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## THE ISLAMIC PUBLIC SPHERE AND THE DISCIPLINE OF *ADAB*

### **Abstract**

Recently, there have been many compelling new theories of the emergence of an “Islamic public sphere.” Few studies, however, have examined the role of literary writing in contributing to its emergence, even though such writing was critical to the intellectual elite’s shift toward Islamic subjects in mid-20th century Egypt. In addition, little of this scholarship has examined the gendered nature of this public sphere in any depth, though gendered rights, roles, and responsibilities were among the most hotly contested debates in public discourses on religion. This article looks at how literary writing not only shaped particular interpretations of gendered relationships in Islam but also developed hermeneutical techniques for reinterpreting religious sources. It specifically examines the work of Egyptian literary scholar and Islamic thinker Bint al-Shati’ and how her writings helped define the nature of the family, gender relations, and the private sphere in Islamic public discourse.

Recently, there have been many compelling new theories of the emergence of an “Islamic public sphere” associated with the Islamic revival.<sup>1</sup> Few, however, examine the role of literary writing in defining this sphere, even though literary writing played a critical part in intellectual elites’ shift toward Islamic themes.<sup>2</sup> In addition, little scholarship has looked at the gendered nature of this public sphere in any depth, even though gendered rights, roles, and responsibilities have been among the most hotly contested debates in public discourses on religion.<sup>3</sup> The writings of Arabic scholar and Islamic thinker Bint al-Shati’ (pseudonym of ‘A’isha ‘Abd al-Rahman) crystallize some of the most salient themes of the Islamic world of letters and illustrate the power of *adab* in formulating modern Islamic ethics and politics. Through vivid portraits of the early Islamic community, Bint al-Shati’—and other leading intellectuals of her time—employed a kind of literary Salafism to imagine an idealized *umma*, principally through biographies of the *aslāf*. A public intellectual, political activist, chaired professor, journalist, and *adība* (woman of letters), she synthesized discursive trends for a broad spectrum of readers that included both intellectual elites and popular audiences. Enjoying an illustrious career as an Islamic intellectual, she drew on the authority of both traditional religious disciplines

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(*tarājim*, *tafsīr*, and the sciences of the Arabic language) and revivalist discourses. Yet she was neither of al-Azhar (although she was the first woman invited to lecture there) nor of the Muslim Brotherhood but of Cairo University and ‘Ain Shams. From these more secularly oriented institutions, she mainstreamed ideas of the Islamic intellectual sphere—in the press, lectures, and popular publications. Perhaps most importantly, she articulated the gendered dimensions of this Islamic public sphere, writing about the women in the Prophet’s family, women’s emancipation in Islam, women’s rights, women in Islamic law, and women writers. Her writings contributed to making the world of letters, religion, and women the very axis for articulating an Islamic body politic. *Adab*, literature, became central to the *ādāb*—the ethics, morals, and values—of the emergent Islamic awakening.

Bint al-Shati’s intellectual trajectory spanned eras and genres. Through the life of her own publishing career, she connected the surge in Islamic literature of the 1930s and 1940s to the awakening of the later 1970s and 1980s. In the midst of the al-Nasir years, she helped foster the religious revival that Saba Mahmood has described as “a religious ethos or sensibility,” one that had “a palpable public presence in Egypt, manifest in . . . a brisk consumption and production of religious media and literature, and a growing circle of intellectuals who write and comment upon contemporary affairs in the popular press from a self-described Islamic point of view.”<sup>4</sup> She is not considered a revivalist, however—Hassan al-Hanafi dismissed her as one of the *fuqahā’ al-sulṭān*, a Khomeini designation for the comprador elite.<sup>5</sup> She was too close to *le sein du pouvoir*, intellectually and institutionally: she served on government committees under al-Nasir, was photographed embracing Sadat, and held a chaired professorship of Arabic at ‘Ain Shams. Precisely because of her position at the center of public institutions, she was able to visibly sustain a newly decentralized Islamic discursive tradition throughout the secularly oriented al-Nasir era. This decentralization was performed through the development of new modes of religious education, expression, and social mobilization beginning with the *nahḍa*. Her literary writings provided a public outlet for religious discourse at a time when the Muslim Brotherhood was driven underground and al-Azhar and the religious courts were subsumed by the state. Even as she firmly situated herself in disciplinary regimes of knowledge, she destabilized disciplinary parameters. While a professor at a secular university, she wrote almost exclusively on Islamic subjects; she was a literary scholar interpreting religious materials and a woman encroaching on a predominantly male domain of scholarship. Her literary production during the al-Nasir years laid the foundation for the intellectual Islam of the later revival.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, she contributed to configuring the gendered dimensions of this intellectual Islam that were so critical to the literature of the *ṣaḥwa* (awakening).

#### THE WORLD OF LETTERS AND THE ISLAMIC PUBLIC SPHERE

Bint al-Shati’ circulated in the most illustrious intellectual circles of her time, among figures whose lives and careers were defined by the intersection of religion and literature. Although clearly influenced by and refracting intellectual currents of these circles, she was no mere “copy” of these thinkers, as Tawfiq al-Hakim accused her of being.<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, she was able to synthesize intellectual arguments for popular audiences, meld literary creativity with religious scholarship, build on theories of the liberating nature of

Islam, and foster debates in which the intimate domain became “the primary axis of the public sphere.”<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the modern age, literary writing has been key to imagining new kinds of gendered relationships.<sup>9</sup> In Egyptian public life, especially between the late 1920s and late 1940s, it also became a key tool in developing a modernist hermeneutics for Islamic thought, one that Bint al-Shati’s large body of work helped cultivate.<sup>10</sup> This extended from her early years as a literary writer and student of Arabic literature, to her creative flourishing as a biographer of women in the Prophet’s family, and, finally, to her late career turn to Qur’anic exegesis. In 1934, her first year at Cairo University, she married her teacher Amin al-Khuli, known for his advocacy of literary interpretations of the Qur’an. Even though she wanted to pursue Islamic studies, he encouraged her—perhaps because of her gender—to study Arabic language and literature as the first tool of understanding religion.<sup>11</sup> Combining novel and traditional approaches, she deployed literature as a dramatic tool for re-envisioning the early community, understanding the meaning of the Qur’an, and reinterpreting classical religious scholarship. Taha Husayn, another intellectual who experimented with literary approaches to religious texts, supervised her dissertation, which she wrote on the 11th-century poet Abu al-‘Ala’ al-Ma‘arri.<sup>12</sup> In her early years studying at the university and writing her master’s thesis, she gave birth to three children and wrote novels, short stories, books on life in the Egyptian countryside, and articles in prominent newspapers like *al-Ahram*. Bint al-Shati’ actively sparred with the most important contemporary public intellectuals of her time, carrying on debates in print with figures like Sayyid Qutb, Mahmud ‘Abbas al-‘Aqqad, and ‘Abd al-Wahid Wafi. Like her, they used language and literature as a means of interpreting classical religious sources; like her, they were not trained formally in religious institutions but rather brought new kinds of learning to traditional scholarship.

Bint al-Shati’ turned to religious themes almost immediately after completing her doctoral thesis, with the 1951 publication of *Ard al-Mu‘ajizat: Rihla fi Jazirat al-‘Arab* (Land of Miracles: Journey in the Arabian Peninsula), a memoir of performing the ‘umra on a school trip with other students and teachers. This work marks a definite transition in her scholarship, as she moved away from poetics (of the blind skeptic, as al-Ma‘arri was called) and toward religious themes. Over the next decade, she would publish almost exclusively on religious subjects, with few exceptions. In *Ard al-Mu‘ajizat*, Bint al-Shati’ describes a transformative, personal experience of Islamic history, interspersing the account of her travels with erudite references to pre-Islamic and Islamic poets, hadith, Qur’an, and history. The miracle to which the title refers is clearly the Qur’an, but other literary forms also mediate her experience. The travelogue style is punctuated by the ritualistic reenactment of the ‘umra, as she conducts the narrative both vertically and horizontally, synchronically and diachronically, telling of the airplane taking them to the land of the awakening (*arḍ al-maba‘th*) and later the story of oil in Dhahran alongside her narration of the rites of the ‘umra performed in Mecca. The synchronic and diachronic plays out stylistically, as she writes in a direct, journalistic, reportage style, with footnotes on hadith and pre-Islamic poetry. Her personal experience of the hajj, woven in with scripture and poetry, attests to both textual and emotional authenticity, as she intersperses mundane details of travel with witnessing the transformative power of ritual and sacred space. Her modern scholarly style (of meticulous footnotes, for example) combines literary references simplified for a general audience and explanations, in a clear

vernacular, of citations that would be familiar to more educated readers of Arabic. The book enjoyed popularity, with over six printings between 1951 and 1985.

