

Jumana Bayeh & Sahar Amer

COMMUNITY ACTIVISM AND CREATIVE PRACTICE IN
AUSTRALIA: AN INTERVIEW WITH PAULA ABOOD

Abstract

In this interview, Paula Abood discusses how her activist work in the community sector is intrinsically tied up with her creative practice. Describing herself as a secular Arab feminist, Abood's public activism is deeply informed by Spivak's important question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Abood acknowledges that "speaking out" is a complicated political act, because it entails speaking on behalf of otherized women who are often silenced and marginalized within Australia. Alongside this interview, a sample of Abood's creative work is included, which reflects both her theoretical interests and her activist work.



You have been very active in community work in Sydney over the last thirty years. Could you tell us a bit about this work and how it complements your creative practice?

Social justice work has been at the heart of my practice for the past thirty years in Sydney. I started out in adult education and moved to the non-government sector where I have worked at the grassroots with migrant and refugee communities, notably with women. This kind of work brings you into the intimate realm of people's lives and with that comes great responsibility. In the course of this work, I have learned much about power, politics, and people themselves. I have always applied a human rights approach in this work, where empowerment and self-determination are fundamental elements, as much as being community accountable. In the last eighteen years, an intensely racist anti-refugee political environment has poisoned public debate and social relations, enabling a suite of brutal policies and state practices, including the arbitrary detaining of those seeking asylum for indefinite periods of time. As a community advocate and activist, this is one area of work that I have intensely reflected and acted on in terms of how we might empower those whose voices are least heard, and who are at great risk indeed if they speak out.

Paula Abood is a community cultural development practitioner, writer, and educator. Email: paula@paulaabood.com

It was around this time that I moved away from more traditional capacity building community work to community cultural development, a field that expressly uses culture and the arts as a tool for social change. Story work as a means to empowerment is about engaging people to create, learn, express, connect, communicate, and heal in nurturing ways. This work is also about fostering creativity in all its diversity to inspire and facilitate critical dialogue among and between disparate groups. Uniting around shared oppression, projects with Arabic-speaking, Sierra Leonean, Somali, Ethiopian, South Sudanese, Bosnian, and Afghan women and their communities have unearthed stories of resistance, uplift, and sacrifice. As complex and exacting as this work is, a fundamental aim has been to cultivate a safe space for marginalized people to share their stories in their own language and on their own terms. I have engaged communities in projects that traverse literature, film, radio, music, theatre, and visual arts. We have produced a library of works that have contributed to a vibrant and diverse multicultural community in Western Sydney. Some of this collaborative work includes books about war and suffering *Bread and Other Stories* (2001) and *Poetry Across Rooftops* (2006); work that is expressive of the voices of children and young people *Hurriya and Her Sisters* (2009) and *The Book of African Australian Stories* (2006); and a feature documentary that maps the war in Sierra Leone through the eyes and experiences of journalists in *Darkness Over Paradise* (2006).

You have described your work as being informed by Arab feminism. What do you mean by "Arab feminism" and in what ways does Arab feminism inform the Australian context?

I have always felt grounded and empowered identifying with Arab feminist genealogies of struggle, histories, and legacies of resistance. I especially feel bonded to women of color the world over who have argued, stared down, disrupted, campaigned against, and sabotaged patriarchal systems that have afflicted and brutalized the lives of so many, both culturally specific versions and Euro-Western colonial iterations.

I neither see feminism as a singular mode of thinking or practice, nor do I adhere to the idea that there is a universal feminist subject who is able to parse the world through an individuated experience and thus speak for all. There are a multiplicity of feminisms

that exist on the spectrum of theory and practice. I am especially conscious that various formations of feminist activity can be oppressive in the way they subordinate and subjugate other women's voices, bodies, and material lives. As a kind of oppositional politics, I purposely announce myself as an Arab feminist in order to make a distinction between what passes for the mediocre and self-interested strand(s) of liberal Western feminism (colonialist, imperialist, humanist versions) that is unable to unshackle itself from its whiteness and all the racially structured privilege that comes with. As a counter to this hegemonic mode that dominates in the colonial-settler state setting, I identify as an anti-colonialist and anti-racist Arab feminist, strategically shifting between descriptors.

