Textured Feminisms: Cairo, Tokyo, Beijing, 1907

In an essay published in the Cairo newspaper *al-Jarida* in 1907, Egyptian writer Malak Hifni Nasif responded to a speech delivered by 'Abd al-Hamid Effendi Hamdi on "Veiling and unveiling." In speaking back to the '*alim* ('scholar'), Malak Hifni Nasif (who gave herself the penname Bahithat al-Badiya, "Seeker in the desert") enacted a historical shift that she had narrated in a previous essay: women "of the era" were no longer willing to maintain the silences or practice the subterfuges that had governed the lives of their mothers and aunts. Situating herself precisely as a reader, she made the point by implication that because women of her social stratum remained constricted in their spatial movements (and the word for veiling, *hijab*, can also signify gender segregation, for it means "[behind] a curtain or barrier"), she had experienced this speech not as a member of the listening audience but by "following this, issue by issue, in *al-Jarida*."[1] Thus, from her very first sentence, Hamdi's call for women's "unveiling" is subverted as well as criticized, through Malak Hifni Nasif's act of speaking back but from a necessary position of distance, dictated by prevailing practices of gender differentiation and segregation and yet not necessarily imposing either a lack of communication or worldliness. She went on to dismiss "religious and economic" arguments on which proponents of continued segregation and veiling in Egypt relied, noting their spurious basis whether in the interpretation of Islamic sacred texts or in practice. Her own perspective, she said, focused on "the social dimension" and on women's experiences. She criticized the "extremism" of men who would boast that "their women" had never gone outside the walls of home. But she asked why, when men have not changed their behavior nor have women been permitted to experience the world and learn about it, men are suddenly so keen to unveil women. "If you aim to destroy an edifice, do you not do so by taking it apart piece by piece, demolishing it gradually, until it is no more, after which you build a finer structure on its ruins? To propose destruction at one blow—using the tools we have at present—means pondering how that could possibly be done without destroying passersby or construction workers. Not to mention all of the rubble—such as window panes and wood."[2] Men may wish women to mix in their company, but what would this mean? "Is she going to go head to head with him in political affairs when she does not know England's location from that of the Aegean Islands and cannot explain the meanings of 'constitution' and 'imperialism'? What on earth happens if she finds nothing to say to him except what she

likes about his appearance and dress? What a lapse that would be!"[3] The author notes her approval of family outings and "modest dress," which would not, she says, depart from the logic of *hijab* within the present ambit of middle-stratum women's experience. She turns the argument back on her interlocutor by adducing the productive instability of terminology: "I seek the eloquent orator's leave, in using the expression *hijab* in a way other than it has been used—for if we constrict every metaphor to its existing concrete sense [lit., *al-haqiqa*, 'the reality'], then language becomes narrower than a needle's eye."[4]

Malak Hifni Nasif (1882-1918) was an exact contemporary of He-Yin Zhen (1884-ca. 1920). As the former was publishing her essays (1907) in a Cairo liberal-reformist newspaper established by the male intellectual and educationist Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid (1872-1963), the latter was publishing her essays (1907) in the Chinese-language anarcho-feminist journal, *Natural Justice*, of which she was a founding editor, in Tokyo. Although Malak Hifni Nasif and He-Yin Zhen wrote in and from very different personal-historical contexts, they shared a world in which their societies were undergoing rapid transition of every sort under the pressures of European capitalist-imperial encroachment. Local social and intellectual transformations were partly the outcome of globalizing forces that surfaced in locally produced, outward-reaching discourses. Such forces, transformations, and discursive performances were not unidirectional, but they were uneven in their flows and effects. The public political interventions of both women, available to us through their periodical publications, and the particular contours of their rhetoric, lines of argumentation, uses of the past and in particular of foundational societal texts, and modes of address and interlocution might begin to furnish a comparative historicization of feminisms. Such a comparative venture would recognize shared conditions shaping their speech acts while grounding each in a specific temporal and geopolitical site. Among many approaches one could take to such an enterprise would be that of studying overlapping moments of translation, within, between and amongst radically different socio-political and linguistic contexts.

