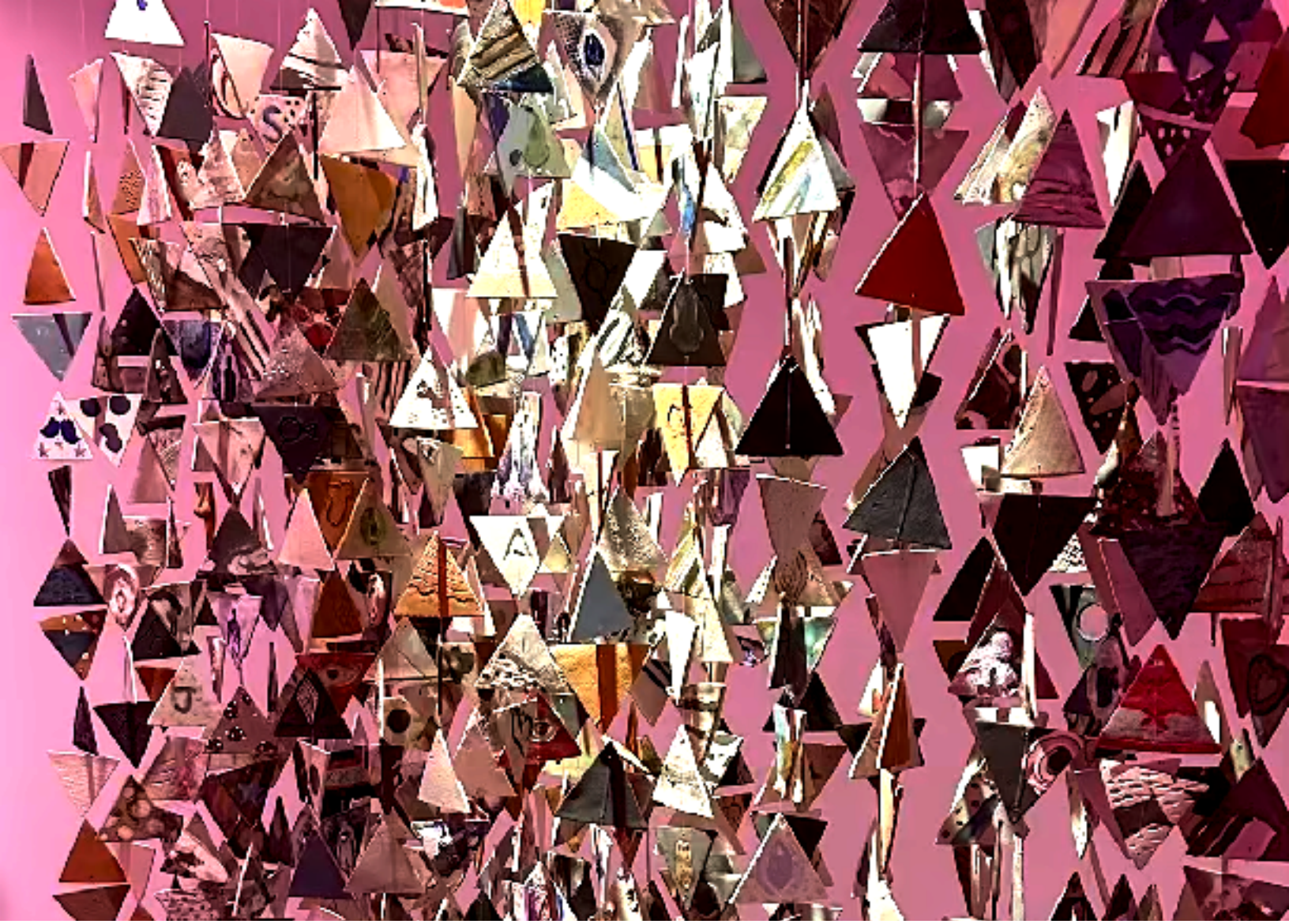
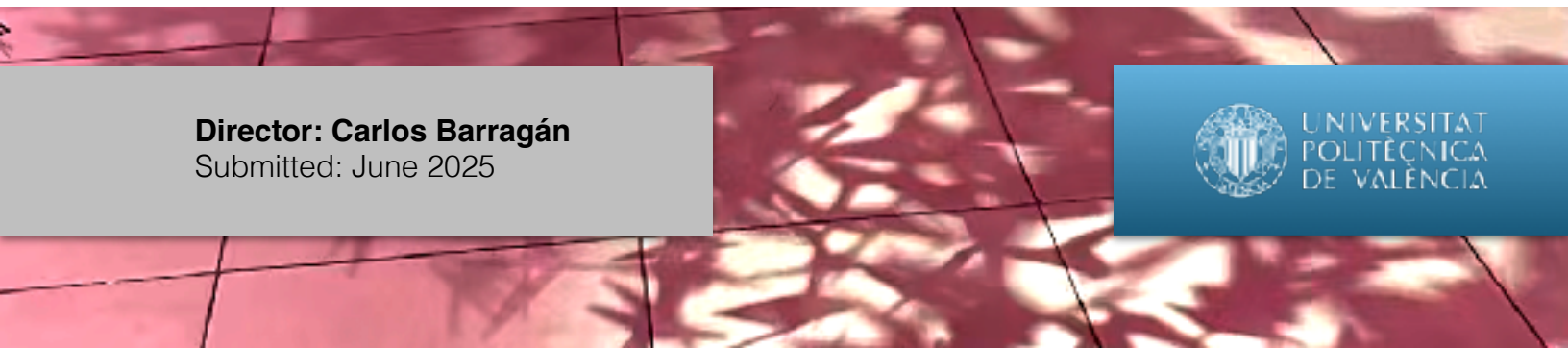


CONSTRUCTION of IDENTITY THROUGH FUNERARY ART WITHIN CONTEMPORARY LANGUAGES and ADAPTATIONS

Theresa Wilshusen



Director: Carlos Barragán
Submitted: June 2025

UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE VALÈNCIA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AGRADECIMIENTOS

Thank you to all my friends, and especially my partner, for supporting me through this arduous journey of investigation, study, discovery, academics, travel, creation, and finally, deliverance.

Especially to Mina, Emily, Loli, Pattie, Sara and Rolando, and Valentina - you have no idea what gratitude I have for you and your continued encouragement, motivation, and support. I love you so very much.

To my mom, Arlene, whom I wish could have witnessed her only daughter receive her doctorate, I will always appreciate your sacrifices for me, as well as your encouragement and love for me. You were right all along, I am 'the good one'.

Gracias a todos mis amigos, y especialmente a mi pareja, por apoyarme en este arduo viaje de investigación, estudio, descubrimiento, academia, viajes, creación y, finalmente, liberación.

Especialmente a Mina, Emily, Loli, Pattie, Sara y Rolando y Valentina: no tienen idea de la gratitud que siento por ustedes y por su continuo aliento, motivación y apoyo. Las amo muchísimo.

A mi madre, Arlene, a quien me hubiera gustado ver a su única hija recibir su doctorado, siempre apreciaré sus sacrificios por mí, así como su aliento y amor por mí. Tenías razón todo el tiempo, yo soy "la buena".

SUMMARY

This thesis explores the intersection of funerary art and identity expression through contemporary artistic practices inspired by Ancient Egyptian traditions and materials. It examines how individuals construct and express identity in life and death, comparing funerary practices within Western and Egyptian cultures, with across time and religious contexts. A specific key focus is the role of gender and sexual identity in funerary art, which analyzes how contemporary feminism empowers non-binary individuals and how art serves as a medium for self-representation. The research also investigates sociopolitical and economic barriers to self-expression in death, particularly for marginalized groups, and how modern artistic methods can provide more accessible and adaptable alternatives. Through three experimental art projects, this study reimagines funerary artwork as a means of preserving intersectional identities. It argues that, like the Ancient Egyptians who meticulously prepared for the afterlife, individuals today can use contemporary artistic mediums to curate their evolving identities, ensuring an authentic posthumous representation.

Key words:
gender identity; identity in death; Ancient Egypt; posthumous representation; New Kingdom Egypt; funerary artwork

RESUMEN

Esta tesis explora la intersección entre el arte funerario y la expresión de la identidad a través de prácticas artísticas contemporáneas inspiradas en tradiciones y materiales del Antiguo Egipto. Examina cómo los individuos construyen y expresan su identidad en la vida y en la muerte, comparando las prácticas funerarias de las culturas occidental y egipcia, a través del tiempo y los contextos religiosos. Un aspecto clave es el papel de la identidad sexual y de género en el arte funerario, que analiza cómo el feminismo contemporáneo empodera a los individuos no binarios y cómo el arte sirve de medio de autorrepresentación. La investigación también indaga en las condiciones sociopolíticas y económicas de la autoexpresión en la muerte, especialmente en los grupos marginados y en cómo los métodos artísticos modernos pueden ofrecer alternativas accesibles y adaptables para dicha autoexpresión. A través de tres proyectos artísticos experimentales, este estudio re-imagina obras del arte funerario como medio para preservar las identidades interseccionales. Sostiene que, al igual que los antiguos egipcios que se preparaban meticulosamente para la otra vida, las personas de hoy pueden utilizar los medios artísticos contemporáneos para conservar sus identidades en evolución, asegurando una representación póstuma auténtica.

Palabras clave:

Identidad de género; identidad en la muerte; Antiguo Egipto; representación póstuma; Nuevo Reino Egipcio; arte funerario

RESUM

Esta tesi explora la intersecció entre l'art funerari i l'expressió de la identitat a través de pràctiques artístiques contemporànies inspirades en tradicions i materials de l'Antic Egipte. Examina com els individus construïxen i expressen la seua identitat en la vida i en la mort, comparant les pràctiques funeràries de les cultures occidental i egípcia, a través del temps i els contextos religiosos. Un aspecte clau és el paper de la identitat sexual i de gènere en l'art funerari, que analitza com el feminisme contemporani empodera als individus no binaris i com l'art servix de mig d'autorepresentació. La investigació també indaga en les condicions sociopolítiques i econòmiques de l'autoexpressió en la mort, especialment en els grups marginats i en com els mètodes artístics moderns poden oferir alternatives accessibles i adaptables per a esta autoexpressió. A través de tres projectes artístics experimentals, este estudi re-imagina obres de l'art funerari com mig per a preservar les identitats interseccionals. Sosté que, igual que els antics egipcis que es preparaven meticulosament per a l'altra vida, les persones de hui poden utilitzar els mitjans artístics contemporanis per a conservar les seues identitats en evolució, assegurant una representació pòstuma autèntica.

Paraules clau:

Identitat de gènere; identitat en la mort; Antic Egipte; representació pòstuma; Nou Regne Egipci; art funerari

GUIDE

GUÍA

English begins on page… 7

Castellano comienza en pagina… 307

INDEX

Introduction 9

Chapter 1 20
Gender and Feminism in Contemporary Society

Chapter 2 49
Sociocultural Studies on Gender and Feminism in Egypt

Chapter 3 95
Gender and Feminism in Ancient Egypt

Chapter 4 155
Death

Chapter 5 201
Identity

Chapter 6 251
Projects in Reference to Research

Chapter 7 292
Final Conclusions

References 630

Appendixes

A 649
B 651
C 660

Construction of identity through funerary art within contemporary languages and adaptations

Theresa Wilshusen
Director: Carlos Barragán

UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE VALÈNCIA

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

My research questions the ability to express one's authentic identity through the use of contemporary artistic mediums that reference those used in Ancient Egypt.

This thesis examines death and dying and the construction of identity through life and one's expression of their identity in death. This thesis will focus on U.S.-based culture – The United States as the primary country, with supporting evidence from other American countries – and Egyptian culture, where I will compare funerary practices within the majority religions of these countries, along with a breakdown of the funerary art within them. Comparisons of Egypt's ancient culture with its contemporary culture will examine the expression of sexual and gender identities through art respectively, as well as the funerary culture of the United States from just after its conception to its contemporary practices as well. Similarly, this thesis will explore how contemporary feminism empowers non-binary individuals cross-culturally, but also how art is influenced by the authentic expression of one's identity, both in contemporary and ancient cultures. This thesis concludes with an examination of three experimental projects completed during this investigation through the construction of intersectional identity and the expression of it through the use of art, reimagined as funerary artwork.

This thesis is framed as artistic research—more precisely as research through art practice. The methodology is both critical and generative, grounded in artistic production as a mode of inquiry. Through a combination of historical analysis, sociopolitical contextualization, and creative experimentation, I explore how identity can be expressed before death through materially engaged artistic practice. Because of this methodological structure, I switch between first- and third-person perspectives across chapters. This reflects my dual role as both researcher and artist, and mirrors the shifting registers required to move between theory, personal reflection, and creative production. Each chapter begins with a brief methodological note outlining its specific function and disciplinary approach, which helps frame the varying language styles—ranging from formal academic to intimate and reflexive—depending on the role of the chapter within the thesis as a whole.

This thesis suggests that the intersectional identities of an individual are most clear upon their death; by collecting and converging these identities before death, one can use contemporary art to express themselves authentically in death, just as the Ancient Egyptians did through their funerary work, as they spent their lives preparing for their afterlife. Accounting for the evolution of varied and intersectional identities, art creates space for flexibility, alteration, and layering of identities while maintaining customs and/or traditions.

I will discuss recent political and militarial influences, social issues, and religious aspects that both influence and affect the expression of gender and other identities in both life and in death from both antiquity, in Ancient Egypt, as well as contemporary. I pay close attention to the plights of vulnerable groups, especially the LGBTQIA and women, in particular Egyptian women, as they are so greatly affected by politics and religion. I reference a variety of sources, such as academic

papers and studies, human rights organizations, news articles, Egyptology publications and other texts, interviews, and other research studies.

Throughout this dissertation you will be introduced to a variety of topics that are interconnected through gender expression, or lack thereof. I take a broad look at social and political phenomena as well as social issues in Egypt and the Americas and dissect how they affect gender and other self-expression. I will also discuss the sociocultural aspects that are affected by the aforementioned situations to give an expansive perspective of prevailing matters and demonstrate how native cultures can be an example for contemporary societies around the world. This research has brought me closer to the reality of specific groups in Egypt, such as the LGBTQIA community. It is an important part of the context of my research and the creative work produced during the production of this thesis. This contextual research contributes to my critical positioning as an outsider but engaged observer. As a heterosexual cisgender woman in the United States with a continuing interest in Egypt due to personal relationships, I approach the topic from an American perspective, but from a participant observation perspective rather than from the familiar experiential view of someone born and raised in Egypt. This position allows me to remain reflexive and maintain a critical awareness of the materials used in my artistic production and their connection to the culture that inspired them.

This background research has provided me with real perspective and positionality of the specific groups, such as Egypt and the LGBTQIA community, within the context of my research and creative work produced during the production of this thesis.

Currently, I found there is a great lack of self-expression in contemporary funerary art. I have observed that many people do not plan for their deaths any more than perhaps an insurance or death policy, and many young people do less than that, with fewer people able to save for such situations. While doing preliminary investigations, I discovered the Ancient Egyptian death preparations to be fascinatingly profound, rooted deep in religious beliefs of an afterlife that was much more important than life on Earth. While I am not a religious person, I found the preparation and dedication to one's funerary cache to be extravagant, but also careful and deliberate. The devotion ancient Egyptians had with regard to choosing the best artisan, that was affordable to them, was inspiring. This provoked me to examine U.S. American habits regarding death preparations, as I had nearly no experience related to it, at that time.

Through this preliminary research I found many disadvantages for the general population in having control of their identities and how they were expressed in death, especially with the financial inability to prepare for such a situation, which for many seems like a distant plan. These disadvantages can become greater when the individual is part of the LGBTQIA community, as they may not have the same support of someone outside of that group. These disparities are often cross-cultural and affect other minority and disadvantaged groups. The advantage of my research is that it makes self-expression (identity expression) more accurate, affordable, and adaptable to these groups than traditional funerary art, while also providing personal, handmade artifacts.

The research that I have completed as part of this dissertation reflects the moment of people, creating new forms of identity self-expression through creative mediums that permits the 'artist' to accurately curate their own narrative of their lives ante-mortem (before death). This allows the 'artist' to be flexible, adapt, and alter their identities as they like, without creating inconsistencies, rather a more accurate timeline, so as they reach death, at whatever moment, their last created work is the most accurate and truthful expression of their identity.

The purpose of this research was to find a way in which regular individuals, but more specifically, under-represented and vulnerable individuals would have new, creative ways of self-expression that accurately articulates their identity as it evolves. I question ways in which contemporary funerary art can be adapted from the Ancient Egyptian funerary art to be created before death, like the ancient Egyptians, yet be affordable, accessible, and adaptable means of identity expression.

The three experimental projects presented in this thesis (Private Views, The Gender Veil, and Seeking Self), as contemporary and personal reinterpretations of ancient Egyptian rites, employ specific materials that correspond to conceptual themes of identity, memory, and death. The use of resin, ceramics, and instant photography reinterprets traditional materials such as embalming substances, clay vessels, and visual representations of the deceased. These materials, I propose, have a symbolic and historical resonance with ancient Egypt while being highly accessible to contemporary individuals. They were chosen for their affordability, portability, and ease of use, requiring little to no technical training. This makes them inclusive and feasible for people from diverse economic and artistic backgrounds to use in preserving their own funerary identity, should they identify with this proposal. Their use connects ancient practices with contemporary material culture, offering both historical continuity and adaptive flexibility.

Outline of the chapters

Chapter one looks into contemporary perspectives of U.S. American and Egyptian cultures, examining feminism and its absence in both cultures, as well as the expression of gender and its oppression. This chapter identifies current North American perspectives about gender and feminism and demonstrates how attitudes surrounding these concepts are changing and/or evolving despite the measures of a few to interfere and stop the progress. It continues to explain how social media plays a role of outreach and community for LGBTQIA+ people with little or no support, showing that expression of one's authentic identity is necessary to the human experience, to feel accepted and perhaps understood. I give examples of change over time in the United States and contemporary examples throughout the Americas, including some indigenous peoples, but also providing some examples of change that has already occurred in Europe with regards to gender expression.

In the second section of this chapter, I touch on U.S. American perspectives of Egypt and how misconceptions about the Egyptian people can hurt or stifle the feminist movements happening in Egypt today. Examples provided from the history of women's movements in Egypt help frame a

cultural identity for women, and how the melding of politics and religion offset progress in some ways. This chapter also examines how the 2011 Egyptian Revolution brought the Egyptian woman's role as activists to light, but in doing so also brought to light the sexism and violence against women that still persists in contemporary Egypt. However, these occurrences encouraged more dialogue about women and their roles in politics, especially those that shape the lives of women, speaking to the changes that have been occurring since the Revolution, but how with the el-Sisi regime, some of the women's movements have been hijacked for political gain. I explain how this continues to affect the identity of many in Egypt, not only women, through attempts at homogenizing the Egyptian identity into idealized versions of a complex intersectional culture. I examine women's agency in contemporary Egypt as it is both questioned and dismissed in contemporary Egyptian politics.

Chapter two dives deeper into social, religious, and cultural impacts on gender and gender expression, as well as how feminism is perceived and [mis]used and how that affects greater change. It examines how Egyptian women are following different trajectories than their mothers overall and how this affects and is affected by education, marriage, divorce, gender roles at home and outside the home, being a home carer, [domestic] abuse, politics, and widowhood. I discuss how these factors affect women's lives as well as their empowerment, and ultimately how it affects all genders.

It reviews how religion has appropriated Egyptian culture, politics, and identity, demonstrating, for good or for bad, the influence religion has had on Egypt as a nation and how it does not necessarily reflect the culture. I explain how religion denies authentic representation of intersectional identities that exist within the culture and why that is potentially destructive for the culture. This chapter refrains from using strong identity language terminology to avoid potential conflicts or restrictions dissemination or for future publications in the region.

Both chapters one and two form part of the foundational research necessary to understand the cultural background. This is a critical part of the research both for the reference to Egyptian culture as well as for the LGBTQIA community because, as the researcher who does not come from or belong to either group, it is important to investigate and understand both communities to the best of my abilities as they form crucial and fundamental aspects of this thesis. Treating each of these communities, particularly pre-revolutionary, revolutionary (2011), and post-revolutionary Egypt, as case studies for the sake of identity research adds greater significance to the research as a means of understanding the change of the collective identity.

I break down how Egyptian culture is being reframed idealistically, putting vulnerable groups in dangerous and sometimes deadly situations and how supporting or enabling these vulnerable groups can be cause for imprisonment as well – guilty through association. I examine how suppression of authentic identity expression disrupts the culture and can create animosity towards those restricting the freedom of expression, which, in turn, could cause further protests, or perhaps fuel future revolutions. Further, I demonstrate how the media, including social media,

can act as allies in the fight for self-expression in Egypt, but how it is with great personal and professional risks, as they can be jailed for debauchery. Lastly, I explain why freedom of identity expression is important, especially in Egypt, as it greatly affects LGBTQIA+ individuals who are largely the most violated, however, as one vulnerable group is attacked, others are also associated to and with them unjustifiably.

Chapter three focuses on contemporary concepts of gender and feminism as incorporated and utilized in Ancient Egypt, expanding on their applicability to customs and how they were affected by them. In the first section of this chapter, I demonstrate how gender was portrayed in Ancient Egypt in high society, in religion, and culturally, as well as its role in different aspects of Ancient Egyptian culture: in marriage, with respects to fertility, within the family and home, how it was viewed outside of the home and its economic and legal bearings.

In the second section, *Gender representation in death and its greater significance to identity in life,* I explain how Ancient Egyptians spent their lives constructing their identities in preparation for death, where in which they would be able to eternally continue an aggrandized version of the life they led on earth in the afterlife. I explain how the identity was created and maintained in life and what that meant for their afterlife.

Finally, in the third section of this chapter, *What it means to be a man/woman in Ancient Egypt through artistic references,* I identify three main ways that an individual expressed their identity: through pictorial, sculptural, and textual mediums. While these methods were often reserved for the elites and royals, some middle class aimed to do the same.

Chapter four investigates contemporary funerary traditions in both the United States and Egypt, while comparing them with their previous historical practices in each culture respectively, and includes the majority religions in both the United States and Egypt for reference. This comparison allows for connections to be made with regards to the practices, customs, and traditions of religions and cultures, additionally, how individuals expressed their identities in death through a variety of mediums, including photography, clothing, makeup, personal artifacts, and shared stories. It further explains the significance of death and how it affects one's identity, with particular emphasis on Ancient Egypt, resulting in the expression of the individual's true and preferred identities by way of artisanal funerary art.

I first identify the funerary practices in modern America, and how identity is intertwined and revealed in death. I include burial practices as part of the individual's identity – relating to their final wishes, religious traditions, or requests of surviving family. I compare these practices and traditions with that of contemporary Egypt to provide relatable comparisons, showing the importance of identity to the funerary and burial processes.

Subsequently, I compare contemporary practices with that of the Ancient Egyptians to demonstrate the commonalities in traditions over centuries, as well as highlight the fundamental

importance of identity and how it, in Ancient Egypt, was important for survival in both this life and the afterlife.

Chapter five compares contemporary methods of identity expression with that of the Ancient Egyptians, using art as the common factor. This chapter also examines how heteronormativity is challenged in the pursuit of authentic identity expression. The first section of this chapter explains how identity expression has been subverted through religion and politics over decades of autocratic rule with the subjugation of vulnerable groups, including LGBTQIA+ and women, specifically in contemporary Egypt.

In the following section I discuss the role of art in U.S. American women's activism that compelled other groups to appear and demand better treatment, but ultimately the right of self-expression. I examine different types of identity: vertical and horizontal, and how this affects how identity is expressed. Further, using these concepts I consider how art reinterprets materials and processes which can, in turn, increase awareness and develop empathy for individuals who are quite unlike each other.

Later, I break down two different interviews of contemporary, feminist, female artists. One is an American, Buddhist, transgender ceramicist, the other is a single Egyptian, Muslim, visual artist working with a variety of mediums, but primarily includes ceramics and glass. These interviews examine the roles that their intersectional identities play in their art and, adversely, how their art serves them in their identity expression.

Further, the next section discusses the contemporary manners in which identity is preserved and continued, though they may be based on traditions, religion, or simply a desire to be remembered. These expressions are usually acts or practices that carry/carried meaning for the dying/deceased. Common objects can become artifacts of one's identity and further turned into art through the process of memorialization – when someone places significance on an item that wouldn't otherwise be extraordinary. Some choose to leave behind previously held identities to bring to prominence others that perhaps make them out to be better people. I discuss how survivors celebrate and mourn the deceased in a way that perpetuates their identities.

I demonstrate ancient expressions of identity and how they defied the expectations or norms of the time in Egypt using art and 'literature' from the era, including sculpture, relief, and texts. The provided examples give nuance to the significance of the usage of the mediums.

Finally, I provide some exposure to the problems within Egyptology that was an antiquated heterosexual male perspective of the findings, perhaps skewing understanding of the inscriptions and usage of the artworks. A , colonial perspective as such can lead to misinterpretations, overlooking other aspects that would appear rare and significant to identity expression, that may have also supported non-binary concepts of identity.

Chapter six is a breakdown of the methodologies of each of three projects created throughout the investigation of this thesis. Each project touches on one of three aspects of the expression of identity in death – preservation through resin, construction and reconstruction of fractured identities in ceramics, and creating a narrative through imagery (instant photography). These projects tangentially explore gender expression through three specific materials - resin, clay, and instant photography, as a means of being engaged with both Ancient and contemporary Egyptian culture, as well as the LGBTQIA community while not specifically being part of either community. The research on these communities helps to find parallels and intersections among their complex identities.

Each project relates to one aspect of Ancient Egyptian material that was used to express identity, however, repurposed and using contemporary materials to demonstrate their importance in the preservation of identity in contemporary society.

Private Views is a resin collage series that layers conceptualized identities through the use of a variety of 2D and 3D materials. The contemporary resin acts like that of the Ancient Egyptians, attempting to preserve a curated identity, picking and choosing which artifacts to be encapsulated to best represent the individual.

The Gender Veil is a sculptural installation of hundreds of ceramic triangles. These triangles are created from a variety of different clays, impregnated with images, colors, textures, and symbols, meant to be interpreted differently on an individual basis. Each strand contains different types of triangles hung head to foot, with every other triangle inversely hung. The mixing of clays represents both the variety of individuals, as well as the complexities of identities that each of us possess.

Seeking Self, an instant photography sculptural installation, allows its viewers to question aspects that have shaped them, allow them to find commonalities with others much different than themselves, and encourages an open discussion about what makes up one's identity. It questions the difference between sexual identity and gender identity and the range of factors that make up both. The project further questions if identity can be found in art- through a variety of forms- but specifically through instant photography.

Methodology

This research began with residual inquiries about decoration in tombs and the use of funerary objects as identification of the deceased from my master studies. The research began to develop through more investigations into the use of *shabtis* in funerary practices in ancient Egypt, along with tomb frescoes and reliefs. Through a qualitative approach, I began investigating the materials and their purposes, along with the 'why?'.

Through this investigation I became more curious if this class identity and self-expression was only among the elite or if it was common throughout society. As the research revealed more

information, I began hypothesizing about historically underrepresented groups, such as gay and lesbians in the ancient world. I discovered content that seemed to conclude an accurate self-expression of some gay identities, but were analyzed by Victorian era Egyptologists, who perhaps had their own agendas, concluding these tombs to be of 'brothers', for example.

I questioned the legitimacy of these conclusions as there were no conclusional references to gay or lesbian tombs, though some contemporary Egyptologists would disagree. This led me to the question of accurate self-expression in Ancient Egypt, did it exist? I discovered through my more in-depth research that authentic identity expression did exist in various cases, to which I needed to look at how this was achieved in the ancient world. I did find that it was much more accessible to the elite classes and Royalty, but did find that artisans were the backbone of this process. They made it possible for nearly everyone to have what they needed in order to be identified in death, in order for the deceased to potentially move on in the afterlife and be recognized accurately. This was done through their artistic mediums. Ancient Egyptians relied on artisans to provide them with artifacts that helped the deceased be identified, as well as have the material items needed for recognition and sustenance in the afterlife.

I had to compare these aspects to the funerary art of the Occidental world, such as the United States of America, to that of the ancient world, for perspective. When comparing the two I found there were some similarities - imagery of the deceased, stories of their good deeds on earth and idealized versions of the deceased, as well as artifacts, as well as some other funerary aspects, such as preservation and concealing of the body before burial.

I discovered through this aspect of the investigation that few people prepared for death like the Ancient Egyptians. There were many factors that determined the reasoning behind this phenomenon, but accessibility was one major aspect. For many the financial means to prepare for death proved to be out of reach for many, relying on the survivors to be the ones to manage that deed. With this occurrence of the survivors managing the funerary tasks, it also became their job to depict the deceased, which meant the deceased we depicted from the perspective of the survivor(s) - note necessarily an accurate portrayal of the deceased.

This research naturally led me to look at contemporary Egyptian death and funerary practices. Exploring the religious aspects of the funerary processes brought me to the political aspects that greatly affected the religious identity in Egypt. By further inspecting the politics of religious identity in Egypt, it became clear that a religious identity was one that was obligated by the Egyptian government and that alternatives are prohibited. Many funerary processes in Egypt, despite religion, are fairly similar to that of the West. Contemporary funerary practices in the West and in Egypt are discovered to be less representative of the individual and more generic or idealized versions of the individual leading to inaccuracy of the individual posthumously.

These findings provoked the question of accurate identity expression in contemporary funerary art, and thus, funerary practices. Can an individual authentically express themselves through

funerary art, like that of ancient Egypt? I wanted to find ways around societies norms, laws, and cultural barriers to provide individuals a way in which they could accurately and authentically express their identities in death, but through prior preparation. With Ancient Egyptian artisan work and methods on my mind from so much prior research, I found it important to connect the ancient and contemporary worlds, which ultimately provided three mediums - resin, ceramics, and [instant] photography (imagery).

I began with ceramics, as they played many important roles in ancient Egyptian funerary practices from amulets, *shabtis*, and canopic jars, to more practical things such as containers for their food and beverage caches. Through my ceramic project, I did not want to simply use the same method and means in a contemporary context, rather I wanted to use ceramics as a representation of the process of life with all its hazards and triumphs, as well as a platform in which one could build and breakdown concepts, fragment their identity, reconstruct it, and even blend it with another. Through the use of a variety of clays of different textures, styles, and temperatures, *The Gender Veil* provides iconography, language, and the seven elements of art (line, color, texture, form, shape, space, and value) to be adapted to form the identity of the creator. Providing an accessible and adaptable medium in which one could authentically express their identity. The individual would be able to build on their identity over time, over years of their life, connecting, and displaying or preserving their artistic expression in any way they wish, while being created by them. This would, like the other projects I will discuss, provide artifacts that could potentially be distributed to individual survivors posthumously.

The following project *Private Views,* which began during the process of the aforementioned project, *The Gender Veil,* is one that was limited in time and subjects. This project began through small interviews of many individuals that I had some familiarity with. I expressed my plan to express identities through layered identities set in resin. Many participants were engaged and excited to see the outcome of their identities, but many were hesitant to have their names or likenesses depicted, out of precaution for safety or concealment. With respect to that I did not provide any real personal artifacts of theirs in these collages and rather interpreted their identities, as if I were the survivor describing them. The concept in practice would be that the individual themselves would create the works to be displayed, layering their own artifacts in the resin, again enabling accessibility and adaptability at any moment. I explain how this project could further be adapted to the individual's needs.

During the production of *Private Views* my own mother passed away suddenly and this project took on new depth. With the investigation I had begun, it suddenly became very personal and while the work was completed, the need to find another method became more apparent. Struggling to combine and represent the conflicting identities that suddenly so many people were expressing to me about my mother, I had to find intersections of her identity and accept them as true, though perhaps hidden from me. At that time, I hoped for more clarity and less confusion about who she was and wasn't, but instead I had to be the bearer of her identities to her family and friends. I knew I could not necessarily reject any specific identity as untrue, because I could

not be certain, she had not been explicit. While looking through photos that people were sending me of my mother, showing me her childhood that she did not like to talk about, her cousins told me about her. I learned about her past identities through them. I found the same in ancient Egyptian tombs, which showed the past lives of the deceased. This connection led me to find another medium in which I could work to authentically express identity.

I considered various kinds of film, as I found this to be the most nostalgic, but I sensed that it should be something intergenerational and tactile, so I avoided digital photography. First, I began with disposable cameras, but it became quite a hassle to find developers and developing independently proved to be too expensive and/or difficult - less accessible. I had my mother's old polaroid camera along with some other cameras, so I tried it out as it still had film in it. When I attempted to purchase more film I found the polaroid format to be quite expensive, but did provide the desired effect of a tactile photograph that was a mix of manual and automatic, darker colors that reminisced the past. I found a FujiFilm camera (Instax Wide 300) that had a different photo format, slightly smaller than the square Polaroid, that achieved the same goals at about half the price. Both the camera and the film were found to be accessible to a greater number of people.

Seeking Self became the last of three projects that best facilitated the authentic expression of identity. This medium allowed it to be portable and user friendly. This medium focuses on capturing images that one could piece together to construct an identity from any minuscule to grand aspect of one's life. This would allow an intimate look into someone's life, things often unseen from an outside perspective. It permits the 'artist' to also capture scenes from niche groups or cultures. The portability of this medium grants the individual the ability to arrange and reconstruct the photos in ways they feel best depict them and express their identity. The pictures can be curated and adapted to any individual, and further provides artifacts that can be distributed upon death, like the other projects.

CHAPTER 1

GENDER AND FEMINISM IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Chapter 1 – Gender and Feminism in Contemporary Society

Introduction

It is important to understand how contemporary society is affected by gender and furthermore, how feminism is tied to it. Understanding the progress of gender studies in any given society, or lack thereof, can help us follow and comprehend a society's growth towards inclusion of non-binary gender individuals, further helping gauge society's effects on them. This could allow studies to pinpoint areas in need of improvement, define necessary training, along with other practical applications to enact. It might further encourage the communities involved to better comprehend the importance of feminism in society and how it can serve their communities better, further innovation, science, and technology, expand the arts and culture, and provide a safer society for all to engage in and be a part of.

This chapter is situated within the broader structure of this thesis as both contextual groundwork and critical inquiry. From a methodological standpoint, it draws upon feminist theory, gender studies, and sociocultural analysis, while maintaining a dialogue with visual arts and artistic practice. The language employed in this chapter will reflect an academic register appropriate to the critical theoretical content it engages, while later chapters will vary in tone depending on their function—whether analytical, reflective, or creative. This variation aligns with the nature of artistic research as a dynamic, layered process that accommodates shifts in voice, disciplinary approach, and positional engagement.

As a researcher and artist, my approach is shaped by my specific positionality: I am a hetero cisgender woman from the United States with a long-standing personal and academic interest in Egypt. While I do not have familial or cultural ties to the region, my research aims to engage Egypt respectfully and thoughtfully, informed by both critical distance and sustained study. My identity inevitably informs how I interpret data and relate to subjects, and I am aware of the ethical considerations of working interculturally, particularly in regions where discourses on gender and feminism are often controversial or politically and socially censored.

With regards to this thesis, viewing these issues through an artistic lens has proven necessary in discovering manners in which vulnerable individuals are able to express their identities in ways that are safe, imaginative, and true to themselves. Drawing on an informed understanding of contemporary gender norms within Egyptian society, both the research methodology and artistic practices were consciously adapted to be culturally responsive and contextually sensitive. These adaptations were crucial in creating inclusive and supportive environments for identity exploration and expression through art.

This chapter looks at the importance of gender and feminism in contemporary society as a way of understanding where Occidental and Oriental cultures are in actuality and why their trajectory is important, as it has influence in the region, but could further drastically affect the lives of many individuals and communities across cultures. The gravity of the intersectionality of gender and

feminism cannot be understated as they drive and support each other.

Intersectionality being, “the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups,” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-b). The continued growth of the expression of gender needs the support of feminism in order to do so safely and justly, and the absence of structural feminism creates ruts wherein great numbers of people are overlooked, disadvantaged, or worse, persecuted for their identity.

Focusing on these aspects provides critical information about the arts and ultimately the ability to express oneself safely and in a manner that is authentic. Through the investigation of how a society has grown and adapted to gender, and how it has or has not embraced feminism as a working construct, portrays a distinct view of the progression of the arts and how self-expression is affected by one’s ability to do so authentically without fear of receiving undue retribution.

Furthermore, identifying how countries in different regions react to the expansion of gender recognition and inclusion may lead to improved conditions of marginalized individuals. This could prove to be a key in understanding the symbolism in art and the significance of the ways in which it is created and exhibited, as well as the mediums used. Additionally, this could provide insights into a more profound understanding of a society’s individual expression through their varied art forms.

This chapter approaches gender and feminism from a socio-cultural and intersectional perspective rooted in sociology and gender studies. While not intended as a comprehensive overview, the chapter draws on selected examples that illuminate contemporary societal shifts and their relationship to self-expression and identity. The research is grounded in qualitative, critical, and intersectional feminist methodologies, focusing on how feminism and gender theory evolve in relation to cultural narratives, social media, and artistic representation.

As part of an artistic research framework, the purpose here is not only to establish a theoretical context but also to create the necessary conceptual grounding for the artworks developed later in the thesis. This chapter adopts an academic tone aligned with gender studies scholarship and lays the foundation for understanding why feminist and gender-related topics are critical to artistic self-expression in contemporary society.

1.1 The Occidental Perspective: Views of gender and feminism

The “occidental perspective” is based on a post-colonial view of the current sociological views of gender and feminism in the contemporary (U.S. American) occidental world. These are observed from this perspective with some regard for native peoples, religion, and politics, while using examples from indigenous people’s customs and cultures to navigate contemporary concepts of feminism and gender. In doing so, the “western perspective” appropriates those native beliefs to reinforce the existence of gender non-conforming individuals. These views are based on research

of native people and their traditions and beliefs prior to their official identification in Canada in 1990, existent pre-colonization (Robinson, 2019). The “occidental perspective” therefore demonstrates the rich history and comprehension that native people have had of gender and how they have been exemplary in demonstrating how societies worldwide can accept, understand, and support gender differences in a contemporary context (Robinson, 2019). The “occidental perspective” is borne from the comprehension of pre-colonial native beliefs and practices that have influenced post-colonial progressive concepts of “two-spirit” or “third gender” individuals (HRC Staff, 2020).

This section will discuss the intersectionalities of gender and feminism by dissecting the current attitudes towards gender and gender non-conforming individuals. It will further look at sociological and political changes with regards to both gender and feminism, as well as social trends that have both assisted and discouraged gender non-conforming individuals in finding outlets in expressing themselves. This section will also discuss the cross-cultural progress in gender and feminism in the West, including North and South America.

1.1.2 Current U.S. American attitudes

The U.S. American view of gender is evolving as society looks to Native people’s beliefs and practices with regards to non-binary people, or those who do not conform to the gender binary – male or female. The (U.S. American) occidental world is not yet progressive as there are only a few nations in the West that recognize non-binary genders officially which will be discussed later. As non-binary gender recognition evolves, like in most big cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, or Vancouver, it is likely to encompass more and more people (Liszewski, et al., 2018). And like the expansion of cities, the expansion of gender could also begin to include more people and through such act incorporate family extensions and extended families in the dialogue, as they are connected in some ways to a non-binary being. This is not meant that they are directly connected, but rather through association, as many will not be directly affected at all, depending on their proximal association to the non-binary individual. However, this indirect relation to the non-binary being allows for conversation and acquaintance with the concepts, even if from a significant distance. While this simple connection may seem insignificant, it in fact links more binary beings to a non-binary being extending the scope of those affected, if only minutely by a thin margin.

This connection creates dialogue, be it positive or negative, allowing diffusion of the concept and exposing individuals otherwise not exposed to these concepts and identities. Continued exposure to a concept over time begins to normalize it, slowly deteriorating the discrimination created by it. Whether the binary individual accepts or refutes the concepts is irrelevant, as over time the general public will likely normalize the concept (either positively or negatively) without the need for individual acceptance. This is the case for many other non-related topics, such as social programs and gender roles. As our necessities change, so do our expectations.

This association affects feminism at a great level. While it may seem that it would not, it in fact

does have a great impact on it. Feminism is not only the cause for equality between sexes, but for genders, regardless of status, race, ethnicity, education, location, caste, etc. Feminism is a conscious act to understand gender inequalities, power relations, create equality for all, based on the experiences of gender roles and relations (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Though there is still pushback from some 'feminists' about what is considered equality between genders and where the line should be drawn, the fundamental idea behind feminism is exactly that: create equality for all, gender notwithstanding (Álvarez, 2021). Dialogue around gender is a feminist issue as it has a ripple effect in society – when one group is negatively affected the negative effects are seen in other groups (Barsade, 2002).

Because of the significant amount of inaction and protection from conservative, religious, or fundamentalist governments in the West, progress is slow and laws of inclusion, and a broad spectrum of protections in jobs to physical protection, are not in place to ensure healthy, safe growth and evolution of the society (Davaki, 2012). At local levels there is more being done, including in local governments and small businesses that voluntarily proclaim to be non-discriminant and openly accept non-binary workers without prejudice (Cusick, et al., 2017). Local governments and individuals can help break down stigmas and discrimination through zero-tolerance policies towards gender discrimination and operations. Technologic and scientific innovations increase as a result of gender diversity, especially among larger firms that can both obtain a larger, more diverse company population, but also through the type of innovation at hand (Teruel & Segarra-Blasco, n.d.). Often, small communities that accept and celebrate diversity, not only between sex and gender, but through race and ethnicity, show more creative problem solving than those that are monolithic (Dickey et al., 2016). This is evident in sectors such as the arts, technology and product development, and politics, including other sectors (Zheng, 2020). Diverse cultures think differently and have, through cultural experience, developed their own methods for solving problems to suit their specific environments and sociological needs. It is crucial to have a range of diversity within a community to encourage growth, acceptance, and the acceptance of the evolution of gender as it changes with the mindset of society.

1.1.2 Changes in attitudes of gender non-conforming individuals

Inevitable conversations will take place among loved ones, often along with symptoms of grief, such as the stages of denial, disbelief, anger, and bargaining, are among them (Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2021). While this is not always the case, it is not uncommon, as people are being opened to a new concept that changes their understanding and possibly their overall comprehension of the non-binary individual (Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2021). When the authentic self is revealed, there are often underlying truths that come forward and previous gender norm performances cease to exist or are no longer performed. This can be jarring for those unaccustomed to the other's true self, as the authentic self may appear as a sudden performance. It may seem to the gender conforming individual that they have 'lost' the person they knew before, thus the feelings often presented in grief (Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2021). Other instances are likely less dramatic, but while there may be confusion or disbelief of the associated to the non-binary individual, there is potential for a sense of understanding or knowing, leading to immediate or prompt acceptance

from the gender conforming individual, depending on their understanding and background of the concept. This loved one may already be aware of the circumstance, giving more space for the non-binary individual to come out with less explanation and more acceptance.

While the latter is becoming more commonplace, there are many instances of the former, especially in rural, conservative, or religious communities, though not exclusively (Kaplan et al., 2019). Some rural communities are often seen as 'traditional' or 'conservative' because there are norms in place that have not been disturbed for many years, if not generations. This leads to a sense of stagnancy in the growth of the family or community. When the norms are not challenged over time then it can seem that any change or challenge to said norms are 'wrong' and can create confusion or animosity. This can drive out members of the family or community that think this way, allowing the cycle to perpetuate. Communities that are challenged in such a way and accept the differences they are presented with begin to open up and further, thrive (Kaplan et al., 2019). Why would they thrive? Simply, because they are diversifying their ideas. In doing so, they are, as some would say, "opening their hearts" to different kinds of people. That acceptance is transmitted to others in different ways. Tolerance of other difficult issues, and perhaps later even acceptance, becomes commonplace and the community is able to grow in ways perhaps previously unknown or unseen. This also allows for the gender nonconforming individual the space to grow and understand themselves and their relationships with their current and new communities (Kaplan et al., 2019).

