

ABSTRACTS

Corin Braga
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Utopia, travel narrative and extraordinary voyage

The text explores the relationship between the travel literature (as a non-fiction genre) and the extraordinary voyages (as a fiction genre), on the one hand, and utopian literature, on the other. Using various literary samples and also previous theoretical commentaries on utopianism, it proves that utopias are symbiotically merged with voyage narrative. This cohabitation refers not only to the plot necessity of introducing utopian descriptions through a geographical travel to far away places, but also to the presence of the main character and traveler, who is also a story-teller and a *raisonneur* of the utopian society.

Keywords: Utopia, travel literature, extraordinary voyages, science-fiction.

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Hermann Hesse's 'Glass Bead Game'

Analysing the purely male spiritual enclave depicted in Hermann Hesse's novel 'The Glass Bead Game', the author traces the possible origins of this game to Leibniz's esoteric texts, in which the German philosopher imagined knowledge as the skill of detecting abstract and subtle correspondences between the different sciences and the divine plenitude of the cosmos, based on the art of a generalised calculus, or mathematics, which he called *Characteristica Universalis*. In Hesse's independent school system of Castalia, the glass bead game is practised by its participants as a universal science (*mathesis universalis*) of elaborated European and Oriental cultural symbols and analogies, governed by the pure and abstract equations of mathematics and music. Since Hesse's Castalia functions as a utopian, exclusively intellectual province, its vulnerability towards the everyday history and politics of the surrounding nations brings it inevitably to the brink of decline and future destruction. Hermann Hesse's protagonist, the skilled Josef Knecht reaches the highest rank of 'Master of the Game' (*magister ludi*), and then quits his office in an attempt to escape from collective mystification and inconsistency.

Keywords: Hermann Hesse, Swiss German literature, literature and decadence, utopia.

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Under the sign of Ulysses. Wandering through the text in Benjamin Fondane's and Paul Celan's writings

This work studies the intertextual traces of Ulysssean wandering in the poetry of Benjamin Fondane and Paul Celan. We demonstrate that Benjamin Fondane reprises from the archetypal core of the *Odyssey* two characteristics of the persona: the centrifugal élan of the journey out, and the centripetal movement towards the intimacy of the hearth. He integrates these into his own personal myth inscribed with motifs from the Titanic, considered as the vessel of the dead, and of the sea crossing assimilated with the journey to the beyond: a personal myth that issues forth in a Ulysssean aesthetic emphasizing the snares and perils of the seduction of the siren. In Paul Celan the myth of Ulysses centers on deadly suicidal waters and on the memory of Ithaca assimilated with that of his lost Romania. He has also transposed to a metaphysical plane the "mytheme" of "Nobody" from the Homeric narrative in the collection, *Die Niemandrose*. We demonstrate that, within this perspective, the Meridian coincides with the Ulysssean periplus and that the unknown addressee of the poem,

tossed like a bottle into the sea, becomes paradoxically the “nova terra”. The poem, as an experience of the abyss, thus reveals itself, both with Celan and Fondane, as a final mutation of the perilous navigation of the mythic hero.

Keywords: Benjamin Fondane, Paul Celan, nomadism, poetry, sea, quest, myth.

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Homo Viator in Transition
Travelling through and with Céline, Nabokov, Kerouac

The characters in the three novels (*Voyage au bout de la nuit*, *Lolita* and *On the Road*) analysed in this essay willingly put themselves in the position of a *picaro*. This allows them to taste the world, but also to isolate themselves preventively from it. They adopt a *raisonneur* strategy, as they discover that time can be more easily controlled through narrativity. Some of the characters develop different theories related to temporality in order to justify their condition of frenetic wanderers. Throughout their journeys, their greatest acts of defiance are against Time: their struggle is to find the way in which time can be manipulated so that they might sublimate their despair and solitude.

Keywords: Ferdinand Céline, Vladimir Nabokov, Jack Kerouac, initiation voyage, self-discovery

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Kerouac and America on the Road to Postmodernism

Abstract: This study introduces Jack Kerouac as an author “who intuited aspects of the postmodern and developed fictional strategies and projects that both express and engage our contemporary moment” (Hunt, xxvi) and anticipated formal, artistic and cultural phenomena that would be theorized later in postmodernist thought. *On the Road*, his most popular work is presented in its quality of transitional work from *The Town and the City*, a first published traditional work, to experimental novels such as *Visions of Cody*.

Keywords: American Literature, Beat Generation, Jack Kerouac: *On the Road*, Postmodernism.

