UNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN

Battle of the Sexes

The Modernization of Gender and Sexuality in *The Vices of Men* and *The Education of Women*

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S1065920

MA Thesis Modern Middle Eastern Studies

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Introduction

Two Qajar Tracts: *The Education of Women* and *The Vices of Men*

By the end of the nineteenth century two books were written in Iran dealing with the norms of gender behavior and sexual relations within marriage. The first book was printed in 1886-1887 by an anonymous writer, most probably a Qajar aristocrat (hereafter QA), called *Ta'dib al-Nesvan*, (*The Education of Women*). It gives an account on how the ideal wife should behave. The second book was a reaction to this book: *Ma`ayeb al-Rejal* (*The Vices of Men*) by Bibi Khanom Astarabadi, written in 1894. This outlines how men should behave. Together these books create a vivid image of the debate on the norms of gender and sexuality in upper-class Iranian society at the end of nineteenth century Iran.

The books were written in a crucial time for Iranian society. It was transformed by ideas of modernity at the end of the nineteenth century. Qajar (1785-1925) Iran at the end of the nineteenth century was confronted with, what several authors termed, their backwardness in comparison to European technological progress. When Europe began to colonize the Middle East the need for modernization became even more pressing. In order to stay independent, Iranian society felt that it had to become modern.[1] One of the main pillars of the modernity discourse became the position of women in society and the sexual relations between men and women. In short the modernity discourse argued that gender norms and sexual boundaries had to change radically for Iran to become modern. Qajar social arrangements were primarily homosocial and openly homoerotic. Modernist writers thought that Iran could only turn into a modern society if it would give up its homoerotic and

1 Monica Ringer, 'The Discourse on Modernization and the Problem of Cultural Integrity in Nineteenth- Century Iran' in *Iran and Beyond. Essays in Middle Eastern History in Honor of Nikki R. Keddie*, ed. Rudi Matthee and Beth Baron (Costa Rica, 2000), 56.

homosocial culture in exchange for a heterosocial and sexual culture.[2] By placing the debate of Astarabadi and QA within their proper socio-political context gender, sexuality and modernization in Iran at the end of the nineteenth century can be analyzed.

In *The Education of Women* QA gives ten norms for the proper behavior for women. It included rules on how women should behave: in public, at home towards their husband, walk, talk, eat, sleep, look, and pleasure their husband in the bedroom. *The Education of Women* was aimed at a male public in a male community where gender behavior of women was a popular literary theme.[3] By the end of the nineteenth century, upper-class women had been exposed to European culture, this resulted in the questioning of their position within society. Many men within the upper-class saw this reconsideration of gender hierarchy as a threat to their male dominance in the domestic as well as the public sphere. In order to regain control over women QA outlines the proper submissive behavior for women towards their husbands.[4] Most of his advices came straight from well-known Islamic teachings and Persian literature tradition, advising men how to treat their wives and educate their daughters. The book can be placed within popular ethics literature that uses humor and sensationalism to bring the message to its public.[5] QA makes use of poems of popular poets such as Saadi (1203-1291) and Hafiz (1326), and the structure of the famous book on women *Kimia-yi sa'adat* by

2 Afsaneh Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards. Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity* (Los Angeles, 2005), 32-42.

3 Cyrus Masroori, 'Rethinking Gender and Humour in Nineteenth-Century Iran' *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (2016): 14, accessed June 13, 2016, DOI:10.1080/13530194.2015.1133277.

4 Hasan Javadi and Willem Floor, 'Introduction' in *The Education of Women and The Vices of Men. Two Qajar Tracts Translated from Persian and with an Introduction by Hassan Javadi and Willem Floor,* ed. Hasan Javadi and Willem Floor (Syracuse, 2010), x.

5 Masroori, 'Rethinking Gender and Humour', 11.

Ghazali (d.1111). The virtues and vices of women described by QA are primarily defined through the pleasures and pains of the male-centered perspective.

To rebuff the accusations towards women in the work of QA, Astarabadi wrote a furious but very well-articulated response in the satirical book *The Vices of Men*. She counters all ten rules that QA gives women to follow. Astarabadi uses a combination of Qur'anic texts, classical poetry, satire and street language to discount the behavioral norms stated by QA, which are in her opinion unrealistic and unreasonable. She argues that if men wanted loyal and obedient wives, men first had to rid themselves of their own vices before passing judgment on their wives.[6] The book gives a rare insight in the upper-class female discourse on gender and sexuality at the end of the nineteenth century in Iran. Together these books can give an understanding of the gender and sexuality debate between men and women formed by ideas of a modern society at the end of the nineteenth century in Iran.

Current Academic Debate

Gender and sexuality in Iran as a research area has been troubled with many difficulties, such as the limited amount of sources dealing directly with women's issues.[7] In the traditional historical narrative the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) is pinpointed as the start of female activism in Iran. Out of a desire of writing women into Iranian history, historians had failed to see the nineteenth century roots of female activism. The focus on the Constitutional Revolution has led to the invisibility of nineteenth century women in historical research. Susynne M. McElrone points out in a historiographical overview of women's activism that:

6 Javadi, 'Introduction', xii-xiii.

7 Susynne M. McElrone, 'Nineteenth-Century Qajar Women in the Public Sphere: An Alternative Historical and Historiographical Reading of the Roots of Iranian Woman's Activism' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 25, No. 2 (2005): 297.

> […] while hedging away from such a pinpoint definition of distinct, almost tangible roots, mercilessly paint a picture of women's lives in the prerevolutionary years without hint or reference to the zeitgeist, in chador blacks so dark that they seem effectively to negate the possibility of even the slightest development of women's independent or free thought - either collectively or individually- before the turn of the century.[8]

One of the first to slightly depart form this view was the book *Veils and Words The Emerging Voices Iranian Women Writers* by Farzaneh Milani from 1992. Milani makes a study of the writings of female poets. She explains how Iranian culture has managed to keep most women silent, resulting in a very low number of women active in the literary tradition. She emphasizes that by writing women rebelled against the gender expectations of society, starting with Tahirih Qorratol'Ayn (1817-1852).[9] The research on gender and sexuality in Iran of the past 15 years has shown that the female 'awakening' of the Constitutional Revolution is fabricated. Women had been influenced by the changes of Iranian society of the nineteenth century as much as men. Recently research has been more focused on historicizing women within nineteenth century Qajar society.[10] Growing academic interest in the conditions of Qajar women can be seen in the exponential growing amount of articles and books published on the subject and the new archival website dedicated to Qajar women founded by Afsaneh Najmabadi.[11] It has been argued that in the development of the Iranian modernity discourse in the nineteenth century, issues of gender were not only very prominent but also interlinked with sexuality. Janet Afary for instance argues in *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran* (2009) that

8 McElrone, 'Nineteenth-Century Qajar Women', 298.

9 Farzaneh Milani, *Veils and Words. The Emerging Voices of Iranian Women Writers* (New York, 1992), 51-53.

10 McElrone, 'Nineteenth-Century Qajar Women', 300-301.

11 http://www.qajarwomen.org/en/ visited 27-07-2-16, Leiden.

'[…] sexuality occupied an undeniably crucial place in Iran's history. One could not simply talk about gender and women's rights, particularly rights within marriage, without also addressing the subject of same-sex relations.'[12] Within the academic renaissance on Iranian gender and sexuality research, the books of QA and Astarabadi give an extraordinary research opportunity, here an actual debate between men and women over the norms of gender and sexual hierarchy is recorded.

In a recent article Cyrus Masroori has discovered that a total of five versions of *The Education of Women* circulated at the Qajar court in the first half of the nineteenth century, before it was printed in 1886-1887. She divided the six versions into three categories, each category is slightly different from the others. Masroori argues that because of the response written by Astarabadi, *The Education of Women* has been wrongfully interpreted as a modern disciplinary book, while instead it 'was written for men to have a laugh at women's expense.'[13] Masroori states that in researching *The Education of Women* together with *The Vices of Men*, researches are taking *The Education of Women* out of context and 'implant concepts and ideas in the texts often alien to the original authors. Such readings lead to unsubstantiated interpretations which distort our understanding of nineteenth-century feminism in Iran.'[14] There are several flaws in her argumentation. Firstly she states that *The Education of Women* was written at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and thus written in a different intellectual context than *The Vices of Men*. This means that they cannot be researched as a pair. [15] She contradicts herself on this point. Her conclusions on the ability to

12 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 2.

13 Masroori, 'Rethinking Gender and Humour', 15.

14 Idem, 15-16.

15 Idem, 3.

do research on the printed version are based on the intellectual context of the original author. She shows herself that editors have emphasized or cut certain parts of the book to fit whatever was most relevant for the editor's public. This shows that the book was not frozen in time but a living product. It has to be considered in the context of the public and the social function of a specific edition, next to the context of the original author.[16] Masroori places the context of the original author on the edited printed version. She ignores the fact that the book was still relevant enough for the public by the end of the nineteenth century to be printed in 1886-1887. Secondly she renders the influence of the book on its public at the minimum because it was written in popular ethics and made use of satire. It was common in popular ethics to formulate a serious moral through humor and poetry.[17] Finally she reduces the importance given to both books in recent research on gender and sexuality relations at the end of the nineteenth century. She states that they cannot have had much influence because of the small amount of manuscripts found.[18] Here she completely ignores the fact that at court, where both pieces were written, the main literary outlet was oral and not written or printed. The fact that *The Education of Women* had crossed from the male community and entered into the female community hints to its large readership.[19] The informal circulation of the handwritten accounts suggests that there were discussions of the appropriate behavior of men and women, within and possibly between the segregated communities.[20] That *The Vices of*

16 Julie S. Meisami, 'Genres of Court Literature' in *A History of Persian Literature Volume I General Introduction to Persian Litrature*, ed. J.T.P de Bruijn (New York, 2009), 236.

17 Meisami, 'Genres of Court', 252.

18 Masroori, 'Rethinking Gender and Humour', 2.

19Afsaneh Najmabadi, 'Veiled Discourse– Unveiled Bodies' *Feminist Studies* 19, No. 3 (1993): 491.

20 Camron M. Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman Gender, State Policy, and Popular Culture, 1865-1946* (Gainesville, 2002), 34.

Men was not rediscovered until 1992 is more a statement of the effective silencing of women in the twentieth century, than a statement of its popularity in the nineteenth century.[21] The fact that *The Education of Women* was printed could indicate its popularity among upper class men. The printing press and lithography in Iran was introduced in the first half of the nineteenth century. Only with the turn of the century did printing become common in the whole country.[22] By historically contextualizing *The Education of Women* and *The Vices of Men*, they will show how traditional Muslim men and women at the end of the nineteenth century dealt with the modernization of marriage and gender behavior in Iran.

21 Milani, *Veils and Words*, 4.

22 Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), 337.

1. **Theoretical Context**

Gender and sexuality norms are constructed out of a matrix of mechanisms that are at work within society including behavioral norms, morals, discourses, and power relations. This matrix determines the outlines of acceptable sexual and gender related behavior among the subjects in society. Even though the content of gender and sexual behaviour is constructed by society, for the subjects in question gender and sexuality norms are experienced as a natural occurrence. The different sexual and gender behavioural rules concerning men and women are seen as a logical outcome of biological differences and the different roles in reproduction. However gender and sexuality are primarily socially constructed.[23] Gender is the meaning and behaviour different cultures ascribe to the different biological sexes.[24] As feminist philosopher Sandra Lee Bartky puts it: 'We are born male or female, but not masculine or feminine.'[25] In other words when talking about gender, one is talking about what makes a subject masculine or feminine in a specific society. Sexuality is defined as firstly the sexual attraction to another person and the sexual act itself. Secondly, used as an identity marker for human categorization, on the basis of sexual attraction to specific sexes. The most important question here is *how* the gender and sexuality meaning and behaviour is represented and constructed in written word.

The Education of Women and *The Vices of Men* were written in a time when people in Iran started to question the 'natural' order of gender and sexuality constructions in Iran. Changes in the behavior of men and women in society created an interlinked web wherein

23 Cheshire Calhoun, 'Thinking About the Plurality of Genders' *Hypatia* 16, No.2 (2001): 68.

24 http://www.rug.nl/research/centrumgenderstudies/ visited 19-07-2016, Leiden.

25 Sandra L. Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power' in *The Politics Women's Bodies: Sexuality, Appearance, & Behavior*, ed. Rose Weitz (New York, 2003), 27.

matters of sexuality changed. By looking at the discourse of society at the turn of the twentieth century and the issues presented within *The Education of Women* and *The Vices of Men*, the inner workings of gender and sexuality of this particular time and place can be discovered. Before looking at a particular case of gender and sexuality in the political books in question it is important to set out the parameters of this research. The purpose of this chapter is to first understand, on a theoretical level, how gender and sexuality are constructed by people before turning to the specifics of Iran.