Change is hard to accept when the colloquial phrase 'That's the way it's always been done,' is the status quo. Significant transitions are generally harder to accept among older individuals because they have a planted way of thinking and unless those ideas have been challenged, they too, are stuck to the norms known to them having not come of age with the progression of such concepts. Contemporary society looks for ways to challenge difficult, old ideas, to improve them, and evolve as a culture or community, but it is often met with initial resistance. This resistance is often fear of something new or unknown because it may change something that is deemed to be 'good' or 'normal' into something undesirable (HRC Foundation, n.d.).

Why does this seem like a sudden trend? Why are there more instances of this? While it is not the only reason, social media plays a huge role in the rise of these cases, but otherwise we can look at exposure in general as one of the facilitators of this phenomenon. Media is a major role of exposure providing a variety of new ways to gather and consume information. Previously, the media was limited to specific outlets such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. With the invention of the internet and the expansion of our access to new, up to date information, we have been able to see more stories of different individuals from around the world, bringing light to their situations and some feeling less ostracized. Further, with the rise and use of social media platforms we can now access and consume the same information in an even more condensed form, as well as be selective with what we choose to consume (Farrar, 2019). Ultimately, with the advancement of technologies, like smartphones, tablets, and other devices, we are able to collect, access, and consume large amounts of information within seconds, scrolling through information

with ease and often being exposed to things we wouldn't otherwise see.

Familiars of non-binary people may be exposed to more online influence of people sharing their experiences with coming out as access to it is more available more often, and conclusively more accessible. This is a worldwide phenomenon and with the algorithms at play, catering to specific demographics, with the aid of apps and technology it is likely that they will see more of what they have already viewed (Bivens, 2016). They may have less exposure to these pages or individuals in their real life, however their presence on social media exposes them to more analogous instances than they would without it. This may seem like it is something 'trending' when in reality the algorithms are determining the nature and frequency of the content that one consumes.

1.1.3 Online trends of self-expression and their value

Social media can act as positive reinforcement for loved ones of gender nonconforming people, by encouraging and providing explanations as a way of understanding gender nonconforming individuals better in an almost anonymous manner (Wortham, 2018). Jenna Wortham suggests that through this type of exposure, it can also act as a learning tool, or training, to help them engage and ask questions indirectly about techniques of dialogue, allyship, terminology, as well as showing general support and acceptance. This acts as a supplementary education tool for gender conforming individuals so the non-binary person does not also have to also be the educator, rather simply allowed to exist and grow (Wortham, 2018).

Gender conforming individuals can also use social media as a support tool for others as well as themselves, giving them access to individual and group support to manage emotions and concerns, and likewise learn from others who have had similar experiences (Wortham, 2018). It may also provide a platform in which they can engage with others to help them to be a better ally, friend, or family member to their non-binary loved one (Wortham, 2018).

With the rise in use of social media as a means of communication, some non-binary and gender nonconforming individuals choose to use it as a platform to come out, educate their followers – be they family, friends, or other – and additionally as a way to express themselves and their experiences (Statista, 2022). This is particularly important for gender nonconforming individuals that are geographically dislocated from greater communities that they could benefit from being a part of (Wortham, 2018). It's important for them to have visibility, especially through social media, since the average person consumes about two and a half (2.5) hours of social media daily, of some form, per day, while teenagers average around three (3) hours per day (Statista, 2022). Representation of non-binary people challenge and change misconceptions, as well as provide life-saving exposure of both the positive and negative aspects of living their lives authentically (Wortham, 2018).

Social media can be described as having many functions today. It provides us with a means to communicate with friends and family, along with strangers, commune with others like that of community and support groups, as well as a tool for self-expression, not including the capitalist

aspects of these mega corporations (Pathak, 2019). This strikes one as a lot of responsibility for a media genre, which might also be complicated to maneuver, and one result is that it provides relief for many gender non-conforming individuals who want to express themselves authentically. Could social media be a stress *relief* rather than a stress inducer? Frankly, it is much easier to state one's truth behind the perceived anonymity of a screen rather than face-to-face, this is known as online disinhibition effect (Farrar, 2019). Concepts that are particularly hard to talk about are more easily discussed when the individuals are not forced to feel the tension or perceive the body language of the other. The screen, and distance from the situation, provides a sense of protection where individuals can be more honest about their beliefs, especially when the topic is as complicated as gender (Wortham, 2018; Farrar, 2019). This concept goes even further when one considers that social media, with its anonymity, allows some relief to those who are not yet out as a way to be honest with themselves first in a safe anonymous way that leads them to gain courage to come out to those closest to them, if they haven't already, which, as previously mentioned, may be harder to do since one may be face-to-face with possible rejection (Farrar, 2019).

Not only a means for support, but likewise, social media is a route for destruction and abuse. Because the screen gives a false sense of protection it does not, in fact, provide actual protection from those that intend to inflict harm. There are large numbers of people willing to express their opinions and assert their beliefs through social media platforms with no concern for the person on the other end, as they too feel a sense of perceived protection. Comments can be particularly hateful and harmful to one's self-esteem when going through gender-related issues. Not only can emotional and psychological trauma occur online, but physical abuse can also occur and has been reported after threats were made online (Wortham, 2018).

Social media as a form of communication, be it positive or negative, is commonplace, and the current standard. With it comes the same, if not greater, risks and rewards of engaging with it. However, visibility through social media is incredibly important to disseminating positivity and acceptance, as easy as it is for the contrary. The breaking down of gender stereotypes and gender binary norms is not necessarily actually trending, rather it is becoming more visible to a greater audience than before. Not only have laws changed that allow people to reveal their true selves, but access to those examples is more evident than ever before. Discernable challenges to the gender spectrum and society's norms and expectations are being broadcast to the world now rather than concealed and hidden in small town news, and that is progress. Progress comes in many forms, but visibility is one of them.

1.1.4 Progress in gender expression around the world

The visibility of women in a variety of sectors previously dominated by men is seen as a sign of progress, such as in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), but they are often still the minority among their cohorts. Non-binary individuals are less likely to openly divulge personal information for a variety of reasons, some of those include their personal safety, protection from persecution by peers, and potential expulsion (Zheng, 2020). This suggests that male-dominated industries in the West still face challenges in the workplace with regards to

achieving tolerance and equality for all workers, regardless of their sexuality and/or gender expression.

Attitudes towards homosexuality have changed dramatically in the past 30 years in the United States according to sociologist Michael Rosenfeld. Using data from a long-running survey of American attitudes, he was able to determine a shift of acceptance of homosexuality of 11.6% in 1988 to 68% in 2018 (NPR, 2019). These views were slow to change and until today, remain just above fifty per cent, but as Rosenfeld explained, it's rare for opinions on highly contested issues to change that much. Psychologist Mahazrin Banaji has similar data tracking people's implicit biases, with the most surprising changes occurring in the sexuality tests, with a 33% drop in anti-gay biases (NPR, 2019). Rosenfeld suggests this is due to more visibility of gay people, primarily in the 80s and 90s when gay people were coming out due to the AIDS crisis in America (NPR, 2019). Seeing progress is difficult when there are many obstacles preventing palpable change being made in society, such as stalled government legislation that would benefit everyone in the LGBTQIA communities, including national anti-hate and discrimination laws (NPR, 2019). The governments of the West, while seemingly more liberal than other nations, are still conservative overall, though considered 'moderate' (Saad, 2021). Politicians are less willing to upset the majority who voted for them to keep favor and opt to make small changes to remain somewhat moderate to appease both sides. This is more evident in The United States of America and Canada, with Latin America often overlooked as progressive countries, but are moving to the progressive left (Global Foundation for Democracy and Development, 2022).

Latin America as a whole is religiously conservative, however the younger generations (around 45 years and younger) are being their own examples for the progress they want to see by supporting officials they endorse or running for office themselves (The Economist Newspaper, 2022). Progressive development is more visible in Latin America with the recent elections of various left-wing leaders, or perhaps because they are still externally seen as religiously conservative countries, often having to protest for equality and human rights issues, and with more flagrant corruption with no major repercussions (Human Rights Watch, 2022, January 13), however this is also true in the United States. So, when significant changes to policy are made there, it seems like major change is happening. That is not to undercut the monumental changes they have been fighting and protesting for over the past decades. They have worked for the progress that has come, as it has not been a simple change of mind, but rather intense, exhausting protests (Human Rights Watch, 2022, January 13). Their progress as a whole is nothing less than compelling.

Looking at progressive change in regards to gender rights and feminism there are plenty of progressive actions in the past two decades. While not all Latin American countries recognize non-binary individuals legally, it appears to have roots in the region (López Torres, 2021). Many native tribes in the Americas including the Crow people, Apache, and other Native American tribes, not only Latin America, recognize and celebrate a third gender, or in some cases more than three genders (López Torres, 2021). "Anthropologists have also noted the acceptance of gender fluidity in pre-Columbian Mexico, citing accounts of cross-dressing among Aztec priests, as well as

Mayan gods who were simultaneously male and female," (López Torres, 2021).

Colonization and Christianization stunted the expression of the third gender as colonizers from Europe began to impose their beliefs on the native people. This is true for both North and South American natives, however some indigenous communities continue to accept and celebrate the gender nonconformity (López Torres, 2021, HRC Staff, 2020). I understand that beyond a singular gender divide, an interchange of attitudes and traits between the masculine and feminine are recognized. It's important to acknowledge that while roles were distinct, they were viewed through a lens distinct from our modern U.S. American perspective.

In southern Mexico, in Oaxaca's Istmo de Tehuantepec region the people recognize and celebrate the indigenous Zapotec's third gender called muxes, known since pre-Hispanic times (Synowiec, 2018; López Torres, 2021). The concept is not a new one, and within this community they are respected and welcomed to be themselves. Anthropologist Pablo Céspedes Vargas (2015) explains:

> "What we know, 'under Western eyes', as 'male-to-female transvestite', 'male-to-female transsexual', 'effeminate gay' or 'masculine gay' seems to be included within the category of 'muxe' as long as there is also a strong component of ethnic identity."

In the region muxes are celebrated at their own festival, where they invite guests to their tables to celebrate together. The guests are served by the family of the muxes as they are considered to be a blessing to the family, and further, to the community. Their work also constitutes a large part of the local economy working as handicraft makers, seamstresses, hair salon owners, and even in heteronormative jobs within the community (Synowiec, 2018). They are also caregivers within the family, attending to children and elders of the family. Muxes are cared for from the beginning when they begin expressing themselves.

> "When boys express effeminacy, some Zapotec mothers will begin to train them in traditional female roles. Similarly, many mothers do not disavow young men who show an interest in work traditionally assigned to women," (López Torres, 2021).

Though Mexico is still regarded as religiously conservative compared to the U.S. and Canada, as they are predominantly Catholic, even in Tehuantepec they are integral to the Catholic churches. Within the church they are regarded as one of three sexes, with the priests giving sermons about respect for all individuals, differences and all (Synowiec, November 27, 2018). They specifically draw attention to muxes – a third gender recognized in the state of Oaxaca in Mexico – and ask their congregants to understand and accept them, a lesson not hard to learn as they are already honored in the community for their being and responsibilities within the community (Synowiec, November 27, 2018; Synowiec, November 28, 2018). Great progress like this in small communities can create greater change when it is encouraged and transmitted, providing visibility and reference for others unable to do so in their regions, but also enrich the communities in which

they grow.

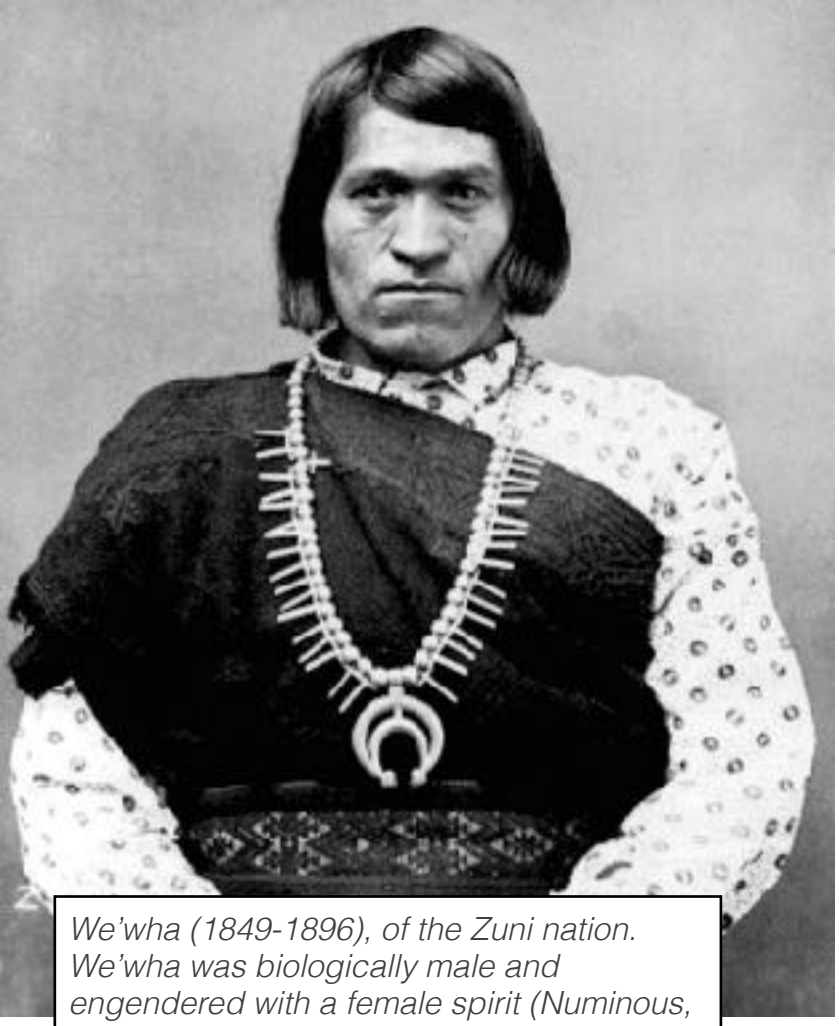
While muxes are celebrated members of the family and community, they are not permitted to leave the family. From childhood they stay under the supervision of their parents, within the confines of the family home and prohibited from leaving to start their own families. They cannot live independently or with their partners. While they are held in high esteem they are limited in their agency.

Argentina, Colombia, Canada, and The United States of America are some countries in the Americas making small strides to providing non-binary individuals the ability to be identified as non-binary (Fung, 2021; Lavers, 2015).

In Canada, it is through the census representing themselves authentically and being counted as such officially. Canadians are allowed to choose between three genders in the 2021 census. Though it is a small step, it makes a difference to people previously leaving the box unchecked entirely, leaving the government to question why this is the case. In 2019 Canada began approving 'X' genders, as a third gender option, on passports, and in some provinces, also on driver's licenses and birth certificates, though it is not yet nationwide (Fung, 2021).

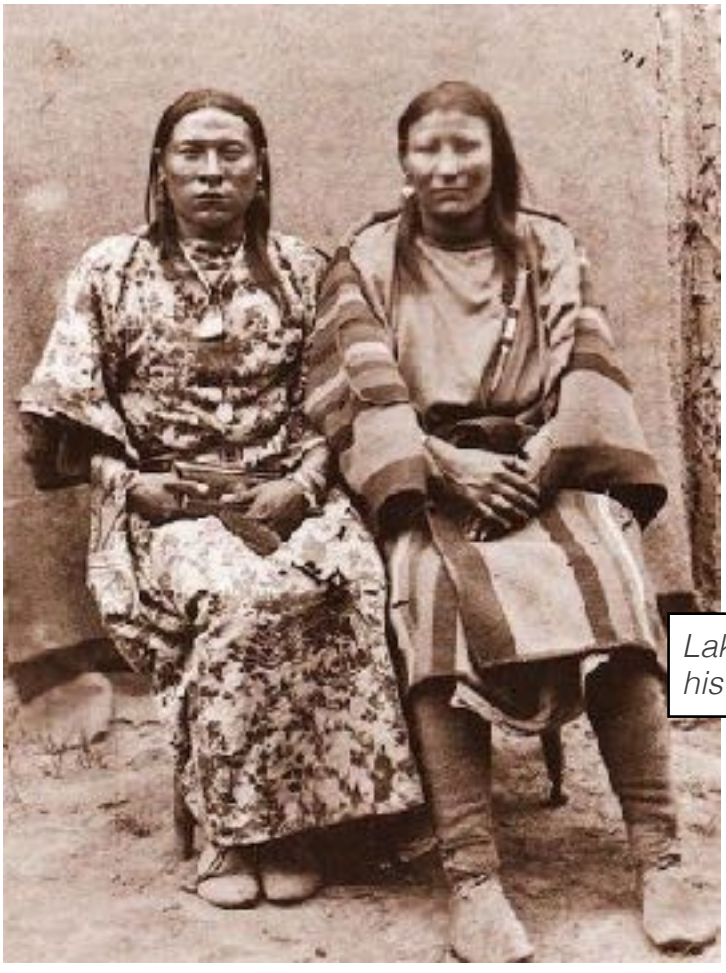
Similarly, The United States of America is allowing the selection of genders 'female', 'male' or 'X' on passports in what they are considering a major effort to allow Americans to identify themselves accurately (Fung, 2021) though this is not currently part of a greater expansion of non-binary gender recognition across the nation. The United States of America is somewhat behind in progress for such gender related topics though, considering it is considered a 'progressive' first world country it has a long road ahead as gay marriage was only nationally legalized less than a decade ago (Cusick, et al., 2017). It is argued that America should be on par with their northern neighbors, Canada, though the current Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, is much more liberal than The United States of America's current and former presidents (Wallenfeldt, n.d.).

Two-spirit people are still recognized today in Canada, but historically have been recognized in indigenous tribes across North America for centuries. Two spirit, "refers to a person who embodies both a masculine and feminine spirit," (Filice, 2015). The Cree people had terminology to describe cross-dressing individuals. The Siksika (Blackfoot) people had terms for men who took on traditionally feminine roles such as basket weaving and pottery making. Ktunaxa (Kootenay) had names for the opposite, women who took on traditionally masculine roles, such as healing, hunting and warfare. The Zuni people had a term for "mixed gender". "In various Indigenous cultures, temperament, work roles, dress and lifestyle distinguished two-spirited individuals from men and women," (Filice, 2015). Indigenous people did not discern individuals as homosexual or heterosexual, and actually considered relations between same-sex couples as heteronormative. It was the colonization of the Americas by Europeans, and Christian missionaries, that brought colonialist ideologies and terminology to the Native Americans (Filice, 2015). Two-spirit is a



We'wha (1849-1896), of the Zuni nation. We'wha was biologically male and engendered with a female spirit (Numinous, 2019)

A Hopi Interpreter (left) and Charlie, Diné (right),1895, by Adam Clark Vroman, (Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, 2022)



Lakota Two Spirit Osh-Tisch (left) with his wife (right) (Numinous, 2019)

modern, encompassing term, coined in 1990, "activist Albert McLeod proposed the term *two-spirit* to refer to the Indigenous LGBTQ community, (Filice, 2015). This is an important notation as native people of many different tribes do not feel that they fit into the categories of contemporary terminology and/or prefer the more compassionate term two-spirit as it also reflects their indigenous heritage (Filice, 2015).

Argentina is the first Latin American country to provide the 'X' identity marker. This a huge step forward for progress in Latin America, as it leads Latin America with this progressive step for non-binary individuals (González Cabrera, 2021).

> "The change comes per a decree by President Alberto Fernández, which states that "X" will be used to denote the following meanings: "non-binary, undetermined, unspecified, undefined, not informed, self-perceived, not recorded; or another meaning with which the person who does not feel included in the masculine/feminine binary could identify," (González Cabrera, 2021).

Looking forward, this may set a precedent for other Latin American countries to embrace non-binary identities, or at least offer the option for individuals to decide for themselves how they want to be identified legally. In 2015, Colombia began allowing transgender individuals to legally change their gender and legal names on government issued identifications in a broad sweep to curb traumatic and invasive exams justifying the need for surgery (Lavers, 2015). Instead, this is offered to anyone regardless of transition stage, or lack thereof. Yesid Reyes, Justice Minister, was quoted in El Espectador, a Colombian newspaper, "The construction of sexual identity and gender is a matter that does not depend on biology," (Lavers, 2015).

Since the move to allow individuals to legally change their gender on government documents, the Colombian Constitutional Court has ruled that people with non-binary gender markers will be legally recognized on all official government documents (González Cabrera, 2022).

> "The court held that when the name and sex in identity documents do not reflect one's identity "it hinders the projection of one's own gender in society and fosters scenarios of discrimination and exclusion in the public and private spheres,"" (González Cabrera, 2022).

More progress in gender expression is imminent as similar rulings have passed in lower courts in Mexico and Brazil, though not nationwide. These rulings pave a path for the non-binary people of Latin America.

Various countries in Europe have previously taken steps to offer such identity markers, including Austria, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Malta, Belgium, and the Netherlands, with the Netherlands attempting to eliminate gender markers all together (González Cabrera & Galvis Caballero, 2022) (Galindo, 2020) (Fung, 2021).

Spain has also taken steps in regards to LGBTI individuals with the advancement of the bill draft *"law for real and effective equality for trans people".* Though the bill had not yet become law it would allow individuals 16 and older to legally change their gender and legal names on government documents without a medical assessment, like the aforementioned law in Colombia.

> "The Minister for the Treasury and Government Spokesperson, María Jesús Montero, stressed that with this law the Government aims to overcome the invisibility, stigmatisation and lack of recognition of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex (LGBTI) people and to place Spain at the forefront of Europe in defending their rights," (Council of Ministers, 2021)

The bill was met with disapproval from feminist organizations such as Against the Elimination of Women and Feminist Convergence Movement, which together represent around 140 groups, along with the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) exposed an internal memo, suggesting, "… that gender self-identification "eliminates" the experience of women," (Álvarez, 2021). Irene Montero, the Minister of Equality of Spain, and member of the Podemos party, rebutted ,"…it was "feminist" legislation designed to guarantee basic rights and freedoms," (Jones, 2021). The evolution of ideas takes time, and the acceptance of those ideas requires patience and understanding. Irene Montero describes this as Spain slowly taking steps to "create lives worth living," (Council of Ministers, 2021). While there are feminists of all types, as well as pushback, there is significant dismissal of the experience of all women from Against the Elimination of Women and Feminist Convergence Movement. Feminism is complex, but inclusive and intersectional.

Feminism is not a concept that is exclusive and as the word 'feminism' evolves, it includes more individuals, which is the premise of the concept. 'Feminist' groups in Spain, such as the ones mentioned previously, that vary in extremes, are not unique around the world, as there are massing amounts of groups that would like to infringe on the rights of "non-traditional" women to some degree. These groups tend to express outrage at transgender rights issues, as some believe autonomy of one's body, especially if their sex does not match their identity, should not be protected. When, in reality, the simple fact that their lives are broadly ignored and further, even unprotected, is cause for reevaluation of those fundamental beliefs. Dismissal of transgender and/or non-binary people does not eliminate them from existence, instead it fuels rebellions and greater efforts to find a place for their existence.

1.2 The Oriental Perspective: Egypt – The impact of changing socio-cultural and political attitudes on the current status of women in Egypt

1.2.1 Contemporary, Pre-Revolutionary Egypt

Egypt's reputation for extreme religious conservatism hides the fact that support for furthering feminism is taken seriously. Contemporary Egypt suffers from stigmas of the repression of women, strict gender roles, and ultra-conservatism, while the U.S. American view perceives

Egyptian women as repressed; the reality is more complex as many Egyptian women are religious, but not necessarily religiously repressed. Though some of this does in fact exist, it would be unfair to claim that Egyptian women do not have a voice, platform in which to make that voice heard, or communities and movements that support women.

Though the occidental world groups Egypt in with many other, much more conservative, countries, like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Oman it differs greatly with respect to women and their roles in society. As the country struggles with a military government and conservative Islamic influence, especially within that government, women's movements exist and have for some time. These misconceptions and invalid regional groupings of societal norms across the Middle East speak little about the actual freedoms, religious and otherwise, of Egyptian women.

For centuries Egyptian women have proven to be outspoken and have feminist agendas, and be consistently confronting religious and government leaders to validate their competence and capabilities equal to those of their male counterparts, evident in writings of both foreign and national women journalists and in both published works of the time and unpublished works (until now). Since the first feminist movement in Egypt in the early 1800s, Egypt has long been up to speed and active when it comes to women's issues (Hagg, n.d.). Egyptian women are less than complicit with the patriarchal regimes that dictate societal norms.

The occidental observer has always been intrigued, if not mystified, by Egypt's culture, history, arts, and its people, but veiled women are particularly a focus (Pequot Library, 2018; Alexander, 2016, p.1). Veils and freedom are not mutually exclusive, which tends to be the misunderstanding of the occidental world of Egypt and other countries that adopt this practice. All types of women throughout Egyptian history have used the veil for various reasons, specifically for religious modesty (Alexander, 2016, p.2). However, this does not signify that all veiled women were controlled; a veil does not signify oppression and submission, rather some women use the veil as a resistance to sexual objectification (Alexander, 2016, p.2).

As a result of feminist and 'New Woman' movements in both the United States and England, and the attraction of adventure in Egypt, Egyptian women were exposed to many foreign women venturing to Egypt. These European and American women were primarily, and outwardly, feminist, which greatly influenced women's movements in Egypt after British occupancy. These feminist women travelled to Egypt, sometimes as travel writers, seeking like-minded women in hopes of emancipating Egyptian women of all classes (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.77, 156-157, 188-189;).

Cairo was home to Egyptian royalty and through private education elite Egyptian women were not only educated, but also motivated and inspired by these foreign women to pursue their own ideals of bettering Egypt. Some leading women in the cause for greater education for all women was Egyptian Princess Ayn-el-Hayat, who was not only very well educated, but is remembered as

the founder of the Mohamed Ali Benevolent Society, a dispensary that provided basic education and skills training to women and girls. Ayn-el-Hayat self-funded much of the Society, supplemented by other donations in the early 19th century (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.236). She expanded the society's reach to provinces across Egypt and boasted that its supervising committee were all women and were only advised by men for medical and financial purposes. Having been married and divorced, baring four children of her own, she was seen as a great contributor to the success of women's education in Egypt and perpetuated the importance of continuing to educate girls and women to strengthen society (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.236). The society, under her leadership, not only furthered education for girls and women, but was expanded to social welfare and health arenas, opening social welfare centers for families and hospitals (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.240-2). And in the midst of feminism progression were not only women, but men alongside them, supporting the movements through (mostly) financial contributions, but as well as consultations. There were oppositions to educating women among the upper class, as it was seen as unnecessary and out of place, challenging gender roles for both men and women at the time. This led to women taking on more public roles in society, and men taking on more domestic roles that required more family involvement rather than just being the breadwinner. Then began to blur the lines of what gender roles meant for men and women, as well as who would perform them.

Earlier Egyptian feminists such as Huda Shaarawi came from a respectable family from Cairo, and she was well educated, like many elite women were, but only in subjects her father deemed necessary. This was common for young girls to be educated based on what the men of the family thought pertinent. Shaarawi was tutored many subjects at home that included reading, but not writing Arabic, memorizing the Qur'an, Turkish (both grammar and calligraphy), French, and music (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.188-9). She was more rebellious as a girl and young woman and followed her passions, as inappropriate as they may have seemed to her male relatives. Though surrounded by intellectuals and conversations of the sort, as well as being raised and educated in an elite household, she was excluded from stimulating conversations because what would a girl need with acumen? She formed the Intellectual Association for Egyptian Women in 1914. Shaarawi recounts in her memoirs that the nationalist movement in the 1910s and early 1920s brought women of varying faiths and social classes together in politics. Politicizing women from all backgrounds gave more voice to the beautiful diversity of the women throughout Egypt and encouraged change. Dialogue began between couples that would have otherwise been mute, creating a closeness between them, but with differing opinions the sudden proximity between politics and spouse was an uncomfortable one. Shaarawi withdrew from the nationalist movements recognizing drifts between her and her husband and founded the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923. That same year she gained international recognition when, after returning from a woman's suffrage movement in Rome, publicly removed her face veil at the Cairo train station (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.190).

Contemporary feminism in Egypt is important in Egypt because of the cultural traditions that have been instrumental in shaping young women's beliefs about their cultural identity and their role in

society. Huda Shaarawi was raised in an elite harem system, then "unhappily married in 1892 to an older cousin" at the age of thirteen and this experience was seen to have motivated her yearning for reform for women (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.188). Shaarawi was able to change the system to allow girls and women like her, who were also passionate about the arts, education, and debate, to have the necessary resources to develop independently, providing them with all the necessities, including funding doctors, lecture series, and debate forums (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.193-195). Contemporary Egyptian women benefit from other strong women, but additionally from the support of their male counterparts and their roles in helping shape early feminism in Egypt. Shaarawi used her elite status and money to provide more for her countrymen and in doing so advanced women in the culture for generations through her philanthropic work (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.193). On a small scale, it was providing basic services to girls and women to improve their lives and the country, but on a large scale it was enriching Egyptian culture, gender roles, standards for both men and women, as well as encouraging the advancement of the arts. With an already creative and cultured ancestry in Egypt, contemporary women were finally breaking social norms and doing what their ancient feminist ancestors did and took the lead and began to speak with authority and purpose.

Contemporary Egypt is not without prejudices and fundamentalist ideals; however Pre-Revolutionary Egypt was explicit in these instances, showing little to no concern for the abominations that occurred against women in particular, regarding sexism, misogyny, domestic violence, sexual harassment, discriminatory societal expectations, poverty as a single parent, and other issues (Abouelnaga, 2016, Khorshid, 2021). Protocols such as, the militarization of the country, the continuation of virginity testing carried out by the military, homogenizing "the Egyptian identity" through military and political campaigns, forced conformity of women to adhere to the constructs of the "modern" image of Egyptian women are some examples of how the current government operates, holding Egypt back from gender progress (Abouelnaga, 2016). While many of the Pre-Revolutionary misogynistic aspects exist, they were brought to light during the 2011 Revolution and further challenged by society.

1.2.2 Changes in Revolutionary Egypt (2011)

During the Egyptian Revolution in 2011 (from the 25th of January to the 11th of February), many things changed and people were united in repudiation of the government. The attempt to oust Morsi, Women of all types were seen protesting in a variety of different ways during the revolution (and after). For the majority of Egyptian women, they were also fighting for this right to protest and be heard. The crowds of protesters had multiple reactions to the different women. Some were supported while others were abused by their fellow protesters (men). Women began to change the image of the "modern Egyptian woman" from "docile bodies" to those of fierce fighters for change (Abouelnaga, 2016).

Women in the Egyptian Revolution changed the forms of the strategies of resistance through new discourse. They became present in the eyes of the public and the media, and others became aware of them suddenly. The uprising gave more visibility to women as a whole, but showed

varying distinctions between them, giving further confirmation of both unity and individuality. Using their presence, ultimately their bodies, once used against them – violating them, silencing them, violence against them, disqualifying them from participation in many effects, as well as simply overlooking them, allowed their voices to be heard and for the world to take note of their abilities to not only be "present", but also protest, riot, fight, have opinions, and bring to the forefront the individual identities that existed among the homogenized version of Egyptian women portrayed by politicians and the media (Abouelnaga, 2016). Egyptian women were consciously or unconsciously using the female body as a tool, or weapon in some instances, to bring about autonomy through a collective effort of refuting the government and its misconduct perpetuated against women.

Shereen Abouelnaga states that, "Direct and unmediated, women's presence in the Egyptian Revolution was so inspiring that it could not pass unnoticed…" with many suggesting that it created a "space of appearance" according to Abouelnaga. She goes on to say, "Unfortunately, at the toxic crossroads of culture, religion, and politics, women lost their "space of appearance," and the female body was turned into a site of different ideologies." Women were not only present - protesting and rioting, but they themselves were used as a tool in which those in power, such as the media, could project onto them their causes for being present (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.48-55). They were used as a "place" within the context of the revolution as well - every woman held revolution within and therefore the revolution was women, within them, contained at a specific point in each woman, an seemingly unlikely participant or provocator. This was used both positively and negatively for the revolution, negatively to instigate unease and distrust in the presence of women (as invaders), as well as positively to exhibit that while women's presence was being co-opted against them, they demonstrated that they were, and had been, fundamental to revolution in the past, and were also in the current (2011) Revolution. The Egyptian women revolutionists did not let themselves remain co-opted, using their own bodies as their tools of opposition, turning, "physical violations into a tool of rewriting the culture of the body and is essential in understanding the new gender positions," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p 4).

Post Revolution, women found common ways to remain in the public eye. Women resumed normal activities after having taken to the streets and fighting for so long resisting a homogenous identity. They continued the resistance, as Asef Bayat put it, prior to the Revolution, as a "collective action by non-collective actors," (Abouelnaga, 2016). The "micropolitics" of daily life is what allowed women to advance their vision. They did this through bringing the personal aspects of life into the public eye and continuing to stay present. Abouelnaga further explains that,

> "The Revolution created a context where the encompassing rubrics 'women of the Third World' or "Muslim women,' for instance, do not mirror the novel circumstances Egyptian women have to confront and engage with. Neither do these rubrics explain the complex interplay of powers where women's agency and position are constantly negotiated."

The new discourse challenges the preoccupation of identity, allowing it the freedom and flexibility it requires in geopolitical, as well as wider contexts. This access to freedom of identity allows women to exercise the new text, "Thus, rethinking gender in the light of the new revolutionary discourse is a means of rewriting culture or, rather, reading it against the grain," (Abouelnaga, 2016). Abouelnaga further explains that through a resurgence of nationalist-feminist discourse, women's voices have been subjugated further suppressing gender issues and prioritizing nationalist concerns over them.

Among the resistance have always been women, finding creative ways to protest as mentioned previously, however, through their presence women have also contributed to the artistic expression that itself worked as a tool for the resistance. Abouelnaga describes the conversation of going beyond gender as a complicated one, as it is also considered contradictory to speak of the gendered performance of art, but as a remarkable and unforgettable act:

> "Yet, it is an unforgettable fact that women and art were the two phenomena that directed the attention of the world toward the Egyptian Revolution. Can we talk about the role of women and art in the Revolution? They were not assigned a role; they were committed to the revolutionary act." (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.7).

She explains the complicated history and relation of politics, art, and gender pre-Revolution as, "the deep state supported a homogeneous artistic scene that guaranteed, unfortunately, a perfect alienation of the arts," (Abouelnaga, 2016). Furthermore, facilitating the use of art as not only a means of expression, but also a means of resistance through unconventional means, such as songs, jewelry, chants, and banners, as well as graffiti.

Many of the graffiti that appeared during the revolution regarded justice for two female martyrs, Sally Zahran and Iman Salama. Motherhood materialized as one of the themes, one grafito of a mother of one of the martyrs, an image of the mother with the threat "*kjafi mena ya bukuma* (fear us, government)" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.45). Other graffiti that appeared was based on violations committed by the military related to virginity testing and the beating and stripping of a young woman in public. This became one of the most notable graffiti to emerge during the revolution - the blue bra, based on "the blue bra girl" who was assaulted in Tahrir Square by the military. The grafito is of a blue bra with the caption "*la li ta'riyat al-sha'b* (no to stripping the people)" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.45). Subsequent graffiti utilized pharaonic imagery reinterpreted for the revolutionary movement - Nefertiti wearing a gas mask, a mural of Maat (goddess of justice) leading a group of women, and other examples incorporated certain Islamic concepts into the Revolution (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.45).

The overall goal of the government was to appear to be in favor of gender equality and be proactive in passing more laws in favor of women's rights, however the reality depicted a different outcome. The actuality of the situation was the removal of women from the public eye so that other matters could be considered and prioritized instead, without having to actually address the

(Amaria, The 'girl in the Blue Bra' 2011)

(Khalil, Blue Bra graffiti (Bahia Shehab) 2014)

Detail (Khalil, Blue Bra graffiti (Bahia Shehab)

issues.

> "Erasing women from the cultural memory and all forms of archive, accompanied by the discursive practices that twist the women's position, fueled the struggle over memory. That is to say, what the culture remembers and what it chooses to forget or erase became a contested space (similar to the body and arts)," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 10).

The previous regimes would have preferred erasure rather than the mere ignorance of women so they would not have to address gender disparages, abuse, and neglect by them, as well as by society in many respects. Erasing the importance of women as a whole erases a collection of identities. The internalized sexism that existed (and continues to exist) in Revolutionary Egypt led to violence against women at home and in the streets, even when protesting against such misogyny. The patriarchal system that attempted to erase women from collective memory, as if their efforts could be attributed to others (men), was the one supporting women's rights laws behind a façade of important names.

Laws created under previous regimes to protect women were also used against them at times, or used as a bargaining tool. Laws such as, "Suzanne's Laws," after Suzanne Mubarak, "Gihan [Sadat]'s Laws" created a relationship with the women who created them, which proves to be problematic when there are people who are fervently against supporting previous regimes (and their spouses). That connection tarnishes any real progress that could come from them as those laws are tied to fallible individuals. When progressive changes are made to said laws named after precarious individual's, progression is also tied to them, which could be untrue of their actual values. In fact, these particular laws were used to proliferate and enforce projected conservative, patriarchal values of "modern women" in Egypt in an effort to further create a falsified nationalist portrayal of women (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.16).

Abouelnaga examines the homogenization of women (and men) of previous regimes to propagate falsified idealized versions of Egyptians and the country as a whole. This caused radical hostility towards women when combined with the appropriated and manipulated representations of women by activists to change the dialogue. Women activists are in danger from other progressive women simply by supporting and attempting to expand the laws that are in place to help them because of their association to the former First Lady, Suzanne Mubarak (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.16). This being counterproductive, both for the cause and for women in general, makes recognizing transnational feminism important. Acknowledging the solidarity of global feminist causes can expand the understanding of the importance of rewriting laws, and support for existing laws that protect women, however unfortunate their names and the circumstances in which they were passed.

External support, assistance, or solidarity is looked upon as a threat to the national identity of Egyptian women, and in the same way Egypt as a constructed homogonous entity, that is in fact, nonexistent. Abouelnaga illustrates,

> "…gender stands as one of the main constituents of identity, and this explains why the ex-regime was so concerned with controlling and legitimizing a certain system of gender as the dominant cultural representation; that is, it "amounted to the sanctioned institutionalization of gender difference" by enforcing state feminism."

Homogenizing women to control the image of society is dangerous at best, but is devastating for future generations who are forced to live under false narratives about their own identities and grouped into categories that do not represent them or their interests in the pursuit of unification of a broken nation. This scenario creates an 'other', which is a tool for demonization of those who object to the mandates of the state. They can be summarized as, "…those who are trying to deform the image of the nation and sabotage the national project," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.18). Deniz Kandiyoti (2015) explains this scenario as utopian populism – social unity is achieved on the ground of agreeing on the position of women, as the cornerstone of cultural authenticity (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.18).

The 'other' could not only be the outsider, someone in the exterior of Egypt itself, but also those on the inside refuting the homogenization of an entire sect of a culture. Kandiyoti (2015) clarifies that utopian populism, "attempts to obliterate such divisions by demarcating the boundaries of the 'true' community and excluding the 'Other within'," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.19). Furthermore, the use of utopian populism by the ex-regime(s) facilitated conflict and fusing of the regime and activists for women's rights, resulting in the paradox that projected diversity, but in fact portrayed the fantasy of it using positive images to construct that national identity that the regime needed (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.19). This is not a new concept,

> "…the woman question was born with the 1919 Revolution. And, ever since that time, women's rights have never managed to stand independent of the competing discourses of the state, Islamists, and nationalists," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.20).

Egyptian women have found themselves, since the beginning, battling identity politics and not having enough agency to dictate it themselves. Hala Kamal (2015) explains that even in the 1923 Constitution women's rights were excluded while recognizing other diversity characteristics of Egyptian society, including ethnic and religious diversity and discrimination. This homogenization of the Egyptian woman, and further, the Egyptian family, specifically put women in a precarious position in which they had to fit a mold of a certain type of woman to be acceptable in the eyes of the current regime and further contaminating the expectations of society at large.

Additionally, "the genuine character of the Egyptian family" became a legitimate discussion in 2012 with the formation of the new parliament with the rise of Islamism and the descent of nationalism, though not out of the picture. Islamists took over the contest for power and control of women's bodies and their rights.

> "Article 10 of that constitution says:

> The family is the basis of the society founded on religion, morality and patriotism. The State is keen to preserve the genuine character of the Egyptian family, its cohesion and stability, and to protect its moral values, all as regulated by law," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.22).

With an Islamist government now controlling women's rights and, ipso facto, their bodies, they then are forced to perform state mandated identities. Their own character in question, moreover revoked as they are obligated by a conservative Islamist government to be actors in a religion, for some, not even their own, denying them agency. "…forced politically and discursively to conform to a monolithic image and a gendered discourse that overlooked all sociopolitical and cultural differences," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.22). The denial of agency is an abuse or violence against women (and any who suffer from it) as it comes in many forms such as physical, verbal, and even symbolic, "Perceived as the iconic representation of culture and the marker of national boundaries," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.23).

Egypt has struggled with forming and maintaining a national identity, as if it is a necessary aspect of contemporary society, however in doing so has escalated violence against women. Non-conforming women to the standards of the state and, further, society, women are left to battle staunch government or religious supporters/believers. Women then take the abuse from society while society itself still struggles to assert its identity. The 2011 Revolution exposed the truth of identity, in that it is flexible, fluid, and intersectional, leading to the need to rethink the constraints of gender as it relates to nationalism.

> "The redefinition is definitely not discursive, but, rather, it comes through the actions, and reactions toward the daily micropolitics of women's life. It is a voice charged with the consciousness that identity is flexible and changing and that the quest for authenticity means nothing – if there is anything in the first place that could be called 'authentic," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.23).

1.2.3 Women's Agency

The humanist theory about agency is helpful in understanding the meaning of being an individual entity, giving sense to the autonomous individual. It supports the idea that as a free, homogenous, rational, integrated being, in control of one's own moral authority and consciousness, we are independent of those and the world around us. Abouelnaga (2016) argues that the humanist theory limits the understanding of the individual – one who does not comply with the status quo, who challenges their discursive position, who may suffer from discontinuity and fragmentation, and those who seek the reconstruction of identity into "subject positions." There is the understanding that we are free individuals, but only if we relegate ourselves to society's expectations of how the individual should be. The argument against this theory is that there are conflicts of beliefs as to how the individual can possess agency and act as their own governing body.

