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Serious Jokes: Humor and The Provocation of Cultural Will in Egyptian Feminist Cartoons[1]

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Abstract: This paper seeks to read cartoons from within the theoretical framework of feminist humor. The paper departs from the classical expressions of humor as a mode of entertainment and contends that it is an exclusive competency of the male gender as per the common and classical semiosis. The main purpose of this paper is, thus, to recognize cartoons/caricature, a sub-category of humor and visual culture, as a plausible feminist tool that subverts the cultural stereotypes planted by the patriarchal meta-narratives in the collective unconscious. The paper renders an analysis of selected caricatures as critiques of the cultural and legislative meta-narrative in Egypt and as a counter discourse to the prevalent Western stereotypes. The two main works leading the theoretical approach are: Freud's Theory of Release, and selections from Pierre Bordieu's theories of cultural practices. The selected works are examples of feminist caricature from the Global South, namely: Doaa Al Adl's 50 Cartoons and More on Women (2016).

Keywords: Humor theory, feminist agency, suffragettes, cross-cultural, socio-political, cartoons, caricatures, feminism, gender studies, culture theory, anti-feminist cartoons, Bourdieu, Egypt, discriminatory laws, Doaa ElAdl, gender politics.

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Among women the need or the ability to be funny is tremendously less than that among men" – Christopher Hitchens

In January 2007 issue of Vanity Fair, prominent journalist and essayist Christopher Hitchens starts perhaps unknowingly one of the fiercest literary brawls of the decade if not the century. An article he wrote under the title "Why Women Aren't Funny" [2] carried within its lines the very core of the feminist struggle in the postmodern era.

Hitchens argues that the world of comedy belongs to men because women only need to be pretty in order to impress rather than funny; a trait he described as secondary for a woman but almost essential for a man. Gradually but confidently, Hitchens takes his argument of inequality to the next step where he reveals an intrinsic element of humor quoting Fran Lebowitz "[…] humor is largely aggressive and pre-emptive, and what's more male than that?" Certainly, Hitchens relies mainly on stereotyped roles and social constructions of masculinity and femininity that go back even before the suffragettes and add a masculine flavor to the nature of humor as well. In other words, he makes humor exclusive to the male "aggressive" gender rather than the gender that he describes as able to "produce babies".

Hitchens then rests his case using the reproduction card to imprison the female gender within its own seriousness:

For women, reproduction is, if not the only thing, certainly the main thing. Apart from giving them a very different attitude to filth and embarrassment, it also imbues them with the kind of seriousness and solemnity at which men can only google. (Hitchens, 2007)

Although Hitchens' sexist takes on the exclusivity of comedy is often debated and subverted by feminist and non-feminist journalists, artists and comedians; one cannot simply ignore that there might be a certain truth to his claim. Of course, not the gendered manner of building his premises but rather the assumption that speaks to what one sees in everyday life. Women are not funny! They do not use humor as often as men does. Yet most of the objections to Hitchens' claim take a defensive mode instead of an inquisitive one. Humor

[1] This paper is part of a dissertation chapter, published in partial fulfillment of the requirements for PhD program under the supervision of professor Shereen Abouelnaga, Professor of English & Comparative Literature, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University.

[2] In the article, Hitchens in a persuasive proficiency reintroduces the idea of production vs. reproduction where production refers to male wit and ability to produce a clever joke vs. female beautiful dumbness based on her serious reproductive experience. Every vein of the article aims to turn the myth into a fact that, to him, is imperative to keep the natural balance and order intact.

is a sense subject to development based on nurture rather than nature. Thus, the problem should be, why are women depraved of a sense of humor? Or perhaps why is it expected from women to laugh at jokes but do not make them? Christine Nicholson[3] in "The Humor Gap" discusses the egality of the genders when it comes to humor production and appreciation, yet the surprising find is that the frequency of women's use of humor in production is considerably lesser than men.

The main question is, therefore, whether feminist humor in caricature constitute a discursive practice that subverts patriarchal meta-narratives of culture? In other words, can feminist caricature be used as a strategic tool to reclaim women's agency in a gendered culture?

In the coming sections of this paper, the author attempts to resolve the Hitchens debate using a cross-disciplinary methodology to develop a framework and a synthesis among three major literary disciplines: a) Psychoanalysis approach using Freud's Release Theory of Humor, b) Sociology in Critical Cultural Theory using Bordieu's concepts of the doxa, cultural capital and Nomos, and c) Gender Politics through feminist agency in socio-political cartoons. Together with the quick survey of thematic caricatures of anti-feminism from different parts of the west held in analogy to their feminist counterpart from Egypt, this cross-disciplinary approach builds a concrete premises and displays a consensus in favor of the paper's position.