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Narratives of ‘Liquid Modernity’:
Translation, Migrancy and Nomadism in Salman Rushdie’s Novels

This paper looks at translation, migrancy and nomadism as strategies of self-definition and self-location in several of Salman Rushdie’s works. In contrast with the alleged solidity of the myths legitimating the birth of ‘imaginary homelands,’ novels like *Midnight’s Children* (1981) and *Shame* (1983) promote the notion that countries need to be fluidly projected into existence. In his more recent narratives, such as *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Fury* (2001) and *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), Rushdie seems to confirm, as well as amend to some extent, Zygmunt Bauman’s diagnosis of the progressive liquefaction of the age of modernity, whereby solid, rigid, traditional societal and power structures are being supplanted, in this ‘post-panoptical’ stage, by more fluid and flexible, extra-territorial figurations.

Keywords: Salman Rushdie, translation, migrancy, nomadism, ‘liquid modernity’

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Erranze pirandelliane nella narrativa di Paul Auster
Appunti per una speculazione

The study is meant to propose a comparative approach between Luigi Pirandello's characters (Mattia Pascal, the six characters searching for an author) and the postmodern dispersive interiority enacted in Paul Auster's narrative. The arguments take into account both the thematic coincidences, (the existence as a perpetual metamorphosis of the surface, the inner world as simulacrum) and the stylistic techniques that aim to create a continuum between the world of the reader and the different levels of the textual reality (metalepsis, *trompe l'oeil*).

Keywords: Paul Auster, Luigi Pirandello, "postmodern identity", simulacra, "*trompe l'oeil*"

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The Space and the Revelatory Voyage in the Chilean Exile Literature
Impossible Geographies: Inner and Outer Space

The voyage, main concept at an implicit level in the Chilean exile literature (the generation of Isabel Allende, Luis Sepúlveda, Antonio Skármeta and others) expresses in a symbolical form the constant need of the individual to recuperate through the artistic act his native space and the area of his identity. This voyage through mental spaces inscribes new maps, on which the space is fragmented in islands whose names are given by nostalgia, memory and by an act of re-creation. This literature tries to rebuild vertically and horizontally the geography of a country as it continues to exist only in the memory, an invented country, as Isabel Allende calls it, which persists beyond the authentic space, curved into an act of self-discovery and self-construction. As reality (initially forbidden) cannot sustain itself (when the contact is reestablished) against nostalgia, because it has brutally lost its innocence, the only possible native country resides in the language, a privileged space where the dynamic act of combining memory and invention takes place by drawing the new lines of a vital space. Out of the magic, protecting, circle, projected in a cruel no-man's-land, the individual has to assume an inner re-building in order to find new roots in this mental, invented country, through a revelatory voyage to a necessary but impossible geography.

Keywords: Chilean literature, Isabel Allende, Luis Sepúlveda, Antonio Skármeta, exile, identity

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From the *Balkans* to *Cultural Balkanism*

There are few terms to have met, as Balkanism did, a greater political contamination, a greater voiding of the basic meaning and a greater acquiring of altered meanings. These altered meanings are accounted for by the fact that Balkanism is too often thought of from the outside, from a distance cardinally expressed in the terms of two forms of culture: East vs. West. However, beyond its pejorative valences (rather *invented* than real), Balkanism subsumes a world not easy to frame. The most common question is whether this notion is not artificial, whether it does not cover a distinct reality that requires a specific definition. Here are enough reasons to answer affirmatively, as well as there are reasons to make us believe that Balkanism has already overcome the geographical borders of the Balkans, being exported outside its *native* land.

Keywords: Balkanism, crisis, territoriality, nostalgia, centre vs. periphery, picaresque, inconsistency, *homo duplex*.

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Venice, between Orient et Occident

The article analyses the unique cultural characteristics of Venice as the encounter of Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy in the Byzantine Empire of the Middle Ages.

Keywords: The Balkans, Venice, Orient, Occident, Byzantium

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Some remarks on the real / fictitious Constantinople in the travel narrative of Ruiz González de Clavijo

At the beginning of the 15th century, the embassy sent by the Castillian King to Timur Leng, led by Ruiz González de Clavijo reached Constantinople on October 1403, i.e. fifty years before the fall of the city by the Ottoman Turks. The Spanish ambassadors stayed there three weeks and visited the famous city, its beautiful public monuments, its religious edifices (churches and monasteries). Clavijo's testimony is very interesting to study the Constantinople's imaginary in the western people's minds. Clavijo was seduced by this peaceful city, the architectural beauty of the churches and especially by the frescoes and the mosaic pictures. He also described the numerous relics, the miraculous artefacts and some monuments from late antiquity. The most interesting for us is to discover in Clavijo's vision the Byzantine people supernatural creeds and their innocent and magic approaches of the Christian faith.