Abouelnaga (2016) cites poststructuralist theory as one concept that supports subject positions and women's agency in the sociopolitical area in 2011, and the years following. Her example of Tahrir Square's momentous female occupancy during the 2011 Revolution as proof of the contradictory belief that women aided and yet were not welcome after. She also mentions women's presence as part of protests against the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) and identifies that even the one and only lawyer who attended the investigations of those arrested during the protests was a woman. Women's positioning and presence is fundamental to the revolution itself and the identity of the women who participated, not as a homogenous whole. Their experience in the revolution and thereafter are the crucial aspects. Bronwyn Davies (1991) explains that, "agency and experience in poststructuralist theory have different meanings. It does not revolve around identity; it is rather all about experience," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.25). Davies (1991) explains that subjectivity is made up of the dialogue within the positionality of a person by way of themselves or another's words or writings. Contradicting discourses do not necessarily fully dispute one's true nature, rather it is their subjectivity that is in contradiction. This is often seen in elections, and specifically in the election of Morsi vs. Shafiq. Women were forced to choose the lesser of the two evils, in a sense, as neither made genuine concern for women's rights and in fact often undermined them. The choice between two problematic candidates provides two choices – forced choices. Neither are ideal or even acceptable by most. It can be said that such a choice is not really a choice at all, lack of agency when trying to determine what is best. However, a third option exists in this scenario, abstain from voting. This is debatable as a choice as it is actually the absence of choice fundamentally. "Egyptian women had to negotiate the best choices available in specific political situations," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.25). Voting for Morsi at the time seemed like the only possible choice, or 'best' choice given the selection. Women were put in a position of perceived power, but were actually power oppressed, losing a sense of agency.

Discourses guided women's subject positioning, at times contradictory, suggesting a sense of ambiguity and ambivalence about their choices. However, there was much more that informed the choices of women. The intersectionality of their religion, race, class, gender, education, location, and experiences are some of the aspects that helped shape them. In *Mappings*, Susan Friedman (1998) writes that these intersectionalities become new geographies of identity, explain that these new geographies create a new positionality, be them a physical site, perspective, connections, decisions, knowledge, or actual terrain,

> "It articulates not the organic unfolding of identity but rather the mapping of territories and boundaries, the dialectical terrains of inside/outside or center/margin, the axial intersections of different positionalities, and the spaces of dynamic encounter," (Freidman, 1998).

The articulation of identity with its complex intersectionalities requires openness and agency for the individual to use their personal experiences and situations to better express their identities without the threat of violence against them for doing so. These new geographies of identity pave

new paths for generations to possess more agency and further continue to resist fixed interpretations or judgements. While women's choices seem to consistently be at the forefront of criticism and scrutiny, they are informed about the policies and laws they are up against (Kamel, 2020). They have been persistent, and will likely continue to make more informed decisions based on their needs given agency and undoubtedly using the new geographies as guides in doing so (Kamel, 2020).

The 'woman question' gets dismissed not as a gender issue, rather recategorized as another to avoid confronting it. Many argue that contemporary Egypt exemplifies equality with working and educated women, down to the Revolution itself, even as their words inflate their horrific actions.

> "When it comes to fathoming the revolutionary (con)text, it is all too easy to claim that men and women were equal in receiving the bullets and that there is no need to single out or specify gender." (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.31).

However true the fact that bullets collided into all bodies, killing and injuring both men and women, reality remains the same that addressing specific gender issues is necessary and often deprioritized, if not blatantly ignored.

Gender remains a topic of discussion, though some will attempt to deem the topic and even vocabulary outdated in an attempt to shift the focus onto other topics, perhaps to dilute it and focus on greater problems. However, dismissal of the issue and reduction of the topic of women's rights is to make it seem like a non-issue, though it is practically written into the Egyptian Constitution through its text, however avoiding the use of specific words. Abouelnaga (2016, p.31) explains that,

> "Doing away with gender, or even implying the idea, backgrounds women's agency, resistance, and power. Gender is an essential and legitimate category of analysis, and the material conditions that brought gynocriticism and gynesis into practice still exist."

Friedman (1998) agrees that the demand for visibility and usage of the new geographies are crucial in the creation of a stronger, more flexible society, and that gender must be a priority. She states that it, "incorporates diverse formations because its positional analysis requires a kind of geopolitical literacy built out of a recognition of how different times and places produce different and changing gender systems as these intersect with other different and changing societal stratifications and movements for social justice," (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.32). The literacy that Freidman speaks of is that which does not oppress women both directly or indirectly, which means using different dialogue and addressing gender related topics first and foremost.

Without question, gender is a crucial aspect to dissecting the needs of many into achievable sized tasks. It cannot, however, be ignored or downplayed, like it so often is. It is necessary that it is discussed, especially given the new geographies that help demonstrate the diverse

intersectionalities that exist within a homogenized group. Contemporary Egypt struggles with giving agency to women and other vulnerable groups because the patriarchy is afraid of losing power and control. Giving power to those groups that need it most only enriches the greater society by making it richer, sustainable, and healthy. Geopolitical literacy is necessary to understand the society and given the new geographies it is owed to the people to make changes that benefit the women that have and will continue to fight for greater change.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the intersections of gender and feminism in contemporary society through selected examples drawn from U.S.-based and international contexts. Grounded in social theory, intersectional feminism, and cultural studies, the discussion emphasized how evolving conceptions of gender identity are influenced by political systems, media discourse, and cultural frameworks. These examples were chosen not as exhaustive representations, but as meaningful entry points for understanding how identity and self-expression are permitted, encouraged, or restricted in different societies.

As part of the broader framework of artistic research in this thesis, this chapter establishes the sociopolitical context in which identity operates. Its insights directly inform the subsequent chapters, particularly those dealing with cultural specificity and historical continuity. The following chapter narrows the scope of inquiry by turning to Egypt as a case study, allowing for a closer examination of how local forces shape gender expression and the possibilities for artistic intervention within that context.

Understanding the effects of feminism on a society can be so profound in the growth and development within communities, countries, and regions. People begin to see and be seen through the lens of equality, with greater visibility, with more supportive communities, including through social media platforms. Using a social media presence as an outlet and connection for “other” groups and minorities, like non-binary people, can change misconceptions, educate the population, and begin to construct a more tolerant, inclusive society.

The correlation to a tolerant and inclusive society and art is not an inconceivable concept in this case. The fair and equal treatment of people across all spectrums could provide the space for freedom of expression, in a variety of forms, including art. Freedom of expression online and more authentically in life can affect how one expresses themselves in other ways – when one is reduced to a uniform they find more subtle ways of self-expression, such as through creative hair, nails, makeup, shoes, piercings, tattoos, etc. Art is, according to the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), commonly understood as the manifestation or utilization of human inventive abilities and imagination, often in visual formats, with the intention of creating pieces valued primarily for their aesthetic appeal or ability to evoke emotions. Therefore, these artistic forms of self-expression can further encourage an individual to outwardly express themselves in more overt ways in the future. When self-expression is limited or suppressed, art provides the outlet to self-expression, anchoring a sense of self-recognition or understanding in its creative process or

outcome; one that could not necessarily be expressed safely in other ways. Social media perpetuates and creates a generally safe place to do so as there is still some anonymity online.

A rise in acceptance rates of homosexuality/non-binary individuals in the United States of America is because visibility has allowed for individuals to live openly and authentically over the past decades of more and more transparency. Canada was an example for the United States, Mexico has been using the USA as an example, and even surpassing the US in its more progressiveness. Regional change influences neighboring regions/countries, paving the way for change, though sometimes slow, in the West, we have seen examples of this from North to South America. These changes affect how individuals see themselves and their futures, how they create, express themselves, spend their money, determine what sectors they might work in, and overall, how they live their lives – determining even what bars, restaurants, discos/clubs, etc. they might patronize.

Latin America has a long history of embracing self-expression of non-binary genders, specifically through muxes in Mexico, and other Native American concepts of the non-binary, like that of the Two-spirit people of Canada, another Native American concept. Feminism leads these concepts into our new reality, and can further be done specifically through art, which has no gender or conformity. A feminist aim is inclusion and equality, not reducing or forcing femininity onto anyone, rather opening the door for femininity to be accepted across the spectrum and for its value to be recognized.

Egyptian women have proven to be outspoken and have feminist agendas, while consistently confronting religious and government leaders to validate their competence and capabilities as equal to those of their male counterparts. However, they are often met with discriminatory responses underestimating their value outside of the home, as patriarchal concepts are deeply rooted in fundamental, conservative, religions, of which one must belong to in Egypt. This prohibits many women from participating in activities unrelated to sexist roles within the home, limiting their engagement in non-traditional education, careers, hobbies, and other interests, which affects their capacity to live authentically.

The history of Egyptian women proposing feminist ideas in Ancient Egypt, as well as in the early 20th century, is proof that Egyptian women have a history of stepping out of traditional roles and shows their abilities to lead and be creative, as well as their interests in politics and entrepreneurship, all with the intention of bettering the country. Through modern militarization, and further reduction of individual identity, women have been reduced again to sexist roles, regardless of their education, experience, or interest – focusing again on their importance in their roles of caregivers and producers (of children, to men).

The 2011 Egyptian Revolution changed the way the everyday Egyptian viewed Egyptian women – they were seen as brave, fighters, martyrs, and loud. Though they too were reduced to symbols, or objects of the revolution, their presence was seen and heard, which echoed through much of

the 2011 Revolution's street art. This creation of a 'new' discourse, through street art allowed women to be seen in a different light than previously viewed. Women as the subject matter helped to rewrite the culture behind the Revolution, becoming active participants, agents of change through art. This artistic expression became a tool of the resistance, and both unconventional artform (graffiti) and an unconventional fighter (women) were at the forefront of the resistance. We can use these aspects of the Revolution to comprehend the danger of homogenizing a culture, however big or small, as it stunts individual growth, opportunity, and creativity, while also fomenting anger, resistance, and hostility towards the oppressors.

Giving women agency allows them to experience life authentically, empowering them to find themselves, and encourages them to support other women, as well as other individuals – gender notwithstanding – that allows them to be active agents in their own identity. Through the advancement of women's empowerment and agency, through the implementation of feminist concepts, laws, and activism, all types of people can thrive, creating and perpetuating safe, creative environments to live and be themselves authentically.

CHAPTER 2

SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES ON GENDER AND FEMINISM IN EGYPT

Chapter 2 – Sociocultural studies on Gender and Feminism in Egypt

Introduction

There are deep social, religious, and cultural impacts on gender and gender expression around the world, however these impacts can be felt even more profoundly in Egypt, as well as how feminism is perceived and [mis]used and how that affects greater change within the country, but on a more micro scale, families and communities. Analyzing social structures within a culture or country, we are likely to find great differences between communities in many areas of daily life because these communities are influenced by other members within it, exposure to exterior/ neighboring communities, religious affiliation, political beliefs, and other significant factors, including access to education, exposure to abuse (of any kind), and even customs within the home. These factors tend to dictate how society functions, determining what is and is not acceptable or appropriate of members of that society.

Religion and politics in Egypt are two factors that are intertwined and difficult to distinguish between at times, causing turmoil and discontent throughout the country. This combination affects the lives of every individual in Egypt, even visitors. This fusion of religion and politics can further restrict individuals from living the lives they want, in the ways in which they want to live them, not because they are bad people, but because they do not subscribe to the politics/religion of those in power. It is necessary to keep in mind the difficulties this synthesis causes on a larger scale and its impact on the quality of life of everyone in Egypt, as its reach is far and wide, and not only influences whole communities, but dictates the freedoms of every person regardless of their belief or political affiliation.

Reframing a culture to fit unrealistic ideals is a dangerous endeavor, both politically and socially, as people are held to impractical or improbable expectations, they have a tendency to resent their oppressors and ultimately revolt, which has been the case already in Egypt during the 2011 Revolution. However, the recreation of a cultural identity not only foments unrest, but endangers nearly everyone, because protest and revolt engage everyone, not only those who wish for change.

Suppression of authentic identity expression disrupts the culture and can create animosity towards those restricting the freedom of expression, which, in turn, can incite violence toward those aggressors, as well as towards the vulnerable groups. The punishment and abuse of those who do not conform to a cultural homogenization should not be tolerated, and furthermore disproves the ideal. Considering all of these factors, we can comprehend the importance of understanding the current cultural, political, and social climate that Egyptians are enduring and further, the need to delve into these factors to grasp the reality and importance of the freedom of self-expression in a country determined to homogenize and deny freedoms of expression.

This chapter constitutes the second part of the fundamental research component of this thesis, which investigates sociocultural perspectives on gender and feminism in Egypt from the

perspective of postcolonial feminist theory, sociology, and cultural studies. The information obtained from this analysis will serve to frame the artistic production within a research methodology that approaches cultural and political analysis not as an isolated investigation, but as a foundation that informs creative practice.

This chapter focuses on selected case studies and social dynamics that provide insight into how identity is shaped, restricted, and challenged in contemporary Egyptian society. The tone I use is intended to be as neutral and objective as possible, although I emphasize again that this information informs the personal proposal of the artistic practice and establishes relationships between the cultural and political context and the artistic practices necessary for subsequent material investigations.

2.1 Sociological – How the status of Egyptian women is following a different trajectory to that seen in the West

Modern Egyptians face many different sociological challenges with regards to gender identity due to a complex history of religion and politics, as well as globalization; and modern Egypt is a melting pot, much like The United States of America and Canada are considered to be today (State Information Service, n.d.). Throughout Egypt's history it has been a hub for continental power and trade, however, because religion is so intertwined within society and government it is difficult to separate specific examples of societal norms without also considering or alluding to religion as a fundamental factor (State Information Service, n.d.). Among other factors, Egypt has struggled to create and maintain a national identity as discussed in chapter one, its governments often try to homogenize groups to make them fit into certain preconceived norms with women as the center focus.

The Western perspective of Egypt is problematically skewed for a number of reasons, one being that most of the West is not dictated by an explicitly intertwined religious conservative culture like that of Egypt. However, there are conspicuous contradictions to the separation of church and state that the United States claims to characterize itself by, which is comparable to the modern Egyptian Islamic government. In the West, Christianity is the majority religion, and though there are conservatives in and controlling the government, it is arguably less powerful of that of the Egyptian Regime, yet it is a growing threat with already visible consequences (Leppert & Fahmy, 2022). While many Westerners identify as belonging to some sect of Christianity, there are few who say they are active followers – not belonging to a church or attending with frequency (Jones, 2022). While Westerners *believe* they are more free than Muslim majority or Muslim controlled nations, they are perhaps blinded by the fact that conservative Christians in government are equally, if not more conservative than those in power in Egypt, or other Muslim majority nations, and with Christian Nationalism on the rise in the United States, their freedoms could soon diminish (Whitehead, 2021). This farce amplifies a false sense of freedom in Westerners and can create hostile and judgmental opinions of Muslim majority nations. However, Christian behavior varies among sects and substantially between individuals, and while the use of religion as a

means to justify or negate one's actions is not unique to one religion or individual, "religious people internalized stereotypes regarding the moral superiority of their religious group," (Dolan, 2020).

Understanding the Western perspective is important in this chapter because the data and culture are interpreted through the lens of a Christian-born, university educated, CIS, straight, white, American woman. These factors aside, there are cultural differences and gender norms that are different in both cultures that affect one's overall perspective. The majority of heterosexual Western women actively participate in gendered tasks, especially with regards to child rearing and housework (Barroso, 2021). While the majority of heterosexual Western women do rely on the stereotypical gender roles of men, such as the completion of yard work, car and home maintenances, as well as benefiting from their gainful employment, they tend to be more independent and self-sufficient, additionally having other expectations for their partners to aid in housework, child rearing, and pet care. These gender roles are perpetrated without much thought in most cases and can prove to be the cause for the majority of household confrontations (Barroso, 2021). While this can vary from region to region, even family to family, there is a lot of shared responsibility. Heterosexual families often fall into more stereotypical gendered roles because of the dichotomy of the perpetuated gender norms lived for each individual. Gender nonconforming families have a greater ability to share the family obligations more evenly (Miller, 2018).

When looking at non-traditional families or gender non-conforming families, such as homosexual relationships, multiple partner (polyamorous or polygamous) relationships, the stereotypical gendered roles are less consistent than in heterosexual relationships (Miller, 2018). These families can more often exhibit regular examples of feminism within the family sphere, especially with regards to family responsibilities. They tend to have a more balanced view of the house responsibilities, opting to delegate responsibilities based on ability or preference rather than allowing ingrained gender norms to dictate. This creates a micro lesson in feminism in the home sphere, teaching feminism without bias (Miller, 2018).

Single-parent homes can also create more balanced and equal home responsibility environment because they often require assistance from the children to accomplish all of the household duties effectively and in a timely manner – teaching balance between work/school, house duties, and social/personal time, without differentiating between sexes or genders or considering gender roles from the beginning. While this is not always the case in single-parent families, they are capable of providing such examples through equal shared responsibilities in a variety of ways: random chore assignment, chore wheels, rotating chore lists, etc. In some cases, however, if there is a daughter within the family, much of the stereotypical gender roles at home can still fall on her to accomplish with little to no regard for the brother(s), such as basic cleaning duties, laundry, caring for siblings, and cooking, among others (Ratini, 2021). The parent may look to the daughter automatically with gender bias to tend to these house chores while her brother(s) is assigned to other stereotypical gender roles, such as tending to the yard work or pet responsibilities.

This section will look how gender and feminism affects sociological aspects of modern Egyptians, specifically women, with consideration of the intersectionalities that exist in a highly religious governmental regime.

2.1.1 Education – general and higher education

Egyptian women take the lead when it comes to creating the identity of the nation, portrayed as the foundation of the culture. In turn, women are systematically expected to provide for the nation without thinking of themselves or their own needs, rather the needs of the greater good – the nation, providing large families to perpetuate and grow the workforce, generally of the lower middle class (Abouelnaga, 2016; Samari, 2020). What is the cause of high fertility and low education in Egypt? Agency is one of the predominant factors in determining fertility rates, but this goes hand in hand with education. However, intrinsic agency and egalitarian gender beliefs collide to greatly influence educated women (Samari, 2020).

According to Samari (2020), the increase in fertility in Egypt, post the 2011 Revolution, is, in part, due to political and social changes which may have threatened the security of many women, physically and economically, but may have also disrupted family planning and jeopardized their social statuses. She continues, explaining that in other Middle Eastern countries when security becomes a threat, women are driven to marriage, and ultimately childbearing, for a variety of protections and out of education as well as the labor force. However, Samari describes research that shows that improvements to women's status through higher learning and education in general, as well as integration into the labor market significantly reduces fertility among women. Since Egypt has an already high birth rate, projected to increase from 88 million to 128 million people by 2030, it is important to understand the risks that accompany such high fertility rates (Samari, 2020).

> "High fertility is likely to have grave implications for Egypt by hindering economic development; increasing climate-related challenges; and limiting access to education, employment, food, and potable water, creating health risks for women and children," (Samari, 2020)

To understand how Egyptian women gain empowerment, moreover intrinsic agency, we must look at what is needed to do so. The empowerment of women begins with resources, agency, and achievements (Samari, 2020). These three aspects are interconnected. Through education women will find autonomy (agency) as it increases their status in society, providing them with more opportunities, and leading them to achieve more personal and social achievements as they are self-motivated.

With education forms autonomy (agency) therefore projecting women to make more decisions about and for themselves and/or their families using critical thinking gained through education, thus converting into intrinsic agency and instrumental agency. With both the abilities to think critically (intrinsic agency) and formulate one's own strategic choices and to control resources

(instrumental agency) one is empowered to be the leaders of their own lives, setting and achieving goals they are able to set and accomplish independently (Samari, 2020). This leads women to manage all three aspects above: agency, empowerment, and achievements. When one has arrived to this level of personal autonomy, they make more informed decisions for themselves and their families as a result. These results can be seen in the demands of women in the labor market, government, and health (Samari, 2020).

> "Education, as a resource, and agency are different parts of the empowerment process, yet education is used improperly, at times, to operationalize empowerment. Although education is considered a key correlate of empowerment, when education alone is used to measure empowerment, researchers cannot disentangle the effects of enabling resources versus the effects of agency," (Samari, 2020).

This is to say that education serves as a resource, but alone is ineffective in empowering women. It appears as a key component to empowerment, and can be justified as such, but must also be used in conjunction with other aspects to achieve the desirable outcome – education alone is not the answer. Combining education as a resource with pocket instances of agency creates more space for expansion of the two (Samari, 2020). Working in unison allows for empowerment by extension. With each small instance and application of agency, the setting of a goal – something to achieve, the level of agency expands, as does critical thinking skills, even if the outcome is undesirable, because they had agency throughout the process. Through education, subsequently agency, there is evidence of economic growth and a reduction of poverty (Samari, 2020).

There is little known about the consequence of lowered fertility in educated women, and if, in fact, education is a direct cause of the decline, but the little evidence that exists suggests that education often competes with other resources in the family. While traditional education is one aspect in the greater scheme, alternative education also introduces women to other opportunities such as medical information such as current contraceptives, which in turn can provide women with more time for family planning (Samari, 2020).

There are other reasons education plays a role in the fertility rate in Egyptian women, apart from a race for resources, and that is time. Many things in a woman's life require her attention and therefore her time. When women prioritize their time, they find they choose to use their time pursuing education, training, or their careers in the labor market. Empowered women who think critically may weight the outcomes of having children with their goals and find that children consume much more time and money than they would like to expend at any given moment, so they may choose to pursue education or further their careers, which often have manageable timed goals, rather than enter into motherhood with less time, and other resources, to do so. They are thus provided with more choices about what they want to do (or not do) with their own bodies (Samari, 2020).

With agency comes options and the ability to make informed decisions based on what is best for

every given individual, which affects fertility, with greater access to family planning, contraceptives, as well as inclusion in discussions about fertility. When a woman is well informed and active in discussions about what her options are, with her socioeconomic status in mind, she is more likely to delay or space out pregnancies.

> "In Egypt, women's agency, measured as lack of involvement in decision making and freedom of movement, is associated with women's unmet need for contraception," (Samari, 2020).

With greater agency women can better plan their families through joint discussion with their partners, which provides control of a woman's future as well as her day to day. This control empowers her further, gaining more household agency. And when empowered women are given a seat at the table there are significant improvements to the allocation of finances and prioritization of needs (Samari, 2020).

Education in Egypt continues to show disparities between genders, but they are not stagnant. Egyptian women are 65% literate compared to men at 82% and while education is becoming more accessible to girls and women only about 25% of women are active in the labor force. This is startling as 61% of the population is under 30 years of age, projecting future difficulties finding work for the younger population despite a more educated population. This would affect the entire population, but would greatly affect women as they already hold such a low percentage in the labor market (Samari, 2020).

Egyptian women are getting married later, becoming more educated, and being part of the decision makers at home. These intrinsic egalitarian beliefs in gender are evening the scales for women and society is taking note. "…gender-related attitudes seem to be changing: young adults in some parts of Egypt say that women and men should share household decisions," (Samari, 2020).

However, women who do not or cannot find work in the labor market are more likely to have children sooner than those who are working, regardless of access to contraceptives and educational health programs. The average fertility rate in Egypt is approximately 3.5 births per woman, with this as a widespread expectation for the majority of women (Samari, 2020). It is important that women review their own needs and wants through education and open communication with their partners to decide what their family will look like and when, given socio economic situations.

2.1.2 Marriage

Marriage in Egypt, like in most of the world, is an integral part of adulthood. Its importance is comparable as a life event as finishing a degree or entering the labor market. The laws of marriage have been changing over the years in Egypt, mainly to halt early (underage) marriages. But marriage remains a universal activity in Egypt with nearly 60% of the country's population (15

years and older) to be currently married, based on a 2011 report (Roushdy et al., 2011). Men and women in their thirties show an almost unanimous percentage of marriage, nearing 98% in people over fifty (ever-married) (Roushdy et al., 2011). With marriage rates climbing since 2018 one can also assume so are divorce rates. Divorce rates are also increasing since 2017, but not to the same degree as marriages, at 40% of marriages ending within the first five years (Roushdy et al., 2011).

It is true that age and education play a significant role in marriage, as well as location, which tends to be the leading cause. Urban areas have a lower number of married individuals, whereas in rural areas, marriage is still consistently common practice (Roushdy et al., 2011). When considering previously discussed factors for women's empowerment, we can now understand that marriages occur at younger ages for women in rural areas due to lack of education, agency, and resources. It is not to say that is always the case, but research informs us that when women are lacking these elements they are put in precarious situations where they may not have other options, or they may not even be aware of other options. They marry because that is how things are done where they are from. Women living in urban areas have more resources available to them, perhaps a wider community of diverse women, access to education, access to health education, along with more autonomy. Marriage among illiterate (62.5%), young – rural dwelling (48%) females is at the highest rates in the country (Roushdy et al., 2011). Marriage among secondary educated women drops considerably from 59% to 42.1%, and 30% of women who complete their schooling and enter the workforce are married. As we have seen through these statistics, education plays an important role in forming and informing women's choices about marriage. Further, as women seek higher education the percentiles of women engaging in marriage continue to drop as they postpone marriage and focus on their education in lieu of settling down (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Early marriage still remains largely a female phenomenon and, as previously mentioned, is usually among females living in rural areas with little or no education. Early marriage refers to young women (girls) who marry under the legal age of 18. However, it must be noted that the legal age of marriage has continued to climb, previously the legal age of consent was 16 and is now 18 (Roushdy et al., 2011). From this we can understand that previously early marriage was among girls of less than 16 years of age.

> "…in rural Upper Egypt, where 15% of currently married females were married before age 16, and 38% before 18. In urban areas these numbers are more than halved: 4% of females were married before age 16 and 13% before age 18," (Roushdy et al., 2011).

So, we can see that location and access to education and other fundamental resources is crucial to understanding the marriage rates in Egypt, "of currently married females who were married before age 18 by residence. Some 37% live in rural Upper Egypt and 41% in rural Lower Egypt," (Roushdy et al., 2011). On the contrary, of university educated women, less than 1% would have married early. Location, resources, and agency are massive determining factors to early marriage and statistically we can expect them to delay marriage considerably (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Consanguineous marriage, or marriage between blood relatives, is also a common phenomenon among young girls.

> "Overall, 34.4% of marriages among the young are consanguineous. Approximately 60% of these marriages are to first cousins. Consanguinity is most common among females aged 15-17 among whom 63.7% are married to a relative," (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Economics plays a large role in these types of marriages. Upper Egypt has the highest rates of consanguineous marriages in the country, but that is not surprising when you learn that these marriages happen among 44% of those young marriages. Upper Egypt is mostly rural, offering little work opportunities and is significantly less educated. The 44% mentioned are girls in the lowest wealth quintile (Roushdy et al., 2011).

> "The profile of youth in consanguineous marriages suggests that these young people may marry relatives because their disadvantaged socioeconomic position limits their access to other networks through which they might meet potential spouses," (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Roushdy reinforces the importance of female empowerment as a means of agency with their provided statistics. In the cases of poverty and inadequate access to even individuals outside of your community can cause great socio economic strife, resulting in burdening young girls and women with marriage without alternative options, such as pursuing higher education or seeking out partners in other towns or regions. However, some consanguineous marriages are intended to relieve some of the financial burden of marriage, or even for families (Roushdy et al., 2011). These marriages are not all to older men (11 years or more), about 14% of them to that scenario. There is, however, a much more significant percentage of these marriages that are to men six to ten years older, at 36% (Roushdy et al., 2011). This leads us to the conclusion that young marriages reduce the agency of these young girls, creating a transactional marriage – one benefiting all parties involved except the young girl.

There are many expectations when getting married and one of them is where to live after marriage. In Egypt; many couples move into the home of the husband upon marriage. It is not strictly for economic reasons, as sharing a home among more people is cheaper than affording multiple residences. Rather, it was done out of cultural obligation. The eldest child, male or female, had obligations to the family to live with the parents until they themselves were married, and, in the case of the eldest son, after marriage he would continue to live with his parents as they aged and his new wife would join him. The new wife in this instance was then deemed a carer for the elder members of the family. Though it is more common among the lower and lower-middle classes, it can be seen throughout all classes. The upper-middle and upper classes would have the means to afford other accommodations, however choosing to stay close to their parents. The idea itself is accepted by nearly half of young Egyptians (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Agency for women, in this case, is fraught with compromise and some relinquishment of power. While many women agree that they could live with their in-laws it is not the ideal situation for a newlywed couple, however it is often a condition in their marriage contract – a series of terms agreed upon prior to marriage (Roushdy et al., 2011). These contracts are intended to protect women in the case of divorce or death of her husband since many women don't enter the workforce or abandon the workforce in order to marry and start families or other pursuits (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Finding the right partner is a challenge for most, and while arranged marriages still exist in Egypt, they are not what most people perceive them to be. Usually, in an arranged marriage, it is simply an introduction of two individuals that the families believe would be a good match – they are not forced in the majority of cases, and are similar to a match-making scheme (Roushdy et al., 2011). In the case of an arranged marriage, the individuals get to know each other over a series of chaperoned meetings and often marry within months of their first meeting if all goes well (Roushdy et al., 2011).

In choosing a partner in Egypt, there are a lot of expectations and baggage. Like most places people want to marry someone who will improve their quality of life and provide a stable environment for them to grow together. It is no different in Egypt, however the expectations vs. prospects are a big challenge. Egyptian men and women have similar expectations when it comes to characteristics they look for in a partner including being educated, religious, and polite. Women had other characteristics they felt were important as deemed so by society, such as having a respectable job, having an apartment, and having a strong personality. Women often chose characteristics based on societal expectations so they can be cared for rather than a partnership in which they work together. Few men required the characteristic of financial stability in their partner, likely assuming they would be the main breadwinner of the family, also feeding into the stereotype. Men also looked for more superficial qualities in women, such as beauty and virtue. About 20% of both groups looked for love and mutual understanding, but an interesting and alarming characteristic is that they "treat her well", where women selected this trait twice as often as men (Roushdy et al., 2011).

2.1.3 Divorce

The statistics that we have seen show strongly the importance of empowering women to make informed decisions about themselves and their needs, so they can create agency for themselves, thinking critically about what they do and do not want and/or need. They have access to the resources that will aid them in their actions and decisions, including if/when to marry, and furthermore if/when to divorce. When it comes to divorce in Egypt, women have less agency than her male counterparts. In most cases she is at the mercy of her husband as we will discuss.

Like anywhere divorce can be complicated, expensive, and emotional, especially when navigating the legal system as a less educated person or in a situation that requires the authority of a religious body to approve of the divorce before it is granted. These are some things that affect

Egyptians today along with the changing sociocultural and economic changes.

As more people move to urban areas to find work and rural areas are urbanized, more people are exposed to different ideals than they may be accustomed to. Urban regions tend to have different insights that rural areas aren't exposed to. This may include deviations from stereotypical gender norms and roles within a family (Mendoza et al., 2019). As more women are finding themselves educated and entering the workforce to start or advance their careers, and marriage is often delayed, women are being their own agents and now share equal or near equal roles in the family, especially when it comes to decision making. With that comes conflict in a patriarchal society that still considers the man to be the ultimate decider in the family. Since more and more women are empowered in Egypt this becomes a point of friction and can lead to divorce. Current laws in Egypt still favor men in that they have the ability to file for divorce from his wife without her consent, claiming "incompatibility" as the cause (Mendoza et al., 2019). Couples that are more educated tend to have lower rates of divorce as there is more critical thinking at play.

> "Research shows that individuals with higher education show better judgement when selecting a spouse, are better at communication and managing conflict, as well as have more control over external interference particularly from family," (Mendoza et al., 2019).

Divorce has a lot of complicated implications, especially in a climate like that of Egypt, but more so for women. Since men have much of the upper hand in situations like divorce many women go through divorce with an array of feelings ranging from blame and sinful to criminalization and discrimination. There are the stigmas of society that they must also face, which often looks at a divorced woman as a bad parent or spouse, much more often than men. Because of this many divorced women have a harder time recovering from divorce, suffering from depression and self-esteem issues (Mendoza et al., 2019).

Divorced women with children are often stigmatized more than divorced women without children, often ostracizing them from their regular social groups, as well as a loss of friends, leading to isolation. "These social ramifications often leave women enduring dysfunctional and abusive marriages in order to avoid this social discrimination and humiliation," (Mendoza et al., 2019). With these social and economic risks women will stay in marriages that are unhealthy and unsafe to avoid these outcomes of divorce, however they are sometimes inevitable. Since men have the ability to declare divorce to their wife with her having no real ability to resist his will, women are often forced to suffer these stigmatizations.

> "Divorce law is particularly complex in Egypt, with different types of divorce authorized for men and women. Men were resistant to women initiating divorce, with just a third in favour of the right of women to do so, less than half the proportion of women who were in favour," (Feki et al., 2017).

Some men are in favor of wife-initiated divorce, but others find it fearful, almost an attack on their power as the husband with the ultimate decision. One forty-five-year-old man in the IMAGES MENA Egypt survey (2017) stated,

> "Of course, these laws have had negative effects. Before, women were blind [unaware] and her husband was a Si Sayed [a fictional patriarch] and she had to obey his bidding. Now her eyes have opened to every big and small issue, and she can threaten her husband with khol' [wife-initiated divorce]."

In cases of divorce, a proclaimed "traumatic" experience, women are not only stigmatized negatively in the previous ways mentioned, but they are also objectified by men and are even considered a threat to other marriages (Mendoza et al., 2019).

There are laws in place to help women who have been divorced (or widowed) as a result of the laws that allow them to be placed in that situation, however they are weak and provide little assistance. Many women remarry out of necessity, though with caution. Through divorce a woman experiences a loss of agency as she is unable to explicitly argue for her needs, however research has shown much resilience among divorced women. As women recover from divorce and the associated trauma of it,

> "In many cases, divorce is seen as a way to leave a situation that was already painful, and despite experiencing grief, individuals also experience freedom, happiness, and a reinvention of the self," (Mendoza et al., 2019).

As trauma is processed, grief passes, along with depression in some cases, women begin to recover themselves and find happiness in their new found freedom, especially if it was a particularly poor relationship. This is not specific to Egyptian women, but it is important to note that Egyptian women post-divorce may feel that they have recovered their agency and as Mendoza et al. states they experience a "reinvention of self" allowing them to live for themselves more authentically, perhaps becoming more empowered, exemplifying resilience and stifling stigmas.

2.1.4 Gender roles

A lot of legislative progress is being made in Egypt on the front of gender related issues, especially after the 2011 Revolution, but they are slight and slowly forthcoming (Feki et al., 2017). Egypt struggles with misogyny and strict gender stereotypes, which are often exaggerated in rural regions in Egypt. Many of these stereotypes are reinforced during childhood and perpetuated through lack of education or exposure to balanced roles in the home (El-Behary, 2017).
The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) in the Middle East and North Africa Egypt (MENA) was conducted by UN Women, Promundo in 2017, that included Lebanon, Morocco, Egypt, and Palestine. This survey was a, "study on men's realities, practices, and

attitudes with regard to gender norms, gender-equality policies, household dynamics, caregiving and fatherhood, intimate partner violence, sexual diversity, health, and economic stress, among other topics," (Feki et al., 2017). It provides an accurate, up to date perspective of men and women of Egypt (and other countries). With this information we can understand the current state of gender equality from a firsthand experience of the men and women in Egypt and take steps to educate and inform them of modern practices, as well as provide resources that will help shift perspectives and actions going forward to create a more equitable society.

According to new research from Øystein Gullvåg Holter, reported by Ashild Lappegård Lahn (2015), "gender equality gives men better lives." Lappegård Lahn's report of Holter's research explains that it is positive for all involved when the gender scales are balanced, referencing that all involved are less likely to suffer from or experience, depression, divorce, or violent death. They go on to explain that a high level of gender equality does not, in fact, benefit women at the expense of men's benefits and privileges, though he does not dispute the fact that gender equality affects people differently, and some benefit more than others, that outcome often due to greater disparities (Lappegård Lahn, 2015). When solely considering the wage gap in other nations, such as the United States, we can see improvements in the quality of life when the gap is much narrower, like that of some states within Europe. When the pay gap is narrowed or eliminated men are not affected, but women (and their families) benefit from it. Holter explains in the report that,

> "Both equal pay and gender equality have roughly the same positive effects on welfare. At the same time, gender equality is also an independent factor. It appears that gender equality has equally strong effects on health and welfare as wage equity has," (Lappegård Lahn, 2015).

We often put women at the forefront of the fight for justice and gender equality, but Holter explains that men are important for its success. His figures show that when men share duties at home such as childcare or elder care there is a direct correlation to the level of gender equality of the country (Lappegård Lahn, 2015). It starts at home, not with women doing more, but by men stepping up and sharing the load. The contribution of men in unpaid work that women are usually delegated to do affects society as a whole, claiming, "It is not without significance that the countries that have been most affected by the financial crisis are also the ones in which men participate least in unpaid care work," (Lappegård Lahn, 2015). The burden of bringing equality to reality simply cannot lie on the shoulders of women and temporary or faulty government policy.

With statistics showing this correlation, why don't men take the initiative and begin to end gender inequality? Holter suspects, "that this has to do with men not being aware that high quality of life is connected to gender equality," (Lappegård Lahn, 2015). There is evidence of this among educated groups, understanding that equality at home, for example, allows for a more productive household, benefitting from both participating parties involved (Samari, 2020).

Little research is actually done about how men view gender equality as well as how to deconstruct the inequalities as it often focuses on women as both the problem and the solution (Feki et al., 2017). As mentioned, gender equality is complex and cannot be focused on simply one side of the debate when there is research and evidence of some gaps that can be filled. The research done in IMAGES MENA Egypt further explains the lack of research on men's views of gender equality, continuing,

> "Nor is much data available on the impact of political, economic, and social shifts on men's view of their own place in their families and communities; nor on how these forces shape their own identities as men and their relations with others; nor on the ways in which these issues differ among the generations. These attitudes and practices have a direct impact on the lives and well-being of women and girls, as reflected in substantial rates of gender-based violence, amongst other challenges, (Feki et al., 2017).

The above suggests that more research must be done about men's gender-specific realities. With social pressures to perform certain cultural gender roles with an inability to do so because of underlying socioeconomic or sociocultural issues then we cannot undo the tension that exists as a result (Feki et al., 2017). Understanding the positionality of men's views and the drivers behind them are as important as the inclusion of women in the debate and process. "…unemployment and poverty are often felt as emasculating," (Feki et al., 2017) and in a culture with deep patriarchal roots one cannot assume that that can be resolved quickly, as the absence of work and an increase in poverty will continue to worsen if the underlying causes are not also addressed.

The jobs issue is not merely a problem for men, but for women as, "many, and particularly younger women, lack access to jobs in the formal sector, which contributes to limitations on their physical, social, economic, and political mobility," (Feki et al., 2017). While gender inequality prevails, so do employment opportunities. Just as work opportunities affect men, they affect women and have "profound implications" for both men and women (Feki et al., 2017). It should be noted, however, that while an alarmingly high number of Egyptian men believed that a woman's place was in the home (90%) rather than working outside the home or in political or public arenas, two thirds of men believed in equality of education for both boys and girls (Feki et al., 2017).

> "…changing economic conditions make this expectation increasingly difficult for men to meet. At the same time, the shifting status of women is putting many men on increasingly uncertain ground," (Feki et al., 2017).

One sixty-one-year-old man, a participant in the study, was quoted, "A man is a man, a woman is a woman, I work hard and do my part. I need to go home and find things ready, don't ask me to do anything extra. I'm the man," (Feki et al., 2017).

These findings of IMAGES MENA Egypt show the change from old ideas to more modern ones, with some still stuck in traditional practices for the sake of, “That’s the way it’s always been done.” Many men still believe they have obligations to women both on a personal and public level, believing they should be the guardian of his female family members, as well as the main breadwinner. Gender equality must analyze the sociocultural expectations and needs of men as well as women to facilitate gender equality, apart from education.

2.1.5 Home Carers

Child rearing is largely, if not solely, the woman’s role in Egypt, as it was in ancient Egypt. Women around the globe are considered to be natural nurturers, assuming children will instinctively go to their mothers when in need. However likely, children and adults will go to the person that they find the most comfort in, and not all women are natural nurtures aiding those in need or in search of help. Despite this, societies around the world are conditioned to believe it to be the natural order of things, women as the natural caregivers. Conditioning women to believe they have to be the sole nurturer can cause self-esteem issues in women who do not feel this way or even when their children do not naturally come to them, or have preference for their partner. This causes stress and anxiety and can lead to depression (Yuko, 2016). Women are still burdened with the general task of tending to the needs of the children, and other members of the family, often neglecting themselves and their own needs in the process. This can be seen worldwide, but is significant in Egypt (Feki et al., 2017).

An unequal amount of responsibility is placed on women and girls of any given Egyptian family. While some responsibilities at home are healthy to help encourage proper self-growth in regards to managing personal and domestic responsibilities, many Egyptian women are inundated with unrealistic societal expectations in and outside of the home (Feki et al., 2017). This could be exacerbated when regarding single parents. Though it is not uncommon in Egypt to be divorced, it does occur and has been on the rise (Feki et al., 2017). And, as mentioned previously, the domestic tasks are often unequally distributed to the remaining female members of the family, but predominantly the wife. This can be attributed to the idea that the males in the family are more likely able to find stable work or odd jobs to help provide for the family. However, the domestic duties fall on the shoulders of the females and they are continuously expected to perform all the duties adequately with disregard for other circumstances (Feki et al., 2017).

The mother is often considered to be the binding figure of the family cross-culturally, but with that consideration comes a heavy responsibility to keep the family unit intact and cohesive. This is part of the rearing of children, to teach them to listen and obey what the parents require, and in this obedience, they should follow the norms set forth in the family and at school. The mother must also teach manners in the rearing development, though in Egypt this is seen as a shared job of the father (Henry & Elwy, 2020). The children must be learning proper manners while interacting with the parents, siblings, extended family members, and guests, as well as maintaining this in the public sphere.

In the IMAGES-MENA survey more than 90% of men believed they should have the final word about decisions in the home, concluding that they take responsibility for the goings on in the home and provide for it. However, in the same survey 98% of men believed that caring for the children, including changing diapers, giving baths, and feeding were all the mother's responsibility (Feki et al., 2017). This disturbing reality that men believe they are responsible for taking care of their families and home, but neglect duties of significance proves that their criteria for providing is much more general and less involved. This leads to other questions about intention. Do fathers have children out of selfish desire to have a successor like them without having to do any of the physical or psychological effort of raising them, purely benefitting from the efforts of women?

These problematic ideals perpetuate from generation to generation as children grow up seeing the disparities between their parents without necessarily questioning them (Feki et al., 2017). The contradictions in thought about gender roles in the home are striking as the IMAGES-MENA study showed that a miniscule percentage of men did not find it shameful to help out with the children and do domestic work and (as previously mentioned) believed that education is equally important for both boys and girls, contrarily also believed it was more important for a woman to marry than to have a career (Feki et al., 2017).

The study illustrates and describes the impact of education as a driving support for equality, as both men and women who were educated, as well as those whose mothers were educated demonstrated more equitable answers on the survey, though women more so (Feki et al., 2017). This study also showed that, "men and women whose fathers participated in housework also held more gender-equitable attitudes," (Feki et al., 2017). "Only around a third of men – mainly those with jobs or higher education supported the idea of women working outside the home on the same terms as men," (Feki et al., 2017). Many Egyptian women agree that men's access to work was more important than their own which is reflected in the statistics of the labor market.

> "Egypt's rate of female labour-force participation is less than 20 per cent, among the lowest in the world, and more than four-fifths of the survey's female respondents are housewives. This not only increases the pressure on men to provide, but leaves women in a dependent, but not necessarily dependable, situation," (Feki et al., 2017).

Women become more vulnerable members of society if they are under the sole care of their husband, who has largely more rights than them when it comes to marriage and divorce. Though unpaid domestic care is work, it is often disregarded as such for men who are absent from the home. The perspective of the collective changes when the woman is active in the workforce. In this scenario,

> "…men are willing to share at least some of the attendant responsibilities and benefits. More than 70 per cent of men expected a working wife to contribute to household expenses, compared with more than 90 per cent of women. Almost three-quarters of

> men believed in equal pay for equal positions, while women were almost universally in favour of equal pay (Figure 3.2.2b).4 Men were almost as willing as women to work with female colleagues, though significantly less enthusiastic about having a female boss," (Feki et al., 2017).