Humor Production as Power and Anti-Power

The study of humor often introduces an interdisciplinary field of humanities where it is tied to psychology, sociology, cultural studies, literature …etc. Possibly because the commentary and impact on humor often invites a subject matter from literature or film, an interpretive technique from psychology or sociology and an affective outcome on culture studies or anthropology and gender. Two outstanding schools of humor introduce its basis of operation and function in blatant opposition; the first is born out of 'Superiority' and the latter out of 'Release'. The producer of a joke in each school holds a contrasting position to his counterpart.

Humor as Power: The Superiority Theory of Humor

The school of superiority derives its basis from the plays of power between the subject matter of humor (inferior), the author/text of humor (superior) and the audience. The constructing principle is a practice of authority and/or judgment through humor where the subject matter is the weaker side undergoing scathing scrutiny within the joke/comedy.

Aristotle defines comedy as "an imitation of inferior people" where the inferiority he refers to in his *Poetics* is that of social and moral standards (lxii). The figural focus of his comic design is mainly lowly persons within the bases of the great chain of being. Of course, since a huge part of Aristotle's views on a theory of Comedy was lost and did not reach the modern publication of his *Poetics*, one cannot be certain of whether he meant the figures of comedy to be of low social and moral implication is to serve a biased or a moral purpose of comedy. Yet if Aristotle sees "the laughable is a species of what is disgraceful" then at least his thesis here is more inclined towards ridiculing the deficiencies of behavior within an erroneous human category (lxii). Given the main Aristotelian rule on Art as an 'education and entertainment', this specific perception that comedy/humor is created to mock the inferior by the superior within the moral system has credibility. In the sense that humor would fulfill both sides of the equation of entertainment through laughter and education through criticism, the Aristotelian comic design provides a logical interpretation to the principle of Superiority in Humor.

On the same note, Thomas Hobbes points out a 'sudden glory' accompanying humor in his *Leviathan*. Hobbes explains his views on humor as follows:

Sudden glory is the passion which makes those grimaces called laughter; and is caused either by some sudden act of their own, that pleases them; or by the apprehension of some deformed thing in another, by comparison whereof they suddenly applaud themselves. And it is incident most to them, that are conscious of the fewest abilities in themselves, who are forced to keep themselves in their own favor by observing the imperfections of other men. And therefore, much laughter at the defects of others, is a sign of pusillanimity. For of great minds, one of the proper works is, to help and free others from scorn; and to compare themselves only with the most able. (Hobbes 1651, 36)

The glory in which Hobbes indicates in this passage is caused by the realization of the interplay of power within the comic design. Pointing out the flaws of others in a humorous way is display of authority from the one who practices humor upon the subject matter of humor. The surprising fact in this regard is that through 445 pages of The Leviathan, Hobbes' sole remark on the nature and function of humor is the above passage. The fixation on the negative perception of humor is subject to multiple interpretations yet Hobbes' determination to categorize ridiculing others' imperfections as immoral is quite evident. To Hobbes, using humor as a tool to point out the deficiencies of others is an indicator of timidity and petty. Perhaps, Hobbes' view is one of a

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simple moral code of conduct rejecting the ridicule of involuntary imperfections such as physical disabilities or social class. Yet a main objection to this view is his disregard of humorous criticism that would manipulate the principle of superiority to tip the scales in favor of improving morality. In other words, Hobbes neglected satirical humor that mocks the moral deficiencies of a person, class, or society and imprisoned laughter within the vice of oppressing the 'less able'.

Humor as Anti-Power: The Release Theory of Humor

In 1709, Lord Shaftesbury's essay "An Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humor," explained the nature and function of humor as a release of nerves carrying the 'animal spirits' where "The natural free spirits of ingenious men, if imprisoned or controlled, will find out other ways of motion to relieve themselves in their constraint; and whether it be in burlesque, mimicry, or buffoonery, they will be glad at any rate to vent themselves, and be revenged upon their constrainers." (4-5)

In a more progressive analysis, Sigmund Freud applies this theory to human psychology. Freud's contribution to a theory of humor is latent in his *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (1905). Freud's theory fashions a psychological purpose of humor and its very existence where he states that:

Tendentious jokes are especially favored in order to make aggressiveness or criticism possible against persons in exalted positions who claim to exercise authority. The joke then represents a rebellion against that authority, a liberation from its pressure. The charm of caricatures lies in this same factor: we laugh at them even if they are unsuccessful simply because we count rebellion against authority as a merit (Freud 1905, 77).

The psychological claim in Freud's thesis is that a joke is a means to release aggressive and suppressed thoughts within the unconscious that is accumulated by manner of oppression. In other words, the subject matter of a joke is mainly involving an oppressed joker, an object of oppression and a target oppressor. This particular mode of offence in Freud's view is really a sort of unconscious purgation through satire. Thus, a joke in this sense is an act of protest against injustice that aims towards the liberation of suppressed feelings through laughter.

These two theories of humor are the first clues to understanding the two genders' approach to joke production. One theory places the joke producer in a position of 'superiority' hence power while the subject matter of the joke is in a position of 'inferiority' hence oppression. Whereas the other theory displays the joke producer in 'Release' mode painting him/her as a rebel while the subject matter of the joke is the 'oppressor' facing this release as an act of resistance or subversion of power.