Both women addressed the ways binary thinking—modeled on and productive of sex-gender differentiation—is engraved in received language and serves to perpetuate and naturalize social practice through disciplinary categorizations of human subjects and their spatial correlates. Both were highly aware of discursive-institutional ferment in Europe and North America concerning the social locations of gender-differentiating practices. Both were in dialogue with—or at least in responsive mode to—reformist men of their societies who

tended more often and more explicitly to draw on translations of Western social thought in their argumentation. If the social locations and political outlooks of Malak Hifni Nasif and He-Yin Zhen diverged enormously, the transregional and translational circulation of ideas-practices that marked intellectual and political life for elites in many parts of the globe at the turn into the twentieth century were in their worlds, animating them.

He-Yin Zhen wrote in a period of political crisis, from the1894-5 Sino-Japanese war to the ensuing period of attempted reforms, to the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and formation of a republic the year after. Malak Hifni Nasif was coming to adulthood and beginning to write as the British consolidated their 1882 occupation over Egypt in the 1890s, and as the rise of a nationalist movement took concrete discursive form in the range of nationalist-reformist publications of the *fin de siècle* and first decade of the twentieth century. Intellectuals in both societies grappled with issues of sovereignty, autonomy, governance, and social organization. In both Egypt and China, though differently, rural economies had undergone decades of pressure, reshaping the ecology and structure of family survival, including labor and migration patterns, creating hardships of which these writers were acutely and unusually aware from their own experiences. If Malak Hifni Nasif could be said to subscribe in certain ways to a reformist discourse, she was also deeply suspicious of whose interests this served, and in this sense as in others, her situation and her writings form a parallel if also divergent counterpoint to those of He-Yin Zhen.

In *The Birth of Chinese Feminism*, Lydia Liu, Rebecca E. Karl, and Dorothy Ko provide the sort of deeply contextualized translation and discussion of texts that would make such a comparative venture possible; the volume is in itself an exemplary outcome of collaborative work. They introduce the intellectual labor of He-Yin Zhen through selected essays all published in 1907 as well as two essays by reformist and male writers which provided part of the specific intellectual context in which she wrote—and to which she wrote back.[5] Essays on the historical and discursive contexts of text production frame the translations, with particular attention to crucial terminology that organizes He-Yin Zhen's revolutionary outlook. The scholarly accessibility this deep grounding offers makes it possible to think with He-Yin Zhen (to the extent that someone of a later generation, a later and different feminist moment, and different languages can "think with"!—but surely that's the point), while having to remain always aware of difference. The care taken to elaborate the slippery meanings of concepts and the inventive usages of language in a period of transition and

translocation –between translations of European works, existing Chinese scholarship, new publication venues, and the Japanese context in which He-Yin Zhen and other Chinese intellectuals of her generation moved—allows one to "think in translation," to ponder the genesis of feminist terminologies across divergent linguistic regions. To explore these terminologies, their internal changes and external parallels, is to open up the language of sexual difference as a mechanism of social division and control. He-Yin Zhen's own acute awareness of the continuous meaning-making of received, familiar terms surfaces in this volume's introductory material and scrupulous notes, and that is of course made possible by her writings. Malak Hifni Nasif chose a penname that inscribed a situation and mission at once metaphorically and concretely (she had married a highly educated Bedouin known to the Cairo nationalist elite, but who lived in the oasis of Fayyum, away from her home city of Cairo). He-Yin Zhen inscribed her identity by using her mother's family name (Yin) as well as her father's in signing her work, although later historians had dropped the maternal signature before it reappeared in this volume as well as in recent Chinese-language scholarship.

