Gender Diverse Performativity in Classical Islam

Word count: 12, 254

Moses Aziz

This dissertation is submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of BA with Honours in Religions and Theology (TPE) in the University of Manchester.

Moses Aziz

Abstract

This dissertation explores the various outlooks on gender diversity in the classical period of Islam, through focusing on mukhannathun. Each chapter will focus on an individual viewpoint; these will be social understandings, legal understandings, and medical understandings. Judith Butler and Julia Serano's works on gender theory will foreground this analysis, allowing these findings to enrich both the discipline of Islamic history and gender theory. The exploration of social perspectives will focus on the relationship of mukhannathun with beauty, homoeroticism, and their work as musicians and jesters. These perspectives on mukhannathun will ultimately emphasise gender diversity as a social construct within a patriarchal culture. The analysis of legal perspectives will focus on the relationship between mukhannathun and ijtihad (independent reasoning), maslaha (public interest), and the diction of Islamic scriptures. These findings will demonstrate the role of mukhannathun as scapegoats through manipulation of the sharia in contrast with the positive recognition of gender diversity in the Qur'an and Hadith. This perspective will reinforce social constructivist understandings of mukhannathun. The evidence from medical perspectives will focus on justifications for sex-differentiation as the basis of gender diversity as well as medical justifications for mukhannathun as passive partners during male sex. These arguments will reveal that most physicians deemed occurrences of gender diversity as beyond the control of the will. Perspectives from this field will stress the essentialism of gender, and so highlight that the overall classical Islamic understanding of gender challenges the constructivism-essentialism dichotomy often maintained by gender theory. Conclusively, this research will justify the necessity for contemporary Islamic authorities to accept gender diverse individuals.

Acknowledgements

I thank God for my curiosity and conviction regarding queer Islam.

I would like to thank Dr Kamran Karimullah for being the most helpful listener.

I would like to thank my partner for her graciousness and faith in me.

I would like to thank queer, especially trans, Muslims for being.

And I thank myself for consistency and discipline throughout the year.

Table of Contents

Introduction **1**
Literature Review **2**
Methodology **5**
Chapter 1 - Social Perspectives **8**
Introduction 8
Beauty in Society 8
Beauty in Poetry 10
Homoeroticism 11
Work 14
Conclusion 16
Chapter Two - Legal Perspectives **18**
Introduction 18
Function of the Law in Islamic Societies 19
The Law and Gender 20
The Law and Mukhannathun 22
Conclusion 27
Chapter Three - Medical Perspectives **29**
Introduction 29
Importance of Medicine in Islam 29
Foundations of Knowledge 30
Islamic Medical Perspectives 33
Conclusion 38
Conclusion **39**
Bibliography **40**

Introduction

A mukhannath, despite having become an almost obsolete term, is the most documented form of gender beside masculine males and feminine females in classical Islam, so focusing on them provides substantial information on what we call gender diversity. “Gender diversity” will be defined as identification with the spectrum of femininity and masculinity that diverges from males as masculine and females as feminine. Mukhannathun themselves vary in definition, especially throughout time. Physically, they are outlined as males who are ‘"effeminate," without distinction between involuntary and voluntary behavior’ (Rowson, 1991, p. 673) ; this effeminacy takes place through the plucking of their beards (Musić, 2003, p. 34), wearing female’s jewellery (Rowson, 2003, p. 56), and because ‘[*mukhannath*] literally means a man whose voice tone resembles woman’s voice’ (Ishak and Haneef, 2014, p. 524). Etymologically, ‘the term *mukhannath* is derived from a word for skin that is folded back upon itself… the term suggests an inversion of the norm (like turning something inside out) and also a languidness in posture’ (Kugle, 2021, p. 335) which emphasises the femininity of the mukhannathun as subverters of conventional male-ness by ‘abandoning patriarchal manhood to become effeminate with all the privileges and dangers of that identity’ (Kugle, 2021, p. 254) and even ‘[challenging] what was, in the premodern Middle East, one of the most sharp and consequential of boundaries: the distinction between genders’ (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 22). While thes public expressions of effeminacy distinguished the mukhannathun from the earliest years of Islam, societies in the late Umayyad Caliphate and the Early Abbasid Caliphate projected assumptions onto them about their private sexual interest by ‘ [juxtaposing] issues of gender identity with issues of

sexual orientation, so that the distinction between these different phenomena became blurred' (Kugle, 2021, p. 256). This semantic change led to social pejoration of the mukhannathun, causing them to become socialised as 'passive male [sodomites who were] seen as being in possession of a female sex drive' (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 22). Such social pejoration occurred because '[sex] was not categorized into heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality… it was simply insertion and domination by privileged males, and reception and submission by their subordinates' (Oberhelman, 1997 p. 57). And so, these projections onto mukhannathun as passive sex partners further distanced them from masculinity, causing them to be socially looked down on, both for dissociation from masculine appearance and from being active sex partners. Evidently, opinions on this group varied throughout classical Islam. The aim of this dissertation, therefore, is to explore the varying understandings of gender diversity in classical Islam, as intellectualised through the lens of gender theory. This exploration will be accomplished through employing a theoretical framework constituting Butler's gender performativity (1988), Serrano's Intrinsic Inclination Model (2009), and views on gender essentialism to an analysis of contemporary social, legal, and medical perspectives on mukhannathun.

Literature Review

This literature review intends to highlight the need for scrutinising analysis on mukhannathun through the lens of gender theory. The key academic to discuss mukhannathun is Everret Rowson (1991, 1997, 2003), whose discoveries relate first-hand accounts of the mukhannathun from the Kitāb al-Aghānī (*The Book of Songs*) by Abū l-Faraj al-Isfahanī (967 AD). While al-Isfahanī's scope regarding contemporary perspectives on mukhannathun is unclear, Rowson's discussions seem to primarily cover mukhannathun's homoeroticism and their work as entertainers. These aspects of the mukhannathun's lives will form the

initial chapter concerning social perspectives on the mukhannathun. When examining the relationship between the sharia and mukhannathun, as the second chapter will, it becomes apparent that a central body of scholarship regarding legal perspectives on this group is lacking. Consequently, the sources employed will draw on perspectives from varying fields such as Islamic law (including Wael Hallaq), Islamic queer studies (such as Aisya Zaharin, Maria Pallotta-Chiarolli, and Kecia Ali), as well as Rowson's historical accounts on mukhannathun themselves. Despite the inability to find a central scholarship concerning legal perspectives on mukhannathun, the integration of scholarship from these various fields culminates to achieve a fuller picture of the contemporary legal perspectives on them. Discussing the sharia itself is important because, as historian Ahmed Ragab (2015, p. 430) points out, 'the process of gendering occurs primarily within social and legal discourse,' so analysing legal positionings on mukhannathun is necessary for revealing views on gender diversity by classical Islamic societies. Since gender manifestations occur through the body, it is necessary to also explore the views on gender diversity from those who had knowledge and authority on bodily functions during the classical period of Islam. These were the physicians, whose work is primarily contextualised by Islamic medical historian Nahyan Fancy (2017, 2018, 2018, 2018, 2019). These contemporary physicians draw on Ancient Greek biology to form their own justifications for gender diversity. Both the physicians' and Fancy's discoveries are necessary for understanding classical Islamic perspectives on mukhannathun.

While the individual scholarship found regarding mukhannathun in all three chapters is essential to this study, there seems to be an absence of a holistic discussion of the mukhannathun which covers these three areas (and even other important angles which this dissertation may be ignorant of). This gap in scholarship makes the foundation of this dissertation - these aforementioned perspectives - necessary to the study of mukhannathun. A discipline that further enriches this study is gender theory as it provides justifications for why individuals from these three perspectives hold their respective views. Using gender theory in a historical analysis of Islam also enriches gender studies since it is a relatively new discipline

which stems from post-second-wave feminist ideas of gender (since that was when it was formalised), so there seems to be an absence of historical Islamic understandings of gender in such scholarship.

The two main gender theorists this dissertation engages with are Judith Butler and Julia Serano. Building on Beauvoir's 'one is not born, but rather becomes, [a] woman' (1949, p. 283), Butler argues for a social constructivist idea of gender, which will be employed throughout the upcoming chapters. Opposing social constructivism is gender essentialism - a view of gender as primarily biological - which will be necessary for exploring medical understandings of mukhannathun. The ways that a mukhannath (or more broadly, anyone) enacts their gender, is what Butler (1988, p. 522) coins as *performativity*. This is the idea that the actions one carries out become gendered over time, causing the individual to be perceived (by themselves and others) as such gender. This is an important idea because the performativity of mukhannathun are the aspects of their gender from which classical Islamic understandings are generally drawn. Complimenting Butler's social constructivism and employing some aspects of gender essentialism is the work of Julia Serano, including her *Intrinsic Inclination Model* (2009, pp. 99-100). This model outlines gender identification (or, *inclinations*) as subconscious. She highlights that these inclinations are quantitative traits, each with 'a continuous range of possible outcomes,' which 'roughly correlates with physical sex, resulting in a bimodal distribution pattern,' meaning those - like the mukhannathun - with exceptional 'gender expressions… are naturally occurring examples of human variation.' While this model demonstrates essentialism, she elaborates that 'the way we interpret those traits, and the identities and meanings we associate with them, can vary significantly from culture to culture'(Serano, 2009, p. 101), so is simultaneously a proponent of social constructivism. Her ideas reflect the overall classical Islamic understanding of gender diversity as both socially constructed and essentialist, which emphasises her scholarship as necessary for justifying classical Islamic positioning on mukhannathun. This dissertation will, therefore, contribute to both the historical analysis of Islam through intellectualising their accounts of gender diversity, and reinforce the strength of gender theory by providing accounts which confirm Butler and Serano's beliefs.