Claiming the Cultural Capital

Culture in itself is an arena for the interplays of power to impose its narratives using several construction and subversion modes which humor comes to be one of its crown jewels. Cultural construction or re-construction is fundamentally dependent on meta-narratives created or modified to serve the purpose of power. Culture in this context is a fluid concept owing its leniencies to support the discourse of power and place further shackles on the subjects of power. Yet, power itself can change its allegiance from one side to another or several others provided that the cultural discourse changes as well. The dilemma in this view is which discourse controls the other? The discourse of power might be able to re-create cultural doxas[4] and the cultural discourse might overthrow the established power and introduce a new one. This conundrum is variable based on the type, method and context of discourse.

According to Leila Abu-Lughod, "… culture operates in anthropological discourse to enforce separations that inevitably carry a sense of hierarchy." (Abu-Lughod 1996, 466). Power in Abu-Lughod's "Writing Against Culture" is latent in the 'sense of hierarchy' created by cultural narratives. For example, religion and the anthropological narrative of worshipping deities bring about 'a sense of hierarchy' where Man in any given doctrine is located below the superior entity being worshipped. Power in this regard is integrated in the human mind through cultural operatives.

On the other hand, power could manipulate culture into creating and/or maintaining certain 'hierarchy' that serves its purpose. To achieve this end, discursive practices of a new rising culture or a dominant one - seeking to preserve its existence- must make the best use of its cultural capital.[5]

[4] Doxa—According to Pierre Bordieu, it is a set of core values and discourses which a field articulates as its fundamental principles, and which tend to be viewed as inherently true and necessary. For Bourdieu, the 'doxic attitude' means bodily and unconscious submission to conditions that are in fact quite arbitrary and contingent. (Danaher et al ixx)

[5] The Cultural Capital is the first phase of the Culture Industry cycle. The notion is pragmatic and recurrent with the interplays of power. The cultural capital is a value associated with a form of authority that an individual or an entity might possess to impose their views or introduce standards of tastes. Such standards would be recognized as a type of a fundamental norm by habitus. The cultural capital comes in two symbolic forms: a) Symbolic Capital; and b) Symbolic Violence. The term is used in Dialectic of Enlightenment 1944 by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

Patriarchal Cultural Capital: Sexist Humor in Suffragette Cartoons

The discursive practices of anti-suffragette cartoons create a blueprint for feminist cartoons to follow in subverting stereotypes. The cartoons attacking feminist figures, suffragette movement and extending to reinforce misogynist ideologies in the early 1900s use patriarchal doxa to discredit any claims that women can possess any skills outside the domestic ones. Although, the main end of such cartoons is inherently unethical, it could still be a reference to establish an anti-thesis of the patriarchal capital.

In the preface to *Funny Girls: Cartooning for Equality*, Shelagh Diplock Director of the Fawcett Society[6] sums up the function of cartoons as a type of socio-political humor that "… can get a message across, sometimes a very complex, subtle or uncomfortable message, by breaking down defensiveness and making the reader laugh." (Atkinson 1997, xvii). This elaborate definition of the power of a cartoon comes to fit both sides of a gendered narrative. A cartoon is a powerful tool in the hands of patriarchal and somewhat misogynist discursive practices that once aimed to subvert women's early movements to participate in the political life. For example, *What I Would Do with the Suffragists (Fig. 1)*, an American Anti-Suffragette Cartoon 1908 uses the 'Joke-work'[7] to provoke aggression towards the suffragettes. The cartoon then creates an infuriating sentiment towards not the ideologies of the suffragettes but the women of the suffrage themselves.

To prove that such discourse is rather a recurrent pattern in sexist or misogynist cartoons in the west, an early Dutch 1900s (Fig. 2) cartoon depicting a woman having her tongue cut off to stop her from talking too much, displays a notion that stands quite firmly on the ground that physical aggression is the only subversive practice for opinionated women. Also, from early 1900s (Fig. 3) this time from the UK shows similar representation of the suffragette. The anti-suffragette cartoons in la fin de siècle "…manifest[s] an irrational reaction to women participating outside the domestic setting, an issue in which republicans, monarchists and even socialists converged, a telling indication that gender contradictions covered all the different colors in the political and class spectrum." (Soihet 2006, 2). In these cartoons, the woman's features being portrayed not only manly but rather ugly and is being thrust into silence either by physical restraints, dismemberment, or shaming. The cartoons express a sort of humour that is dark, aggressive, and inherently misogynist. This representation of opinionated, or self-expressive women as abominations with a physiognomy that falls in neither gender categories was a common technique in western cartoons of the time.