Keywords: Ruiz González de Clavijo, Constantinople, magic, marvels, dragon, relics

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Voyages. A Propaedeutics. Types of Travels in the Romanian Middle Ages

The paper focuses on the perception of space in the medieval Romanian culture. The orientation and the role attributed to the geographical axes are a sample of the Orthodox, namely, Eastern-European vision of the world in the Middle Ages. Verticality is seen more as an invitation to a metaphysical ascension, while horizontality is reserved to the terrestrial life. Using such abstract coordinates, medieval Romanians organized their travels alternating the rhythms of movement and rest.

Keywords: Travel literature, historical anthropology, Romanian principalities, Middle Ages, horizontal and vertical dimensions of space, movement, rest

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Travelling with Gulliver in the Balkans and Ruritania

In the light of A. Toynbee's view of the relation between Western Europe and Eastern Europe, the present article aims a double journey together with *Gulliver* (here Gulliver being an archetype of the British colonising thinking and mentality): first, the journey made by some British travellers in the Romanian

Principalities in the 18th century and secondly, the journey through the text. At the same time, we shall try to reshape the real geography of the Romanian lands and its people through the imaginary geography of the travellers' texts.

Keywords: the Balkans, the Romanian Principalities, imaginary geography, journey, British imperialism, the Other, stereotype images.

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Nomad Romania in post-communist Romanian novels

This work focuses on the phenomena of exile and emigration as reflected in Romanian literature after 1990. It explores two directions: the fiction literature that presents the Romanian emigration in Post-communism, most often seen as an escape from the "doomed homeland", and the non-fiction genre of memoirs written by Romanian writers that had left Romania before the fall of Communism. In these memoirs the return to the natal country appears as a "last voyage", a death voyage, to a bizarre, tormented and futile world. Adrian Otoi, Florina Ilis, Petru Babru, Dumitru Tepeneag are authors used as samples for the first series of texts, Norman Manea, Gabriela Melinescu, Matei Calinescu, Sanda Golopentia, Constantin Eretescu, for the second.

Keywords: Romania, Post-communism, exile, emigration, loneliness, anguish.

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Francophone literatures of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea

The article makes a survey of the Francophone writers from the countries of the Levant and Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Keywords: Francophone literatures, Mediterranean Sea, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Israel

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The Mediterranean Orient in Nadine Ltaif's poetry

The imaginary world of Lebanese Canadian exiled poet Nadine Ltaif is rooted in the context of middle-eastern geography and mythology. Any attempt at understanding her poetic experience must be anchored in Mediterranean symbolism. This article explores the theme of exile in the poetry of this poet and identifies four essential mythological figures: Ishtar, Phoenix, Agar and Hecate. Ltaif invokes these symbols and reconstruct their metaphoric meanings in order to seek a metaphysical remedy for her anguish. The analysis of these Mediterranean symbols reveals a metaphysical process or a quest which begins with the exploration of the anguish of uprootedness and exile, reaches an emotional catharsis that desperately searches for an emotional refuge and finally leads to the emergence of a feeling of liberation and plenitude.

Keywords: Lebanese literature, Nadine Ltaif, exile, Ishtar, Phoenix, Agar, Hecate

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Writing in exile, writing about the exile

In this article, I intend to analyze how it is said and lived the exile in the novels of Abla Farhoud, *Le bonheur a la queue glissante* (1998) [*Happiness has the slipping tail*] which gained the France-Quebec price in 1999, et *Splendide Solitude* (2001) [*Splendid loneliness*]. Abla Farhoud, an author of Lebanese origin from Quebec, lived the uprooting in her own youth when she left Lebanon, with her family, to settle in Quebec. In her novels, where the personal experience is often combined with the fiction, the female protagonists must face the condition of the exile, they must learn how to be reinvented in order to create a new identity and to find again their love for life. Although the exile is represented in a different way in the two novels, one can however affirm that the protagonists live the exile not only as immigrant, but also as women who remain still excluded from certain social functions. In *Le bonheur a la queue glissante*, the protagonist, Dounia, lives a triple exile. Initially, she is exiled to have left her native land. Then, she is also exiled on the social standing because, as a woman, and especially an immigrant woman, she seems to be able to fulfill herself only like a mother and a wife, within her family. Finally, the linguistic exile deprives Dounia of her word, and consequently, she does not have the possibility of being affirmed. In *Splendide Solitude*, the protagonist is a woman who, after a life devoted to her family, finds herself alone and has to think about her life. Her loneliness thus becomes a metaphor of her alienation, of seclusion not only from the others but also from herself. The exile seems to be a difficult condition to support especially when the women are confronted with it. However, it is thanks to their sensibility that they can find in themselves the impulse to survive, to live.