Literary treatments of religious themes began to dominate the world of letters during the 1930s and 1940s, as the most illustrious innovators of Arab literature in the 20th century treated scriptural subjects through modern genres.<sup>13</sup> One of the first of these was *Hayat Muhammad* by Muhammad Husayn Haykal, controversial author of the “first” Egyptian novel *Zaynab* and a proponent of Pharaonism.<sup>14</sup> Bringing a humanist approach to religious sources, his biography of the Prophet stresses the latter’s humanity and emphasizes that his only miracle was the “human” and “rational” miracle of the Qur’an.<sup>15</sup> These innovations revolutionized the literary field as well as religious knowledge, as writers employed contemporary genres of narrative discourse not only to reinterpret scripture but also to comment on classical theological debates revived for the 20th century. This was performed largely by intellectuals who had early in their careers come from secular backgrounds, written on secular topics, and emulated modern, positivist models of knowledge. Bint al-Shatī’ epitomized a new kind of Islamic intellectual who was not formally trained in religious institutions or disciplines but became a popular authority on the Qur’an and a respected public intellectual. In *Ard al-Mu’ajizat*, Bint al-Shatī’ jumps into the “new Islamic mood” of the Egyptian intelligentsia, situating herself directly in what had by then become a genre of religious travel writing mainly by male literati such as Muhammad Husayn Haykal and Ibrahim al-Mazini.<sup>16</sup> Several genres of *islāmiyyāt* had emerged: the travelogue of pilgrimage, biography of the Prophet, biography of the early community, and eventually, literary interpretations of the Qur’an. Bint al-Shatī’ would follow this path, first with *Ard al-Mu’ajizat*, then with extensive *tarājim* of women from the Prophet’s family, and, finally, with her own interpretations of the Qur’an. The *islāmiyyāt* extolled the virtues of the early community through modern genres (novel, play, essay, biography), used *ijtihād* to reinterpret early sources, and deployed artistic license to paint idealized portraits of the *aslāf*. This new literary movement infused religious “aura” into supposedly secular forms of technological reproducibility, belying Lukács formulation that these modern narrative forms depict “a world . . . abandoned by God.”<sup>17</sup>

Bint al-Shatī’'s biographies, mainly of women of the Prophet’s family—his daughters, granddaughters, mother, and wives—combine impeccable *sīra* scholarship with an engaging narrative discourse. Her *Banat al-Nabi* (Daughters of the Prophet, 1956), *Zaynab Bint al-Zahra’* (1956), *Umm al-Nabi* (Mother of the Prophet, 1958), *Sakina Bint al-Husayn* (1958), and *Nisa’ al-Nabi* (Wives of the Prophet, 1961) are novelistic dramatizations of the domestic sphere. They are intimate portraits of her subjects, with inferences about their emotional life, psychological states, and domestic struggles. At the outset, she admits using imagination to flesh out details of her characterizations, and she writes in a clear, lucid style directed at a general audience. The biographies evoke the inner life, both emotional and domestic, of women in the Prophet’s family, as Bint al-Shatī’ constructs humanized images of ideal womanhood. Her descriptions conventionalize domestic space, infusing it with romantic love, narrative suspense, and devotion. Bint al-Shatī’ combines domestic fiction with *sīra* literature, developing a new kind of feminine religious biography. As Stowasser observes in *Women in the Qur’an*, these narratives fuse a modern “storytelling style and an emphasis on domesticity,” traits that she sees as functioning antithetically. By contrast, literary scholar Marilyn Booth recognizes

this modernity and domesticity as complementary, reflecting an image of ideal Islamic womanhood that would become a staple of revivalist discourse both in *daʿwa* literature and in a flourishing field of biographical literature about exemplary women.<sup>18</sup>

Published between 1956 and 1961, Bint al-Shati's *tarājim* appear anachronistic, neither belonging to the earlier *islāmiyyāt* nor to the later awakening. Her writing not only bridged different bodies of literature that belonged to different eras, but it also addressed contestations around the family and religion during key years of the al-Nasir period. The trend in literary approaches to religious biography peaked in the 1940s with Mahmud ʿAbbas al-ʿAqqad's *ʿabqariyyāt* series and Haykal's biographies of the *rāshidūn*, but Bint al-Shati's *tarājim* appeared right in the middle of the al-Nasir era.<sup>19</sup> Booth traces the surge in religious biography of "famous women" during the revival of the 1980s and 1990s to this period in the 1950s, even though their origins are in these earlier *salafī* biographies. Gershoni and Jankowski proffer several explanations for the shift toward religious themes in the 1930s and 1940s, among them the "desire to appeal to new literate publics and to create a dialogue with potential consumers of intellectual production through the use of popular forms and themes of literary production."<sup>20</sup> Charles Smith shows that the shift in orientation was a response to the specific political context of the early 1930s when the Liberal Party aligned with the ʿulama' in response to Isma'il Sidqi's repressiveness.<sup>21</sup> Despite Smith's convincing argument, it does not explain the persistence of this genre across time and political contexts. The literary intelligentsia's deployment of religious writing was a response to the specific political situation of the 1930s, but in subsequent decades it also became a tactic used by this elite to challenge state authority through alliances with other centers of political, religious, and popular power.

Recent theorists describe the "democratization of religious authority," as religious knowledge became more diffuse with the expansion of print capitalism, the rise of literacy, and the development of mass education.<sup>22</sup> This resulted in a generation of scholars and writers authoritatively writing and speaking on religious subjects without having had formal religious training. Hassan al-Banna is a classic example of a new kind of religious authority, with his insistence in not attending al-Azhar, his training at Dar al-ʿUlum, his elevation of lay people within the ranks of the Brotherhood, and his success within secular institutions like Cairo University.<sup>23</sup> Out of the Brotherhood came not only new modes of popular preaching but also a new kind of popular literature disseminated through pamphlets (and later other forms of mass media).<sup>24</sup> At the same time that the Muslim Brotherhood mobilized the Egyptian middle class through a grassroots social movement, the first fruits of Egypt's expansion of secular education began applying methods of this education and *Weltanschauung* to religious topics and debates. As Smith shows, religious rhetoric became intellectuals' means of mobilizing popular audiences and challenging state power.<sup>25</sup> The Islamic world of letters articulated the middle-class values of the public sphere as Islamic ones, through specific images of the private sphere, gender, family, and the household.

#### THE HOME OF PUBLIC DEBATE

Bint al-Shati's writings functioned as a kind of literary *daʿwa* for the reading public; they were widely circulated among popular audiences while serving the pedagogical

role of religious education. Like *da'wa* literature, these writings are preoccupied with defining the nature of the private sphere in relation to the public, or what Habermas calls “privateness oriented toward an audience” and Charles Taylor describes as the shaping of the sphere of intimate relations through public debate.<sup>26</sup>

The intimate domain had to be defined through public interchange, both of literary works and of criticism. This is only superficially a paradox. A new definition of human identity, however private, can become generally accepted only through being defined and affirmed in public space. And this critical exchange itself came to constitute a public sphere. We might say that it came to constitute an axis of the public sphere, along with, even slightly ahead of, the principal axis of exchange around matters of public (in the first sense) policy.<sup>27</sup>

The world of letters plays a critical role in constituting the bourgeois nature of the public sphere in Habermas’s formulation, with the literary domain intersecting with the letter of the law to make middle-class mores and values normative. Habermas observes how the patriarchal conjugal family acts as the “home” of public debate, that is, as a public of private individuals whose “audience-oriented privacy made its way into the political realm’s public sphere.”<sup>28</sup> The world of letters is the mode through which this experience of privateness is publicly articulated.

Bint al-Shati’ wrote her *tarājim* during key years of the al-Nasir government, between the promulgation of the constitution in 1956 and of the National Charter in 1961. This period was one of heated public contestation over the nature of women’s public and private roles in the new republic as citizens, wives, and mothers. Her writings were first published during postrevolutionary debates over women’s citizenship rights versus their familial responsibilities and went on to enjoy great popularity in subsequent decades. The constitution had declared equal rights one of the principles of the republic: all citizens are “the same before the law. They are equal in their rights and public obligations, and there should be no discrimination among them based on sex, origin, language, religion, or faith”; it connected this equal opportunity to “social liberty which is specified as the basic rights of all citizens.”<sup>29</sup> In contrast, the laws of personal status delineated a relationship between husband and wife—and man and woman—as one of male authority and female obedience, fundamentally contradicting the ideals of freedom and equality espoused in the constitution. (Debates tended to focus on a more abstracted relationship between men and women rather than specifically between husbands and wives.<sup>30</sup>) In 1957, Amina Shukri, one of the first women to be elected to parliament, proposed amending the principle of *bayt al-ṭā’a*, or “house of obedience,” the compulsory return of a woman to her husband’s household, in the personal status laws. She also proposed subjecting decisions of divorce, polygamy, and child custody to a judge’s mediation, giving the wife a say in these domestic matters.<sup>31</sup> Bint al-Shati’, with Suhayr Qalamawi and Mufida ‘Abd al-Rahman, would present a nearly identical proposal in 1960. A professor of literature, Qalamawi was the first woman to receive her doctorate from Cairo University (also under the supervision of Taha Husayn). Mufida ‘Abd al-Rahman was the first woman to practice law in Cairo, served on the United Arab Republic’s National Assembly, and defended the feminist activist Duria Shafik in the trial against her (after she stormed parliament calling for reform of the personal status laws and for equal rights for women).<sup>32</sup> In this coalition, we see the world of letters and the letter of the law negotiating the nature of government in the private and public domains.