1.1 Constructing Gender

Gender is the meaning and behaviour cultures attributed to different sexes, within the specific historical and geographical context. This broad and elusive definition was formulated when feminist theory was confronted with the fact that markers for womanhood are not the same in every time and place. In the 1970's when feminist studies first came into being as a separate area of study the focus was mainly aimed at white, western, modern and heterosexual women. The markers of womanhood were based on this model. However feminist academics were confronted with women who did not fit it. The question was raised: what constitutes a woman? American feminist philosopher Cheshire Calhoun answered this question in her article 'Thinking about the Plurality of Genders' by arguing that: '[…] a deep appreciation for the fact that difference goes all the way down should lead us beyond the conclusion that "woman" contains a multiplicity of woman genders. It should also lead us to the conclusion that that category is itself fiction.'[26] To go beyond the category of 'woman' researchers have to look primarily to the expression of gender of the subject in question within the particular context. A theoretical breakthrough within feminist studies based on the work of Judith Butler.

26 Calhoun, 'Thinking About',71.

American feminist philosopher Judith Butler argues in her seminal book *Gender Trouble* (1990) that one has to look at gender as behavior that is constructed by a stylistic repetition of acts, this creates behavior that is seen by Butler as performative. Every act has its own meaning and every act is ascribed to be performed by a specific sex. In other words gender is something one does and performs in society, not something one is. By looking at gender as performative, the construction of the meaning of gender behavior within the specific historical time, culture, and society can be analyzed.

Butler further argues that the repetitive acts are taking place within the connections of regulatory conventions and norms that are dominant within a particular society. The two core elements of gender meaning-making are the actions by the subject and the context of society. Gender behavior, as stylistic repetitive acts, is always constructed within the limitations of a particular culture and society. Slight variations in the repetitive acts by subjects, is the location of agency of subjects. This way the norms of society can be slowly destabilized without subjects acting outside of the cultural and temporal context. In other words, it is impossible for a subject to radically act outside of what is knows. This does not mean subjects are powerless. The agency of women and their capacity to actively challenge dominant gender paradigms are socially constructed within the social norms of a particular society.[27] The articulation of gender is closely related to power relations between men and women. The modern disciplinary powers as described by Foucault are particularly powerful when it comes to the formation of gender. Through constant social pressure people are in a 'state of conscious and permanent visibility', what a sign is that disciplinary control over the body as internalized

27 Fiona Webster, 'The Politics of Sex and Gender: Benhabib and Butler Debate Subjectivity' *Hypatia* 15, No. 1 (2000): 2-4.

into the mind. Gender only exists in terms of feminine and masculine because people are conditioned to act feminine or masculine.[28]

1.2 Power Relations, Gender Hierarchy and Patriarchy

When talking about gender, we are talking about *different* behavior ascribed to *different* sexes and how these differences of behavior function in relation to each other. In society the masculine usually ascribed the dominant position and the feminine the submissive position in the gender hierarchy. Most societies function as a patriarchy, a social system where men have the principal power. Radical feminist theorists were the first ones to use the term patriarchy to apply to every possible form of male dominance. Inside this template, patriarchy became defined as an all-pervasive timeless phenomenon. This created a monolithic concept of male dominance, this obscured the inner workings of different gender arrangements in diverse historical and cultural contexts. After correctly contextualizing the power relations between men and women, researchers saw the many systems of male dominance even though they were in place could vary according to class, culture, and time.[29]

Male dominance within a patriarchic society is and was never one sided, women always acquire something in return as a tradeoff for their submissive position. Just as seen with performative gender constructions, the patriarchal restrains are created out of a stylistic repetition of actions. Within the patriarchal system there is agency in the slight variation in the repetition of gender actions within patriarchal limits. Variations represent the negotiations of the terms that determine the male dominance over female submissiveness within society. The negotiated terms form the confines of the patriarchal bargain. The patriarchal bargain is not a

28 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity', 27.

29 Deniz Kandiyoti, 'Islam and Patriarchy: A Comparative Perspective' in *Women in Middle Eastern History. Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender,* ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Beth Baron (New York , 1991), 24-27.

static status quo, but consists of changing social mores of society. These social mores are subject to historical transformations that open up new areas of gender negotiations. [30] The negotiations over power are not found in direct confrontations of the male dominance, but through subtle and slow changes within the performance of gender roles and behavioral norms. It is the disruption of the processes that show the gender performances of men and women, and their relation to each other.[31] Gender and sexuality intersect in the male-female interaction.

1.3 Sexual Acts and Identity

Sexuality is closely related to gender for they both deal with overlapping aspects of identity, meaning-making, social behaviour and dynamics of reproduction. Central to sexuality research is the connection between sexual acts and identity. Sexuality as an act of sexual desire became inseparable from sexuality as an identity. This paradigm assumes that a particular sexual action marks the subject's permanent sexual identity, for example the intercourse with the opposite sex marks the subject with a heterosexual identification. Sexual acts as markers for sexual identification fit within the western construction in the twentieth century of exclusive and static sexual identity orientation, where one is either heterosexual or homosexual.[32] This kind of identity categorization limits the research of sexuality as it assumes a static category of sexual practices and interpretations of sex. Historical research has shown that sexual acts were not necessarily interpreted as being related to any particular kind of permanent identity, especially in the past. By dismissing these sexual practises and their

30 Kandiyoti, 'Islam and Patriarchy', 24-27.

31 Webster, 'The Politics of Sex and Gender', 9-10.

32 Calhoun, 'Thinking About', 70.

significance to the subjects as not related to identity, a whole world of meaning-making will be lost.[33]

A new term has been developed to counter the Western hegemony on the 'gay' experience and identity: queer. Postmodern queer theorist John C. Hawley states that there was a need for a new term: '"Queer" acknowledges ongoing debates over the question of essentialism versus constructionism in both gay and lesbian studies, and in feminist theory, and recognized the inadequate current knowledge of differences between and among various gay men and women.'[34] Queer theory challenges the idea that people are either heterosexual or homosexual. It encompasses all sexualities that do not fit into the strictly defined categorizations. Queer theory is against fixed sexual identities: it states that such identities are articulated as the effect of subject categorization by regulatory regimes. By viewing identity as fluid queer studies wants to go against the static binary of homo- and heterosexuality, against the western model of a gay life style and the trappings of western sexual identities. The main difference between strictly gay discourse and queer theory is that the former emphasizes the essentialist nature of secularity over the social constructionist nature that is embodied in the later.[35] Just as seen in the construction of gender within feminist theory, queer theory emphasizes what people actually experience and how they give meaning to these experiences within the constructed and regulated behavioral norms of society.

33 Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi, 'Preface' in *Islamicate Sexualities. Translations Across Temporal Geographies of Desire*, ed. Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge, 2008), x.

34 John C. Hawley, 'Introduction' in *Post-Colonial Queer. Theoretical Intersections*, ed. John C. Hawley (New York, 2001), 3, 5.

35 Idem, 3.

1.4 Foucault and Sexuality

By emphasizing the construction of sexual experience within the cultural context of a certain society, queer theory avoids imposing western ideas of sexuality on non-western cultures and premodern times. The construction or essentialism of sexual identification has been one of the main academic issues for the research on sexuality ever since Michel Foucault published his seminal book *The History of Sexuality* (1976). He argues that the modern western notion of sexuality was a creation of psychoanalysis and medical discourse on sexual perversions in the nineteenth century. According to Foucault sexuality was used by states to control their subjects in a disciplinary and regulatory regime wherein subjects had to be categorized. He argues that the experience of sex is controlled by what is defined as normative by the state and society depending on the dominant the discourse, its propagation, science and societal mores. Only in the nineteenth century did sexuality as an identifiable category develop in Europe in combination with modernity. The nineteenth century was the first time when sexualities developed into a certain type of human beings, within strict permanent categorizations. This was a theoretical revelation within the study of sexuality that had major implications on the future of sexuality.[36]

One of Foucault's more problematic parts of *The History of Sexuality* in relation to the Middle East is the division of the 'Western' and 'Eastern' sexual experience. Foucault speaks of the two great procedures for producing the truth of sex, he draws a binary that juxtaposes a Western *Scientia sexualise* opposite an Eastern *Ars erotica*. The 'western' *Scientia sexualise* produces a truth of sex and sexuality through science that has its roots in confession. The 'eastern' *Ars erotica*, in contrast, does not seek truth, but pleasure, desire, and is transmitted as a secret. This definition of *Ars erotica* suggests that it lives outside of science and time and is

36 Arnold I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality. Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge and London, 2001), 30-32.

not affected by modernity.[37] This became the basis of the orientalist research to the 'over-sexed' Easterner. It gave a monolithic and static vision of Eastern sexuality. [38] Research on sexuality in non-Western societies has faced many difficulties in the past. Not only because of the application of western theoretical templates, but for a large part because Orientalism has originated from the supposed difference between Western *Scientia sexualise* and Eastern *Ars erotica*.[39]

1.5 Implications of Cultural Imperialism

With the extension of the study of sexuality to non-Western areas of the world, researchers have to be warry of cultural imperialism. Since sexuality is constructed within the borders of culture and society, the experiences of subjects may differ according to time and place. By uncritically applying modern Western templates for sexuality to non-western/pre-modern cultures, there is a risk of imposing cultural imperialism. As Valerie Traub argues: 'the cultural imperialism implicit in any unidirectional importation of a conceptual apparatus derived largely from European and Anglo-American perspectives.'[40] In other words, the assumption of theoretical templates that are developed on the European and Anglo-American societies cannot be uncritically applied to other parts of the world. When this is the case, one is imposing foreign concepts on a culture, such as permanent homosexual identity markers. However, one should not push to the other end whereby all same-sex identification is

37 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York, 1990), 56-58.

38 Leon A. Rocha, 'Scienta Sexualis versus Ars Erotica: Foucault, van Gulik, Needham', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences* 42, No.3 (2011): 330-333.

39 Babayan, 'Preface', VII.

40 Valerie Traub, 'The Past is a Foreign Country? The Times and Spaces of Islamicate Sexuality Studies' in *Islamicate Sexualities.Translations Across Temporal Geographies of desire*, ed. Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge, 2008), 13-15.

automatically modern Euro-American and thus completely alien to all other cultures and times in the world. Cultures rarely pass by each other in time and space without any contact or influence. The idea that the world is made up out of impermeable cultural zones that are resistant for outsiders has lost its credibility in the academic world. Micro historical research has proven that there was a lot of interaction between cultures. Historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam argues that: 'States and empires were very rarely ships that passed in the night of incommensurability […] Rather, what usually happened was approximation, improvisation, and eventually a shift in the relative positions of all concerned'. So there is always a mutual influence when cultures come into contact with each other.[41] In this specific case-study of Iran in the nineteenth century, the contact between Europe and Iran intensified because of many technological improvements in travel and communication. A two-way street of interaction and cultural influence was created. Ignoring this influence would be just as bad as overemphasizing Europe's ideology in non-western cultures. Acknowledging this exchange does not mean diminishing the agency of the internal culture. It only adds to the environment of internal and external forces that shape a particular society.[42] The influence of European discourses on Iranian culture was mediated through the projects of modernity, which had a crucial effect on Iran's historical development, as well as political, social, and cultural life.[43]

Research has often been based on the assumption that traditions and practices connected to Islam are universal for every Islamic society and have not changed since the dawn of Islam. When looking at Islamic law it is very clear that the act of anal penetration

41 Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly encounters. Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge and London, 2012), 29-30.

42 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 5.

43 Lila Abu-Lughod, 'Feminist Longings and Postcolonial Conditions' in *Remaking Women:Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. Lila Abu-Lughod (Princeton, 1998), 16, 18.

should be punished by death, not the preference of people for same-sex sexual desire. The focus on anal penetration in Islamic law shows that the main objective was male homosexuality. Female same-sex sexual acts were barely mentioned.[44] This assumption has led to a universal rendering of all sexual practices in Islamic societies under the banner of Islam. As the book *Islamicate Sexualities* by Katheryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi emphasises, there is no such thing as a 'monolithic rendering of Islamicate sexual practices and discourses throughout the ages.'[45] Micro historical research has debunked the monolithic and static images based on the assumption of a universal believe in Islam without any cultural differentiation in the Islamicate world. This showed that a variety of sexualities are based on Islamic principles, cultural traditions and external influence.

Homosexuality in Iranian society can be rather problematic, as the entry on homosexuality in the *Encyclopedia Iranica* shows. There is a large entry on homosexuality and Zoroastrianism, the non-Muslim past. The entry on Islamic law makes clear that there are strict rules against anal sex (male or female) and the entry on art emphasizes how homoerotic expressions were mostly ungendered and aesthetic. Especially telling is the fact that there is no entry on homosexuality in modern Persia. This entry can only be found in the supplement without the mentioning of an author.[46] The denial of same-sex practices is a result of the desire for a heteronormative society, this would bring Iran back to its former glory. The homosexual parts of society were covered by a heterosexual veneer, or collectively forgotten like the

44 E.K. Rowson, 'Homosexuality in Islamic Law' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Volume XII Harem I-Illuminationism*, ed Ehsan Yarshater (New York, 2004), 442-443.

