

innovators intended that the new market would rely on “pure” information, but traders assign names (e.g., Spoofer) and character traits to the other traders they discern in these numbers’ patterns.

Fewer traders are required, and some of the old guard can’t adapt to the new technology, but those who do carry their culture and their dedication to liquidity with them. One trader in Zaloom’s London office, where she arrived in 2000 and observed the transition, kept a baseball bat nearby, and would slap it into his palm when he was doing badly. Another, named Freddy, picked his nose and chanted his own version of a well-known hip-hop number, “Who let the Fred out? Woof, woof, woof.” “Freddy’s performances epitomize economic man, trader-style,” Zaloom writes in her formal, academic style. “His ratty self-presentation and loutish deeds display the aggressive and naked desires of the debased market creature.”

Though insightful, *Out of the Pits* reveals more about yesterday’s market than it does about tomorrow’s. The conversion to electronic trading has untied the world’s great exchanges from the cities they have inhabited for so long, but Zaloom fails to explore the implications of this seismic shift. The once-teeming pits of the Chicago Board of Trade, which soon will merge with the more technologically advanced Chicago Mercantile Exchange, already stand half empty. If they disappear, what will the silence mean to Chicago?

—Elizabeth MacBride

Life Behind the Veil, and Without It

THIS REMARKABLE BOOK enriches the field of Middle Eastern studies, to which Nikki Keddie has devoted herself for the past four decades. She has made it her particular concern to exam-

WOMEN IN THE MIDDLE EAST:

Past and Present.

By Nikki R. Keddie.
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ine the lives of the region’s women, and the most important research of recent years on that subject informs this essential new volume. Even among scholars, there is a tendency to generalize about Islam and about Muslim countries, particularly about the role of women there. Keddie’s goal is to “avoid sweeping timeless generalizations about such things as ‘Arab women’ or ‘Islam,’” and one of the chief strengths of her book is that it consistently points up the diversity of women’s lives in the Middle East.

She begins with a historical overview that reaches back to women in pre-Islamic Arabia, then goes on to consider, among other topics, the rise of Islam, the portrayal of women in the Qur’an, the various interpretations accorded the Qur’an’s verses about women, and the influence of the West on women’s status. In many countries of the region today, family law is still largely based on Islamic law, or sharia, as it has been for hundreds of years. Women have no right to divorce, and, if their husbands divorce them, they lose custody of their children. To work, to study, or to travel, they must obtain the permission of their husbands, fathers, or male guardians.

But the lives women lead in different parts of the Middle East vary greatly, which Keddie highlights by dividing her discussion of 20th-century and contemporary history into sections that focus on individual countries. In the last century, Egyptian women were at the forefront of the rights movement, and many of them had ceased to wear the veil by the late 1930s. Iran, by contrast, saw the reverse of progress: Before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, women were free to dress as they liked, even in miniskirts, but today Iranian law requires that all women there observe Islamic rules regarding dress.

In the 20th century, Turkish president Kemal Atatürk, Iran’s Reza Shah, and King Amanullah of Afghanistan promoted change in their countries, although, argues Keddie, their primary concern was modernization, not

women's rights. Nevertheless, these men loosened sharia's restrictive impact on women, opened education to them, discouraged veiling, and raised the legal marriage age for girls. Keddie takes note as well of more recent developments, including the rise of Islamists in the region; the discussions of Islam, democracy, and women's rights fomented by secularists; the gradual inclusion of women in the political arenas in Kuwait, Yemen, Oman, and other Persian Gulf states; and women's access to education—but exclusion from political life—in Saudi Arabia.

After the regional history, Keddie turns her attention to developments in the nascent field of Middle Eastern gender studies. She welcomes the trend away from reliance solely on "ideal" sources, such as the Qur'an and the traditional sayings of Muhammad, as indicators of what life was like for women in the Middle East in the past. And she warns against the tendency of some scholars to romanticize the lot of women in previous eras, for example, in pre-Islamic Iran or in Egypt

before the Ottoman conquest. Keddie urges greater use of anthropological studies and comparative perspectives, more focus on the "undocumented women" of the lower classes, heightened sensitivity to how history shapes the present, and special attention to the variety of women's experiences as determined by factors such as class, social position, and rural vs. urban lifestyles.

The book concludes with material from two 1990 interviews in which Keddie—currently an emeritus professor at the University of California, Los Angeles—traced her life from her early days as a scholar of European history and literature focused on 19th-century Iranian history. Realizing that she had overlooked the role of women in her own work, Keddie began to focus on gender issues. To read these interviews from almost two decades ago is to be struck by how much the world and Middle Eastern studies have changed since. For the new prominence of scholarship about women, no little credit is due Nikki Keddie.

—Haleh Esfandiari

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