At stake were women's public and private rights, seemingly differentially defined. Public discourse depicted these roles as complementary and overlapping even as they were characterized by contradictory ideals: freedom, equality, and rights on one side; dependencies, hierarchies, and responsibilities on the other.

Women's productive roles as citizens were intimately connected to their reproductive roles as mothers in the family, as Mervat Hatem notes.<sup>33</sup> The National Charter asserted women's freedom and equality as citizens but connected this to their role in reproduction, stating:

Woman must become equal to man and the chains that impede her free movement must fall so that she can deeply and positively participate in the making of life. The family is the first cell of society, and all methods of protection must be provided to it so that it preserves national traditions, reproduces its fabric, and moves along with society toward the goals of national struggle.<sup>34</sup>

One of the ways that the al-Nasir government ensured that the family advanced the goals of national struggle was by subsuming legal regulation of the family into national government. In 1956, al-Nasir abolished the religious courts and brought the laws of personal status into the national courts.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, a parallel move was made to reform al-Azhar and put it under state control, effectively incorporating two of Egypt's principal religious institutions—the code of personal status and al-Azhar—into the secular state. Historian Laura Bier observes:

Confining *shari'a* to domestic matters politicized the family both as a sphere of intimate, affective relations and as a repository of group identity of which religious affiliation was a defining legal and moral characteristic. Languages of privacy entered the legal discourse around personal status matters, creating “the family” as a private space that was central to political order.<sup>36</sup>

In the middle of these debates, Bint al-Shati's immensely popular writings on religious domesticity depicted the family as the natural domain of women's work, the Prophet's family as a model of idealized domesticity, and the private sphere as the repository of religion. In his work on the laws of personal status, Talal Asad recognizes that secular processes helped define the family as a sphere of religiosity (and, analogously, confine religious law to the family).

It is because the legal formation of the family gives the concept of individual morality its own “private” locus that the *shari'a* can now be spoken of as “the law of personal status”—*qānūn al-ahwāl al-shakhsiyya*. In this way it becomes the expression of a secular formula, defining a place in which “religion” is allowed to make its public appearance through state laws. And the family as concept, word, and organizational unit acquires a new salience.<sup>37</sup>

The family, as Islamist political scientist Hiba Ra'uf observes, became the “natural nursery of religion” in public discourse.<sup>38</sup>

Public attention was riveted by debates over the personal status laws. At issue was not only the relationship between family and state but also the nature of gendered rights and responsibilities in the new republic. In December 1959, Bint al-Shati' published an editorial in *al-Ahram* about the laws of personal status, arguing for a revolutionary liberation of the family from the despotism of *bayt al-tā'a*, which she compared to prerevolutionary feudalism and colonialism.<sup>39</sup> *Bayt al-tā'a* is a kind of slavery, she wrote,

that reproduces a structure of governance sanctioning political slavery of Muslims to their rulers. In response, ‘Ali ‘Abd al-Wahid Wafi, dean of the faculty of education at al-Azhar, wrote an editorial defending *bayt al-ṭā’a* but did so by situating it in a system of rights and duties within the family. Wives, he argued, have a responsibility to obey their husbands, one that corresponds to their right to financial maintenance. Likewise, husbands have a right to this obedience, just as they have a duty to provide this economic support. Different, but complementary, rights and duties for women and men are outlined in the Qur’an and constitute a core element of Islamic law. The complementary rights and duties described in Islamic public discourse of the 1950s and 1960s, however, had another dimension: they were couched in the language of freedom, equality, and human rights.<sup>40</sup> Although the compulsory return of a woman to her husband’s household was ended by executive decree after the Six Day War, the family was still defined by a set of prescribed rights and duties. Financial maintenance was contingent on a wife’s obedience, and this right was forfeited in the case of disobedience.<sup>41</sup> Wifely obedience was reinterpreted through a matrix of rights, where the right to freedom (from compulsion) was asserted, making the marriage contract one that was “freely” entered into. In her 1967 lecture on “al-Mafhum al-Islami li-Tahrir al-Mar’a” (The Islamic Understanding of Women’s Liberation), Bint al-Shati’ discussed this economic guardianship, referred to in verse 4:34 of the Qur’an. This, she asserted, does not infringe in any way on women’s “intrinsic and fundamental right to life”; rather, it is a guardianship that “we the liberated Muslim women concede to our men gladly and with pleasure.”<sup>42</sup>

This rights discourse reinscribes the wife’s submission, and her economic dependence, as contracted by choice. Even if freedom and equality were idealized as rights of the citizen, the home and family were differently structured. The social contract of the public sphere is depicted as premised on equality between (male) citizens; the sexual contract of the private sphere, however, is based on “natural relationships existing in the family where a woman’s submission to her husband is natural because he is stronger.”<sup>43</sup> This dualism—of freedom, equality, and rights in the public sphere and obedience, hierarchy, and duties in the private sphere—characterizes what Wendy Brown calls “the constituent dualisms of liberalism.” The first dualism is the dichotomization of the social and sexual contracts. “The social contract to make civil society and the state *cannot come into being* without a sexual contract that subordinates women in marriage.”<sup>44</sup> The social contract of the Islamic public sphere reproduces the dualisms described by Brown: of equality/hierarchy (or equality/difference), autonomy/dependence, freedom/obedience, rights/duties, public/private, individual/family, and reason/emotion. Brown observes that liberalism “rests upon mechanical foundations’ . . . therefore appearing equally compatible with Chinese post-Confucian post-Maoism and Iranian Islamic fundamentalism.”<sup>45</sup>

My aim is not to depict liberal Islam’s view of gender relations as merely a derivative discourse but to contextualize Islamic thought’s relationship to liberal ideology. In Egypt, liberal discourses of freedom, equality, rights, and democracy have been garnered in service of Islamist political aims in the quest for equal representation, free speech, a robust civil society (of religious institutions), freedom of political participation, and a thriving public sphere. Women’s rights in Islam are a major motif of this discourse, as are family relations, expressed in the language of communitarian dependencies so critical to the religious imaginary.



PRIVATE LIFE AND THE PUBLIC INTELLECTUAL

As scholars have noted, the personal status laws had the contradictory effect of relegating religion to the domain of intimate relations while maintaining its very visible place in public politics.<sup>46</sup> Habermas and Taylor have shown that “this is only superficially a paradox,” since the private essentially defines the public.<sup>47</sup> During this period, such “private” definitions of religion, whether in literary letters or in the letter of the law, served less to relegate religion to the margins than to secure its place in public life. Gendered definitions of religion, or religious definitions of gender, functioned similarly. Veiling, as an example, emphasized the private nature of women’s bodies in a very public way. Private definitions of religion kept religious debate in the public eye during the al-Nasir years, but in the late 1960s and early 1970s a religious awakening began to chafe against al-Nasir’s suppression of political Islam. Even as private definitions of religion continued to underpin the Islamic public sphere, there was what Carrie Wickham describes as a “spillover” into other domains of political and social life.<sup>48</sup> This new shift in orientation can be seen in Bint al-Shati’'s own writings, as she moves from a primary focus on gender, the private sphere, and literature to more political issues such as Islamic freedom, citizenship, and sovereignty.

In February 1967 and February 1968—in the midst of intense political upheaval in Egyptian political life—Bint al-Shati’ presented a series of lectures at the Islamic University of Omdurman in the Sudan. These were presented just before and after the Six Day War, and in February 1968 student protests against the al-Nasir government erupted on Egyptian university campuses, the first stirrings of the Islamic movement that would blossom in the coming decades. From then on, Carrie Wickham observes:

a sea change took place in the political orientations and behavior of the educated Egyptian youth. First and most striking was the replacement of the left by the reformist wing of the Islamist movement as the country’s leading opposition force. Although calls for political freedom, social justice, and confrontation with Zionism and imperialism could still be heard, they were henceforward cast in an Islamic idiom.<sup>49</sup>

Wickham argues that another major change was the “spillover of opposition activism from the universities into the wider arenas of public life.” In this “spillover,” ideas and trends from the university percolated into public life and public consciousness. Wickham observes that movement leaders serve as “signifying agents,” articulating and transmitting ideas that function as the basis for social mobilization. How these frames are constructed and acquire power is not well understood, however. Although Wickham sees a seismic change in ideological orientation after 1968, these Islamic discourses had long been in circulation, albeit marginalized under the reigning ideology of Arab nationalism. As a literary scholar—and perhaps also as a woman—Bint al-Shati’ worked under the political radar of the state, which most likely enabled her to sustain this Islamic discourse with impunity. Sayyid Qutb, who abandoned literary scholarship for Islamic activism in the Brotherhood, is a counterexample, suffering a decade in prison, torture, and eventual execution. The ideas Bint al-Shati’ developed about Islamic freedom echo Qutb’s arguments in *al-‘Adala al-Ijtima‘iyya fi al-Islam* (Social Justice in Islam, 1949) and *Ma‘alim fi al-Tariq* (Signs on the Path, 1964). Her lecture at Omdurman on “al-Qur’an wa-Huquq al-Insan” (The Qur’an and Human Rights, 1968) drew directly on