The editors argue that for He-Yin Zhen, "women" was not a "naturalized figure of biological or cultural subordination" but rather a "transhistorical global category—not of subjective identity but of structured unequal social relations" accruing across time through an accumulation of Confucian scholarship, received ritual and social practices (9). The conceptual category *nannü* underlay her argument: "man/woman" or "male/female," but more than that, a structuring concept of binarizing thinking that reproduced unequal social relations across the wide landscape of human sociality and economic re/production. Thus, "women" could not be extracted from this operative principle of binarism and hierarchy, rescued for an agenda of nationalist modernity that would simply replicate, in other terms and forms, the endlessly self-perpetuating categories that it named. *Nannü* and its associated terms did not simply describe a sex-gender system; *nannü* drew on the inseparable binary of m/f to operate social distinctions and binaries across human sociality that became the bases of power differentials, perpetuated through uneven accumulation of resources. He-Yin Zhen explored not so much the effects of gender binaries (though her language is beautifully scathing on those) as she did the very operations of a concept of division that found its explanatory purchase in sexual difference. She thus termed it a "class system" operative by means of sexual difference in which the means by which one lives, materially and psychically,

are already organized by a stratification made to seem natural and perpetuated by economic class relations that are in fact defined by it, even as they change over time. Thus, private property relations are part and parcel of the same system: and women as men's private property cannot escape the servitude inherent in this power relationship which, she argues, is essential to a modern republic based on capitalist property relations as it is to a "traditional" dynastic form of governance. "The articulation of *nannü*, therefore, is not so much about biological or social differences, which can never be settled, as it is about reiterating a distinction that produces historically a political demand for social hierarchy" (20). For the male reformers whose perspectives He-Yin Zhen challenged, the distinction and its operative hierarchy were taken-for-granted starting points. For her, woman suffrage, therefore, was a demand without meaning, for it would simply reproduce the hierarchy, and thus social injustice, in a different form, admitting women with economic privilege to the ruling group. What is so powerful and provocative in He-Yin Zhen's thought is her refusal to separate questions of women's subordination from radical critique of systems of rule: her refusal of liberal republicanism, in favor of an anarchist viewpoint that saw social justice as possible only with thoroughgoing, revolutionary upset of existing systems of human sociality and relations of production and property. But being able to trace the structure of her argument through fine-grained translation is a gift to those of us who work on sister discourses in other languages.

In "On the question of women's liberation" He-Yin Zhen launches into her topic bluntly: "For thousands of years, the world has been dominated by the rule of man. This rule is marked by class distinctions over which men—and men only—exert proprietary rights. To rectify the wrongs, we must first abolish the rule of men and introduce equality among human beings, which means that the world must belong equally to men and to women. The goal of equality cannot be achieved except through women's liberation" (53).

This is He-Yin Zhen's entire argument in a nutshell: patriarchal rule is about gender yet it is a principle of division and hierarchy that uses gender to create a "class" system. Again, these are inseparable: women's liberation is impossible without revolutionary change and revolutionary change—the bringing of equality—is impossible without erasure of gender hierarchy. One does not precede the other; one is not vaster than the other. In enumerating ways that men have established and maintained "proprietary rights" over women—from spatial dichotomizing through seclusion and gender segregation, to marriage as a mode of

property relations, to patriarchal notions of who "owns" the children—her argument circles repeatedly to expand powerfully, between "women" as a sign of societal inequality and the revolutionary change that is necessary to erase this signature in the name of social justice. As noted, central to her argument is an unpacking of language: that a man calls his wife "the inner one" perpetuates this principle of division, as does the ineluctable yoking of females and domestic labor through the very signs of "woman." He-Yin Zhen enumerates Chinese characters denoting women or femaleness, pointing out that they derive from elements suggesting servitude (including the figure for "broom"), gift, being bound, and constituting wealth—women as servants, as exchanged commodities, as property. Language creates and maintains the psychic and material states that it supposedly names: you are "woman" because you are "the inner one," rather than vice versa. "Woman" is a sign of structural inequality: woman as property allows segregation on the basis of sexual difference, as it allows enslavement of female (and disprivileged male) bodies for sex work or factory work, or both: He-Yin Zhen demolishes the notion that in the present system, women as workers have any autonomy or rights over their own bodies.