45 Babayan, 'Preface', XIIII.

46 'Homosexuality' in *Encyclopaedia Iranica Volume XII Harem I- Illuminationism*, ed, Ehsan Yarshater (New York, 2004), 441-444.

figure of the *amrad.*[47] Another consequence is that homosexuality, as an exclusive sexual desire, was never accepted into society. Modern Iranian society focuses on the practice of anal sex. Through this thinking the Islamic Republic can still claim that there are no homosexuals in Iran. Because homosexuality never developed as an identity marker in the modernity discourse in Iran, Iranian society was able to completely forget about their homosexual past through mandatory hetero normativity.

47 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 235.

2. Transformations in Nineteenth Century Iranian Society

Gender and sexuality are constructed behavioral acts created out of discourse, the power relations, and the cultural norms of society. It is important to establish the environment in which they are formed. When *The Education of Women* and *The Vices of Men* were written the discourses of gender and sexuality were in the middle of a transition from premodern to modern. The ideas on gender behavior and sexual activities in Iran changed significantly over the course of the nineteenth century. In this chapter firstly there is a brief explanation on the general political situation of the time. Secondly there will be a review of the sexual relations and gender articulations of early nineteenth century Iran. Lastly there is a survey of the Iranian discourse of modernity that played a pivotal role in changing attitudes towards gender and sexuality in Iran.

2.1 Politics

Nineteenth century Iran was ruled by the Qajar dynasty. In theory the Shah claimed a monopoly over all means of violence, administration, revenue, and adjudication. In practice their power was limited by a lack of a strong state bureaucracy and a standing army. Their power stayed in the exploitation of social divides among the noble families that ruled on a local level. The direct power of the Shah was restricted to the area around Tehran.[48]

The fragile power relations of the Qajar state came under heavy strain with the slow penetration of the country by western forces at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The Qajar state first realized the need for modernization after two heavy military defeats, first by the hands of the Russian (1813 and 1828) and later by the British (1857). Iran was never formally colonized, but the privileges of the peace treatises gave far reaching diplomatic and economic power to foreign states. After the humiliating military defeats the Qajar state started

48 Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge, 2008), 8-9, 33.

a project of defensive modernization to limit the foreign intrusion into Iran. It was mainly focused on military and technological modernization of Iran and strengthening of the central state. Nasser al-Din Shah (1831-1896) sent students and diplomats to Europe to learn about their ideas and technology. On the level of the state the defensive modernization of Nasser al-Din Shah miserably failed because of the inability to raise taxes. The Qajar state was simply too weak to collect enough taxes for this project.[49] In an attempt to break this circle, money was generated through foreign loans and selling privileges. The sale of trade monopolies was heavily opposed by local merchants because it disrupted the local trade. One example is the sale of the Tobacco monopoly to Russia. In 1890 massive protests were organized that stopped the sale (1891-1892).[50]

The central state was further destabilized because of the interference of British and Russian diplomats in local politics. In the traditional system the Shah's influence was used for the support of local hierarchies. In return the local noble families were loyal to the Shah. The attempts of Nasser al-Din Shah to create a centralized state generated great suspicion among the local elites who were no longer certain about their position. Especially in the southern regions the elite was no longer certain that the loyalty to the Shah was in their best interest. By exploiting the local power structures the British counsels insinuated themselves in the Qajar political system without violating the sovereignty of Iran.[51] The contacts with the West intensified, on a diplomatic, cultural and intellectual level. It made people think about their own society and the traditional social arrangements.

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49 Abrahamian, *A History*, 9.

50 Idem, 36-39.

51 H. Lyman Stebbins 'British Imperialism, Regionalism, and Nationalism in Iran, 1890-1919' in *Iran Facing Others Identity Boundaries in a Historical Perspective*, ed. Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani (New York, 2012), 154.

2.2 Premodern Gender and Sexual Practices

2.2.1 Male-Female Relations

Premodern Iranian society was one of gender segregation, wherein unrelated men and women were not permitted to interact. Their relationships were limited to a number of sexual contracts, this had a profound effect on marital relationships.[52] There were two forms of marriage contracts. First, there was the *nekah* (permanent marriage) contract. After the contract was signed the husband had to pay a bride price and provide maintenance for his wife and children. In return he had exclusive sexual rights to his wife. Men had the right to four *nekah,* and each of the wives entering this marriage with a man was called '*aqdi* (permanent wife). These marriages were primarily seen as contracts of reproduction and a union between families. Apart from the permanent marriage, Shi'i men could take as many *sigheh* (temporary wife) as they wanted. The *mut'a* (temporary marriage) is seen as a practice of divine origins by Shi'i doctrine. The literal definition of a *mut'a* is formulated as followed: 'A man agrees to give a women something for a specified period in return for her sexual favors, with the understanding that there would be no marriage (*nikah*) in the beginning nor a divorce at the end.'[53] The most pronounced difference between a *nikah* and *mut'a* was the specifically determined time of the *mut'a* contract. Moreover a *mut'a* was usually primarily aimed at sexual satisfaction.[54]

52 Shahla Haeri, *Law of Desire Temporary Marriage in Shi'i Iran* (New York, 1989), 65.

53 Idem, 50.

54 Haeri, *Law of Desire*, 2, 23,26, 50-51 and Willem Floor, *A Social History of Sexual Relations in Iran* (Washington DC, 2008), 33, 65,82, 109, 136-140.

The tradition of the Prophet emphasized marriage as an act of piety. Marriage was seen as a way to legally contain and morally guide the natural sexual urges of people.[55] Men and women were seen as fundamentally different in terms of sexual needs. Men were obligated to be sexually intimate with their wife at least once every four months. Men, however, could not and should not have to restrain themselves sexually and have to be satisfied on command. Therefore women should at all times be ready to satisfy their husband, as Majlisi an intellectual from the seventeenth century stated: 'Any time a husband wants to have intercourse with his wife she should not deny him, even if she is riding a camel.'[56] The contractual nature of marriage amplifies the imbalance in the right to sexual satisfaction. As buyers in the marriage contract, a man had paid for the right to use the woman's body. In extension women are obligated to submit to that for what they were paid for. [57]

The satisfaction of male sexuality within a controlled legal environment is one of the basic religious explanations for the practice of polygamy that was mostly practiced in the higher classes of society. They were the classes that could afford the maintenance of multiple wives.[58] It is often argues that the practice of polygamy led to a lack of love and companionship within marital relationships. Women did not feel appreciated by their husbands because of their multiple sexual relationships outside of the marital bed, this meant that there was no emotional connection. Another reason for often loveless marriages was that marriages were usually arranged when girls were still very young with no or barely any courtship or romance, due to the prohibition of contact between unrelated men and women.

55 Haeri, *Law of Desire*, 4-5.

56 Haeri, *Law of Desire*, 47.

57 Idem, 47- 48.

58 Floor, *A Social History,* 136-140.

The lack of an emotional connection in the marital relationship may have contributed to the widespread practice of same-sex intimate and sexual relationships. In contrast with the heterosexual relationships, the ones built within the homosocial space were usually preceded by a long romantic courtship and embodied a strong connection of friendship and love.[59]

2.2.2 Homosocial Culture and Same-Sex Relations

The segregation of men and women was created out of a concern of uncontrolled heterosexual desires that would lead to social anarchy. Segregation was to protect the honor of the family, this was strongly connected to the virginity and the sexual faithfulness of women.[60] Within Islamic law concerning marriage and women, it is suggested that female sexuality is very active and aggressive. Without male control female sexuality is a threat to the social order of society. It is believed that when a man sees a woman, he is in the passive role of seduction. He is not responsible for satisfying his sexual needs on women. The seduction is the fault of women, for this reason women are often identified as a symbol of disorder in public areas.[61]

The fear in society for dishonor because of heterosexual illegal sexual acts created separate spaces for men and women with their own behavioral norms and cultures. Segregation was traditionally an attempt to limit heterosexual relationships between unrelated men and women. It was later maintained because of tradition and strong homosocial bonds of friendship, love, and desire within the homosocial space. Love and desire within the homosocial space were not necessarily an expression of frustrated heterosexual desires. If it were only sexual satisfaction people were looking for, people had several heterosexual

59 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 28-29.

60 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 25-26.

61 Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil. Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society. Revised Edition* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1987), 39-44.

options in the form of marriage that would ensure it. Iran had a long cultural tradition of male homoerotic art and literature this shows that it was not sexual frustration that led to same-sex sexual acts. In premodern Iran the object of sexual desire was often ungendered. In art the object of desire had features that could be ascribed to both male and female. In poetry it is even more elusive since Farsi does not use gender-pronounces. In premodern tradition the gendering of desire and sexuality was far more flexible and temporal based than in modern times.[62]

In the female homosocial space a culture developed that included sister vows resembling marriage and could contain a homoerotic or sexual dimension. The vows seem to have been rather common among urban upper-class married women. Before the vow was taken, it was customary to have a courtship of several moths in this time the women socialized and exchanged gifts.[63] Within the female communities women were freer to express themselves, because of the absence of male judgment. The homosocial space gave women a loophole within the male dominated patriarchal system. They found a way to work with the rules and find their own agency within a segregated society.[64]

Out of fear of heterosexual transgressions outside of the legal and controlled confines of marriage, male-female relations were closely controlled. Segregation did not mean the same as seclusion. Women were monitored but they still managed to go out of the house.[65] The segregation of the streets in Tehran into a female and male section according to the time

62 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*,16-17.

63 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 101-102.

64 Najmabadi, 'Veiled Discourse', 488.

65 Vanessa Martin, *The Qajar Pact. Bargaining, Protest and the State in Nineteenth-Century Persia* (New York, 2005), 99.

of day suggests that women were outside.[66] Upper-class women were more restricted in their movements than women of the middle and lower classes. Middle- and lower-class women usually had to be around and about in order to economically support their family. Women had important economic roles in the family out of necessity.[67] The veil gave some freedom of movement for (especially married) women to socialize within their own gender, and to some extent in society.[68] Women in the nineteenth century were not secluded from the world around them. They did participate in social conflicts, issues and politics in a public manner.[69] There have been a number of uprisings in the nineteenth century where women play an important organized role. As early as 1840 at least five big riots involved large groups of middle-class women. Two of these riots show signs of premeditated organization with active involvement of women.[70] However, as women were collectively unheard and unseen they are not recorded into historic documentation. [71] At the turn of the twentieth century it became easier for women to publicly express and discuss their political ideas. Women took an active part in the Constitutional Revolution of 1906-1911.[72]

Personal narratives from men of the upper-class show a relative open network of homosocial and same-sex sexual relationships. Same-sex sexual activities and relationships

66 McElrone, 'Nineteenth-Century Qajar Women', 312.

67 Idem, 303.

68 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 26-27.

69 McElrone, 'Nineteenth-Century Qajar Women', 303.

70 Martin, *The Qajar Pact*, 100-104.

71 McElrone, 'Nineteenth-Century Qajar Women', 312.

72 Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911 Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, and the Origins of Feminism* (New York, 1996), 177-208.

were not in themselves issues that were highlighted as unusual or problematic. Historical records from the nineteenth century show that punishment rarely happened, only in cases of rape or breaking of morality codes. In contrast to the western modern association of sexual identity, sexual patterns in Iran were rarely fixed lifelong templates. They often had a temporal nature connected to power, age, class, and rank.[73] In male homoeroticism the object of desire was the *amrad* (beardless boy), a young boy, not a child anymore but not yet an adult man. The turning point of going from an object of desire to the desiring object was the appearance of a full beard. When a man was able to grow a full beard he was considered an adult and was expected to become the desiring object. The relationship between the object of desire and the desiring object was often related to a patronage system, where the *amrad* was bonded to an older man after a period of courtship. In this relationship the older patron would provide the *amrad* with an education, gifts, and introduce him to influential people so that when he came of age he would be able to take a prominent position in society. The *amradbazi* (beardless boy-playing or practicing love with a boy) relationship was a practice most common in the upper-classes of Iranian society. The community did not object to this practice, as long as men did fulfill their obligation of reproduction with their wife.[74]

Sexual desire or acts were not associated to either identity or exclusive preference. It was expected for men to take part in same-sex sexual relationships next to their heterosexual reproductive marriages. It was assumed that most adult men were sexually attracted to adolescent boys, parallel to their attraction to women.[75] With the development of the modernity discourse these same-sex sexual actions in favor of the heterosexual marriage

73 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 16-17.

74 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 20.