Qutb's vocabulary of freedom, sovereignty, and lordship. The power of the idea was the force inspiring this seismic shift in Egyptian political life, a passive revolution effecting enduring grassroots social change.<sup>50</sup>

This was also a period of intense upheaval in Bint al-Shati's personal life; the Omdurman lectures were her first public appearances after al-Khuli's death in 1966. Bint al-Shati' describes how she retreated to her childhood home seeking solace in the Qur'an. "Seeking isolation, I withdrew into the remains of my self, trying to gather its scattered fragments, from which I began to walk on the path of existence." In her grief, she grasped "the secret of being . . . that singular experience, in order to surpass the furthest of what humanity can bear in realizing her ideal existence, ordained for us to face our final destiny that encloses all that is, as if an illusory dream or vision."<sup>51</sup> In her grief, she took refuge in the Qur'an, reading in it "the story of the human being from beginning to the end," a story of human struggle (*mujāhada*) and effort (*kadhī*) (84:6), using *mujāhada* as an alternative rendering of jihad.<sup>52</sup> Her analytic labor, alone with the text, was an existential, ontological, spiritual, and literary struggle to interpret the Qur'an, one that led to an illumination that she described as liberation. The fruit of her own *mujāhada* is *Maqal fi al-Insan: Dirasa Qur'aniyya* (Treatise on the Human: A Qur'anic Study, 1969), in which she probes the "story of the human," the role of language (*al-bayān*) in granting humanity its special status, and the way knowledge ultimately frees humanity from enslavement to ignorance and false gods. In these arguments, Bint al-Shati' develops *nahḍa* ideas about the compatibility of reason and faith, science and religion, melding Enlightenment and revivalist concepts about the primacy of knowledge and about the darkness of human ignorance. Ignorance, equated with *jāhiliyya*, is a form of unbelief (*jaḥd*), contradicting the will of God.

Al-Khuli's death seemed to free up Bint al-Shati' intellectually, and she began writing almost single-mindedly on the Qur'an. During al-Khuli's lifetime, Bint al-Shati' published just one slim volume of exegesis, *al-Tafsir al-Bayani li-l-Qur'an al-Karim* (Clear Interpretation of the Noble Qur'an, 1962), a meticulously executed reading of the mystical suras at the end of the Qur'an. In this work, she carefully and thoroughly applied al-Khuli's hermeneutical techniques. *Al-Tafsir al-Bayani* is a cautious work, with the methodical rigor of an ambitious student and the tentativeness born of the gendered (and perhaps personal) boundaries she was breaking down, as she ventured into her husband's intellectual field.<sup>53</sup> She would not publish Part II until five years later (in 1967), just after al-Khuli's death. The Omdurman material conceptually leaps out of the tight frame of *al-Tafsir al-Bayani*, with lectures that formed the kernel of what became a fully developed theory of human liberation in Islam. Between 1969 and 1972, she published a flood of works of exegesis (seven in total) as well as her own biography of the Prophet.<sup>54</sup>

Bint al-Shati's *manhaj* diverged from al-Khuli's, both in method and conclusions. Her exegetical method evolved into one of primary focus on the text itself (rather than on historical context as al-Khuli called for).<sup>55</sup> In *Maqal fi al-Insan: Dirasa Qur'aniyya*, she turns mainly to the "guidance provided by the book of Islam . . . the original source that guides us to the core of Islamic thought on freedom," rather than focusing on the wide "circle of Islamism that includes the studies of philosophers, of 'ulama' of religion, of the most knowledgeable of Islamic thought"; nor will she focus on "hadith or on *turāth* of the *salafī* community."<sup>56</sup> In this she engages in a kind of literary Salafism, calling

for a textual analysis that asserts the primacy of the Qur'an as revelation, returns to the guidance of the original text, and uses a form of literary *ijtihād* to reinterpret scripture. She argues for letting "the Qur'an speak for itself and be understood in the most direct of ways," and for eliminating extraneous elements like Biblical material (*isrā'iliyyāt*), historical accounts, and prior *tafsīr*. Though Bint al-Shatī' carefully situates herself in the Islamic exegetical tradition, she shakes free of the burdens of past scholarship by arguing that the Qur'an can stand on its own. Her close readings treat the text as an "organic whole," drawing on romantic understandings of the literary work's organicity, an idea that informed structuralist interpretations of the text as a closed system of signs.<sup>57</sup> She partly draws on al-Khulī's literary method, where a word or concept should be analyzed with reference to its every instance in the Qur'an as a whole.<sup>58</sup> Her approach combines classical techniques of *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* with structuralist ideas of the text as an integral whole. In *al-Tafsīr al-Bayani*, the method bears fruit as Bint al-Shatī' convincingly argues against the presence of synonyms in the Qur'an, asserting that each word has its own specific meaning.<sup>59</sup> She not only effectively refutes the lexical tradition of the scholarship of synonyms but also contributes to a modern linguistic theory of the sign in Islam. In her theory, every signifier has only one signified, as she argues for inimitability at the level of the sign, even while using different words for "signs" (*bayān*, *dalā'il*, and *ma'ālim*). In her lecture at Omdurman on "Kitabuna al-Akbar" (Our Greatest Book, 1967), she says her interpretation of the signs' forms in the Qur'an (*istiqrā'*, *dalā'il al-alfāz fi kitābunā al-akbar*) "leads to the secret of its dazzling eloquence."<sup>60</sup>

Bint al-Shatī' calls for modern literary analyses in the field of exegesis but carefully situates herself in orthodox understandings of the Qur'an's divinity. For her, as for al-Khulī, the Qur'an's literary merit is evidence of its *'ijāz*, its inimitability, its miraculousness, rather than evidence of its human composition (or, for that matter, Muhammad's divine genius). These classical arguments neatly converge with romantic conceptions of the divine inspiration behind the literary text, as Bint al-Shatī' develops her own modernist method of Qur'an interpretation.<sup>61</sup> Out of this hermeneutic, Bint al-Shatī' formulates a theory of human freedom in Islam—of free will, freedom of belief, freedom of thought and opinion—one that she develops in *Maqal fi al-Insan*. Engaging in literary analysis of key Qur'anic terms, namely, those related to willing, wanting, determining, and desiring, she observes that they are always predicated by people, not by God. Through this, she argues for free will, an argument she applies to subsequent discussions of freedom of belief, thought, and opinion.<sup>62</sup> Theories of Islamic freedom in Islam had already circulated in diverse quarters, in the work of 'Abd al-'Aziz Jawish, Muhammad al-Khidr Husayn, Sayyid Qutb, and 'Ali 'Abd al-Wahid Wafi. These exegetical approaches developed by the literary elite helped shape liberal interpretations of the Qur'an: interpretations of human freedom, equality, and human rights that would become a staple of modernist thought in Islam. These Islamic intellectuals seem to be thinking through Rousseau's bind that "man is born free, but everywhere in chains." Rousseau's basic point is that the social contract is the "chain" that makes us free. It is just the nature of the covenant that must be determined. For these writers, the nature of that contract is Islamic: submission to Islam is the "chain" that makes Muslims free. But what of the sexual contract, the social contract's counterpart, where universalist discourses of freedom become gendered hierarchies and dependencies?

The first set of lectures—on women’s liberation and women’s literary life—sets the stage for the second set, which focuses more generally on the sovereignty of the Muslim subject. The first set of lectures continues to grapple with the contradictions of freedom and obedience, equality and hierarchy, rights and duties, public and private. Like the political discourse of the Charter, her lecture “The Islamic Understanding of Women’s Emancipation” asserts freedom, equality, and rights as the legal entitlement of the (Muslim) citizen–subject. Like the public discourse around the laws of personal status, this freedom is characterized by a corresponding set of hierarchies and dependencies within the family. She defines Islamic citizenship through a corresponding set of “family values.” Nonetheless, Bint al-Shati’s later work abandons the framework of gender, as she assumes a gender-neutral (male?) citizen–subject imbued with freedom and rights. Her 1968 lecture on “The Qur’an and Human Rights” assumes a (male?) universal subject of human rights, with no reference to the set of hierarchies and dependencies of the sexual contract. This theory of human rights is framed by the June 1967 war; it is also presented on the twentieth anniversary celebrations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was formulated in tandem with the 1948 partition. In the lecture, she observes the irony of the Palestinians’ continued disenfranchisement from their own rights in the face of these celebrations. Her second lecture is on the historical dimensions of the Muslims’ struggle with the Jews. From this time, her writings shift toward *al-shakṣiyya al-islāmiyya* (the Islamic personality), Islamic citizenship, and Islamic politics rather than the “Muslim woman” and the Arab literary writer. Despite the change in orientation, though, the gendered (feminine) identity explored in the earlier lectures sets the stage for the emergence of the universal subject of human rights articulated through a newly emergent Islamic politics.