Methodology

To answer the research question ‘With a focus on the performativity of mukhannathun, how did classical Islam understand gender diversity?,’ this dissertation will engage in a historical analysis of contemporary attitudes to gender performativity. The analysis will be descriptive, which allows for a more authentic depiction of cultural realities than a prescriptive analysis would. To achieve such authentic insight into classical Islamic understandings of gender diversity, this study primarily acknowledges the contemporary understanding of gender, not as distinct divisions between males, females, and “others”, but as the expectations assigned onto individuals based on how much they identified with masculinity or femininity - regardless of one's sex - which was seen as a spectrum (Ragab, 2015, p. 454). While there may be a risk of projecting Butler and Serano’s ideas anachronistically onto classical Islam, viewing contemporary gender as this spectrum allows for a more realistic interpretation of their society. Although the analysis is descriptive, these findings can influence the contemporary issue of gender diversity often being seen as incompatible with Islam. And so, the provisional conclusions are likely to be prescriptive demonstrations of the capacity for accepting gender diverse individuals in Islamic spheres rather than shunning them under the guise of them being un-Islamic (Kugle, 2021, p. 249).

For the first chapter, analysis of the lives of mukhannathun such as Ṭuways and al-Dalāl (from Rowson’s explanation of the Aghānī) will be central to recognising social understandings of gender diversity. The second chapter will draw on the Qur’an and Hadith to obtain legal positionings on gender diversity. And the final chapter will scrutinise theories from Islamic physicians such as Al-Razi and Ibn Sina (which originate from Galenic and Hippocratic medicine) to achieve medical understandings on mukhannathun.

The choice to use both Butler and Serano's ideas is justified because Butler's notion of performativity highlights views on everyone's gender in a society, which then allows an accurate understanding of the relative positioning of mukhannathun. Butler's ideas are also significant because they emphasise performativity as constituted in time (Butler, 1988, p. 520), which reflects the gradual semantic - and so, social - change of mukhannathun. Serano's theories are consistent with Butler's idea of gender as being beyond personal control, as well as being both subject and object (Butler, 2006, p. 195) (Serano, 2009, p. 99-101). She further maintains gender as both constructed and biological, which reflects the overall provisional conclusions of gender being simultaneously socially constructed and biological.

While mukhannathun became less prominent in society from the tenth century (Nielson, 2012, p. 260), most information regarding them comes from between then and the start of Islam (610 AD). Yet scholarship chosen for the medical perspectives covers until the thirteenth century as major contributions were still being made by Muslim physicians about gender diversity at that point, which reflects the continued importance of gender diversity to Mulsims even beyond classical Islam and the waning of mukhannathun.

The decision to fulfil this research question by focusing on mukhannathun remains justified as societal effemimania, 'an obsession with "male femininity"'(Serano, 2009, p. 129) allowed for cultural focus and documentation of the group.Yet this study is limited since such scope overlooks the importance of perspectives from gender diverse groups other than effeminate males. The lack of scholarship concerning masculine females in classical Islam made it difficult to investigate attitudes to them, but this does demonstrate the difficulty for females to 'move "up" [in social status] to become like men' (Kugle, 2021, p. 253). There is evidence of ghulamiyat 'slave girls who cross-dressed as boys… in an effort to deter [aristocratic males's] homosexual inclinations' (Amer, 2009, p. 226). Eunuchs were also a manifestation of gender diversity, but their performativity 'was imposed by society upon them without their consent'(Kugle, 2021, p. 253). Hermaphrodites were another contemporary form of gender diversity,

although their performativity was treated fundamentally as a medical ailment which physicians and jurists legitimised by forcefully socialising them as either a male or a female (Sanders, 1991, p. 77). Understanding these manifestations of gender diversity could certainly enrich this discussion, but the scope of sources seems to limit a comprehensive discussion to that of mukhannathun.

Chapter 1 - Social Perspectives

Introduction

Butler's social constructivist belief that gender performativity is constituted in time demonstrates that '[to] be gendered is to be social' (Musić, 2003, p. 38). Consequently, through an exploration of Islamic societies' appreciation of beauty, poetry, active male homoeroticism, and music, it will be demonstrated that these social values shaped the performativity of mukhannathun throughout classical Islam. This initial chapter will argue that classical Islam's understandings of gender diversity originated from their societies' varying projections regarding the feminine-masculine spectrum. These societal understandings of gender will be explained through analysis of the key fields - introduced above - in which the mukhannathun's performativity seems to have been most prominent. This analysis will employ a social-constructivist outlook onto historical sources, and examine primary accounts such as the experiences of Medinan mukhannaths al-Dalāl and Ṭuways.

Beauty in Society

The definition of beauty in the classical Islamic period transcended notions of gender; being deemed beautiful did not influence the masculinity or femininity of one's gender performativity. The features that were seen to increase someone's aesthetic value in society were the same regardless of whether a person was male or female (Najmabadi, 2005, p. 2). Due to this "androgynous" view of beauty, 'an adolescent with the first trace of a mustache *(nawkhatt)* and before the full growth of facial hair (a process that could take a number of years) was considered the most beautiful' (Najmabadi, 2005, p. 15). Because of this

ideal of beauty, mukhannathun arguably '[do not] want to appear female. Perhaps they simply wish to look like beardless male adolescents' (Najmabadi, 2005, p. 16). It seems, therefore, that the performativity of mukhannath was underpinned by the desire to achieve socially idealised beauty, which highlights gender as socially constructed. Distancing themselves from enacting typical masculinity through the adoption of various unmasculine performativity, including walking with feminine stature (Najmabadi, 2005, p. 16), was a way that mukhannathun utilised gender markers to align themselves with their society's epitome of beauty. Their gender was performative through their enactment of beauty. This manifestation reflects the Intrinsic Inclination Model in which Serano highlights that gender can be acted on by others (Serano, 2009, pp. 99-100), and in this case, the subject is society since it enacts gender ideals through the notion of beauty onto the mukhannathun. It can be deduced that gender-diverse performativity was understood by classical Islamic societies as an attempt at alignment with cultural values of beauty. Najmabadi (2005, p. 26) argues that the mukhannathun were not intending to be seen as feminine, but as plainly beautiful because beauty has only recently become a feminised phenomena. The mukhanathuun's performativity of adopting female clothing and jewellery can, therefore, be deduced not as them aiming to be overtly like females, but simply inverting norms expected of males as has been indicated in the introduction through their etymology (Ishak and Haneef, 2014, p. 524).

These societies acknowledged that beautiful faces, of any gender, could arouse desire but that wasn't considered sinful, only acting on desire was (Najmabadi, 2005, pp. 17-18). While anyone could be deemed beautiful in varying ways, it was beardless adolescent boys who were generally considered more beautiful than women, and so often considered more tempting, usually to men (Najmabadi, 2005, p. 15). This highlights an androcentric social dichotomy between those who performed as men and everyone else whose gender performativity was regarded as non-man, and seen as having beauty for the sake of male consumption. This socially constructivist, androcentric idea of gender is reinforced since '"the inclination to boys" and "the inclination to beauty"... were often alternative ways of describing the same behavioral pattern' (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 56). Yet, their understanding of beauty remained holy since these

societies often believed that ‘all instances of worldly beauty are manifestations of the divine’ (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 96) which was often demonstrated through poetry in which beautiful young males were symbolic for both divine and corporeal definitions of beauty. Over time, mukhannathun performativity adapted from assimilation to this embodiment of beauty to include sexual attraction to it.

Beauty in Poetry

Sufi love poetry was significant in relating social views about such beauty. Once the performativity of mukhannathun shifted to encompass homoeroticism, their desires were often recorded in Sufi poetry. This genre is important because it gives an insight into the social realities regardless of the behaviour encouraged by scripture, which Wafer (1997, p. 128) emphasises as ‘the official doctrines are not, of course, a reliable guide to the realities of erotic conduct in Islamic cultures.’ Mukhannathuns’s homoeroticism in classical Islamic poetry manifested in two ways, for which Wafer coins the terms “vision complex” and “passion complex”. The former entails imagery of voyeuristic *gazing* at a beautiful male subject, which Orthodox Mulsims deemed to be “divine imprint in manifestation.” Meanwhile, the latter uses symbolism of physical interactions whence the speaker is destroyed by their lover. Wafer points out that the vision complex is concerned with God’s immanence, while the passion complex is concerned with God’s transcendence (Wafer, 1997, p. 109). Evidently, these societies viewed beauty as a means of connecting to God, which justifies the Sufis’ and mukhannthun’s desire for male beauty in poetry. This derived from sama gatherings (mystical rituals where Sufis remember God) in which a shahid (usually a young beautiful male) was present as a witness to God’s beauty (Wafer, 1997, p. 111). Gazing seems to be an allegorisation of the role of the shahid, which reaffirms poetry as an echo of reality. This beautiful adolescent imagery was employed by mukhannathun for both worldly and spiritual intent - to portray their

wish for closeness to God and to portray how they wished to enact their attraction to beauty (either just to engage in a form of voyeurism or to be consumed by their lover). The poetry of Abu Nuwas - who studied at the Abbasid school of Basra which engaged in this love mysticism - uses both types of Wafer's complexes as well as ranging between chaste and vulgar imagery. Until him, it seems that most homoerotic poetry was anonymous (Rosenthal, 1997, pp. 29-30), which may be due to a potential fear among people for even talking about acting on their desires - even if it is just gazing - as homoeroticism was originally deemed scandalous. Yet, Abu Nuwas was notorious for his boldness so may have taken a risk, or since studying at Basra, it was the norm for him to witness appreciation of male beauty, so writing up similar imagery was not unusual. This use of poetry by mukhannathun to portray the experiences of male desire towards male beauty would be considered important by Serano who argues that gender diverse individuals are too often dehumanised by being written about by people who are not of said gender identities themselves but estranged from the realities of such identities (Serano, 2009, p. 151). Poetry (again, unlike doctrine) is reinforced as a source for understanding the ways that mukhannathun performed their gender diversity through their attraction to social ideals of beauty.

