

Islamic religious and legal practices. He argues that custom in geonic period played a dynamic role in the adaptation of Jewish law to new social, economic and political circumstances.

After discussing the theoretical and historical aspects of Islamic influence on geonic Jewish law Libson turns to demonstrate this phenomenon in two cases in the final two chapters. In the sixth chapter, he deals with the oath of destitution in which “a debtor admits to his debt but swears that he has no means of payment.” Libson sees that the oath in the form of “I have no means” is a geonic innovation based on practice of *yamin al-‘adam* in Islamic law. This can be taken as an example of Islamic influence on Jewish legal practice in court procedure and financial matters, two major channels of influence in Jewish – Muslim relations.

The other prominent channel of influence, i.e. family law, is examined in the next chapter. Libson construes the geonic practice of estimated *mohar* as an example of legal innovation through the use of custom that originated from the Muslim practice of *mahr mithl*.

In this valuable study, Gideon Libson demonstrates his acquaintance with both Jewish and Islamic law and the book is the result of fine scholarship. He supports his arguments in the text with extensive reference in the endnotes to legal literature of the period. The present volume corresponds to a new phase in comparative research in Jewish and Islamic law, which certainly will contribute not only to a better understanding of the historical relationship between Judaism and Islam, but also to the establishment of a peaceful future for both faith communities.

Mahmut Salihoğlu

### **Stolen Honor: Stigmatizing Muslim Men in Berlin**

Katherine Pratt Ewing

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In *Stolen Honor* cultural anthropologist Katherine Ewing presents a fascinating study of the masculinity of Muslims of Turkish descent in contemporary Berlin. Commonly — and increasingly since September 11, 2001 and the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh — the Muslim man in Germany is considered to be iconic of tradition (i.e. not ‘modern’), of patriarchy and the oppression

of women (i.e. contrary to Enlightenment values like equality), and of violence (i.e. not rational). In short, the Muslim man has come to be the ultimate 'other' to modern, secular, enlightened German identity, a screen on which many in Germany today project their fears, hopes and desires regarding what German society is, is not, and what it ought to be. Both the dynamics of these projections and the ways in which they are experienced by Muslim men themselves are the main topics explored by the book. The book is one of a now quite large body of social research that is inspired by and builds on the approach of feminist theory to gender, employing it fruitfully in studies of masculinity. It draws on a wide array of source materials, including observations and interviews from the author's fieldwork, historical materials, audio-visual media, and the scholarship of others.

The book makes several interconnected arguments, and does so quite convincingly. Most broadly, it argues that the issue of Muslim masculinity in Germany cannot be approached in isolation from the wider developments in German society and politics since World War II. Most relevant here is the country's attempts to repudiate its Nazi past by trying to institutionalize and legislate an ethos of tolerance and openness, and an avoidance of stigmatizing members of any given ethnic or religious community. As such, many Germans take their country to embody Enlightenment liberal ideals of natural freedom and equality. It is precisely these values that the 'Muslim man' is increasingly portrayed as unable or unwilling to embody. Crucial here is that it is not merely the political Right in Germany that finds things to object to in the figure of the Muslim man; more recent, and as Ewing argues, more interesting denunciations are coming from the Left, for whom such men do not sufficiently embody the norms of secular Enlightenment reason. This is probably the most interesting feature of the book, that it does not bother much with discussions of anti-Muslim sentiments on the part of the Right, but rather with Muslim masculinity in relation to allegedly Enlightened Germans who see themselves on the political Left, and in relation to Germany's post-war constitutional order.

The book's introduction ably situates the study in the context outlined above and indicates the theoretical field in which the book is seeking to include itself. Ewing draws on Julia Kristeva's use of the concept of abjection, but it is unclear how much Ewing desires to follow Judith Butler's version of abjection in the book, which emphasizes the historical and cultural specificity of a visceral, moral rejection, in contrast to Kristeva's more (universalistic) psychoanalytic approach to the concept. Similarly, one might single out Ewing's frequent use of the term 'fantasy' in the book, the precise meaning of

which is somewhat unclear. In any event, she does not claim to be making any major innovations on a theoretical front, which I do not necessarily see as a weakness of the book; indeed, her general eschewing of theoretical innovation may help to keep the book accessible to a wide audience (which is important, given its topic).

The book's first chapter explores the histories of the discourses that Ewing thinks have become central to the terms in which the Muslim man is discussed in Germany today. The major strands here, Ewing argues, are 1. A broader, centuries-old European Orientalism, which is now known to have produced stereotypes of Turks as 'Orientals', and hence, as violent and backward and yet also somehow exotic and even seductive, 2. An anthropological attempt to make a cultural unity out of the Mediterranean region based largely on an allegedly shared, region-wide concern with honor, and 3. An argument that to a large extent, Republican Turkish official discourse has put tradition — and the Muslim man as a synecdoche for tradition — in a position of abjection in ways remarkably similar to that in which it has been done in the rest of Europe, as does a great deal of transnational and Turkish feminist discourse.