#### THE LIBERATION OF LETTERS

In the 1967 lectures, Bint al-Shati’ wrestles with the gendered contradictions inherent in the Islamic personality she struggles to define. Her two lectures on gender—“The Islamic Understanding of Women’s Emancipation” and “The Arab Literary Woman: Yesterday and Today”—are punctuated by her lecture on “Our Greatest Book,” a tribute to al-Khuli and his literary method of Qur’an interpretation. The middle lecture is interspersed with elegiac poetry to al-Khuli and tributes to his scholarly ability. Yet she clearly breaks with the hierarchical constraints of the teacher/student, husband/wife, religious scholar/literary writer, male/female relationship. She begins her first talk with the emancipating power of knowledge in Islam: knowledge not only as power but also as a human right. This premise structures the lecture and so much of her work of Qur’an interpretation. She begins the lecture by quoting the first verses of Surat al-Rahman (55:1–4): “The merciful. Taught the Qur’an. Created humanity. Taught it eloquence.” This teaching of *al-bayān*—signs, eloquence, articulation, speech—is what connects humans to God through the Qur’an. These writings demonstrate an unmitigated faith in the power of ideas to effect social justice.

“The Islamic Understanding of Women’s Emancipation” defines the understanding of rights and freedoms of the Muslim woman as “not extrinsic to us nor is it a foreign import. On the contrary, it is the book of Islam in us.”<sup>63</sup> Muslim women’s rights to education, to own property, and to work, she says, are free and equal to that of men

(“My right in life is intrinsic and authentic, equal to the right of man”).<sup>64</sup> But even after positing that the Qur’an granted these free and equal human rights, she goes on to argue that this equality is not absolute equivalence. Even though she continues to use a language of freedom and equality, she asserts male guardianship over women (based on verses 4:34 and 2:228 of the Qur’an). “Our understanding of this equality has been liberated,” she says, “with the return to the origin of Islam, for the equal, instinctual woman admits that man has a legal and natural right to guardianship over her.”<sup>65</sup> In writing about the “degree” men have over women in the Qur’an (2:228), she says, “Its point of departure is manhood . . . to which the instinct submits and measurements are balanced, without revoking our legal right to equality, for equality does not surpass the burdens of integrity and the responsibility of humanity.”<sup>66</sup> Even though she speaks about complementary souls, companions in a single social cell, a shared life beating with a single pulse and united in congruity, and harmony in an integral whole, the harmony is structured by hierarchy, by guardianship, by a man’s degree over a woman, by difference, and by “equivalent right and duties.”<sup>67</sup> Using a distinctly liberal idiom for the Islamic public sphere, she defines rights and duties for the private and public realms through an analogous lexicon but using differential definitions of similar terms.

Bint al-Shati’ extended her exploration of the private dimensions of public citizenship in a lecture presented a few days later on “The Arab Literary Woman: Yesterday and Today.” Education, writing, voice, and expression are still keys to the process of emancipation and awakening. The world of letters acts as a vehicle for this emancipation, expressed by Bint al-Shati’ as a liberation of the repressed female voice and of repressed emotion. The problem is not women’s participation in the public sphere, because Muslim women had always participated in public life, she says. The problem is limitations on women’s public *expression*, specifically through the restriction of their literary contributions to *rithā’*, or poetic elegies, traditionally considered the domain of women’s poetic expression. This limitation of women’s artistic expression to elegies was akin to being emotionally buried alive in a “region of darkness,” as women were denied the right to speak of their emotions and “to expose the secrets of the self.”<sup>68</sup> For “buried alive,” she uses the term “*wa’d*” that refers to the pre-Islamic custom of burying girl babies alive, an image she uses several times in “The Islamic Understanding of Women’s Emancipation.” The modern age—and the “dawn of the Arab literary resurgence and nationalist awakening”—liberated women from these restraints, as Arab women “broke the shackles of emotional burial and sang their desires.”<sup>69</sup> Even though Bint al-Shati’ speaks abstractly as a literary critic, weighing and evaluating the contributions of classical and modern Arab women poets, her lecture is also a commentary on her own mourning, her own mourning poetry, her mourning lectures, and her mourning autobiography dedicated to the memory of al-Khuli and published that year.<sup>70</sup> She asks for the liberty to be freed from her own *rithā’*, justifying coming out of mourning to present her scholarship on women’s liberation in Islam and on the difference between the Arab literary woman of yesterday and today. Moreover, she justifies standing before the crowds and speaking publicly.<sup>71</sup> How does she break out and sing her own desires? Her own Qur’an commentaries sing the freedom of the Islamic subject.

This liberation is explicitly and passionately Islamic, as is the liberated voice, expression, emotion, and writing. She begins her lecture with a quote from a Sufi love poem by Rabi’a al-‘Adawiyya. Alluding to accounts of Rabi’a’s slavery, her liberation

through faith (her master heard her praying for emancipation so that she could devote herself to God day and night), and her belief in divine love, Bint al-Shatī' says that Rabi'a "liberated poetry from mourning into sheer eternal love . . . filling the horizons throughout the expanse of time with her heart's sensitive hymns and the intimate soliloquy of her living feeling and realizing her literary existence with authenticity and ability."<sup>72</sup> *Wijdān*, the word Bint al-Shatī' uses for "feeling," is a critical modern keyword defined as "faithful personal feeling" and "genuine spiritual/psychological representation."<sup>73</sup> Bint al-Shatī', like her predecessor in the field of literary criticism al-'Aqqad, uses the term *wijdān* to refer to the feeling, emotion, or inspiration said to motivate poetry; his disciple Sayyid Qutb used the term to describe the literary power of the Qur'anic art of representation, as it penetrates through to the senses.<sup>74</sup> Qutb would later use the term *wijdān* to refer to his first "pillar" of social justice in Islam, *al-taḥarrur al-wijdānī*, or intrinsic sensory emancipation. His own definition of *al-taḥarrur al-wijdānī* is *shu'ūr nafsī bāṭn*, an expression with layers of meaning of personal gut feeling or inner spiritual consciousness. Samira Haj, in *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, describes how modernist thought in Islam cultivated a sense of spiritual interiority, through inner sentiments (*wijdān*) that are brought under the control of the intellect or mind. Muhammad 'Abduh refers to this interiority as *al-taṣdīq bi-l-wijdān*, or conviction through inner experience.<sup>75</sup> Bint al-Shatī' similarly uses *wijdān* in its existential sense of individual liberation, its meaning of affective feeling or emotion, as the core of literary inspiration, and as the heart of spiritual conviction or belief. Without *wijdāniyya*, she argues, literature would not be art. However, she also defines this literary, artistic, and spiritual emotionality as the sphere specific to women's nature. "This faithful personal feeling [*al-wijdāniyya*]," she writes, "is an essential element of female instinct [*fiṭra*]. So it is intuitive that she would excel in a field [poetry and literature] shaped for her instinctually [*fiṭriyyan*] by virtue of her affective nature."<sup>76</sup> The modern Arab woman poet liberates herself from the shackles of emotional burial by living her own instinct through the expression of emotion and hence becoming an artist. "This emotional authenticity in the instinct [*fiṭra*] of the Arab literary woman explains for us a striking phenomenon in our modern literature."<sup>77</sup> Women, she says, express the living emotional reality of the *umma*. Emotion is not only the core of artistry but is also a core element of female instinct. For this reason, she was instinctually made, by virtue of her affective nature, to excel in the field of literature. But it also gives her the sacred conviction associated with *wijdān*.

Bint al-Shatī' calls for women's participation in public, but not for exposing too much or for proclaiming too loudly. Although she calls for emancipation of women's expression, women's feeling, and women's writing, she does so within very specific literary and moral bounds. The moral bounds are of chastity and modesty; the literary bounds are the limits on what should be expressed. In short, some things should not be made public. Her use of *fiṭra* is key; it is another word, like *wijdān*, that evolved in modernist religious and literary writings.<sup>78</sup> *Fiṭra* (from Qur'an 30:30) not only connotes both human nature and God's creation but also can mean instinct of intuition when referring to the human being's innate character or natural disposition. Bint al-Shatī' uses *fiṭra* in a double, almost conflicting, way to express emotion and modesty. Women's instinctual connection with emotion makes them fit for the field of literature, but part of this "instinctual [*fiṭrī*] inheritance" is also the "chastity, abstention, and modesty" that women must preserve with their own hands. Those who do not will go from being

the “personal property of their husbands to being common property [*shuyū*] in the streets.”<sup>79</sup> The word she uses for “common property,” *shuyū*, has connotations not just of a kind of prostitution but also of the circulation of goods and news (as well as the “common property” of communism). She defines the “licit” in self-expression as love, emotion, spiritual desires, and intellectual liberation. Liberated literary women

recognized with the soundness of their instinct [*fiṭra*] the limits of what is licit [*mubāḥ*] in what Eve disclosed [*baḥḥ*] of her affection . . . Even today it is impossible for us to rebel against what is in our femininity of chastity and modesty, either instinctually or genetically. It is impossible to rebel against the feelings of limits that we know we will not surpass, either in disclosure or exposure. There is a difference between our freedom in expressing our selves and our feelings, and those who go beyond these limits.<sup>80</sup>

Bint al-Shati’ calls for a measure of “repression and reserve [*katmān*, meaning also silence] during this phase of our emancipation” and for “chastity in behavior and in words . . . The tearing of the veil is a rebellion against our femininity that still controls us with modesty and abstinence, thanks to a long inheritance. We should proudly reject this current loudly voiced exposure that sullies our femininity . . . with nakedness and degradation.”<sup>81</sup> Yet Bint al-Shati’ acknowledges that this “instinctual [*fiṭrī*] inheritance” has shackled women mentally and emotionally, shackles that they have not been able to discard.