75 Rowson, ‘Homosexuality in Islamic Law’, 443.

became signs of decline. The desire as such was mostly untouched since, just as Islamic law, modernist did not see homosexuality as an identity but as a disruptive sexual act. This is a remarkable difference for the Foucauldian model of Europe. In Europe the same-sex sexual desire was seen as an illness and homosexuality was a type of human. In other words, homosexuality became a permanent identity marker. In Iran the discourse of modern sexuality was focused on the practices and not the inherent forms of desire as an illness, rather it was an obstacle towards the modern monogamous marriage.[76]

The interlinkage of gender, sexuality, and modernity discourse arose because of European reflection of Iranian segregation and homosociality as primitive. In modernist writings heterosexuality became the desired norm, they argued for heteronormativity in society. In the view of modernist writers, such as Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani (1853-1896), same-sex relationships were disruptive for the relationships between men and women. In the negotiations of modern relationships between men and women the same-sex relationships gave a third option for love, companionship, and sexual relations.[77] Thus, if Iran wanted to become modern, gender relations and, in particular, sexual practices had to change.

2.3 Becoming Modern

As said state modernization failed because of a lack of money. It did not mean that modernization had not taken hold of society. One of the features of the modernity discourse in Iran was its articulation was almost entirely outside of the state. Many of the students and diplomats sent to Europe came back with new ideas on how to modernize Iran as a whole, not just the state or army. In the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a large amount of European books translated and available in Iran for the literate classes. Alongside of these

76 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 57.

77 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 162-163, 203.

translated works, many Persian writers wrote about Iran with Europe as a mirror of self-reflection. These books had a general theme of the decline of Iran. One of the most influential examples of such books is *Yak Kaleme* (One Word) by Mirza Yusuf Khan Mustashar ad-Dowla Tabrizi (1895/1896). He was a liberal writer at the end of the nineteenth century that contributed to the development of a constitutional government for Iran. Through his experiences as a diplomat in European countries he concluded that the Iranian society was backward. This could only be fixed through the introduction of codified law based on universal equal rights for everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim, men and women alike. This would mean a departure from many essential parts of Islamic law. He tried to reconcile Islamic law with the European law system.[78] Modernity discourse did not only deal with law and politics. A large part of the modernization discourse was devoted to the discussion of the position of women and sexual practices.

Discourses concerning gender and sexuality at the turn of the twentieth century were based on different attempts to resolve the modernization dilemma, namely how to become modern and resist western powers without losing cultural integrity.[79] Women and their position within society became a prime issue in the modernity discourse. The discussion of the status and role of women opened a discussion of the power relations within the family and the society as a whole. Different gender behavioral norms were proposed, those were within the cultural norms of Iran but still seemed modern. The power relationships of the patriarchal society were more publicly discussed than ever before.[80]

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78 A.A. Seyed-Gohrab and S. McGlinn, *One Word - Yak Kaleme 19th- Century Persian Treatise Introducing Western Codified Law with an Introduction and Annotated Translation by A.A. Seyed-Gohrab and S. McGlinn* (Leiden, 2010), 1, 11, 13.

79 Ringer, 'The Discourse on Modernization', 56-57

80 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 1.

2.3.1 Political Discourses on Modernity, Gender and Sexuality

Over the course of the nineteenth century contacts between Iran and Europe intensified. Iranians became aware of the differences in gender and sexual practices between their own culture and the societies they visited in Europe. Iranians that visited Europe were confronted and surrounded by female company in public spaces. Seeing men with women in public changed their perspectives on gender and sexuality boundaries. In addition to the experience of the heterosocial public space and heteronormativity as a sexual norm in society, Iranians were confronted with the misinterpretation of Europeans of the homosocial space in Iran for homosexuality that Europe connected to the underdevelopment of Iranian society. Modernist writers began to imagine alternative gender relations and sexual orientations based on the European model in order to become a modern state.[81]

Iranian intellectuals reasoned that the heteronormalization of eroticism and the public space was a prerequisite for achieving modernity. As Najmabadi argues: 'One marker of Iranian modernity then became the transformation of homoeroticism into masqueraded heteroeros. By this I do not mean to imply a mere covering over an already existing notion of homosexuality. Rather, this is itself the moment of constitution of homo- and heterosexuality.'[82] That is to say, with the development of the modernity discourse in Iran, love and desire were for the first time gendered into the modern binaries of male and female, and homo- and heterosexuality. Same-sex practices were connected to gender segregation and seen as prime examples of Iran's underdevelopment. It was reasoned that women were to be introduced to the previously male public sphere. To be able do this, women had to control their sexuality internally so that they would not disturb the public order.[83]

81 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 54-55.

82 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 39.

Roughly three overlapping political discourses on gender, sexuality and modernity developed. One discourse was the new nationalist address of 'scientific domesticity'. It emphasized the development of institutions such as education, health and industrialization with the aim of turning Iran into a modern country. Through education, science, and new technology women had to provide a modern household, this would be the basis for a modern society. The scientific domesticity discourse did not aim at radically altering the existing gender or sexual patterns in society. The second discourse, the social democratic discourse, added to the scientific domesticity discourse more civil liberties and social reforms for the poor. The main difference between the social democratic ideas and the discourse of scientific domesticity was that supporters of the former wanted to drastically alter the gender structures in society. They wanted to redraw gender boundaries between public and private areas in society by lifting the traditional segregation between men and women.[84] Within the social democratic discourse the idea of the modern romantic and companionate marriage was developed and emphasized. For the social democratic discourse marriage had to be more than just a reproductive contract.[85] This was only possible if homosocial and sexual relations were given up in favor for the heterosocial and sexual relations.[86] The third discourse was a counter discourse against modernity. It was formulated as a conservative religious reaction to Western modernity and very negative towards anything to do with the West. This counter discourse was mostly concerned with all reforms that threatened male dominance in the domestic and public sphere. All three discourses seem fairly different. However, as Afary argues: 'Implicit

83 Idem, 56-57.

84 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 111.

85 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 147.

86 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 18.

in all of these discourses was the fact that redrawing the boundaries between the public and private arenas also disturbed the (male) homosocial environment and its semi-clandestine sexual norms.'[87] What started with reimaging the role of women in society, became the reimagining of marriage and the reevaluation the homosocial and sexual practices in society. All three discourses were obsessed with the position of women in society.

2.3.2 Traditional versus Modern Woman

Modern Iranian womanhood developed in contrast with two images: the Euro-American model and the traditional women. Iranian writers saw in the Euro-American archetype woman a common image of modern progress and education but moral laxity. The other image was that of the traditional woman. She was ignorant and superstitious, a victim as well as a collaborator of the traditional Qajar regime. She was not a loyal companion of the husband that the modernists wanted her to be. A loyal companion would be able to assist her husband in the process of rebirth of a modern Iran.[88] As modernist writer and poet Iraj Mirza (1874-1926) wrote: 'In other lands, wife is a companion of men. In this land of sorrows, she is a burden'.[89] It was a paradoxical situation for women. Either they were educated and associated with the vices of sexual immorality of their Euro-American sisters, or they were uneducated, ignorant and blamed for the backwardness of Iran.[90]

One of the most visible markers of the traditional woman in Iran was the veil. In the social democratic modernist desire of desegregating the public space, the veil was indirectly seen as the reason for homosocialization and same-sex sexual desires. It was argued that if

87 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 111-112.

88 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 48.

89 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 160.

90 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 48.

Iran ever wanted to become modern the unveiling of women was necessary. The modernist movement appointed themselves as the new guardians of women. At first glance these writers saw a more respected and broader role for women in society. A closer reading shows that they were primarily concerned with the role of women in the domestic sphere as an educated mother and supportive wife to men.[91] By unveiling women they would become vocal public personas and active participants in society. Women had to come out of their segregation to be free of the traditional seclusion, but in turn they had to be internally disciplined in order not to bring chaos to the social order. Instead of veiling their bodies women began to veil their language and their behavior so that it would be appropriate in the new heterosocial setting.[92] The internal veil of chastity was acquired through modern education and the proper behavior in a heterosocial space.[93] This was the blueprint of the modern patriarchal bargain between men and women. The dismantling of segregation and their homosocial space meant access to the now heteronormative public space. This was only possible by the disciplinary regime of internal veiling. Women accepted this new bargain because of the promise of a monogamous companionate marriage.

2.3.3 Reimagining Marriage

In the second half of the nineteenth century, secular Muslim intellectuals started to campaign for the idea of the companionate monogamous marriage as a more modern sexual contract over the procreation focus in traditional marriage. Writers such as Akhundzadeh and Kermani called for the reform of marriage laws in Iran within the Islamic context. They argued against practices such as polygamy and large age differences between marriage partners, this they

91 Idem, 25-26

92 Najmabadi, ‘Veiled Discourse’, 489, 511.

93 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 150-153.

viewed as the reason for unhappy marriages and lack of attraction between couples. In their opinion, these social practices let to sexual promiscuity and the stagnation of Iranian society. Their ideas were revolutionary for the time and their writing became very influential among the elite of Iranian society in the years that followed.[94]

The changes in the discourse on marriage meant that certain core principals of the marriage and Islamic law had to be reevaluated. They were the male prerogatives of divorce and polygamy that created several problems for women in committing to marriage as a romantic contract. The principles of the romantic contract were based on a mutual exchange, without any imbalance between husband and wife in love, companionship, and the mutual attendance to each other's desires and needs.[95] In the popular poetry genre of the *ghazal* the ideals of love assumes that the beloved is a partner in the relationship. This relationship gives both members rights and obligations to one another. In the idealized depiction of love in Persian poetry, love is a binding contract. The beloved object had obligations toward the beloved, because the beloved object had an exalted status they had to govern the relationship according to protocol based on the principles of justice.[96] Many men, however, advocated romantic marriage without relinquishing the prerogatives characteristic of the traditional procreative sexual contract. In the name of the tradition of Islam they wished to keep their right to polygamy and easy divorce. In the name of modernization they wanted a companionate and loyal wife.[97]

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94 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 114, 116-18.

95 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches,* 174

96 Julie S. Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton, 1987), 258.

97 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 174-175.

2.4 Feminism in Women's Views

The modernist narrative of women was primarily articulated by men. They spoke about women's emancipation and reimaged the female without actually giving power to women themselves. Through a disciplinary discourse they created a heterosocial sphere and their ideal version of a loyal, submissive, and internally veiled wife. An unforeseen side effect of the modern education of women was that women began to articulate their own ideas of womanhood. Women argued for a change of behavior by the male community towards women. They felt that men had no loyalty or respect towards their wives. In articles from the early twentieth century written by women, it is addressed that if women were educated and accomplished they would be able to create a healthy atmosphere in the house. Then men would not feel the need to execute their prerogative of polygamy and would prefer a monogamous marriage.[98]

Early female activists were critical thinkers who confronted political leaders about social and political issues. They argued that only through education could Iran catch up with modern Europe and eliminate the backwardness of women. Consequently, mass literacy became a key stone for the new female self.[99] Many of the first secular schools in Iran were established by women in the nineteenth century, mostly by non-Muslim minorities, but at the beginning of the twentieth century also by Muslim women.[100] The organization of schools and formulation of early women's issues was done within the confines of semisecret women's councils: the *anjumans*. They were established in the midst of preamble to the Constitutional Revolution. While women did actively participate in the preamble and revolution itself, they

98 Janet Afary, 'On the Origins of Feminism in Early 20th- century Iran' *Journal of Women's History* 1, No. 2 (1989): 75, 80.

99 Najmabadi, 'Veiled Discourse', 505, 508.

100 McElrone, 'Nineteenth-Century Qajar Women', 307.

were held back by many male constitutionalists that were determined to uphold traditional gender relations despite the political changes in the country. Instead of waiting for institutional support women began to organize themselves.[101] Only after the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911) and more forcefully under the Pahlavi dynasty (1924-1979) did the state become involved as a factor in improving the status of women. Under the Pahlavi certain channels of social mobility were opened and traditional obstacles to the participation of women in public life were removed. Throughout their reign a general policy encouraged women to be active in the public sphere.[102]

The main focus of early female writers was the pursuit of education, lobbying against polygamy, and against easy divorce by men. These last two issues were rather controversial since a direct attack on polygamy and divorce meant a call for a massive reform of Islamic marital law. In 1909, in an article in *Iran-e Now* Baha'i poet 'Esmat Tehrani (d.1911) tried to convince men that the key to progress for the nation was the advancement of women. This was only possible with a change in the treatment of women by the male community. Because of polygamy men felt no loyalty to their wives, and women did not bother to form any long-lasting emotional attachment to their husbands. With the education of women, wives would be able to give a healthy atmosphere in the homes and men may prefer monogamous marriages.[103] Such a strong connection was drawn between gender behavior of both men and women in order to reach an agreement on the modern patriarchal bargain within a companionate monogamous marriage.

101 Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution,* 181.

102 Kamran Talattof, 'Iranian Women's Literature; From Pre-Revolutionary Social Discourse to Post-Revolutionary Feminism.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29 (1997): 533.