Homoeroticism

Butler argues for social constructivism by highlighting gender as 'the stylized repetition of acts through time' (Butler, 1988, p. 520) which indicates that repetition of performativity underpins gender, but also that as time changes so can gender markers. As such, the performativity of mukhannathun changed with time, becoming redefined with new stylized, repetitive acts. Regarding this, Rowson (1991, p. 693) emphasises the

> … sudden emergence of (active) homoerotic sentiment as an acceptable, and indeed fashionable, subject for prestige literature, as represented most notably by the poetry of Abū Nuwas. Increased

> public awareness of homosexuality, which was to persist through the following centuries, seems to have altered perceptions of gender in such a way that "effeminacy," while continuing to be distinguished from (passive) homosexual activity or desire, was no longer seen as independent from it; and the stigma attached to the latter seems correspondingly to have been directed at the former as well, so that the *mukhannathūn* were never again to enjoy the status attained by their predecessors in Umayyad Medina.

He outlines the pejorative social views of mukhannathun once their performativity became 'assumed to be *baghghā'ūn* [passive homosexuals]' (Rowson, 1991, 686). Serano's Intrinsic Inclination model (2009, p. 101) points out that these social constructions (which give mukhannathun their definition as passive homoerotics) are reflective of the associations a society has with its naturally occurring variation of genders. In this case it is non-masculine males. If one does not fit into the masculine male (and therefore "penetrator") category, then they are socialised as the "penetrated." The sexualisation of mukhannathun's performativity can be interpreted as effemimania, which Serano (2009, p. 133) attributes to 'the implicit assumption that femininity is inferior to masculinity.' This hierarchy (which informed the effemimania and what Musić (2003, p. 34) calls the 'binary tension between men and not-men') in classical Islamic societies is ascribed by Serano (2009, p. 134) to the 'cultural tendency to sexualize femininity and femaleness in all its forms.' Serano (2009, p. 283) provides further evidence for the link between the extrinsic construction of mukhannathun from males who enact femininity to males who also wish to be penetrated by other males by arguing that 'assumptions are that crossdressing is a form of appropriating or objectifying womanhood; that it is an expression of latent homosexuality… or some other form of "sexually deviant" behavior.' It is clear that classical Islamic societies deemed mukhannathun semiotically linked with homoeroticism and receiving penetration due to their social construction as non-masculine-males. Masculine males were considered superior since 'phallogocentrism continuously and systematically reduces gender and sexuality to absurdly basic categories of active and passive,' (Musić, 2003, p. 12) and so the inclination away from it by the mukhannathun (both in their effeminacy and their homoerotic attraction) socially constructed them as disgraceful.

Butler (2006, p. 41) outlines that ‘sexuality is always constructed within the terms of discourse and power, where power is partially understood in terms of heterosexual and phallic cultural conventions,’ and this androcentric construction of sexuality is conspicuous in the ways that classical Islamic societies ‘regulate sexual activity among their members’(Ali, 2013, p. 56). Males who performed masculinity tended to be married to females, yet the social prestige of being an active partner in male sex, a *lūtī*, allowed them to fulfil familial duties while also being able to engage in homoeroticism. Najmabadi (2005, p. 20) highlights that ‘[vaginal] intercourse with wives was aimed to fulfill procreative obligations, while other acts were linked to the pleasures of power, gender, age, class, and rank.’ Homoeroticism clearly had a social function which aimed to maintain masculine males at the top of the social hierarchy, which Musić (2003, p. 38)reiterates, arguing that ‘[to] be gendered is to be social, and vice versa. More importantly, to be social implies belonging into a hierarchy privileging men.’ Females and mukhannathun were socially constructed as inferior to males because of their detachment from masculinity, and the prestige associated with active male homoeroticism allowed maintenance of this sexual - thereby, social - hierarchy.

While the Early Abbasid period generalised that mukhannathun were passive partners in homoerotic sex, their own participation in such activities was not entirely new or consistent. An example of their performativity as passive sex partners is evident in the case of al-Dalāl who is regarded ‘as an unabashed *mā’būn*, that is, someone who sought the passive role in homosexual relation’ of the early Islamic generation of mukhannathun in Madina (Rowson, 1991, p. 685). Yet, evidence also indicates that the mukhannath Tuwais had a wife (Rowson, 1991, p. 179), so it can be deduced that mukhannathun had diversity in their sexual attractions. Such variety in sexual partners and positions emphasises the early Islamic social construction of sexual attraction as independent from gender performativity. It is only with the conflation of mukhannathun and ma’bun, induced through effemimania (Serano, 2009, 133), by the Early Abbasid period that sexuality became a gender marker. This reiterates gender as ‘the stylized repetition of acts through time’(Butler, 1988, p. 520), thus presenting the prestige of gender diversity as

having shifted (as it pejorated) throughout the classical period of Islam due to increased sexualisation of femininity and the attempt to maintain society as patriarchal.

The social construction of mukhannathun's performativity as passive homosexual partners lessened their dignity. The fickleness of this lack of dignity is emphasised by Rowson (2003, p. 63):

> The *mukhannathūn* had very little dignity, and their status in society, controversial even in the Umayyad period, sank noticeably under the 'Abbāsids, possibly in part because they were henceforth assumed to be passive homosexuals… The resulting lack of dignity freed them, however, from numerous constraints, and enabled them to serve as clowns and entertainers of other sorts, who could be vastly amusing without having to be taken seriously.

Clearly, their assumed sexuality rendered them the least powerful in society through freedom from the respectability expected from the rest of society. The strength of social constructivist theory is highlighted here because such consequences of this gender marker as undignifying led mukhannathun to go from being viewed as esteemed musicians in the Hijaz (Nielson, 2012, 246) to engaging in ignoble work such as being jesters and professional sex-workers within a mere few hundred years (Nielson, 2012, p. 260).

Work

While there was generally disagreement regarding the permissibility of music, which will be explored in the following chapter, the upper classes of the Hijaz, including the Quraysh, were most appreciative of it. Because of this, the mukhannathun who were musicians 'for a period of some two generations, enjoyed a position of exceptional visibility and prestige' (Rowson, 1991, p. 672) for their pioneering music in Medina and also somewhat in Umayyad Mecca. The Hijaz, especially the city of Medina (which is known for its musical traditions since the Ansār welcomed Prophet Muhammad with music) cherished music. And so, the musical performativity of mukhannathun allowed them to be valuable to their society as they

popularised new instruments and ways of singing rhythms (Rowson, 1991, p. 678). This can be seen as ‘Ṭuways was the first of the *mukhannathūn* to sing "art music" (? *ghin′ mutqan*), and the first person to compose in the "lighter" rhythms of *hazaj* and *ramal* in Islam… [and] relied exculsively on the *duff*, a square tambourine’ (Rowson, 1991, p. 678). While the duff was previously regarded as a woman's tambourine, al-Dalāl also preferred this instrument as well as employing hazaj and ramal rhythms which they both performed, and taught to their students (Rowson, 1991, p. 682). These all became characteristic, and so ‘stylized repetition’ (Butler, 1988, p. 520) of the performativity of mukhannathun, even up to the early Abbasid period (Rowson, 1991, p. 682). Accordingly, mukhannathun excelled in what the upper classes and general society considered valuable, so their role in musical developments enhanced their respectability in these early years after the establishment of Islam.

This work maintained the social value of mukhannathun, allowing them to grow from musicians in Medina to receiving patronage to work in the Abbasid court of Baghdad in the ninth century under Harun al-Rashid (786–809) despite various government crackdowns on the group from the year 717 (Rowson, 2003, pp. 45-47). Their effeminate performativity was conspicuous even in such lofty positions since they performed wearing ‘a mix of women’s and men’s garments, although they certainly wore women’s jewelry’ (Rowson, 2003, p. 56). Such visibility indicates a social approval of their respective alignment with the feminine-masculine spectrum. Their performativity allowed them to subvert social expectations of gender roles, which Butler (1999, p. xxii) would be a proponent of, because until them, patronage (*qiyan*) was offered only to young females (Nielson, 2012, p.235-236). Their prestige in the field opened up music to any gender. Regarding this, Nielson (2012, p. 238) establishes that their performativity as musicians ‘not only informed the musical and social identity of Islamic court musicians, but influenced the development of Islamic musical discourse.’ Evidently their performativity altered the spheres of both gender and music. People other than just females could now sing, and music had new instruments and melodies that had been introduced. Both the mukhannathun and the musical tradition benefitted from their

inclusion in this tradition, so it is reinforced that they were recognised as valuable for their society at a time.