If I am to reflect on a kind of alter-politics that describes my particular experience of Arab feminism within a specific multicultural diasporic context, I would describe my practice as secular, reflexive, and intersectional. Being secular in this setting for me means being non-sectarian, in no way aligning with the secular fundamentalist racists who insist on imposing their rigid and increasingly fascist approach to faith. As an intersectional feminist, I do not privilege one dimension of inequality over another. I clearly understand and actively work at addressing the multiple dimensions of inequality that underwrite women's lives, be they race, class, gender, ability, sexuality, age and empire. Being a self-reflexive feminist is crucial in the type of cross-cultural, transgressive community activist work that I do, where respect and sensitivity are paramount. In this mode of being, stepping back from self-certainty is a means to empower and facilitate agency in particularized hostile racist and misogynist environments that demean people's sense of self-knowledge, spirituality, wholeness, and well-being.

Your work and practice has straddled both academic and activist worlds, without keeping them separate. Could you tell us about how your academic work has influenced your activism and, in the reverse, how your activism has enriched or contributed to your academic or intellectual development?

I have always been a keen reader of critical theory. My activist work is especially informed by the methodologies of key theorists of the postcolonial field, guided in practice by Aboriginal women, beginning in 1988 with the anti-bicentennial protest movement. This was my induction into political activism in a white supremacist colonial settler

state that has made a national holiday out of dispossession and genocide. In those early years, working in solidarity with Wiradjuri, Gamilaroi, and Bundjalung women in Sydney, the language of anti-colonialism became part of my political vernacular.

I ascribe to the idea that the separation between academia and activism is a false one. I believe a fundamental responsibility of the intellectual is to the socio-political. I think the late Edward Said provided a pathway in this regard. His intervention has been crucial in understanding how knowledge production for and by the Western subject about the 'other' works in a multiplicity of contexts. Professor Said was able to bridge the divide between theory and practice precisely because he was able to move beyond the academy into social, cultural, and political spheres that forced elites, gatekeepers and hegemony into often uncomfortable dialogue about power, race, culture, and imperialism. My own work is very much influenced by this kind of model. As an activist, I have experienced the limits and the contradictions of representation; the burden and the violence of representation, notably in the media activism work that I have engaged in. Having scrutinized and experienced personally the persistence of Orientalist logic and practice, I have cultivated a critical insight into how the hierarchies of race and gender intersect with discourses on sexuality to inform and inflect the representation of Arabs in contemporary iterations of popular culture. In so doing, I have been able to develop strategic responses to racist representations and work towards radical change via my writing and theatre work. Drawing on post-colonial theory has provided me with an intellectual framework both to critique and produce culture that is informed by a multiplicity of concerns. I think this is crucial if we are to realize any kind of critical autonomy and/ or self-affirming and reflective models of thinking and practice, and not become accomplices to the insidious materiality of the Orientalist project.

Spivak famously asked "Can the Subaltern Speak?" How central has this question been in your community work?

In all the disparate settings of my community work, questions of representation have naturally figured. Speaking has been a central and ongoing concern. Or more precisely, who speaks and who does not. Spivak's question, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is forever relevant because access continues to be systemically obstructed. Just because

one person is “permitted” or “invited” to speak does not mean that the structures of power have been radically altered. This is how I read Spivak’s question. After years of thinking and writing about representation, agency and diversity, we are no closer to realizing any kind of substantive change on our own radical terms. By this, I mean that those in control continue to use their power to decide who speaks, whose story is valid, who is allowed to cross the border, who sits on panels, and who gets published.

My thinking around this is informed by my own experiences of speaking and writing as an engaged critic and activist. I am fundamentally concerned with the problematics of voice as an indicator of agency and the impact of subaltern voices on public discourses. I am equally concerned with the emotional toll that “speaking” in mostly hostile public environments has on women of color. These concerns were significant enough in *Hurriya and her Sisters* (2009), a project with young Muslim women creating and producing an animated short film to speak in ways that were safe and affirming. The stories within the film spoke especially to the lived realities of young Arab Muslim women whose intersectional experiences as racialized gendered subjects impact on how they are in the world; where they can walk, how they dress, who they speak to, what they believe, which of their stories get told. This project aspired in some way to address the muting of subaltern voices via the violence of racism, displacement and gendered marginalization. Certainly, the structured place from which young women have the capacity to access power is radically obstructed by the deeply embedded Islamophobic and misogynist culture that dominates all domains, sectors and aspects of political and social life. Young women’s right to a whole lot of freedoms in both private and public spheres is contested up to this day.