Furthermore, like a few individuals in Egypt at the time, He-Yin Zhen argues that the sexual segregation and seclusion that men have devised to exert control over women's "honor" (in other words, men's anxiety over paternity and sexual right) will simply not work: "seclusion cannot but lead to desire and fantasy" (56). She debunks the notion of chastity as a social sham: "confining women to the boudoir does not prevent them from conducting illicit affairs" (57). Men's arguments against women's liberation had included a stated anxiety that women would then turn to sexual promiscuity (perhaps on the basis of what men often did), when in fact the opposite was true; if anything, cloistering is the worst enemy of "virtue," for it yields only dreams and subterfuge. Here as elsewhere (and as was happening in Egypt), He-Yin Zhen turns this rhetoric inside out, forcing the reader to confront the received meaning of virtue. Like Malak Hifni Nasif and others in Egypt, she takes on a sanctified discourse that had over time provided the rhetorical scaffolding for instituting approved behavioral practice: in her case, Confucianism and its elaborators. As the editors note, a consistent strategy in her work is to take up the same texts that her resistant interlocutors did and to subject them to scrutiny before rejecting them: she thereby shows that she is operating out of the same scholarly-historical context even as she turns the work of the scholars against itself, exposing their scholarship as a polemic of social control.

Indeed, her rhetorical strategy makes clear how extant dominant discourses—whether the "ancient" (and continuing) practice of Confucian commentary or the contemporary men's writing on women's rights—become sustaining material forms of enslavement in concert with the enslavement of women's bodies, whether for sexual gratification, reproductive work (the modern family "is still a man's family," its ownership inscribed in the use of the father's name, she notes ruefully [61]), or labor in the new factories of modernity.

If coming from and moving to a different perspective than Malak Hifni Nasif, He-Yin Zhen was similarly (and perhaps less politely) suspicious of the agendas of progressive men: in their calls for women's education as in their uncritical espousals of a republican government and European liberal philosophy, they were, she argued, simply reorganizing the structures of patriarchal privilege and hence gender-based subordination. Like men in Egypt, these Chinese male intellectuals were sensitive to the accusations of European politicians and thinkers that their society was characterized by a "backwardness" inhering in the sequestration of females, lack of formal education for them, and practices that were seen as associated marks of oppression. To reverse this situation was to enter the well-policed gates of a West-defined modernity—as exemplified in *The Women's Bell* (1903), by Jin Tianhe, a celebrated tract supporting female education which closes this volume.

The editors explain that early Chinese feminism's genealogy has conventionally been seen as "a byproduct of the introduction of liberalism" (36). Early writings by the mostly male reformists were themselves partly outcomes of reworking Western sources through translations. This, too, has been the canonical reading of early Arab feminism as a discourse of "fathers," a historicization of the 1880s-1910s that began as early as the 1920s in Egypt. But in both places, women were working out their perspectives on the politics of gender in conversation with—but certainly not always in agreement with—male compatriots (and I am not suggesting here that there was necessarily any more agreement among men, or among women!). Thinking comparatively, and very specifically through circuits of translation and citationary and reading practices across languages, can open up questions about the genesis of feminist thinking in discrete but not unrelated contexts.

One of the discursive practices that undergirded the accretion of a restricted feminine ideal was the genre of biographies of exemplary women from the past, which remained resonant in turn-of-the century China as Joan Judge has shown in her work.[6] He-Yin Zhen alludes to and even draws on this genre, but does so to overturn its implications of

exemplarity. Yet, it seems to me that these are moments where her writing shows the difficulty of overturning a discourse from inside, for occasionally she does what she accuses the men of doing: taking one example as illustrative of all women.

