

Feminism in Islam

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Secular and Religious
Convergences

MARGOT BADRAN



O N E W O R L D
O X F O R D

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PREFACE

A few years ago it was suggested that I bring together some of my scattered work for publication in a single volume. With the expanding interest in feminism in Muslim societies, both from within the academy and the broader public, I decided to heed the suggestion. Here I present a selection of articles on feminism in Egypt and in other Muslim societies that I have written over the past two decades. Many chapters originated as articles that grew out of public lectures and conference papers presented in different parts of the world, with many subsequently published in scholarly journals and books. A few chapters originated as essays appearing in the popular press and specialized bulletins. Several of the recent pieces have also appeared on the web in various e-publications. One article is published here for the first time, and another appears for the first time in English. I draw attention in endnotes to some of my work which I would like to have included here but could not for lack of space.

Placing works such as these, which were composed at different moments, in juxtaposition, can provoke new readings of the feminist past and present. The works gathered are “of their time,” giving windows into the building of women’s history, and as such can, in part, be read historiographically. I have indicated dates of prior publication or original presentation of works at the end of each chapter. I would also like to note that in a collection of pieces that were composed over a long span of time and that were meant to stand on their own, a certain repetition and overlap is to be expected. I have gathered this material together in a single book in the hope that it will be of interest to students, scholars, and a wider readership.

Assembling this collection has brought back memories stretching back over a long time, evoking moments of enthusiasm and hope, of anxiety and despair, as I proceeded from enthusiastic graduate student along the bumpy road forward at a moment when some of us were trying to create the new discipline of women's studies and the new related field of women's history. By now women's studies is a well-established discipline, or "inter-disciplinary discipline" that has secured its place within Middle East studies and Islamic studies in the United States, parts of the Middle East, and the broader Muslim world. New questions continue to be asked and new methodologies to be devised as the field is constantly expanding and is being taken into exciting new directions by both established scholars and newer generations entering the field. It is a rich and dynamic time.

It is a happy moment when bringing a book to close to thank people for their contributions on many fronts. Because the list is too long and the line goes back so far, I issue a most sincere general thanks to colleagues who have been an important part of this broad venture and to friends and family who have sustained me along the way. I would, however, like remember and thank those who helped me early on. I mention with gratitude three mentors – all male, it will be noted, in the days when women were scarce in the academy – who played a role in facilitating the rise of women's studies by encouraging their persistent students: Carl Brown, who taught me at Harvard; Yehia Hashim, who taught me at al-Azhar University; and Albert Hourani, who taught me much as he supervised my D.Phil. thesis at Oxford University. While at Oxford I joined the Women's Social Anthropology Group which Shirley Ardener organized, and would like to register my appreciation to her and to the other women who provided a special atmosphere in which to share our work. I also express gratitude to the many women I met and worked with through the Berkshire Women's History Conference (revived as an organization in the 1960s) for creating vibrant triennial conferences where we shared work at a moment when the academy at large, including area studies, was wary of the new venture of women's history and women's studies, and which still continues to be at the cutting-edge of women's studies. While doing research on first-wave feminism in Egypt countless women helped me in so many ways and were living, remembering repositories of precious knowledge of the feminist past. In particular here I point to Saiza Nabarawi and Hawa Idriss (a long list of others is recounted in my book *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the*

Making of Modern Egypt). Over the years in Egypt and elsewhere in the Muslim world, colleagues who form part of the large *silsila* (chain) of women's studies scholars and feminist activists are too numerous to even begin to name in this preface. I have, however, acknowledged many in chapter endnotes.

I have received numerous fellowships and grants for which I remain grateful and am pleased to acknowledge. These include awards from the American Research Center in Egypt, the American Institute for Yemeni Studies, the Research Institute in Turkey, the Fulbright Foundation (for several fellowships, the most recent being the New Century Scholars award), the Annenberg Research Institute, the Ford Foundation, the Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), the Rockefeller Center at Bellagio, the Social Science Research Council, and the United States Institute of Peace. The support of these organizations has greatly facilitated my research in numerous locations and provided me with extended opportunities to engage in the give and take of exchange and debate that has been invaluable to me and for which I thank all who were most generous with their time and ideas.