As always, I reach for theory to guide my own thinking, and Arab- American literary theorist Lisa Suhair Majaj’s work on voice and representation has informed my practice. Majaj argues that “articulation functions as a fundamental vehicle of agency, understood as the ability to affirm the self and to take action in the world.”¹ She writes that “silencing cannot simply be challenged by speaking out on behalf of the voiceless, because articulation is caught up in the problematics of representation: in particular, the tension between speaking for the ‘other’ and empowering the ‘other’ to speak for herself.”² I am especially conscious of what is often “inadequately acknowledged” in the kinds of projects that I have initiated, articulated by Majaj as “the problematic role of power—for no matter how

liberatory the intention, to speak on behalf of others is implicitly to participate in the same power structures that make it possible for some people to speak while others are spoken for.”³ Spivak’s question for me, then, delivers an ongoing challenge to all of us in how we work critically and respectfully with those who have been excluded, silenced and made invisible; and how we might support those very subjects by building a kind of community that is inclusive, safe and affirming.

What sorts of challenges have you faced as a publicly engaged Arab feminist in Australia?

I have been an active protagonist at the intersections of community cultural work, artistic representation, and political activism in Sydney over the past three decades in what I would describe as a predatory racist, white supremacist, nationalist colonial settler state. A state that pays lip service to a dismally shallow formation of multiculturalism, where elites within our own communities maintain hetero-patriarchal norms, marginalizing any critical feminist dissent.

Speaking in this kind of socio-political setting is more often than not, an adversarial event. Challenging gender norms and white supremacy marks you as a target both internally and externally. As a publicly engaged Arab feminist, speaking to the media represents the most demanding of tasks. The emotional, mental, and physical impact is felt on the toughest of women. Not only are we hostage to every journalist or broadcaster with an Orientalist storyline, but also to editors, producers and sub-editors with the hidden power to take your sentences, empty them of all connective meaning via the editing process and then take you down in a three second grab to produce an appearance from “The Angry Arab Feminist.” Going live to air is an equally fractious site, the upside being the journalists can’t so easily edit your truth to affirm theirs. The media, like the parliaments in Australia, remain one of the whitest institutions in the nation. The news in particular, as a site for the dissemination of actual and everyday events, plays a crucial role in how racial ideologies are cultivated through its narratives. The reporting of “events” like the Sydney gang rape cases of 2000 became necessarily an intense period for speaking back to the media, with feminists like myself attempting to reframe how rape and “Arabic culture” were represented. In any racialized context, to talk about culture is a fraught exercise. In this case, the signifying practice of foregrounding the racial, ethnic, and religious

background of the accused (who happened to be Lebanese Muslim Australians) served the ideological function of causally linking being Lebanese and Muslim to the specter of sexual assault: that is, *being* Lebanese and Muslim was elevated as the reason *for* the sexual violence, with the inference being that the accused committed the crime because it was “cultural.” In this state, when a brown man perpetrates these sorts of acts of violence against women, race, religion, and culture become crucial to the narrative. Further, his “community” must take responsibility for the violence, whereas, the white male is an atomized individual who operates outside the normativity of his “community.” It has been important for Arab-Australian feminists to acknowledge these racial double standards in order to publicly speak about violence against women. If we are committed to combating violence against women regardless of culture, religion, or origin, then learning a race-neutral language is crucial so that we are able to speak of the specificities of violence that afflict women and girls’ lives in our communities, rather than persisting in the pretense that some cultures are more violent than others.

Exposing the stereotyping of culture, and the stereotyping of what are taken to be practices of specific cultural groups has been a critical standpoint for Arab-Australian feminist intervention and solidarity work, as it has been for Indigenous and other minority feminists. Internally, the predicament of “quiet but strong” speaking is mired in accusations of “feminist imperialism” and being “assimilated into Western ways.” Regardless of both internal and external pressures and demands, long-term strategies to effect change from within the community must be undertaken fearlessly and sensitively to enable transformation to occur.

Since Edward Said’s Orientalism, much has been written about representations of the “other” in both fiction and non-fiction. Can you talk a bit about this genre of writing today and also how it may actually silence the voice of Arab feminists?