In Egypt, too, women were writing biography, as a resistant discourse to men's appropriation of women's history, as I argue in a forthcoming book. Between 1891 and 1896, Zaynab Fawwaz (c1850-1914) compiled an enormous biographical dictionary of women of the world. Although she drew on templates of exemplarity such as the use of epithets of praise for women, she undermined notions of exemplarity by including "scandalous" women alongside the paragons of propriety, and (I argue) she sought to present a nonchronological history of being-a-woman that illuminated the repeating though ever-ramifying conditions in which women acted and reacted.[7] Like He-Yin Zhen, Zaynab Fawwaz used the contours of what had been a male-inscribed discourse to reorient the thinking of her primary sought audience—women and girls—and to a lesser extent, men and boys. And like He-Yin Zhen, Fawwaz (and Malak Hifni Nasif) questioned the "freedom" and rights of European and American women, even as they gave cautious praise to certain Western achievements, and criticized male commentators for seizing on European ways as a wholesale model of desirable modernity (except, of course, when this might encourage women to make political demands, or to step onto the dance floor).

Jin Tianhe's 1903 treatise, *The Women's Bell* plies a rhetorical strategy that is starkly at odds with He-Yin Zhen's: rather than the latter's "we" as an inclusionary deictic that brings women together as speaker, listener, and central subject, this text preaches from the narrating perspective of a male savior for whom liberating women is all about men's needs as they envision a modern society. For me as a scholar of contemporaneous discourses in Egypt, one of the most helpful outcomes of this project is that it allows us to see the contrasting structures of meaning and address—and silence—in these texts, that map against similar or parallel contrasts in Arabic texts of the same period. That He-Yin Zhen is adept at arguing through and against the scholarly tradition that her men compatriots relied on (just as women in Egypt could wield Qur'an and *hadith* against their opponents, including those who might appear to be allies) shows up by contrast another structural and thematic distinction between her writing and that of the male interlocutors translated here: that is, what the women do not say. The similarities to such generally gendered distinctions amongst intellectual production in Egypt are striking. As earlier, I am not suggesting any kind of

essential or always-operative distinction here between works by men and those by women, but rather one based on differences of experience and culture that speak to the segregated lives of middle- and upper-stratum people in the cities of both societies: while the men, urging women's work in restricted professional arenas and waged labor, harp on the "idleness" of women at home, women do not (with the exception of carefully qualified statements about aristocratic women with lots of household help, paid or unpaid). And while men in both societies readily accuse "lustful hags and filthy servant girls" (216) or "servants, grannies and aunts" (213) of corrupting the young, and lambaste women's talk as superstition or worse, the older woman presented as a baneful influence is rarely a figure in texts by women. Rather, women's oral culture is a prized legacy, an acknowledged source of knowledge (as in Malak Hifni Nasif's writing, or in Zaynab Fawwaz's biographies and essays), and a fund of experiential learning—in contrast, of course, to the "scholarship" of the men, with its source base in sanctified written texts.

Such a distinction also emerges through the deployment of affect. For Jin Tianhe it is an enthusiastic if at times despairing but above all didactic voice that tellingly reduces the idealized modern female subject of its dreams to an infantilized object, that instrumentalizes women socially, economically and sexually as implements in a new configuration of patriarchal social relations, governance, and relations of production. It is no surprise when, enumerating the benefits of an envisioned educational programme for women designed to fashion them (as rather passive recipients) into what the author regards as productive members of society, the text outlines their possibilities for nondomestic occupations: kindergarten teachers, primary-school teachers, school management, and perhaps study abroad (that is, in the West). And maybe they could even participate in certain associations, most of them specifically for women (246-47). It is no wonder that, in contrast, throughout a text where she defines men's calls for women's liberation as a new form of masculine privilege predicated on male self-interest, He-Yin Zhen expresses rather different emotions; "I cannot but sigh at this," she interjects, discussing how scholars had worked to naturalize the precepts of Confucianism (128); elsewhere, she is "outraged." Significantly, these eruptions of affect in the text suggest a cosmopolitan empathy, if a frustrated one (and certainly one that does not bow to the West): in discussing Western women's "lack of awareness of their own humiliation," she feels "mortified" (111). And the study of history leaves her grieving: "It makes me sad to review the annals of history from antiquity to the