I have put the finishing touches on this book while a senior fellow at the Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim–Christian Understanding at Georgetown University and would like to thank John Esposito, the founding director, and other colleagues for their welcome and the staff for their help. At Georgetown University Library I thank Brenda Bickett, bibliographer for Islamic & Middle Eastern studies, for her swift and generous assistance, as well as the many reference librarians who steered me in the right direction. In bringing this book to a close it gives me special pleasure to thank those at Oneworld Publications who have made this book a reality: Novin Doostdar, founder and director of Oneworld, for his enthusiasm for this project and more broadly for playing a key role in supporting the development of Islamic studies, and within this field, women's and gender studies; Omid Safi, supportive scholar and energetic series editor at Oneworld; Kate Smith, production manager, and Mary Starkey, the sensitive copy-editor of this volume. Finally, I thank Ali Badran, who has been there from the very beginning of my engagement with feminism.

INTRODUCTION

Feminism in Islam has become the focus of intensified academic interest as well as a topic of public concern on an unprecedented scale in recent years. Concurrently, it remains the subject of confusion and contention, and of considerable ignorance, both within and beyond Muslim communities in the East and West. Feminism in Islam has long been presumed non-existent by most in the West, who have insisted that “feminism and Islam” is an oxymoron. In their view Muslims were incapable of producing feminism, and “Islam” itself would not allow it. In “the East,” a term still commonly used in the early twentieth century to refer to Islamic and other societies in Africa and Asia, most Muslims have pronounced feminism produced by women in their midst an anathema. Feminism to such opponents served, so they insisted, as another form of Western assault upon their culture, and constituted a blasphemy to religion. Many in the West, on the other hand, have used the trope of the “oppressed Muslim woman,” a set piece in Orientalist discourse, displaying a feigned concern for “her” plight, in order to justify colonial and neo-colonial incursions into Muslim societies, or simply to make a show of arrogant superiority.

When Muslim reactionaries, whether in the East or West, sustain repressive patriarchal versions of Islam to maintain control of women and to perpetuate the conventional hierarchical order – and with this their own power and privilege – they concurrently solidify Western stereotypes. Thus, we note that Westerners attack Muslims by belittling the very notion that they could generate a feminism of their own, and in so doing denigrate Islam as inherently gender-unjust, while many Muslims (playing into their hands) attack the West for foisting

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feminism upon their hapless coreligionists, wantonly discrediting Muslim women's feminisms. The two opposing forces – the one disparaging of and the other hostile to Muslim women's feminisms – have tenaciously persisted from early last century into the twenty-first century. Muslim women's feminisms meanwhile have resolutely stayed the course. It is this story that *Feminism in Islam* aims to tell.

At the outset it should be made clear – as history and empirical research attest – that the feminisms Muslim women have created are feminisms of their own. They were not “Western;” they are not derivative. Religion from the very start has been integral to the feminisms that Muslim women have constructed, both explicitly and implicitly, whether they have been called “secular feminism” or “Islamic feminism.” This is in contrast to feminisms in the West, which have been largely secular enterprises in the sense of being typically articulated outside religious frameworks. Yet those Westerners who believe secularism – in the sense of moving beyond religion, or even assuming an anti-religious stance – to be a *sine qua non* of feminism forget the role religion has played in their own feminisms. To cite American experience, they ignore their forebears who produced the Woman's Bible in the mid-nineteenth century and the Jewish and Christian religious studies scholars who created women's liberation theology in the late twentieth century. In the main, however, feminism in the West has been cast within a secular framework and has neither explicitly invoked religious principles nor looked to religion for support or legitimacy. In chapter 9, I point to the basic differences between feminisms produced in Muslim societies, where religion saturates the broader culture, and those in contemporary Western societies, where religion has been experienced differently and is often more compartmentalized. I note that Islamic feminism speaks, actually or potentially, to society at large, while Christian and Jewish liberation theology is a form of feminism that for the most part speaks to the concerns of the few.

Historically, Muslim women have generated two major feminist paradigms, which they have referred to as “secular feminism” and “Islamic feminism.” It is important to immediately observe, however, that these two feminisms have never been hermetic entities. Nor, concomitantly, have those known as “secular feminists” and “Islamic feminists” operated strictly within the separate frameworks that the designations of the two feminisms might suggest.