Before the advent of the blogosphere, there were limited spaces for Arab feminists to write and get published on their own terms. In Australia, there is a kind of literary apartheid in mainstream publishing that insists on tokenism where one or two writers are allowed in, allowing the publishing “gate keepers” to tick the requisite box on diversity. The mainstream publishing establishment especially favors

the stories of the Native Informant who invariably tells the dramatic tale of escaping the oppressive brown patriarchy over the searing critique of the postcolonial Arab feminist. It is no secret that there is much money to be made in Orientalist pulp fiction and nonfiction. Certainly, Australian-born Pulitzer prize-winning author Geraldine Brooks' literary beginnings can be traced in part to her Orientalist non-fictional feminist fantasies.

The Native Informant typically pens bestsellers and opinion pieces, works lecture circuits and news outlets, and is more than comfortable speaking on the fundamentals of the colonialist feminist canon: crimes of honor, forced marriage, polygyny, women's sexuality and oppression, and female genital mutilation (FGM). These bespoke issues align with the racialized culture of the corporate media, and so the Native Informant regales us with tales of forbidden love, honor killing, and hyper-patriarchal men, valorized naturally by a white public. The Native Informant is guaranteed a protected speaking position, and significantly, is often detached, disengaged and not answerable to the community about whom she speaks. Working at the grassroots as a race-conscious feminist, addressing issues of violence and women's empowerment is urgent and critical. The proliferation of Native Informants and their insistent racializing frames means at times our work with communities is compromised, and all too often puts women and girls at risk. Theorist Marnia Lazreg perfectly describes this scenario where audiences expect and "insist on information about 'oppression,' not an analysis of the institutional context within which 'oppression' becomes meaningful."⁴

When the Native Informant is not available, there is always the dependable white female expert who has forged a professional career out of living in the Middle East, studying it, reporting it or writing about it. Professor Said's activist-theoretical work scrutinized the white Middle East specialist like no other. His eviscerating interviews during the 1990s provided activists in the diaspora with the intellectual tools to speak back to the hegemonic voices whose function was (and is) to reiterate the Orientalist narrative in order to counter the emergence of articulate interlopers such as Said as they moved outside the academy and into mainstream public debate.

In the province of liberal feminist hyper-activity, there is an enterprising publishing industry that convenes around the scrutiny of the intimate lives of Arab Muslim women. The underlying assumption in these texts is that women in the West belong to perfectible societies, whereas Other women's societies are by definition "traditional,"

impervious to change from within, and unknowing of what is good for them. This genre straddles both fiction and non-fiction. Orientalist pulp titles like *Not Without My Daughter* (1989) by Betty Mahmoody (with William Hoffer), *Princess* (1992) by Jean Sasson, and *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women* (1995) by Geraldine Brooks have generated an international readership and a thriving industry.

Popular female-centered Orientalist literature is not a new genre. Reina Lewis traces the production and reception of harem literature, examining the importance of this category as an area of cultural activity historically available to Western women. She notes that the one constant in this category has been its “authenticating female point of origin.”⁵ As one of the many “authenticating female” voices, Brooks’s text *Nine Parts of Desire* (1995) bears out the Western female Orientalist’s continuing preoccupation with Muslim women’s interior lives. The full Quranic quote from which Brooks’s title is drawn, states: “Almighty God created sexual desire in ten parts; then he gave nine parts to women and one to men.” This text in particular was seen as an important text on Muslim women by a white Australian female journalist and attracted wide public attention and institutional support in its promotion in Australia. The second part of the title – *The Hidden World of Islamic Women* – is idiomatic of not only the genre’s enduring fixation with the trope of the so-called “hidden Islamic woman,” but also reflects the strategic articulation of the voyeuristic elements inherent in these sorts of female-centered texts.

I remember attending the Sydney Writer’s Festival in 1996 as Brooks was on the circuit promoting her book. I had witnessed her speaking over and above Muslim women on every TV channel, every page, and in every supplement as the expert on the lives of “Islamic” women. And so, speaking from the floor, surrounded by an outwardly hostile audience, the subaltern confronts the White Colonialist Feminist. It is precisely in this unequal relation that the subjectivity of the colonial feminist subject is privileged, and that concerns of race and representation are all but elided.

In incidences like these, it is obvious that the power and agency of the Western feminist subject is contingent on the female other occupying the role of victim (a victim of her culture, a victim of her religion). It is on the back of the victim that Brooks anchored her feminist identity, and like so many white liberal feminists in the 1990s, she reduced Muslim women to speechless objects without agency, thus setting up the “white woman saving brown women from brown men” fantasy.