Bint al-Shati’ writes about this chastity, abstinence, and modesty in the context of “our emancipated reality and our equal instinct.”<sup>82</sup> This is similar to the set of contradictions in “The Islamic Understanding of Women’s Liberation,” when she talks about “liberating our understanding of equality” while still arguing that the “equal instinctual woman admits that a man has a legal and natural right to guardianship over her.” Men have a degree over women “to which instinct [*fiṭra*] submits and measurements are balanced, without revoking our legal right to equality.”<sup>83</sup> This formulation assumes a liberation of women’s literary voice and a correlated liberation of their emotions, but boundaries and restraints in their relationships to men, to sexuality, and in the family. Similarly, Bint al-Shati’ asserts equality even while describing gendered hierarchies. Wendy Brown’s “constitutive dualities of liberalism” become, in the literary world, feminized emotion, instinct, love, intimacy, and affection that public discourse declares are women’s natural domain and, moreover, “liberate” women into their true nature. In “The Islamic Understanding of Women’s Emancipation,” she juxtaposes and connects the biological “instinct” of reproduction, childbearing, and breastfeeding<sup>84</sup> with the God-given gifts infused in human nature: of knowledge, intelligence, speech, eloquence, and so forth. This gift of speech becomes the medium for expressing human nature, defined differentially for a woman, as mother, chaste, emotional, instinctual, and literary. “The new woman has liberated her understanding of equality,” for it does not “eliminate natural difference between male and female or social difference between man and woman. Equality does not go beyond equivalent rights and duties.” This is what she calls “the severe judgment of the logic of *fiṭra* and the law of nature.”<sup>85</sup> Ideals of freedom and equality become gendered rights and duties, not just cast in the romantic hue of instinct, nature, and biological essentialism but also given an ontological spiritual status. Here scriptural language of *fiṭra*, Islamic legal definitions of equivalent rights and duties, and

gendered virtues become interpreted through liberal discourses of rights, freedom, and equality, which clearly encode a particular vision of gendered relationships.

In Bint al-Shati's subsequent writings, and in the Omdurman lectures of the following year, the gendered framework disappears behind her new definitions of the "Islamic personality." Her lecture "The Qur'an and Human Rights" assumes a universal, gender-neutral subject of rights.<sup>86</sup> We see the widow, the *'ajūz*, the shaykha, assuming her postmenopausal role of authority—not only stripped of but also released from womanhood's pressing responsibilities. In "The Qur'an and Human Rights," she discusses key human rights of the UDHR, observing that these came down fourteen centuries ago with the book of Islam. She methodically covers a set of rights that Islam secures: rights and freedoms irrespective of race, color, sex, or class; the right to security; freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; freedom of opinion and expression; the right to education; and the right to be free from slavery. "The Qur'an and Human Rights" addresses issues of freedom as the "core of the matter," rearticulating the idea that worship of God alone and submission to God alone liberates humanity from slavery and bondage.<sup>87</sup> She employs Qutb's language of lordship or divinity (*rubūbiyya*), belonging to God alone, meaning that Islam does not allow any human being to take another human being as his master (*rabb*). This makes the Muslim free from earthly bondage, liberated from material and mental slavery.

In this lecture, we see a shift in spheres of intellectual influence, from al-Khuli to Qutb and 'Ali 'Abd al-Wahid Wafi. Wafi, author of *Huquq al-Insan fi al-Islam* (Human Rights in Islam, 1957), hosted Bint al-Shati' in Omdurman and presented his own lecture on "al-Hurriyya al-Madaniyya fi al-Islam" (Civil Liberty in Islam, 1968). He had also been one of her main interlocutors and sparring partners in the earlier debates over the personal status laws. *Huquq al-Insan fi al-Islam* was a massively popular work, republished eight times in the midst of the proposed reforms of the personal status laws, under different titles such as *Bayt al-Ta'a, Ta'addud al-Zawjat, wa-l-Talaq fi al-Islam* (House of Obedience, Polygyny, and Divorce in Islam, 1960), *al-Musawaa fi al-Islam* (Equality in Islam, 1962, 1965), and later, as *al-Mar'a wa-l-Islam* (Woman and Islam, 1970). Even though *Huquq al-Insan fi al-Islam* is framed as a general discussion of Islamic freedom and equality, it directly addresses the principal issues of the personal status laws (divorce, *bayt al-tā'a*, and polygamy). These are detailed—however contradictorily—in Wafi's section on "Equality in Islam," which includes a long discussion of "aspects of discrimination between men and women." Even as Wafi asserts ontological freedom and equality in Islam, he defines the family as a site of wifely obedience and male guardianship. By aligning herself with these thinkers, Bint al-Shati' reoriented herself, like Qutb, toward a more radical politics of Islam, initially mediated through the lens of literature.

Bint al-Shati's published writings would not return to the subject of gender until nearly twenty years after "The Islamic Understanding of Women's Liberation." Just before her death in 1998, she presented a lecture, "Islam and the New Woman," at a conference in Italy. Both lectures use Qasim Amin's language of *tahrīr al-mar'a* and *al-mar'a al-jadīda* during a time when women's emancipation in Islam was becoming one of the revival's leading themes.<sup>88</sup> Bint al-Shati's writings helped develop specific notions of women's rights, roles, and emancipation that would become central to the Islamic revival. She did so partly by cultivating, like many of the literary intelligentsia,



an Islamic imaginary that envisioned an idealized private sphere through public debate over the Islamic world of letters. The 1997 lecture on “Islam and the New Woman” vividly returns to the private counterpart of the universalist subject of Islamic human rights. She begins, as she does in “The Islamic Understanding of Women’s Liberation,” by delineating the accomplishments and progress of women in the professions, in the workplace, government and politics, and education. “So what is the problem?” she asks, in a preacher-like repetitive fashion. Though women have entered the public sphere, she argues, the true nature of liberation and equality has become deformed, creating a “distorted vision of women’s rights.”<sup>89</sup> The work of motherhood has been devalued; it was a mistake for the movement to focus on women’s public roles. This misplaced focus has produced a false understanding of women’s liberation, since mothers are not valued for their productive labor.

Our failure to recognize the true value of the mother’s great role was a major stumbling block in the early stages of the movement for which our generation paid a terrible price. Thus I hope that we may spare our daughters from falling into the same trap and enable them to realize their full potential in society as Islam—the religion of the deepest insight and intuition [*fiṭra*—has taught us.<sup>90</sup>

Women’s leadership and example comes from this maternal function, she argues. “I remind people of this,” she says, “in order to correct mistaken ideas about the position of woman and the role of motherhood in Islam, the religion of insight and deepest intuition [*fiṭra*].”<sup>91</sup> Islam protects women from “mental and emotional burial,” by making marriage free from compulsion and characterized by “affection and compassion, spiritual and mental compatibility, and a peaceful home.”<sup>92</sup> These words suggest a corresponding Islamicization of liberal discourse, or perhaps a liberalization of Islamic discourse. The world of letters used Islamic terms, ideas, and texts to articulate a public sphere governed by rights, freedoms, and equality and a private sphere governed by affection, compassion, spirituality, self-sacrifice, and devotion. These are the social and sexual contracts of modern Islamic thought.

#### NOTES

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<sup>1</sup>Dale Eickelman and Armando Salvatore, “Muslim Publics,” in *Public Islam and the Common Good*, ed. Eickelman and Salvatore (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004); Armando Salvatore, *The Public Sphere: Liberal Modernity, Catholicism, Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Dale Eickelman and Jon Anderson, eds., *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2003).

<sup>2</sup>Charles D. Smith, “The Crisis of Orientation: The Shift of Egyptian Intellectuals to Islamic Subjects in the 1930s,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 4 (1973): 382–410; Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, “Print Culture, Social Change, and the Process of Redefining Imagined Communities in Egypt,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999): 81–94; Charles D. Smith, “‘Cultural Construct’ and Other Fantasies: Imagined Narratives in Imagined Communities,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 31 (1999): 95–102; Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation: 1930–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). One of the few pieces examining the relationship between literature and the Islamic public sphere of the last few decades is Iman Farag, “Private Lives, Public Affairs:

The Uses of Adab,” in *Muslim Traditions and Modern Techniques of Power*, ed. Armando Salvatore (Münster, Germany: Lit Verlag, 2001).