Muslims' secular feminisms first arose on the soil of various emergent nation-states in Africa and Asia from the late nineteenth

century through the first half of the twentieth, during processes of modernization, nationalist anti-colonial struggle, dynastic decline, and independent state building. Islamic feminism emerged in the global *umma* (Muslim community) simultaneously in the East and West, in the late twentieth century during the late postcolonial moment. Islamic feminism appeared, as well, at the time of an accelerating Islamist movement, or movement of political Islam – and, in the case of Iran or, later, Sudan, following the installation of an Islamic regime – as well as during widespread Islamic religious cultural revival in many Muslim-majority secular states and minority societies. Concomitant with these phenomena have been new waves of modernization experienced by more modest economic segments of urban and rural populations. Secular feminism emerged as a composite of intersecting secular nationalist, Islamic modernist, and humanitarian (later human rights) discourses. Secular feminism signified a model of feminism located within the context of a secular territorial nation-state composed of equal citizens, irrespective of religious affiliation and a state protective of religion while not officially organized around religion. From the beginning, secular feminism has been action-oriented, engaging in social and political militancy. Indeed, it emerged as a social movement – or, more precisely, social movements within national contexts, although, as evident in the Middle East, they were also transnational, notably in a regional sense.¹

Islamic feminism, by contrast, burst on the global scene as a new discourse or interpretation of Islam and gender grounded in *ijtihad*, or independent intellectual investigation of the Qur'an and other religious texts. The Islamic, or religious, framing of this new feminism did not mean that “the secular” in the sense of worldliness was absent. This new critical thinking was understood by its shapers from the outset as linked, of necessity, to paving the way for gender liberation and social change in particular contexts. Its concern has not been simply a religious and societal reform but a fundamental transformation reflecting the practice of an egalitarian Islam, as I discuss in chapter 14.

The two feminisms, secular feminism and Islamic feminism, have approached gender equality differently. Emergent secular feminism insisted upon the implementation of gender equality in the public sphere while acquiescing in the notion of gender complementarity in the private sphere or the domain of the family. This was in keeping with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Islamic

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modernist discourse first promoted by the Egyptian Shaikh Muhammad ‘Abduh that pioneering secular feminists accessed.² Women who were incipient feminists did not have access to the education and training that would enable them to engage directly in systematic re-readings of religious texts themselves; the exception only proved the rule.³ Secular feminists used Islamic modernist arguments to demand equal access for women to the public sphere in the domains of secular education and work, and political rights, as well as to call for women’s ability to participate in congregational worship in the mosque. Secular feminists’ Islamic modernist understanding equipped them to demand revisions of Muslim personal status codes, or family law, and to call for the optimalization of the practice of complementary roles and responsibilities in the family, insisting especially that men honor their duties. Their Islamic modernist understanding, however, did not enable them to go beyond a patriarchal construction of the family in arguing for a fundamental recasting of Muslim personal status or family law on an egalitarian model.

Islamic feminists, on the other hand, have through their own *ijtihad* made compelling arguments that the patriarchal model of the family does not conform to the Qur’anic principles of human equality and gender justice. Islamic feminists promote gender equality along a more fluid public–private continuum, promoting an egalitarian model of both family and society. They thus do not conceptualize a public–private division, as was typical of secular feminists. Moreover, Islamic feminists insist upon gender equality within the religious part of the public sphere – that is, in the religious professions and mosque ritual. It was women exegetes’ direct scrutiny of the Qur’an and other religious texts that brought them into the universe of holistic egalitarian Islam encompassing the intersection of family and society that constitutes the *umma*.

In recognition of the diverse secular feminist movements that arose in different national locations I often pluralize the term secular feminism. Secular feminism, as noted, has been primarily “movement feminism,” exploding upon the scene as social movements – clearly suffused, however, with fresh gender ideas. The secular feminist movements that arose in various Muslim-majority countries were organized within a national rather than a religious framework, but were decidedly imbued with religious principles; secular, in this sense, signified national. Such secular/national feminist movements were called Egyptian feminist movements, Syrian feminist

movements, etc. Speaking of secular feminism in the plural captures its expression in the form of these multiple movements situated in diverse locations.

On the other hand, in speaking of Islamic feminism mainly in the singular I seek to maintain a focus on what is, *au fond*, an intellectual endeavor or *ijihadic* project of articulating a coherent model of an egalitarian Islam, and one that can serve as a template for religious and socio-cultural transformation. By referring to Islamic feminism in the singular I do not wish to suggest the absence of intellectual differences within the Islamic feminist framework or a lack of different activist priorities in various places.