The mukhannathun being reputable was short-lived. Due to their social pejoration once they became associated with passive partners in homoerotic sex, '[mukhannathun] continued to remain at court, though their performances now focused on theatrics or buffoonery, with less emphasis on music' (Nielson, 2012, p. 251). This shift emphasises that 'gender… is an identity tenuously constituted in time' (Butler, 1988, p. 519), thus, making it clear that their social position shifted from one of esteem to one of farce due to the pejoration of their performativity in society's view. Mukhannathun were able to engage in such frivolous work because '[more] than their music… it was their wit that now defined their persona' (Rowson, 1991, p. 693). This wit can be attributed to their socialisation as undignified due to their effeminacy and role as passive partners in male sex (and so, again, freed of the need to be respectable). As such, social constructivism seems essential to the ways that mukhannathun were viewed in classical Islamic societies. Social projections of femininity as inferior onto them dictated the work they were able to engage in as their performativity became less aligned with social roles of a masculine male. This perception of mukhannathun as deeply undignified seems to have almost distinguished them from the rest of society as they were not taken as seriously as other gender performativities.

Conclusion

Ultimately, it has been delineated that mukhannathun performativity varied throughout classical Islam. Their effeminate performativity originated from the desire to achieve social ideals of beauty, which diverged from masculinity. Their appreciation of and, later, attraction to such beauty was depicted through Sufi poetry, presented as a way to connect with the divine. Yet attraction to male beauty and the desire to

engage in male sex was only socially acceptable if one was a penetrator, which the mukhannathun were socialised not to be, so they were often seen as undignified by society. The earliest generations of mukhannathun performativity did not inherently mean being passive sex partners. Yet, becoming constructed as such meant they were socialised as inferior to masculine males. This was to maintain the man/non-man dichotomy. Despite the earliest generations socially flourishing for their musical contributions, being socialised as *baghghā'ūn* freed them from needing to be seen as respectable, turning them instead to theatrical works. This diversity - and the reasoning for such diversity - of the mukhannathun's performativity in classical Islam presents social understandings of gender diversity as contingent on however strict the social construction (of gendered expectations) were. As the earliest generations had more ambiguous performativity, they seem to have been more empowered and valued by society. Yet the patriarchal projection of inferiority onto their performativity, whether intentional or not, demonstrates the debilitating power of patriarchal social understandings. This influence of social constructivism onto performativity will be further scrutinised in the following chapter regarding the field of law.

Chapter Two - Legal Perspectives

Introduction

Since the establishment of Islam, the legal system was produced ‘in the relatively short span of… three and a half centuries’(Hallaq, 2009, p. 27). Having chiefly derived its principles from the Qur’an and supplemented by the Sunnah and eventually the Hadith (Hallaq, 1997, p. 255), it was systemised into the four madhabs (Hallaq, 2009, p. 71). Despite juridical authority coming from these complete scriptures and the formalised authority of the madhabs, interpretations of the sharia ‘continuously [underwent a] renewed exercise in hermeneutic,’ which is understood as *ijtihad* (Hallaq, 2009, p. 546). This allowed Islam to be ‘extremely pluralistic in “legal” constitution’ (Hallaq, 2009, p. 17). It was, thus, through ijtihad that the sharia could be employed to give guidance for every situation that a Mulsim might encounter (that had not already been clarified by Prophet Muhammad himself), especially as it is stated in the Qur’an ‘We have sent the Scripture down to you explaining everything’ (16:89). The Qur’an is communication from Allah and, therefore, generally understood as containing the true principles of Islam - which, as will be seen, indicate that diverse gender performativity is unproblematic. Yet, this chapter will reveal that both this and the hadith were instead often manipulated by jurists. It will be established that such interpretations projected ideas of mukhannathun - and so performativity of gender diversity - as having negligible agency, deserving punishment, and fundamentally deemed threatening to social structures. This conclusion will be reached through outlining the aims and structure of the sharia, scrutinising the impacts of the sharia being developed in an androcentric field, and examining the ways the law impacted the performativity of mukhannathun throughout its development.

Function of the Law in Islamic Societies

Ijtihad is, arguably, the most important process for the construction of the sharia, aside from the opportunity to ask for Prophet Muhammad's own opinion. After the demise of the Prophet (632 AD), the scriptures themselves necessitated 'independent reasoning' (Sirri, 2020, p. 39) that conformed with Islamic principles to be applied to unprecedented situations. A *mujtahid* (one engaging in the ijtihad of scripture) is set apart from lay-people - *muqallids* (Hallaq, 2009, p. 111). Authorising someone to take up this meticulous legal requisite requires trusting them to be '"doing the right thing" in exerting their juristic effort (*ijtihād*) in reaching a rule or an opinion' (Hallaq, 2009, p. 82). This was upheld through them being 'latently sanctioned as such by the scholarly community' (Hallaq, 2009, p. 110). This designation of an Islamic jurist to a mujtahid was necessary as the position required consideration of the niceties of respective situations and of Islamic principles. The mujtahid's position allowed them authority to impart informed judicious decisions, yet due to the heterogeneity of humans's thought processes, '*Ijtihād*… is just… an opinion. It does not claim monopoly on jural truth, nor does it instigate any powers of enforcement' (Hallaq, 2009, p. 110). And so, diversity in opinions regarding a situation was not uncommon, as each view was deemed 'equally valid, although one of them – for the purposes of practice and application – must be viewed as superior' (Hallaq, 2009, p. 82) for the benefit of the wider community (the *ummah*). Although, contrary to this, jurists often produce rulings based on public interest (*maslaha*), yet it is contested whether this required textual evidence (Hallaq, 2009, p. 109).

To understand the role of public interest, it first needs to be understood that 'there are five universal principles that underlie the Sharʿıa, namely, protection of life, mind, religion, private property and offspring' (Hallaq, 2009, p. 109). These principles ensure the fulfilment of the 'aims (*maqṣūd*) of the law' (Hallaq, 2009, p. 104), which are the 'systematic exclusion of harm and inclusion of benefit' (Hallaq, 2009, p. 104) of the ummah. On the basis of these principles, jurists may use 'suitability' - employing

their own rational faculty - when considering '"relevant" ways of rational reasoning that serve the public interest (mas˙ lah ˙ a)'(Hallaq, 2009, 104). The problem with maslaha is that rationality concerning common welfare did not serve the marginalised (such as those whose gender performativity varied from the general public's, like the mukhannathun). This problem will be explored further on in the chapter. Hallaq's (1997, p. 225) interpretation reflects this somewhat problematic aspect of the sharia:

> The very fact that the Quran untiringly called upon the Arabs to obey God and His Prophet, and to abandon their old ways in favor of a new "path" prescribed by the Deity, constitutes the practical equivalent of a higher will dictating to man modes of thinking and living that are often at variance with his normative ways.

It is clear that he deems the aim of sharia to be one of seeking out and empowering thought that is not part of the common interest. This can be interpreted as those with gender diverse performativity.

The Law and Gender

Following on From Hallaq's statement, ijtihad seems the most effective legal way to empower gender diverse individuals since it 'allows for the possibility of new meanings to be read into the text…, which, in turn, makes for new gender-just understandings of the divine mandate' (Sikand, 2006, p. 648). Yet, the use of maslaha renders mukhannathun socially disadvantaged. As has been discussed in the previous chapter, their performativity of both homoeroticism and femininity degrades them in the eyes of society, and so are deemed as undermining public welfare. This was due to their inability to conform to what Serano (2009, pp. 164-165) calls *cissexual assumption*, which she attributes to 'when a cissexual makes the common, albeit mistaken, assumption that the way they experience their physical and subconscious sexes… applies to everyone else in the world'. Despite the sharia being in place to serve all Muslims, the legal focus on maslaha - rather than just ijtihad - meant that the mukhanathun's performativity rendered

them liable to punishment from a *mufti* since it scandalised the public. Such punishment for the performativity of one's intrinsic inclinations - which Butler (2006, p. 172) would argue is induced through the political naturalisation of heteronormativity - may render mukhannathun ‘to feel shame about [what they] have learned to hide or repress’ (Serano, 2009, p. 306) like their feminine gender markers. In the face of cissexual assumption and patriarchal heteronormativity, ijtihad would have been more likely to justly defend their performativity. This highlights that the law was fickle as it could be used to both uplift or punish those whose genders diverged from the expectations of society. The performativity of mukhannathun, and thereby gender diversity, is assumed to be embarrassing and somewhat independent from social expectations.

Androcentrism, a tradition maintained from pre-Islamic pagan mindsets (Qur’an 43:16-18), seems to have underpinned what was considered public interest. This can be seen as ‘*fiqh* was the monopoly of male scholars and women were excluded from the production of religious knowledge’ (Sirri, 2020, 41) which highlights the legal field as patriarchal. The needs of females (beyond their relationship with males), and by extension the needs of anyone whose gender performativity did not align with masculine males, were inherently undermined through the devising of the sharia. While this male domination is not what Serano (2009, p. 308) calls effemimania but instead an inattention to effeminacy, she notes that ‘[while] those who live full-time as women surely bear the brunt of traditional sexism, female and feminine-inclined malebodied people are also clearly targeted by this form of sexism, as is evident in our culture’s rampant effemimania.’ She highlights the masculine-male/non-masculine-male dichotomy which is evident in the production of the sharia, and it seems that both effemimania and disregard for effeminacy maintains the social construction of sexism. This gatekeeping disempowered anyone whose gender performativity was not that of masculine males. It is clear that the Qur’an was exploited in order to serve and preserve the patriarchy (a system which empowers masculine males who experience attraction to females). This choice to maintain the production of religious knowledge (through means which included maslaha and ijtihad) as a field for males may have been justified since the ‘Qur’an did not address women as a group at all, but

only addressed the group of men even in those issues that concerned women' (Youseff, 2017, p. 10). Yet, Kugle (2021, p. 245) rebuts this rationale through questioning 'in highlighting their contrast and pairing [of men and women] is the Qur'an describing or prescribing?,'which reinforces Hallaq's ijtihad of the Qur'an as a means to understand such patriarchal traditions as needing to become obsolete. Ali (2013, p. 116) reaffirms Kugle's argument, disputing such religiously-justified androcentrism by arguing that 'the ontological equality of all human beings takes precedence over the earthly, temporally bound regulations that privilege men over women.' Reinforcing Hallaq's ideal of employing the sharia to bring about improvement, she highlights the Islamic necessity to enact equality rather than succumbing to maintaining patriarchal traditions. These critiques emphasise the importance of the sharia as a means to serve all Muslims, especially those whose gender performativity lessens their societal privilege as 'Islam has always taken sides with the oppressed rather than with the oppressor' (Zaharin and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2020, p. 235). This demonstrates the possibility for using the sharia equitably for gender-diverse individuals, which will be stressed in the conclusion of this dissertation. Nonetheless, this androcentric overlooking of the needs of anyone who is not a masculine male highlights that such individuals were deemed as having less agency than masculine males. Such individuals were deemed inferior to them in this 'legal system that methodically denies subjects' liminality under guises of preserving divinely inspired order, while simultaneously recognizing a continuum when phallic privilege needs protection' (Musić, 2003, p. 51).

