Waters as chapter.

In spring 1983 an acute epidemic in Israel forced more than 900 persons to be hospitalized. The epidemic spread exclusively in non-Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Moslem girls' schools were the main site of the outbreaks. One third of cases outside the school, between 16 and 40 years old, including Israeli soldiers posted in neighboring public buildings, were males. The epidemic was evidently not infectious. No fever was reported. No deaths occurred.

International investigators said: "The cause of this illness was anxiety" with "support for the diagnosis... psychogenic disease...attributed to the fact that the overwhelming majority of patients were adolescent girls, an age group that has been implicated in previously described psychogenic outbreaks". No further mention of the case was to be found in the Israeli professional or public discourse for several years to come.

The event presents an opportunity to analyze a case study that will illustrate the conditions which shape medical diagnoses. The proposed research project will document the interplay of religion, science, and ideology. Most importantly, it will illuminate the personal, social and cultural condition of women in modern society.

My study will document the production of a gendered medical truth in a social environment where the modern state defines itself as Jewish while only one part of the population is Jewish. It will show how this fact affects the manner in which gender is constituted in the dominant political culture and in that of the Palestinians.

The analysis will allow an understanding of how a disease emerges and might constitute a significant contribution to health policy as well as to the sociology of knowledge and the discourse on modernity and on women's biology and the role which it plays in her distinctive journey towards subjectivity.

The proposal will review established biases and modes of thought since the 18th century which determine modern medical causal thinking (nosology). It will also review the frames of reference, both structuralist and discursive, which are currently guiding the critical history, philosophy and policy studies of science. Further, it will review the discourse regarding the signification of women in three religious traditions (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) relevant to this case study.

The analysis will employ a crossdisciplinary methodology that synthesizes resources from the natural and social sciences and cultural studies. It will integrate insights from a decade long study of the conduct of science in Israel as related to the evolution of social structure and its spatial representation. It will also draw on more recent work conducted with the Harvard Working Group on New and Resurgent Disease. The team asked broad evolutionary questions about what caused diseases to emerge. This study poses the distinctly sociological question "What causes the apologetic interpretation of disease emergence?" My analysis will highlight the treatment of nature and the social in modern scientific thought and its ensuing implications for the treatment of women's illnesses.

I will analyze data from original field observations as well as secondary sources including:

a) on-site research I conducted during the epidemic;

b) reports produced by international investigators;

c) reports produced by the Palestinian medical community illustrative of the problem of knowledge production under military rule;

d) reports produced by the Israeli military and Israeli academic institutions;

e) selected hospital medical records; and,

f) Israeli and Palestinian press reports in Arabic, Hebrew and English including TV footage.

I also will contrast the 1983 epidemic with selected examples of Israeli recognized diseases from three periods: when the Palestinians were invisible; when their presence in Israel's social structure became undeniable; and, when the uprising that began in 1987 established their separateness.

The case study will serve as laboratory for testing the hypothesis that the religious signification of women systematically shapes medical diagnosis. The exploration holds a grand promise for practical and theoretical advances. It will pose new questions for the feminist theory regarding the role of science in the worsening condition of women in the Third World and the eventual reversal of that role.

A book documenting the emergence of an epidemic involving Moslem women under Israeli rule will constitute the project's end product. The book will utilize an original theoretical frame of reference which constitutes the philosophical foundation of the Jerusalem Institute for the Study of Society --a post positivist science alternative which I established in 1984 seeking to advance in Jerusalem a model of science for a truly democratic, post national and post modern society.

Analyzed from this perspective, the case study will offer an example of how both resistance and diagnosis are dependent upon the history and function of gender in symbolizing religious traditions as well as in the legitimization of modern social structure. Thus, the project will bridge the gap between discursive and structural approaches to both women's studies and science studies.

The timely completion of a work which has long been thwarted by political constraints, will constitute a significant contribution to women's studies, science studies, urban studies, religious studies as well as to ethnic conflict and human rights, since it will be written from the point of view of thoroughly dispossessed 900 rural Moslem women whose illnesses and their treatment under the prevailing conditions poses challenging questions for all these fields.

As a rule, science has been regarded as a liberating force, guiding the human journey away from nature and religious coercion towards freedom and subjectivity. Feminist theorists often militantly contest this assumption on purely ideological grounds. In documenting the production of gendered medical truth in apologia for an oppressive political power structure involving religious, ethnic, class and gender domination/subordination, this proposal provides rich material for rethinking some of the unquestioned assumptions and frames of reference that continue to hinder the development both of women's studies and science studies towards their fully emancipating intellectual scope.

The book, which I am eager to publish at a critical moment, will succinctly illustrate the application of an original spatial theory of knowledge, the essence of my work to date which is an elaboration of a post najwa makhoulpositivist variant of the "science of complexity" that establishes the connection among ideology, spatial patterns, and scientific method, thus, providing the key to reVersing the interrelationships among science, gender and empire.