The second chapter is an interesting discussion of how well-intended social workers pick up and often extend stereotypical conceptions of Muslim men, in particular, as they overwhelmingly portray Muslim women as victims in need of rescue (from men, from their families, from tradition, from religion, or from several or all of these). There is also a flourishing mini-genre of films on these themes in Germany, most of which are made with the participation of some Muslim women individuals or organizations, of people who see themselves as feminists, and of social workers.

Chapter Three examines some of the ways Muslim men in Germany relate to the representations and institutions that produce high-profile 'knowledge' about them. Here, we begin to read fascinating accounts from Ewing's interlocutors, both men and women, of their views on relationships between men and women, parents and children, Germans of Turkish descent and non-, and how all of these have been changing as generations of descendants of Turkish 'guest workers' have been born in Germany. Many of the interviews are frank, and illustrate the nuanced subjectivities Ewing argues for acknowledging in the book. For instance:

"Seventeen-year-old Sezai... emphasized the differences between himself and other young men of Turkish background.... [He said] 'Ninety percent of the foreigners here are unemployed, get money from the state, have fifteen kids

who are criminals and go to *Hauptschule*. I say, send them back. Send them back! I have integrated. I don't do illegal things, and I don't plan to live off the government.' When another student commented, 'Germans do that, too,' Sezai replied, 'And we taught them to do that! Before we came they didn't know how!'" (119)

Chapter Four is centered on a discussion of discourses and practices of honor among Muslim men and women, an issue that is itself often taken as constituting an obstacle to the proper acculturation of Muslims in German society, i.e. an exaggerated concern with honor and respect. While it seems that very few of the men and women Ewing has worked with consider the concept of honor to be totally bereft of meaning, the important point the author makes is that the meanings of honor are in fact extremely fluid and have changed considerably over time (both in Turkey and in Germany). "Rarely is the effort to be identified as modern associated with a total rejection of the principle of honor. Even men who view themselves as well-integrated into German society are concerned with issues of honor and are struggling to negotiate identities in which honor continues to be an important component" (148). These first four chapters constitute the first part of the book, grouped under the heading 'Mythologizing the "Traditional" Man'.

The shorter second part of the book, under the heading 'Stigmatized Masculinity and the German National Imaginary,' explores several sets of controversies that erupted in Germany and which were structured around the concept that Muslim masculinity and gender are fundamentally problematic to the German constitutional order and ethos of Enlightened liberalism. The term 'moral panic' is used repeatedly in these pages.

Chapter Five looks specifically at the controversy surrounding honor killings, in which a woman is killed (usually by a brother or her father) in order to recuperate the family's honor, which the woman has allegedly besmirched through her behavior. While this came to be seen as a common occurrence in the Muslim community, human rights organizations and groups that are concerned with the protection of women estimate that there were something like 45 'honor killings' in Germany in the nearly ten-year period between 1996 and 2005. Even these numbers, Ewing argues, are likely to have been inflated, as any murder of a woman of Turkish descent by a man of such background came to be recorded as an instance of an honor killing. Interestingly, and crucially, the fact that none of the discussions Ewing found about such murders in the media were accompanied by a discussion of male violence against women in Germany in general. As such, the honor crime – and then Muslim men's attitudes toward them – were

made into another instance of Muslim men's irredeemable otherness to German political modernity.

Chapter Six examines controversies and debates about the establishment of required tests for prospective applicants to German citizenship, as well as more informal 'tests', like whether or not a family allows their daughters to participate in physical education (gym) courses at school. The chapter includes an interesting discussion of nudity in German society and culture, and links this to an ethos of openness and health. This, Ewing argues, has become woven into the expectations many Germans have regarding a democratic, 'open' society, to such an extent that modesty, as many Muslims are concerned with it, can be seen by some Germans to be problematic for the very functioning of a liberal democracy.

Chapter Eight looks at the politics of multiculturalism in Germany, and in particular, the controversies surrounding notions of a German *Leitkultur* (leading or guiding culture). There are several ironies and tensions here, most obviously the distaste most Germans have for such a concept that many feel echoes themes from the days of Nazism, but also the more subtle problem that the 'essence' of the 'German culture' that is allegedly in need of protection is its liberal democratic openness to difference. It is, in other words, because they are allegedly not sufficiently open to difference that Muslim men are dangerously different from the 'German'.

A concise epilogue to the book ties the arguments together and suggests the usefulness of examining topics like Muslim masculinity in Germany for illuminating several phenomena, most prominently the political culture in Germany and multiculturalism in Europe today. This important book appears at a time when Europeans have been interrogating the nature of their societies, their states and Europe in general, in tandem with the very concrete question of Turkey's accession to the EU. Many outside of Europe were somewhat surprised and dismayed at the extent to which Turkey's EU bid set off something of an identity crisis in Europe, and Ewing's book, among other things, furnishes insight on debates about cultural identity, Islam and Europe in the case of Germany. As such, it illustrates in an exemplary way that some of the most important questions raised by the issue of Islam in Europe have to do not so much with Muslims themselves, but rather with the nature of Europe.

Brian Silverstein