Men are willing to help if it benefits them or relieves some of their financial burden. The majority also do not contest working with female colleagues, but would take issue with a female superior. When faced with the prospect of working beneath a woman this can be considered a threat or even an attack to their masculinity in some instances setting a dangerous precedent in the workforce that they would be unwilling to execute their work duties if a woman was in a position of significant power. The power struggle of men needing to be in control of women, be their guardians and protectors, as well as the ones who make the final decisions for the family needs to be addressed as it will have long lasting effects on their children, perpetuating the cycle of gender inequality.

2.1.6 Abuse

Domestic abuse is not a topic that is easy to discuss and is often a secret part of life, certainly not one that is discussed regularly or without shame. Women are often the victims of domestic abuse, as previously mentioned, they are more vulnerable members of society, not because they are weak, but because they are often put into positions of vulnerability where they lose agency rendering any attempt of escape seemingly hopeless.

In the MENA region it is not uncommon for women to suffer from domestic abuse as it is quite common and the IMAGES-MENA study proves that it is certainly part of the mindset in Egypt. Fifty-three percent of men who participated in the survey agreed that there are times when women should be beaten, with 32% of women in agreement as well. A staggering 90% of men agreed that a woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together, with an astonishing 70% of women in agreement (Feki et al., 2017). These dangerous mentalities pose threats to women's health and safety, as well as the wellbeing of young girls who grow up with this mentality. They may internalize these beliefs and believe they are meant to endure violence for the sake of others, losing agency, possibly developing depression, and losing self-esteem, not to mention continuing to perpetuate the cycle of abuse and violence against women, through misdirected anger.

The idea that women must endure violence in order to maintain a collective family is disturbing, but again the weight of that task is put solely on the shoulders of women. The conversation is not about men controlling their emotions, rather using women as their child bearers, child-rearers, maids, chefs, and to an extent their punching bags without consideration that they are not slaves to men and their physical and emotional needs. The solution is better directed at men with a series of questions: How can men find productive ways to manage their anger, and what are they? In what ways can men cope with unfortunate situations that life sets for them? What resources are available to men to manage society's expectations? How do other aspects of their lives affect

their abilities to manage stressors in their lives? Giving men resources to cope with the stress of social, cultural, and religious expectations will arm them with more tools to manage difficult situations and not revert to violence against women, and perhaps children. Projection of anger, and other emotions like jealousy, is dangerous as the ones who are truly suffering are not the ones at fault for the situation. Rather, they are the victims as a result of circumstances. Men, too, are the victims of misdirected anger and projection. It is also important to ensure men not only have the resources available to cope, but that these mechanisms are also included in education so that children, of all genders, grow up learning that violence is not the correct method of managing emotions, and that what violence or abuse they see or experience at home is not normal or acceptable.

As violence against women in Egypt and the MENA region is common, it is important to continue to study legislative progress and how it directly affects both men and women. With the institution of and continued education regarding domestic violence and abuse there will be great changes in younger generations. Fighting toxic masculinity in Egypt must begin with where it can with educating children, as well as providing resources to men to cope with stressors, and of course for women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse. The empowerment of women early on will help them to make better decisions throughout their lives, but the same must be said and done for men. While they are often the culprit of violence against women, they need also be empowered to manage socio economic difficulties while respecting their partners and children.

> "Some women were also concerned about the risk of a male backlash against demands for gender equality, making women shoulder more burdens and responsibilities, instead," (Feki et al., 2017).

Women are greatly concerned for men and the "backlash" that could ensue if given gender equality. With less than 20% of women entering the labor market, combined with the scarcity of work, women naturally assume more tasks to relieve the burden of stress of their partners. However, the same is not true for men. The fear women experience for simply wanting equality is distressing considering the nearly 50% of university students being women (Feki et al., 2017). Women are using their time and effort to educate themselves to later have to forfeit their opportunities to appeal to the male ego. Women cannot gain agency when they are deferring to men to make decisions as to if, where, when, and how they can work when they are educated and competent individuals. Women have goals, just as men do, however current Egyptian society assumes they are less important than those of men simply because they deem the work of men, whatever it may be, more important than that of women.

Women's experience with violence and abuse in the home is something the majority have accepted (70%), which is why it is not surprising that they were at the forefront of the protests during the 2011 Revolution (Feki et al., 2017). The political elections following the Revolution demonstrated the force and persistence of women with an unusually high turnout of female voters. They endured the violence during the Revolution just as the men did, and even

experienced violence from their fellow protesters, but they persisted (Feki et al., 2017; Abouelnaga, 2016).

> "Over the past decade, female judges, police officers, marriage notaries, governors, and other public officials have been appointed in increasing numbers, albeit with hurdles once on the job," (Feki et al., 2017).

Women will continue to fight for their seat at the table in Egypt as it becomes more progressive. Egypt now has 15% of the seats in parliament, but that is only half of the internationally-recommended threshold. They will surely endure more violence and abuse for wanting change, fighting for change, and executing change.

2.1.7 Politics and Public Life

Previously it was stated that while Egypt is in the practice of developing its acceptance of women in government, it is still far behind. Politics in Egypt have traditionally been run by men with previous regimes being very conservative or Muslim fundamentalists (Rubin, 1990). We have seen the hyper-masculinity of men shape the country, having women to believe there are times she should be beaten, that women should endure domestic violence to keep a family united, that women are better suited as housewives and caregivers, that they should not, in fact, even be allowed full access to the internet (Feki et al., 2017). This mentality is damaging to the self-worth of women, but also grooms more generations of the same type of men. Women's existence and participation in the Revolution and subsequent initiation into government and public offices is a robust and necessary visual for young and old men and women alike. They must be exposed to, if not educated about, the success of women in the labor market, but further in leading political appointments.

> "Over the past decade, female judges, police officers, marriage notaries, governors, and other public officials have been appointed in increasing numbers, albeit with hurdles once on the job," (Feki et al., 2017).

According to IMAGES MENA Egypt survey in 2016, only 29% of men believed that more women should be in positions of political authority, against 68% of women. More than half of men surveyed (53%) believed that if a woman was a capable politician that she would not be a good caregiver to her family, assuming that she should maintain both positions rather than her partner take full or partial responsibility. More than half of men (57%) also agreed that, "Women should leave politics to men." Seventy-seven (77%) of men and 89% of women agreed that, "A woman with the same qualifications can do as good a job as a man," (Feki et al., 2017). The numbers of men, both educated and uneducated, rural and urban, that believe that women should stay out of the public sphere and focus on being a mother, while also being educated, is surprising considering that they also believe she is capable of holding the same positions so long as she is qualified, but simply shouldn't is astounding. The obedience of men to social and cultural norms

outweigh evidence that proves women are capable of doing such jobs with no contradicting evidence that they cannot also contribute to raising a family. However, this is the other question. Can women raise a family well while working a demanding job? The questions exempt the duty of men altogether and focuses on the abilities of women to do more than their fair share of work because she is a woman and cultural and societal norms are the real controller.

The IMAGES MENA Egypt survey also states, "…three-quarters said that women are too emotional to lead. Younger men are particularly opposed to women's political leadership," (Feki et al., 2017). With 74% of men believing women are too emotional to lead in politics or other leadership roles, we must keep in mind the mental state of Egyptian men. Fragile egos are easily challenged when women of confidence are empowered. Fragile men often struggle with masculinity issues and any woman who proves to be more in control or powerful is a threat to their masculinity, and by that very fact their masculine identity (Promundo UN Women, 2017). Deescalating the anger and hesitation that Egyptian men feel about powerful women is not an easy task, but can be done through education and exposure (Promundo UN Women, 2017). Women must continue to believe in themselves and empower other women to do the same and the study showed, "Women were generally more supportive of women in public life," (Feki et al., 2017).

> "While a majority of men accepted women's leadership in civil society, government ministries, and parliaments, only a third or fewer accepted their participation in such traditionally male preserves as the courts, the army, or the police," (Feki et al., 2017).

It's clear that the threat men perceive is not a physical one, but an emasculating one. The majority of men do not want to see women in positions of power where they can institute real change and hold men accountable for their actions, especially their misconduct against women. As we see from the study, it's acceptable for women to participate in civil society, but not in government, courts, or the police as these positions would give authority to women over men in certain circumstances and it appears that it is too much power to relinquish.

The study refers back to the events of the 2011 Revolution as an example of the gender-based violence that occurs against women in the public sphere, even when they are fighting for seemingly the same cause in public demonstrations, "almost two-thirds of men who said that women should not participate in political protests," (Feki et al., 2017). However, the Revolution meant much more for women as they seized the opportunity to not only refute the government's misdeeds, but also bring to light disparities among the genders that women suffer from.

Egypt has been taking steps to improve the lives of women, as much of this legislations has proved to fit within the parameters of "the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – provided such changes do not violate shari'a," (Feki et al., 2017). Laws have been changed or created in the areas of marriage, divorce, which most were aware of, nationality, and birth registration, among others. Which, the study explained, is progress

on paper rather than practice.

> "More than 60 per cent of men and women in the survey were aware of the existence of legislation promoting women's rights – mainly laws on divorce and gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. Ironically, men were better informed on these issues than women were, with almost a quarter of female respondents unaware of the existence of any laws to protect their rights," (Feki et al., 2017).

Women doubt the effectiveness of these laws when they are aware of them, while 90% of men find them sufficiently effective. However, there are limitations to these laws as well as little enforcement, building skepticism in many women (Feki et al., 2017). Although skepticism does not mean the laws at hand do not work, there are other real concerns from women about the effectiveness of these laws.

> "Other obstacles cited included the weight of social norms that discourage women from speaking up on such matters, and the stigma and scandal that often ensue when women bring cases to light," (Feki et al., 2017).

While there are supporters of these laws of all genders, there is still fear that women will have the upper hand or control or agency. One participant in the IMAGES MENA Egypt (2017) survey stated,

> ""The new laws that support women have made them very brave and hard to control. Now, they can argue and fight with you, because you know that they are protected. Right now, if you talk to a woman, she would go to the police station and say that you were harassing her and you would get in trouble." Man, 64 years old, Cairo".

Ultimately there is a general fear that men will be held accountable for their actions when before there were little or no repercussions for them. Now, there is a real chance that they could have to answer to a woman in charge that perhaps herself has experienced the same as the woman in the case. With new changes to the law and better comprehension of the penalties for their actions Egyptian men are feeling the constraint of the law and pressure to improve before it. It is now a matter of putting these laws into action and both men and women, advocates of gender equality and women's rights, to begin to elect women that have the best interest of the country at heart. Women can continue to empower one another to enter and stay in the workforce, assuming powerful positions, and creating the change they themselves hope for.

2.1.8 Widowhood and Inheritance

The death of a partner or parent can also be an immense stress on the family. Widowhood can cause economic strife in any family, but especially in Egypt where women are left with fewer options with the death of a spouse or a parent as men still retain more rights than women in

terms of inheritance and custody [of children]. Death itself is never an easy discussion but discussion of inheritance just after death can be devastating. Women who survive their husbands in death in Egypt don't benefit from the existing laws.

> "The laws also organized women's maintenance during marriage and alimony after divorce as weil as 'idda (waiting period following divorce or widowhood during which a woman may not remarry) and put conditions for a repudiation to be considered valid. These laws are still in force, though they were amended in 1985 by Law No 100," (Promotion of Women's Rights Project in Egypt, n.d.).

It may seem that 1985 laws could not seem so ancient and outdated, but much has happened in Egypt since this time including a revolution. Results by OECD's Social Institution and Gender Index (SIGI) indicate that women in Egypt and other North African countries suffer from, "the highest levels of discrimination productive and financial resources in the world: 45%, compared to a global average of 27%," (OECD, 2020). This puts women at a significant disadvantage when it comes to accessing financial resources.

> "…according to the SIGI, widows and/or daughters in the four countries do not enjoy the same legal rights as widowers and sons to inherit land and/or non-land assets," (OECD, 2020).

In instances such as these, women are unable to receive their full inheritance and are often pressured by male family members to relinquish their inheritance for the family to retain it fully. This leaves the female heir with little or even no inheritance. With women already being a vulnerable economic group, relying on their family or husbands for support, it is inherent that they have the resources to, at the very least, receive all of their owed inheritance. However, little has changed in these ways, so women who inherit substantial property will likely see very little of what they are actually owed. Other male members of the family stand to benefit from the vulnerability of women in such cases (OECD,2020). This situation could potentially leave older widows in need of financial assistance and find themselves suddenly needing to enter the workforce (Zeitoun, 2018). Older women unable to inherit their own possessions from their late husbands must rely and trust that their male family members truly have their best interest at heart when transferring their inheritance to them. They must, again, rely on men to care for them without their own true consent.

Section Conclusion

Throughout this section we have seen the impact of female empowerment, how it works, and what is needed to advance it in Egypt. Through the use of resources, education, and agency we can empower women, and men, to fight more diligently for the cause of gender equality. Changing the minds of the majority, along with cultural norms is not an easy task, but it is important to support the cause of gender equality, supporting Egyptian women in their struggles

for it through allyship, financial support, and educational support. Providing resources to Egyptian women of all ages increases their ability to make better choices, paired with education about what is happening in their country politically and socially, and how it affects them and their future, will further prepare them to make the educated choices they feel are appropriate for them and their families going forward.

We have also discussed the results of the IMAGES MENA Egypt survey which brought to like many of the insecurities of Egyptian men and how those insecurities affect Egyptian women. Through this survey we were able to analyze the current socio cultural mindsets of Egyptians in general and evaluate the progress being made across the country. It's important to consider all the factors at play in the fight for gender equality in Egypt. There are many social and cultural battles at hand, but an even greater challenge is combating the issue of toxic masculinity in the country. Egyptian women will continue to fight an uphill battle against gender inequality as long as men assume control over women. These different forms of control – financial, locational, physical, laboral, and political – keep Egyptian women vulnerable and dependent on men. As previously discussed, the empowerment of women to find their own agency in a variety of ways, will help them to take back their control through continuing their education, delaying marriage and fertility, pursuing their careers, and being an equal part of the decision making at home.

An important factor to keep in mind throughout this process is the wellbeing of men. As this section has discussed, men cannot be eliminated from the conversation of gender equality as it relies on their participation. They must begin to share the roles women have taken for so long, and begin to reshape the identity of the Egyptian man, father, husband, and neighbor. If men continue to feel attacked, or that their masculinity is in jeopardy, they will not believe in the cause of gender equality and will likely remain combative and resistant. Gender equality education does not stop at women, it must also be taught and instilled in men, along with children.

Egypt currently struggles to perpetuate a false identity, homogenize women and force their portrayal as the bearers of the culture itself. This false sense of identity that so many are forced to bear will fade and truer varieties of identities will be brought forth from the collective efforts.

2.2 Religious impact – Islamic revivalism in Egypt since the 1980s and a decline in Egyptian liberal views towards women (How Islamic revivalism change attitudes to Gender and Feminism)

2.2.1 Religion

Egypt, a socially and politically conservative Muslim nation, with rigid ideals of gender norms, many stemming mostly from religious conservatism and fundamentalism. The country consists of a very large majority of Sunni Muslims (about 90 million), with the remaining population is classified as Coptic Orthodox Christians or other denomination of Christian at about 10 million, however it is also estimated that less than 2% of the population is of other religious beliefs (CNEWA, 2022; Office of International Religious Freedom, & U.S. Mission Egypt, 2022). Due to a

conservative religious fundamentalist ideology, paired with the Egyptian identity debate, in the past 30+ years, Egypt has been suffering from forced homogenous ideas of what the Egyptian identity is (Feki et al., 2017). This is not isolated to one religion in particular, rather the religious collective through rejection of secular ideas and alternative lifestyles. What does this mean for Egyptians?

Younger generations of Egyptians feel the effects of religious conservatism in a variety of ways, including obligation of financial support regardless of ability, educational or career restraint, adherence to strict religious traditions and norms regardless of level or depth of belief, inability to pursue secular trends (clothing, makeup, music, etc.), among others (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). For many young Egyptians (18-25 years old) they look to their religious elders for knowledge and clarity of the world around them, and as they do so in their formative years they can become more fundamentalist as the view of religious authorities play a huge role in their lives, often having a more narrowed view of the sociopolitical roles of their religion as well as maintain support religious law, despite it targeting non-believers (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

> "This distinctive orientation toward one's religion is characterized by a strong belief in the universality of its teachings, the immutability of its principles, the validity of its claims about this and other worlds, and its indispensability for human happiness," (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

With Egyptians unable to separate themselves from their religions, they are politically and socially tied to their religions. With the marriage of government and religion society is forced to follow the religion or at least be subjugated by its laws. Politicizing religion or religionizing government creates an unbalance of the two and the distinction between the two becomes more and more blurred. When the two mesh it can isolate specific parties, usually people who do not follow the religion in political authority. This creates a variety of issues and is problematic as it ultimately forces non-believers to abide by religious laws they perhaps disagree with or are contrary to their own beliefs. Perhaps the push stems from the need to homogenize society under one belief system or one religion, such as states that blend politics and Islam or Christianity.

> "These conceptions are variously considered as: (a) a set of ideas recorded in the Islamic text; (b) a discourse produced by Muslim intellectual leaders; and (c) a movement dedicated to Islamize society," (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

This attachment or fusing to a religion may prohibit the individual from expressing themselves authentically, verbally or otherwise, such as on social media platforms. This could put them at risk of potential backlash from their religious communities or governments, especially in Egypt where they could find themselves in complicated legal situations (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). When religion fuses with government and people break religious law, they are in fact also breaking social laws and vis versa. Social laws are then, ipso facto at the mercy of interpretation of religious texts, which may have varying interpretations, while social law is written as explicitly as possible to

avoid interpretations (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

> "…resting on secondary interpretations of the sociopolitical teachings of Islam, such as the unity of religion and politics, the scripturally sanctioned gender inequality, and the non-recognition of individuality in Islamic tradition. The distinctive view of Muslim fundamentalists on religion, gender, politics, culture and science is claimed to have originated from these principles," (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

As Moaddel and Karabenick (2008) state, these views are those of Muslim fundamentalists, which have inherent inequalities written into the religion, and do not recognize an individualistic view, further homogenizing or Islamizing of an entire country. The beliefs held by fundamentalist Muslims may not be shared with the wider collective. These interpretations are carried out by intellectual members of the religion and thus can differ from one to another having different consensus. Their roles as interpreters are not the same as translators of text, rather they are making decisions based on what they believe to be consistent with their religion, which can again vary based on a myriad of factors.

> "…these ideas are produced by Muslim intellectual leaders to resolve such historically significant issues facing their faith as the status of secular reasoning in Islamic theology, the relationship between religion and politics, the form of government, the relationship of Islamic countries with the outside world, individual identity and the social status of women," (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

With these intellectuals interpreting on behalf of Islam, there are many in disagreement as they themselves may have different experiences and education that have informed their opinions about their beliefs in their religion(s). This is problematic when it is justified as being equal to law in an inexplicit way- open to different interpretations by others. When the interpretations of a minuscule number of 'leaders' who were not elected as representatives, are put in a position of power to dictate the voice, or lack thereof, of the majority is when it becomes problematic.

While this may seem to be a mere impotence of freedom of expression it is far more reaching. Declaring oneself as atheist, agnostic, or even a non-believer could result in severe consequences, socially and legally, even resulting in, or punishable by, death (van Nieukerk, 2019).

In some religions, such as Islam, Catholicism, and Judaism one cannot divorce oneself from the religion easily, if at all (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). One is born into the religion and, though there are ceremonies, traditions, and specific rituals that may need to be carried out in order to confirm one's true alliance to it, they are much harder to leave, in some instances impossible punishable by death (van Nieukerk, 2019). Many of these ceremonies and rituals are carried out at young ages, when children are naïve to the implications of becoming part of a religion. Children are often following their parents and their beliefs rather than making the decision clearly and unequivocally for themselves, often knowing little to nothing about other religions and their

beliefs. Children are impressionable and if they grow up being told they belong to a certain religion they usually continue to believe that until they are proven wrong, usually as adults. This generic example speaks to the way families pressure their children into following their own belief systems, sometimes it is a declaration, in other cases you are even tattooed as an infant, binding you to it (Myers, 1996). One can only imagine this is done with love and with the intention they will receive the benefits of being a part of the religion perhaps both in the earthly realm and afterlife.

The tradition of religion is one born out of necessity for the religion to continue in great numbers, to enable its funding, outreach, and deliverance of message and the belief must continue from one generation to the next in order for it to survive (Myers, 1996). The continuing tradition of religion, a system of belief, is one that continues out of the human need for reassurance and continuance of security of a better life in another realm. These systems of belief rely on the congregations to provide financial and other support for the religion so that it may continue, but only because there is an unidentified force that wills it to continue (Myers, 1996).

Many religions prey on people who are in need or at the end of their life with promises of an afterlife, a continued better life, that is perfect and without pain or suffering among many other promises. These promises are conditional and seem to have strict orders for their believers condoned and supported by the leaders of the religion. These leaders are often selected to guide the followers and ensure they follow the rules and traditions, while instilling faith that the followers are believing in the correct god/gods, and also imparting them with some fear of leaving the religion or belief by way of repercussions for not believing, perhaps further perpetuated by other family members who are also believers (Pretorius, 2004; Myers, 1996). This similar tactic is one used in parenting with children, to get them to behave reasonably and responsibly out of fear of something greater.

2.2.2 Religious Government

When the marriage of religion and government concentrate, it becomes problematic as the controlling government begins creating and passing laws and regulations with religious endorsement, if not written explicitly in favor of one religion. What does this mean? The government begins constructing and implementing laws and regulations that interfere with the daily lives of individuals that do not belong to the religion of the governing body. It begins to carry out those laws and regulations based on interpretations of religious texts governing religious individuals, rather than society as a whole. If the majority of the country belongs to the religion of the governing body, then why would that be problematic? When the laws are written based on a belief and not on basic morals all of society can agree on then those of other religions, or no religion at all, are then subjected to those laws regardless of their willingness to participate, without consideration of their own religious beliefs, which may be in conflict with them (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

While many religions have similarities about their ethics and morals for society, they can vary

greatly when it comes to implementation, or to the degree of which they should be followed. This creates a dangerous manner of governance due to the often very outdated systems of punishment for not obeying religious laws. They are often based on writings thousands of years old, many of which are translated and further interpreted by religious intellectuals because language and society have evolved (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). As societies and cultures change, languages change, and further religions. Based on societal changes, religion must adapt in different ways. If religion does not change and adapt to society, they lose followers and may become minuscule in size and objectively insignificant. They then become extreme because they have not adapted to the changes of technology, social norms, or cultural nuances because they do not attempt to veer from the fundamental interpretation of the text, leading them to decipher and follow texts more literally instead of semantically, when a divergent interpretation could have been intended, especially as language was different at that time of the writing of the text, as well as cultural and technological differences that existed that lead to misinterpretation.

When governments begin to govern backed by any given religious entity it may have extreme consequences for those that don't subscribe to it. The use of religion, especially when it's a majority, to create a society that suits one group rather than attempting to include all cannot only cause resentment, but it could be deadly. In self-declared Christian and Muslim nations, for example, where the laws are created to govern those believers with strict repercussions for those that do not abide by the religious laws, implicit or explicit, non-conforming individuals find themselves required to adopt religious practices they perhaps do not agree with (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). Sometimes it's a mere inconvenience to abide by religious laws, but sometimes it can result in jailing or death when the religious law prohibits the expression of one's sexual or gender identity. To give an example of this in both aforementioned religions in Egypt, an individual cannot legally reveal themselves to be homosexual; the implications of doing such could result in jailing or death because of the strict conservative laws that preclude them from doing so. Being homosexual is a crime as it conflicts with both religions, but in Egypt, with an Islamic government, the repercussions for being homosexual and acting on it can result in severe mental and physical abuse, even death (Villarreal, 2020). Even if the family accepts the individual's sexual identity, they cannot be public about their true identity for the repercussions they will endure from their own government and society (Villarreal, 2020). If the laws governing society only acknowledged religious truths within one religion, they would then be delegitimizing freedom of expression (of sexual orientation), and while some believers of that religion understand and accept some of the basic religious 'truths' but rejected ones that condemned homosexuality, for example, they would be in contradiction of the law because it was based on religious views they do not hold.

Some religions, such as those mentioned previously, interfere with science and scientific discoveries that would support and perhaps substantiate non-binary identities (Eidhamar, 2014). These interferences are based solely on belief and interpretation of religious texts, where science is based on facts and observations of reality. Excluding scientific data that disempowers specific religious beliefs creates conflict in society, not only in politics. Such conflict deprives people of the

ability to live authentically, both in and outside of the religions it's in conflict with, and may even blame the individual for living in such a way. Religion, in general, attempts to create a hegemony over others that can be contained and controlled.

The holy texts, scripts, and books are often not scrutinized from within the religion and instead considered infallible as they are interpreted by religious scholars (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008; Eidhamar, 2014). The concept itself is fallible as discussed, language and society change over time and what was once true, only decades later, could prove to be untrue as new research is done and discoveries made (Halim, 2015). However, religious beliefs can only be proved inaccurate if questioned, again because they are interpretations, not based on fact. If those questioning the accuracy are not trusted or belonging to the religion, their perspective is often overlooked or ignored entirely, treated as a threat to the fundamentals of the religion – believed to be reliable and otherwise unquestionable. Secular criticisms are ignored, or fought using the religious texts themselves, rather than secular texts that support the criticism. Though, a non-fact cannot be substantiated using the same foundation as the source of justification or exoneration.

Denying an individual access to common societal interactions and basic inclusion in society because of one's identity is discrimination. Certain groups are being excluded from participating fully in society because of the extreme beliefs of others. That is not to say that all exclusions are unjustified, however exclusions based on religious beliefs exclude common individuals from participating and growing the society, possibly stunting societal advancements, including in other aspects such as research and development, technology, philosophy, arts, and sciences. Moral differences are at the heart of these exclusions, however some of the exclusions are superficial, and those that are interdependent on the healthy functionality of society should be the ones that apply, and reinforced. These may change over time as well, nevertheless none should be based on religious belief.

2.2.3 Effects of Religion on Women

Women are often an afterthought when considerations about the effects of societal changes are being made, especially in modern Egypt's patriarchal society. They are not considered to be among those affected significantly, as they are usually maintained and cared for within the home, therefore little action is taken in regards to their needs (Feki et al., 2017). This is not isolated to religion or religious government, in fact, there is intersectional discrimination within both, non exclusively.

While women are not only overlooked and discriminated against, they are even intentionally left out or objectified to support other issues (Feki et al., 2017). These two concepts seem impossible to coexist, however they do. Women are considered to be both an integral part of society and religion, as well as a seemingly disposable object among the two as well. Objectively speaking, women are necessary for reproduction therefore esteemed highly, however, in the same context their sacrifices are not necessarily considered to such a high degree and they are often abused, used as pawns in negotiations, and even rejected from the workforce. They are expected to care

for their children, maintain their homes, cook, and take care of themselves even after an intense physical and psychological event. This is one example of hundreds of how women are esteemed highly for their physiological abilities yet have their pain disregarded in the same breath.

Women in religion and religious-backed societies are often thought of as insufficient intellectually and physically in comparison with men; this inaccurate concept is archaic, coming into prominence along with the patriarchal ideals, with an ebb and flow of flimsy evidence (Halim, 2015). The patriarchy, oppressing more than just women alone, has created an inaccurate view of women and their place in the modern world, as well as in history. That being said, women have proved to be capable, intelligent, and strong in a variety of ways, however dismissed, with whatever agenda. Egypt has a tumultuous relationship with women in power throughout its very long history. Women in ancient Egypt fought for recognition and power just as modern Egyptian women do today unfortunately, but were still considered powerful (Khalil et al., 2015). It is easy to look back in history and say it was a different time, uncivilized, brutal, barbaric, etc., but in reality, it was an advanced, powerful, civilized culture. It was also run by very powerful, intelligent women, and another example of historical indications can be considered as signs of congruency of 'other' in gender, such as the case of King (formerly Queen) Hatshepsut. Debates continue about the interpretation of the Quran's views about women, as well as their roles in society:

> "The verses in the Quran and the hadiths (pronouncement of the Prophet) that deal with women do not, however, systematically define women's roles and status. Their ambiguity has provoked considerable controversy regarding the Prophet's views and intentions," (Halim, 2015).

With undefined societal roles based on religious text, women are still subverted in terms of gender equality in a variety of fields. However, within the same religion, using the same religious texts, there are variations of interpretations of women's roles: "In addition, the four major legal schools within Islamic tradition have differed in their interpretation of the sources of revelation, including on the issue of women status and rights," (Halim, 2015). This alone is proof enough that the use of religious interpretations should not be a basis for laws that govern society. These interpretations will continue to vary and change over time, with each new Islamic scholar interpreting them differently.

Historically, Egypt has not always been an Islamic nation, and pre-Islam Egypt was relatively free, showing much more gender equality than modern Egypt, with exceptions for marriage and divorce (Halim, 2015).

> "Pre-Islamic poetry, for instance, portrayed women as able to freely interact with men and to actively involve in communal affairs, including in spiritual domain," (Halim, 2015).

Fixed, patriarchal societies struggle to relinquish power to those they deem inadequate,

insufficient, or weak, which is often considered to be women, but has also, historically, considered the poor, working class, disabled, deformed, ill, elderly, uneducated, and 'other' (Capurri, 2006). Those in power may be part of the aforementioned groups, but the commonality among those in patriarchal power is that they are often wealthy or come from wealth, are educated, or had the ability to be educated. They are not even required to be intelligent to participate in the patriarchy, so long as they are forthright a man. However, exclusions do apply, those being some of the previously mentioned insufficiencies. The patriarchy is built on exclusion and elitism, and considerably [toxic] masculinity that exclude partially, or entirely, women and minority groups (Capurri, 2006).

> "One major factor contributing to the conservative evolution of Islamic society with regard to the interpretation of the proper roles for women was the pressure of the ideal of tribal honor," (Halim, 2015).

This leads to the concept that the honor of the family is sustained by the virtue of the women of the family. "At the same time men's image of women emphasized female sexuality and postulated that women were weak and irresponsible," (Halim, 2015). Thus, assuming that intermingling of men and women ultimately led to sexual acts, dishonoring the family. As a result, "Seclusion and veiling of women served the purpose of protecting the family from possible humiliation by the transgressions of its women," (Halim, 2015). Further attributing women with the shame of any sexual acts perpetrated by the pair, and ultimately devaluing women and their character.

> "Ultimately women were kept apart from men to shield men from the temptations that women, who were inherently untrustworthy, inevitably offered. The confinement of women to home obviously limited the roles they could assume and their ability to enforce their rights," (Halim, 2015).

Halim explains how the interpretation of the Quran has dramatically shifted from giving women rights, to taking them away. It is the interpretation of the religious laws and not the text itself that has betrayed women in their fight for equality. Interpretations by men, who wish not to be blamed for their own impulses and lack of self-control. Women are not necessarily without fault, but it is the lack of recognition that men have historically blamed women for their own lack of self-control and that has perpetuated false ideals of women, eliminating much of their agency and creating a virtue-based honor system relying on power over women and their bodies.

2.2.4 Islamic revivalism in Egypt since the 1980s

A decline in Egyptian liberal views towards women – how Islamic revivalism change attitudes to gender and feminism

Egypt has struggled with gender equality for a long time, but it began suffering further with the revival of Islam in the mid 1980s. Islam is not the fundamental cause for this, however religious

extremists were somewhat to blame (Carvahlo, 2009). This section will discuss factors outside of religion that could be the cause of religious revivalism and question who it impacts most and why. This section aims to briefly explain the transformation of Egypt as a secular society to a religious fundamentalist one.

In the late 1970s there was a swell in religious participation within the Muslim communities in Egypt. However, prior there were political shifts towards more secular ideals and a movement away from religious participation, with many passively participating in Islam having been born into it, but leaving it as a fractional aspect of their identity (Carvahlo, 2009). Islam had become an "inherited culture rather than a source of practical guidance," among the educated elite. Islam was fading as a point of contact for religious or personal direction (Carvahlo, 2009). People were living out of the bounds of Sharia Law (religious law), and religious traditions happened less frequently and with less enthusiasm, also an increase in alcohol consumption appeared. At this time, veiling [of women] was almost nonexistent in Cairo as people were enjoying secularism (Carvahlo, 2009).

There are many theories as to how the shift from an increasingly more secular society to a sudden exaggerated shift to conservative religious values occurred. One theory held by Jean-Paul Carvahlo (2009) is that it began as an economic crisis. In the occurrence of a decrease in labor people find themselves desperate to find work and at the same time comparing themselves to others. While families had worked to ensure their children were educated to have more opportunity in the labor market, they suddenly found themselves without work, or very little. Carvalho (2009) explains this time as "envy and unfulfilled aspirations" or *reference-dependent preferences* – A moment when individuals had to make decisions about their lives giving themselves few choices based on what they envied and what they had yet to obtain, including, (1) continue to work hard by extending, or overextending, themselves further to obtain work, whatever the means or (2) dropping out of the race to devote one's time to Islam and religious practices.

> "The critical psychological mechanism required for rising relative deprivation to lead to a religious revival is that religious activity produces religious values which enable agents to cope with envy and unfulfilled aspirations," (Carvahlo, 2009).

Young educated Muslims used this practice to make important decisions about what they saw for themselves. They had to ask themselves if they wanted to do the extra work in hopes they could find employment or secondary employment to maintain their lifestyles, and/or improve their conditions, or reduce their stress and opt out. Opting out of the status race to find employment was also not easy, but it was used as an excuse for their situation. If they withdrew from a secular society that told them to want more, achieve more, and be more, then they no longer had to compete for those things. Instead, by submerging themselves in religion – one that promised wealth, health, and all the things one desires in the next life by simply living according to the Quran – they could create for themselves and build a 'richer' life through religion. They would

have less stress as they would not need to compete for wealth in this life if they can live modestly and righteously. Paired with this they could be exempt from even the pressure to perform to the same degree in secular society. They could use piety as an excuse for their suffering, and in doing so reduce negative income comparisons, as well as lowering their secular aspirations (Carvahlo, 2009).

> "As such, we trace the origins of the contemporary Islamic revival to a combination of two developments: (1) a growth reversal in Muslim societies, and (2) increasing income inequality and impoverishment of the lower-middle class," (Carvahlo, 2009).

Carvahlo (2009) examines the rising aspirations of young Egyptians in the 1950s and 1960s who took advantage of the state-run development of free education throughout the country, particularly those from rural areas. They were motivated by the growth and upward mobility that education brought, though not consistent. The growth reversal that occurred affected these, mostly rural, young Egyptians who did not have the needed social connections or lacked other desirable skills, such as proficiency in the English language. These unfulfilled aspirations led many of them to turn to religion, as explained previously, to devote themselves in other areas where they believed they would not have to compete, drastically increasing religious participation (Carvahlo, 2009). On the contrary, Carvahlo (2009) found that, "…real wages have been falling in Muslim societies since the mid-1970s," leaving less reasonable excuse for the drive from the workforce, or out of the labor market, considering that it was not a new circumstance. Carvahlo (2009) further explains from his research,

> "The key psychological mechanism we identify is that devoting more time to religious activity generates religious values which 'immunize' agents against negative income comparisons."

Carvahlo (2009) and many other authors, he suggests, hypothesize, "that frustrated youth join Islamic political organizations in a bid to alter their economic circumstances by forcing a change in political institutions." This however leaves individuals vulnerable to a collective mindset that may change gradually, potentially radicalizing. And adversely, the collective runs into "free-rider" problems (Carvahlo, 2009). Carvahlo (2009) continues,

> "…that religious activity produces religious values, which help people to cope with envy and unfulfilled aspirations by placing less importance on the object of envy/aspiration (e.g. income, wealth)."

While this reduced emphasis on secular needs helps the individual to separate themselves from secular comparisons and competitiveness, they are still vulnerable, the focus has simply switched. Religious immersion may help de-emphasize material competition and increase religious moral values, but ultimately accentuates moral comparisons. In an attempt to devalue secular

comparisons, religious moral comparisons begin to build, suggesting, “satisfaction of moral superiority helps agents better cope with relative deprivation,” (Carvahlo, 2009).

> “As a consequence, we propose that the process of religious revival in Muslim societies was intensified by the sexual revolution in the West and rapid urbanization caused by the urban concentration of state-led modernization efforts. Large numbers of recent migrants to cities came face to face with the alien values adopted by urban elites,” (Carvahlo, 2009).

The integration and appropriation of western cultural norms along with the state’s modernization efforts further propelled the deviation from secularism to religious engagement, however all this was also paired with economic instability, “Hence cultural and economic polarization went hand in hand,” (Carvahlo, 2009). Many believe this is the lead up to militant and terrorist groups, but that is refuted by the greater Islamic movement. The culmination of these factors at the time are not the sole reason for the revival of Islam, rather parts of the greater whole still.

Through investigation into the World Values Survey (WVS), Carvahlo (2009) discovered that Muslim societies were much more likely to deem homosexuality, divorce, prostitution, and abortion as never justifiable, more so than the United States, also a highly religious state, concluding that the major discrepancy between the West and Islam was not democracy, as was believed strongly at the time, rather gender equality and sexual liberation, major issues consuming the West at the time (Carvahlo, 2009).

Public character is one defining aspect of religious revivalism in Egypt, apart from political movements. This comes in the forms of religious greetings and expressions, informal missionary work and the most recognizable feature, veiling of women, as well as the long beards of men. These spontaneous forms of Islamic identity expression acted as deliberate approaches to reject secularism and display one’s ‘public character’ or religious values, acting as a symbol of one’s religious devotion, an already formative competition among other religious individuals who supposedly abandoned competition (Carvahlo, 2009). Carvahlo (2009) argues, “The veil is perhaps the most potent symbol of Islamic revival. In countries such as Egypt, veiling is a highly counterintuitive phenomenon. After Huda Shaarawi famously removed her face veil in Cairo in 1923, Egyptian women of the middle and upper classes came to adopt Western modes of dress.” To see the drastic change in perspective and use of the veil in only 30 years, from nearly no women veiled in 1969 to around 80% of women veiled in even the most “westernized” neighborhoods by 2000, is striking (Carvahlo, 2009).

In contrast to the political and cultural secularization of Egyptian society, the Muslim Brotherhood was formed (in 1928), “calling for social justice through strict adherence to the *sharia* and the establishment of a Muslim state,” (Carvahlo, 2009). But it wasn’t until the 1970s, with the widespread economic crisis did they gain popularity, but that included the defeat of the Six-day

War that was a major turning point. Following that loss, Anwar El Sadat waged another war with Israel in the name of Islam (Carvahlo, 2009).

> "Despite severe state opposition and repression in countries such as Egypt, Turkey and Algeria, Islamic principles and parties have assumed a highly prominent role in politics in Muslim societies," (Carvahlo, 2009).

Muslims became desperate to show their public character and defend the religiously backed state. This led to other religiously backed organizations such as banks and educational institutions, like schools and universities, as well as an uptick in Islamic books, as well as social welfare services (Carvahlo, 2009).

> "In Egypt, Islamic organizations accounted for at least half of all welfare organizations in the late 1990s, with the number of beneficiaries of health services from such organizations rising from 4.5 million in 1980 to 15 million in 1992," (Carvahlo, 2009).

The rise in visibility of Muslim-led organizations was growing quickly not only in the public and political sectors, but within the educational realm as well. Where secular leftist intellectuals once controlled student unions, Islamist student leaders were the majority control by the end of the 1970s. There was a doubling of mosque construction in just over ten years as well. The advancement of Islam as a means to push out secularism and install an Islamic state had been succeeding. "In addition, the Muslim Brotherhood had gained control of many of Egypt's professional associations by the early 1990s, including the engineers', doctors', pharmacists', scientists' and lawyers' associations," (Carvahlo, 2009) which allowed for a greater economic impact, affecting business practices and policy. The establishment of Islamic economics, founded by Mawdudi, "spurred the development of a multibillion-dollar Islamic banking sector, state support for wealth distribution through the *zakat* (tithe) system and an emphasis on Islamic norms in business," (Carvahlo, 2009). The Muslim Brotherhood took on more assertive roles in combination with the current regime and had a more practical approach to policy reform, joining forces with other entities that did not share their ideologies, in an effort to reassert their political presence (El-Din Shahin, 2007). They published their platform as being inclusive, respecting pluralism, but also promoting an adherence to Sharia Law, while respecting the values of democracy:

> "…respect for public freedoms; acceptance of pluralism; transfer of power through clean and free elections; sovereignty of the people; separation of power; rejecting the use of violence and adopting gradual and legal means to achieve reform; acceptance of citizenship as the basis for rights and responsibilities for Muslims and non- Muslims; and support of human rights, including those of women and the Copts," (El-Din Shahin, 2007).

The stance of the Muslim Brotherhood as an inclusive, pluralism respecting society and political entity, that supports human rights, including women and Copts, seems to undercut their original message of inclusion when they relegate half of the population (women) and at least 10% of the population (Coptic Christians) as an afterthought. Their attempt to project themselves in this way seems like a weak façade, however they had the support of the majority of the nation. With the rigidity of the party, it began to splinter and the Wasat Party was formed by younger members who believed they had a lack of ideological clarity as well as being considerably inflexible (El-Din Shahin, 2007).

It is this sense of inflexibility and fundamentalist idealism, with lack of clarity, that showed the Muslim Brotherhood for what it really was, which was a façade of comprehensive ideals that appealed to Muslims, but was, in reality conservative fundamentalists behind it all, portraying the party as one that wants to progress the country on the basis of religious law, but was actually rejecting of secularism of all sorts and did not, in fact, advance human rights for women, all while trying to maintain their influence (El-Din Shahin, 2007). The Wasat Party was denied recognition multiple times citing that it was not distinctly distinguishable from other parties, though,

> "According to its programme, the party's vision of Islam is based on three fundamental pillars: citizenship that provides equal rights for Muslims and non-Muslims; the right of all citizens to assume all public positions; and coexistence with other cultures on the basis of respect for cultural specificities, justice and equality, interdependence and mutual interests," (El-Din Shahin, 2007).

Carvahlo cites Dekmejian (1988):

> "A sense of xenophobia pervades Muslim society, the feeling that Islam itself is facing a mortal threat. In the opinion of revivalist intellectuals, the very integrity of the Islamic culture and way of life is threatened by non-Islamic forces of secularism and modernity, encouraged by Muslim governments... Western cultural values and mores are vehemently rejected as being alien to Islam. To this end, the mass media are enjoined to propagate Islamic values and practices instead of disseminating foreign cultural influences." [p. 10-11]

This sense of xenophobia, rejection of secularism, of U.S. American culture, and all things foreign to Islam created religious extremists, whether it was intended to or not. This form of religious extremism, turning a secular government around and reversing progress the country had made, and at the same time instituting religious laws that mandated the population to follow, regardless of their own beliefs, created a dangerous precedent for gender equality and women's rights. It paved the way for religious extremism to breed radical insurgent sects. It has impacted the Egyptian economy in both positive and negative ways, but ultimately it has created tension and divisiveness unnecessarily.