103 Afary, 'On the Origins of Feminism', 67, 69-70, 75.

These writings did not give rise to a feminist literary movement. It only came into being after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. The early twentieth century female writers wrote on themes related to women, but emphasized the sociopolitical issues within these themes rather than specific gender issues.[104] For example the article discussed above emphasizes the progress of the nation as the main issue, to accomplish these men-women relationships had to change. The modern female writer was shaped by a construction of internal veiling, a disciplined de-eroticized body and voice.[105] Female writers were restricted to the male dominated literary discourse, usually writing in an ungendered way as to not attract any attention to the fact that they were female.[106] They were writing in an environment that saw them as inferior. In fighting off this image their writing shows an expression overarching cultural and social concerns. These female writers were attempting to adapt to the old male dominated literary tradition.[107] Their writing was conditioned by the sociopolitical processes of their time, where women's issues were primarily important only in view of the progress of the nation.[108]

This does not mean that women's writings were not significant. By only writing they already rebelled against the general silence of women in society.[109] Women's writing in a male

104 Talattof, 'Iranian Women's Literature', 531.

105 Najmabadi, 'Veiled Discourse', 510.

106 Firuzeh Dianat, 'Iranian Female Authors and "the Anxiety of Authorship"' in *Persian Language, Literature and Culture: New Leaves, Fresh Looks*, ed. Kamran Talattof (London, 2015), 337.

107 Dominic Parviz Brookshaw, 'Women Poets' in *A History of Persian Literature XI. Literature of the Early Twentieth Century: From the Constitutional Period to Reza Shah* , ed. A.A. Seyed-Gohrab (London, 2015), 242.

108 Talattof, 'Iranian Women's Literature', 553-554.

109 Milani, *Veils and Words*, 54.

dominated discourse and using male dominated language made a slight adjustment to the existing disciplinary system that determines gender. Women were by no means victims of modernization. At the beginning of the twentieth century many women used literature and print to let their voices be heard and their traditional silence broken. Writers such as the Qajar princes Taj os-Saltaneh (1883-1936) and poet Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em-Maqāmi (1884-1946) made their criticisms on men that resemble *The Vices of Men* of Astarabadi. The memoires of Taj os-Saltaneh focuses on the political issues related to women and the contradictions of womanhood in Iran. What makes this memoir also interesting is that for the first time women as such were put in the spotlight, not as mothers and wives but as women.[110] She also clearly shows the struggle of female authors of the time in finding a balance between two opposite ideas, modernity versus tradition. It shows a search to the location of herself in a community from which she was both isolated and part of.[111] Zhāle's poetry shows a deeply disturbed view of what it meant to be a woman, mother, and wife. In her poetry she shows how the image of Iranian womanhood is in conflict with her inner self. She writes about very personal and female issues such as marriage and losing a child.[112] The female writers that were active at the turn of the twentieth century opened the door of literature and female participation in society for the great female poets of the middle of the twentieth century, such as Simin Daneshvar (1921-2012), Forough Farrokhzad (1935-1967) and Simin Behbahani (1927-2014).[113] One of the first records of a woman writing on women's issues in the nineteenth century is *The Vices of Men* by Astarabadi.

110 Afsaneh Najmabadi, 'A Different Voice: Taj os-Saltaneh' in *Women's Autobiographies in Contemporary Iran*, ed. Afaneh Najamabadi (Cambridge, 1990),18, 26.

111 Dianat, 'Iranian Female Authors', 342

112 Brookshaw, 'Women Poets', 288.

113 Idem, 241-242.

3. Changing Love and Desire

In premodern times marriage in Iran was considered a legal outlet for heterosexual satisfaction and the religious duty of every Muslim. With the development of the modernization discourse the concept of marriage radically changed.[114] As Najmabadi points out about the social arrangements in Qajar Iran: 'If we name the social regime of Qajar Iran as one of compulsory homosociality combined with procreative heterosexuality that left the structure of sexual desire indeterminate, we can say that Iranian modernity insisted on a regime of compulsory heterosociality that was to underwrite normative heterosexuality.'[115] So because of segregation a culture of homosociality could flourish, whereas marriage was primarily aimed at the continuation of the human species. In the modernization discourse the segregated spaces had to be dissolved in favor of gender mixing. This was necessary in order to promote affectionate heterosexual relationships between men and women. Heterosexual normativity was seen by modernists as a superior social regime that would lead Iranian society into the modern ages.[116] Within the religious counter discourse the formulation focused on marriage as a legal and pious way of satisfying human sexual desire and maintaining social order. They returned to the traditions of the Prophet who marked marriage as an act of piety. Sexual desire was part of human nature and a divine certainty. The Prophet had determined that celibacy was unnatural and marriage was the ideal way to guide these natural and divine urges.[117] Sexual instinct was the basis for a man to desire marriage the religious counter

114 Heari, *Law and Desire*,5.

115 Afsaneh Najmabadi, 'Types, Acts, or What? Regulation of Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century Iran' in *Islamicate Sexualities. Translations Across Temporal Geographies of Desire*, ed. Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi (Cambridge, 2008), 289.

116 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 160.

discourse formulated marriage as a sexual, rather than a procreative contract.[118] In the end, whether the aim was to become like Europe or to be differentiated of Europe, the discourse of marriage was radically changed at the turn of the twentieth century.

The gender roles of men and women had to be reformulated in order to fit the new (hetero) sexual patterns in society. With the heteronormalization of love men and women would have a more intimate relation to each other. Traditional power relationships in the marriage and society had to be renegotiated. Astarabadi argues for a loving companionate relationship in return for male dominance. She is negotiating the terms of the patriarchal bargain and asserting her personal agency to destabilize the known system. A loving companionate relationship was only possible, in her opinion, when the disruptive element in this relationship was given up, namely male promiscuity. The renegotiation of male-female dynamics was felt by many men as a threat to their dominance over women in the public space of society but also in the family. This fear is reflected in the writings of QA. QA is mostly concerned with the implications to male dominance when women should get sexual equality within marriage. The books have in common that they both call for the abandonment of the homosocial space of the opposite sex, in order to focus on the heterosexual marriage. By giving up the homosocial relations Astarabadi was hoping to gain companionate and loving husbands for women, while QA wanted to ensure the wives' loyalty and obedience to their husbands. The homosocial space and same-sex relationships became the main negotiation grounds for the modern male-female dynamics and a new patriarchal bargain.

117 Heari, *Law and Desire*,5.

118 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 160.

3.1 Controlling Sexual Desire

Through the genre of popular ethics QA conveyed an important morality to his male public. In essays on popular ethics the purpose was to emotionally persuade the reader to adopt certain behavior outlined in the texts. His message was only a reflection of what the public already knew. A writer, or editor, cannot write outside of the understanding of his public. The education of women' was not an unusual subject in the Persian literary tradition. The behavior of women was often topics of satire and humor in the male dominated literature tradition.[119]

QA argues for a sexual contract as the preferred way of satisfying male sexual needs. He is slowly moving away from the procreative contract. The importance of the sexual relationship is emphasized in *The Education of Women* in the ninth chapter 'Of Bed and Sleeping Manners'. Not only is this the longest chapter in the book, but QA also informs his readers that 'This is the whole point that I have been trying to make, and this chapter is the most important one'.[120] In other words, the sexual aspect is the most important part of marriage, in connection, with but not exclusively, reproduction. He describes how women should adhere to the desires of their husbands all the time. In this chapter the first signs of the behavioral paradox of modern Iranian women are treated. They had to be chaste but arousing to their husbands. QA states that a woman in bed should sometimes show a little reluctance: 'Reluctance should be combined with coquetry and tenderness, not with donkey like movements and kicking. In play and talk, she should be soft and gracious.'[121]

Modernist writers were struggling to bring together the image of women as inciters of sexual desire and the image of women as a civilizing influence on the family. Kermani argues

119 Masroori, 'Rethinking Gender', 11.

120 QA, 'The Education of Women', 41

121 Idem, 47.

that the men should hunt women down and possess them. Only then could female sexuality and virtue provide the service of perfecting men and arousing the spirit of the Iranian nation.[122] The sexual paradox, created for women can be seen in the poetry of Zhāle as well. In her poem *Bandit* she describes how hard it is for her to reconcile her sexual desires with chastity:

> O you who are far away from fairness, a woman has also desires that sometimes lie in ambush.
>
> Like you yourself, she had a skin on her flesh.
>
> Neither her body is made of steel, nor her heart of iron.
>
> How long should she struggle with passion, like an ascetic.[123]

Zhāle describes how women are under great pressure to control their sexual nature. They are told that they have no other desires, except to pleasure the desire of their husband. The demand that a wife only had the duty to sexually satisfy her husband was by no means new, as we saw it was the fundament of the marriage contract in Islamic law. The principle of love in Persian poetry also contributed to the contractual basis of love. The *ghazal*, the ideal love was one of an obsessed beloved and an object of love that is bound to the principles of justice.[124] With the discourse of modernity the disciplinary means of internalization of these demands significantly changed.[125]

122 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 34.

123 Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em-Maqāmim, 'Bandit' in *Mirror of Dew. The Poetry of Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em-Maqāmi introduced and translated by A.A. Seyed-Gohrab,* trans. A.A. Seyed-Gohrab (Boston, 2014), 181.

124 Meisami, *Medieval Persian,* 258.

125 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity', 37.

QA's arguments on sexuality in marriage are very reminiscent to the arguments made in the eleventh century book *Kimia-yi sa'adat* by Ghazali (d.1111). Ghazali emphasizes that the purpose of marriage is not sexual satisfaction. It is even dangerous to be sexually satisfied within marriage. When a woman can satisfy a man's sexual desires, he might develop feelings of affection and love. This would result in the man becoming subordinate to the woman. There was a fear of gender reversal in Ghazali's writing. Gender hierarchy in the marital relationship was all depended on sexual dominance.[126] Iranian writings from the beginning of the nineteenth century about monogamy in the West show similar notions. Iranians saw European women as nymphomaniacs who slept every night with numerous men. They were seen as powerful matriarchs who had emasculated their men by controlling the sexual relations in society.[127] Changing marriage from purely procreative to one of equal sexual desire, it was feared that the female sexual desire could overpower the dominant male position.

In *The Education of Women* it is not love that threatens the masculinity of men, as is seen in Ghazali, it is the sexual desire of women that is a threat to the patriarchal hierarchy. The husband becomes subordinate to the wife when it is the female desire and sexuality that governs the sex life of the marriage. He argues:

> The relationship between husband and wife can be of two kinds. In the first kind, the husband is a captive in the hands of a shrewish, ill-tempered, and lustful wife. He had no choice but to be henpecked, beaten up, and he had to be at the lady's beck and call

126 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 159.

127 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 112.

> in order to avoid being cured, beaten, or divorced. He has to act according to his wife's desires, not his own.[128]

Here men are subordinate to the lust of women. A better kind of marriage is his second category: 'In the second kind the wife and husband are extremely affectionate and have sex out of mutual desire.' [129] The articulation of 'mutual desire' suggests sexual equality between husband and wife. His further elaboration on the second kind of marriage makes clear what he reckons as 'mutual desire': 'Whenever the husband, day or night, has an inclination to play and have intercourse, she should be ready, and she should not say "no" because she will regret it'.[130] For QA the principal of 'mutual desire' means complete sexual subordination of the wife towards the husband. In doing so, the patriarchal power relations within marriage are confirmed. QA blames women of the sexual laxity of men. For if women are not ready to sexually satisfy their husband these will get '[…] infatuated with vulgar concubines. This is why the wife should not act so haughtily. She should be ready whenever the husband wants her and in whatever manner […]'.[131] QA was not justifying men who had concubines. He was arguing that marriage was the only way to satisfy human sexuality and the importance of complete female submission in the sexual relation. He promoted the heterosexual marriage focused on a lifelong commitment, for he argues:

> We cannot change our wives every moment as we change a shirt or underwear. Therefore, a wife is the companion for life. One should pray to God that her

128 QA, 'The Education of Women', 49.

129 Idem.

130 Idem.

131QA, 'The Education of Women', 47.

> disposition and behavior are good; otherwise, we will be afflicted for life, and we will have to suffer and endure.[132]

He emphasizes the importance of heterosexual relations through the use of Islamic law and Persian literary tradition. He was preoccupied with creating his partner for a lifelong monogamous marriage, without losing the dominant position in the relationship.

3.2 Loving Boys

The fear of gender reversal and the emasculating character of love for a woman complements the male homoeroticism that existed in Iranian society. This feature of society was a major obstruction in the modernist attempts to promote the romantic marriage. Modernity discourse was struggling to refashion marriage wherein a man and a woman had an affectionate relationship, when the love and desire for a woman was viewed as a threat to masculinity. The practice of homoeroticism and same sex-sexual relations had to be recast as major vice in order to refashion marriage[133] The political discourses on modernity shaped the transformative regulations in sexual normative desires.