Keywords: Lebanese literature, Abla Farhoud, exile, the status of women

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The quest for identity: Saying the names and Unsaying in Andrée Chedid's novel 'Les marches de sable'

The desert is an essential element of the Egyptian identity. It has been a referential symbol since antiquity. It is the frame chosen by Andrée Chedid, a writer of Lebano-Egyptian descent, for her novel *Les Marches de sable*. The desert is an ever-changing space where one must re-invent oneself in order to survive. The three female characters, Cyre, Marie, and Athanasia, set out for the desert on an identity quest. After a long period of gestation in union with the cosmic emptiness of the desert, they give birth to their names, that is, to themselves.

Keywords: Egyptian literature, Andrée Chedid, the desert, the quest for identity, self-engendering

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Amin Maalouf in search of his origins

In his latest book *Origines* (Grasset, 2004), Amin Maalouf delves into his personal and familial history, developing a veritable quest for his ancestors that becomes an individual and collective memory of Lebanon. In this quest he comes to grips with the autobiographical as well as the mythical. By returning to his origins the author leads us back to our own beginnings in a complex dialectics between East and West. The analysis is based on the theory of autobiography and an attempt to understand the singularity of the proposed pact between author and reader.

Keywords: Lebanese literature, Amin Maalouf, the quest for the ancestors, the reading pact

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Exile and Identity in Kenizé Mourad's work

During long years Kenizé Mourad worked as a journalist at the *Nouvel Observateur*. In 1987, she became worldwide famous with her first novel entitled *Regards from the Dead Princess*. This is the story of Princess Selma, granddaughter of the Ottoman Sultan Mourad V. She died in exile in Paris. In fact Princess Selma is Kenizé Mourad's own mother. In her second novel *The Garden of Badalpur*, she writes her own story, her childhood in Paris and her discovery of India and her father, the former Rajah of Badalpur. With her third book *Our Sacred Land*, Kenizé Mourad returns as a journalist and listens to the voice of ordinary people from Israel and Palestine. She tries not to judge but to understand the two parts. One can detach three themes dominating these books: exile, identity and sense of belonging. The exile of the Ottoman family and the exile of the Palestinian people. The identity quest of Zahr (*The Garden of Badalpur*) and Kenize Mourad herself. The sense of belonging of two communities to "the sacred land".

Keywords: Turkish literature, Kenizé Mourad, exile, identity, sense of belonging

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From Ancient Orient to Contemporary Near East: Myriam Antaki's novels

In this study, we propose an approach to the works of Myriam Antaki, a Syrian author who writes in French. We focus on how the third novel, *Les versets du pardon*, echoes the first one, *La Bien-aimée*, published fourteen years earlier. The latter inaugurates the evocation of the immemorial "Orient" which continues in the second and the fourth novels – while the third novel introduces the reader to the cruel present of today's Palestine and Israel. Even though the style remains similar, a much different use of the two narrative poles, war and love, produces a unique effect. One can only wish to analyze such an art of telling stories of a Byzantine princess as well as a Palestinian terrorist.

Keywords: Syrian literature, Myriam Antaki, war, love

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Andrée Chedid's novels: Rewriting tragedy?

The aim of this work is to analyze the paper of tragedy and the tragic in the novels by Andrée Chedid. In her novels, Chedid gives a great importance to tragical events which overwhelm man's power, such as fate, history, violence, or many other elements which give a tragic color to the narrative. She takes her inspiration after real events, mainly contemporary ones. Her work contains many elements that belong specifically to the tragical genre and she uses writing strategies which enhance even more the tragic atmosphere.

Keywords: Egyptian literature, Andrée Chedid, tragedy, fate, history, violence

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Beirut is near. Visible and invisible urban spaces in Ghassan Fawaz's 'Under the Western Sun'

Under the Western sun is a long monologue where the Lebanese war is becoming a powerful narrative trigger, revealing the causes and phantasms besieging the two characters: Untel and Mehmed. It is not really the story of a conflict. It is not either another novel about Beirut, but only pieces of the Lebanese mosaic breaking out like an exploding shell. Untel and Mehmed are two Lebanese leftist students, living in Paris at the Cité Internationale, for their Doctorate diplomas. On one side they express their feelings about exile, being torn apart or losing some of their illusions and on the other side enjoying thoroughly the dimensions and variations (freedom) of Parisian student life. This chaotic and exhilarating novel is far from being only a tale (story) and even further of the art of building up a plot or creating new characters, because it rather builds up spaces which become the organizers of the scheme. Paris on one side, Beirut on the other side, just as a pattern on a rug. This dualism can be noticed under several aspects: eros and pathos, labyrinth and lay out, distance and closeness, order and disorder, love and hate, war and peace, lucidity and madness, present and 'flash back'.