<sup>3</sup>Notable exceptions are Fariba Adelkhah, “Framing the Public Sphere: Iranian Women in the Islamic Republic,” *Public Islam and the Common Good*, 227–41; and Hiafaa Jawad, “Islamic Feminism: Leadership Roles and Public Representation,” *Hawwa* 7 (2009): 1–24.

<sup>4</sup>Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3.

<sup>5</sup>Cited in C. Kooij, “Bint al-Shati: A Suitable Case for Biography?” in *The Challenge of the Middle East*, ed. Ibrahim El-Sheikh, C. Aart van de Koppel, and Rudolph Peters (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1982), 70.

<sup>6</sup>Raymond William Baker, *Islam without Fear: Egypt and the New Islamists* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>7</sup>Kooij, “Bint al-Shati,” 70.

<sup>8</sup>Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University, 2005), 106.

<sup>9</sup>Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990). For the context of Arabic literature, see Ellen McLarney, “Socialist Romance of the Postcolonial Arabic Novel,” *Research in African Literatures* 40 (2009): 186–205.

<sup>10</sup>The most important literary interpretations of the Qur’an during this time were Amin al-Khuli, *al-Tafsir: Ma’alim Hayathi, Manhajuhu al-Yawm* (Cairo: Jama’at al-Kitab, 1944); Sayyid Qutb, *al-Taswir al-Fanni fi al-Qur’an* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma’arif, 1945); and Muhammad Khalafallah, “al-Fann al-Qissasi fi al-Qur’an al-Karim” (PhD diss., Fu’ad [Cairo] University, 1947). Earlier, Taha Husayn’s *Fi al-Sh’ir al-Jahili* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub, 1926) used literary criticism to comment on certain inconsistencies in the Qur’an, causing an uproar.

<sup>11</sup>She recounts this in her biography of al-Khuli, *‘Ala al-Jisr: Usturat al-Zaman* (Cairo: Dar al-Hilal, 1967), 34.

<sup>12</sup>Husayn wrote his doctoral dissertation on al-Ma’arri in 1914 at the newly opened Egyptian University. He published eight works on al-Ma’arri, and Bint al-Shati’ published four. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, at the height of the boom in *islamiyyat* literature, al-Ma’arri experienced a renaissance, with Husayn’s *Tajdid Dhikrat Abi al-‘Ala’* (Cairo: Matba’at al-Ma’arif, 1937), Mahmud ‘Abbas al-‘Aqqad’s *Raj’at Abi al-‘Ala’* (Cairo: Dar al-Kutub al-Haditha, 1939), Bint al-Shati’*’s al-Haya al-Insaniyya ‘ind Abi al-‘Ala’ al-Ma’arri* (Cairo: Matba’at al-Ma’arif, 1939), and al-Khuli’s *Ra’i fi Abi al-‘Ala’* (Cairo: Jama’at al-Kutub, 1945). Why the revival of al-Ma’arri? Did al-Ma’arri’s use of poetry and prose to probe religious and existential questions serve as model for these literary scholars turning to theological matters?

<sup>13</sup>Sabry Hafez, in *Genesis of Arabic Narrative Discourse* (London: Saqi, 1993), brilliantly analyzes how this narrative discourse emerged from both indigenous forms of Arabic literary writing and imported genres.

<sup>14</sup>Elliott Colla, *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007), 213–15.

<sup>15</sup>Muhammad Husayn Haykal, *Hayat Muhammad* (Cairo: Matba’at Misr, 1935), 71–73, 202–209. Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, 57.

<sup>16</sup>“Where in the 1920s the intellectual fashion had been to visit the Pharaonic ruins of Upper Egypt in order to realize one’s Egyptian identity, in the 1930s a new trend took its place: that of proceeding to the Hijaz to experience personally the full effects of participation in the hajj. The content of such accounts usually combined description of the formal ceremonies of the Pilgrimage with analysis of the social and emotional meaning of taking part in this central event of the Muslim umma.” Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, 60.

<sup>17</sup>Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1996), 88. Hirschkind and Larkin argue that religion circulates through media, creating new kinds of imagined communities for the contemporary world, contradicting Walter Benjamin’s understanding of mass technology as destroying religious aura. Charles Hirschkind and Brian Larkin, “Media and the Political Forms of Religion,” *Social Text* 26 (2008): 2–8.

<sup>18</sup>Barbara Stowasser, *Women in the Qur’an: Traditions and Interpretations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 120; Marilyn Booth, *May Her Likes Be Multiplied: Biography and Gender Politics in Egypt* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2001), 281–311, 418n5. For a brilliant discussion of modern discourses of Islamic domesticity, see Omnia Shakry, “Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt,” in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Modern Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>19</sup>'*Abqariyyat Muhammad* (Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Tijariyya, 1942); '*Abqariyyat 'Umar* (Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Tijariyya, 1942); '*Abqariyyat al-Sadiq* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1943); and '*Abqariyyat al-Imam* (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1943). Al-'Aqqad's biographies of 'A'isha and Fatima do not carry "genius" in their title.

<sup>20</sup>Gershoni and Jankowski, *Redefining the Egyptian Nation*, 65, esp. 54–78.

<sup>21</sup>Smith, "'Cultural Construct' and Other Fantasies," 95–102.

<sup>22</sup>Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 105.

<sup>23</sup>Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement* (Reading, U.K.: Ithaca Press, 1998).

<sup>24</sup>See discussions of *da'wa* in Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 119–45; Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 79–82; and Asef Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007), 136–86.

<sup>25</sup>Smith, "The Crisis of Orientation," 382–410.

<sup>26</sup>Jürgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into the Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), 43.

<sup>27</sup>Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 105–106.

<sup>28</sup>Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 51.

<sup>29</sup>Jumhuriyyat Misr, *al-Dustur 1956* (Bulaq: al-Matba'at al-Amiriyya, 1956), 11.

<sup>30</sup>See, for example, 'Ali 'Abd al-Wahid Wafi's *Huquq al-Insan fi al-Islam* (Human Rights in Islam, 1957), namely, his chapters on "Aspects of Discrimination between Women and Men," 121–216.

<sup>31</sup>Laura Bier, "From Mothers of the Nation to Daughters of the State: Gender and the Politics of Inclusion in Egypt, 1922–1967" (PhD diss., New York University, 2006), 156–57.

<sup>32</sup>Cynthia Nelson, *Doria Shafik, Egyptian Feminist: A Woman Apart* (Cairo: University of Cairo Press, 1996), 171–74.

<sup>33</sup>Mervat Hatem, "The Egyptian Revolutionary Context and Bint al-Shati's Construction of the Biographies of Women from the Prophet's Family," lecture, Duke University, 17 September 2009.

<sup>34</sup>Jumhuriyyat Misr, *al-Dustur*, 105–106; Mervat Hatem, "Postcolonial Perspectives on de facto Secularism, Religion, and Gender in Nasser's Egypt," unpublished article.

<sup>35</sup>Nadav Safran, "The Abolition of the Shari'a Courts in Egypt," *The Muslim World* 48 (1958): 20–28.

<sup>36</sup>Bier, *Mothers of the Nation*, 149.

<sup>37</sup>Talal Asad, "Reconfigurations of Law and Ethics in Colonial Egypt," in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006), 230–31.

<sup>38</sup>Hiba Ra'uf, *al-Mar'a wa-l-'Amal al-Siyasi: Ru'ya Islamiyya* (Herndon, Va.: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1995), 191.

<sup>39</sup>'Aisha 'Abd al-Rahman, "Fi al-Ahwal al-Shakhsiyya," *al-Ahram*, 3 December 1959. See Bier's excellent discussion of public debate over the nature of *bayt al-tā'a* in *Mothers of the Nation*.

<sup>40</sup>Barbara Freyer Stowasser, "Women and Citizenship in the Qur'an," in *Women, the Family, and Divorce Laws in Islamic History*, ed. Amira El Azhary Sonbol (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 23–38. Kecia Ali, "Progressive Muslims and Islamic Jurisprudence: The Necessity for Critical Engagement with Marriage and Divorce Laws," in *Progressive Muslims: On Gender, Justice, and Pluralism*, ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: One World, 2003), 163–89.

<sup>41</sup>Bier, *Mothers of the Nation*, 170, 194.

<sup>42</sup>Bint al-Shati', "al-Mafhum al-Islami li-Tahrir al-Mar'a," lecture, Islamic University of Omdurman, 1 February 1967 (Cairo: Matba'at Mukhaymir, 1967), 12.

<sup>43</sup>Ra'uf, *al-Mar'a wa-l-'Amal*, 180. Also see Carol Pateman, "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy," in *Public and Private in Social Life*, ed. S. I. Benn and G. F. Gauss (London: St. Martin's Press, 1983), 283–84.