Leila Ahmed calls this out as “the standard colonial feminist practice”: the notion that “progress for women [can] be achieved only through abandoning the native culture.”⁶ Ahmed’s point that, whether in the hands of patriarchal men or feminists, the ideas of “Western feminism [are] heir to colonialism, to colonialism’s discourses of domination, and to its cooptation . . . [in] further[ing] Western imperialism” highlights how Orientalist texts like *Nine Parts* remain productive sites in the hegemonic discourses of domination.⁷ Whilst not a Muslim Arab subject myself, but clearly the un-exotic secular Arab feminist daring to question the “white expert,” in this instance, public excoriation from the panel’s moderator and verbal abuse from floor was my punishment for speaking back to the hallowed white writer.

Does the Arab feminist have agency to “speak back” when she is silenced or when she is willfully excluded? What does speaking back entail for you?

African American feminist theorist bell hooks’s childhood memories of *Talking Back* resonate with the kinds of cultural politics that I have come up against. hooks writes:

“back talk” and “talking back” meant speaking as an equal to an authority figure. It meant daring to disagree and sometimes it just meant having an opinion . . . To speak . . . when one was not spoken to was a courageous act -an act of risk and daring . . . to make my voice, I had to speak, to hear myself talk . . . and talk I did . . . endlessly asking questions, making speeches. Needless to say, the punishments for these acts of speech seemed endless. They were intended to silence me . . .⁸

Considering all the environments in which we are socialized and conditioned as racialized females, I agree with hooks that speaking back is an act of great courage. It is not always possible. But when it is, it can inaugurate a process of breaking down the heft of power. And I know that is never easy; and I know that for many women, it is downright dangerous. For women who are stateless or seeking asylum, it can get you incarcerated or deported. For those in any kind of politically or socially precarious position, speaking back can get you violated, harmed, or blacklisted. And so, I never take the material

conditions of “speaking back” for granted. I also understand the sense of power that can be felt in “coming to voice” because I was raised to not speak up or back. So for me, speaking back entails courage, responsibility, sensitivity, and strategic thinking. I have learnt this over time. I have berated myself when I have let something pass. I have admonished myself when I have gone in too hard.

There have been many occasions I can recall where I have been willfully excluded or banned because I have been labeled as a trouble maker. I used to believe that speaking in the mainstream was crucial and would deliver us change. Certainly, it is unarguable that a diversity of opinions, views, and voices need to animate this space, but I have found that convening counter publics via alternative media, and through other forms like theatre is as empowering and transformative. We cannot afford to throw up our hands and sulk because we have been excluded from “their” center. I am interested in making our own centers. A thousand centers. When excluded, I have used the anger that inevitably comes with that to create alternative spaces to speak and act. I have used art and culture as a tool to speak on my own terms and thus return to my own source of power.

Returning to Spivak’s seminal question, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” do you think there are ways that the subaltern (in this case the Arab- Australian feminist) can express herself to effect change? Can the subaltern, such as yourself, produce work that does not conform to and indeed willfully moves past existing genres and creative frameworks?

Over the last twenty-five years, together with a community of Arab feminist artists in Sydney, we have aspired to make work not only on our own political terms, but also in response to the neglect of critical race-conscious feminist concerns. With the erasure of minorities in representational form from majority conceptual space in theatrical, literary, visual and screen cultures, artistic expression plays a significant role in our collective resistance. To that end, our performative activism has inevitably had to respond to the essentializing Orientalist tropes of mainstream culture and to the “everydayness” of Orientalist narrative and hyper-activity. From performative political flash mobbing to theatre, this has been an important site where the question “Can the Subaltern Speak?” is meaningful and understood in terms that we can shape and control. It has been momentary, but empowering nevertheless.

As a founding member of the Sydney Arab Feminist Alliance (safa), our first production in 1994 was provocatively titled, *the politics of belly dancing: a choreopoem*. Promoted as an Arab feminist work, we spoke back to a history of Orientalism, racism, cultural appropriation, and the internal and external colonialisms of our bodies. This expressive theatrical work garnered much attention, mostly because of the title, but for us, we felt powerfully in control of the narrative and how we arrived on stage because we wrote, directed, and produced the show.