2.3 Cultural impact on perspectives self-expression – Restrictions on artistic and self-expression with a comparison in media, art, and among the elite

Egypt has been in the process of great change and progress since the 2011 Revolution and although these changes have been slow and challenging progress continues. However, Egypt continues to be a major perpetrator of human rights violations, as the government "cracks down" on what they consider the misuse of social media, as well as charging journalists with terrorism for criticizing the government (Amnesty International, 2021). The Revolution challenged many cultural and gender norms as women took on active, visible roles in the protests. This revived the 'women question' (previously discussed in this chapter). Still great threats challenge society, greatly affecting women and minorities, as well as all members of the LGBTQI+ society, without exemption for men. These restrictions limit the ability for society to openly criticize its government as well as restricts individuals to live authentically without fear of violence or death. Since the Revolution, in recent years, "Authorities continued to severely repress the right to freedom of expression and clamp down on critical voices offline and online," (Amnesty International, 2021).

In this section I will discuss the restrictions on self-expression through the use of a variety of art forms, online through social media platforms and the media, and explain how this affects different genders and classes.

2.3.1 Freedom of Association

Present Egypt is acting as a great example of what not to do in terms of human rights. They have had a tumultuous and contradictory history with human rights. Egypt struggles to have consistent application of the law without interference from police and other internal and external forces that wish to alter the results. With each new regime the laws are executed differently leaving any individual to ponder their fate. Egypt maintains the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of a variety of individuals, some in particular are those fighting for human rights, including activists and defenders.

> "Officers at the National Security Agency (NSA), a special police force, intimidated human rights defenders and political activists by unlawfully summoning and subjecting them to coercive questioning and extrajudicial police probation measures," (Amnesty International, 2021).

This inconsistency among arrests and imprisonment does not stop defenders and activists from fighting for their rights, though it does put them at further risk of increased violence and death. The current Egyptian military regime, under Abdel-Fatah El-Sisi, is one that does not tolerate criticism, especially when those criticizing the government are doing so because of their human rights violations.

> "Authorities arbitrarily detained and unfairly prosecuted tens of human rights defenders

> and opposition politicians on unfounded charges of "terrorism" and "spreading false news". In July, Hossam Bahgat, director of a prominent NGO, was convicted and fined for peacefully expressing his views on Egypt's 2020 elections. Investigative judges interrogated at least five NGO directors in July and revived investigations into tax evasion by NGOs as part of the politically motivated decade-long criminal investigation into the activities and funding of human rights organizations known as Case 173. Authorities dropped investigations against 12 NGOs but continued to subject their directors and staff to travel bans and asset freezes. At least 15 others remained under investigation and subject to similar restrictions." (Amnesty International, 2021).

Lawyers are not exempt from the backlash of the government. As they represent and speak for those who have been unjustly abused, arrested, imprisoned, and even killed, they themselves are targets for the same. They face imprisonment, being placed on terrorist lists, banned from traveling, and even had freezes placed on their assets in retaliation for their work to help others who have been unjustly treated by the Egyptian government. Through association to activists, opposition politicians, and other human rights defenders, lawyers experience similar, if not the same treatments of those they are defending. Furthermore, they find themselves helpless in continuing their fights if/when they are released as they are banned from the ability to reenter the workforce if found guilty on any of their charges (Amnesty International, 2021).

> "Authorities arbitrarily added 408 people, including activists and opposition politicians, to the "list of terrorists", effectively banning them from engaging in civic or political work and travelling abroad for five years. In November, the Supreme Administrative Court upheld a decision to disbar six lawyers on the "list of terrorists"," (Amnesty International, 2021).

Though the Egyptian government has been releasing some unjustly detained prisoners, including journalists, activists, and human rights defenders, these prisoners have spent years in prison with many on the outside pushing for their release (Human Rights Watch, 2022, May 4). Mada Masr reported that the releases were, "on the condition that, once free, the activists remain silent and refrain from criticizing the authorities," (Human Rights Watch, 2022, May 4). The silencing of these human rights defenders is key to El-Sisi appearing to have more support than he actually does; if he appears to not have public criticisms then he appears to have supporters. For years these human rights violations have been perpetrated by Egyptian authorities without impunity allowing it to continue (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Masr explains that these releases, with such specific and strict conditions, do not actually prove positive change ahead for freedom of expression, including criticism of the government and Egypt's many human rights violations and overall record (Human Rights Watch, 2022, May 4). This façade of progress is quickly undermined by the government itself as new arrests were made the same day.

> "…the same day that the releases were announced – Egyptian authorities arrested TV presenter Hala Fahmy, and journalist Safaa al-Korbagy was handed a 15-day detention

> order by the State Security Prosecution, three days after her arrest," (Human Rights Watch, 2022, May 4).

The 15-day detention orders act as scare tactics for the alleged violators, but also allow for a case to be brought against the individuals. They are jailed on charges without specifics and once the flimsy evidence against them is collected they are held further to await trial. This is how many of the other unjustly detained persons previously mentioned remained imprisoned for months and years (Human Rights Watch, 2022, May 4). The government continues to use counterterrorism laws unjustly to retaliate against peaceful critics, also using them as scare tactics for future critics (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

2.3.2 Self-Expression in a restricting environment

We have seen the consequences of being outspoken of the government when one is an activist, journalist, or defender of human rights in Egypt; however, what are the implications of expressing oneself non-politically? Because El-Sisi continues to homogenize the Egyptian identity and create one that uses women and their virility and strength as the basis of a moral society (Abouelnaga, 2016), there continues to be repression of expression outside of the approved norms. Women are held to higher moral standards of men overall as they are to exhibit and symbolize Egyptian culture. Men dictate women's lives in general in Egypt as women are still subject to their male guardians, so their voices are often the first suppressed (Halim, 2015).

Not only are women vulnerable to the suppression of self-expression, but in Egypt, anyone can be a target. While women who are outwardly contradictory of the "Egyptian identity" of fierce morality, men also suffer from this forced identity. Human Rights Watch (2022, April 27) reported the continued "crackdown" on singers and other artists who violate the family values of Egyptian society. The charges are often vague, but target "*mahraganat*" artists – "a relatively new and hugely popular genre of low-budget Egyptian electronic music developed since 2007, often portraying stories from the lives and struggles of lower-income Egyptians," (Human Rights Watch, 2022, April 27). The Musicians' Syndicate has banned various *mahraganat* artists for their use of language such as "alcohol" (a legal substance) and "hashish" (an illegal substance) as a way to further curb self-expression, especially of individuals lower class and low-income societies, as they often describe the impoverished conditions in which they live and exist (Human Rights Watch, 2022, April 27). Human Rights Watch (2022, April 27) explains that the head of the Musicians' Syndicate believes, "the ban aims to "purify the situation" and that he is against "bad words and sounds."

Performers of all types are being punished, having their permits revoked or not being reissued performance permits because of actions or statements that violate this morality law. These actions could be wearing "inappropriate" clothing or, in the case of actor Mohamed Ramadan, for performing shirtless, or Marwan Pablo, an Egyptian rapper, who featured a Palestinian rapper who altered an Islamic hymn. Some researchers at human rights groups have said that the government has empowered the various artists' syndicates to restrict the members' freedoms,

"on the basis of morality violations," further limiting self-expression with an undisclosed period of restriction (Human Rights Watch, 2022, April 27).

> "Art cannot be like that [*mahraganat*] in President al-Sisi's era. We are moving toward the new republic and art like that is not accepted," Hany Shaker said in a television statement in November 2021 (Human Rights Watch, 2022, April 27).

The current regime would like to ensure that musicians and artists alike are silenced from any criticisms of the government, as has been made clear, however, because it is not clear what constitutes criticism and what is normal speech, artists of all kinds are finding themselves losing freedom of expression rights and a further unable to make a living because of it. The lack of uniformity within the law is the cause of such confusion among artists, some of which intend to stay within the limits of the law to avoid such a fate.

Apart from governmental or political criticisms, it's clear that the laws regarding morality are purposefully vague, leaving room for unjustified silencing, a way for the government to contort the truth and achieve the results they desire. One of El-Sisi's tactics is to assess not only the morality of the content, but decide if it 'improves people's conditions', as Sisi explained himself at the inauguration of a new medical complex (Egypt Independent, 2021). El-Sisi stated at the inauguration, "…people have a right to express their opinions and object to things…However, the aim of such expression should be improving people's conditions." He continued, ""Opposition should not be the aim of the opposition, and freedom of speech should not be for people to just talk, they should speak to say 'pay attention to this'," continuing that doing otherwise is wrong (Egypt Independent, 2021). This type of speech is a warning to the public, not an explanation of how the law works. He explains that all expression should have a constructive purpose, even artistic expression, otherwise it is wrong. However, he and his government constitute what is right and wrong through how they implement the laws. In essence, he is making it clear to the country that they, including the artists, must very carefully follow moral codes so that they do not inadvertently break the law while continuing to leave the laws vague.

Human rights will continue to be challenged in Egypt as long as a forced identity is placed upon the country requiring its citizens to abide by vague and intrusive laws that restrict one's real ability to express oneself authentically. Human Rights Watch (2022, April 27) stated,

> "Egypt is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which permits restricting freedom of speech due to public morals, but such restrictions cannot be arbitrary and need to be based on clear law that sets out the prohibitions in a way that people can reasonably predict what constitutes a violation. Any speech restrictions should be proportionate and cannot be discriminatory."

2.3.3 The Media – social media, news outlets, etc.

So far, I have discussed how the Egyptian government has unjustly arrested, imprisoned and

ultimately silenced human rights activists and defenders and the little evidence it takes to keep them jailed indefinitely. Artists have also been silenced in a variety of ways, as their acts are more public and there are more witnesses to their alleged crimes against morality. This section aims to discuss the common Egyptian and how these same laws affect them on a very micro level.

Journalists, reporters, photographers, correspondents, and even television producers, those who are considered 'the media', are all on the line when it comes to the morality laws. They are to report the events happening accurately and truthfully. However, as discussed, they can be arrested or imprisoned with weak evidence or even unsubstantiated evidence for criticisms of the current regime, but their jobs are ones of great risk around the world as the world understands that telling the truth and accurate reporting is dangerous, especially in countries like Egypt. If they speak against the government, they are aware of the risks they are taking to report true but unflattering information of the regime. They believe in truth and its dissemination.

> "Security forces arbitrarily arrested at least six journalists for their work or critical views. On 19 July (2021), they arrested journalist Abdelnasser Salama after he called for the president's resignation. He and 24 other journalists remained in prison following convictions or pending investigations into accusations of "misusing social media", "spreading false news" and "terrorism"," (Amnesty International, 2021).

It's not uncommon for regimes such as El-Sisi's to limit access to television and radio broadcasts that are critical, which has happened, but they also make such attempts online. El-Sisi's regime aims to cut off the interaction of the citizens with such news, and, if possible, with the operations or organizations themselves.

> "Authorities continued to block at least 600 news, human rights and other websites, according to rights groups," (Amnesty International, 2021).

The attempts to block news, human rights, and other websites is not the solution to the problem, though the Egyptian government makes valiant efforts to do so, and have in the past, such as during the 2011 Revolution. "The response from the Egyptian authorities was to shut down the Internet and mobile services; this was ultimately unsuccessful as social media served as the catalyst for spreading the idea of protest," (Abdelsalam et al., 2013). Their efforts are often only successful for a short time as the means for getting information on the internet are vast and far reaching. The El-Sisi regime has continuously underestimated the power of social media and the expanse of the internet, as well as how people consume information and news.

> "Egyptian authorities often rely on the abusive and ill-defined family values charge to exert control of social media. Since 2020, Egyptian authorities have arrested and prosecuted at least 12 female social media influencers accused of violating the charge, and courts sentenced many to hefty fines and prison terms of up to 5 years," (Human Rights Watch, 2022, April 27).

The laws being used in these cases are often those that state immorality, violation of family values, debauchery, and/or false news, all of which weak reasons for hefty fines, arrests, and/or imprisonment, which these alleged violators face or are charged with (Human Rights Watch, 2022, April 27; Human Rights Watch, 2015). The Egyptian government is going above and beyond to use social media against the population. On multiple occasions since the 2011 Revolution, but even more recently, Egyptian citizens have been accosted in the streets by police and police checkpoints demanding ID, which is not unheard of and even common practice at police checkpoints, however they have also been ordering citizens to relinquish their phones, unlocked, to be searched by police (Al-Monitor, 2021). In these instances, they are searching for anti-Sisi sentiments. Police search social media platforms in pursuit of negative comments about El-Sisi, the government, human rights sympathies, among others. Their photos and private messages are among other applications examined in these arbitrary searches (Al-Monitor, 2021).

> "The Egyptian constitution states that the right to privacy is irrefutable and that telephone conversations and electronic communications cannot be confiscated, accessed without permission or censored by the authorities," (The New Arab, 2019).

According to the 2014 Egyptian Constitution the flagrant searches of phones is constitutional misconduct by police, however El-Sisi's regime has disregard for this, and despite it they continued searches, arrests, and transfers to holding cells without disclosing the alleged violation. The police and government have said they are part of investigations and those detained were unable to contact family or legal representation (Al-Monitor, 2021). The reality is that these random searches of any and all persons attempting to enter or exit Tahrir Square (and many other prominent locations) were searched physically and digitally, in an attempt to capture activists and potential protesters (The New Arab, 2019). All of these are in violation of Egypt's 2014 Constitution. The government stated that any reports of citizens being illegally searched and their movement monitored or limited was false news and was an attempt to sew confusion (Al-Monitor, 2021).

> "Article 54 of the 2014 Egyptian Constitution states, "Personal freedom is a natural right that is safeguarded and cannot be infringed upon. Except in cases of in flagrante delicto, citizens may only be apprehended, searched, arrested or have their freedoms restricted by a causal judicial warrant necessitated by an investigation. All those whose freedoms have been restricted shall be immediately informed of the causes thereof, notified of their rights in writing, be allowed to immediately contact their family and lawyer, and be brought before the investigating authority within 24 hours of their freedoms having been restricted," (Al-Monitor, 2021).

The government began using the Constitution against the citizens and charging them with "flagrant delicto" in order to carry out these acts on its citizens (Al-Monitor, 2021). While they have repeatedly attempted to cover it up as false news or justify it with charges with weak evidence, the many people who experienced these searches have spoken out about them online

and have warned others using the same platforms the government has consistently attempted to shut down in order to stop the flow of communication between allies (The New Arab, 2019). The government is actively working against its citizens in an attempt to control the story and the perspective. Ultimately these methods are poorly executed power grabs, and while the people suffer, they are using the internet and social media to their advantage.

2.3.4 LGBTQ+

While it is dangerous to have opinions that conflict with what the government would want you to believe in general, it is even more dangerous for some. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and Pansexual (LGBTQ+) individuals have a lot to lose when it comes to expressing their identities. There are laws that prohibit one from being homosexual in Egypt. While they cannot be enforced unless there is action that supports suspicions or proof, the government and police are not afraid to search suspected individuals out to punish them. Living a secret, homosexual life in Egypt is very risky.

Egypt has seen a variety of crackdowns, on criticism of the government, on protests and activism, on self-expression, on disseminating truth, and of course on morality. The LGBTQ+ societies have lived underground, fearing for their safety and the safety of their loved ones. They are one of the most diverse intersectional groups as many are human rights activists, critical of the government, attempt to disseminate truth themselves, prove they are moral and human, as well as destigmatize being LGBTQ+, all dangerous. We have seen the flimsy evidence that can be brought against an individual in hopes they can be charged with the most arbitrary crimes. What is the goal? “The professed motive is cultural authenticity coupled with moral hygiene. The means include entrapment, police harassment, and torture,” (Human Rights Watch, 2004). The Egyptian government has not been quiet about their abuses and torture, as if they are acceptable behaviors when detained. They have normalized these abuses for detainees, though it is in fact torture.

These detentions began in early 2001, these men being convicted of men having sex with other men, consensually. These arrests began happening under the guise of “debauchery” to later have more heinous charges (Human Rights Watch, 2004). The reality of these crackdowns on homosexuality or “debauchery” is really a veiled offense against marginalized groups, as we have seen with *mahraganat* artists. Each of these abusive attacks on citizens is an attack on the privacy of every individual. “Every Egyptian's dignity and integrity are under threat in a time of torture, when the law accepts violence as investigation and stigma as certainty,” (Human Rights Watch, 2004). When one marginalized group is attacked, it will not be long before the government finds reasons to go after others. Forced conformity to an identity that does not exist is torture in itself, but these detainees are exposed to excruciating torture.

> “Police routinely torture men suspected of homosexual conduct, sometimes to extract confessions and sometimes simply as a sadistic reminder of the burden of shame their alleged behavior incurs. Men have told Human Rights Watch how they were whipped,

> beaten, bound and suspended in painful positions, splashed with ice-cold water, and burned with lit cigarettes. Men taken during mass roundups may be tortured with electroshock on the limbs, genitals, or tongue. Guards encourage other prisoners to rape suspected homosexuals. Psychological torment complements the physical trauma," (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

These are not even the extent of the atrocities committed while detained. The government has instituted anal cavity checks as well. "Men arrested for homosexual conduct are forcibly subjected to anal examinations at the hands of the Forensic Medical Authority, an agency of the Ministry of Justice," (Human Rights Watch, 2004). These searches carried out by medical professionals aim to find evidence that they have been "habitually used" in "sodomy" (Human Rights Watch, 2004). This type of examination, like that of the virginity testing done on young girls and women, is pseudoscience. However, this does not stop pro-regime doctors from inventing new torture methods to "prove" them right in their homophobic agenda (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

In 2001, among the first arrests were fifty-two men, detained from a discotheque called "Queen Boat" which was believed to be frequented by homosexual men. The men arrested were charged with an array of crimes, deemed "Satan worshipers" and "sexual perverts" when their arrests were made public. These men were demonized for associating in a club allegedly known for homosexual behavior, though they were not actually caught in any such behavior at the time. They were, until this moment, practically invisible to society, not challenging authority, and certainly not publicly flagrant with their sexuality (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Men were once able to associate with one another, share with each other, and commune with one another, but when these crackdowns began men across Egypt became fearful of being misidentified as homosexual or engaging in homosexual behavior as the cases of other men became public.

> "Even before the bar raid, agents of the Vice Squad (a morals police [squad] within the Ministry of Interior's national police force, with divisions in each jurisdiction) had started surveillance of the Internet, answering personals advertisements placed by men seeking men, arranging meetings with them, and arresting them (Human Rights Watch, 2004)."

In other cases, police in Cairo and elsewhere have raided private apartments, or wiretapped phones to collect and arrest contacts, or used "trusted secret sources" to finger men suspected of homosexual conduct. Vice Squads maintain lists of homosexuals; massive roundups may follow if a gay man is murdered, with dozens or even hundreds arbitrarily detained," (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Police use entrapment techniques to find and finger men who are suspected homosexuals in a government sponsored aim to defend Egypt's cultural values. I argue that it breaks the trust of society, both with the government and between individuals, as well as cultural and religious bonds. If one feels threatened by members of their own religion or within their communities, they

will distance themselves from them in order to protect themselves, and as a means of living more authentically.

> “Egyptian officials have deceptively claimed that the country codifies "no distinction or discrimination based on a person's sexual orientation." In fact, as Human Rights Watch shows in this report, legislation originally meant to penalize prostitution swelled, during its drafting, into a sweeping instrument punishing "promiscuity" in general,” (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Over the past two decades these crackdowns have continued and more and more individuals are reluctant to talk about or mention being gay. Those who know or suspect individuals of being gay, especially young urbanites, will often protect their identities and deny knowing anyone who is homosexual. More people silently, and perhaps secretly, show solidarity for LGBTQ+ people by simply staying silent in the face of harassment. In September 2017 a concert was held in Cairo, where various members of the audience held up rainbow flags in support of the band leader, who was openly gay. Pro-government media, conservative politicians, and religious leaders called for their arrests and the police went to work entrapping and otherwise capturing those who waved these rainbow flags at the concert, by reviewing social media posts that showed photos and videos of the event (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Those arrested were, again, charged with “debauchery” and/or “inciting debauchery” until they could be investigated and charged with greater crimes. The first of those arrested was sentenced to six years in prison for their assumed sexuality, and six additional years of probation (Human Rights Watch, 2017). “Since al-Sisi took power in 2013, more than 230 people have been prosecuted on “debauchery” charges, according to a November 2017 report from the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR),” (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

> “Security forces routinely pick people off the streets based solely on their gender expression, entrap them through social networking sites and dating applications, and unlawfully search their phones. Prosecutors use this content to justify prolonged detentions as they rubber-stamp police reports and bring unjustified prosecutions against them,” (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The world watches as these atrocities are committed in Egypt and other nations, but little is done. There are rumors that international silence is the best way to maintain a pacified Egypt. This section documents reports collected since 2001, with witness statements of the abuse and maltreatment of detainees, demonstrating the necessity for individuals to have the freedom of expression. Egyptian police are able to pick up any suspected homosexuals based on their gender expression, search their phones, and potentially imprison them for simply being non-binary. The abuses of Egyptian citizens at the hands of a homophobic regime creates much more than distrust of the government and police, it foments hostility, fear, shame, helplessness, and an urgency for change.

Gender expression is part of identity. The current Egyptian government would like to homogenize the population, however improbable, and hide behind a façade of false narratives, poorly constructed veils, and impose violence against those who reject them. The Egyptian identity that has been proposed by El-Sisi and his government is one that is an idealized version of heterosexuality. This government imposes not only their religious beliefs on the country, but also cultural and moral standards even they cannot live up to. They commit atrocities in the name of Islam while simultaneously demonizing terrorism, when they themselves are committing terrorist acts on their own people. They have and continue to steal the privacy and peace of mind of their people through arbitrary searches and arrests, by jailing gender nonconforming individuals who have done nothing but express themselves differently. In Egypt's current climate no one is safe from persecution when the requirements for detainment are vague and evidence lacking.

Let us use Egypt as an example of what we must continue to fight against, as well as what we should fight for. Let us understand that gender nonconformity is not an abomination, like the government would like all to believe, but rather the natural order. Let us not become complicit with injustice against marginalized groups, as one day it could be us for any real or perceived reason. Let us understand that the construction of one's own identity is crucial for authenticity and the creation of an accepting cultural identity – one that will be so bright that it blinds those who wish evil to be done.

Conclusion

By analyzing feminist histories, religious influences, and socio-political pressures specific to Egypt, this chapter outlines the challenges and strategies of gender expression in a highly regulated cultural environment. These findings form a crucial part of the thesis's foundation, helping to contextualize the aesthetic choices and symbolic themes of the artistic works that follow. In the next chapter, I expand the temporal frame by turning to the mortuary practices of Ancient Egypt, continuing the process of bridging critical research with creative exploration.

The impact of small, even micro, influences cannot be overlooked or denied as this chapter demonstrates the crucial effect and reach they have on individuals, communities, and a culture. Throughout this chapter I have indicated many underlying factors in the suppression of expression, generally speaking about individual self-expression, but this does not exempt self-expression through art, in all its forms. While authentic gender expression is not permitted and other forms of self-expression are also censored or concealed, the artistic means of authentic self-expression encourage non-conformity and break homogenization tactics, though subversive and subtle, can speak loudly where voices are silent and words are not enough to express everything.

Empowering individuals, women in particular, allows for growth in many directions within a society, as they are fundamental to the success of a family. Creating equality in society for women to participate equally, creates space for innovation and creativity previously filtered or dismissed. Throughout this chapter we have seen the importance of the many roles women have in Egyptian society and how they are not given a fair say in their own lives, though we have also seen the

strength and drive women have to contribute to society and improve conditions for themselves and their families. The empowerment of women benefits all as they often search for justice and equality because they have not always been provided it. As a vulnerable group in Egypt, women understand the necessity for fairness and a seat at the table, like in many other countries. Empowering women and promoting uniqueness could allow for politics to continue to gradually change, allowing other, more vulnerable groups, to also have a say in their own lives and self-expression.

Through the investigation of social, religious, and cultural impacts on gender and feminism in Egypt, it can be discerned that the importance of gender expression and authentic self-expression is crucial to a healthy, functioning society. Governments such as Egypt's, militarized and religious conservatives, will attempt to subdue society again and again, using arrests, abuse, and even torture to make them conform and adhere to their extremist laws. This power grab for total control could imply that the government, in fact, is not as strong as it seems, and the only possible way to create a society they envision is through total control. However, Egypt continues to prove that it is not homogenous, it is not extremist, and it will not be controlled entirely. Though there are bigger mountains to climb for Egyptians to have a more equitable society, they are not willing to sit idly by, but rather endure immense pressure, pain, and suffering for a greater change.

It is important to understand the culture and politics of the society to further comprehend how identity is influenced and expressed with relation to these aspects, including religion. Having a fundamental understanding of these concepts and how they influence identity expression over time, contributes to not only a greater comprehension of the culture and people, but provides fundamental information for this research, allowing it to be more complete and relevant. Without this background research in contemporary Egypt there could potentially be a disconnect from the reality of the current situation and my proposed question. Through this research I was able to gain an understanding of how individuals feel they can express themselves generally, which is key to the methodology of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER AND FEMINISM IN ANCIENT EGYPT

Chapter 3 – Gender and Feminism in Ancient Egypt

Introduction

This chapter focuses on contemporary concepts of gender and feminism as incorporated and utilized in Ancient Egypt, expanding on their applicability to customs and how they were affected by them. In the first section of this chapter, I demonstrate how gender was portrayed in Ancient Egypt in high society, in religion, and culturally, as well as its role in different aspects of Ancient Egyptian culture: in marriage, with respects to fertility, within the family and home, how it was viewed outside of the home and its economic and legal bearings. It is pertinent to consider the cultural influences of Ancient Egypt with regards to gender and feminism as their long history and rich customs are intercultural and yet still unique, but continue to have influence today. Understanding how gender affected the daily lives of the average and elite Egyptian will help reveal the necessity for gender expression both in life and death. Furthermore, it allows us to see how and when feminism was implemented and what effects it had on individuals and the culture as a whole.

Ancient Egyptians spent their lives constructing their identities in preparation for death, where in which they would be able to eternally continue an aggrandized version of the life they led on earth, in the afterlife. I explain how the identity was created and maintained in life and what that meant for their afterlife. Interpreting and further examining the importance of death and what role identity played in it is crucial to understanding self-expression in Ancient Egyptian art and funerary/mortuary art. Using artisanal traditional methods, both in pictorial and textual, we are able to examine what was of the utmost importance to any given individual who had the means to procure funerary materials. Additionally, through these artisanal methods, we are able to explore more of the individualistic, and perhaps even questionable techniques as a means of self-expression through funerary art.

Finally, questioning what it means to be a man or woman in Ancient Egypt using artistic references, I identify three main ways that an individual expressed their identity: through pictorial, sculptural, and textual mediums. While these methods were often reserved for the elites and royals, some middle class aimed to do the same. Through this investigation we discover the importance of fitting into society through conforming to tradition and burial practices, while also challenging the status quo, religion, cultural customs, and the gender binary. Through the use of different materials, they were also able to make statements about who they were. Likewise, who they were depicted with in their tombs, as well as who was described in their texts or on their coffins made a point. Funerary and mortuary arts were a reflection of who the individual was as well as who they believed themselves to be, or hoped to be in the afterlife.

This chapter begins a review of information focusing on representations of gender and identity in Ancient Egypt, considering its mortuary art and cultural practices as the main axes of this review. Rather than offering an exhaustive study, it draws on selected examples from elite funerary contexts that are particularly relevant to contemporary debates about identity, transformation,

and visual symbolism. These cases are selected for their scholarly visibility, material richness, and conceptual alignment with the personal approach to artistic practice that will be explored later in the thesis.

The objective of this research is not only historical understanding but also to extract visual principles and strategies from Ancient Egyptian traditions that can be extrapolated to the interpretations I have made in my artistic practices and that touch on some of the issues of identity construction.

This chapter is situated at the intersection of historical research, gender archaeology, and visual analysis. It contributes to the thesis's overarching artistic research framework by tracing how gender identity was represented, performed, and preserved in Ancient Egypt, particularly through funerary art. As with the rest of the thesis, my methodological approach stems from a practice-based investigation driven by artistic inquiry.

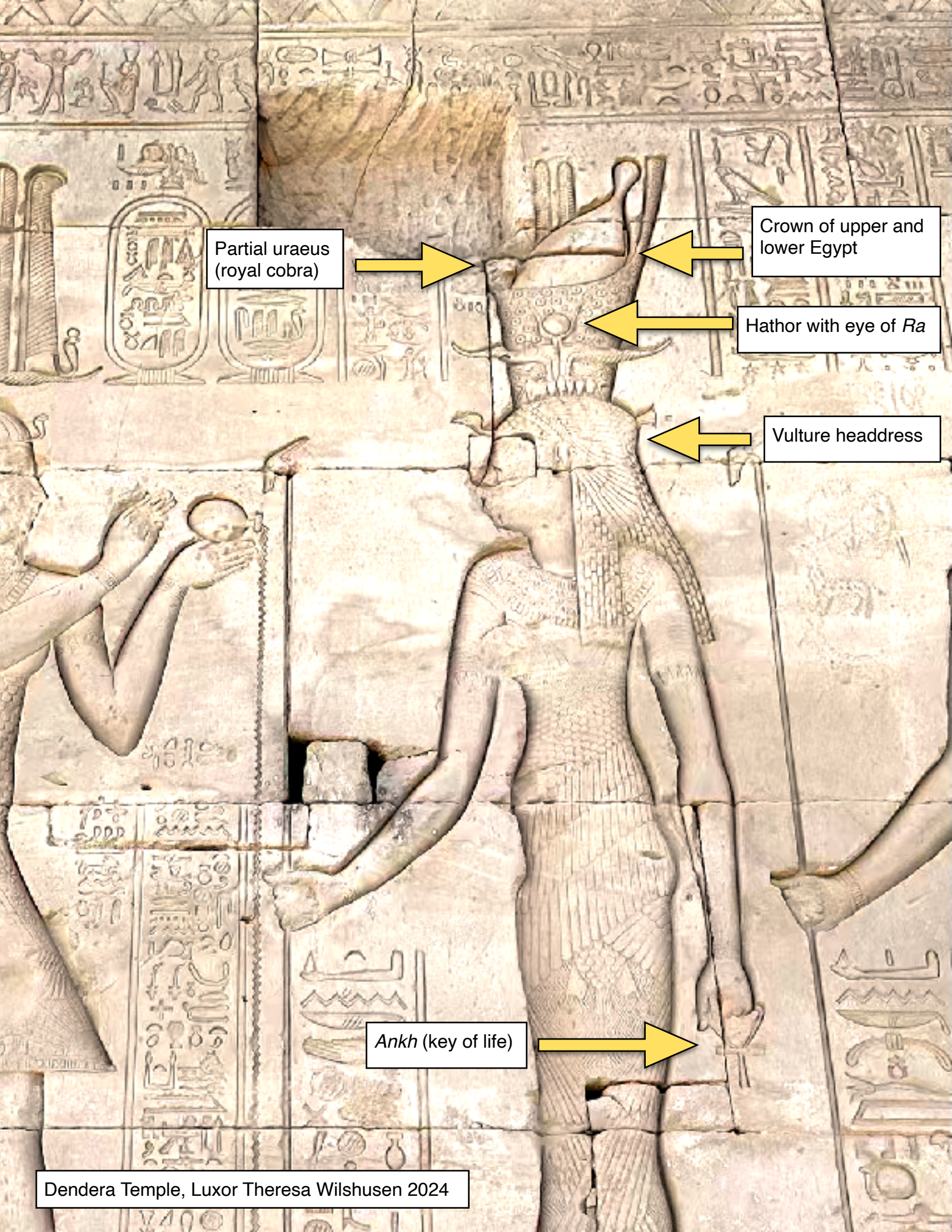
The writing of this chapter maintains the academic tone necessary to maintain the greatest possible objectivity regarding the studies of Egyptology and those of visual and cultural culture, aware that its conclusions are of an individual nature and that they will provide a comparative historical basis for the artistic projects developed in subsequent chapters.

3.1 Gender as portrayed in [Ancient Egyptian] culture and its implications

3.1.1 Royalty and High Society

Throughout Ancient Egyptian history there is excessive evidence of men, particularly royalty, and their lives. As royalty (the king) was the liaison to the gods, the direct descendent of them, he played a critical role in the lives of everyone. With this belief he was further infallible and unquestionable. Not only was the king royalty, one who controls the land and the people, he was also the highest religious authority as a direct descendent of the gods (Robins, 1993, p.21). The king was, with very few exceptions, male, and through his kingship and divinity was differentiated from all other beings. When the king ascended the throne, he was, through ritual, bestowed with divine gifts giving him the authority to rule, in accordance with *ma'at* – the correct order of things established by the creator god. Kingship was meant to pass from father to son, so it was important that they marry and father families to ensure a successor would take his place, but where were the women? They are depicted throughout ancient history on façades, in tombs, and in texts (Robins, 1993, p.21).

Men were surrounded by women due to their large families; their circles often included royal women such as mothers, wives, and daughters. Though little was known about women, more can be observed about royal women, and their importance and roles in the lives of the royal family. Three millennia of surviving evidence has allowed researchers to study the changes throughout history, as their titles, insignias, and the contexts to which they were represented (Robins, 1993, p.21).


Partial uraeus (royal cobra)
Crown of upper and lower Egypt
Hathor with eye of *Ra*
Vulture headdress
Ankh (key of life)
Dendera Temple, Luxor Theresa Wilshusen 2024

Men, in the divine royal role, were the creators of their kingdoms and thus determined the status of those around them, including the statuses of women directly. In Ancient Egypt the titles of women referred to their positionality to the king – king's mother, king's daughter, king's wife, and even more exclusive titles such as king's principal wife and king's sister. While all of these titles refer to women's roles in royalty one may question if women were also, in fact, divine, though their titles appear as if they were the property of the king (Robins, 1993, p.23).

Though contexts are vague, from insignias researchers have found that women were in fact portrayed as divine through connections to deities. This often came in the form of headdresses and depictions with the key of life (*ankh*). This connection was made through direct affiliations with the goddesses by using the animals that corresponded to those deities. For example, one of the most common was the vulture headdress that fit the head of the queen, wings that wrapped around the sides, with the head that jut forward. The uraeus, or the royal cobra, was another common headdress, and could be substituted for the vulture. Both are vestiges from the Old Kingdom, but were continued to be used. Vulture goddess Nekhbet was the protector of Upper Egypt (in the south), Wadjyt was the cobra goddess and the protector of Lower Egypt (in the north). Queens throughout pharaonic history wore headdresses of these two goddesses signifying their control over the two parts of Egypt, and while other goddesses later also used these animals as their insignia, pharaonic queens continued to use them as both symbols of their control as well as to represent their relation to the goddesses throughout history. Some scholars also believe that there are correlations to the sun god Ra, with the goddess Hathor as the eye of Ra. Through this combination of gods, Ra acted as a protector for the king from his enemies, making a direct correlation between the king and these deities, as well as the women who wore the representative headdresses. The king's most noted attribute or insignia was the uraeus, which is another potential reason for the queen's use of it in her own right (Robins, 1993, p.23).

Another identifying factor in determining the godliness of individuals was the use of the *ankh* (the key of life). This cross figure with a rounded top carries extreme power in depictions of gods and humans. The *ankh,* when carried by a human, signifies their godliness or their direct connection to the gods. It is also used in depictions of the queen when she is around other people below her status. It again, represents that she is superior to them by showing her connection to the gods and making her distinguishable from those around her as god-like. This symbol is also used in cult and funerary contexts, it symbolizes that the individual is dead (Robins, 1993, p.25).

All of these identifiers were indicators of godliness using them as an insignia to show a bloodline to the divine, thus determining that royal women who were represented in these ways were divine, just as the king. Some scholars suggest that the right to the throne was in fact through royal women and only effectuated when they married a royal man (usually their brother or half-brother), thus giving him full, divine power of the throne, however some wives of kings were not of royal blood, and yet they were still divinized (Robins, 1993, p.26-7).

By the New Kingdom kings were polygamous, many having both royal and non-royal wives,

though the selection process of non-royal wives is not clear. This is when the title “king’s principal wife” came to use. This created a hierarchy among the wives, signaling that there were likely some that were royal and non-royal, but the importance of them became who provided an heir to the throne, which had to be male (Robins, 1993, p.27). This shows that kings were in control of choosing their wives, and Robins (1993) states that women who were non-royal and selected as wives were elevated in status and their families benefited from her ascension. Robins (1993) suggests the families of the women were not benefitting from the marriages to the same extent as their daughters, but their lives improved significantly as they had connections to the royals and could be considered for jobs or work they wouldn’t have been otherwise.

In Ancient Egypt, like in other ancient cultures with royalty, marriage acted as a tool for international relations. Marriage to foreign wives created diplomacy between kingdoms, which allowed for the trade of goods and products, as well as labor and knowledge. Foreign kings would often offer [one of] their daughters to the king to appease him, perhaps to avoid conflict and show submission, however it was also done after a failed conflict where the foreign king had lost. Daughters were offered as payment, usually along with healthy slaves, animals, and chariots. In this sense they were traded as goods themselves, rather than just as diplomatic symbols of good faith. Women in these situations were property of their kings (fathers or brothers) and though valuable, lacked agency in deciding who they would marry for the “greater good” of her country (Robins, 1993, p. 30). These women who were traded as high value objects were princesses of substantial power in their home countries/kingdoms, and thus they were ‘sacrificed’ to the contending king. Women of high status only were traded in this way (Robins, 1993, p.30-31).

While Egyptian kings would take foreign wives as prizes after war, as tribute, or for diplomatic purposes, they were a superpower in the region. Records show that Egyptian kings often took foreign brides, and their dowry along with them, but often refused to marry off their own women in other, but similar, circumstances. There is evidence from external kingdoms, like the Hittites who were excellent record keepers, documented specifically that the Egyptian kings, on various occasions, did not provide women or princesses in trade. They had high esteem for their royal women and it was not until they began to lose power and status in the region that they began to marry off their royal women (Robins, 1993, p.32-33). Women’s values fluctuated with the state of the kingdom. When the kingdom was rich and powerful, so were their women, highly sought after and yet exclusive to Egyptian royals. When the kingdom began to show signs of distress and in need, they became a bargaining chip of mediocre value, one that needed to be traded with other goods of equal value – including animals.

In good times of economic stability and power in Egypt, women were regarded in high esteem, but were often not a part of negotiations. There are rare instances where queens on either side of the negotiations participated in the negotiations, but were usually left out unless they themselves were the initiators of the discourse (Robins, 1993, p.34). Women who were exchanged as wives to the Egyptians were taken and accepted as wives, but little is known as to how they were treated once they arrived. The little information that exists suggests that, in few instances and through

negotiations, they were taken on as “king’s principal wife”, but that was very rare. There was correspondence between the Hittites and Egyptians with regards to the princesses they had sent on various occasions, frankly stating that they have not heard from them and do not know if they were indeed alive or dead. In these correspondences they asked for proof of life – sending one of their own who knew her well, that could come and see her and talk. There was real fear from subordinate kingdoms that the Egyptians were taking their valuable women and perhaps discarding them, or worse yet, killing them and avoiding contact (Robins, 1993, p.34-35).

At this time, any agency women had as royals in their own countries seemed to have been stripped when they arrived in Egypt, often being cast as “king’s wife”, of which there were usually many, and being forgotten simply as a means of diplomacy. Robins (1993) explains that foreign brides came with entourages of women to care for them, and some as gifts, as they were non-royal. Robins (1993) continues that these women were likely put to work at one of the many linen workshops, left from the Old Kingdom, spread out across Egypt. Many of these foreign brides were unlikely to have ever lived with the king, and rather were cared for at other compounds to maintain peace and alliance.

Elite women in the ancient world, royal women with power and dominance, were treated as property, with no real agency. These women were important to negotiations, but were not able to participate in them. They were instead traded like a valuable stud. Men controlled their existence along with the lives of their royal attendants, and while they were traded like goods, they were crucial for the function of the entire process.

> “They had no say in their fate, and yet they became important cogs in the working of the international diplomatic system; while the system was run by men, the women were needed to make it work,” (Robins, 1993, p.36).

With so many wives, one could expect there to be many children. Though kings often had many wives out of necessity for international relations, he did not necessarily have sexual relations with them all. However, one example of the contrary is Ramses II. There is a record of more than one hundred children originating from him. The mothers are unknown, but it is significant that there is record of his offspring being so numerous. As we can see through even the record-keeping of heritage, women were not considered a significant part of the lineage, rather the king was, as a direct descendant of the sun god, Ra (Robins, 1993, p.36). This put women, queens, in an even more inferior position than their counterparts, as while their children would be named offspring of the king, their own names would be lost and/or forgotten, acting simply as a vessel for the king’s spawn to be produced.

The importance of having multiple wives then is not the same as polygamy today. In ancient times there were many reasons that a mother or child would not survive childbirth. As we know today, childbirth is dangerous, and yet in Ancient Egypt it was much more so. Women and infants had to fight off bacteria, disease and illnesses, plague, and animals or insects. Throughout childhood

they were exposed to many more dangers than modern children are today, with far fewer resources to combat them, such as medicines, vaccines, surgeries, and treatments. There was also the issue of incest, which often produced ill or deformed children who lived short lives, most notably King Tutankhamun (Awad, 2010).

Royal children were well taken care of, having many women caring for them, but they also had hierarchy. As with the mothers (the king's wives, the queens), they were born into a system of importance. Of course, their mother's status was important, but so was their sex. All of the queens were hoping to provide the king with his heir to the throne. Once the first son was born, he was cared for differently than any of his sisters. He was treated as the heir and experienced a superior upbringing with the expectations of who he would one day be looming, and assuming he survived until then (Robins, 1993, p.37). Lifespans for adults were short, but were shorter for children as previously mentioned, they were facing a lot of biological battles, so their existence and survival were of utmost importance. It was not always the first-born son that would become the heir, as the king could ultimately choose who would be his heir, assuming he had a selection (Robins, 1993, p.37).

Daughters had no kingly expectations and were therefore deemed less important in terms of formal upbringing, however since Egypt did not recognize female kings, there was no pressure for her to be brought up in the same way. Since they were, however, potential queens, they were raised to be able to perform these roles (and others). The daughter with the king's mother and the king's principal wife, the three formed a triad much like that of the person, goddess Hathor, and the sun god, Ra, creating a close connection between the royal women and, on some occasions, they were able to appear with their fathers in ritual scenes (Robins, 1993, p.37). Daughters were educated based on the roles they would assume in the future, and since at the time, they could not become king they were trained and educated to be wives, sisters, and mothers, and perhaps allowed to learn to read and do math for the sake of assisting with other duties, to which there were plenty of responsibilities, but were still considered inferior to that of the heir to the kingship (Robins, 1993, p.21-23).

As kings took on wives, they always had a principal wife, or 'favorite' wife, often named "king's principal wife". Queens did have royal duties to attend to, but important queens had their own establishments. These were compound-like estates, sometimes even in her own name, but were still administered by men. Harims were situated across Egypt, usually along the Nile River. These were independent establishments on par with that of the king. They were supplied with cattle, fish, grains, oil, and other provisions. Some texts suggest that these establishments were run by the queens, often using the textile workshops to produce just that, and contribute in some way to their maintenance as queen, such as previously mentioned with the arrival and keep of foreign brides (Robins, 1993, p.39). While the harems were run and maintained by some of these favorite queens, some even independently owned by these queens, they were still fundamentally run by men. This gave the appearance of agency for women, particularly powerful women (queens), but in fact undermined their authority with the implicit control of men of other authority, not

necessarily of royal standing. These queens were still being controlled (Robins, 1993, p.39).