Until now the historical trajectories of secular and Islamic feminism have not been examined together in a single volume. I have titled my book *Feminism in Islam* to underscore that feminism exists within Islam – that is, within Islamic discourse and among Muslims. I chose the subtitle *Secular and Religious Convergences* to draw attention to the presence of what is conventionally understood as both “the religious” and “the secular” within the feminisms that Muslim women have created. The juxtaposition of these two feminisms illustrates how “the religious” constitutes a vertical thread in the history of Muslims’ feminisms, as does “the secular” in the worldly or quotidian sense, and reveals the multiple valences of the terms “secular” and “religious” and how their meanings, and our grasp of them, change over time. Indeed, there is significant recent interrogation and debate about how “the secular” and “the religious” are constituted as seen in the work of Talal Asad, Saba Mahmood, and others.⁴ Terms such as secular feminism or Islamic feminism, which are necessary for purposes of identification and analysis, can be, and indeed sometimes have been, understood in ways that are rigid, reductive, or misleading, and frequently have been deliberately manipulated for political ends. Feminism *per se*, “secular feminism,” and “Islamic feminism” have for a variety of reasons all been highly contested terms, even for protagonists of their projects, as I discuss in various chapters.

Scrutinizing secular feminism and Islamic feminism side by side brings to light the confluences between these two feminist paradigms, and not simply the divergences that many presume. Examination of concrete experience indicates how Muslim women as feminists employ multiple discourses and possess multiple identities, and how secular feminists and Islamic feminists have worked together, and do so increasingly, to achieve shared goals.⁵ At the same time it shows the

different work that the two feminisms do. Muslims' secular and Islamic feminisms should not be seen as oppositional forces, as some are inclined to do, seemingly influenced by the hostility between Islamist and secular forces in societies at large from the final decades of the twentieth century with the spread of political Islam, and which Islamists indeed frequently take pains to promote. Islamic feminists who articulate an egalitarian mode of Islam should not be confused with Islamist women who promote political Islam and its patriarchal version of the religion.⁶ Indeed, we must be wary of Islamist women's specious renditions of feminism which, as just noted, Islamists are typically wont to deprecate. During my research and interactions in diverse parts of the Muslim *umma* since the 1990s, I have observed how secular and Islamic feminisms have been in constructive conversation, and how secular and Islamic feminists have joined forces in activist campaigns, as we see in part II of this book.

BUILDING A NEW HISTORIOGRAPHY

In my four decades of work I have been concerned with the theory and practice of feminisms within Muslim societies. I began my exploration of feminism in the 1960s within the context of Middle East studies with a focus on the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. In the 1990s I turned my attention to the contemporary moment, and also opened my lens to include the Muslim world at large – and in so doing became part of what was gradually coalescing as the new Islamic studies. It is worth noting that Middle East studies was formed in a “patriarchal moment” and came under its influence. It took considerable effort, as it did in other area studies and “mainstream” disciplines, to introduce women's studies into Middle East studies curricula and scholarly vehicles in the United States and elsewhere.⁷ In order to support and accelerate this process, a group of women scholars from a variety of disciplines created the Association of Middle East Women's Studies (AMEWS) in 1985, and twenty years later the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* (JMEWS) was created under the aegis of AMWES.⁸ The new Islamic studies, on the other hand, was consolidated after feminist thought had already made a deep impact on the academy and was well reflected in scholarly production.⁹ The new Islamic studies in the main moved beyond the patriarchal thought that had for so long influenced area studies.

When I embarked upon my investigation of the feminism that pioneering Muslim and Christian women in Egypt created together in the early twentieth century, I did so as a historian belonging to the founding generation of women's studies. When I set out to explore the rise of women's "feminist consciousness" and evolution of the organized feminist movement in Egypt I was moving in largely uncharted territory. In the 1960s and 1970s feminist experience was virtually unrecorded in mainstream histories in Egypt, apart from the occasional fleeting mention in the nationalist narrative. The beginnings of feminist history were evident, however, in a few theses and books produced by young women scholars in Egypt, with such exceptions proving the rule.¹⁰ In Middle East studies in the United States the absence of work on women and on feminism was as glaring as it was in other area and disciplinary studies.