The Law and Mukhannathun

Regarding the performativity of mukhannathun, muftis may employ a gender essentialist model to justify that 'God cursed the males who appear like females and the females who appear like males' (Ishak and Haneef, 2014, p. 524), and so, again, present mukhannathun as deserving of punishment. Yet classical

Islamic medical justifications for gender diversity have been used to prove that the performativity of feminine males and masculine females are just as biologically natural as feminine females and masculine males; this is delineated in the next chapter. This essentialist perspective which deems the performativity of mukhannathun as a sin through the belief that their actions are '"changing the creation of Allah" or "wrongly interfering in God's creation"' (Zaharin and Pallotta-Chiarolli, 2020, p. 236) contradicts Serano's (2009, p. 78) ideas of subconscious sex, which she defines as 'the gender we subconsciously feel ourselves to be.' If a male has always felt an affinity to effeminacy, then they are not changing their gender identity but, instead subverting this claim since their performativity re-aligns them with the way they believe Allah created them. This allegedly gender-related transgression is further undermined since Zaharin and Pallotta-Chiarolli (2020, p. 236) highlight that, despite its manipulation against gender diverse individuals, the ruling is actually refers to 'changing religion, namely Islam, and God's commands' as an infraction, and does not involve gender. It can, therefore, be deduced that the vagueness of the sharia is often manipulated against gender-diverse individuals, yet the actual rulings are not prescriptive about the ways gender performativity should be embodied.

The Qur'an evidences the performativity of mukhannathun who were initially believed to experience no sexual attraction and later on engage in homoeroticism (rather than heteroeroticism) when referring to males 'who have no sexual desire [towards females],' (Quran 24:31) who are permitted entry into female quarters as her family male family members would be. Ishak and Haneef (2014, p. 524) argue that 'traditional Islamic jurisprudence interpreted [this] as reference to the mukhannathun.' And so, this distinction between males who do and do not experience homoeroticism (the mukhannathun and those who experience sexual desire for females) explicitly highlights the distinct rights that mukhannathun have. It also validates mukhannathun as 'a third gender' (Serano, 2009, p. 174), presenting them as able to mix between public male domains and private female domains, which ultimately empowered them as interweaving between males and females allowed them engagement in careers such as marriage broking. Allah's explicit reference in the Qur'an, the basis of sharia, to mukhannathun and their subsequent

empowerment demonstrates the performativity of mukhannathun as divinely-decreed, and beneficial to both themselves and wider society.

Despite the Qur'an affirmation of the performativity of mukhannathun, hadith regarding their interactions with females are often wrongfully manipulated to portray them as worthy of social exclusion. This can be seen through the account of the mukhannath Hit, who was caught gossiping about other female's bodies in front of Umm Salama (the Prophet's wife) to her brother, resulting in his banishment not only from her quarters but from Madina to nearby al-Himā (Rowson, 1991, p. 677). The Prophet's juridical instruction to 'not admit these into your… presence' (Sahih al-Bukhari) has been misinterpreted to suggest that he was talking of mukhannathun not entering houses, especially alone with females. Yet, contrary to this, the punishment was not for the mukhannathun as a whole for their performativity but for Hit alone due to his crossing of conversational boundaries. It can be understood that the Prophet banished him for describing a female's physique vividly, so deems the infraction to be gossipping. Or, Kugle and Rowson point out that it may have been since his vivid description revealed to the Prophet that he understood the physicality that makes a female attractive, thus undermining the early Islamic ideas of mukhannathun as 'men… who have no sexual desire'(Qur'an 24:31), and so this ambiguity concerning their sexuality may render them a threat to females's chastity. They further highlight the infraction possibly being that sharing such descriptions of females to males incites lust among them, thus encouraging the sin of fornication (Kugle, 2021, p. 111). Regarding the gossipping and encouragement of sin, Musić (2003, p. 50) clarifies that '[the] Prophet seems to have found nothing intrinsically wrong with this group of people, though moral transgressions (again, separate from their gender expression) of a few individuals had to be punished.' This re-emphasises that this group was not deemed worthy of exclusion simply because of their gender performativity but because those who commit infractions, regardless of their gender performativity, must face consequences. Yet, the idea that Hit was excluded because he did not perform his gender as was expected (through being expected to lack sexuality) undermines arguments of gender being socially constructed and rigid, and instead strengthens views of gender as intrinsically-defined and fluid, which

Butler (1988, p. 528) explains as ‘gender is made to comply with a model of truth and falsity which not only contradicts its own performative fluidity, but serves a social policy of gender regulation and control’. Hit’s understanding of sexuality does not reflect every mukhannath’s relationship with sexuality, and so again this can be deduced as a singular incident manipulated against all mukhannathun. This is reinforced since Rowson (1991, p. 677) reveals that ‘[none] of our sources in fact state that Muhammad actually banished more than two *mukhannathūn*, and there is considerable evidence that such men continued to have access to women's quarters and to describe women to other men.’ Furthermore, Hit’s understanding of attractive aspects of female physicality can be attributed to the common work of mukhannathun as marriage-brokers, which would have necessitated learning about physical attraction between males and females. This, again, undermines ideas of mukhannathun as being worthy of exclusion, and highlights one instance where a singular mukhannath crossed conversational boundaries and was thus punished for compromising the chastity of private spheres. So, this juridical focus on their actions as heightening the risk of sins rather than every mukhannath being seen as intrinsically worthy banishment highlights that their gender diversity was not the cause of their punishment, but they were easily homogenised and villainized through the sharia.

Another example of Islamic rulings issued unjustly towards mukhannathun is evident when the Umayyad Caliph Sulayman (715-717) castrated a group of mukhannath including Samīr al-Aylī, Ṭuways and al-Dalāl due to their music being deemed a distraction and arousal to women (Rowson, 1991, p. 690). This punishment illustrates that the social conventions which allowed mukhannathun to be musicians were fickle; while it raised their status, the opinion that music was impious (Rowson, 1991, p. 671) rendered mukhannathun consistently in precarious standing with the sharia. The instability of their social standing is apparent on the occasion when Samīr’s music at the Caliph Sulayman’s camp distracted the ruler’s servant girl from attending to her responsibilities. On discovering it was Samīr’s music, the Caliph’s jealousy caused him to castrate Samīr along with fellow mukhannathun (Rowson, 1991, p. 690). It can be deduced that this punishment was caused by the Caliph’s insecurity regarding his power over his

slave girl which - despite the social construction of mukhannathun as having homoerotic inclinations at this time (Rowson, 1991, p. 693) - he felt was threatened by the mukhannathun's arousing music. And punishing them all for the (arguably unjustified) infractions of one mukhannath demonstrates the social construction of mukhannathun as scapegoats for the shortcomings of those with social power. This emphasises their lack of power in the face of Islamic rulings, which arises from the legal sphere being patriarchal. It is clear that mukhannathun, and therefore gender-diverse individuals, often faced injustice through Islamic rulings, so lacked respect in their patriarchal society.

Rulings on *gazing* varied from lawful - in the eyes of mukhannathun and mystics - to unlawful - due to it being understood as a preliminary to zina (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 118). As such, El-Rouayheb (2005, p. 111) points out

> such a taking in of the charms of women or beardless youths was deeply problematic from the perspective of Islamic law. To be sure, the love poetry was often *not* taken realistically… The idea that "poets say what they do not do" thus made room for a peaceful coexistence between the sensual ideals often celebrated in love poetry and the rather more austere ideals upheld by religious jurists… poets did not *always* "say what they do not do," but the assumption that they did so "as a rule" allowed them to express a fondness for wine, women, or boys, without compromising themselves.