Another form where the cultural capital manipulates humour to establish oppressive practices against women is elaborate in "The Origins and Development of a Suffragette" (Fig. 4) 1909, USA. This cartoon is another indication of a set pattern of subversive practice attesting to the western propagated stereotype of a feminist or a suffragette in early 1900s tradition. The cartoon published around 1910 on a post card in USA Today, shows the phases into which the suffragette goes through, tracing her development in a reverse-Darwinian depiction from when she was of a docile, feminine existence to being a spinster and finally the ape-like suffragette. The cartoon's use of antonymous depiction of the delicate woman subject in phase 1 versus her dehumanised, barbaric cave-man expression in her final phase invokes a humorous assault on freedom of expression. According to this method, the cartoon creates a subject and carves the antagonist from it over one grand and controlled narrative to sell the newly constructed stereotype into the market of symbolic goods. A question critically posed by Françoise Parturier: "Once again, a woman is execrated, in the face of the worst flaw possible – and what flaw could be worse than physical ugliness? This is the very proof of error, of deviation, and monstrosity." (Parturier 1974, 20) The subject being a normal female, the narrative being spinsterhood, and final monstrous outcome is the suffragette. Suffragettes who have never been kissed (Fig. 5), 1907 by John Hassall[8] in the UK bears the exact same message of shaming and stereotype perpetuation. The spinster lacking feminine charms is one of the most passive aggressive anti-suffragette and anti-feminist discursive practices that survived time till this day.

By repeating the joke in different cartoons and contexts, the negative image becomes an established stereotype, and the stereotype makes way to a doxa that is almost impossible to subvert using serious academic or formal means of expression. "Paradoxically, however, they jeopardized their libertarian proposal by assuming a misogynist posture, turning their wrath equally against women who had decidedly taken up the struggle for rights and/or who, in their quotidian, would take on attitudes considered inadequate to the established femininity and gender relation." (Soihet 2006, 3). Regardless of the existing ideologies in real 1930s life in both countries

[6] The Fawcett Society is one of UK's leading membership charity campaigning for gender equality and women's rights at work, at home and in public life previously known as The London Society for Women's Suffrage.

[7] Freud argues that the "joke-work" is intimately related to the "dream-work" which he had analyzed in detail in his *Interpretation of Dreams*, and that jokes (like all forms of humor) attest to the fundamental orderliness of the human mind.

[8] John Hassall (1868-1948) was a cartoonist, illustrator, painter and poster artist. After the Post Office lifted its restrictions on the design and use of postcards in 1902, the time up to the WWI was a golden age for postcards. The Post Office allowed photographic or drawn images to appear on one side with the message and the address on the other side. This decision resulted in a wide-spread of pictorial ideas of the masses with no censorship and no regard to the content it conveys be it slavery, misogyny, immorality ….etc

about women, cartoons are means of promoting certain narratives, stereotypes, and traditions. They are a type of cultural advertising that seeks to sell ideological goods to society. Yet the counter-narrative being that "those women […] denounced the separation between the public and the private, between the personal and the political as being a mystification and insisted upon the structural nature of domination expressed in quotidian relations, whose systematic character appeared covert, as if it were a product of personal situations" (Soihet 2006, 3).

Those cartoons whether on postcards, magazines, newspapers are but few examples that reflect a tradition in western visual culture that employs dark humour to invoke either passive or active aggression on a type of women that seek to express self or others. The atrocity in this form of art is that it assumed a position in the western popular culture where it gained the capability of creating an entire doxa out of a simple negative stereotype. Women in this context are reduced to become less than human. They have no voice, no dignity and will power. And any member of this dehumanised gender-submissive community that seeks to change the status-quo is deemed to be branded with an even more degrading stereotype. The art form of cartoons in 19th and 20th centuries was apparently mastered by misogynist, patriarchal members who created an imagined hierarchy with woman at the base of the food chain. The danger of this development is latent in the fact that cartoons "…exist in the popular consciousness or graphic tradition before (they) can be amplified and caricatured by the artist" (Medhusrt and DeSousa 1981) as cartoonists "live and practice within ideology, drawing literally and figuratively on prejudices that already lurk or inhere in the audiences" (Curtis 1971, x)

Anti-Feminist Cartoons in Egypt: A Perpetuation of stereotypes

Unlike the western cartoons that crucified the suffragette women, Egyptian caricature has little to no history of supporting anti-feminist ideologies. After going through entire collections of Egyptian caricatures, one can only find perpetuations of gendered stereotypes that is unconsciously feeding female objectification and misrepresentation but not an openly misogynist let alone aggressive in nature. In , Salah Jahin[9] uses the Joke-work as put by Freud along with the doxa of the Egyptian culture's naturalized perception of gender stereotypes not to make a point but rather to make a joke out of both male and female culture in Egypt. When seen dissociated Women vs Men Doctors (Fig. 6) displays evident bias especially that the cartoonist is a man. However, "Boys will be Boys" (Fig. 7) which shows a cartoon critiquing universal culture where men often objectify the female body, places his perception of the two genders in an egalitarian flare. In other words, Jahin is not attacking gender, he is mocking the constructed stereotypes that embedded those traits in the mindsets of both men and women. A discursive subversion of the doxa in this sense is not explicit yet Jahin's use of his cultural capital as a prominent cartoonist, and well-established figure of the Egyptian elite, subverts an unconscious practice of a doxa that in time could be an irrevocable Nomos. Jahin's works are neither anti-feminist nor feminist but rather purely a social critique of an existing naturalization and perpetuation of gendered stereotypes.