I have mentioned the importance of titles among the royal women, as it provided them status among the other women, but the two most important positions were “king’s mother”, and “king’s principal wife”. The context in which they were depicted with their royal insignias and names was what gave them status, so it was important for them to be seen, or appear in important ritual scenes (Robins, 1993, p.40). Scenes depicting the divine birth of the king were utterly important for the king’s mother, as she would be seen impregnated by Amun-Ra, and through this act she was in direct connection with the god Amun-Ra without any intermediary (Robins, 1993, p.41). These depictions of the queens without the presence of the king provide her with power and divinity. They assume her importance in the creation of the divine king, and assure her prominence. She is, in these depictions, the actor of her own agency and able to carry the lineage of the kingdom, putting her at a very high level of esteem as a royal, but also within the kingdom. “This meant that every king’s mother had been on one occasion the earthly consort of the god Amun-Ra, and this may have been one reason for her importance,” (Robins, 1993, p.41).

The king’s mother was also given a second title, the second most important – king’s principal wife. There are suggestions that the two titles were used in the same way, for in some cases, the king’s principal wife was also given the title of king’s mother. This could be in reference to the prospective king, not the acting king, but it is unclear. It is assumed that it was akin to an honorary title given to the mother of the reigning king (Robins, 1993, p.41). While honorary titles do help provide or boost the status of a queen, they seemed to be somewhat insignificant if added after the ascension of the king (the son of the mother receiving the title).

The kings and queens of Ancient Egypt derived their divinity and power from belief in cults and religious rituals. They functioned together, one dependent on the other to assume and maintain power. Although women occupied great positions of power, they had little when it came to the matter of decision making, however, they were necessary to the throne. Royal women were often given divine attributes as their existence was complementary to that of the king. “…the interconnection of the two meant that one could not exist without the other,” (Robins, 1993, p.42). The reliance of one another meant that one could not simply eliminate the other in order to rule the way they wished, and this was clear. Some queens outshined their husbands, or at least became excellent examples for their husbands. One such queen was Ahmose Nefertari.

Ahmose Nefertari was the principal wife of Ahmose, but she was also his sister (or half-sister) and the mother to his successor. She did not use any of the habitual titles given to queens, and instead used ‘god’s wife of Amun’, given to her by her brother-husband, Ahmose (Robins, 1993, p.43). Not only was this a title given, but it was an important priestly office held in the cult of Amun at Thebes. She outlived her husband and her son (Amenhotep I) and lived into the reign of Thutmose I, with whom she was not related. She was however revered as there are stelae and depictions of her, including offerings for her. “Ahmose Nefertari’s importance did not end with her death. Together with her son Amenhotep I, she was deified and worshiped by the workmen at

Deir el-Medina as their patron," (Robins, 1993, p.44). Her cult lasted throughout the New Kingdom, testifying to her magnitude as a great queen. Women like her were rare, as they were powerful and commanding. She was deeply involved in the cult of Amun, making her a particularly religious woman, perhaps out of necessity, but cared about contributing to her kingdom.

The daughter of Thutmose I, Hatshepsut, was another strong and powerful woman, well known for how she ruled. She too took on the title of god's wife of Amun. She was not related to Ahmose Nefertari however. While Thutmose I was selected by Amenhotep I as his heir, his mother was not royal and had no title; this suggests that Thutmose was also not royal and was likely selected by Amenhotep I because he had no surviving male offspring. Little is known about Hatshepsut during the reign of her father and half-brother-husband. She appears in some stelae alongside her husband, Thutmose II, but she outlived him. Surviving evidence, the biography of an official, states that "Thutmose II 'went up to heaven and was united with the gods. His son arose to his throne as king of the Two Lands and ruled on the seat of the one who begot him. His sister, the god's wife, Hatshepsut, controlled the affairs of the land," (Robins, 1993, p.45).

This is the moment that began a new life for Hatshepsut, the daughter of a non-royal, and Queen of Egypt. Thutmose III rose to power as a boy, but he was not the son of Hatshepsut, who only had a daughter. Hatshepsut was determined to stay in control and became regent for the young Thutmose III, remaining as the controlling individual until he became of age to rule for himself (Robins, 1993, p.45). Hatshepsut suddenly came into controlling power and material. She maintained her title of god's wife and relinquished the majority of her queenly duties, but remained a faithful servant of the cult of Amun. She was depicted in kingly iconography, using kingly titles – titles used exclusively for kings, but with her own reinvention of them, like 'mistress of the Two Lands'. She built temples, erected obelisks, and took on important titles of authority. She acted as king, depicted herself as king, and seven years into Thutmose III's reign and her as regent, she abandoned the titles that marked her as queen and deemed herself king (Robins, 1993, p.46). Until this moment she had been acting as king, so while Thutmose III aged, she ruled Egypt as king. Her iconography was changed to depict her in male clothing, and in texts she was referred to as king. She claimed that her father had selected her as heir to the throne and had offered her to the court and all the gods of Egypt. And like the births of kings, she had her conception and birth depicted in her mortuary temple to ensure it was seen that she was born as the king of Egypt, just as all the others had in myth (Robins, 1993, p.46).

Hatshepsut found it difficult to relinquish her power to Thutmose III when he came of age, and instead decided to co-rule with him. This wasn't entirely uncommon, as it was a way to advise and prepare the new king for his new position. While she was officially titular king, she reigned along with him. She was, however, depicted more often than her co-king on statuary, though he did appear with her in temple scenes (Robins, 1993, p.47). She understood that her ability to continue to reign as co-king was to keep peace and allow Thutmose III to feel in control, while in reality she continued to rule Egypt primarily.

MFA Boston. (n.d.). Statue fragment of Hatshepsut

Large kneeling statue of Hatshepsut: New Kingdom. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-a).

Seated statue of Hatshepsut: New Kingdom. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-a).

Hatshepsut as regent for Thutmose III

Musei Vaticani. (n.d.). *Stele of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III*. Stele of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III

Hatshepsut seated offering, Deir el Bahri, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Osiride statues ofHatshepsut, Deir el Bahri, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

She was an intelligent being, had a strong character, and was favored by her people. She broke with traditional cultural and gender norms at the time and not only to maintain the power and control that she enjoyed, but also to take control of her identity. She changed her name, her dress, her title, and shattered the expectations of what 'king' meant. She reigned, either as regent, queen, or king, for 20 years (Robins, 1993, p.49). She had huge construction projects that benefited the workers, had numerous stelae, obelisks, façades and other depictions created of her that put artisans to work; Egypt was rich and thriving, and though she was not a great leader of war, and is seen today as a pacifist, she did have war campaigns (Robins, 1993, p.47). Her intelligence was exceeding other kings, as she was an excellent negotiator in trade and allowed Egypt access to rich resources because of it (Cooney, 2015, p.90, 95).

Hatshepsut was a woman, who ultimately became a man, be it through rituals, crossdressing, titles, pictorial declarations, or through funerary technicalities. She became a man in all ways she believed she could at the time, with clear perceptions of herself as king. While society had their doubts about a female king, they realized her capacity to lead and do so well. Her gender expression was not socially or culturally acceptable, but she changed the perception of it through challenging all parts of those expectations and norms while also continuing to successfully lead a prosperous country (Cooney, 2015, p.95). Her scribes detailed her using masculine pronouns and grammatical form, and yet today we still refer to her with feminine pronouns And, while kings were often referenced to the male god Horus as a symbol of their divinity, Hatshepsut, as king, referred to herself as female Horus, a contradiction of genders for the god Horus (Robins, 1993, p.50). She was the contradiction of *ma'at*, the natural order of things, but showed that she was more than capable of being king, or in reality, co-regent. Thutmose III ascended the throne as sole king after Hatshepsut's death and sometime after he began erasing her kingly images. There are questions as to the motive as it is known that this did not take place immediately after her death, rather sometime later, years in fact. One theory is that as he came into his kingship with confidence, he began to want to erase her existence as king to further legitimize his own. It was not seen as a vindictive act rather than an act of taking on the natural leadership role of king, with perhaps some intimidation of her images as king. He did however, leave intact her images as queen and regent. This could be a sign of intolerance for her "unnatural" ascension to the throne, and/or a type of rejection for her gender expression as well (Robins, 1993, p.51-52).

Nefertiti is another influential and well-known queen. She is most notable for her bust that survives in Belin, Germany (Robins, 1993, p.54). Nefertiti was the principal wife of Akhenaten, also known as Amenhotep – who changed his name to Akhenaten to honor his god Aten. Nefertiti was a beloved queen; "No other queen was ever shown so frequently on the monuments, in temples, tombs, and statuary," (Robins, 1993, p.53). Like Hatshepsut, Nefertiti was represented in temples making offerings directly to Aten, the only god that Nefertiti and Akhenaten worshiped, as they abandoned the worship of all other Egyptian gods. Nefertiti can be seen in stelae with Akhenaten and the sun disk god, Aten, creating a triad, "…echoing the triads of deities that had been common in traditional religion," (Robins, 1993, p.54). She also appears to have taken prayers directly from citizens, closing the gap between God and mortal, acting as a god herself.

Nefertiti was a queen with substantial power within the cult of Aten. This fundamental role gave her the power of not only the cult, but more power as queen. She wore insignia that were common of queens, "…including the double feathers, the horns and disk, the uraeus and the double uraeus, all of which had solar significance," (Robins, 1993, p.54). These traditional crowns were not unique, like her infamous crown worn in her infamous bust in Berlin; additionally, she wore kingly crowns, mostly during the last years of Akhenaten's reign. Some scholars say it was a symbol of the transition of power, however, she has also been depicted smiting enemies which were traditionally kingly depictions (Robins, 1993, p.54). These instances do not have heavy significance about her ideologies about her place as king or queen specifically as she has a longer and more compelling history as queen.

3.1.2 Religion and Rituals

Religious beings in Ancient Egypt included the upper elite of the population. They had access to jobs in temples just as any other sector, through appointment by a higher member, or more commonly, through inheritance of the position from father to son. Only men were allowed to work in government jobs, and most other jobs, but this included religious jobs as well, such as in cult temples; these, like others, were often inherited from one's father or other close relative. Since men were educated, having trained as scribes, they were able to inherit these types of jobs, while women, even if they were literate, were not. Therefore, cult leaders were all men, but both men and women served other positions within the cult temples. This is not to say that women, even elite women, had well paying religious jobs within the cults, because they did not consistently. However, since they were married to men of status, they were provided titles that were of equivalent honor, despite not being able to work in any real administrative role, and yet still being supervised by men (Robins, 1993, p.144).

Many women, as we will discuss in more detail later, received honorary titles because of the positions of their husbands, therefore, if there was a 'priestess of Hathor' then it meant that the woman's husband was a priest in the temple of Hathor, providing her with a similar title, though perhaps she was unable to be a functioning, performing priestess of the temple of Hathor, she likely had no active role but retained the title, if in name only. Women whose husbands held other high official offices could be provided with other titles such as 'musician of Amun', usually in the temple of a goddess, or they could receive more specific titles, such as 'musician of Amun in the mortuary temple of Ramses II' demonstrating that this woman had an even more prestigious title, serving as a musician in the same temple that her husband ran, ultimately revealing higher status (Robins, 1993, p.145). Since we know much more about elite women, we can see that elite women took advantage of the statuses of their husbands and thus gained agency and autonomy they wouldn't otherwise have had. Women of lower classes also served as musicians in the temples, but could have just been called 'musician' instead of a full title like that of the elite (Robins, 1993, p.145).

While women took on many 'lesser' roles in the temples, though maintaining their elite statuses, there were many other musicians and performers connected to the cult temples (Robins, 1993,

p.145). There appears to be no real restrictions as to who could actively participate, be them qualified. Both men and women served as musicians, as well as participated in choirs, and performed as acrobats of the cult temples. There is much evidence depicting mixed groups of the aforementioned companies. These musicians actually played instruments, sang, and danced (Robins, 1993, p.145-146). Their gender was not an exclusionary aspect, which was rare, especially for women who work outside the home. Though, all of these performers were overseen by the priests of the temple, who were men. Women lacked the ability to take on supervisory roles like that of their male counterparts, even if they were elite women, using their honorary titles (Robins, 1993, p.145).

> "The temple was not simply a religious edifice, but also had administrative aspects that women were normally excluded from. This did not mean women were excluded from meaningful participation in the cult, but rather they forged an iden- tity based on providing music for the cult in various ways," (Onstine, 2010).

'Chantress' or 'Chantress of God' appeared as a popular title in the New Kingdom for the average lay woman, which was considered to be quite a prestigious title to obtain and have recorded. Many monuments and stelae were created for women with this title, so their official record would be left behind, and being so prestigious would have been a title she used above others, even with close family members such as husbands and sons. Because temples were only for those priests and priestesses, and other temple personnel working for the temple, meant that it excluded the entrance of lay people. Chantresses were often identified as belonging to the temple harem by early Egyptologists, and in doing so projected sexualized connotations that were not accurate for these women. They were performers bringing offerings and petitions to the gods, not sexual concubines, and could be better described as entertainment troops (Lesko, 2019).

Much of Ancient Egyptian religion focused on rebirth, which further focused on women's roles in the continuation of the royal lineage, as well as among the gods themselves. In the context of royalty, it is important to note that the spotlight was still on the kings, as they were those who connected the gods and humans, however the birth story of each centered around the mothers of the kings (Robins, 1993; Onstine, 2010).

> "The religion of ancient Egypt was especially concerned with aspects of gender because of their focus on fertility and spiritual rebirth, concepts which were often expressed using gendered language and visual metaphors," (Onstine, 2010).

The dichotomy of the importance of the gender roles and the gender of the individual is one that is fraught with contradictions. The perspectives that we have of Ancient Egypt are from male perspectives and greatly underrepresent women as a result. While women play a more dominant role in Egyptian mythology, it has been dissected by men for hundreds of years lacking diversity among perspectives, especially relating to gender and the actions of women at the time. Men have created a duality for women, simplifying their importance and perhaps their roles overall

(Onstine, 2010). We must understand women in Ancient Egyptian mythology to understand their human roles in religion.

In mythology, the creator god, Atum, ejaculated and brought forth the creators of the elements:

> Atum "…ejaculated the twins Shu (male, air) and Tefnut (female, moisture). Shu and Tefnut bore Geb (the male earth) and Nut (the female sky). Geb and Nut together bore two sons and two daughters; Osiris and Seth, and Isis and Nepthys," (Onstine, 2010).

This myth shows that the creator god possessed within himself both male and female, an already gendered metaphor for existence itself. In this example we also see that the male act of ejaculation was the center of creation, putting emphasis and extra importance on the male. Women appear as important vessels that carried the seed of life, but were just that, the carrier, rather than possessing necessary elements to life. The sky goddess, Nut, is a prime example of this as she swallows the sun god nightly to protect him on his journey through the underworld with his rebirth each morning. It is clear even from the mythology that Ancient Egyptians understood the fundamental importance (and general processes) of insemination and birth, but believed that the semen had the potential for life giving it more relevance, while the woman was undervalued in her position as vessel (Onstine, 2010).

While this extreme duality existed within mythology they did not adhere to the static physical binary. Some of the gods and goddesses were androgynous or had ambiguous physical traits.

> "The goddess Neith, the very ancient and tutelary goddess of Sais in the Delta, is sometimes described as 'the man who acts as a woman and a woman who acts like a man' or that she is 2/3 masculine and 1⁄3 feminine," (Onstine, 2010).

She is depicted in pictorial representations as a woman but her iconography and adornments are masculine or relate to masculine activities, such as hunting or warfare (Onstine, 2010). Neith is one example of a seemingly non-binary goddess. However, another interesting and crucial god is Hapy, the Nile god. Hapy is a god that is purposefully left androgynous as he represents the potential fertility of the Nile and surrounding land (Onstine, 2010). Onstine (2010) explains that fertility relied on both the feminine and masculine elements, so Hapy is depicted as a man with pendulous breasts to demonstrate not only the value of the duality, but emphasize the importance of them together. Since people relied on both the Nile floods and the land for agriculture, one relied on the other for existence.

The penis was a powerful symbol in mythology and religion as it represented both creation (fertility) and regeneration (rebirth in the afterlife). "Votive offerings of wooden penises found at Deir el Bahari and dating to the New Kingdom are further evidence that it was a potent symbol that could be invoked in a religious context," (Onstine, 2010). The penis in its votive form would be used to pray for children, but Onstine (2010) suggests that there were likely more complex

meanings for them, especially in a religious context.

Apart from the mythological realm and among humanity we know that the administrative participation in cults (and in temples) were performed by men. In homes such as in Deir el-Medina and el-Amarna there is evidence of religious practice, much like an in-home shrine, including a stela that would bear the name of the deceased. This was likely a centerpiece in the home where they could pray for divine intervention from the deceased, as this was a common belief (Onstine, 2010). It's unknown if men and women practiced religious traditions in the same way at home or if the act was gendered. It could be assumed that the care of the altar would have been the responsibility of the woman, however, there is evidence of both men and women petitioning to the dead for assistance and/or intervention in their tombs, so it would not be extreme to assume the same could be true at home (Robins, 1993).

Musicians within the temple cults were imperative for the maintenance of the deities, as they required song, dance, and sustenance. Musicians were used to appease the gods and since both men and women were attached to temples, they are depicted in a variety of rituals and performances. They were crucial to the function of the temples, as they were the homes of the gods, and thus required (Onstine, 2010). The use of both men and women musicians provided song, dance, and music through the playing of instruments. Within the cult maintenance rituals, they were seemingly equals, however, women took precedence as musicians in the cult of Hathor, the goddess of music and dance.

> "…musical instruments called the sistrum (a hand- held rattle) and menat (a heavy beaded necklace) were regarded as her sacred emblems. The use of these instruments was believed to invoke the goddess and confer on the ritual participants the blessing of the goddess," (Onstine, 2010).

Throughout the New Kingdom, the use of these instruments by women were widespread in both cultic and funerary settings, and transcended their Hathoric representations, and were used by women in a variety of cults, not exclusively that of Hathor, and were even used by common women, outside of the priesthood (Onstine, 2010). The use of these instruments by priestesses and among common women throughout the New Kingdom show they were gendered instruments, especially when they were used early on in the cult of Hathor. It was almost a female religious revolution, as women were performing their religious duties in an extreme manner within, and later outside, the cult, while remaining an almost exclusive female act.

Women continued to associate themselves with powerful cults, not only that of Hathor, but also Amun. There was no division between religion and government in Ancient Egypt, as the temples acted as a tax collector (Onstine, 2010; Lesko, 2019). Associating oneself to a popular and powerful cult or specific temple could have provided the elite women and musicians that worked for them better circumstances. Lay women were able to obtain prestigious titles for their work for temples as Chantresses earning respect and standing they wouldn't have had otherwise (Lesko,

2019). The power of religion and therefore religious title cannot be underestimated, nor can the efforts of women that maintained temples, continued traditional rituals, and assisted in celebrations and funerals.

3.1.3 Sociocultural expectations and norms

3.1.3.A *Marriage*

Defining marriage in Ancient Egypt is clearer and more direct than one might expect. The concept of marriage in Ancient Egypt was dictated as family groups that centered around three aspects: a man, a woman, and their children. Dating back to the New Kingdom, there is a register that confirms the inhabitants at the worker's village. This register shows each of the workers by name and the members of their household – these details are explicit in following their names with 'wife', and the names of their children and their filiations, if there are any. While there is no real mention of marriage ceremonies or rituals like those of the cults or ascension of royalty that would formalize it as a specific act. What there is evidence of is actually the act of cohabitation, which seems to have been the important factor for which marriage was enacted (Robins, 1993, p.56).

The 'marriage' of the couple seems to occur when one of the individuals moves into the home of the other; this is usually the case of women, as they leave their family homes and move in with their partner. "This is seen in some of the Egyptian terms which we take to mean 'to marry', such as 'to establish a household', 'to enter a household', and later 'to live together'," (Robins, 1993, p.56). This signifies that there was not official documentation of marriage, ceremonies, or rituals involved apart from simply moving in together. So, it would mean that divorce would be the opposite, in fact, divorce was the 'expulsion' or 'departure' of one individual from the home, again, usually the woman (Robins, 1993, p.56). This simplification of marriage and divorce would leave the possibility for men and women to marry and divorce at will, with no legal repercussions for either of them.

Marriage in Ancient Egypt was seemingly simple since there was virtually no paperwork or proceedings needed to do so. However, since marriages were so straightforward, it must also be considered that there were other implications to marriage. Like we saw among royalty in Ancient Egypt, marriage was, at times, part of negotiations or peacekeeping efforts rather than for love. This was not unusual for civilians either. One must look at the 'burden' the family had by having daughters, as the likely did not work jobs that brought in large wages (elite positions), as most of the well-paying jobs belonged to men, though they did work in agriculture and textile manufacturing (Robins, 1993, p.64). Young women were burdens to their families if they were not also contributing, so it was in the best interest of the families to marry her off. With marriage processes so easy, it really came down to negotiations. Women were "given" away from the family, usually by the father, in some sort of negotiation. This could have been beneficial for both sides, both for the family discarding a daughter or sister, and for the man who was receiving a wife (Robins, 1993, p.58-59). When women of the royal families, daughters of deities in their own

right, are treated as property to be given away or negotiated with politically for the expansion of a kingdom and for peace keeping, then it is no small leap to see the same among the non-royal, working class. Men often bartered their daughters or sisters for things of value, including land or properties (Robins, 1993, p.59). Sometimes that wealth is kept within the family when daughters are traded among the family, usually a stepchild or adopted child (children born through surrogacy, ideally to have an heir to the family jobs and property) (Robins, 1993, p.59). We know that fathers had invested interests in exchanging their daughters, and it was somewhat of a business as they could potentially have a lot to gain from these exchanges. The man marrying would be the one to provide a gift to the father of the bride and this would be considered and ultimately, he would decide if she would then marry him. However, little is known if the young women involved in these interactions had any say in the matter. There is little evidence that shows they did, though some scholars believe that some fathers considered their daughters' preferences before making such arrangements, but little is known according to Robins (1993, p.60).

More fixed contracts appear later, in the 7th century BCE, which assured women (and men) rights during marriage, but mainly that women would receive compensation for marriage in the case of repudiation by her husband or in the case that she leaves of her own free will. It was usually written as certain, agreed upon, quantity, that one part was given to her (or her father) as a gift upon marriage, and then the contractual fixed amount if they separate (divorce). However, there were also other financial stipulations, wherein the man had to provide the woman with one-third of all of his possessions from the moment of marriage, which was obviously advantageous for the women (Robins, 1993, p.60).

It is understood that in Ancient Egypt, especially among the elite and royals, they had multiple wives for the purpose of providing an heir to their position. Likewise, among the working class this can also be seen, but because the daily lives of the lower class were not documented to the extent of the elites and royals, less examples exist. Though there are few examples, it is evident in some court proceedings that have survived, with some nuances. While at the royal level, kings had a 'principal wife' and then 'wife', the word 'wife' itself seems to have varying meanings among the lower classes. In these court proceedings, women are sometimes declared as 'wife' and sometimes as 'concubine', and the shift between these titles. Men have stated that they have multiple wives, and then one of which might be referred to as a concubine in the same breath (Robins, 1993, p.61). This suggests that not only were women used as bargaining chips, but could also have been used sexually by her 'husband' with little ability to refute her position. Some texts suggest women were able to leave marriages, ultimately resulting in divorce since that was the general concept, however, as a concubine, the woman may not have necessarily been married to the man, rather taken as a mistress in order to provide an heir. This suggests that perhaps these concubines were negotiated into that position and after providing the man with children had to attend court in order to leave her situation. Robins (1993) suggests otherwise, stating that the term 'concubine' holds strong connotations and believes it wasn't applicable to Egyptian society at the time, while others disagree.

Just as men were able to divorce their wives, women were also able to divorce their husbands. Both were able to remarry after divorce and that is seen in multiple court cases, though it is not entirely clear how marriage was accepted. Some of the grounds for divorce were infidelity and infertility, among the most common. However, in this case, would men who took on multiple wives not also be considered unfaithful? The terms to marriage are unclear in Ancient Egypt. Some evidence points to men having had multiple wives, that is to say that they had consecutive monogamous relationships, usually due to the death of a wife resulting in remarrying. However, in some cases (evidenced in court documents) that some women had stated they were one of four (or multiple) wives. This could mean that the man had previously been married and divorced, or widowed and remarried, but it could also mean that he had concurrent multiple wives (Robins, 1993, p.61-64). When discussing the terminology for marriage, including 'concubine', it appears that it is possible that men were married to multiple women at the same time that another was alive, and not out of divorce or widowhood. While the texts would lead us to believe this was viable, especially considering the advantages of having multiple wives, assuming they are part of the workforce, be it agricultural or textile, women could have been financial contributors to the family making it worthwhile to have multiple wives. The physical evidence that remains leaves this theory less likely for the working class. Remains at Deir el-Medina, the workers' city, prove that the homes were small and provided little to no extra space for the possibility of multiple wives under the same roof. And as the documents maintain evidential records of all the workers that lived there and their wives (and children), there is no such evidence to support this type of relationship within the Deir el-Medina complex (Robins, 1993, p.64-65).

While there is no physical evidence of men having more than one wife concurrently, it is a possibility based on the texts that leave enough room for that assumption. If it is true, in fact, that men were able to marry more than one woman concurrently, like I am suggesting based on text evidence, Robbins (1993) indicates that there is absolutely no evidence of the contrary. Women were able to remarry following divorce and widowhood, but nowhere is there evidence that proves she was able to have multiple husbands concurrently. It must be mentioned again, women were still traded and seemingly sold off rather than 'given away' from the information that exists about the process of marriage as a construct for property ownership and acquisition. It is not surprising that women were unable to marry multiple men concurrently, but their ability to divorce at their own will is. Robbins (1993) affirms that there was no stigma for neither men nor women about remarriage after divorce, so it was commonplace that women would have had multiple husbands in a lifetime, especially considering the young ages they were married off.

The discussion of marriage is inevitable as it is a simple but significant act in Ancient Egypt, but just as today, there were individuals who did not marry; they did not move out of their parental home, or they never moved in with another person. Some of these people were considered to simply have bad luck in terms of finding a partner, however other instances are those of homosexuality, where men do not take wives. This is evident with a fragment narrative of a homosexual affair between king Neferkara and his general Sasenet (in the Old Kingdom), Sasenet having no wives (Robins, 1993, p.72). Robins (1993) explains that homosexuality was advised

against as it appears in various texts, including *Instructions of Ptahhotep*, and in the New Kingdom *Book of the Dead* in the 'Negative Confessions'. One instructs against homosexual acts and the other is a confession of having not performed them. Robins describes the conditions:

> "The problem with homosexuality was that it did not conform to the Egyptian ideal of family life based on the concept of fertility, while in a funerary connection, the sterile nature of the relationship could have hindered rebirth into the next world," (Robins, 1993, p.72).

The reality of the issue with homosexuality was not that the acts were unnatural, but rather they did not lead to offspring. This meant that there was no one for you to leave your estate to, nor your job, as these were inherited, passed on from one generation to the next. Apart from not providing heirs, homosexuality left one vulnerable in their ability to pass on into the afterworld as they had to make negative confessions – confess to the things that they had not done that might prohibit them from passing on, a declaration of innocence (Mark, April 2017). If one was unable to cross over then they would simply cease to exist and they would not be entitled to the benefits of the afterlife that they would have been planning for most of their lives; and while homosexuality was practiced and acceptable at the time, various confessions are either explicit or implicit in acting outside of one's marriage or interrupted marriages of others (adultery) though this could be true for men, though the translations refer to adultery with women (Mark, April 2017).

3.1.3.B *Fertility*

Fertility was arguably the most important aspect of life in Ancient Egypt. It solidified heirs and the continuation of the kingdom. It was a means that provided free labor for many sectors of the workforce, but specifically agriculture, it ensured the preservation of the family, as well as provided care for the elders of the family. It was so important that infertility was even grounds for divorce, a very important factor, among the top two reasons. Religious cults were created around fertility, with shrines built in homes, or figurines adorning the walls and around the bed (Robins, 1993, p.75). Fertility figures and figurines appeared in tombs that were once thought to provide concubines for the deceased man in the afterlife, however they were also found in female tombs, proving later to be hope for rebirth in the afterlife, as they were also found in the tombs of children of both sexes (Robins, 1993, p.76).

Ancient Egyptians believed that not only could fertility gods, like Hathor and Bes, help with fertility and bring children, but they also believed that the dead were able to have influence in such cases. People hoping for children would offer these fertility figures (called *shabtis* or *ushabtis*) to deceased relatives in a funerary setting, like an offering in a tomb, write letters to the dead asking for them to clear up issues in the realm of the dead, so they would be able to conceive in the realm of the living Robins, 1993, p.75). Since the dead, they believed, could affect the living for good or bad, some tried to make amends with dead ex-wives or husbands, so they would relinquish any malicious ties to them (Robins, 1993, p.76-77).

Pillars with head of goddess Hathor at Temple of Hathor, Dendera, Egypt, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Ushabtis in The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Bes relief at Temple of Hathor, Dendera, Egypt, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

These good faith acts did not always work, as evidenced by stone records, usually in the form of monuments to fertility gods, showing offerings to fertility gods, or in their likeness and in honor of them asking for children. With the death of these individuals, we are able to see that these were sometimes in vain as their predecessors were not their children, rather other individuals, non-kin entirely. When offerings and monuments failed, some had children in other ways. Some, as we know, sought children through surrogacy, usually the man impregnating a concubine or another woman, such as a slave, in order to have children. This wife would then adopt the children, and they would be claimed as her own. Adoption was one way to achieve children when pregnancy, birth, and the early years of life were so very dangerous for women and children. And when women were barren, this was a positive alternative for them (Robins, 1993, p.77).

We know that ancient Egyptians were aware of menstruation and ultimately that not having it was a possible sign of pregnancy. Women were given a variety of tests to prove pregnancy, but some of these tests were suspected to also be able to identify the sex of the child. Many of these tests revolved around the use of the woman's urine and the effects it had on different grains. Women were prescribed medicines to encourage or sustain pregnancy, though the ingredients of which we still do not fully understand today because of lexical differences. However, there were also physical tests done on women, such as examination of the skin, breasts, and pulse that helped them to understand their fertility status (Robins, 1993, p.79). Women were examined and tested thoroughly to ensure the continuation of pregnancy, or perhaps assist in the process of it.

While fertility was not only expected of women, but demanded, they were not always content with being pregnant, as it was a dangerous condition to be in both for the woman and the child. There is evidence of prescribed contraceptives; some of these include honey and crocodile dung, both to be inserted vaginally, though not used together. These forms acted as a blockage against the passage of sperm, so the awareness of the processes of pregnancy was well understood. Other, more effective contraceptives included ground acacia tips. As Robins (1993) explains, "These contain gum Arabic, which has a chemical effect on sperm, and actively retards conception." There were also less effective contraception methods including teas and some foods. Robins (1993) continues that there is no evidence of forms of contraception for men.

We have seen the use of religion to summon the fertility gods to aid in conception and pregnancy through the use of altars to these gods, but pregnancy is rarely depicted in formal art. Most imagery of women are of slender female bodies. Some pregnant bodies are depicted, but usually in birthing scenes, where women are being led to birthing rooms, or scenes that depict the birth of the divine king, proving his (or her) legitimacy to rule. One female deity is shown pregnant and that is Taweret, the protector of pregnant women. She is depicted as an amalgamation of a variety of animals.

> "She takes the form of a hippopotamus with the limbs of a lion, the tail of a crocodile, and flat, pendulous human breasts. She stands upright on her hind legs and her obviously swollen belly sticks out in front," (Robins, 1993, p.80).

Statuette of the goddess taweret: Ptolemaic period. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.)

Taweret, Street mosaic, Alexandria, Egypt, 2015,Theresa Wilshusen

There are few other depictions of the most important operation in a woman's life, significant for both men and women. This disregard for the suffering of women, as well as the trauma and risk they took to provide an heir, not for themselves, but for their husbands, to be overlooked seems to be common throughout Egyptian history, both from the ancient world as well as modern. In the ancient world, without defense of disease, severe illnesses related to pregnancy or other, along with bodily risks for the woman, including complications, made pregnancy a life-threatening condition, one that was prayed for, and yet dismissed throughout Egyptian history, and a condition that most women experienced multiple times throughout their lives from puberty to menopause. As mentioned in this section, men would often remarry if their wife died, regularly marrying soon after, generally to younger women than themselves, in search of an heir. Women were seemingly considered disposable. Considering men would divorce women due to infertility, or for even not providing a son, it seems that while women were a necessity to the everyday workings and continuation of life, they were considered to be of much less value in the greater scheme of things. There was a depreciation for the life of a woman, especially when she was unable to bear children or provide a son, through no fault of her own.

3.1.3.C *Family and home*

Ancient Egyptian women carried different titles to show their positions in society as well as in the home. The most common title observed on monuments for elite women was that of 'mistress of the house' which is to assume that even elite women took pride in this title as they were in control of the goings on of the home. Robins (1993) examines a passage from the New Kingdom *Instruction of Any,* which states:

> "Do not control your wife in her house, When you know she is efficient; Don't say to her: "Where is it? Get it!" When she has put it in the right place. Let your eye observe in silence, Then you recognize her skill," (Robins, 1993, p.92).

Women were expected to be in the home, but were respected as carers for the home as well. As the above selection exhibits, men were not to interfere with a woman in her home, giving her control of the home and how it was run or managed. In texts and stories, we find more examples of this, such as in the story *Two Brothers*. In this story the husband expects his wife to be at home waiting for his arrival after work (or hunting). Robins (1993) further explains that these gender distinctions were proportionate to those of tomb chapel scenes depicting few occasions where women accompanied men as they engaged in activities outside the home or his estates.

House duties for elite women were quite different from those of common women, this is due, in part, to the often immense estates that the elite possessed. While elite women did not tend to all of the aspects of the estate because she likely had servants or slaves to do this work, she did oversee it to some extent. Through funerary art we are able to see examples of these different aspects of the elite's extensive estates, including a granary, cattle shed, a butcher's shed or other like building, a bakery, brewery, a carpenter's workshop, and a weaving shed. These were among the most common of high officials and were spread out over large swaths of land which may have

also included separate kitchens from the main house, gardens with trees, flowers, and vegetables. These estates were similar to compounds, many having high walls that surrounded the property (Robins, 1993, p.94). Due to funerary art found within the tombs were are able to understand the elements and workings of these large estates of the elite. They provide us with a window into the lives of ancient Egyptians with little other physical remains of these sites.

The homes within these estates were also quite large themselves with the main house usually being square plan with rooms surrounding a central living space with ceilings supported by tall wooden columns with windows high up on the walls. Around the central living space were the principal family rooms, with the principal bedroom being placed next to a bathroom and lavatory with no drainage. Other rooms would have included a reception room and storage rooms. Many of these homes had internal staircases which are believed to have led to the roof which was used for a variety of other functions – eating area, work space, or alternative sleeping location (during specific seasons) which would have allowed for an extension of the space (Robins, 1993, p.94). The elites had exaggerated living spaces with much of the dirtier rooms not being attached to the main home, allowing for cleaner and more hygienic spaces for elite families.

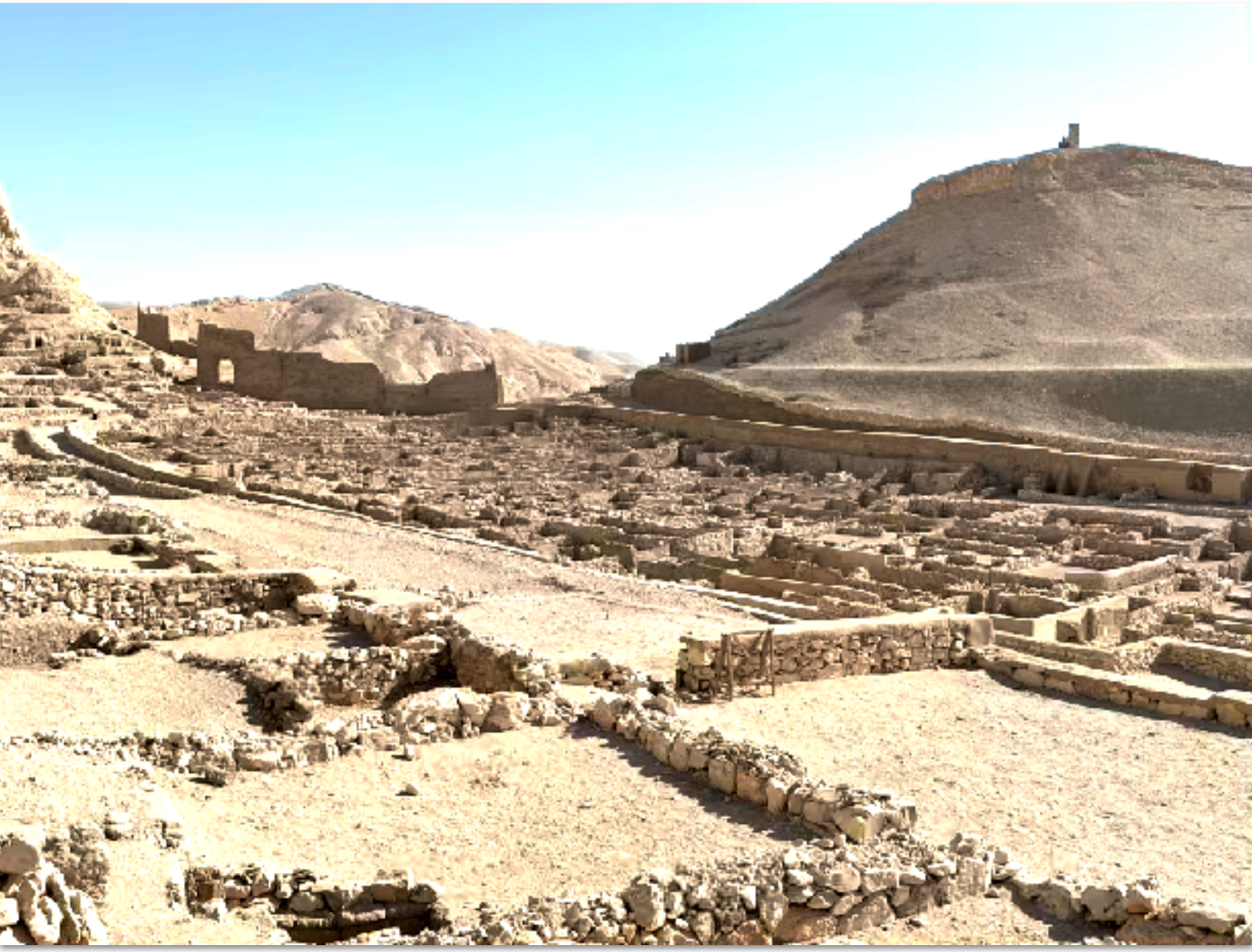
One can imagine then that the homes of the working class, specifically that of the worker at Deir el-Medina, of which there is the most physical evidence of the middle working-class living situations. These homes were built within specific confines and were specifically for the workmen and their families at Deir el-Medina who worked to build the royal tombs in the Valley of the Kings (Robins, 1993, p.93-94). Robins (1993) describes the layout of this village as such:

> "Rows of houses fronted onto the streets, and each house was rectangular rather than square. At Amarna each house occupied an area of slightly under five meters by ten, and was divided into three unequal parts from front to back."

Robins (1993) continues to depict the different styles of homes, including the size differences between homes at Deir el-Medina and Amarna, some of which were built for incorporating cattle, complete with feeding troughs, some equipped with installed limestone mortars for grinding grain, other homes were prepared for craft production, such as weaving or spinning. Some of the remains indicate that the interior walls were likely covered in plaster and further painted and decorated.

> "…fragments of scenes survived in the front rooms of two houses at the time of excavation. One showed a group of dancing Bes figures facing towards a figure of the goddess Taweret. The other depicted a procession of women apparently dancing," (Robins, 1993, p.95).

The remains of the homes of the working class show such decoration within the homes designed for work and to preserve the workman and his family, however they adapted their homes and made them into beautiful works of art. The images described above are of two fertility gods, and



Deir el-Medina worker's village, Luxor, 2024 Theresa Wilshusen

though they were painted in the front rooms, a common area within the home, rather than in the bedroom may infer that these images were not always used exclusively for ritual or prayer purposes, but simply as decorations, pleasing to these particular families. Other depictions throughout the house could have included other well-known deities such as Horus or Isis. Women would have been in charge of these paintings as 'mistress of the house'.

Most of the evidence of women at work in the home, or actually running estates are seen in tomb scenes. They are not entirely reliable as men were usually the owners of the tombs and their female family members were simply added to it. The tomb scenes belonged to the owner and were therefore depictions that would be prosperous for him in the afterlife. However, there are female tomb owners, and their tomb scenes also depict males overseeing house or estate duties, where women were actually in charge (Robins, 1993, p.99-101). Since women were presumably in charge of the home and men were mainly focused on duties outside the home, we must question whether the tomb depictions were the responsibility of the men as well, even when owned by women, as it was a duty outside the realm of women at the time. We must also consider the implications of being a female in Ancient Egypt, as burial had specific requirements that will be discussed in a later chapter, but did not necessarily allow women to pass into the afterlife, undergoing gender changes in order to do so (Wilshusen, 2018, p.11). This may have prevented women tomb owners from depicting themselves in the scenes and instead permitting a male to appear.

While women spent much of their lives pregnant, they were responsible for their homes, but as we know, upper class women had servants, and workers at Deir el-Medina and Amarna were state-employed workmen and were provided with a certain number of hours of slave work each week which would have mitigated the household strain on pregnant women in particular. However, elite women could have been entirely cared for during pregnancy and post pregnancy, relying on servants to rear their children as well (Robins, 1993, p.101-102). Since women were both expected and obligated to provide children for their husbands, along with the cultural expectations to have large families with a multitude of children, women wouldn't have been about to have bureaucratic work outside the home, with exception for elite women, who, as we know, were involved in cult activities such as priestess and cult temple musician work (Robins, 1993, p.101-102).

Such sacrifice on the part of the woman is seemingly a form of domestic slavery, especially among the middle and lower classes where they were likely unable to hire nurses and carers for their children, and servants for their houses. They were bound to their homes by cultural and gender norms that mandated they produce heirs for the men at all costs. This was the cost of being a woman in Ancient Egypt. Women sacrificed their bodies, and sometimes their lives, to fulfill high cultural and familial gender expectations. Women of Ancient Egypt appear to be cared for and maintained by their hard working husbands, but in reality, once they were of child-bearing age they were married off or even became servants in larger homes (Robins, 1993, p.101). Ultimately, this is domestic slavery for the middle and lower classes. Elite women, with more opportunities

available to them, were less house-bound and for this are depicted performing some important cult jobs and holding such priestly positions that enhanced their statuses (Robins, 1993, p.102).

Virtually nothing is known about the lower class of Ancient Egypt as it was obviously not something depicted in the tombs of the upper and elite classes. When depicted they are generalized and somewhat neutral, not portraying the reality of life at that level, and often ignored entirely (Robins, 1993, p.107-108). Further, since women worked in the home, lower class women would not necessarily appear in the tomb paintings unless they were servants. Otherwise, lower class women who worked in the home, rearing their children, and perhaps selling any surplus goods from the home would not have been depicted and thus, they are essentially invisible (Robins, 1993, p.107). Formal art in Ancient Egypt did it a cultural injustice as it omitted some of the most necessary societies from their record as the elite were determined not to expose the unpleasantness of reality, including deformities or aged bodies. There is further elitism with respect to scribes. This job could only be performed by men, and the texts written by elites for scribe students are practically promotional. The built-in bias of these texts attempt to motivate scribe students to continue to work hard and carry on with their studies describing the harsh realities of everyone else, apart from this we must remember that these texts are directed at an all-male audience, so women were unable to perform this job and better their conditions. Additionally, excluding women from this role, and describing the conditions of men in the average workforce, women are eclipsed entirely (Robins, 1993, p.108).