Keywords: Lebanese literature, Ghassan Fawaz, exile, Paris, Beirut, eros, pathos

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Globalisation and Identity: Vassilis Alexakis's case

This article seeks to demonstrate how Alexakis, a Greek-French-speaking author, through his writing, produced in a set claimed to be multicultural, escapes the risk to undermine his identity self-determination, how he is ensured on his own originality through this mosaic and, how he finally acquires a universal dimension. At first sight, the concepts of identity and universalization seem radically opposite: the personal versus the universal one. The case of Alexakis, on the contrary, testifies how the identity, by its nature into full becoming, can go through several stages and acquire, finally, universal dimensions, although often anchored in the local. Typical representative of all emigrants, with the constant reference to his own situation of emigrant, all his work is a game of identity unfolding, aiming at deciding which culture (that of birth, the Greek one, or that of adoption, the French one) he belongs to. This bi-directional course takes various forms being expressed through a specific set of themes, common to the entire human community (death, love, language, exile). The solution to this dilemma is given through an African "minor" language, the sango, which shows him the way to dodge the French-Greek bi-polarity. Thanks to this dialect, his writing is set up to a planetary standard, since it is a writing which implies the feeling of belonging to the same interdependent community, of a mutual sharing of values across nationalities, borders and cultures, towards the respect of the others, including its differences, in favor of the cultural diversity and the pluri-linguism. This attempt opened the door to a more widened reception of Alexakis' work and it could be used as a starting point towards the concept of a global human identity.

Keywords: Greek literature, Vassilis Alexakis, universalism, identity, bilingualism

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'Live space'. Blanche Molfessis's case

The narrative of this "story" is space-timely set in Greece, Cyprus, Paris and Constantinople, before, during and after the civil war. It concerns preposterous events of Blanche Molfessis' birth, as well as incidents of the own childhood. The narrative place, which concerns us here, is specified by two pivots: the house and the archeological place of Delphi, on the one hand for the former touches upon the personal-private moments and the latter touches upon the collective-national moments, and on the other hand, while there seems to be no organic relation between them, going back to Bachelard and Vernant we are allowed to make certain associations and show the relevance among all these. The literary reconstruction of the house and archeological place attempted by the writer, turns them into archetypal values. The house constitutes a place for her, which is depicted as an ideal setting with a striking semantic weight for her opening

“conversation” with her parents’ birthplace. With her youth’s initiating and archetypal trip to Delphi, a union is achieved with the Primitive womb, the *Omphalus* of Earth, marked by the rebaptism in the water of the Castalia Spring, finding an outlet for her internal concerns and quests. The narrator’s textual world in her book, *L’arme aux yeux*, evolves in such a way that it manifests the significance of the place. The sensation of this particular space is strikingly depicted as a symbolic place. Sketching the place, the writer also traces her own internal itinerary, which constitutes a topography of her own internal being in the quest of her own identity.

Keywords: Cypriot literature, Blanche Molfessis, the quest of identity, rebirth

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Francophone literature in Cyprus

This article attempts to give an assessment of the contribution of the Francophony in Cyprus in relation to the dialect and, in particular, to Cypriot literature. Having briefly recalled the history of a linguistic contribution that begins with some borrowings from French dating back to the Lusignan period, and arrives to the actual Cypriot dialect, we then evoke the presence of Rimbaud and his rather legendary impact, before presenting some French-speaking figures of the island, whose activity and work have left their mark on Cypriot culture. This francophone literature, sustained as soon as the Independence (1960) by a highly active French Cultural Centre, has allowed Cypriots to keep an open window into a world other than the sole Anglo-Saxon one that was perceived as the oppressor during almost a century.

Keywords: Cypriot literature, French influences, Rimbaud, Pavlos Valdasseridis, the Théodossis brothers, Yiorgos Filippou Piéridis

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Feminine vs. Masculine writing. Francophone Feminine Literature in Lebanon. Testimony of a she-writer

The article focuses on the differences between masculine and feminine writing techniques and visions of the world in the context of Lebanese and Near Eastern literatures.

Keywords: Lebanese literature, feminist studies, the social status of the woman in Eastern societies