Like other emergent historians of women and feminism, my first task was to search for imagined sources and to work out new methodologies appropriate to the retrieval and analysis of a forgotten past.¹¹ When I began my research the few remaining first-wave feminists and early witnesses of feminist activism were of indispensable help to me in conveying the *esprit*, along with illuminating details of the pioneering feminist movement. They spent countless hours recalling this past, serving as living repositories of precious information and insightful stories. They shared their personal papers and photographic collections, and led me to what were then little-known writings of women by opening their private libraries to me.¹² The lack of a historiography of women and feminism in Egypt at the time, as elsewhere in the Middle East and Muslim societies, presented numerous challenges, starting with the most basic: how to frame and contextualize the feminist narrative. In confronting conventional periodization and analytical apparatus, one had to ask: what were the seminal moments and turning points in women's pasts? How was women's experience inflected by class, region, and communal affiliation? Such were the concerns of all who were striking out then to research, narrate, and analyze women's unexplored histories. For those of us starting out in the 1960s, it would be two decades before the construct "gender" would be devised as an analytical tool. In chapter 8 I explore the travels of "gender" into the Arabophone world.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, the heyday of second-wave feminism in many parts of the world, I continued to research the history of secular feminism/s, often called simply feminism, maintaining a

primary focus on Egyptian feminism in the first half of the twentieth century while I also explored feminist history elsewhere in the Middle East, as seen in chapters 1 through 5. Taking a deep historical look at Muslim women's feminism/s and providing thick detail reveals the textures and fine-tuning of women's feminism/s and the minutiae of their moves forward, as seen for example in chapter 4. The history of women's feminist thinking and activism, as I mentioned at the start, gives lie to the assertion that Muslims and others from beyond the West borrowed their feminism from the West. Such insistence imposes upon Muslim women's feminism/s an illegitimate birth and tainted past. Women's own experiences tell a very different story.

In the late 1980s I turned my attention from the feminist past in Egypt to the feminist present. In my previous research I had talked exclusively with women who recollected the feminist past. Now, instead of working with memory, I wanted to see how Egyptian women, in the midst of the vibrant second wave, understood contemporary feminism. It was then that I found that some socialist women who earlier had adamantly eschewed feminism as superfluous to and detracting from the socialist project were now, following the demise of state socialism (at the beginning of the 1970s), gravitating toward feminism while the second wave was well underway. Nawal al-Saadawi, pioneering second-wave feminist, stood out from the beginning for combining socialism and feminism, while Inji Aflatun, a first-wave precursor, connected Marxism and feminism. Both women claimed a dual identity: Aflatun as a communist and a feminist; and al-Saadawi as a socialist and a feminist. Among the new generation of women I had presumed to be feminists – “daughters,” heirs, and beneficiaries of feminist predecessors – I unexpectedly encountered a troubled ambivalence toward feminism. These younger women questioned contemporary feminism's methods and politics which did not suit their needs. Women of the rising generation, whom I called “gender activists” – along with others who eschewed a feminist identity – wanted to distance themselves from the high-profile and high-gear second-wave feminists.

Meanwhile, I sought out women who were part of the new religious, cultural and political resurgence, and were presumably critical of feminism, to share with me their understandings of feminism. The handful of “religious women” (referred to as *mutadayyinat*, a neologism that appeared in the 1980s) I was able to meet, to my surprise revealed that they were gesturing toward a new “feminism” by

posing their own questions about women and Islam and looking to the Qur'an for answers. They were impelled to critique the resurgence of a gender-reactionary Islam that threatened the gains women had made but recoiled from the word "feminism" because of the associations it held for them, seeing it as "Western"; yet they had difficulty in coming up with an alternative term. I soon learned that similar moves on the part of religiously identified women were underway in other societies. I discuss these new gesturings on the part of the "religious" women I met, the reluctance of young secular progressives to align themselves with feminism, and the new gender sensitivity of their some of their socialist elders in chapter 6.

In various parts of the *umma* most producers of the new women-friendly and gender-sensitive Islamic discourse did not regard their intellectual work as part of a "feminist" project. A striking early exception were the new religious intellectuals – women and men – scholars, writers, and journalists in Iran who were explicit about the feminist dimension of their work, and indeed played a seminal role in the development of the new Islamic feminism as their ideas circulated globally. It was Muslim secular feminists as writers and scholars in various locations who recognized, in the new *ijtihad*, the emergence among coreligionists of a "feminism in a new voice" and coined the term "Islamic feminism," as I note in chapter 9.