This demonstrates an acceptance of homoerotic expressions but not of actions. The medium of poetry seems fundamental for mukhannathun to safely express the sexuality aspect of their gender performativity; it was their defence against punishment as it allowed sharing of homoerotic desire without suspicion. As is characteristic of effemimania, legal positions on gazing varied, meaning 'diametrically opposed positions could be reached on [the] issue' (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 116). To justify gazing as an offence, scholars likened mukhannathun to females, portraying it as an offence similar to one that may lead to zina. Yet, when they considered it to not be an infraction, they likened mukhannathun to masculine males and claimed the fixation was not caused by lust (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 116). It seems that whether it was allowed was based on its benefit to public interest and patriarchal male scholars; if gazing caused temptation for males then it was illegal, if it did not then it was allowed. Both arguments that poets wrote

about gazing since they did not enact it and that gazing is allowed when not lustful undermines its homoerotic basis, yet seems to be an act of safety in the face of effemimania-induced prohibitions. Mystics who were proponents of gazing defended it through arguing that it benefitted those who engaged in mysticism but those who were not of such ranks would inevitably deem it an impediment to their religiosity. Further criticisms of gazing as a sin can be seen through several scholars who argue that

> no one was in a better position to judge than the onlooker himself, and it was not permissible to claim that one knows whether others look with lust or not. Rather, one was obliged to think well of one's fellow Muslims unless there was weighty evidence to the contrary (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 116).

It can, therefore, be argued that it is important to trust that one will engage in gazing only if they deem it permissible, as mukhannathun and mystics did. These rulings also seem to be 'general prohibitions… that were not based on sound juridical principles, but merely out of a moralistic conviction that wickedness and depravity was widespread' (El-Rouayheb, 2005, p. 116). And since the performativity of homoeroticism was looked down on, this highlights the vulnerability of a public interest based on patriarchy and androcentrism. These rulings against mukhannathun's active engagement in homoerotic performativity were clearly defensive from the patriarchal law-makers, and so reveal gender diverse performativity as threatening to patriarchy.

Conclusion

Ultimately, despite being in place to serve all Muslims, the sharia being an androcentric field meant it was often shaped to serve the patriarchy, thus undermining the needs of genders other than masculine males. It was rarely employed to help gender diverse individuals, apart from the explicit reference to their rights in the Qur'an, or mystics' defence of gazing. This undermining of the needs of females and gender diversities demonstrates that they were deemed as lacking in agency by classical Islamic societies. Effemimania-induced manipulation is inherent in the laws since they have often been misinterpreted to

exclude or punish mukhannathun when the actual intention behind these laws lies is the bigger picture such as abandoning Islam, punishment for a mukhannath's individual sins, or maintaining social structures that dichotomizes the performativity of masculine males as the most socially powerful against all other gender performativity. So, the need to miseducate society about mukhannathun by inhibiting their power suggests a weakness from those creating the laws - masculine males - and so it can be concluded that classical Islamic society viewed gender diversity as threatening to public interest and patriarchal ideals. The following chapter will explore medical justifications for gender diversity, which was a field that often interacted with the legal sphere.

Chapter Three - Medical Perspectives

Introduction

Butler (2004, p. 20) outlines that ‘it is through the body that gender and sexuality become exposed to others, implicated in social processes, inscribed by cultural norms, and apprehended in their social meanings,’ which emphasis that the classical Islamic recognition of gender markers as biological complies with their view of gender performativity. Such gender markers are the process of sex-differentiation and mukhannathun’s experience of *ubnah,* ‘uncontrollable desire for anal penetration’ (Ragab, 2015, p. 449). Thus, by analysing theories from those who held authority in biology - Muslim physicians - regarding these causes of gender-diverse performativity, this chapter will establish that classical Islamic societies understood gender-diversity as being medically justified as mostly natural. This conclusion is reached through outlining the importance of medical knowledge for contemporary Muslims, summarising the sources that Muslim physicians derived their knowledge from, and ultimately assessing the ways these physicians’s ideas position gender-diverse performativity.

Importance of Medicine in Islam

There are a multitude of reasons for medical knowledge being of importance in Islam, namely the Egyptian physician Ibn al-Nafis (1288)’s idea that ‘the study of anatomy can lead the investigator to recognise the existence and wisdom of a creator God’ (Fancy, 2018a, p. 43). It is clear that engaging in

achieving medical knowledge allows Muslims to understand that God creates everything deliberately with intricate wisdom. It not only evidences God's existence (a fundamental belief in Islam) but reinforces belief in it. This rationale affirms the idea that everyone is created as they are meant to be due to divine wisdom and so overcomes what Serano (2009, p. 89) calls 'gender entitlement, [which is] the arrogant conviction that one's own beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions regarding gender and sexuality are more valid than those of other people.' And so, those who differ from the norm - such as males who identify with femininity rather than typical masculinity - are acknowledged as experiencing such identification simply because it is God's will. Understanding the variety that there is in creation fundamentally helps strengthen one's relationship with God, which is reinforced by Fancy (2018a, p. 176) who highlights 'that medicine was, by and large, deemed a praiseworthy science by religious authorities in the pre-modern Islamic world.' The pursuit of knowledge was held in high prestige as it was regarded as a moral virtue that simultaneously attended to society's bodily afflictions but also improved one's belief in God.

This chapter is just as relevant as the previous chapter since medical and religious scholars engaged in each other's works, allowing both groups to benefit from the knowledge found by the other. It has been claimed that Islamic texts merely recycled the knowledge of Greek physicians like Galen and Hippocrates rather than presenting any new knowledge. (Fancy, 2018b , p. 129) Yet, as will be revealed, Muslim physicians only took the Greeks' work as a starting point for their own distinctive findings which often had different conclusions from those of their Greek predecessors.

Foundations of Knowledge

Muslims would have been unable to build on Greek medical knowledge without the translation processes that took place. Continuous translations by Syriac-speaking Christians - beginning with Sergios of Ra's al-ʿAin (Rēshainā) (d. AD 536) - enabled the conversion of Greek work into Syriac for the purposes of medical training in the Middle East, and then the consequent translations from Syriac to Arabic were wholesale (Dols and Immisch, 2011, pp. 38-39). This well-funded translation movement employed specialised translators who were patronised, and had 'reached its peak with Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq and his colleagues in ninth-century Baghdad' (Dols and Immisch, 2011, p. 39). The medical knowledge that was preserved through these translations was mostly Galenic - his own work and his commentaries on his predecessor Hippocrates - so his theories came to make up the basis of Islamic medicine.

Galen's commentaries on Hippocratic texts allowed for somewhat of a preservation of Hippocrates's theories, yet since his work was always supported by Galen's commentaries, it is often difficult to establish whose theory is whose. One which came to influence Islamic medicine is his theory of The Four Humours, where particular elements and humours constitute one's healthy temperament. Regarding the sexes, he associated the elements of heat and dryness with masculine males while cold and wetness were associated with feminine females (Fancy, 2017, p. 157). These opposing temperaments are what Serano (2009, p. 97) would classify as '*exceptional* gender expressions,' and since she acknowledges that naturally occurring gender variation is inevitable (2009, p. 100), and while The Four Humours Theory makes space for the combination of hot and moist or cold and dry temperaments to also occur, it is evident that feminine males and masculine females, and so the performativity of gender diversity, were deemed as natural through medical perspectives. It can, therefore, be deduced that the medical knowledge Muslims received justified gender diversity. Hippocrates's other major theory was the Two-Seed Theory. In his Aphorisms, he suggests that both the male and female partner produce seed which causes sex-differentiation of the foetus (Fancy, 2017, p. 150). Since Galen's views permeate what has survived of Hippocrates's works, his ideas about sex-differentiation also contain aspects of Galen's Right-Left Theory, which is evidenced through his understanding that 'the male sex is generated when seed from the

right testicle flows into the right cavity of the womb and mixes with the female seed lodged there' (Keuny, 2013, p. 60). The idea of there being two seeds and of the womb having two sides constituted Hippocratic sex-differentiation on top of ideas about The Four Humours. Muslim physicians built on these theories to rationalise the femininity-masculinity spectrum one could fall on regardless of their sex, and so justifying diverse gender performativity.

Due to Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq's conscious choice to translate Galen's work rather than any other Greek philosopher, his theories seem to have been more prominent for Muslim physicians. When forming his Right-Left Theory of sex-differentiation, he adds to Hippocrates's Two-Seed Theory. Galen understood the female's womb to have two cavities - a right and left side - which holds her seed, just like each side of the male's testicles holds the male partner's seed (Keuny, 2013, p. 61). Hippocrates's influence on Galen's theory is evident since the latter considered heat - which he viewed to be 'nature's primary instrument' (Anthony, 2013, p. 2) - as central to the Right-Left Theory. This is because the right side of the womb was closer to the liver (which was considered the producer of blood from digested food), and so caused it to receive blood before the left side, and thus be warmer. The liver was also significant because it was deemed the source of the faculty of reproduction, and so caused the formation of the foetus from the male seed. He outlined that males are formed from seed from the right side of the testicles entering the right side of the womb, and thus mixing with the female's seed, while females are formed when male seed from the left side enters and mixes with the female seed on the left side of the womb. This theory permits the possibility of naturally occurring gender variation (Serano, 2009, p. 100) since it is possible for seed from the male's left side to enter the female's right side or from the male's right side into the female's left side. This confirmation of gender diversity being justified through Islamic medicine is reaffirmed by Ragab (2015, p. 454), who outlines 'their reliance on [Galen's] morphology encouraged them to theorize a continuum of masculinity/femininity in which multiple sex categories coexisted and where some remained ambiguous.' Examples of such theorising from Muslim physicians on the performativity of this masculine-feminine continuum will now be highlighted.

