



Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory

Fatima Mernissi

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Chronicling ten years of research, this book presents a sustained analysis of the position of women in the world of contemporary Islam. One of the most important feminist thinkers, Fatima Mernissi here makes a major contribution to the theorisation of gender roles and sexual identity in the Islamic world. The book first explores some of the concrete issues fundamental to the status of muslim women, such as the production of statistics which mask women's contribution to the economies of Arab states. Mernissi also looks at a variety of demographics including education and literacy - she shows their importance not only for empowering women but also for improving their health. She analyses the role of the state in prescribing women's roles, activities and spheres and explores the insidious consequences of state supported inequality - not only for women but for the creative and spiritual life of a culture. She goes on to look at the position of women in Islamic thought and history and the construction of femininity in the muslim unconscious. She presents a sustained analysis of some of the Koranic formulations of gender, and demonstrates how very partisan the collective Islamic memory - of both history and theology - can be. Throughout, Mernissi argues that the emancipation of women is vital for the development of the Arab world.

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