By the time Islamic feminism surfaced as a named phenomenon in the 1990s there was a significant and rapidly-growing literature in women's studies focusing on Muslim women and an expanding literature on Muslims' feminisms. Indeed, the work of "secular" women who were scholars in these fields helped bring to wider notice the emergent discourse of Islamic feminism generated by "religious women" or those who explicitly identified themselves with religion. Interestingly, Fatima Mernissi, a Moroccan sociologist and secular feminist scholar, produced in 1987 what would be hailed as the first major work of Islamic feminism.¹³

My eagerness to investigate the emergent Islamic feminism took me far beyond the borders of Middle East studies, catapulting me into research in South Africa,¹⁴ West Africa,¹⁵ South Asia,¹⁶ Southeast Asia,¹⁷ and Muslim communities in America¹⁸ and Europe.¹⁹ Most recently (June 2008), I visited Indonesia, where I met with a large range of scholars and activists, and members of communities in different parts of the country, and was deeply struck by how ideals and practices of Islamic feminism were widely in evidence – and

especially remarkable were manifestations of this at the level of local communities.

Since the rise and spread of Islamic feminism I have also maintained my interest in Muslim women's secular feminisms, and indeed I am especially interested in the intersections of the "two feminisms" and the interactions of their protagonists. These intersections might be obscured by the separate terms "secular feminism" and "Islamic feminism," yet they remain discernible strands of what constitutes "feminism in Islam."

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

I have divided the book into two parts. Part I is devoted to my work on Egypt. It deals with the history of secular feminism from the late nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth.²⁰ Chapters 1 and 5 analyze the longer historical trajectory of feminism in Egypt. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 offer a fine-grained treatment of women's feminist thinking and experience in the first half of the twentieth century.²¹ Connections between women's feminism and their own self- and society-enabling nationalism, and how feminists did not privilege their nationalism above their feminism but linked the two, are analyzed through an autobiographical reading in chapter 4.²² Feminist regrouping in the final years of the twentieth century is examined in chapter 6 at the moment of an incipient move toward a paradigm shift in feminism. Chapter 7 unravels the political battles around women's bodies and sexuality, with a focus on FGM, and analyzes secular feminist and Islamic feminist interpolations. Chapter 8 explores the entry of "gender" into the analytical lexicon in Arabic, which would become a key tool for secular feminist theoreticians and activist strategists and for scholars engaged in the new *ijtihad* that was shaping the incipient Islamic feminist discourse, and for the state was a welcomed mechanism in attracting development funds. In chapter 3, I address memory, history, and gender in the politics and practice of commemorating feminist history at the end of the twentieth century.²³

Part II examines the rise and spread of Islamic feminism in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries in the broader Muslim world or *umma*. Chapter 9 discusses how disaffection with political Islam pushed some women in Turkey, late last century, to quit

Islamist ranks and to move into their own independent activism on behalf of women's rights and liberation within an Islamic framework of their own making, and draws a comparison with how secular feminists' disappointments with male secular nationalists in Egypt earlier that century had spurred them into independent feminist organizing. Chapter 10 grew out of a talk at the American Research Center in Egypt in 2002, aiming to draw the contours of Islamic feminism and to contextualize it at a moment when Islamic feminism was still a largely unfamiliar phenomenon. Chapters 11 and 12 demonstrate how women draw at once upon both secular and Islamic feminist discourses in struggles for gender justice within the realm of *shari'a*-based laws. Chapter 11 discusses how women as secular and religious activists moved successfully to stave off the imposition of a more conservative family law in Yemen. Chapter 12 analyzes how Muslim women as secular feminists and religious activists, joined by Christian supporters, triumphed in their efforts to realize justice for women accused of *zina* (adultery) under *hudud* laws in northern Nigeria through meticulous readings of *fiqh* and demands for responsible application. Chapter 13 describes imbrications of secular feminism and Islamic feminism over time and space, looking at the secular roots of Islamic feminism and the Islamic future of secular feminism. Chapter 14, as its title indicates, regards "Islamic Feminism on the Move." The chapter, a reflection and overview, originated as a talk at a well-attended conference on Islamic feminism in Paris in 2006, sponsored by the NGO Islam & Laïcité and UNESCO, where presenters and participants representing a wide ideological spectrum engaged in lively debate on women and gender.²⁴

Together parts I and II provide a window onto trajectories of Muslims' feminisms in diverse places in the global *umma*. The appearance of the new Islamic feminist paradigm did not spell the disappearance of secular feminisms. The "two feminisms" continue to exist side by side, and are increasingly mutually interactive. Secular feminists have a long historical memory of women's gender struggles and a repertoire of organizational practices and skills highly honed over time. Islamic feminists have built upon and extended the Islamic modernist thinking that has been an integral component of Muslims' secular feminism and moved it into a whole new space. Islamic feminists are providing the new intellectual fuel necessary to push forward feminist goals in Muslim societies in Africa and Asia, and in Muslim communities in the West, in an effort to move closer

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to achieving a transformed *umma*. Secular and Islamic feminists now work side by side in productive synergy more than ever, in a highly volatile environment; one which is full of more peril and of more promise.