Islamic Medical Perspectives

The Persian physician Ali ibn Sahl Rabban al-Tabari (838-970 AD) seems to be the earliest Muslim to affirm Ragab's assertion. Building on the Right-Left Theory, he argues for the justification of gender diverse performativity through sex differentiation - 'if the seed were to flow from the left testicle to the right side of the womb, the child would be a "masculine female," and if it gushes from the right testicle to the left side of the womb, the child would be a "feminine male"'(Keuny, 2013, p. 61). This theory that biology influences the aspect of the feminine-masculine spectrum that one identifies with is a form of gender essentialism that permits diverse gender performativity. While this superficially seems at odds with social constructivism, Butler (1988, p. 519) outlines that signifiers of sex and gender change throughout time. This enables the understanding that al-Tabari's explanation reflects the classical Islamic ideas of gender-identifiers as biological. His explanation, therefore, demonstrates that gender-diversity was seen as naturally occurring variation by classical Muslim physicians.

The next Muslim physician who attested to diverse gender performativity as biological was Abu Bakr Al-Razi (864-925). In accordance with the Two-Seed Theory, Al-Razi argues that

> femininity or masculinity occurs only in accordance with the prevalence of one of the two sperms over the other in quantity and quality, until one of them becomes the one that transforms (muḥîl) and the other the one that is transformed (mustaḥîl). (Rosenthal, 1978, p. 52)

He explains that whichever partner's seed is stronger will overpower the other, thus causing the amount of masculinity or femininity the baby embodies to correspond with that of said partner. From his perspective, gender markers are the relative strength or weakness of each parent's seed. He attributes gender performativity to the power of the seed in the womb, arguing that strong seed will lead to masculine males

and feminine females (Rosenthal, 1978, p. 54), which Serano's defines as '*exceptional* gender expressions' (2009, p. 97). Consequently, it is because of the weakness of both seeds that Al-Razi justifies the occurrence of masculine females and feminine males (Rosenthal, 1978, p. 54). His theory exemplifies that male's identifications with masculinity and female's identification with femininity are only extremes on this spectrum, and that other identifications with the spectrum fall between these categories. Such understandings of this spectrum reflect Serano's Intrinsic Inclination Model (2009, pp. 99-100), which demonstrates that the correlation between the subconscious identification with the femininity or masculinity and one's physical sex result in a bimodal distribution pattern, so most males will be masculine while most females will be feminine, yet there will always be individuals with ambiguous gender identifications. Al-Razi's argument suggests that diversity in gender is, again, a naturally-occurring phenomenon.

Al-Razi's argument develops to analyse the cause of mukhannathun experiencing ubnah - the socially humiliating desire for being the passive partner in male homosexual intercourse. Being the first physician to investigate ubnah (Rozenthal, 1978, p. 48), he outlines that effeminate males experience ubnah because, during their conception, the weakness of the male partner's sperm impacts the development of the offspring's genitalia as their 'spermatic vessels were located close to their rectal wall and that the movement of sperm in these vessels caused the severe itching that forced the patient to seek anal penetration' (Ragab, 2015, p. 449). Razi called ubnah a 'hidden illness' (Rosenthal, 1978, p. 47) since he believed those experiencing it experienced shame because of it. Butler (1988, p. 524) attributes this source of shame to heteronormativity - the social expectations to perform heterosexuality. It can be argued that ubnah may be a barrier to males having intercourse with females, and so inhibits their fulfilment of heteronormativity. These males wishing to fulfil heteronormativity and males newly experiencing ubnah were considered able to be "cured" of the malady. However, the mukhannathun were not perceived as needing a cure for their ubnah (Rosenthal, 1978, p. 49). Since those who wanted cures could be given treatment, and those who did not would not be cured, it can be understood that Al-Razi viewed the

spectrum of masculinity and femininity that one identified with as having a mental component as well as being bodily. Engaging in ubnah was a gender marker of mukhannathun. Since Butler (1988, p. 519) argues that the preservation of gender markers through their 'stylized repetition' creates performativity, Al-Razi's theory of mukhannathun with ubnah as not necessitating a cure positions him as contributing to the preservation of mukhannathun. Rosenthal strengthens this view of Al-Razi, and thus Islamic society, as preservers of the mukhannathun through outlining that '[the] attitude expressed by ar-Râzî reflects Muslim middle class sentiment much more accurately than the entertaining literature, and while ar-Râzî' s statement is particularly to the point, it is not unique' (Rosenthal, 1978, p. 48). Evidently, these medical positions, despite their heteronormative view of ubnah as shameful, reaffirm classical Islamic societies as understanding mukhannathun - and by extension, gender diversity - as 'naturally occurring gender variation' (Serano, 2009, pp. 99-100) that do not require "cures" for their performativity.

Ibn Sina (980-1037) also contributes to classical Islamic medical discourse through his theories on gender diversity regarding sex-differentiation and mukhannathun's experience of ubnah. The word mukhannathun derived from *khuntha* (hermaphrodite) because society's views on the performativity of mukhannathun often corresponded with society's perceptions of hermaphrodites. Their biological incongruence with heteronormativity placed them under similar types of medical scrutiny. Regarding them, Ragab (2015, p. 450) outlines Ibn Sina's employment of the Right-Left Theory and the Two-Seed Theory, arguing that

> There were hermaphroditic (feminine) males (dhaka khuntha), generated by right-sided male seed and left-sided female seed... Hermaphrodites, in Ibn Sina's view, varied in their morphology: "Some hermaphrodites [khuntha] have [neither] a male organ nor a female organ. Others have both, but one is more hidden and weaker as opposed to the other, and he urinates from one and not the other. In others, the two [organs] are the same [in size and appearance]... Here, Ibn Sina's view of hermaphrodites shows that they were not seen as one coherent category but rather viewed as representing various morphologies and various medical and disease presentations.

By grouping mukhannathun and the khuntha together, Ragab highlights Ibn Sina's medical views on gender diversity as naturally occurring variation, which includes individuals who identify with the feminine-masculine spectrum in varying ways. While the khuntha are often deemed needing medical

surgery to better align their performativity with either femininity or masculinity, the performativity of mukhannathun as feminine males allows them to be considered distinct from the dichotomy of masculine males and feminine females. This analogous grouping of both distinct gender categories by Ibn Sina is what Serano (2009, p. 174) calls 'third-gendering,' which can result in undermining of the differences between the groups but Ibn Sina's awareness of the diversities within this 'third-gender' category reaffirms the ambiguous coexistence of these genders in classical Islamic society.

Regarding the performativity of mukhannathun through ubnah, Ibn Sina disagrees with Al-Razi's view of it as genetic and unccurable. He attributes ubnah to

> habituation in an individual possessing weak sexual potency to begin with and a strong desire created by the imagination… They are people of a vile psychological (*suqût an-nafs*) and bad physical disposition who have accustomed themselves to non-virtuous ways (*rada3 at al-'adah*) and feminine behaviour. (Rosenthal, 1978, p. 50)

The reference to the imagination suggests he deems ubnah to be, somewhat, under control of the will which, again, contradicts Al-Razi's ideas. And since Butler (2004, p. 1) argues that performativity is not a conscious choice, the performativity of the mukhannathun through experiencing ubnah can be deemed as a subconscious gender-marker, and therefore undermining Ibn Sina's explanation. The mention of 'non-virtuous ways' may refer to ubnah being deemed shameful due to its hindrance of heteronormativity. While this seems to be the only evidence of invalidating portrayal of the mukhannathun by Islamic physicians, it is clear that Ibn Sina experiences 'gender entitlement' Serano (2009, p. 89). Ibn Sina uses his gender entitlement to argue that the performativity of mukhannathun through experiencing ubnah and enacting femininity renders them an inferior gender than those who do not do these things. Just as with the aforementioned physicians, Ibn Sina's perceptions may be reflective of views held by pockets of classical Islamic society at large.

The final classical physician to justify gender diversity through medicine is Ibn al-Nafis (1213-1288). While his work was produced two decades after that of Ibn Sina, his contributions are significant to

understandings of sex-differentiation. This is because he was the first physician to profoundly critique Galenic authority, instead favouring Hippocratic authority and basing his theories on his own scientific experimentation. He essentially argued that 'the anatomical asymmetry between the left and right renal and gonadal arteries and veins' did not impact sex differentiation (Fancy, 2017, p. 166). This opposes the Right-left Theory, demonstrating that being fertilised on the hotter, right side of the sexual organs does not cause one to become a male. He elaborates by concluding:

> both male and female semen are merely residues of nutrition and thus only contribute materially to the foetus. The active faculties of generation are emanated to the mixture of male and female semen by the new foetal soul, which attaches itself to the mixture once the two semen mix (Fancy, 2019, p. 271)

He still employs the Hippocratic Two-Seed Theory which was conveyed by Galen. Ibn al-Nafis ultimately outlines that whichever performativity of the feminine-masculine spectrum the foetus ultimately identifies with is not influenced by the the qualities of either parent's seed at the time of conception. Instead, it is the infusing of the soul with the foetus, which Mulsims believe is at 120 days after conception (Sahih al-Bukhari). His theory utilises Islamic scripture more than the previous physicians to reach his conclusion, which reinforces the contemporary intertwining of medical and legal scholarship. Since he implies that the soul is immaterial yet essential to one's being, his ideas exemplify Serano's (2009, p. 78) understanding of gender identification as being rooted in 'subconscious sex.' Ibn al-Nafis's argument corroborates this cause of gender performativity as subconscious by highlighting that it arises from the immaterial. This is less of an essentialist perception of gender since he does not attribute sex-diffentiation solely to one's biology, but is not gender constructivism either, which challenges the dichotomization of gender essentialism and social constructivism in gender theory. Considering scriptural teachings in his theorising allows him to understand whichever aspect of the feminine-masclunine spectrum one falls on as and simultaneously inherent yet incorporeal. This incorporeal nature of gender seems to emphasise all gender as divinely-mandated. Unlike Ibn Sina, Ibn al-Nafis, therefore, presents gender performativity as beyond the control of the will.