<sup>44</sup>Wendy Brown, "Liberalism's Family Values," in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 134–65. Her argument draws on Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988). For a discussion of the sexual contract in the context of Egypt, see Mervat Hatem, "Egyptian Discourses on Gender and Political Liberalization: Do Secularist and Islamist Views Really Differ?" *Middle East Journal* (1994): 661–76.

<sup>45</sup>Brown, *States of Injury*, 136, 152.

<sup>46</sup>Asad, *Formations of the Secular*; Bier, *Mothers of the Nation*.

<sup>47</sup>Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 105.

<sup>48</sup>Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*, 34.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic*, 20, 33.

<sup>51</sup>Bint al-Shatī, *Maqal fi al-Insan: Dirasa Qurʾaniyya* (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1969), 7. “Her” refers to the feminine “humanity” (*insāniyya*), a literary double entendre that Bint al-Shatī clearly intended.

<sup>52</sup>“O humanity, you strive toward your Lord and you will meet him” (Qurʾan 84:6) (my translation).

<sup>53</sup>After al-Khulī’s student Muhammad Khalafallah argued for the Qurʾan as a literary document (versus a historical one), al-Khulī was banned from teaching the Qurʾan. For a discussion of debates over literary interpretations of the Qurʾan, see Nasr Abu-Zayd, “The Dilemma of the Literary Approach to the Qurʾan,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 23 (special issue on literature and the sacred) (2003): 22–34; and Rachid Benzine, *Les nouveaux penseurs de l’Islam* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2004), 149–72.

<sup>54</sup>Bint al-Shatī, *Maqal fi al-Insan* (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1969), *al-Tafsir al-Bayani li-l-Qurʾan al-Karim*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1968), *al-Qurʾan wa-l-Tafsir al-ʿAsri* (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1970), *Muqaddima fi al-Manhaj* (Cairo: Maʿhad al-Buhuth wa-l-Dirasat al-ʿArabiyya, 1971), *al-ʿIjaz al-Bayani li-l-Qurʾan wa-Masaʾil Ibn al-Azraq* (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1971), *al-Shakhsiyya al-Islamiyya* (Beirut: Jamiʿat Bayrut al-ʿArabiyya, 1972), and *al-Qurʾan wa-Qadaya al-Insan* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿIlm li-l-Malayin, 1972).

<sup>55</sup>Amin al-Khulī, *Manahij Tajdid fi al-Nahw wa-l-Balagha wa-l-Tafsir wa-l-Adab* (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿarif, 1961), 305–12.

<sup>56</sup>Bint al-Shatī, *Maqal fi al-Insan*, 63. See Issa J. Boullata, “Modern Qurʾan Exegesis: A Study of Bint al-Shatī’s Method,” *The Muslim World* 64 (1974): 103–13. Two of Boullata’s students wrote their master’s theses on Bint al-Shatī’s Qurʾan interpretation but do not probe her larger contributions to literature, gender politics, and Islamic thought. Muhammad Amin, “A Study of Bint al-Shatī’s Exegesis” (master’s thesis, McGill University, 1992); Syamsuddin Sahiron, “An Examination of Bint al-Shatī’s Method of Interpreting the Qurʾan” (master’s thesis, McGill University, 1998).

<sup>57</sup>Samuel Coleridge developed the idea of the literary text as organic whole, an idea incorporated into Arabic literature by Mahmud ʿAbbas al-ʿAqqad and Ibrahim al-Mazini in *al-Diwan: Fi al-Adab wa-l-Naqd* (Cairo: Dar al-Shaʿb, [1921]).

<sup>58</sup>Al-Khulī, *Manahij Tajdid*, 312–13.

<sup>59</sup>Bint al-Shatī’s theory of synonyms was important to religion, law, theology, and philosophy as well as linguistics, grammar, and rhetoric. Boullata, “Bint al-Shatī’s Method,” 111; and Amin, “Bint al-Shatī’s Exegesis,” 75.

<sup>60</sup>Bint al-Shatī, “Kitabuna al-Akbar,” lecture, Students’ Union of the Islamic University of Omdurman, 8 February 1967 (Cairo: Matbaʿat Mukhaymir, 1967), 6, 11.

<sup>61</sup>Peter Wright, “Modern Qurʾanic Hermeneutics” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2008). Wright links romanticism to the development of literary interpretations of the Qurʾan but focuses on romanticism’s historicization of the Qurʾan rather than on the role of divine inspiration in literary creation.

<sup>62</sup>Bint al-Shatī, *Maqal fi al-Insan*, 61–118. See also Boullata, “Modern Qurʾan Exegesis,” 112–13; and Yudian Wahyudi, “‘Ali Shariʿati and Bint al-Shatī on Free Will: A Comparison,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 9 (1998): 35–45.

<sup>63</sup>Bint al-Shatī, “al-Mafhum al-Islami li-Tahrir al-Marʾa,” 6.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 12.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>68</sup>Bint al-Shatī, “al-Adiba al-ʿArabiyya Ams wa-l-Yawm,” lecture, Islamic University of Omdurman, 13 February 1967 (Cairo: Matbaʿat Mukhaymir, 1967), 5, 7, 8.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>70</sup>Bint al-Shatī, *ʿAla Jisr*.

<sup>71</sup>Bint al-Shatī, “al-Adiba al-ʿArabiyya Ams wa-l-Yawm,” 18.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>73</sup>Jubran Masʿud, *al-Raʿid: Muʿjam Lughawi ʿAsri* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿIlm, 1965), 1594.

<sup>74</sup>In *al-Taswir al-Fanni*, Qutb writes: “The point of departure for lasting faith is conscience and feeling [*wijdān*] . . . the closest path to the conscience is the perceptive faculty and the closest path to feeling [*wijdān*] is sensory perception . . . The Qurʾan always proceeds by touching the perceptive faculty and awakening the

senses, penetrating directly through them to insight and extending them to feeling/spirit/psyche [*wijdān*] . . . these open the door to enlightened insight that righteous instinct grasps” (184–85).

<sup>75</sup>Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), 114–15.

<sup>76</sup>Bint al-Shati’, “al-Adiba al-‘Arabiyya Ams wa-l-Yawm,” 18.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 24.

<sup>78</sup>Over subsequent editions of *Social Justice in Islam*, Qutb changes his use of *fiṭra* from meaning a natural, animal-like instinct of needs (the vernacular, lay sense of *fiṭra*) to the sense of God-given nature. William E. Shepard documents these changes in *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 33n82, 35n95, 42n17, 71n202.

<sup>79</sup>Bint al-Shati’, “al-Adiba al-‘Arabiyya Ams wa-l-Yawm,” 24.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>84</sup>Writers associated with the revival similarly combine this sense of *fiṭra* as God-given nature and *fiṭra* as human instinct governing family relations. Ra’uf draws on Qur’anic language nearly verbatim (which she renders in italics): “The foundation of the family is connected to the creation of God according to which he created people, from the desire of each of the sexes for the other. And this drive is what makes the family one of the social models [*sunan*]. The importance of legislation is in its preservation of love, mercy, and tranquility. This is a trait at the core of human nature [*fiṭra*] according to God’s creation.” Ra’uf, *al-Mar’a wa-l-‘Amal*, 187.

<sup>85</sup>Bint al-Shati’, “al-Mafhum al-Islami li-Tahrir al-Mar’a,” 10–11.

<sup>86</sup>For discussions of the assumed universal (European male) subject of human rights discourses, see Domna Stanton and Judith Butler, eds., special issue on “The Humanities in Human Rights: Critique, Language, Politics,” *PMLA* 121 (2006).

<sup>87</sup>Bint al-Shati’, “al-Qur’an wa-Huquq al-Insan,” lecture, Islamic University of Omdurman, 19 January 1968 (Cairo: Matba’at Mukhaymir, 1967), 4.

<sup>88</sup>Abd al-Halim Abu Shuqqa, *Tahrir al-Mar’a fi ‘Asr al-Risala: Dirasat Jami’at al-Nusus al-Qur’an al-Karim wa-Sahihay al-Bukhari wa-Muslim*, 6 vols. (Kuwait: Dar al-Qalam, 1990); Muhammad Jalal Kishk, *Tahrir al-Mar’a al-Muharrara* (Cairo: al-Mukhtar al-Islami, 1979); idem, *al-Hurriyya fi al-Usra al-Muslima* (Cairo: al-Mukhtar al-Islami, 1979); Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi et al. *Mu’tamar Tahrir al-Mar’a fi al-Islam* (Cairo: Dar al-Qalam li-l-Nashr wa-Tawzi’, 2004); Muhammad ‘Imara, *Tahrir al-Mar’a min Awham al-Mutajahilin* (Cairo: Al-Azhar Magazine, 2005).

<sup>89</sup>Bint al-Shati’, “Islam and the New Woman,” lecture in Padua, Italy, trans. Anthony Calderbank, “Gender and Knowledge: Contribution of Gender Perspectives to Intellectual Formations,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 19 (1999): 197.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 198.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 201.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 202.