There is a vibrant history of Arab-Australian theatre in Sydney and Melbourne. Variations of artistic Arab Australian ensembles have collectively created a space to speak a language that resonates with subaltern concerns in the here and now over the past twenty-five years. Together, we share a common political grammar as diasporic gendered and racialized subjects, using creative spaces to explore identity, culture, memory, and language in a range of performative settings. At writers' festivals in poetic terms, reflecting on belonging and not belonging; in poetic performances exploring diverse gender and sexual identities; traversing the epic story of migrancy; exposing racial double standards. One thing many of us have been insistent on is not conforming to the idea that we must create work for the white gaze. I have never been interested in making work to satisfy white audiences. I have always considered Arabic-speaking audiences as my primary audience, and more broadly, a culturally informed public that is interested in political concerns that traverse race, gender, sexuality, place, and identity. I connect particularly with others whose concerns and interests incorporate multiple worlds and realities, resistance and representation. My interest has been in exploring the inherent contradictions of representation through the construction of my own complex configuration of subjects, voices, and geographies. Creative expression has been emancipatory in forging a more autonomous space to speak that is not mediated by the whiteness of the cultural gatekeepers, the racism of the media, the misogynist conservatism of the establishment. Working independently in the small to medium cultural sector is liberatory as this space is certainly the most nourishing and nurturing realm to create counter narratives that not only speak back to something, but affirm and insist on other ways of being.

Have you found, in your many years of community work, activism, and creative practice ways to answer Spivak's question that involve neither speaking nor accepting silence?

I mediate my speaking these days as I have said much these past thirty years. This does not mean I have nothing new or surprising to say. I remain ever conscious of the politics of speaking, and I believe it is crucial to make space for new, emerging, and marginalized voices. This is a fundamental principle. But because I *have* had opportunities to speak, I inhabit a kind of post-subaltern world, so I consciously choose different kinds of platforms to voice my ideas and concerns. I am far less inclined to engage in the spectacle of reactive speaking as this has drained the color out of my words. My creative writing is a space where I feel affirmed and safe.

As I reflect on the past thirty years of activism, community-based work, and creative practice, I can see that there *have* been political shifts. Arab women as speaking subjects are more publicly visible in the present and this represents a tangible example of an incremental cultural change that has taken place in Australia. But even within these contexts, women still relate familiar narratives of power struggles in order to maintain agency and a sense of political integrity. The white gatekeepers remain in control of the narrative and continue to dictate what ends up on the cutting room floor. What has not yet happened is the decolonizing process, where the structures and systems of power have been ruptured down to the root and thus permanently altered. I like to imagine in their place, a radical transformative space will emerge that is inclusive, non-hierarchical, co-operative, participatory, and non-discriminatory. This is where our collective intellectual energies indeed must take focus.

Being part of a collective that has produced an Arab-Australian artistic canon over time, Spivak reminds me that, "It is disingenuous . . . to forget that, as the collectivities [of the marginalized] start participating in the production of knowledge about themselves, they must have a share in some of the structures of privilege that contaminate the [dominant group]." ⁹ This is a salient reminder of how we might think about the question of speaking if we are to avoid "a self-marginalized purism" that is neither useful nor appropriate. I agree with Spivak that we must be conscious not to become complicit in "a caricature of correct politics that leaves alone the field of continuing subalternization." ¹⁰ This is a crucial consideration as we

witness new waves of Arab refugees and those seeking asylum arrive in an ever-hostile reception environment. They do not share our particularized experience as diasporic Arabs. Their voices are muted by both liberal-minded paternalistic concerns and racist subjects in the nation. There is still much work to be done.

NOTES

¹ Lisa Suhair Majaj, "Voice, Representation, and Resistance" in *Intersections: Gender, Nation, and Community in Arab Women's Novels*, eds. Lisa Suhair Majaj, Paula W. Sunderman, and Therese Saliba (New York, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002), 202.

² Majaj, "Voice, Representation, and Resistance," 202.

³ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁴ Marina Lazreg, "The Triumphant Discourse of Global Feminism" in *Going Global: The Transnational Reception of Third World Women Writers*, eds. Amal Amireh and Lisa Suhair Majaj (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 34.

⁵ Reina Lewis, "'Oriental' Femininity as Cultural Commodity: Authorship, Authority, and Authenticity" in *Edges of Empires: Orientalism and Visual Culture*, eds. Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones and Mary Roberts (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

⁶ Leila: *Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press: 1992), 244.

⁷ Ahmed, *Women in Gender and Islam*, 245.

⁸ bell hooks, *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1989), 28.

⁹ Gayatri Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 253.

¹⁰ Spivak, *In Other Worlds*, 253.