Conclusion

Ultimately, due to the preservation of Galenic medicine, it has been demonstrated that classical Islamic medical justifications for intrinsic inclinations to the feminine-masculine spectrum varied. Regarding performativity through sex-differentiation, this ranged from Al-Tabari's essentialist view that gender diversity is merely biological; Al-Razi's theory reflects Serano's model of femininity and masculinity as bimodally related to one's sex, so presents gender diversity as natural variation; Ibn Sina's third-gendering portrays gender diversity as ambiguous but comparable; Ibn al-Nafis attributes gender diversity to the soul, thus emphasising the role of 'subconscious sex' in the experience of gender performativity. Regarding mukhannathun's performativity through experiencing *ubnah*, Al-Razi presents this biological gender marker as an inherent part of an individual unless it causes them mental discomfort, at which point treatment can be offered; Ibn Sina's gender-entitled understanding presents gender-diverse gender markers as deliberate choices and moral failures rather than inherent, subconscious performativity. With the exception of Ibn Sina on *ubnah*, this evidence suggests that classical Islamic physicians - and by extension, their societies - understood gender diverse individuals as a natural yet ambiguous group whose identification with the feminine-masculine spectrum is just as valid as those with '*exceptional* gender expressions.' The following section of this dissertation will synthesise the findings from these chapters into a conclusion.

Conclusion

This dissertation aimed to analyse classical Islamic understandings of gender diversity through Butler and Serano's frameworks of gender. As such, it has ultimately been discovered that social and legal understandings of the performativity of mukhannathun were generally contingent on societal constructs, which ultimately employed their performativity to serve androcentrism and patriarchy. This reinforces power structures as central to the social construction of gender performativity regardless of the diversity of one's gender. Meanwhile, medical perspectives have highlighted gender diversity as naturally occurring variation, which mostly attributes performativity to gender essentialism. And so, while these findings may be at odds with Butler's social constructivism, it is evident that all three perspectives highlight a cultural understanding of gender diversity as being both extrinsically and intrinsically determined, which in fact reaffirms Serano's Intrinsic Inclination Model. Regarding gender theory, the classical Islamic positioning on gender diversity thus emphasises that social constructivism and essentialism need not be mutually exclusive. Regarding Islam, this study primarily focused on Sunni sources, which limited its findings by excluding perspectives from other sects such as Shias. While this study did not confirm the reasons for gender performativity being exploited both socially and legally to serve patriarchal ideals, on which more research is required, the bigger picture demonstrates the capacity for, and integration of, gender diverse individuals through Islamic scripture, medicine and within Islamic societies. And so, a practical implication of these findings would be intentional efforts by Islamic authorities to cultivate Islamic spaces that are considerate of gender diversity as inherently Islamic and not antithetical to the religion.

Bibliography

Abdel Haleem M A (2005). *The Quran*. Oxford University Press.

Ali, K. (2013) *Sexual ethics and Islam: feminist reflections on Qur'an, Hadith, and jurisprudence*. Oneworld Publications. https://hdl-handle-net.manchester.idm.oclc.org/2027/heb30834.0001.001.

Amer S. (2009) 'Medieval Arab Lesbians and Lesbian-Like Women.' *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 18 (2). https://www.jstor.org/stable/40663351.

Anthony, P. 2013. "Sex, Sin and the Soul: How Galen's Philosophical Speculation Became Augustine's Theological Assumptions." *Conversations: A Graduate Journal of the Humanities, Social Sciences and Theology*, 1 (1), pp. 1-15. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/212852165.pdf.

Borde C & Chevallier S M (2010). *The New Translation of The Second Sex*. Alfred A. Knopf.

Butler, J. (2006) *Gender Trouble*. Taylor & Francis Group. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/lib/manchester/detail.action?docID=710077.

Butler, J. (1988) "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40 (4), pp. 519–31. https://doi.org/10.2307/3207893.

Butler, J. (2004) *Undoing Gender*. Taylor & Francis Group, London. Available from: ProQuest Ebook Central. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/lib/manchester/detail.action?docID=183001.

Dols, M W. Immisch DE. (2011) "Galen Into Arabic." In: Michael W. Dols. *Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*. Oxford. https://academic.oup.com/book/1703/chapter/141290141.

El-Rouayheb, K. (2005) *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World*. University of Chicago Press. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/lib/manchester/reader.action?docID=471853&ppg=1.

Fancy, N. (2018) "Anatomy." In: Pormann P. *1001 Cures: Contributions in Medicine and Healthcare from Muslim Civilisation*. Manchester: FSTC. Fancy_GalenIbnNafis_PreTypesetVersion.pdf

Fancy, N. (2019) "Galen and Ibn al-Nafis." In: Bouras-Vallianatos P. and Zipser B. *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Galen*. Leiden: Brill. Pp. 263-278. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BICCvSpuMzAvf9_077e_p-X-_-ougeyM/view.

Fancy, N. (2018) "Generation in Medieval Islamic Medicine." In: Hopwood. Et al. *Reproduction: Antiquity to the Present Day*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

https://www-cambridge-org.manchester.idm.oclc.org/core/books/reproduction/D242999CE51A864D28AB0E9B0E8C4FFF.

Fancy, Nahyan. (2018) "Medicine and Religious Scholarship." In: PormanN P. *1001 Cures: Contributions in Medicine and Healthcare from Muslim Civilisation*. Manchester: FSTC. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BICCvSpuMzAvf9_077e_p-X-_-ougeyM/view.

Fancy, N. (2017) “Womb Heat versus Sperm Heat: Hippocrates against Galen and Ibn Sīnā in Ibn al-Nafīs's Commentaries.” In: Oriens (45). https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bz2CLbuI8m7-Vnl6UGRlTU1mSEk/view?resourcekey=0-nSKc646NJrRPsqrZA8-tuw.

Hallaq, W B. (1997) *Islamic Legal Theories*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://www-cambridge-org.manchester.idm.oclc.org/core/books/history-of-islamic-legal-theories/771C6B38C237FB3CBE664C08096BB133.

Hallaq, W B. (2009) *Sharī'a: Theory, Practice, Transformations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi-org.manchester.idm.oclc.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815300.

Ishak, M S B H and Haneef S S S. (2014) “Sex Reassignment Technology: The Dilemma of Transsexuals in Islam and Christianity,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 53 (2). https://www.jstor.org/stable/24485102.

Keuny, K. (2013) *Conceiving Identities: Maternity in Medieval Muslim Discourse and Practice.* Albany: suny Press. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/manchester/detail.action?docID=3408794.

Kugle, S. (2021) *Homosexuality in Islam: Critical Reflection on Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Muslims.* London: Oneworld Publications.

Musić, R. (2003) “Queer Visions of Islam.” Master’s thesis, New York University. http://www.blackandpink.org/wp-content/upLoads/Queer-Visions-of-Islam.pdf.

Najmabadi A. (2005) *Women with Mustaches and Men without Beards: Gender and Sexual Anxieties of Iranian Modernity.* University of California Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppqcv.

Nielson L. (2012) ‘Gender and the Politics of Music in the Early Islamic Courts.’ *Early Music History*, 31, pp. 235-261 https://www.jstor.org/stable/23254010

Ragab, A. (2015) “One, Two, or Many Sexes: Sex Differentiation in Medieval Islamicate Medical Thought.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 24 (3), pp. 428-454. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24616517

Rowson E K. (2003) “Gender Irregularity as Entertainment” In: Farmer s and Pasternack C B *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages.* University of Minnesota Press, pp. 45-72. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.cttttsps.6

Rowson, E K. (1991) “The Effeminates of Early Medina,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 11, (4). https://www.jstor.org/stable/603399#metadata_info_tab_contents.

Rosenthal, F. (1978) “AR-RÂZÎ ON THE HIDDEN ILLNESS.” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 52, (1), pp. 45–60. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44450443.

Sikand, Y. (2006) “An Islamic Critique of Patriarchy: Mawlana Sayyed Kalbe Sadiq’s Approach to Gender Relations” In: Abu-Rabi’ I. *The Blackwell Companion to Contemporary Islamic Thought*. Williston: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/lib/manchester/detail.action?docID=293132.

Sirri, L. (2020) *Islamic Feminism: Discourses on Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Islam*. London: Routledge. https://www-taylorfrancis-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/books/mono/10.4324/9781003023289/islamic-feminism-lana-sirri.

Serano J. (2009) *Whipping Girl : A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity.* Seal Press. ProQuest Ebook Central. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/manchester/reader.action?docID=679998&ppg=87.

Wafer J (1997) “Vision and Passion” In: Murray O S. et al *Islamic Homosexualities: Culture, History, and Literature.* NYU Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qfmm4

Wright J W & Rowson E. (1997) *Homoeroticism in Classical Arabic Literature*. Columbia University Press.

Youssef, O. (2017) *The Perplexity of a Muslim Woman : Over Inheritance, Marriage, and Homosexuality*. Lexington Books/Fortress Academic. https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.manchester.idm.oclc.org/lib/manchester/reader.action?docID=4811093&ppg=31.

Zaharin A A M & Pallotta-Chiarolli Maria. (2020) “Countering Islamic conservatism on being transgender: Clarifying Tantawi's and Khomeini’s fatwas from the progressive Muslim standpoint”, *International Journal of Transgender Health* 21 (3). https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/26895269.2020.1778238?needAccess=true.

Keddie N K & Baron B. (1991) *Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender*. Yale University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1bhkp33