A surprising and otherwise quite unexpected finding given Egyptian media's apparent misogynistic social stereotypes. After conducting research with an almost certain course of thought that one would find volumes of anti-feminist caricatures by famous caricaturists, extensive digital search showed very little results to the subject using three different languages (English, Arabic and French). An even more astounding result that early political cartoons/caricatures displays support for the feminist cause.

On a partially similar note, Amr Fahmy[10] aligns with Jahin in making his Joke-work unbiased towards gender yet he departs from Jahin's manner of subtle expression of the female body to an explicit exaggeration of female physiognomy. In his cartoons (Fig. 8) and (Fig. 9), Fahmy draws the feminine body with exaggerated curves mirroring the perception of 'male gaze'. Yet both cartoons have different takes about female objectification. The first one (Fig. 8) places the female body as the center of the joke making the women his subject matter whereas the latter (Fig. 9) condones sexual harassment and makes the man his subject matter of the joke. Still, both works do not constitute anti-feminist nor misogynist themes like the western anti-suffragette cartoons. Fahmy's Joke-work although scathing does not transgress to recreating oppression and places both man and woman under the knife.

Chased by the Police (Fig. 10) 1931, the Cartoon of Huda Hanim Sha'rawi and Safiyya Hanim Zaghlul[11]; a work that goes back almost a century in time, this Egyptian cartoon on famous feminist figures is

[9] As Egypt's most famous contemporary cartoonist, Jahin, (1930-1986) ~~who lived from 1930 to 1986,~~ gained fame in the 1950s after his poems and drawings started to appear in magazines like Rosa El-Youssef and Sabah El Kheir. Later on, he edited the latter magazine before moving to work at Al-Ahram newspaper. For more than 20 years, Jahin continued to publish his cartoons daily until he had to stop for health reasons. (Source Al-Fanar Media, A New View of Salah Jahin, Aug 2021)

[10] Caricaturist Amr Fahmy publishes daily cartoons in the State-owned daily Al-Akhbar for the past 27 years. He is considered one of the most gifted cartoonists in Egypt in the past decade, and is distinguished for his news sense and the ironic insight he shows in his daily caricatures.

[11] The cartoon shows Huda Sha'arawi and Safiyya Zaghlul – two of the most prominent female political leaders associated with the 1919 Revolution in Egypt - chased by Egyptian policemen, in Al-Kashkul (Scrapbook) May 22, 1931. When Huda Sha'rawi calls Safiyya

quite progressive when it comes to negative or gendered stereotypes. The cartoon of Huda Hanim Sha'rawi and Safiyya Hanim Zaghlul was published at a time where the west considered anti-suffragette cartoons incite a sense of resentment if not aggression towards the suffragettes based on gendered stereotypes, misogyny, and anti-feminist expression. This apparent contrast of the same gender narrative between Egypt and France/ the west calls into question the entire myth of the origin of misogyny and anti-feminism. A closer look at both cartoons, the Egyptian one of Huda Sha'rawy and Safiyya Zaghlul displays empowered women, rebellious against archetypes that place limitations on their nationalist roles. The cynical facial expressions, the slight raise of the dress tail showing part of the hanim's leg while running from the police all comes together to form a 1930s picture of patriot women in Egypt. The cartoon is not displaying a difficult altercation with the police nor a hurtful rejection of the 'mother' stereotype, but rather a humorous renouncement of a historical title simply because it shackles her (Safyia Zaghlul) identity to the archetype.

This easy dismissal of hundreds of years old tradition does not come by often on formal history books or articles during this era. The cartoon alone acts not only as a tool to subvert the grand narrative but also as a historical document on an account countering the Nomos of today in Egypt." In his "The Cartoon as a Historical Source", Thomas Kemnitz argues that cartoons are "..contemporary history for the use and information of future generations cast into amusing form for the entertainment of the present. Current national opinion frequently becomes modified, and history may qualify – it may even radically alter – the view of the day." (Kemnitz 1973, 81)

The Egyptian cartoon of pre-suffrage rights (Fig. 11) seeks to express the paradoxical oxymoron in patriarchal claims that women have no cultural value or qualification to political vote. The text is cynical when paired with the image. Women are grouped and depicted as lawyers, doctors, artists, teachers, and figures of cultural value to the society. Whereas men who have the right to vote and are lining up to fulfil a duty they seem not to understand. All the men in cartoon are dressed as peasants in an era where illiteracy among this class was quite common. The cartoonist is not only supporting women's right to vote but he/she took their visual expression to classify women as an elite gender whereas men are the inferior one. This notion although not propagated enough in early 1900s Egyptian context, it remains an unexpected finding especially when held in comparison to the cartoons of the west in the same historical period.

