

# Analyze the guests of the sheik essay

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



My dear friend do you not see how we as women are raised and taught to uphold our reputation and our traditions in our villages and in our families. We know from a very young age what our duties and responsibilities are as women and it is the women who are responsible for caring for their husbands, children and the elderly. We as women are destined to marry only if there is a male within the same family available, such as a first cousin, as we would never bear children from other families that are not known to us.

It shocks me that you and your husband dated (courted) prior to the marriage being consummated. Dating is a term I am unfamiliar with but you say you have dated with other men and that you did this several times before you met and married your husband. This would not be tolerated in my village and in fact it may be a cause for one's life to be taken, as it would be so shameful for our families' reputation to have a daughter out with other men from other families. Men, in our village can have several wives but primarily it is only seen in wealthy families like the Sheik's harem.

There was a time when my little sister went with the school principal's brother and his friend, none of whom my father knew, for a ride in the country without the permission of our father. Had my father found out that it was indeed my little sister (many people told lies to protect her from punishment) out joy riding with strange men then my sister would not just be punished but my father would be expected to end her life for she would have disgraced our families name (pg. 257). The type of value that we place on our family reputation is tremendous and it is easier to follow the rules than to break them as you do not get in trouble then.

The behaviors you speak of would cause you death by your father if you were born and raised in El Nahra. In our village it is only a very few women who will ever leave the family for the City to obtain a higher education but it is rare. If we are chosen, by our fathers to marry, it is an arranged agreement, and a price is paid to the bride's parents for their daughter. We are prohibited from marrying men other than first cousins or similar close relatives. (pg 159) I will never marry as the man whom I was suppose to marry disrespected his family and ran off with an outsider and so I am destine to be single.

I do however have a purpose to fulfill and that is to care for my aging parents, it is a very prestigious role to be given. I will always have a roof over my head and food on the table. It is strange because I have heard through friends of mine that marriage and children are a lot of work and many envy me for I will never marry. I believe that our life in El Nahra is simplified and that the Western world complicates their lives with too much choice and freedom. The western way is quite confusing to me. What happens if you marry someone and have children who have a different color skin or hair?

This would never be acceptable in El Nahra and that is why I believe our way is preferred. As you have learned in El Nahra, virginity at marriage is critical and to not be a virgin would create great disgrace to one's family. When a groom goes to the brides chambers after they have signed the book of marriage there is a great celebration when we hear her cry with joyous pain or the groom emerges with a blood stained sheet, as this signifies that his

bride was a virgin. It is then the bride's parents are pleased to know that their daughter respected them and the marriage contract is valid.

I can't imagine how women could date many men and even have sexual relations with many men, how awful! Who would want you? Would you not be a disgrace to your family? It shocks me to hear that western women have relations and children with more than one man. In my family you would be dishonoring your family and it is likely that you would be punished or killed for this promiscuous and defiant behavior. Therefore my dear western friend do you not believe that in El Nahra it is easier to save yourself for marriage and to respect yourself for the man who is chosen for you to marry?

And then we speak of the abayah and veil and you know that it is of great importance for you to wear yours when outside your home so you don't show your body to any other men in a sensual manner which might be inviting to other men and it might create mixed emotions for them too. It would be horrible for your husband or father to learn that other men had witnessed your body. Wearing our abayah symbolizes many things but primarily it is a respect for your husband, family and religious belief. In my country it is said that, " an uncovered woman is an immoral woman" (24).

When we are of age, developing as young women it is an honor to put on our first abayah and it is an exciting time of our lives. To wear our veil in public gives respect and it acknowledges that we honor our families and our God. We place an incredible amount of weight and importance on one's reputation, a reality not foreign to you in the West, although I again state our way is much easier than all of the choices women have in the West. One's

reputation in El Nahra is contrasted to that of an ideal; to a perfect being when we abide by our rules and laws.

When we speak of the abayah we can also speak of why we wear our veil, or hijab. Also, the abayah is worn for protection in the weather but also from other predators as you call them in the Western world. Do you remember when we went to the big city in celebration, that our hijab and abayahs afforded us the ability to not be seen as I would have been in big trouble if I had. It acts as a disguise so to say but it is also a source of comfort and pride for many of us in El Nahra. There are other cultures which I have heard of that share similarities in respect for their families such as the!

Kung women, however they did not wear an abayah or veil because they worked in the fields and were the primary workers and providers for their sustenance. They too managed the family both inside and outside the home but it would have been very impractical to wear an abayah. Also the! Kung women went out gathering their foods and can you believe they frequently had their nursing children attached to them. These women stayed on their property not straying too far from their village, as we do during celebrations and it is not necessary for them to cover themselves as it is for us. An abayah would be too restrictive to the !

Kung. The two cultures do have their similarities when it comes to a women's work and the respect they must show to their husbands, but their duties as women and as workers are greatly different then the tribe in El Nahra as are the areas and environments around them. You my western friends ask if there are the Brahmin problems in El Nahra and I will simplify my answer by

saying that our religious leaders are held at the highest of authority on what is good and what is bad. However there does exist some possibility of revolution as there are differences of opinion in religion and culture.

In El Nahra you have experienced our religious ceremonies and you have been invited to share in these, but if there ever is a revolution I will pray that El Nahra survives the turmoil and attempted upheaval. There are some people who are not satisfied with our lives here and they are tempting our youth into believing other customs. You know that Jabbar and Suheir would like to educate women of El Nahra away from the abayah and this is something that will cause many troubles in the village. It is an outrage and I wish they would stay in the City (pg 308).

There are many people in very high positions who have over time been put there because of their knowledge and upbringing. They are the ones who read the Koran and preach its word. I see many possible troubles with the Brahmin in El Nahra conflicting with those in the City and I do pray that this will not end in a war, but they say it might as there are differences in opinion as to who is right and who is wrong. I repeat myself by saying that El Nahra today has a very balanced system that works and it would be a shame to give choices to the men and women of the village.

The Brahmin are the upper class and wealthy, not only in material items but also in control and power of the community and here they are the respected by most. It is wise to keep things simple and the same and to respect our culture. It is not wise to disagree with the possible changes the Brahmin could lead to as it could cost you your life. In El Nahra our village is highly

segregated to one's social class and only "like" people associated with one another. Also, the women only associated with "like" women and the men were the same.

Social classes are highly distinguished in Guest's of the Sheik and the author and her husband were fortunate to be brought in and educated and somewhat accepted into the wealthy class as they were even given Mohammed to do their chores. When the author Elizabeth Warnock Fernea initially resisted the abayah she was shunned and it was prior to arriving in El Nahra that her acquaintance said you must respect the culture and you must wear this abayah when out in public as we as women do not reveal any part of our bodies to men other than our husbands.

I enjoy my life in El Nahra and you have adjusted well my western friend and I will miss you when you're gone. I do not wish to visit you in America as that scares me but I do hope you come back to visit me again as I like to hear your western ways but I would never wish to live them and I will hope that you will determine that our life is much easier than yours.