NOTES

1. See chapter 12, "Arab Feminism," in my book *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 223–250, where I delineate the Arab (secular) national and the Islamic threads or dimensions of the feminism(s) Muslim and Christian women collaborated in creating.
2. On Muhammad 'Abduh, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 130–160.
3. Nazira Zain al-Din, a Lebanese who was educated by her father, who was a prominent member of the 'ulama, engaged in examination of religious texts, especially the Qur'an. See her *al-Sufur wa al-hijab* (Beirut: Matabi' Quzma, 1928) and *al-Fatah wa al-shuykh: nazirat wa munazarat fi al-sufur wa al-hijab* (Beirut: al-Matba'at al-Amirkaniya, 1929). Her work was praised by contemporary Egyptian secular feminists.
4. See Talal Assad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); and Saba Mahmood, "Rethinking Secularism. Is Critique Secular?," posted on *Immanent Frame*, edited by Jonathan Van Antwerpen, www.src.org/blogs/immanent/frame, a blog on secularism, religion, and the public sphere.
5. I write about this in "Locating Feminisms: The Collapse of Secular and Religious Discourses in the Muslim Mashriq," *Agenda* (South African feminist journal), special 50th issue on African Feminisms, 59 (2001), pp. 41–57; "Zur Verortung von Feminismen: Die Vermischung von Sakularen und Religiösen Diskursen im Mashriq, der Türkei und dem Iran," in Barbara Pusch (ed.), *Die neue muslimische Frau* (Istanbul: Orient Institute, 2001), pp. 213–22; and "Locating Feminisms: Secular and Religious Discourses, A Selective Look at the Middle East," in Fatima Sadiqi et al. (eds.), *al-Harakat al-nisa'iyyat: al-'asl wa al-tawjih/Mouvements feministes: origines et orientations Feminist Movements/Origins and Orientations* (Fes: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur la Femme, Université Sidi Mohamed ben Abdallah, 2000), pp. 73–88.
6. See my essay "Understanding Islam, Islamism, and Islamic Feminism," *Journal of Women's History*, 13, 1 (Spring 2001), pp. 47–52.
7. I wrote about this early process in "The Institutionalization of Middle East Women's Studies in the United States," *MESA Bulletin*, 22, 1 (July 1988), pp. 25–28.
8. On the growth of women's studies in the context of Middle East studies and the founding of JMEWS see "Editors' Introduction" by Marcia C. Inhorn and Mary N. Layoun, in the inaugural issue JMEWS, 1, 1 (Winter 2005), pp. 1–5.
9. I speak of Islamic studies as a still-new interdisciplinary field organized as independent departments or centers as distinct from the classic study of Islamic

theology in departments of religion or seminaries, although presently these are often sites of the new Islamic studies. This is not to overlook that new trends have been underway for as long as two decades or more in some divinity schools such as Harvard Divinity School where the Women's Studies Program in Religion, which has been an important site of the study of women and gender in Islam, goes back to the 1980s.