present… I cannot even count the number of women whose deaths [the despotic rulers and cruel officials] have caused" (167). The present, with its continuing examples of women's victimization (in this case, in wartime) is hardly better: "Can we not gasp in horror?" (172). He-Yin Zhen's affective investment in the subject, together with the deictics of a common condition ("we women," where "women" moves briefly and strategically from being a condition to being an identity predicated on that condition), also frame what I cannot but read (yes, from my own historical moment, but also through my readings of *fin de siècle* Egypt-based feminists) as wonderful moments of understated irony: "I would not raise an issue about this," she remarks, "if women were regarded as a nonhuman species" (106).

I think this raises another point of radical difference between He-Yin Zhen's thinking and that of her male interlocutors—and another similarity, if a differently envisioned one that speaks to their different political sites and allegiances, with Malak Hifni Nasif. Both writers focus on the body as the site of ideological and material energies, in an immediate sense but also in a longer historical sense, which make the female body through instances of covering and constraining. He-Yin Zhen goes further, and it could be argued that her focus on corporeality—and what she does with that—constitutes the radical purchase of her work. In the end, it is control of the body—whether through factory labor, sex labor, outright slavery, denial of basic human needs through the striations of capitalism, or marriage and human reproduction as instances of particularly anguishing, dehumanizing (for both 'men' and 'women') bought labor—that leads He-Yin Zhen to reject presently existing political systems and to argue that differences in the "treatment" of women historically have been more a matter of degree than of substantive change. Her relentless challenge to the politics of reformist, anti-imperialist, anti-dynasticist thinkers finds its point of gravity in the many-faceted politics of the body. As Antoinette Burton reminds us in arguing that the body must constitute an unavoidable 'method' of thinking History, "[t]he enduring though often overlooked insight is that the body has had a distinctively political career entailed by its ideological and material work as a vector of labor and violence, reproduction and atrocity, alterity and civility."[8] He-Yin Zhen does not flinch from this insight, and it organizes her feminism.

There are other entry points to the body as contingent historical force. Like Malak Hifni Nasif, He-Yin Zhen points out a situational irony of her own transitional moment: a

focus on Western modernity as model has yielded a culture of display as the supposed opposite of seclusion. Ostentation is no closer to real rights or freedom, and men's desires that "their" women be respectable partners in public is nothing more than "men's pursuit of self-distinction in the name of women's liberation" (60). (No wonder that the affective tenor of *The Women's Bell* is, in contrast, "embarrassment," and a sense of alienation from the narrator's present milieu: a one-way, rather than inclusive, deployment of affect.) As did women in Egypt, He-Yin Zhen followed women's activisms in Europe closely, but she saw them as caught within the logic of liberal thinking with its unacknowledged victims. Her male interlocutors cite John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer. Occasionally she does the same, but more often she counters with narratives of the aporia between women's actual political gains and the lack of true liberty or justice that obtains in the capitalist systems of governance that they are fighting to join.

He-Yin Zhen does turn to other sorts of writers: she cites Ibsen, Shakespeare and H. Rider Haggard—one could write a very long essay on the uses of translated imaginative literature in gender politics in China and Egypt in this era! Indeed, and as I have already suggested, the uses of translation for these thinkers—the translational thinking that drawing on such sources made possible—is a point of entry to what I think is a necessary further collaborative project. We need to think about how and when such texts—as well as texts produced first in Chinese, Arabic, Farsi, Bengali, Turkish, and so forth—were being translated and circulated. Could we think about comparative vocabularies that turn-of-the-century writers were formulating in different parts of the world through translating the same texts into various languages, and by translating each other? Not long after it appeared in Ottoman Turkish, Istanbul-based writer Fatma Aliye's *Women of Islam* appeared in Arabic embedded in Zaynab Fawwaz's biography of Aliye. What overlapping circuits of translation might we identify? Could close readings in parallel of translations amongst these languages, as well as into them from European languages (not to mention the interesting possibilities of secondary translations—reiterative workings of texts but from translations, not from the first language of composition), tell us more about the contemporaneous discourses of early feminisms across the world?