When looking at the refashioning of modern marriage and the recasting of homoerotic-affection, one anecdote in *The Vices of Men* is particularly instrumental to the understanding of sexual relations at the end of the nineteenth century in Iran. The *amradbazi* is singled out over the other vices as an important obstacle in the relationship between husband and wife. Astarabadi states: ‘The husband should love his wife, not be pederastic, faultfinding, coarse, and he should provide with care and out of love whatever the wife asks.’[134] The anecdote, embellished by Astarabadi’s satirical comments, is a mix of modern ideas of marriage and premodern attitudes towards sexual acts. It highlights the negative

132 Idem, 36.

133 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 160.

effect pederast behavior had on the marital relationship. The story is about a man who had a very beautiful wife but he was not interested in her. He would always find new faults in her and would not sleep with her, because he was fond of young boys. [135] As such, he is not fulfilling his reproductive obligation of the marriage. Same-sex relations were only recorded in the upper-classes of Qajar society as problematic when there were marks of socially unacceptable behavior, such as the failure of one's reproductive obligation. [136] Astarabadi emphasizes here that the problem of pederast behavior was not necessarily the inclination towards same-sex itself but that men had no attention for their wives. The male same-sex sexual relations were an example of their self-indulgence, for Astarabadi states that: 'It has been seen and heard many times that those men who have beautiful wives pay no attention to them and are always engaged in their debauchery.'[137] Men spent all their money on these boys and have nothing left for the maintenance of their family, as Astarabadi states: 'If their poor wives die from stomachache or colic of the colon, they do not have a penny to buy a lump of sugar of medicine to cure them.'[138]

By making a caricature of men, Astarabadi is able to discuss a seemingly trivial manner in a dignified way. Furthermore, by exaggerating certain aspects of the pederast, Astarabadi is able to highlight his most ridicules features.[139] The aim was to show that the

134 Bibi Khanom Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men' in *The Education of Women and The Vices of Men. Two Qajar Tracts Translated from Persian and with an Introduction by Hassan Javadi and Willem Floor,* ed. Hasan Javadi and Willem Floor (Syracuse, 2010), 75.

135 Idem, 76.

136 Najmabadi, 'Types, Acts, or What?', 276.

137 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 76.

138 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 105.

amradbazi were disruptive to the marital relationship.[140] In the first decades of the twentieth century the figure of the *amrad* had turned rapidly from a desired figure to one of backwardness and mockery. The *amradbazi*, once the pinnacle of love in art briskly transformed into something considered as backwards. The shaming of these men is apparent in Astarabadi. The husband that asked for a young boy found himself in an awkward situation when he fell from the bed. His penis got cut on a nail and his ass was torn because of a tree branch, and the neighbors brought a doctor to treat his injuries. Through comic relieve Astarabadi makes fun of the husband and questions his masculinity, thus publicly shaming the husband and his pederast tendencies.[141] The emasculating threat of love was clearly shifting from men that loved women to men that loved men. This was a fast process wherein as we can read in Astarabadi at the end of the nineteenth century the *amradbazi* was still openly practiced, but in the 1930's the *amradbazi* and the *amrad* seem to have disappeared and forgotten.[142]

3.3 Disassembling Homosociality

Astarabadi and QA both comment on the disconnection between men and women because of the time people spend within their respective homosocial community. In the homosocial communities, people found the companionship and comfort that modernists wanted to transfer to the marriage. QA and Astarabadi both argue for the dismantling of the homosocial space of the opposite sex, but were not willing to give up their own. [143]

139 Hasan Javadi, *Satire in Persian Literature* (London and Toronto 1988), 47.

140 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 176.

141 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 77-78.

142 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 235.

143 QA, 'The Education of Women', 4 and Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 66.

According to QA women became corrupt by spending too much time with other women. Older women would fill the heads of younger women with ideas that were harmful to marriage. He argues that: 'Women have made a great mistake in supposing that the source of love is sleeping together in bed. Surely the origin of this notion is those hateful old women […] who first conceived this miserable idea of a bed for two.'[144] It was the fault of older women that young brides had unrealistic ideas about marriage. Therefore, the time spent in the homosocial space was harmful for the marriage. Another sinful aspect of the female homosocial space, in the view of QA, was that women were prone to gossip about intimate details of their marriage. He states that:

> During the day, she should not sit, as is the custom of the women of our time, and tell everything of what happened last night and sometimes show all her friends the marks she may have had on the neck or breast, saying: "Look how fortunate I am." Curse be on you and such a good fortune. What good fortune? Fortunate is she who does not behave in such a manner.[145]

Women had to give up their homosocial communities to become completely devoted to their husbands. QA himself had no intention to give up his relations to the male homosocial community. His writing is firmly based within the male homosocial environment. *The Education of Women* is a call for solidarity among men. The homosocial environment is revealed by the anecdote QA gives.[146] He explains the miseries told by a friend about his wife and the pages of advice he came across through a different friend on these pages of advice

144 QA, 'The Education of Women', 41.

145 Idem, 46.

146 Najmabadi, 'Veiled Discourse', 498.

The Education of Women was based.[147] QA is addressing primarily a male audience by approaching the fathers of girls as a sign of male solidarity and community;

> If this little book pleases the gracious gentlemen, it will be extremely fortunate, and I hope that they will give it to their daughters so that they will read it in the schools. And if they are not pleased with it, I hope that they will not criticize the lady of the house.[148]

By placing his piece firmly within the homosocial environment QA asserts a male solidarity towards ill-tempered women. The editor of the printed version found it important to emphasize the male solidarity in the revised Foreword.

Astarabadi in turn, writes out of a strong feeling of female solidarity against the demands made by men.[149] Just as QA was motivated to write his book by his male friends within his homosocial environment, so is Astarabadi encouraged to write *The Vices of Men* by her friends in the female homosocial environment. This becomes clear in an anecdote she gives in her introduction, which is remarkable similar in content and form to the motivation given by QA. Her friends asked her to write a response after being outraged by the contents of *The Education of Women*. She was introduced to the book by friends who told her '[…] it is a book written by a rascal, who is unique and a wonder in the world. He had given it the inauspicious name *The Education of Women*. I have seen it, and it is ready here. Have a look at it.'[150] Astarabadi and her friends discussed the book and: 'In asking me to write them, they

147 QA, 'The Education of Women', 3-4.

148 Idem, 4.

149 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 174.

150 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 64.

insisted excessively, so per force I started preparing the book answering the criticisms of the book *The Education of Women*, wrote for each a satisfying answer, and made my sisters happy and pleased.'[151] Astarabadi does this only after criticizing her sisters for idle gossip about their husbands, mocking QA's remark on the inclination of women to gossip. She continues on a more serious note, after hearing some of the stories of the behavior of men. By mirroring the rhetoric of QA, Astarabadi constructs a feeling of female solidarity against the accusations made by QA. This form of mirroring is an often used method of satire in Persian poetry. By mirroring his opening and exaggeration of his rhetoric on the gossiping women in the female homosocial space, she makes a parody of his writings.[152] She firmly places her work in the female homosocial space and a broader Persian literature context. Finally the motivation defends the female sociality that QA looks down upon in his work. Women needed each other in a world where men did not see them. [153]

3.4 Companionate Monogamous Marriage?

The companionate monogamous marriage as advocated in the modernity discourse, both by male and female writers, was a tool for the development of a modern nation. A wife who was the companion of the husband could support him in his endeavors to build a modern Iran. It was not the women's issue that was the primary goal, but the progression of the nation.[154] Both Astarabadi and QA marked homosociality in general, and same-sex sexual acts particularly among men, as an obstacle for the progress to place love and companionship into marriage. For Astarabadi an extra obstacle was that men were unwilling to give up their

151 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 66.

152 Javadi, *Satire*, 48-49.

153 Dianat, 'Iranian Female Authors', 340.

154 Talattof, 'Iranian Women's Literature', 553-554.

sexual prerogatives of polygamy and male-initiated divorces but did expect complete sexual and social availability and loyalty of women within marriage.[155]

Astarabadi strongly argues for an equal companionate marriage with an emotional connection. A quality she recognized in the way European men treated their wives. She criticizes men like QA that suggest knowing about the European ways:

> It is strange that this ignoramus, who considers himself one of those so-called westernized and civilized people and an imitator of European teachers, nevertheless clearly is not even half-civilized. All the people of Europe apparently consider the [following] verse as if it was like "the book of Mani and the drawings of Arzhang," and they consider it as a model. Verily, women are like flowers that we have created for you and all you desire the smell of flowers.[156]

The emotional connection according to Astarabadi could only be accomplished when there is affinity between the couple. This can only be established when they are of similar upbringing, age and social status, she especially criticizes arranged marriages.[157] For Astarabadi the companionate marriage was an unrealistic goal for many men. The average Iranian man is described as followed:

> There are many deceitful and ill-natured men who, out of evil intention, search and find a woman with property to marry her. Thereafter, by hook and crook, by deceit and tyranny, or with pleasant and unpleasant manners, he gets hold of her property, he is madly squanders the property as if it were stolen money, on

155 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches,* 162.

156 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 68.

157 Idem, 67.

> ridiculous expenditures such as alchemy, gambling, whoring, pederasty, and parties. The he fall into misery, poverty, and begging and will divorce that poor woman with or without children. Then he will go after another woman.[158]

Men marry without any intention of love or romance, marriage is seen as a way to improve status and wealth. Because of easy divorce men could easily leave a woman without major consequences. A woman however, would lose everything: her property, her honor, and her children. Astarabadi wonders why women would take such a risk with their hearts and lives. Men already proved to be untrustworthy because they did not give women what they lawfully. She argues that according to Islamic law:

> One of the first requirements of getting married is that he should pay the bride's money; the men of our time do not pay this […]God has said: "and treat them well," but men do not do even one thousandth of what God has told them to do with women.[159]

The basis of marriage in Islamic law states that a man has to pay a price for the exclusive rights to have sexual intercourse with a woman.[160] Astarabadi refuses male dominance as set in modern marriage as long as the man does not behave as the Koran had set: 'Has not God said in the Koran: "You shall treat them nicely," not cruelly and roughly? […] If the Prophet of God (peace be upon him) behaved towards his wife in such a manner, why do other men behave in such an [abominable] manner?'[161] If men were not able to do their basic Islamic

158 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 67-68.

159 Idem, 106.

160 Haeri, *Law of Desire*, 36-37.

161 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 113.

duty now, how can they be any different in the future? Astarabadi argues that the subjection of women to men should be determined by the piety of that particular man.[162] This becomes clear when Astarabadi discusses the institution of polygamy. She is not per se arguing for a monogamous marriage. When discussing men who have multiple wives, the issue is not against polygamy it is against the lack of just men in the world who could practice fair polygamy. She uses the polygamist as a prime example of the dishonesty of men:

> If you want to see the extent of the deceit of men, when they marry two women, they always lie. […] They have truly said that the face of a man with two wives is black, let alone a man with three or four, who has neither this world nor the other.[163]

She uses the Koran here to demonstrate the unfairness of men, for the Koran states that 'Men can marry four wives, provided that they treat them justly.'[164] However just men are a rarity. Men are untrustworthy toward their wives and do not treat them justly. Men did not give women what was rightfully theirs, not in terms of the marriage contract according to Islam, nor according to the ideals of love according to Persian tradition.[165] If men wanted to be loved like the ideals of love required, they had to accept the obligations that were connected to it. She emphasizes that love cannot be conducted as a one sided principle, and men had obligations towards their wives.[166] Astarabadi tried to reconcile Islamic law, Persian culture, and modern discourse to reach a form of modernity that would fit the cultural context of Iran.

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162 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 35.

163 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 110.

164 Idem, 84.

165 Meisami, *Medieval Persian*, 258.

166 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 84.

Astarabadi writes as a traditional Muslim woman trying to improve her situation through the modernity discourse.[167] She is able to influence the behavioral patterns that assert her agency within the patriarchal society by placing her book firmly within Islamic and Persian context. Astarabadi argues not for total equality between husband and wife. She bargains for the new conditions of the female submissive position within the marriage where women are treated justly and with respect within the confines of already known behavioral patterns.

In later years the idea of romantic marriage became a grave disappointment to women. An example of this can be found in the memoirs of Taj os-Saltaneh. She describes how her disappointing marriage led her to leave her husband at the age of 18 (1901). She argues that the problems of marriage in Iran were to be attributed to the social practices of arranged marriages and the young age at which girls were married. These practices obscured the way for a loving marriage.[168] Zhāle writes in her poem *Longing for Love* how in her youth she was looking for love, but how in her marriage she found nothing but bitterness.[169] The works of Zhāle and Taj os-Saltaneh show the impact that the companionate marriage had on women at the beginning of the twentieth century. They had given up part of their freedom from the homosocial space for the empty promise of a dedicated husband.

167 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 35.