Feminist Agency: AlAdl's Cartoons and the Provocation of Cultural Will

The expressive nature of feminist cartoons allows the cartoonist to assume the role of an educator and his work to become a mode of visual literacy. This discursive practice of multimodality in both anti-feminist and feminist cartoons create what one calls The Provocation of Cultural Will[12].

By reversing the outlook and raising public doubt towards cultural goods, humor opens an analytical review of the process of accepting these cultural goods in the first place. For instance, patriarchal stereotypes are widely propagated cultural goods that depend on symbolic capital and symbolic violence to secure its power in the culture industry. When feminist humor steps in, it discloses what one calls the paradox of the doxa by subverting the patriarchal premises that 'women aren't funny' along with the seriousness of patriarchal power. Logic immediately rejects the doxa yet is made aware of how it came to power and in that instant, the consumer of culture is left with a revelation that culture is an industry of fluid notions made solid only by the illusion of fundamental norms. With that idea in play, a new culture would introduce itself to the equation of power. This new culture stems from what one would call a provocation of cultural will. Since the consumer of culture discovers the flaws of the current doxas, the need to fashion new ones becomes prevalent and the sudden awareness of the public misrecognition of cultural goods feeds the will to create new ones that are more acceptable and marketable in the culture industry.

Those simple black and white lines not abiding by the sophistication of artistic painting carry within them narratives that have sufficient power to reshape cultures and market ideologies that subvert hundreds of years old doxas. Artists and journalists from around the world attempt to use humour the same way anti-feminism and gendered narratives do to impose power over the market of cultural goods. The most prominent work of feminist cartoons rallying for gender justice in Egypt is Doaa AlAdl's[13] *50 cartoons and more about Women*, 2016.

Zaghlul, "mother," Zaghlul replies, she is not her mother, and that she is not even the mother of the generation of her children, satirizing the use of maternal nationalist rhetoric, as in "mother of the Egyptians."

[12] The Provocation of Cultural Will is a term coined by the author in Chapter 1 of her PhD dissertation titled: *Feminism in Socio-political Caricature: A Cross-cultural Study of the Discursive Practice of Feminist Agency* (ElDawi, and AbouElNaga 2022) based on Pierre Bordieu's, Horkheimer's and Adorno's concepts of the culture industry and the market of cultural goods. A provocation of cultural will is thus defined as an act of agency aiming to subvert a prevailing cultural practice or doxa to carve a space for a new cultural order.

[13] Doaa AlAdl is an Egyptian caricaturist nominated by BBC in its list as one of the most inspirational and influential women of 2016 based on her pioneering contributions to feminist cartoons in the middle east.

For the most part, caricatures or cartoons in general tend to exaggerate aspects of the physiognomy to convey a humours criticism often subverting the narrative of the subject matter. Yet unlike her peers in the field of cartooning, AlAdl chooses to draw cartoons that do not focus the exaggeration on physiognomy but rather focuses her hyperbole on the gendered injustices or the suffering of women in Egypt. AlAdl abandons the classical tradition of Rokha's[14] caricatures that represents the female in exaggerated curves of bust and behind. Instead, she introduces a form of caricatures/cartoons that are more lenient towards simple lines that allow space to the subject matter's expression.

In "I'm a Human!" (Fig. 12) AlAdl deconstructs a long standing doxa among Islamist Radical Sheikh's to use metaphors describing the female body as a piece of candy that 'ought to be covered for safe use'. In their manner of preaching the importance of Hijab, radical Islamists seek to reduce the entire woman identity into her physical form and appearance. AlAdl's cartoon in this context came to summarise what generations of feminists opted to explain as 'female objectification'.

In "Adultery"[15] (Fig. 13) AlAdl draws on the double standards of the Egyptian society when passing a moral judgement on an adulterer. The cartoon is shockingly accurate in portraying how society perceives a male-adulterer versus a female adulterer. The element of 'absurdity' Baudelaire points-out in philosophical art is quite evident in these contrasting stands. The artist chooses not to comment or inscribe her cartoon with any text as any member of the Egyptian society would immediately recognize this paradox. While the female adulteress is often shunned and figuratively stoned by the society, the male adulterer is seen as model for other men in allure, wit, and masculinity. The woman in this context is an archetypal figure in the collective unconscious of an evil and extremely beautiful being that seduces other men to commit a taboo.

Despised, judged, and cast out as an abomination, the adulteress in the eyes of the law is a witch that ought to be burned at the stake. To top this with further 'absurdity', according to the Egyptian law only a male member of her family can reduce her sentence or even pardon her crime. However, the opposite can never take place in this gendered law. It is not within the authority of any female subject or family member to exercise the same right as her male counterpart in case of adultery. AlAldl's cartoon "Adutery" documents this 'absurdity' as a historical account of the gendered bias in the Egyptian law. It provides a counter-narrative of the double standards that based solely on gender. The patriarchal narrative aims to sell a doxa based on the misguiding telos that "naturalised inequalities are not seen as problems to be solved, but as inevitable facts of life" (Koopmans, R. and Duyvendak 1995, 246). The grand narrative or propagated myth that patriarchy sells in the market of cultural goods is based on decontextualised interpretation of religious texts. Yet the most revealing critique of this stance is when one realizes the naturalization of such duality in moral standards to the extent that it is embedded in the Egyptian Law and gets its cultural authority from religion.