10. For example, Ibrahim 'Abduh and Duriyya Shafiq, *al-Mar'a al-misriyya min al-fara'ina ila al-yaum* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Misr, 1955); Ijlal Khalifa, *al-Haraka al-nisa'iyya al-haditha* (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-'Arabiyya al-Haditha, 1974); and Ijlal Khalifa, "al-Sihafa al-nisa'iyya fi misr min 1919 ila 1939," M.A. thesis, Cairo University, 1966.
11. I discussed the process of retrieval of women's feminist past in "The Origins of Feminism in Egypt," in Arina Angerman et al. (eds.), *Current Issues in Women's History* (London: Routledge, 1989); published in Arabic in *al-Mar'a al-Jadida* (Cairo: December 1990) and in Nun (Algiers: December 1990).
12. I remembered two women who were key in helping me in my research in "Defiance on her Brow: Remembering Suffragist Activist Duriyya Shafiq Forty Years after Women Obtained the Vote," *al-Ahram Weekly*, 1996 and on Saiza Nabarawi in "An Alternative Vision of Gender," *al-Ahram Weekly*, 1997.
13. *Le harem politique* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1987), trans. Mary Jo Lakeland as *Women and Islam: An Historical and Theological Enquiry* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991). A young Moroccan scholar, Raja Rhouni, has done an incisive study of Mernissi in her forthcoming book entitled *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi: Thinking a Post-Foundationalist Islamic Feminism*. See also her "Deconstructing Islamic Feminism: A Look at Fatima Mernissi," in Margot Badran (ed.), *Islam and Gender in Africa*, forthcoming.
14. I taught a course on Islamic feminism in the Centre for Contemporary Islamic Studies at the University of Cape Town in 2002 and wrote on this experience in "Reflections on Teaching Islamic Feminism/s at the Center for Contemporary Islam [University of Cape Town]," ARISA: Annual Review of Islam in South Africa (Fall 2002).
15. In Abuja in July 2004 I participated in the International Conference on the Implementation of Shari'ah in a Democracy: The Nigerian Experience, organized by the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, where I gave a paper entitled "Ongoing Tafsir on Men and Women in Islam: Constructions and Practices of Democracy and Social Justice." It subsequently appeared in the online CSID Bulletin. In the spring of 2005 I traveled extensively in northern Nigeria engaging in interviews, group discussions, and collecting materials as a Fulbright New Century Scholar. This research informed chapter 12 of this book.
16. In December 2003 I met with feminists in India and gave talks on Muslims' secular and Islamic feminisms in New Delhi, Pune, Kolkata, Bhopal, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kozikhodi.
17. In June 2008, I met with activists and scholars, and engaged in discussions and gave talks in Jakarta, East Java, Central Java, and West Sumatra. Four years earlier, in September 2004, I participated in an international meeting on Sexuality and Human Rights in Muslim Societies in South/Southeast Asia organized by Women for Women's Human Rights in Istanbul. It was an important event in the drive for human rights for all irrespective of gender and sexualities.

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18. See my entries on “Feminism,” “Patriarchy,” and “Women,” in Jocelyne Cesari (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Islam in the United States*, 2 vols., Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard, a sponsor of the encyclopedia (Westport, Conn. and London: Greenwood Press, 2007), vol. 1, pp. 487–489, 633–637, and 244–249 respectively.
19. See my chapter “Il femminismo islamico e la nuova cultura mediterranea,” in Danilo Zolo (ed.), *L’alternativa mediterranea. Un dialogo fra le due sponde* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 2007).
20. Chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 were published before in my book *Feminists, Islam, and Nation*, trans. Ali Badran as *Raidat al-harakat al-niswiyya al-misriyya wa al-islam wa al-watan* (Cairo: Supreme Council of Culture, 2000), drawing upon my D.Phil. thesis entitled “Huda Sha’rawi and the Liberation of the Egyptian Woman,” Oxford University, 1977, which circulated not long afterwards when the Bodleian Library in Oxford made D Phil. theses available for purchase.
21. I also do this in “The Feminist Vision in the Writings of Three Turn-of-the-Century Egyptian Women,” *British Journal for Middle Eastern Studies Bulletin*, 14, 1–2 (1988), pp. 15–34.
22. Which first, feminism or nationalism, has been a question for women during times of anti-colonial struggle and early nation-state building. I discuss this in “Dual Liberation: Feminism and Nationalism in Egypt from the 1870’s to 1925,” *Feminist Issues* (Spring 1988), pp. 15–24. This also appeared in Dutch as “Dubble bevridding: feminism en nationalisme in Egypte,” *Socialisties-Feministiese Teksten* (Amsterdam: Fall 1987), and in Arabic as “al-Haraka al-nisa’iyya wa al-wataniyya fi misr min 1870s illi 1925,” *Nun* (Cairo, 1989) and *Nun* (Algiers, 1990).
23. I wrote two articles for a broad audience on feminism in Egypt during the nineteenth century: the first occasioned by the UN Conference in Beijing is entitled “Half a Nation: A Century of Feminism,” *al-Ahram Weekly*, 20–26 July 1995, which also appeared in Arabic in *al-Ahram*, 20 July 1995; the second, appearing in a special edition of *al-Ahram Weekly* looking back over the twentieth century, is entitled “Feminism in a Nationalist Century,” *al-Ahram Weekly*, 20 July 1995.
24. A selection of papers presented at this conference appears in *Islam & Laïcité* (ed.), *Existe-t-il un féminisme musulman?* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2007). Another important venue for the presentation and debate of work on Islamic feminism were the landmark first and second international conferences on Islamic Feminism held in Barcelona in 2006 and 2007, with a third happening in the fall of 2008.