168 Najmabadi, 'A Different Voice', 22.

169 Zhāle, 'Longing for Love', 111.

4. Creating the Perfect Partner

With the changing concept of marriage, gender behavior of women *and* men had to change to enable the new male-female relation. Gender is an elusive concept, something that is produced, reproduced, and legitimized by social arrangements and social interaction. Gender behavior is not a natural phenomenon. It is learned and formulated just as the related dominance and subordination in gender hierarchy.[170] The rethinking of the proper behavior was necessary for the transformation of marriage, heteronormalization of love and heteronormalization of public space. These were perceived as key of Iran's modernization project. The changes in gender behavior and sexual relationships were simultaneous and interconnected processes in public debate, together this formulated a new patriarchal consensus.[171] *The Vices of Men* and *The Education of Women* represent two forces that had their own ideas on the proper behavior of men and women. Both texts were firmly embedded within the Islamic Persian cultural and literary context while also referring to different parts of the modernity discourse. They adapted the performance of gender by slightly altering the repetitious gender pattern without stepping outside of their cultural context.[172]

4.1 Disciplining Women

The popularity of *The Education of Women*, decades after it was originally written, can be related to the fear of men of losing traditional male prerogatives in marriage as it was envisioned in the modernity discourse. With the emancipation of women by the end of the

170 Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, 'Doing Gender' *Gender and Society* 1, No. 2 (1987): 147.

171 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 13.

172 Webster, 'The Politics of Sex and Gender', 3.

nineteenth century the gender hierarchy and the dominance of the male guardianship became threatened. The integration of women into the public order and into education, as the modernity discourse proposes, threatened the male dominance in gender hierarchy and radically changed the gender borders of society. The ideas represented by QA must have been very appealing for the male elite audience confronted with modernity. In *The Education of Women* men are positioned as victims of women. As a consequence, women had to be put back in their proper place and male dominance had to be reinstated to its full power. His Foreword is full of hints that the behavior of women and modern ideas were to blame for the loss of women's virtue. The readers of *The Education of Women* witnessed changes of behavior in their wives and daughters. Women were negotiating male guardianship with progressive ideas about gender equality, women's participation in the public sphere, and the rule of law. As guardians, men were not only in control over the house but also society, while women were the symbol of honor and family. This combination meant that if women came into dishonor, it would dishonor their male guardian and thus the entire society.[173] To protect the male privilege, the gender borders, and social order QA argues a counter offence in order to regain control over spoiled women because: '[…] how can he not be apprehensive of his wife when his honor, his property, his life, his children, and even his soul are in her hands?' Women had to be guided by man for they are '[…] a creature who is defect in reason.'[174]QA illustrates in his Foreword the miseries of men because of improper behavior of women: 'Eleven years of my dear life were wasted until she died because she did not have a good temper, which is a requirement of womanhood.'[175] The only solution to the misery of men was that women to obey their husbands and take care of all their needs and desires. Only through

173 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 18, 21.

174 QA, 'The Education of Women', 36.

175 Idem, 3.

the complete subjugation of women could men reinstate their power within the gender hierarchy.

QA's text corresponds with older advice books regarding the 'education' of women. His book was printed at the end of the nineteenth century but not written at the time. The public of this new printed version was more exposed to the modernity discourse than QA himself. His public saw old ideas that they could apply to their new situation. QA writes in a traditional literary way. He uses a combination of Perso-Islamic poetry and reformulates many of Ghazali's rules on the behavior of women through a satirical writing style.[176] The result of this combination of traditional writing and new interpretation is the construction of a new and more restraining discourse on the female body that resembles Foucault's notion of the modern disciplinary body.[177]

In an earlier translation of *The Education of Women* by Najmabadi she translated the title as *Disciplining Women*. Apart from linguistic considerations, this might have been a more suitable title.[178] QA drafted an image of the ideal woman who was submissive and loyal to her husband, in mind and body. The rules described by QA resemble disciplinary control over the human body combined with specific aspects of femininity and power in the patriarchal society. Feminist philosopher Sandra L. Bartky describes three ways that modern disciplining of the body as developed by Foucault, has affected the female body for the creation of femininity: 'those that aim to produce a body of a certain size and general configuration; those that bring forth from the body a specific repertoire of gestures, postures, and movements; and

176 Masroori, 'Rethinking Gender and Humour', 12-13.

177 Afary, *Sexual Politics*, 118-120.

178 Najmabadi, 'Veiled Discourse', 490.

those that are directed toward the display of the body as an ornamented surface.'[179] Women who do not comply with these disciplinary demands of femininity are seen as ‘loose women’. Loose women are out of control and undisciplined, less attractive to men and a threat to the patriarchy. The fear of loose women is not only in the violation of morals but also that of the expected speech, movements, and behavior of women. Styles of the female figure change over time and geography. However, they always reflect the particular cultural obsessions and preoccupations.[180] *The Education of Women* shows how the feminine is constructed into a docile body. Different parts of *The Education of Women* explain the proper behavior that women should follow to comply with a new and more restricted idea of femininity. QA spends three of his chapters on the control of the vocal expression of women, another three on how they should move and two on hygiene, beauty and dressing. All of them are aimed to teach women how to be a proper, loyal, chaste, and most of all silent wife.

A very direct example of silencing women can be seen in chapter two: ‘Control Your Tongue’. In this chapter old rules regarding the behavior of women can be easily applied within the modern disciplinary discourse. The chapter is forcing women in the modern disciplinary corset of femininity by controlling their speech. The tongue and voice of women are surrounded with traditional prohibitions and precautions regarding control. Women were thought to have no control over their tongue. They constantly and compulsively moved their mounts causing sound contamination in the home and in society. Expressions of the voice were to be pushed back to the confines of the private homes, as such the peace of the community was imbedded within the silence of women.[181] QA argues that:

179 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity’, 27.

180 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity’, 27- 30.

181 Milani, *Veils and Words*, 48-50.

> As much as possible, she should not say unbecoming and uncouth words, even if they are jest, because even in jest unbecoming words are not appropriate. She should never criticize her husband to his face, and she should not try to interrupt him; she should not complain either directly or indirectly. She should absolutely avoid sending messages because one word leads to another.[182]

Silence was a prerequisite of the ideal woman, a key criterion for her beauty and chastity. The periodic printing press and modern discourse made it possible to more forcefully impose these traditional ideas on women, as can be seen in an example of the poetry of Zhāle in her poem *Claiming Chastity.* She makes a strong connection between the mouth and internal chastity: 'When chastity leaves the heart, it causes a commotion in the mouth; expel it from your mouth, so that it returns to your heart.'[183] In other words, a chaste woman is a silent woman. Milani has discovered in her research on Iranian women's literature that the ideal Iranian woman is; 'self-effacing rather than self-promoting, enclosed rather than exposed, mute rather than vocal.'[184] If women did not abide to the view of femininity then they were seen as unattractive.[185] QA confirms this when he argues; '[…] the beauty and grace of a woman show when she talks softly and quietly, her voice being as weak and delicate as if she has risen from the sickbed.'[186] Women had to be silent and obedient to their husbands; 'Even if the fault was not hers, she should apologize and say, "I was wrong".'[187] The control of men over women

182 QA, 'The Education of Women', 17.

183 Zhāle, 'Claiming Chastity', 145.

184 Milani, *Veils and Words*, 49.

185 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity', 39.

186 QA, 'The Education of Women', 19.

187 Idem, 16.

was an important point in the modernization discourse. Kermani argues that by completely controlling women in the domestic sphere, women could focus of supporting their husband and raising their children in service of the new nation.[188]

Another instrument of control can be found in the reduction of status of women within the gender hierarchy. The discipline that is at work is part of a larger context that makes up for a non-egalitarian system of sexual subordination. As Bartky points out: 'This system aims at turning women into the docile and complaint companions of men […]' [189] Women are not only silenced but also busy with their appearances and their movements that they have no time at all to conduct any other activities. Here a paradox begins, for women are often viewed as silly and narcissistic because of the time they spend on their appearance and precise movements. It is also expected of them to look and act a certain way, for otherwise they will not really be viewed as female by themselves, by men, and by other women.[190] QA sketches a behavioral pattern where every action should be elegant. An example is her eating habits: 'She should not put large pieces into her mouth and should not chew too quickly so that half of the food comes out of her mouth or so that her mouth is so full she cannot breath by though her nose.'[191] This is followed by several other elegant ways for a lady to eat and sit. QA describes how women should dress for the pleasure of men. He is thus placing the pleasures and opinions of men above that of women. And making women preoccupied with correct movements and appearance. QA's rules and norms on how to dress and behave for women were to create disciplined feminine bodies that were in all aspects subjected to male

188 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 34.

189 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity', 37.

190 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity', 38-39.

191 QA, 'The Education of Women', 28.

dominance. In the work of Zhāle, in contrast to Astarabadi, it is clear that she is struggling with recreating her image in accordance to the male gaze. She is repeatedly confronted with the images of womanhood and female beauty that society bestows on her. Zhāle had completely internalized this image of femininity. However, these expectations of womanhood by men were not compatible with her inner-self.[192] Zhāle uses the metaphor of the mirror to reflect her inner struggle that resulted out of the attempt to connect what is expected of her to her inner-self.[193] Feelings of shame and deficiency experienced by Zhāle for not complying with the external stereotype are features of internalized femininity.[194] Zhāle's struggle shows the speed with which disciplinary femininity was internalized by women in Iranian society.

When not following the discipline of femininity, women would lose their change to love, marriage, and honor. QA had no institutional power or any official sanction ability. The indirect consequences of not following this discipline of femininity were severe for women. Men reading and discussing the book gained certain expectations of women, if women did not comply with this, men had the power to withhold male patronage. Women would be denied sexual relations and marriage.[195] The misbehavior of women justified the refusal of male patronage, according to QA:

> When the woman makes up her own mind and sees herself as the only open on the stage, and she considers herself the equal of her husband, then she should not expect

192 Lila Rahimi Bahmany, 'Bewildered Mirror: Mirror, Self and World in the Poems of Forugh Farrokzad' in *Forugh Farrokhad Poet of Modern Iran. Iconic Women and Feminine Pioneer of New Persian Poetry,* ed. Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Nasrin Rahimieh (London and New York, 2010), 74-75.

193 Nina A. van der Leer, 'The Feminine Mirror in the Poetry of Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em-Maqāmi', unpublished (January 2016), 8-10.

194 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity', 33.

195 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity', 37.

love from her husband unless she willingly and whole-heartedly obeys her husband and says, “My welfare is your welfare.”[196]

If women wanted a loving relationship with their husbands, these were the terms that they had to comply to. QA argues that: ‘The essence of love is good manners, silence, propriety, and charming conversation.’[197] By collectively denying male patronage, men had far reaching disciplinary power over female behavior. This power was magnified with the dismantling of the female homosocial space. With the dismantling of the female community, women were even more dependent on male patronage than before.

The demands of bodily disciplinary rules are connected to how women themselves judged their bodies and behavior. The discipline of femininity is implemented not only by the power of men but through pressure of women on other women and eventually by internal discipline. Femininity becomes a presumed natural feature of the female self.[198] The question is to what extend were these disciplinary demands internalized? In the language use of women there is a sign that the disciplinary norms were more implemented in later writings of women than in Astarabadi. Najmabadi argues that Astarabadi was writing more freely for her exclusive female audience than later writers for their mixed public. Astarabadi uses for instance more sexual language and expressive imagery than would be acceptable of women in later times.[199] Astarabadi uses humor as an instrument in the expression of her discontent on gender relations. She chooses to attack QA in her own vocabulary, timbre and viewpoints.[200]

196 QA, ‘The Education of Women’, 14.

197 Idem, 7.

198 Bartky, 'Foucault, Femininity’, 37.

199 Najmabadi, ‘Veiled Discourse’, 499-500.

Astarabadi shows that the internalization of QA's rules of bodily conduct was not completed yet. Astarabadi's reaction to the restrictions of movement is especially stern:

> Concerning how women should walk. A woman had to take small steps and talk softly and weakly like a person who has just risen from the sickbed. Of course, such a woman is good for a great emir, who is blood lusty, evil, tyrannical, and a faultfinder. All the housework and the work outside are done by men and the wife stays at home, and all the time looks after the husband, and if the husband is pleasure loving, he seeks his pleasure outside the home. Or if she is the wife of a poor man, then the addition to her many burdensome and difficult chores she had to please him as well. How can she behave in this way, be like a humble slave in the service of the mighty master?[201]

For every rule of femininity Astarabadi shows how they are impossible, irrational, or just ridiculous. Astarabadi rejects the reading of modernity that allowed more disciplinary practices to be imposed on the female body.[202] This shows that the modern bodily disciplining of women at that time might have been desired by men in society, but elite women had no intention of willingly surrendering to it. Astarabadi had no desire to go against the male dominance or attack the principle of patriarchy, she did argue that the submission of women should be conditioned on the character of men.[203] She explains that: '[…] I wrote *The Vices of Men* in answer to *The Education of Women* so that men's failings would be known. Perhaps

200 Dianat, 'Iranian Female Authors', 340.

201 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 72.