In her work, AlAdl draws scenes collectively recognized by the same gender. The aspect of naturalizing an oppressive experience as seen in "Marital Rape" (Fig. 14), creates the sense of shock to the opposite gender as a reading-response to the cartoon. The scene depicts a viciously masculine stereotype of a husband walking away from a dismembered figure of his wife ordering her to prepare dinner. The scene entails a normal everyday occurrence yet with the insinuation of a post-trauma of sexual aggression. The head of the wife detached from her body with a tear on a clearly bruised face and an agonized expression delivers the message. The broken heart and teared limbs invoke the atrocity on both the physical and the emotional levels. The cartoon was created in the context of a breaking social debate on marital rape. The provisions of the laws in Egypt does not specifically protect women subjected to such assault. Yet the real atrocity is latent in the social denial of the existence of marital rape to begin with. The prevailing arguments on social media platforms condemns women even talking about marital rape as an aggressive assault because to them a man is not condemned to take what is rightfully his. A wife in their view is a property of the husband and therefore is not religiously permitted to refuse sex with her husband. "This acceptance of the social order, even by people disadvantaged by it, is what Bourdieu calls the 'paradox of doxa' – it is a conflict hidden under the surface of the commonsense notions which rule our social reality" (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008, 46). Furthermore, in his Masculine Domination, Bordieux argues that logicalizing these naturalized practices or even ignoring them constitutes a sort of compliance to the narrative. In his terms, "Being included, as man or woman, in the object that we are trying to comprehend, we have embodied the historical structures of the masculine order in the form of unconscious schemes of perception and appreciation" (Bordieu 2001, 5).

[14] Mohamed Abdel Moneim Rakha 1910-1989 an Egyptian caricaturist who pioneered the field of socio-political caricatures in Egypt. Established and became first chair of the Egyptian Association of Caricaturists 1984. He is the father of early schools of caricatures in Egyptian socio-political journalism.

[15] According to the articles no. 274 and 277 of the Egyptian Penal Code discriminates between women and men in the definition and specification of the concept of the crime of adultery. A man is only accused of the crime of adultery if he is found in the marital dwelling with another woman (that is not his wife). However, a wife that is proved to have committed the crime of adultery shall be sentenced to a period of imprisonment not exceeding two years, however the husband may suspend the execution of the sentence. While the husband is sentenced to a period not exceeding six months, however, the wife does not have the right to suspend the sentence.

In "Egyptian Justice System" (Fig. 15) AlAdl shows how patriarchal laws of gendered discrimination offer women as a prey or a meal for male domination. The symbolic characterization of the law and judicial conduct as a patriarch abusing power to the benefit of the masculine order invites contemplation not only in the injustices committed in the name of the law to the now oppressed gendered class of women but also capitalises on the new practice of visual literacy that "expresses the wish that they [women] will work […] to invent 'and impose forms of collective organization and action and effective weapons, especially symbolic ones, capable of shaking the political and legal institutions which play a part in perpetuating their subordination." (Bordieu 2001, ix). The mobilization of public cultural will to change the status quo requires a collective action of resistance that aims to criticize the masculine order in a manner that excels in convincing the masses to adopt notions contrary to their established Nomos. A discursive practice of visual literacy advocating women cause in the Egyptian society is precisely what AlAdl designates her cartoons to do.

Conclusion

In previous centuries, anti-feminist socio-political cartoons and caricatures aimed to 'dispossess women of their role as historical agents'. Using different modes of propagation, the patriarchal tradition in anti-feminist cartoons de-historicized the feminist narrative and subverted attempts to free the cultural will by smearing the image of the New Woman, the suffragette, the working woman, renegade women, and any agent of gender justice. Perhaps this long-standing tradition provoked its nemesis whose objective is to introduce 'an enterprise of mobilization aimed at putting history in motion again by neutralizing the mechanisms of the neutralization of history.' (Bordieu 2001, vii-viii). This enterprise revoked the masculine order using the same methodology of conducting humors attacks in brief intensive symbolism cast in a feminist cartoon or caricature telling history from Her point of view.

This random analogy is but a stance of how socio-political cartoons of an entire era display the cartoonists' nurtured culture in Egypt and the west. In Egypt, cartoons are doorways to an elitist graphic tradition in possession of a cultural capital. It uses symbolic power to subvert the doxas and reconstruct the nomos making way to new stereotypes detached from the gendered narrative. This tradition gives voice to women not as a gender but as part of the society, equal in role and identity to their peers. In contrast, cartoons of late 19th century to the first half of the 20th century in the west, seek to demolish any connection between being a woman and possessing an agency or independent will.