3.1.3.D *Outside the home*

The role of women in the home varied, but their importance in the home cannot be understated. However, since women were in control of their households, we must imagine that they were not solely bound to the house, rather performing duties outside the home that would have required her to leave, like shopping at the market, bringing other goods to or from the home, perhaps selling surplus goods. If she was working in the home doing other jobs, perhaps weaving or making textiles, she might have gone out to sell these goods as well. One cannot assume she was restricted to the home at all times, though since we would consider this, then it's important to consider other aspects of this type of life, including her skills that would benefit her in this way (Robins, 1993, p.111).

Since women did not usually work outside the home in bureaucratic jobs, there was no real need for them to undertake formal studies to become literate, though that does not mean they weren't. There is nearly no evidence that proves women were literate, outside of the elite, and those instances are also very rare. As we already know so little about the working class, there is no way to know if women were literate. Men were the only ones allowed to formally study to be scribes, and while there are some depictions of women seated, with scribe kits under their chairs, they are seated next to their husbands, and that can be inferred that the scribe kit would have been his and was stored under her chair when not in use. Given what we know about Ancient Egyptian society, we can understand that the women were not the ones using the scribe kits. Though it is possible, more likely among the elite, that women were, to some degree, literate, and

perhaps passed their skills down to their daughters so they may benefit as well (Robins, 1993, p.113).

Little is known about society in general, less still is known about the women. What we can understand are women's positions in society based on their titles, often given because of their own husband's role in the government or positions, though still providing them with status of some kind. They would often take a feminized version of their husband's titles though they themselves were not involved. Through marriage they received an honorary title, in a sense. Some of the other titles of elite women included 'priestess of Hathor' and 'sole lady-in-waiting', though it's unclear if they received them independently or if they were also a reflection of their husband's title. Women of a slightly lower class would have had titles such as 'citizeness', 'lady-in-waiting' which is the diminutive form of the aforementioned "sole lady-in-waiting', 'servant of a ruler' though not necessarily referring to the king, rather lower ranking officials, such as governor, and '*wab*-priestess' which is the feminine of '*wab*-priest' (Robins, 1993, p.115). Women of the lower working class, often serving in homes or on estates held other titles, based on their jobs in the home and if they 'supervised' something in particular. These titles changed and were different over time. Some of these titles in the Old Kingdom were 'keeper of the chamber', 'butler', 'overseer of the kitchen', 'major-domo', and 'sealer'. While the supervisor-like positions appear to be executive, they were still overseen by men. These Old Kingdom titles were descriptive, and they did offer the women some sort of ranking or hierarchy among other staff, but they were quite nominal otherwise (Robins, 1993, p.116-117). These titles didn't serve the women outside of their work in the public realm to any great extent and could be equated to titles given at jobs today, holding little value outside the workplace. An important note about titles for the lower-class women, is that their 'power' was still checked by men, as there were equivalent titles for most of the jobs, which further undercuts women's roles in authoritative positions even at work. Many female versions of male jobs were occupied by women, and even served women directly (Robins, 1993, p.116).

While women held roles of 'baker' or overseer of the kitchen', they performed other work as well, including milling, spinning and weaving, as well as music and dance, which may not be surprising. But while they were involved in much of the food preparation, textile work, and entertainment, there were still jobs that they didn't have access to, despite working in the same domain. Some jobs women were excluded from or had far less involvement in were brewing, preparing and cooking meat, craft production, and agricultural activities (on large estates (Robins, 1993, p.117). Men did the laundry and boat crews were also depicted and written about as being commanded and run by men. Men and women, however, did both use music to entertain with depictions of both men and women performing together at banquets (Robins, 1993, p.120). Women were also not involved heavily in agricultural work. They are rarely seen outside of estate gardens, and when they are depicted or referenced, they have a supportive role rather than a master role. Women are largely seen providing men with water, following men, picking up uncollected or remaining harvest. Men also took other agricultural jobs such as in animal husbandry, papyrus collection, and bird trapping (Robins, 1993, p.121). The supportive role of women, without the

acknowledgement of their relevance, undermines their importance in daily life.

Laborious work for women was often seen as a lack of status, and that could be one reason there are so few images of women doing such work (Robins, 1993, p.122). However, apart from punishments for defectors, women still carried out some of these jobs meant for men, if not in the public domain, they likely would have privately. Texts, such as poems and stories, depict women netting birds, later taking them home to her mother (Robins, 1993, p.123-124). It would not necessarily be noteworthy to add such events into fiction if it did not also occur in real life. While these stories and poems may aim to represent women as capable, hearty, and endearing, there were likely many women performing such duties while their fathers or husbands worked. And since women could rent land for agricultural purposes, they may have done so to broaden their income using the surplus, all while providing for their families. In these instances of working-class women, we can assume that they were unable to hire cultivators to work the land and probably did it themselves (Robins, 1993, p.124).

Although women did not have much authority over bureaucratic issues or those pertaining to legalities, they were able to use the authority of their husbands. Among the elite we can see women borrowing their husbands' official titles and therefore using them for their own statuses, but at lower levels women exercised the authority of their husbands directly (Robins, 1993, p.124). Robins (1993) recounts letters that pertain to the reception of grain and further ensuing problems; the husband is away and the wife, "…is deputizing for him. She remains outside the official bureaucratic structure, obtaining her authority not in her own right but because she is Nesamenemipet's wife. If Nesamenemipet had lost his job or died, her authority would have ended too," (p.124). This and other instances show that women assisted their husbands in their work/professional capacities, while holding no power or authority themselves. It was in the family's best interest to ensure the father/husband of the house maintained his work position/ status to be able to extend rights to their wives.

In these instances of women outside the home, we see women not being given authentic agency overall, but find that they use their husband's authority, status, and agency for themselves. Women of Ancient Egypt were able to use the work of their husbands to enable their own rights. Though we do not see women exercising these authorities or taking control in the areas they were permitted on stelae or in texts apart from court proceedings, we are aware of their impact.

3.1.3.E *Economic and legal*

From final testaments and court cases we see the autonomy of women from the Old to the New Kingdom. In the Old and Middle Kingdom, we know that women were able to own land; they were also able to inherit it based on final testaments for husbands and fathers, though this appears to occur in the upper elite only, based on the surviving texts (Robins, 1993, p.127). There is also evidence that women had their own agency in bringing forth lawsuits, which was the case for one woman against her father. The proceedings described the discrepancy between her and father as pertaining to property and slaves that the woman believed partially belonged to her. The

important factor here is that she felt entitled to property by inheritance (probably of her late mother) and was legally able to file the case for herself. She appears alone in the case, not represented by or appearing with her husband. The case reveals that the woman was able to inherit property (and that is what she was suing for) and that she was able to independently file legal documents on her own behalf (Robins, 1993, p.128-129).

Since women were not involved in bureaucracy, they were not entitled to the wages like their male counterparts. Women were vulnerable in this way, relying on the men in their lives for their survival, which could include fathers, brothers, sons, or other male family members. The government paid men well, in wheat and barley for bread and beer respectively. They were also paid with other provisions, one of which might have included the use of government owned slaves. Each worker was provided a certain number of days work from the slaves, which they could also sell if they were not to use them. The men who received these provisions were able to do what they liked with them, and since they earned handsomely – generally enough to feed a family of 10, if it included small children, they were able to pass on surplus provisions to family members, which there is evidence of some men doing. It appears that they supported some women, likely female family members, though there are plenty of other possibilities for other payments outside of the home for other goods and services (Robins, 1993, p.129).
Though women primarily depended on men to support them, there is a record of women participating and engaging in economic transactions on their own account. Robins (1993) provides information and references to these types of transactions:

> "…an ordinary workman at Deir el-Medina received 4 *khar* (about 300 litres) of emmer wheat for bread and 1 ½ *khar* of barley for beer a month… For instance, a woman was paid 29 *deben* of copper, equivalent to almost 15 *khar* of grain, for some clothes, which she had perhaps woven herself. A *deben* was a unit of weight roughly equivalent to 91 grams. In another business deal a woman purchased items worth 76 *deben*. She made a down payment of garments and vegetables worth 5 *deben* but owed the rest. The creditor must have believed that she would have been able to pay off this debt within a reasonable time," (p.129).

Women were also involved in transactions relating to the rental of land, donkeys, and slaves, adding to their transaction portfolios, though they were not permitted to serve in government positions. Women grew the economy, especially in the New Kingdom. Women were providing goods and services while using their provisions thoroughly. Women were inheriting property, engaging in economic transactions, and providing for their families in many ways, however they were unable to inherit the positions of men, like their sons. Only sons were able to inherit the positions of their fathers (or uncles) (Robins, 1993, p.131-132).

Ancient Egyptian women were considered to be equal to men under the law, including punishments. Women accused for the same crimes as men were punished in the same way, as no exceptions were made for sex. Women were interrogated in the same ways as men as well, which

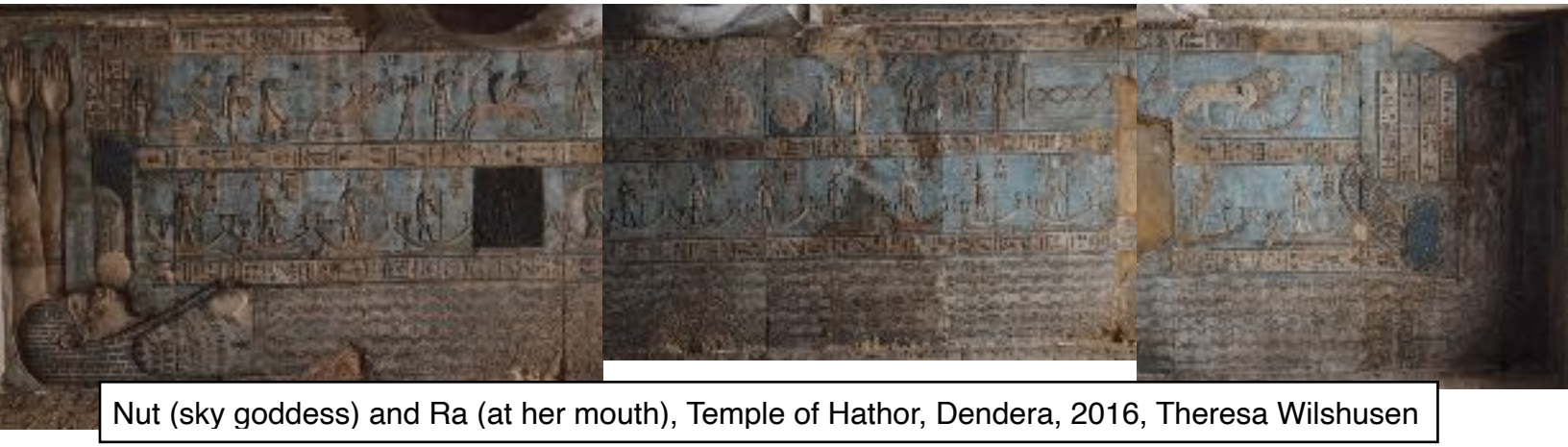
left them accountable for their actions, rather than the man of the house being culpable, therefore women received just penalties (Robins, 1993, p.137).

Widows were one group of women that were considered to be the most vulnerable and were treated with more compassion than any other. Widows were often seen as unfortunate as their livelihoods relied on their husbands and some found themselves with nothing after the death of their husbands. We learn about how widowed women were treated through wisdom literature – explaining how they should be treated, and autobiographies of men who suggest they have been ideal people for giving to, caring for, and not abusing widows. This seems like a low bar, but we must remember that widows could have been easy targets for advantaged people to exploit given that they may have had little to nothing. Disadvantaged widows had little or no family support. Men in the Middle Kingdom onwards often used autobiographies to show their grandeur by writing about their abilities to refrain from taking advantage of others, often women, such as widows, but including daughters. One Middle Kingdom official stated in his autobiography, "…I did not seize a man's daughter, nor did seize his field," (Robins, 1993, p.139). Even Ramses III states that he created safety for women to travel freely, "I enabled the woman of Egypt to go her way, her journeys being extended where she wanted, without any other person assaulting her on the road," (Robins, 1993, p.139). This suggests that it was unsafe for women to travel alone – assuming they were in danger of being mugged, or even raped (Robins, 1993, p.139). Women were clearly a vulnerable group of society, needing the protection of men in more ways than one, but they were vulnerable because of men, leaving men to be both the problem and the solution. In such a situation it is no surprise women were very much prisoners in their own lives.

3.2 Gender representation in death and its greater significance to identity in life

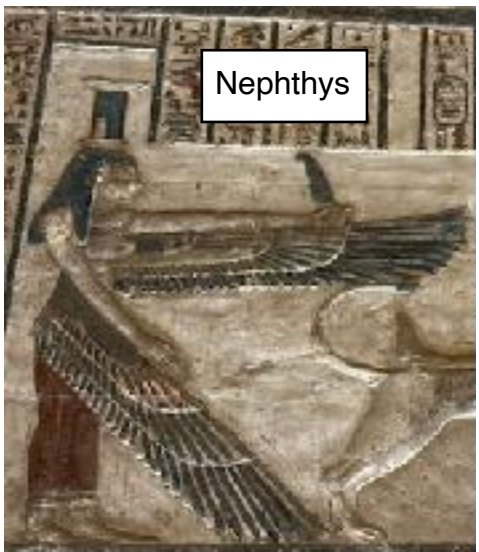
3.2.1 Construction of a living [gender] identity

Religion was the greatest power in Ancient Egypt. The creator god, Amun, created his own divine descendants, Shu (god of air) and Tefnut (goddess of moisture). Shu and Tefnut gave birth to Geb (the earth) and Nut (the sky). Geb and Nut (brother and sister) fell in love; Nut gave birth to the earliest recognized gods – Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys, and Horus (the sun god, Ra). Humans were put on earth (Geb) and ruled by Osiris (Mark, 2013). Ra impregnated the wife of a priest, giving birth to the divine child, which was claimed by Amun-Ra, ultimately making him king (Haikal, n.d.). Ancient Egyptian royalty were gods incarnate, as they were born from the seed of Osiris and therefore birthed as direct descendants of the gods (Robins, 1993, p.21). Kinship to the gods meant that one was not only royal, but divine (Ikram, 2015, p.31, 41). This status was one that was insurmountable. Associations to royalty, and therefore the gods, was an honor, one of which all Egyptians would want to be affiliated (Robins, 1993, p.16). Since the government was composed of divine royalty, then it was a theological government, meaning that governmental agencies were directly connected to religion. By extension religious buildings, such as temples and tombs, were ipso facto government buildings as well (Lesko, 2019). The union of these two seemingly individual concepts made for inescapable elitism among the social and economic groups. People would have vied for positions of power both within the government agencies as



Nut (sky goddess) and Ra (at her mouth), Temple of Hathor, Dendera, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Horus, Nephthys, and Isis at Temple of Hathor, Dendera, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen; Set at Karnak Temple, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen; Osiris at Valley of the Kings, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen



well as religious ones, as there was no real separation between them (Lesko, 2019).

As we have examined throughout this chapter, titles of individuals were what elevated one from one social status to another, and in doing so allowed one to develop one's own agency, wealth, and piety. The importance of social status cannot be understated since it allowed one access to exclusive jobs which could later be passed down like an inheritance from one generation to the next, the ability to establish and expand one's family and property, and in some cases even access to the divine royal family of be in the presence of the gods through work in cults or relating to the cult temples (Robins, 1993, p.111). Since religion (moving into the afterlife) was at the center of lives of every Egyptian, it was pertinent they be distinguished as their social position was an indirect relation to the gods who would ultimately judge them and their actions (Ikram, 2105, p.23; Ikram, 2015, p.24).

With religion intertwined in society, dictating one's social status, work status, and piety, it was an aspect of their identity that was inflexible in many ways. Egyptians had to work for their status in most cases, which was not an easy task as they were left vulnerable to their economic status as well. Many Egyptians further attempted to associate themselves with the temples of the cults they followed, to have favor among the gods. In coupling with the temple cults, one could possibly provide services to the temples and not only gain favor among the gods and priests, but advance socially gaining titles that could elevate them (Robins, 1993, p.108). Since this is from the positionality of a man, we must also consider the positionalities of women, which as we have previously examined, were much more limited. Women were restrained by fairly strict gender norms, though there is evidence they were able to find work and contribute to the household, or for themselves, though it was limited with men still dominating the workforce (Robins, 1993, p.109).

Egyptians worked their whole lives in hopes of ascending in status in preparation for the afterlife, but why? The afterlife promised a life without the suffering of the mortal world, assuming one had done good deeds in life (Ikram, 2015, p.24). Ancient Egyptian religious beliefs were not different from those held by modern religions today, though they did complicate life for some individuals. What constituted a 'good' person and how were people forming their eternal identities – identities they would hold in the afterlife?

Creating an identity in Ancient Egypt was about building up one's own personal identity in the here and now, so they could ultimately perpetuate their life, aggrandizing themselves at any opportunity, but without being entirely deceitful (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6-7). What one had in their mortal life is what they would continue into the next life with, assuming they were able to pass the tests of the gods and provide themselves with adequate provisions, with the provisions and other grave goods arguably among the most important after the weighing of the heart (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.14; Ikram, 2015, p.24). Ideally, one would be able to bury themselves in an elaborate tomb with ornate paintings, prayers and chants scrolling the walls, and in some cases including space for close family members, while also having a generous amount of

provisions from life in death, however there were conflicting beliefs of funerary practices and needs in Egyptian societies, proving that it was not homogeneous in its ideals (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6).

Not only were Ancient Egyptians attempting to provide themselves with the necessities of everyday life, but while they were also trying to prepare for their death, they were pursuing different avenues to build their wealth and gain social status. This is not to say that Egyptians were obsessing over their own deaths, rather they were preparing for their rebirth in the afterlife, which required them to have reserves of what they would need, the finer the better (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.11). Since death was the most obvious and important part of rebirth, Egyptians were greatly concerned with their coffins, as well as their tombs, though their coffins were what enabled them passage to the afterlife to meet the gods and be judged (Ikram, 2015, p.24). Coffins acted as the protection capsule for their bodies as it passed to the afterlife, but also protected them in the human realm from those who may have wanted to do them harm in the afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.25-26). As previously discussed, Egyptians believed that the gods and the dead were able to intervene in the lives of the living, and adversely the living were able to affect the afterlife of an individual through destruction of their name and/or likeness (Robins, 1993, p.76). Therefore, it was crucial that one have the highest quality materials for coffins and other funerary goods, both for the projection of status in their actual lives as well as continued observance of said status in the afterlife, but overall, the individual's name is secured to their body.

Not all Egyptians were able to afford high quality tombs, sarcophagi, or funerary goods like that of the royals and elite members of society as both the type of burial and location differed, but they were all determined to ensure their identities were accurate and perfected (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6-7, Ikram, 2015, p. 25-26). There were specific elements that needed to be seen on the sarcophagi in order for the individual to be identified and recognized, protected, and accepted. "Funerary display can be traced from prehistory onward," (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.7). This shows the importance of the visual aspects of the funerary processes and iconographies. These aspects changed throughout time and seemed to become more representational of the authentic lives lived than in previous kingdoms (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6).

The strict gender norms that existed in Ancient Egypt confined most people to the binary gender expression and the expression of their gender identity was limited as tradition and religion greatly limited their ability to express themselves. The funerary art, including the stelae, personalized funerary goods, and coffins were one way to express oneself while still adhering to tradition and ritual. In fact, it was common that the construct of gender in coffin art was much more flexible in some aspects (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.99). With Ancient Egypt being a masculinized culture – reverting to and facilitating the masculine being – the traditions and rituals were centered around the masculine being. The texts written to guide an individual through the underworld were written for men and tombs were commissioned by men, for men, though in few cases 'owned' by women, and in which case still needed a masculine head figure (Robins, 1993, p.100).

Paper composite mummy mask painted, - medium quality

Paper composite mummy mask painted with gold - high quality

Mummy masks at The National Museum of Egypt, Cairo, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

A variety of gender adaptations were made to sarcophagi before interment, as the deceased individual had to present as male, likening themselves to that of the gods Osiris or Re – an easy task for men, but for women this required a disguise of sorts. A female could not simply present themselves as female and expect to pass, so she had to undergo changes. Though the body of the deceased woman was not altered in the mummification process or further throughout the other anthropoid coffins, her name and likeness were able to remain the same until the last anthropoid coffin, the most exterior.

> "…the inscribed name, were re-gendered, while the unchangeable sex of the individual was hidden inside layers of mummy bandaging. Externally, the female individual was likened to Osiris; inside, the fully gendered human personality was retained," (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.99).

While this phenomenon occurred only with elite women's sarcophagi, the artisans that carried out these artistic gender transformations were aware of the complexity and uncertainty of attempting to cross over without proper likeness and insignia. Artisans had come up with some ingenious techniques to transform the individual through name and likeness that included combining the name of the deceased woman with that of Osiris, and further depicting Isis and Nephthys at the head and the foot of the coffin. This would allow the deceased to be joined to Osiris in name and additionally associated by family. Another cunning technique of educated artisans and scribes was to liken the deceased woman to that of the sun god through Book of the Dead commands along with bronzing her skin in the imagery, which was the masculine colors used in depictions, and furthermore naming her as the child of Nut – the mother of Osiris – associating her as kin. Other times the coffin and mummy case could remain androgynous, "… giving the dead woman a new and fully-bound Osirian body for her transformation," (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.100). These individuals could also change their pronouns to 'he/him' to further assist them in their transformation which would have appeared in the outermost sarcophagi, allowing the woman to preserve her true identity below on the most inner coffins (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.100). These techniques of masking one's identity demonstrates both the need for individuals to be true to themselves in exhibiting their authentic identities and adhere to the religious rituals and traditions, while adapting them to suit their need for self-expression (Wilshusen, 2018). This transformation is a form of cross-dressing, which allowed the deceased woman to safely pass as a man through the underworld in order to arrive at the weighing of the heart ritual (Wilshusen, 2018; Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.100). This is not unlike other forms of identity masking seen in contemporary societies, however, the same terminology is not used to describe the same actions of those in the ancient world.

Royal tombs remained distinct to that of the elite, though the elite emulated the divine royal family and attempted imitate them by perpetuating their own existences through the construction of mortuary temples where they could continue to receive offerings from their cults throughout time (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.8). The lay Egyptian often experienced a much different experience in death and leading up to it, though very little is known, it is assumed many

were disposed of in ways that are unrecoverable, specifically through the means of archeology today (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6).

While the funerary superstructures ceased from the Third Intermediate Period going forward, the elite still focused on the projection of their wealth and status through their funerary trappings. And though people were still concerned with both the contents of their tombs, along with the quality, the outward expression of their status was still primary (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.9). This could be considered the projection of oneself rather than the true reality lived, as they may have been able to construct ornate tombs, and even mortuary temples in some cases, they relied on their cults to perpetuate their existence. These tombs modeled the royals and ultra-elite, but, "…were probably more public and political than communal and mortuary," (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.9). This further exhibits the need to present status rather than the authentic self, perpetuating a life or lifestyle that is close to a façade rather than reality. Building one's tomb throughout one's lifetime stimulated competition among Egyptians as a symbol of their status, or perhaps as competition with the even more elite (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.10). This would have stimulated the economy of course, as more artisans, perhaps not contracted through the government, would have been put to work with grand plans and detailed work, providing them with the equivalent of more financial stability (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.10). Of course, these great mortuary monuments full of funerary goods would have begun construction or manufacture once the individual had reached a specific elite title or peaked in their careers to ensure they would maintain that position for eternity in the afterlife. Not only that, but they would forever be recognized and associated with that specific aspect of their identity, as even the grave goods would pertain to these aspects of their identities, which were dependent on their social status and jobs (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.10-11).

In the New Kingdom, tombs had become extravagant monuments to the dead. They not only provided protection for the body of the deceased and their belongings for the afterlife, but where the deceased were able to transform and regenerate, allowed there to be a space for the living to reunite with the dead – speaking prayers and chants to provide sustenance for the dead (Hartwig, 2004, p.1). Above all, the tomb chapel was a place where the living identity of the person was reflected on all walls, as well as the identity they wished to project, one they hoped to inherit in the next life. This was an idealized identity, one that assumed some reality from the living life, but was aggrandized for further acquisition in the afterlife (Hartwig, 2004, p.1). Both identities were accepted and recognized as one's identity.

Understanding and decoding the imagery in these tombs is important to understand the intersecting realities of the individual at the time, all demonstrated on the walls and within the materials used. Melinda Hartwig (2004) explains,

> "Theban tomb painting and its iconography bear the imprint of the social, religious, economic, and artistic realities present at the time of the painting's creation. Perceived by a wide range of chapel viewers, this imagery had the power to impact the visitor who

> left testimonies about their appreciation of the imagery and prayers for the benefit of those interred in the tomb's subterranean chambers," (p.3).

While we can learn a lot about these factors, differing in each individual tomb, we must remember that tombs existed among the elite and did not reflect the lives of the working and lower classes. However, they help us to understand and benefit from the lives that were composed within them. Tombs commemorated the dead but also allowed them to reflect what they believed to be their true identities. Since many spent their lives building, developing, and decorating these tombs, they were able to project their living identity in its authenticity, as, "…the tomb itself may have been regarded as an aspect of the person," (Hartwig, 2004, p.6). Elite Egyptians aspired to have a long, successful life, large family, beautiful funeral, and exquisite tomb. Their success in the afterlife depended on their descendants, as well as the physical and non-physical aspects of the body and, "…the protective, magical structure of the tomb," (Hartwig, 2004, p.7).

> "In addition, the tomb was also a part of a vast complex of monuments in ancient Egypt dedicated to sacred permanence that linked society and visually reinforced its cultural identity," (Hartwig, 2004, p.1).

Tombs were not only vitally important for the perpetuation of the afterlife for the deceased or a place for loved ones and descendants to gather in remembrance, it also served as a status symbol for the tomb owner of course, and all those interred thereafter, if it was built in such a way, but also served as a monument to a greater cultural identity. This identity was reinforced over and over again, from one generation to the next, through the construction of elaborate tombs with traditional aspects, such as traditional artisan work and stylized and idealized images.

It wasn't until the New Kingdom that more family tombs appeared. Tombs prior were often reserved for the deceased (man) and his wife. From the New Kingdom on is when there is an appearance of family tombs that were prepared for both the deceased and his wife, as well as some close family members and other dependents, such as children or women of the family that might night have married or were widowed (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.11). However, grouped tombs existed prior to this, though they were often for the less wealthy in society and perhaps contained unrelated individuals. However, this allowed for families, or the less wealthy, to benefit from group burial as the purchaser or the tomb would have paid for it and all those buried there would have little extra expense when the tomb was reopened. This appears to be a more authentic rendering of the family as it pertains to the care of the greater family rather than the flaunting of one individual identity, which left the family in charge of preserving the cult and remaining relatively egocentric, which is how they appeared prior (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.11).

In the Third Intermediate Period the preservation of the corpse becomes one of the most important aspects of the funerary process (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.11). The need to appear

perfect and prepared in all ways begins to inundate society even further as preservation of the coffin, tomb, and grave goods, along with the body, all become essential rather than overindulgence, though it was. However, as it became commonplace, the gap between the elite funerary process and the poor began to grow as mummification was a costly procedure and afforded exclusively to the elite and royalty (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.11). Valued members of society, such as artisans, would have had less exquisite burials, despite their success and prominence and importance throughout their lives; they simply could not afford the regalia of the elite. And in the case of the poor and unfortunate of society, there is evidence of mass graves, though most reported as formal (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.12). There were still even less fortunate individuals, who were deprived of a proper interment altogether, in one case near the Delta region,

> "…a corpse discarded in a storage bin had been left exposed and partly consumed by animals. Such a disposal, devoid of grave goods, suggest that members of the lowest social strata or perhaps outcasts might not have had even a simple interment in a burial ground," (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.13).

The identities of these individuals left without a proper burial would have not been afforded the ability to pass over into the afterlife as they lacked proper insignia, and thus in the belief of the Ancient Egyptians, they would have ceased to exist (Ikram, 2015, p.25-26). Those whose bodies were destroyed or discarded in other ways, such as burning or consumed by animals, would have suffered the same fate. Their lack of identity in their lives, be it a lack of status, or having been outcast, would have left them without the means to carry on into the afterlife, dooming them to the miserable lives they led on earth and no further existence (Ikram, 2015, p.24-25). According to Ancient Egyptian beliefs it was necessary to be identified in death to be ushered in safely and further be judged for one's deeds. Without this there is no possibility of an afterlife. Identity was crucial to rebirth in the afterlife, and the continuation of it through your means in life, unfortunately.

Lack of identity could have meant many other things in Ancient Egypt, disassociation from religious cults, ostracization from family or society, being widowed and/or childless, being unmarried without male support, and being enslaved are some of them. This was significant for Egyptians at the time as this meant there was little to no hope of pursuing life after death. One belief is that one must have a cult following in order to maintain one's life in the afterworld, repeating sustenance prayers/chants and speaking life into your name (Ikram, 2015, p.24). This belief in having family to sustain you after death was intangible for some as their beliefs dictated that the tomb provisions would not be enough for continued life. Religious, family, and work connections were imperative to survival in both one's actual, physical life, as well as in the afterlife.

Creating one's identity through association of religious cults did not always guarantee status, but it helped individuals believe they gained favor of the gods of which the cults they belonged to.

Engaging in cult rituals and traditions provided purpose and for some a sense of identity if they were unable to gain religious titles through their services such as through being a musician (Robins, 1993, p. 145-146, 148).

Finding identity through work, be it religious, governmental, agricultural, or artisanal, was a means of belonging as well. Having fixed work meant that you belonged to a group, and were identified with specific titles that would have allowed any given individual to claim association of their work group, some even being buried in the same areas as other people from the same field of work. Work formed a great part of one's identity and furthermore, the identity of the family (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.9).

The creation of identity through status is one of the most common forms seen in Ancient Egypt as it was an amalgamation of a variety of aspects from one's life. Identity through status signified that one had inherited status in some manner, was given a title through their work or deeds after being educated, or earned their status through actually raising themselves up, which was the most difficult and often compromised of some general luck of circumstance since it was a nearly impossible effort (Robins, 1993, p.145-148).

Not all identities were accepted as truth, not even from Egyptologists, as they were discovered long ago and through a colonist perspective of what identity should be, as well as the expectations based on identities of the time. Since many of the discoveries of Ancient Egypt, there has been a lack of revision of said discoveries through the lens of gender studies and research. The revision of texts, language, and cultural norms, as well as the non-conforming aspects should be considered as something other than what the text states. Looking more critically at the situation and details, allowing for understanding outside of the often sexist and outdated perspectives that have documented the findings would perhaps expose more legitimate theories of identities that would explain 'unknown' or 'unclear' concepts. However, the homophobia that continues to exist in academic and field research undermines incredible findings that do not necessarily fit the gender, cultural, or societal norms of the time, but perpetuates homophobia and/or transphobia by restricting the vocabulary allowed to be used when clear examples of them (homosexual, gender non-conforming behavior) are evident, such as the case of Queen/King Hatshepsut.

Identity is a fundamental part of life today, just as it was for the Ancient Egyptians, and for them and their attempts to convey their true identities in death was, as they believed, the utmost important. Though the language did not necessarily exist at the time, at least not the language we use today, they expressed themselves in ways they attempted to make clear through their actions and depictions, only to be misinterpreted thousands of years later. We do not understand Ancient Egyptian culture perfectly, and perhaps never will, however, through history we can gain a better understanding of life at the time and as we have seen in our own time that language changes and is misused and appropriated to mean other things, so this can also be said for that of our interpretations of the language and imagery of Ancient Egypt (Robins, 1993, p.11, 13).

3.3 What it means to be a man/woman in Ancient Egypt through artistic references

3.3.1 Physical manifestations of feminism and the non-binary

This chapter has discussed many aspects of gender and feminism, or in some aspects, the lack thereof. It has provided examples of how gender has been portrayed and used in different factions of society, though most notably among the royal and elite. It has discussed how gender expectations differed among the sexes and the feminism that existed even among the lower classes. It has examined the creation of identity in life and death, giving examples of the necessities to create such identities and how to maintain them both in life and the afterlife. This section will focus on artistic references of the feminine and masculine identities represented as 'men' and 'women' and the fluidity that existed and of which was lacking, along with the transition of some from one to another.

As this chapter has also explained, there is little evidence of the lives of the working and lower classes as they didn't have the means to erect monuments about their own lives, so those that are documented are those of the elite classes and royalty. With this in mind, this section will specifically look at pictorial, sculptural, relief, and textual instances, focusing on one of the most successful eras of Ancient Egypt, the New Kingdom.

3.3.1.A *Pictorial*

Since the majority of Egyptians were mostly illiterate or semi-literate, the elite and royals being those who had more access to formal education, which included scribal training, the majority of what was made public was in the form of images, this included religious directive (Zinn, 2012). There was massive importance put on one's likeness as it was an embodiment of the individual; the destruction of the image was the destruction of the individual, usually once they had passed into the next life, which meant that one could still be eliminated through the destruction of their image (Jarus, 2019).

Imagery is found on temple walls, interior and exterior, they are also seen decorating the interior of tombs in the chapel room (Ikram, 2015, p.146). Some images have been found in homes of workers at Deir el-Medina (the workers village), acting as a centerpiece or focal point of the room (Ikram, 2015, p.149; Weiss, 2009). Since the majority of the general population was illiterate or semi-illiterate then it seems they would be drawn to the image. Pictorial references such as those mentioned above show the correlation between the image and one's connection with the image portrayed, even among the elite who were literate, which is to say, that even among the elite classes, they were drawn to imagery of gods and images of their own likenesses as an essential artform and form of identity expression.

> "Theban tomb painting and its iconography bear the imprint of the social, religious, economic, and artistic realities present at the time of the painting's creation," (Hartwig, 2004, p.3).

The Ancient Egyptians gave power and significance to the image, as I have mentioned, as imagery not only acted as a form of communication between the classes, but also between the gods and humans, as well as between the living and the dead. With so much emphasis put on imagery, they become charged with power, so the destruction of an image could very well mean the death of an individual, chipping away at their existence piece by piece, image by image. So, the importance of depicting oneself was important for status, as well as an act of appearing to make offerings to the gods to maintain one's good standing with them, but the maintenance of one's image came down to maintaining good relations with others so the destruction of one's image would not come to pass. This shows what Egyptians valued in their depictions and imagery, especially of oneself.

> "…iconography provides a window into what the ancient Egyptians valued in this world and secured their eternal life in the next. The iconography also reveals the ideological truths and religious ideas that permeated the age," (Hartwig, 2004, p.3).

Due to the overall lack of inclusion of women in depictions, apart from goddesses, we are able to learn of few of the jobs women actually took on in everyday life, but we can understand their importance in rituals.

> "Images on temple walls mainly show men in charge of these tasks, but women were sometimes included at the head of groups making daily offerings to the god in their role as musicians," (Onstine, 2010).

Having previously discussed women's roles as musicians in temples, we can further understand that when they are depicted, they would be depicted as musicians. They played significant roles in temples as musicians (singers, dancers, acrobatics, and musicians), but further we learn about their importance in offerings.

Women encompassed a body that excited the gods, particularly Osiris. Images depicting nude, youthful girls and women were used to excite Osiris to encourage the act of masturbation, which is how one was to be reborn in the afterlife (Robins, 1993, p.75). Therefore, these images appeared very frequently and numerously within tombs and coffins to ensure there were considerable amounts of these depictions of young women to excite the deceased dressed as Osiris, to be able to be reborn (Robins, 1993, p.77-79).

Other depictions of women appear in other offering scenes, usually in temples or tombs and these include images of women naked or in the typical tight, white linen dress, standing or kneeling, offering goods and foods to the gods (Robins, 1993, p. 180-183). They take on roles of servants to the gods, though their societal statuses may indicate their elite class.

Within the context of funerary art, there are more depictions of women in service than men as musician, dancers, acrobats, mourners, family, servants, etc., though women have an extremely important role in rebirth; they are sexualized and used as a tool to benefit another, even other

women, disguised as Osiris, to ensure rebirth (Robins, 1993, p.142-148). They are shown in scenes of offering, be it with their bodies, or in presentation of goods and foods for the gods. Most depictions of women are subordinate and submissive undercutting their value in society, culture, and religion (Robins, 1993, p.160-161).

There are instances of imagery that do not adhere to the cultural or traditional norms that have been debated among Egyptologists as to their significance and interpretations. Much of what is depicted on tomb walls and public constructions are manicured, idealized versions that are explicitly displaying what the owner or individual wants to be expressed or displayed. The results may not align entirely to that of the status quo, but in the case of the elite, are often not challenged, and executed without question. It is only in the modern age that these images are examined and reevaluated, with more knowledge and understanding of society and gender, that uncovers or unmasks realities of society that were perhaps taboo, unaccepted, or overlooked because new knowledge is being brought to the investigation. This section will look at some of these examples.

Queen (and later King) Hatshepsut had a tumultuous reign as Queen, then Regent, and finally as King. She pushed the boundaries of what was accepted and tolerated based on her beliefs of her own gender identity and her beliefs about her relation to the gods. She challenged gender norms, cultural norms, and religious norms throughout her occupancy of the throne. She was a woman, and later a man, of great substance and character. She is one of the few examples of a gender non-conforming being in Ancient Egypt.

Before discussing Hatshepsut's rise to power, we must first look at how her stepson was solidified as king as a toddler. Hatshepsut, having only bore a daughter, did not provide an heir to the throne of Thutmose II, so when it came time for the selection of the new king, upon the death of her brother-husband, king Thutmose II, she was probably indifferent. The new king was selected, later during his reign the miraculous event was memorialized in stone in the center of Karnak Temple. Thutmose III wanted to ensure the event, his divine selection, could not be challenged in the future (Cooney, 2015, p.77). By commemorating this in stone, with his likeness and that of the god, Amun, he projected himself as 1. the chosen one, directly selected by Amun, 2. an irrefutable selection, and 3. divine and powerful haven been in direct contact with the god. Thutmose III left Hatshepsut out of this depiction, though she was most likely there, since his mother was not of the upper class, and she herself was God's Wife of Amun (Queen) (Cooney, 2015, p.77). This deletion of Hatshepsut from the record is significant, as she was queen and he was but a toddler, not yet able to actually rule. Her power and authority surpassed his own in that moment, and yet, as an adult he wished she was absent. This further projects Thutmose III's own necessity to appear as great and all powerful, without the assistance of Hatshepsut, who, in fact, was his regent and co-regent for many years (Cooney, 2015, p.78). His ego was fragile and thus craved projections of grandeur and influence, again, without the aid of any woman, when in reality, "Thutmose III ruled as king only because Hatshepsut was there to make it happen," as she was careful to allow the oracle to make the selection so that she would appear unbiased (Cooney,

2015, p.77).

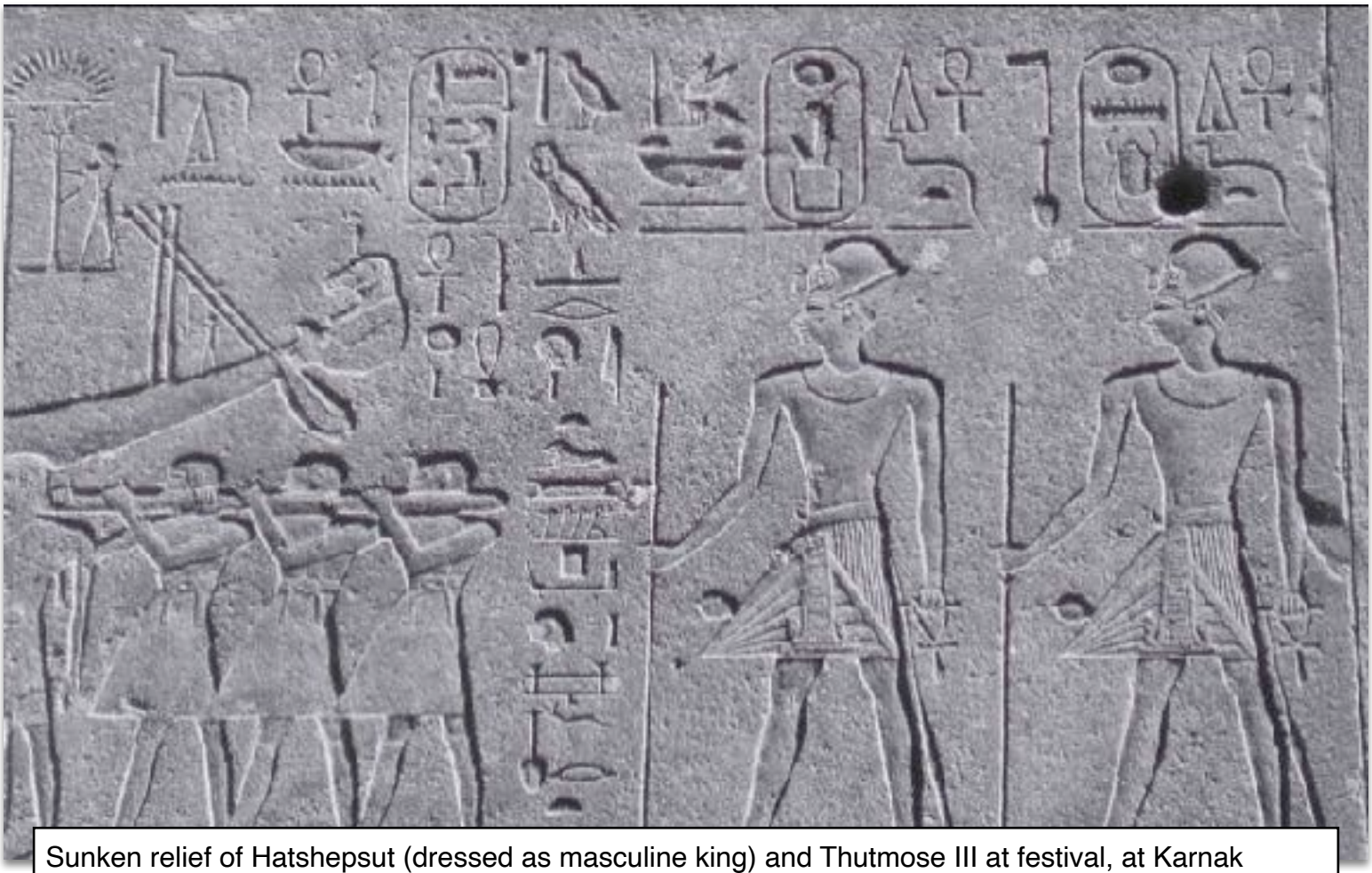
After the selection of the heir to the throne (Thutmose III), Hatshepsut took control as regent as it would be a decade before he was of age to take the throne. And with her title of God's Wife of Amun, a title she declared herself, which asserted her as having direct lineage to the god Amun, allowed her to maintain her power, and ultimately regency (Cooney, 2015, p.78). It was not uncommon for young kings to need grooming and guidance as they grew into their roles, as this was often done by a collection of men and women closest to the young king. This practice was so common that Cooney (2015, p.79) reports that despite Egypt's patriarchal systems of power, women in Egypt had been ruling Egypt informally, and usually unrecognized, for nearly half of the seventy years prior to Thutmose III being declared king.

> "Evidence for the practice of highborn, educated women ruling on behalf of their young male charges goes back to the Old Kingdom at least, almost one thousand years before, and the practice probably stems back even farther, to the Early Dynastic Period, another five hundred years before that," (Cooney, 2015, p.79).