202 Idem, 68.

203 Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman*, 35.

they now will refrain from educating women and devote themselves to their own education.'[204] Astarabadi argues that men only think about their own pleasures while ignoring their wives. Furthermore she explains that men had to be educated themselves before they were entitled to comment on women. Astarabadi's main concern was the neglecting of women by their husbands. All the evils of men can be linked to this overarching vice.

4.2 The Demands of Women

The behavior of men, in the discourse on the modern companionate marriage was largely untouched. *The Vices of Men* is the female vocalization of what the expectations of men's behavior in modern marriage are:

> He should not ask her something that cannot be done, and he should not find fault and quibble with you. He should not be ruthless and cruel; he should not be stubborn and always with his friends and a truant from home; he should not womanize and be loving boys or, like a spineless husband, divorce his wife without any reason.[205]

She attacks men by listing their vices, namely that they only focus on their own pleasure and how they ignore and abuse their wives. Astarabadi names the pederasts as the type of men that neglect their wives. This group of libertines and debauchers is the worst kind, for they do nothing for the country and just think about their own pleasure: 'All troubles of our time come from these idle people. From dawn until three hours into the evening they talk vain words, wander about, and spend their time uselessly.'[206] They spend all their times with their friends chasing boys, drinking and gambling. With these kinds of men, women were supposed to marry, be loyal to, and love while giving up their own homosocial relations in the name of the

204 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 58.

205 Idem, 62.

206 Idem, 105.

companionate marriage? It was not the same-sex sexual act that was of concern but the inability of men to provide for the family, financially and emotionally. [207] *The Vices of Men* gives the image on everything a man should not be. If men rid themselves of the vices the proper behavior of men remains. These men are worthy of being a husband and a respected citizen of the modern nation.

Astarabadi emphasizes that the treatment of women by their husbands was humiliating. These husbands did not have the right to demand obedience from their wives. Astarabadi shows how a good man should act in a story of her own life and marriage. She and her husband were very much in love but at one point after many years and many children Astarabadi feels that she cannot sexually satisfy her husband anymore. She finds him a temporary wife. Astarabadi and her husband had a conflict when the temporary wife had come to life in their house. Astarabadi had to leave her house; '[…] but after leaving me, my husband was ashamed because he was behaving awfully and trying to cover up his faults.' [208] They made up and she came back to the house, however 'Since I was not certain of my husband, I did not say anything, and I behaved extremely accommodatingly [...] Anyhow, my husband and I were in love again with each other, as they have said: Two friends appreciate friendship/When after separation they renew companionship.' [209] She shows how a loving marriage can overcome conflict and how men and women have to work together to accommodate a stable home. For a companionate marriage to work, men had to change their behavior as well as women. Men had to treat their women with respect and loyalty, which

207 Najmabadi, *Women with Mustaches*, 157.

208 Astarabadi, 'The Vices of Men', 124-125.

209 Idem.

meant that they had to listen and provide for them. In return women had to be accommodating to the wishes and desires of their husband.

These were the conditions of the female patriarchal bargain, formulated and argued for within the context of Persian-Islamic cultural tradition. By making small alterations in the behavioral patterns and staying within the accepted confines of culture Astarabadi asserts female agency into the patriarchal system. *The Vices of Men* gives a small insight into how women dealt with the male dominance at the time. By writing, Astarabadi lifted the veil of the female community and showed how women thought about their position in marriage and in society. The demands of women were very slow to bring real change in the behavior of men. In her poem *Advice for the Sisters* Zhāle describes how men ignore their wives, apart from her being a thing that keeps them warm in bed:

> If you make amorous gestures to your husband, men will not call women, "woman", for they are the commanders and we, the followers of commands.
>
> Except for a warm bed and a soft embrace, what do we offer that is fitting for our partners in bed?
>
> At times they call you: "the house", at another time: "the children" for it is a disgrace to the masters to call you by name.[210]

Zhāle emphasizes the importance of kindness and gentleness in a husband and how he should be focused on his family. The ideal husband is a companion and friend of his wife as illustrated in her poem *An Appropriate Husband*: 'A fitting husband is a man who riles over his wife and children but without bellowing, unfairness, or ugly behavior.'[211] Just as Astarabadi, Zhāle does not wish to overthrow the patriarchal power of men. Her aim is to

210 Zhāle, 'Advice for the Sisters', 97.

adjust their behavior towards their wives for a more loving relationship. For the way men are behaving now is harmful towards women as she describes in the poem *Love.* She worries that women are nothing than playing tools for men: 'O friend, love van be obtained by gambling one's life, but what can a poor woman do, but gamble her body? Who is a woman? Is she a plaything of a man's bold desires? Unavoidably, she had nothing to stake but loveliness and deception.'[212] Here there is an echo of how Astarabadi criticized men on only thinking about their own desires and not thinking about the needs of their wife and family.

Taj os-Saltaneh's memoires voice some of the more radical ideas women had about their own place in society and the place of men. Just like Astarabadi os-Sultaneh criticizes men, and calls for gender reform at a national level. She was challenged by the formulation of Persian national identity and the new formulations of gender in the discourse of nation. She is tergiversating between the images of women in tradition and modernity.[213] The memoirs of Taj os-Saltaneh show the tension and contradictions in male-female relations in Iran. Men who saw themselves as modern and progressive could no longer accept the traditional male-female relations as they had existed so far. Veiled women were not a good companion for these progressive men. Through education women had to become the counter part of modern men. Every step meant breaking with old social borders for women into a new set of socially controlled boundaries.[214] Astarabadi was one of the first to express women's issues and reconstructing the image of women. But as Zhāle and os-Saltaneh show in the years after *The*

211Ali-Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, 'Poetry as Awakening: Singing Modernity' in *A History of Persian Literature Volume XI Literature of the Early Twentieth Century From the Constitutional Period to Reza Shah,* ed. A.A. Seyed-Gohrab (London, 2015), 51.

212 Zhāle, 'Love', 91.

213 Dianat, 'Iranian Female Authors', 343.

214 Najmabadi, 'A Different Voice', 18, 26 -29.

Vices of Men women were still revising, deconstructing and reconstructing the image of women inherited by male literature.[215]

The works of Astarabadi and QA represent the first steps of new social constructions of gender that would be further developed in the imminent decades. The new constructs were necessary for the promotion of a new kind of love, the love between a husband and wife. Both Astarabadi and QA created in their books their own reformulation of gender behavior that would be appropriate within marriage. They were both first and foremost preoccupied with the formation of the perfect companion in marriage that was compatible within the known cultural and social borders of society.

215 Dianat, 'Iranian Female Authors', 341.

Conclusion

Modernity opened a way for new forms of domestic roles for women. Modernity did not demolish patriarchy, just renegotiated the terms of control and subjectivity of women to new forms of discipline and control, usually self-imposed by women. Modernity had good and bad consequences for the emancipation of women in Iran and more general in the Middle East. As Lila Abu Lughod argues; 'The tricky task in all this is how to be skeptical of modernity's progressive claims of emancipation and critical of its social and cultural operations and yet appreciate the forms of energy, possibility, even power that aspects of it might have enabled, especially for women.'[216] For women in Iran modernity's progressive claims of emancipation meant that for the first time they could enter the public space and receive official education. In return, they had to surrender to disciplinary and regulatory methods on their bodies and minds that would transform them into submissive modern wives, with the promise of a companionate husband to work together towards a better nation.

The political books of Astarabadi and QA show the flexible gender and sexuality discourses in Iran, influenced by the transition of society from a premodern to a modern nation. They vocalize the gender and sexuality meaning-making of the traditional Muslim in upper-class Iranian society at the end of the nineteenth century. The different modernist writers in Iran wanted the heteronormalization of love, the transformation of marriage, and the rethinking of gender behavior. They wanted to create a society where men and women together could work towards a modern Iran. In order to enter the previously male public space, women had to adjust their behavior in public not to upset the social order according to male modernist writings. They argued for the dismantling of the segregated society and unveiling of women. By internal veiling, women were to control their sexuality in a

216 Abu-Lughod, 'Feminist Longings', 9, 12.

heterosocial public sphere to prevent heterosexual anarchy. The shifting of gender and sexuality boundaries had major implications for the gender hierarchy within society. A new modern patriarchal bargain between man and women had to be negotiated. The expressions of the reconceptualization of gender and sexuality, and the negotiations of the patriarchal bargain can be seen in *The Vices of Men* and *The Education of Women.* The main preoccupation within these books was the formulation of the ideal marriage partner and establishing the male-female power dynamics within marriage.

In the companionate marriage husband and wife were in theory equally connected to each other. This would seriously threaten male dominance in society. Men started to notice the female presence in their previous homosocial male spaces, they felt that women started to undermine their authority in society. To prevent subordination from women had to educate their wives in proper behavior. QA articulated marriage as and institution women would completely be devoted to their husbands, sexually and mentally. A good wife was submissive to a fault, would never argue with her husband, look beautiful and desirable, and be sexually available at all times. Through his rules the entire existence of women would revolve around the pleasures and desires of men. In this way men could confirm their place in the gender hierarchy. Their rules were aimed to silence women in society and isolate them from their homosocial community, so that women would be completely dependent of their husbands.

The standards of QA came from Persian literary and Islamic tradition. With the shifting gender boundaries his rules must have been very appealing to men that felt threatened in their masculine power. The book gives rules that gave disciplinary instructions to create submissive femininity. The rules were aimed to internally veil women and create docile bodies. The original version of *The Education of Women* was written before any discourse of modernity in combination with ideas on gender and sexuality had been formed. However, the printed version was published at a time when this was the case. The new public transformed

these older rules into a modern disciplinary system that actively reduced women to silent ornamental figures in the name of modernity, as can be seen in the writings of women from the beginning of the twentieth century. *The Education of Women* shows no intention to change the behavior of men or give up their prerogatives that were harmful to the companionate marriage, such as easy divorce, the male homosocial community, and polygamy. *The Education of Women* represents the male demands for the new patriarchal system that was making a mockery of the romantic companionate marriage.

Astarabadi was one of the first women to write about the treatment of women in marriage and society. Women discussed political and social issues among each other. They were segregated from men but not secluded. Astarabadi argued primarily for giving women what was rightfully theirs according to Islamic law in terms of finance, and a companionate relationship between men and women. She emphasizes that the worst vice of men is the neglect of their wives. She is very skeptical if Iranian men in general are even capable of setting aside their own pleasures and committing to their wives. She advises women not to be put in a position where they are completely at the mercy of their husband, thus reaffirming the power of the homosocial female community. First and foremost men had to start treating women justly and respectfully. Men had to give up their vices that took them away from their families. By spending all their time with their friends in the homosocial male environment and putting their energies in chasing *amrads*, no possibility to create an affectionate and emotional connection with their wives existed. Modernist discourse focuses mainly on how women had to change their behavior and had to be educated in order for women to become appropriated companionate partners for the new citizens of Iran. Astarabadi turns this around and argues that before men can criticize women, men have to be educated themselves in the meaning of a companionate relationship. For Astarabadi, the companionate relationship was about equal emotional connection and respect, not the unconditional submission of women while men

indulged in their own pleasures. Especially harmful to the marriage where the pederasts, they did not look at their wives because of their obsession with boys. She is not naming homosexuality as a sinful sexual identity, but as an act of neglect of men towards their wives. Through a comic and homophobic anecdote she makes a mockery of homoeroticism and pederast same-sex sexual activities of men. By making a mockery of men that participated in the sexual practice, that was once the pinnacle of love, beauty, and power, she emasculated the men that still partook in them. She argued that men who only though about their own desires were the reason why Iran was in a backwards state. They were libertines and debauchers that did nothing to improve the country.

The Vices of Men is one of the most open female expressions of the demands of women in modernizing Iranian society. Astarabadi uses a combination of traditional literary sources, religious sources, and informal language to express a female point of view on modernizing gender and sexual relations in Iran. Her writing does not yet have the characteristics of internal veiling or usage of ungendered language, common among later female writers. In the segregated society of premodern Iran women were limited in their movement in public space, but were free in their inner expressions. As the examples of Zhāle have shown, with the modernization of society and the heteronormalization of the public space, women were more mobile in their movement in to public space but internally more constricted.

Astarabadi and QA wrote about gender and sexuality while the discourses in society were at a cross-road between modern and premodern. *The Education of Women* gave men tools for the creation of a modern submissive wife completely dedicated to her husband, combining modern disciplinary methods and traditional views on women. Astarabadi is writing for the fair treatment of women according to the traditions of Islam and modern discourse. *The Vices of Men* and *The Education of Women* give a clear image of hybrid gender

and sexuality articulations at the beginning of the modernization in Iran. A new patriarchal bargain between men and women was at stake representing modern male-female dynamics. The negotiations for the new patriarchal bargain between men and women did not mean a complete refusal of what came before but a slight adjustment in what was already known. Finally, both, QA and Astarabadi were arguing for their own version of the ideal partner of the opposite sex in the heterosexual marriage.

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