This has been a collaborative project in a further sense. I was among a group of feminist scholar-translators invited to Columbia University in 2009 for two wonderfully intensive days of living with He-Yin Zhen's texts in earlier iterations of these translations.

What struck me then, and stays with me now, as I think anew through these texts, is how much we share not only with each other as feminist historians and literary scholars and political beings in our own world, but also how much these women and men whom we study shared. Furthermore, producing texts such as these in translation, thinking through their multiple contextualizations and connections, makes evident how very contemporaneous women's activisms were in so many parts of the world. Like Zaynab Fawwaz's Arabic biographies of Victoria Woodhull, Maria Mitchell, Fatma Aliye, and many others, He-Yin Zhen's writings remind us of the cosmopolitan, transcontinental reach of women in Asia and Africa more than a century ago, debunking any notion that the West was leading the Rest. It's not about a competitive who-was-first, but it is about recognizing the many circuits and loops and simultaneous activisms that characterized the times, and thus also throw into relief the ideological purchase of (and its proponents' need for) the imperialist doctrine of civilizational time-lag.

We might ponder, too, how much *we* share with these earlier writers and their discursive activisms as well as the forces they challenged and spoke back to. Sometimes that's a depressing thought (*plus ça change*…) but it is also an affirming one. *Oui, ça change*, *un peu*… partly due to their work, alongside that of so many others, and also to keeping it alive in the world. And perhaps we have a lot to learn from them as theorists. More than a century ago, He-Yin Zhen was enacting in her writing what historian Joan W. Scott has urged historians of women and gender in our own era to do: to consider the operations of gender as an historically differentiated ideological-material force that organizes and heirarchizes human beings; to see gender as a structural force that deploys and displays power; and to interrogate its contingent, if ubiquitous, effects. But He-Yin Zhen, like Malak Hifni Nasif, Zaynab Fawwaz, and so many other women in so many places in 1907, was not necessarily ahead of her time: she was a worldly citizen of her time. We are behind the times if, as feminist historians, we cannot recognize that.

[1] Bahithat al-Badiya [Malak Hifni Nasif], "al-Hijab am al-sufur," No. 2 in *al-Nisa'iyyat: Majmu'at maqalat nushirat fi* al-Jarida *fi mawdu' al-mar'a al-misriyya* (Cairo: Matba'at al-taqaddum, n.d. [1st ed., 1910]), pp. 24-29, quotation, p. 24. All translations from the Arabic original are mine.
[2] Ibid., p. 27.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p.28.
[5] Work on these translations is also attributed to Jeremy Tai, Meng Fan, Cynthia M. Roe, Robert Cole, Wei Peng, Michael Gibbs Hill, and Tze-lan D. Sang. As a translator, I want to laud the clearly collaborative nature of the translation work itself, wherein translators worked together and reviewed each other's work.
[6] Joan Judge, *The Precious Raft of History: The Past, the West, and the Woman Question in China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).
[7] Marilyn Booth, *Classes of Ladies of Cloistered Spaces: Writing Women's History through Biography in 1890s Egypt* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming). On this work as a precursor to biographies of celebrated women in the early Arabic women's press, see Marilyn Booth, *May Her Likes Be Multiplied: Biography and Gender Politics in Egypt* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), Chapter 1.
[8] Antoinette Burton, "The Body in/as World History," in Douglas Northrop, ed., *A Companion to World History* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 272-84, quotation, p. 279.