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Annex

Figure 1
What I Would Do with the Suffragists, an American Anti-Suffragette Cartoon 1908

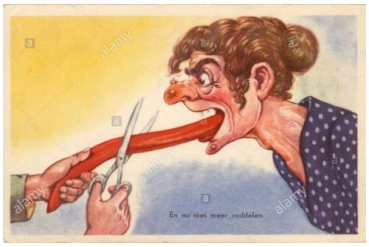

Figure 2
Early Dutch 1900s cruelly comic anti- suffrage, anti-feminist postcard, from the Netherlands, depicting a woman having tongue cut off to stop her gossiping (silencing women) - postcard reads "en nu niel meer roddelen " , printed in Holland, possibly 1930's

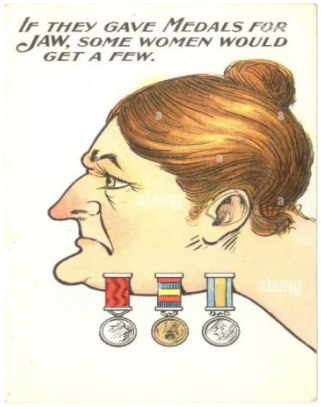

Figure 3
Early 1900's comic anti-suffragette postcard depicting a bossy woman with medals on her jaw, sticking her neck out by demanding equal voting rights for women U.K. The inference is that only unattractive women would be unfeminine enough to speak up for the women's suffrage campaign. It is blatantly against strong opinionated women. Women must keep their place.

Figure 4
Origin and Development of a Suffragette" - Postcard, USA, c.1909

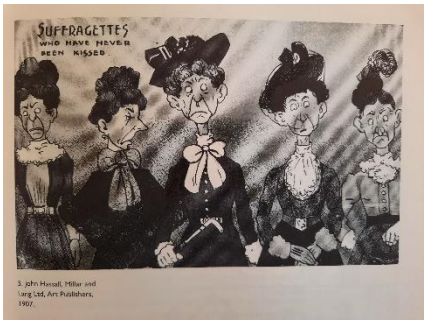

Figure 5
Suffragettes who have never been kissed, 1907

Figure 6 - Women vs Men Doctors
Salah Jahin Complete Works of Caricatures 1956 – 1962
"Cut the meat into cubes and add parsley .. serve it cold!"

Figure 7
Salah Jahin Complete Works of Caricatures
1956 – 1962
"No Comment"

Figure 8
Amr Fahmy - Qahwat Masrawy
Caricatures of Egyptian Daily Life 2021
"How could you embarrass me like that and go out without wearing a face mask?!"

Figure 9 – Study: 9% of men were sexually harassed by women
Amr Fahmy - Qahwat Masrawy
Caricatures of Egyptian Daily Life 2021
" Didn't want to tell you that women sexually harassed me to avoid making you jealous … But I wonder why there is no law protecting guys from sexual harassment?!"

Figure 10
Cartoon of Huda Hanim Sha'rawi

Figure 11
"Preventing Women the Right

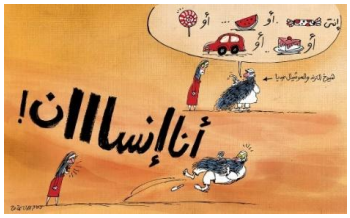

Figure 12
I'm a HUMAN!

and Safiyya Hanim Zaghlul chased by Egyptian policemen, in Al-Kashkul (Scrapbook) May 22, 1931. When Huda Sha'rawi calls Safiyya Zaghlul, "mother," Zaghlul replies, she is not her mother, and that she is at most old enough to be Sha'rawi's child. Safiyya Zaghlul was known as the "mother of the Egyptians." Both women were leaders in the Egyptian suffragette movement at the turn of the 20th century.
(Photo by Gulsah Torunoglu, American University in Cairo Library)

to Vote" The Military: "Go back to your homes … leave politics to men."
(Photo by Gulsah Torunoglu, Huda Sha'rawi Library, Cairo)

AlAdl, 2020. Official Facebook Page

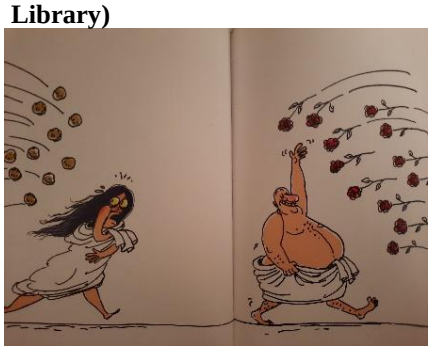

Figure 13
Adultery, 2016
AlAdl, 2016. 50 Cartoons and more about Women

Figure 14
Marital Rape
AlAdl, 2021. Official Facebook Page

Figure 15
Egyptian Justice System
AlAdl, 2016. 50 Cartoons and more about Women

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