So while women had roles in running the country and performing the duties of the king, they were not seen as such important figures, and were certainly not depicted as such. This gender discrimination was commonplace at the time, but would change with the rise of Hatshepsut as regent to Thutmose III.

Hatshepsut had led Egypt while Thutmose II was ill and dying, so she was already the leader Egypt expected, but she was not one who tolerated insubordination, or perhaps even criticisms, as a text commissioned by her stated, "He who will praise her, he will live. He who will speak an evil thing, ignoring her majesty, he will die," (Cooney, 2015, p.79). She had to be a strong leader, perhaps threatening to keep any and all who would challenge her role and position as regent subservient and intimidated by her power. As regent, Queen of Egypt, Hatshepsut also continued to carry and use her other title as God's Wife of Amen as Egypt's highest priestess, holding the two highest titles a woman of the time could possess (Cooney, 2015, p.85). While grooming Thutmose III, Hatshepsut began a campaign on his behalf, but also to her benefit. She initiated temple renewals throughout Nubia, depicting herself as God's Wife of Amen and King's Wife, though Thutmose III was just a child; however, in these renderings he was also depicted as a man, not as the child he in fact was (Cooney, 2015, p.85). Hatshepsut made sure that her likeness appeared alongside the young king depicted as a man, to demonstrate her power and leadership and show, "her image as a woman of authority was carved in Egypt's sacred temples. Her mother, Ahmes, had done the same for herself and Hatshepsut during the reign of Thutmose II. But now Hatshepsut went even further, claiming more space for herself in the temples she built for her young charge. Such depictions of a God's Wife were unprecedented, just like her powerful regency," (Cooney, 2015, p.85).

Hatshepsut understood the importance of the projected image and she continued to erect



Sunken relief of Hatshepsut (dressed as masculine king) and Thutmose III at festival, at Karnak Temple, Luxor
Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology & the Ancient World. (n.d.). History of Egypt I - 18th Dynasty.

Sunken relief of Hatshepsut (right - in king role) and Thutmose III

Lumen Candela. (n.d.). *World Civilization - Ancient Egypt - Hatshepsut*. Hatshepsut | World Civilization

monuments to her late husband-brother, Thutmose II, to further illustrate her connection to the throne and likewise prove her capacity to be regent (Cooney, 2015, p.85). This allowed for the general public to see images of the former king and Hatshepsut together, inscribing the relation and additionally a commemoration, appearing as if to also inform the elite, who were literate, that her power came from power and continued as such.

The exact date is debated, but the suggested date that Hatshepsut was crowned king was in year 7 of Thutmose III's reign. All of her planning and organizing had paid off for her and she had successfully taken the crown, "memorializing the power she had already amassed," (Cooney, 2015, p.100-101). Because she had been planning this moment for years, she had reliefs made to show this moment, as she was taking steps progressively yet slowly, that would allow her to assume more power without overstepping lines too drastically. At Semna temple in Nubia the relief shows her surrounded in the presence of the gods with a description of her actions, including her as 'an heir', 'a builder', 'as a ritual officiate', all actions of a masculine king. She shows herself performing the masculine actions of a king without formally naming herself as such (Cooney, 2015, p.101). At this time, inscriptions made on reliefs or obelisks were privy to the literate, so essentially the elite class. They would be aware of her subtle changes much sooner than the general public who were illiterate.

Prior to her coronation she was constantly modifying her depictions, changing her titles in an effort to support the power she was slowly assuming. One of these changes was on a monument that read 'God's Wife of Amen', which she had altered to read 'King's Eldest Daughter', which Cooney (2015, p.102) states, was "a shift that moved her from a queen's role to an heir's, as the rightful offspring of Thutmose I and one who could make a heritable claim to the throne despite her female gender." While this was a title shift that could only be read, she made other such changes pictorially, like that of a block at Karnak temple. This block displays Hatshepsut dressed in the gown of a queen but with the king's crown upon her head, where she wore a short masculine wig. This block was commissioned by her before he official coronation which appeared to reveal her new status not only by her wardrobe, but also by the images depicting her performing the royal duties of a king, by offering jars of wine directly to the gods- acts that only kings would perform in depictions (Cooney, 2015, p.102). This block was a huge step that formally showed her ascension, not only textual, but also pictorial. This relief also revealed her new name as king, Maatkare (The Soul of Re Is Truth) (Cooney, 2015, p.103). She took a second name, just as kings would, a throne name, transforming her role to king before it actually took place (Cooney, 2015, p.103).

While Hatshepsut had crowned herself king, she continued to bring up the young king, if only for appearances, she made attempts to ensure the public saw her efforts to groom him well, and made this evident through multiple reliefs displaying the two together performing royal rituals as co-kings (Cooney, 2015, p.127). With her seniority, Hatshepsut was probably agitated by the fact that she was represented as co-king with all of her years of experience, and even fewer years as co-king. She cleverly decided to have depictions altered to show her status as king from the death

of her husband, Thutmose II, so that she would indeed have retroactively been king since his death. This gave her more years of seniority over her nephew-stepson, Thutmose III. She sent artisans around Egypt changing the depictions, presenting her in power and him as king-in-waiting essentially (Cooney, 2015, p.131).

As Thutmose III grew into a man and therefore his position as king, Hatshepsut felt a great pressure to maintain her authority and status, and through her actions as king over the past decade, she had begun to feel the responsibility to the position of king. She slowly began changing her image, not only in depictions, though they were first, but in reality as well. Perhaps it started as only private changes, privy to only those within her close circle within the temple. She began questioning her own identity as she grappled with how to express herself authentically, which of the masculine or feminine should win out.

Previously, in the early years of her reign, she had been depicted as a woman who had taken the throne as a woman, with a still feminine identity, or at least a projected one. She adopted masculine wardrobe aspects, mostly to build respect, donning the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt paired with a long dress, like that of a queen. However, year by year the images changed from a hybrid of masculine and feminine aspects to progressively more masculine. This began with the widening of the shoulders and extending her stance to mimic the stances of kings, even when she was depicted in a full dress. Later, she was depicted shirtless and seemingly bare chested. In these depictions she was clearly still a woman, as they displayed her naked breasts, but was coupled with the masculine kilt and king's headscarf (Cooney, 2015, p.154). These depictions were experiments in her hybrid sexuality, that was not yet clear even to her, and this would have made for a shocking image for any to see as it had never been done, so this king of imagery was only displayed within the innermost rooms of Hatshepsut's Djeser Djeseru temple (Cooney, 2015, p.154).

Since these depictions were still quite feminine, Hatshepsut began masculinizing her images even further. Apart from broader shoulders she added a strong pectoral chest, with no visible breasts (Cooney, 2015, p.154). As some of her images still possessed feminine likenesses, she had some altered and other, new, depictions created. Paintings, for example, were changed – earlier paintings would have illustrated her with a yellow-colored skin, typical for women, but when painted over with the usual color for men, a darker red ochre, the colors mix to create an unusual orange tone, one that is non-traditional in Egyptian art (Cooney, 2015, p.154-155). This new blend is almost symbolic of the transition Hatshepsut herself had made, ultimately coalescing her feminine and masculine identities through one aspect of traditional representation. She clearly struggled with deciding how much of each part of her identity she should put on display, considering what would appeal to her people and the gods at the same time, without sacrificing her own authenticity (Cooney, 2015, p.155). Soon after, Hatshepsut took on the masculine identity, without any hybrid concessions.

> "As time went on, her images were completely masculinized in face and body, which

> suggest that even in real life she may have worn a king's kilt and either bound her breasts or included no shirt at all, at least during temple rituals. Hatshepsut could not force Egyptian kingship to fit her unconventional gender; instead, she had to conform to its sacred tenets… she concealed her feminine aspects until there was almost no woman left, except in the sacred texts alongside the picture that continued referring to "she" and "her," (Cooney, 2015, p.156-157).

Hatshepsut became the master of her own identity. She knew that the common Egyptian would not necessarily understand such great changes within an arguably short period of time, especially with firmly rooted gender norms within the culture, however the transformation occurred first in hieroglyphs which the elite could read and ultimately understand and engage with the transformation. So for the common people, Hatshepsut became the king they needed, one that was a strong man, an architect, a protector, and virile, as well as one that could perform rituals for the gods, keeping them content (Cooney, 2015, p.158).

> "…Hatshepsut did not undergo her gender transformation manipulatively or cynically, but piously. It is quite possible that she actually believed Amen had allowed her to transcend her own human body to become an entity greater than herself," (Cooney, 2015, p.158).

3.3.1.B *Sculptural*

Visual representations in paintings, stelae, and reliefs were exceedingly common in ancient Egypt, along with sarcophagi depictions, as they had significant meaning and purposes, usually derived from religious ritual and tradition. And while relief is technically sculptural, this section will focus on three-dimensional sculpture.

Three-dimensional sculpture usually served a variety of different purposes than that of the primarily religious and funerary imagery we have already discussed. These works were also created by artisans that perhaps specialized in three-dimensional sculpture, as most artisans had particular specialties (James & Dorman, 2021). Most of the surviving sculpture from ancient Egypt is funerary, otherwise private votives, for rituals, and others, particularly colossi, were explicitly meant to exemplify grandeur (James & Dorman, 2021).

Sculptures were constructed out of different materials for different purposes. Some of these materials included wood and a variety of different kinds of stones. And as we have learned already about the surviving art, it was produced for the wealthy elite and royalty, so their purposes are similar to that of the pictorial depictions – meant to project the grandeur and status of an individual, while also serving some functional purpose, such as in rituals (James & Dorman, 2021). Craftsmanship seemed to peak in the New Kingdom (18th dynasty), borrowing the best of the Middle Kingdom (James & Dorman, 2021). The New Kingdom sculpture was exquisite for this, providing high quality materials and superb detail; which permitted the work to be both long-lasting and refined.

Feminine depictions of Hatshepsut

Masculine depictions of Hatshepsut

Roehrig, C. H., et al. (2005). *Hatshepsut, From Queen to Pharaoh*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Yale University Press.

This supremacy for sculpture in the New Kingdom was on par with the peak of wealth in Egypt at the time as well. Hatshepsut and Thutmose II began their reign in an economic upswing for Egypt, which Hatshepsut perpetuated during her time as queen, regent, and king. This is significant because it allowed for more construction works to be achieved using better quality materials – materials that could withstand the elements and, more importantly, time.

We know that Hatshepsut had worked hard to bolster and maintain her image of power through her construction efforts, erecting and renovating temples throughout Egypt, but we have seen through surviving sculptures that she was also eternalizing herself and her status forever. She had made attempts at this throughout her reign through relief, which was easily altered to match her ascension of power and gender transformation, but just as easily could have been destroyed as relief was a shallow carving and could be chipped away easily (Cooney, 2015, p.154-157), especially when considering the materials used for construction of many temples and colossal sculptures were made of limestone or sandstone – weak, brittle sedimentary stones (U.S. General Service Administration, 2019; Geology Science, 2019). However, during this time these votive statues were placed in temples across Egypt, in conjunction with Hatshepsut's building and reconstruction projects, which provided even more opportunities for votive sculptures to be constructed and placed (James & Dorman, 2021).

As mentioned above, large works were made with more bland materials, which could be constructed fairly quickly and altered if need be. Smaller sculptures, however, were made of stronger material, such as granite – a colorful, dense, and durable stone (Geology Science, 2021). The use of granite for smaller votive sculptures provided two things: resistance and luxury. Since Egyptians' main prerogative was to maintain their status both in the living world and the afterlife, the use of one's likeness or image was one key factor in doing so, therefore, using a material that was significantly more resistant to the natural elements, as well as to destruction, it gave confidence for the proprietor that it could last for eternity. This ability, access to eternity, in itself was rich, as if it were a guarantee to the afterlife. For these reasons it is very unlikely that any common Egyptian would have possessed any votive sculpture of themselves, as they often struggled to provide an adequate sarcophagus.

What we do know of the surviving sculptures is that the material did, in fact, make a difference, with many more granite sculptures surviving than more bland materials. These sculptures were sleeker and stylized to avoid the realities of the figure of the proprietor. Earlier sculptures, like that of Akhenaten (Amenhotep III), would have depicted wide hips, almost breast-like chests on men, and elongated facial features (James & Dorman, 2021). This exhibition of his feminine features was considered grotesque of a king, but he embraced his authentic features and was depicted in his many colossal sculptures and smaller votives depicting his true figure. He was depicted in these sculptures, including reliefs, performing ritual acts as well as seated with his wife, Nefertiti (Dominguez, 2008). It is believed that Akhenaten was illustrated authentically in his depictions as Nefertiti's imagery was soft, brilliant, and realistic, deducing that they preferred to maintain their likenesses as authentically as they could be, foregoing the stylized versions of

royalty (James & Dorman, 2021).

Hatshepsut was a queen that, like Akhenaten, wanted to be portrayed accurately, as we now know. While she did perhaps exaggerate her authority, she did not distort her identity, rather, she emphasized it, much like Akhenaten she wanted to illustrate not only her power and connection to the gods, but display her transition physically and metaphorically with regards to her ascension of kingship (Cooney, 2015, p.117). She was no longer hiding her "own true character" (Cooney, 2015, p.117). Ultimately, and most importantly for Egyptians, was to be represented as accurately as possible, with exception for embellishments of status and accomplishments, and negative affirmations; Egyptians wanted their personal sculptures to reflect their true likenesses and identities so that Osiris would recognize them and there would be no question or confusion about who they were (James & Dorman, 2021). The likenesses, of all forms, had to match the inscriptions, and could be thought of as a form of identification verification. Therefore, expressing oneself accurately and authentically through their depictions, in whatever form, would help them associate to the texts that would accompany their bodies.

> "To this end the statue was not only a physical representation but also a vehicle for appropriate texts, which might be inscribed obtrusively over beautifully carved surfaces," (James & Dorman, 2021).

These two elements: image and text, provided the deceased with a physical body that acted like a vessel to ensure they would be recognized, where their actual body might have failed this though, illness, injury, or aging, as we must remember they were to project the image they wished to maintain in the afterlife as well, so the images should have been consistent. Thus, this is why Hatshepsut continuously altered her images in temples and her tomb, along with those in public spheres. Images in temples were subject to the gods, who they believed lived there, so all their likenesses were coherent and comparable.

3.3.1.C *Textual*

Texts were important for the release of information to the elite public, in making declarations, memorializing, in establishing power, as well as in documenting or recounting (Cooney, 2015, p.101-103. Texts usually accompanied images in tombs, on sarcophagi, on statues, and other monuments, including reliefs (Cooney, 2015, p.157-158, 162, 165-166, 176). There are instances where the text survives independently from any image; such is the case on obelisks, and even some temples, like that of Habu temple, who's façade is covered in sunken hieroglyphs (Cooney, 2015, p.115). Written texts are examples of where text existed without the accompaniment of images. Large texts such as books often served as religious or funerary purposes, be them directions, chants, and declarations of the deceased for the afterlife, or other purposes such as record keeping, reporting grain taxes collected and owed, transactions between individuals, and even court records (Robins, 1993, p.129-131).

Texts, like images, were also explicit in describing the individual, though not their likeness, rather

their status and deeds in life. Funerary texts on coffins, in tombs and temples, and in funerary texts all served different purposes, but one thing they all had in common was they were to assist the deceased in making it to the afterlife and accommodate changing perceptions of the afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.109). The “Book of Two Ways”, the “Books of the Underworld”, and the “Book of the Dead”, for example, gave instructions, provided protective chants, and warnings for the deceased, with maps covering the bottom of the coffin in order for the deceased to not lose their way, while the books provided protection from anything that would try to detour them or do them harm on their journey (Ikram, 2015, p.38-41, 44, 112-113; Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.100). They were fairly self-explanatory in their function, though the amount of detail in each book varied – the more detailed the book, the more expensive it was, leaving the wealthy elite greater opportunity of surviving the journey and arriving safely without incident (Ikram, 2015, p.38-39). Rarely were they customizable, unlike other necessary funerary goods.

The texts on and in each sarcophagus or coffin contained inscriptions, referred to as Coffin Texts, that assisted the deceased, but they also identified an individual (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.105). These inscriptions first identified the individual, explaining who they were in life, including names and/or job titles, and their relation to ancestors, and of course, their connection to the gods themselves (Miatello, 2018, p.42, 46). Each anthropoid coffin provided similar but different information about the individual and decorations. The one enclosing the mummy, for some, is the only coffin they could manage to afford, so this coffin would have to be incredibly detailed. However, for the elite and royalty, they were fortunate to afford more nesting coffins. The outermost coffin should be the one that greets Osiris, demonstrating one’s likeness to him (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.108). This outermost coffin’s text would be almost near scripted in the type of text it provided, but was also customized to the individual, including their name, family relations, and their importance to the gods (Miatello, 2018, p.42; Ikram, 2015, p.111). With each successive coffin the more authentic the texts could read, as Osiris has to be tricked, to some extent, into accepting the individual by looking like himself (Ikram, 2015, p.108-109). Ultimately, the outermost sarcophagus was a veil of the true identity of the individual. The other coffins had to be more reflective of the owner’s true identity as they believed these would be the identities they carried for eternity (Ikram, 2015, p.120).

Text was an incredibly important aspect of the funerary process, as the name had to be written on all funerary objects, along with their titles, showing status (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.109). Though the names of the deceased had to appear on all funerary items ensuring they would be identified with the body, including one’s social status with their titles, gender, and accompanying identities; the inscriptions on the coffin, in the Coffin Texts, were a little more flexible (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.109). The Egyptian language is gendered, so the words used in the texts were gendered, rendering the deceased in a position of gender incongruency. Though it was necessary for the individual to undergo separations of their identities of manifestations – “The dead could only be reborn through a complex act of separation – in spirit, in body, in name, and even in gender. This fragmentation allowed the transformation,” (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.110). The transformation was the coalescence of the deceased’s identity with that of the god Osiris, which

would allow the individual to be manifested as divinity (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.109).

Using the funerary texts on and in coffins, texts on obelisks, and those on statues we can understand the importance of the name (and title) of the deceased, however what was more important was the sense of identity that was associated to the name. The names were transformed and/or manipulated, and titles and positions somewhat exaggerated, associations to family and the gods were emphasized, unifying different aspects of the identity. Gender identity was flexible in death, fragmented and reassembled to be reborn.

> "Only when a person was vulnerable and fragmented, were transformation into a god, or into another gender possible. When the rebirth transformation was achieved, wholeness was achieved," (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.113).

Vulnerability is considered to be a weakness in the modern world still, yet in the texts of ancient Egypt we see that expressing and representing one's vulnerability allowed them to fragment themselves, break into pieces, like that of Osiris, who was cut into pieces only to be reassembled and rebirthed, giving himself new life through reconstruction of his very vulnerable pieces. But birth and rebirth are impossible without accepting both the masculine and feminine elements of life, which was true for the ancient Egyptians as well.

> "…Egyptians believed that to be reborn, the deceased would need to become *both* genders. For example, in chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead, the deceased likens himself not only to the male gods of creation, Osiris and Re, but to the goddesses Isis and Nephthys who incorporate powers of protection and sustenance," (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.113).

> "Chapter 42 of the Book of the Dead goes even further and likens each body part with a different divinity. The deceased is described with parts that are both male and female; his or her body has both breasts and phallus," (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.114).

These examples, among others, show the need for transformation into the likeness of Osiris was not merely a veil, but was rather one aspect of the transformation, presenting as masculine as one fraction of their divine identity, and encompassing the feminine fraction through other indications, such as the coffin itself, as the phallus and the womb. The "more masculine" and "more feminine" concept is lost within the funerary context as the combination of them both results in a non-binary individual, in death and rebirthed, capable of expressing themselves as the amalgamation of genders with no concern for a hierarchy of importance as one cannot exist without the other.

Early interpretations of Ancient Egyptian mortuary practices were, in large part, shaped by early 20th-century European scholars. Many of these individuals approached the material through a colonial and patriarchal lens. As Edward Said famously argued in *Orientalism* (1978), the colonial

imagination often exoticized and distorted 'non-Western' (those outside of American and European cultures) cultures to fit European ideological frameworks. In Egyptology, this led to interpretations that reinforced heteronormative assumptions and narratives. A prime example of this is the designating of two male figures buried together with intimate iconography as "brothers" rather than considering queer possibilities (we are aware that the concept of queer was not commonly used in ancient Egyptian funerary practices nor in the archaeological and anthropological analyses of the late 1970s, so this mention is an interpretive license that I allow myself to make for a better understanding of the problem).. More recent scholarship, including the work of Gregory Thomas (2006) and Jean Winand (2010), has urged a reconsideration of such interpretations through postcolonial and queer lenses. This thesis aligns with such revisionist efforts, challenging normative readings and foregrounding alternative identity expressions as viable interpretations of ancient material culture.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the problem of identity construction and, based on revisionist theories, explored how the ancient Egyptians constructed and represented certain aspects of their gender and identity through material and artistic forms, many of which were integrated into their funerary practices. These cultural expressions, although historically distant from our present day, have conceptual relevance for contemporary funerary art, which reinterprets some ancient actions to address issues related to identity construction. The next chapter returns to the present, comparing modern funerary practices in Egypt and the United States and examining how they reflect or conceal the complexity of identity in death.

Relatively little is known about the lives of the lower classes in Ancient Egypt, as the lives of the Pharaohs, deities incarnate, were those deemed worth recording, as well as the lives of other upper-class individuals who had scribes or public records or tombs. That being noted, the elites and royalty did well to document their lives. Through this evidence, much of it religious or afterlife related, allowed us a glimpse into their lives. This permitted us the opportunity to understand gender from an Ancient Egyptian perspective, as well as how feminism was applied at that time, though the terminology was not yet born, the concept existed. We were able to see that royal children were all considered to be direct descendants of the gods, showing them as near equals, though literature shows a hierarchy within the family. While other kingdoms would trade their royal women, the Egyptians did not. They believed the royal women to be equal to kings in that respect – untouchable. Elite women were used for negotiations, but had little participation, however crucial to the international diplomatic system.

Feminism in Ancient Egypt was inconsistent throughout history. Male descendants were preferred and prioritized over females because they would one day receive the throne. Daughters were educated for the roles they would play in their kingdom, just as the boys were educated for their potential role as king. Royal women did much more than sit at the side of the king, rather they often oversaw textile production or even whole compounds. Kings and queens depended on one another for the function of the kingdom and international relations. Queens however, in some

cases, outshined their husbands, some outliving them and ruling in their place. Such strong queens seized control of their positions of power and demonstrated their true capacities for power and control in beneficial ways, in these instances, equal to or better than their husbands. These strong women left their marks in history through the different artforms they left behind. This was not just a symbol of power, but a means to be remembered for who they were, in the way they felt best expressed themselves.

Other women of influence, specifically the elite, adopted the titles of their husbands giving them status equal to that of their husbands, but could obtain further more prestigious titles than their husband if they served directly with/for the temples or even the royal households, which because of the lack of distinction between religion and governance, meant they were both high in government and religious status.

The value of women in Ancient Egypt, though seemingly undermined through the 'supervision' of men, was extremely highly valued. They were both used as objects and also honored for their abilities, mostly that of their service to humanity – being the vessel that carried and protected life, both in reality and in mythology. Women also had other crucial roles in the eyes of the gods as protectors, entertainers, and stimulators.

Feminism as we know it today was not apparent in the daily lives of Ancient Egyptians, rather seen more commonly in the mythology and in the depictions of the afterlife. Both seen as other worlds where gender was seemingly less important, where androgyny accepted and deemed useful. Women in Ancient Egypt were not undervalued, but like today, were not necessarily given the autonomy they truly deserved; however, the belief of equality was imprinted in their minds. When powerful women reigned, they were not questioned, and instead were supported and even praised when they proved to be fruitful leaders.

Through marriage, divorce, and control of the home, women of all classes had great control of how the wages (grain) was spent and used. Working class women cared for the home and controlled it entirely, while upper class women still controlled the home, but had other women working for her to maintain her home and do her domestic work, while she also had work outside the home. Women from all classes were the ones in charge of the goings on regarding the home while men simply provided them the home and contributed to the income. However, a woman's domestic workload was recognized as work, less like today where women who stay home are not regarded with such esteem. Women's efforts were noted in tomb paintings and even coffin texts as well as their childbearing distinctions – though principally a transactional endeavor that provided an heir for the man and a stable marriage – which meant safety for the woman.

Bureaucracy at the time involved everyone, including independent women, married or unmarried; however, they were often represented alone in court filings. Women owned land, engaged in economic transactions, and ran businesses – entrepreneurs. Women were unable to inherit the jobs of their family members, unlike men who could inherit the jobs of their fathers or

uncles. Women were self-made. They were entitled to inheritance of property, but only that, so some created their own livelihoods.

The construction of one's livelihood and status were necessary to survive and have a decent life, but it was important for the afterlife and that is why Egyptians worked so tirelessly to prepare for the afterlife. As we have learned building one's life on earth transferred to the afterlife and made it even more crucial to die in the upper echelons of society, believably guaranteeing one that quality of life in the afterlife. Not only was one's working life important, but who they were was important. One must have done good deeds in life or been a good person, ultimately weighing their heart for the truth. But authenticity was incredibly important and was nearly equivalent in death. Ancient Egyptian elite and royalty, those who could afford to, made certain that their likenesses were perfected, and altered to reflect the best of themselves, much like we do at funerals today. However, the identity could not be too far from the truth, so perhaps lives were embellished, but truly represented the individual as accurately as could be. It was necessary to live eternity honestly and fruitfully as one's true self. This is evident in the tomb paintings and funerary art that was so critical to be accurate.

Identities changed for some elite/royalty. Queen turned king, Hatshepsut is a glaring example of transgenderism in the ancient world, or interpreted as cross-dressing, as some conservative Egyptologists would prefer not to address. The facts are that these transformations happened not only for this queen, but for other women who wished to transition into the afterlife. Some examples are not as extreme as that of Hatshepsut who took physical, pictorial, and textual action to change her identity, rather others were a traditional means to an end – a way of enjoying eternity through light masking of a feminine identity. This we know from the many sculptures commissioned throughout her reign, as well as reliefs and obelisk inscriptions. These artforms allowed her to express herself authentically, and though they were literally carved out of stone, were altered to adapt to her outward expression of her gender identity; but ultimately these artforms allowed individuals to be recognized authentically and in their own terms.

CHAPTER 4

DEATH

Chapter 4 – Death

Introduction

Chapter four investigates contemporary funerary traditions in both the United States and Egypt, while comparing them with their previous historical practices in each culture respectively, and includes the majority religions in both the United States and Egypt for reference. This comparison allows for connections to be made with regards to the practices, customs, and traditions of religions and cultures, additionally, how individuals expressed their identities in death through a variety of mediums, including photography, clothing, makeup, personal artifacts, and shared stories. It further explains the significance of death and how it affects one's identity, with particular emphasis on Ancient Egypt, resulting in the expression of the individual's true and preferred identities by way of artisanal funerary art.

I first identify the funerary practices in modern America, and how identity is intertwined and revealed in death. I include burial practices as part of the individual's identity – relating to their final wishes, religious traditions, or requests of surviving family. I compare these practices and traditions with that of contemporary Egypt to provide relatable comparisons, showing the importance of identity to the funerary and burial processes.

Subsequently, I compare contemporary practices with that of the Ancient Egyptians to demonstrate the commonalities in traditions over centuries, as well as highlight the fundamental importance of identity and how it, in Ancient Egypt, was important for survival in both this life and the afterlife.

Building on the historical inquiry of the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on a comparative exploration of rites and the meaning of death in the funerary traditions of modern Egypt and the United States. The selected cultural and religious examples are not intended to represent entire nations or belief systems, but rather to highlight particular rituals, customs, and modes of identity expression that offer insights into how the self is negotiated in death. These examples were chosen for their frequency in public discourse, their symbolic richness, and their resonance with the themes of transformation and preservation addressed in this thesis. It should be remembered that this review aims to inform individual artistic practice and not to draw conclusions about the behavior of a particular society or culture regarding its religious beliefs and funerary rites.

The comparative lens aims to uncover where traditional values support or undermine identity visibility in death, and how such dynamics can be reimagined through artistic means.

The funerary practices examined in this thesis are not only material traditions but social rituals that express and reinforce cultural values. From an anthropological perspective, death rites function as transitions between states of: identity, social role, and cosmological position. The use of clay, symbols, and embalming substances can be read not only as preservation technologies but as systems of identity transition, similar to how contemporary societies use photographs,

clothing, or artifacts in funerary contexts to symbolize relational and personal continuity.

4.1 Contemporary Funerary Traditions and Practices

4.1.1 The materials and ritual actions used in funerary practices in the West

This section will center around contemporary traditions and practices of funerals in the United States of America, with focus on common Christian and non-religious funeral traditions and practices as they hold the majority of beliefs in the United States of America. More than 70% of Americans identify as some form of Christian and the unaffiliated (religious "nones") occupy almost 23% of the population (Pew Research Center, 2022).

Traditions and rituals for funeral practices differ between religions, and non-religious funerals are ceremonies carried out that are not specifically associated with any particular religion (Memorial Planning, n.d.). The commonality is that the *tradition* of remembering or memorializing a loved one, be it a family member or friend, is the primary objective. "The need for a fitting way to remember a departed loved one and say goodbye is universal, even among the non-religious," (Memorial Planning, n.d.). Many of the same practices are implemented in both religious and non-religious funerals, such as eulogies and readings (of non-religious material). Many funeral services, regardless of religious affiliation or not, is an opportunity to celebrate the life of the deceased person (Memorial Planning, n.d.).

Whether an individual dies in hospice care (end of life care in a medical setting), a hospital, or at home, loved ones are able to perform any religious, cultural, or cultural customs, or time to just sit with the deceased (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). In most cases, nothing is done with the body immediately following death in non-emergency situations. A funeral home is usually arranged to pick up the body from the care facility, hospital, hospice, or home, where the body will be cared for depending on the deceased's wishes, burial or cremation (Barrett, 2020).

The first step after the individual has passed away and arrived at the funeral home, or house for a home funeral, is the body will be cleaned and dressed or shrouded (Barrett, 2020). If the body is to be viewed, it will be dressed in clothes provided by the family for the viewing, and promptly refrigerated until said time. However, some choose to embalm the deceased, exchanging their blood for embalming fluid, which allows longer preservation of the body. The deceased bodies can be simply refrigerated until the time of cremation or burial, but different states have different laws with regards to the timing of these events. In Pennsylvania, for example, the state stipulates that, "if human remains are not embalmed within 24 hours of death, then those remains must either be sealed inside a container that does not allow fumes or odors to escape or those remains must kept under refrigeration," (Smith, n.d.). Under the same code requires that the body be buried within five hours after being removed from refrigeration if not embalmed, and further stipulates that if only refrigerated and not embalmed that the public is not able to view the body (Smith, n.d.). If the body is to be cremated then there is no need for embalming, or even a casket.

The process of embalming aims to achieve three main goals, according to Funeral Director Samantha Smith (n.d.), “disinfection, preservation, and restoration.” This process is not only to preserve the body, as she states, but to disinfect the body so that it can be safely viewed, and the deceased can also appear more life-like, since decomposition of the body begins immediately after death (Smith, n.d.). While embalming does not stop decomposition, it does slow it down, giving the surviving family and friends more time with their loved one. Smith (n.d.) goes on to explain that while refrigeration does a good job of slowing decomposition, every individual decomposes at different rates for a variety of factors. “A person’s weight, height, age, and medical conditions all affect how quickly signs of decomposition become noticable,” Smith (n.d.) explains. Refrigeration alone can cause other side effects to the body which would affect its presentation, such as drying out of the skin and the sinking and sagging of facial features, which Smith (n.d.) points out can significantly change the appearance of a person, which can be jarring for even their closest relatives.

Through embalming the body of the deceased, the bodies can be somewhat restored to a healthier form, according to Smith (n.d.). She continues that through embalming the deceased individual can look free of side effects of illnesses, such as sunken eyes or hollow cheeks (Smith, n.d.). “Signs of trauma like wounds, scrapes, or cuts can be closed and the skin restored with a little bit of special wax and a fine coat of mortuary makeup,” (Smith, n.d.). Wounds that occurred during treatment or as injuries prior to or as the cause of death can also be hidden in many cases through reconstruction and makeup, Smith (n.d.) explains. Smith (n.d.) justifies the use of embalming as a practice for families that want to view the deceased one last time, even if they have died under tragic circumstances. Smith (n.d.) illustrates that for some families, seeing their loved ones “laid peacefully” and “with an expression of serenity” was helpful and healing for their grieving processes. She further explains that those who identify their loved ones’ bodies, witness their deaths, or see them just after death can be disturbing, as they may have fearful or unlike themselves (Smith, n.d.). She continues that many family members state that their deceased loved ones look like they did prior to their illness, with energy and life, which she says helps with processing death, “When the body is viewed, the death is confirmed,” which she suggests “is an important means of breaking through the natural impulse to deny death,” (Smith, n.d.).

4.1.1.A Makeup for the deceased

Doing makeup on a dead body has its own challenges; according to Funeral Director, Amber Carvaly, it is because, though the application techniques are the same, the body is much looser and may make the application process more difficult (Nguyen, 2019). Carvaly tends to choose theatrical makeup for covering discoloration or jaundiced bodies, though she does use regular drugstore makeup as well (Nguyen, 2019). Carvaly often uses an airbrush technique on the face to make it appear more lifelike and covers the face evenly. One of the most common complaints associated with post-death makeup comes from the families and friends of the deceased themselves, usually being that the makeup is not how they would have appeared in real life, adding that perhaps the color choices for lipstick or eyeshadow aren’t how the deceased would have worn it, or the hairstyle or hair parts for both men and women weren’t accurate to theirs in

life (Nguyen, 2019). Carvaly suggests that families should be involved in the makeup and dressing processes for more than one reason; she suggests that when they assist the embalmer (who is also usually one of the funeral directors) they can help provide more truthful makeup pairings for the deceased, so they can further be remembered with more accuracy to them in life (Nguyen, 2019). Carvaly also advocates that the families assist in this aspect as she believes that having a connection to the physical and artistic aspects of the process helps them work through their emotions about death (Nguyen, 2019). “Reclaiming the makeup process can be a cathartic first step, as an unexpected outlet for grief, and eventually acceptance of the death itself,” (Nguyen, 2019).

Post-death makeup costs around $250 USD (about 240€) per funeral, so it alone can be a costly addition to the overall funeral costs, so Carvaly says that if families are trying to cut costs, they can speak with the funeral home and make arrangements to do their makeup themselves to save on the funeral costs, and many will accommodate their needs as they understand the costs associated with funerals (Nguyen, 2019). Though this step is omitted if the individual is cremated without a viewing of the body. Ultimately, the concept of performing this step is to display a physical portrait of the deceased in the most life-like and authentic manner possible, to project a lively identity of the deceased individual.

4.1.1.B Home deaths in America

Home deaths were the common practice in America until the 1860s, in which the deceased died at home, surrounded by their loved ones, who would start after-death care immediately (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). This entailed what funeral directors do today, they washed the body with their own hands, dressed them, combed their hair, and laid them out for the community to come and mourn their passing, with the neighbors often building the coffin or digging the grave, and still some made meals (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Home funerals were intimate as the body laid in the home for up to three days for people to come by and grieve with the family, or pay their condolences (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). The occurrence of dying at home and being cared for there up until and after death was such common practice that people built in “funeral-friendly” elements into the home for such occasions (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). “Some early American homes have a *coffin door* which leads from the parlor directly to the outdoors, built without steps or obstacles and provided an easy means of getting the body out of the house,” (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Some homes in the Northeast of America had *coffin windows* that allowed easy access of the body to be passed from the interior to the exterior, with attics storing wide boards curing for such an occasion, allowing the family to be prepared (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

Individuals were buried in a shroud or six-sided coffin until the 1900s, which accommodated the body more snugly which limited movement of the body and weight shifting when being moved (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). This six-sided coffin also minimized the work needed when digging the grave; a full rectangle meant more dirt had to be moved, and with the corners of the coffin angled in, this reduced the amount of surface area, which meant less digging, and since graves were dug

by hand this spared a lot of time and effort for the individuals digging (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

The families and friends sat with the body of the deceased waiting for signs of decomposition, and for however long it took to finish building the coffin and digging the grave (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). At that time, there were real fears about being buried alive, but this also provided time for the families to perform any rituals on/with the deceased, as many factors went into the waiting period before death, including economic resources, status, and religion (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

Miasmatic theory of disease was a popular belief at the time, which was believed to cause other diseases in the living, but was caused by the rotting of dead things:

> "Miasmas are poisonous emanations, from putrefying carcasses, rotting vegetation or molds, and invisible dust particles inside dwellings. Miasmas could be identified by its foul smell," (Kannadan, 2018).

Because of this belief of the deceased potentially causing pestilence, or other diseases such as malaria or cholera, cemeteries that once existed inside of towns and villages, began being moved to rural areas for the bodies to expel their gases without causing epidemics, especially as towns grew into cities (Kannadan, 2018; Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

4.1.1.C Burial during war and its commercialization

The American Civil War (1861-1865) was one of the first instances of bodies being shipped over long distances by train, in order for them to be returned to their families, who wanted to bury them close to home and not on the battlefield (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Since refrigeration was not yet invented and the journey home was extensive, the bodies arrived in poor condition, considering the advanced decomposition that occurred, especially in summer (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). This resulted in the need for embalming, to slow the decomposition somewhat, which began happening on the battlefields, where they were then wrapped and shipped via train, and upon arrival would be further delivered to their homes by *livery drivers* (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

Due to immobility of people at the time, livery drivers acted as a liaison between the government and civilians with regards to the returning of their dead loved ones; and since war was one instance that caused 'unexpected' death, many families were not prepared for them (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). At this time, furniture builders and cabinet makers began making coffins to accommodate the influx of deceased due to war; together with the livery drivers, the woodworkers began competing for the dead and coffins began to be mass produced which began the market for Undertaking (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). When the public viewed the embalmed body of the assassinated president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, forming another death-trade, allowed the funeral business to evolve and market and facilitate the transition of death (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

4.1.1.D The art in dying

With the rise of the funeral business, with fewer people doing the hard work of the funeral processes and rather outsourcing them to the death tradesmen, the Victorian era became a time of elegance in funeral services (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

> "…the Victorians brought forth a new and elaborate fashion-driven set of funeral practices which included specialized attire, jewelry, folk art, and photographs of the dead," (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

Many of the Victorian era funeral practices are still practiced today as they were well documented and alive in the cultural memory, providing families with death and funeral traditions (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Some of these traditions include saving throughout one's life to ensure they had enough money for a proper burial, but this also includes funeral planning, such as the details of what they would wear, their coffin style, and where they were to be buried, and funeral behavior and guest attire needed to be appropriate – they should behave sorrowful and wear dark colors, usually black (Mendoza, 2018). The wake is another tradition that we still use today, it was a time when the body was watched around the clock to ensure the individual was actually dead and not in a coma; another tradition was bringing many fresh bouquets of flowers to the viewing/wake was a way of covering the scent of decomposition (Funeral Basics, 2020). Saving a lock of hair of the deceased is another tradition that not all continue to practice, but it is more common among parents who have lost a child, or in the case of a premature death of other loved ones (Henry Sheldon Museum, 2020; Mendoza, 2018). Taking photos of the dead or displaying photos of them was also a common phenomenon that many still practice today, with people photographing the deceased one last time, or in other cases, presenting photos of the dead in place of or in conjunction with a viewing of the body (Funeral Basics, 2020). Grave markers and headstones that were larger and more elaborate during the Victorian era are still common practice today with grave markers usually being flat and flush with the ground and headstones being large, usually stone, monuments, also marking the grave of an individual (Funeral Basics, 2020).

Lithographs depicting gravestones and mourners were funeral artforms popularized during the American Civil War as a way for families that could not travel to large cemeteries where their late loved ones were buried, especially if they could not afford to have their bodies returned home; stationary cards (Henry Sheldon Museum, 2020). These lithographs acted as a tangible object that represented the burial place of their loved one, where their information could be written on the headstone, as if it was a photograph of where their loved one lie (Henry Sheldon Museum, 2020). Once these became popularized, they took smaller forms and resembled postcards of mourning, a small memento of their beloved deceased (Mendoza, 2018).

Hairwork, or hairwork jewelry, was another popular artform that came about in the Victorian era, and while collecting hair is still somewhat of a common practice, the craft of making it into jewelry is much less common today (Oshawa Community Museum, 2015). Hair of the deceased was used to make wreaths, necklaces, broaches, bracelets, and lockets (Oshawa Community

Depthandtime. (2012, February 21). *Mickie O'Hoolihan's wake, 1897.* Flickr.

Goles, K. (2022, September 28). *Evolution of American funerary customs and laws: In Custodia legis*. The Library of Congress.

Museum, 2015). It was a unique craft of using the deceased's hair and wire and other malleable materials to create elaborate designs with the hair (Oshawa Community Museum, 2015).

Post-mortem photography was a common practice at the time, and while photography at that time was for documentation and less of an artform, it was important for families to have a lasting image of their loved ones; since photography was expensive, it was usually done at major events, such as funerals, and were done as a loving tribute to the deceased (Oshawa Community Museum, 2015; Borgo et al., 2016). Photographers attempted to create more and more lifelike situations for the deceased, so they would appear alive in the photographs, so the family could, "…get the last "picture of life" of "the dead"," (Borgo et al., 2016). There were different styles of posing the deceased, in ways that capture their immediate death, through the lost looks on their family members' faces, photos in which the deceased appear to be alive, posed in ways that appear as if they are performing a task actively, such as reading or playing, another way in which they were posed was where they would be mixed in with the family and captured as a group, and finally one position in which the mother was covered with a sheet, holding the child (usually an infant), while the child in the photo appeared to be alive (Borgo et al., 2016). The practice of documenting the dead did, in fact, become a practice with artistic value of technique.

4.1.1.E Cremation in America since the 1960s

Cremation has become more popular in the United States since the 1960s for a variety of different reasons, including financial stress and reducing their environmental impact (Goodwin, 2020; Nguyen, 2019). Today, around 44% of Americans opt for cremation, while 35% of them still choose traditional burials; also, only 6% of Americans donate their bodies to science and 4% prefer natural burials – burial without a casket, or using other quick or naturally biodegradable material (Goodwin, 2020).

With cremation on a steady rise, many people are choosing creative ways for their ashes to be used, or in this case, disposed of. Some are choosing to have their ashes shot into space, others favor having their ashes compressed into diamonds, but still many Americans choose to have their ashes spread at a specific location of their choosing (40% of those who elect cremation). Thirty-six percent prefer a family member keep their ashes, and still one in ten Americans who wish to be cremated would like them to be used to be planted as a tree (Goodwin, 2020).

Mummification is still an option for some individuals, though it is very costly, starting at $67,000 USD (about 65.300€) so it is not affordable for the average person, much like its availability in ancient Egypt as well, which will be discussed later in this chapter (Goodwin, 2020). This practice is also not a routine one, whereas cremation is much more common and cost effective, though still an expensive method. The average burial and funeral costs are around $8,500 USD (about 8.300€), but does not include the burial plot or grave marker or headstone, while cremation costs are around $6,300 USD (about 6.150€), also excluding interment and associated grave markings if wished (Nguyen, 2019). With these additional costs, funerals and burials can cost over $10,000 USD (about 9.750€), also excluding any further gatherings, including family and/or community

lunches or dinners that often follow the funeral or memorial.

What an individual chooses for themselves is influenced by outside factors other than their own personal beliefs, such as one's religion, family traditions, or finances (Goodwin, 2020). Nearly half (47%) of Americans choose their funerary plan based on their own beliefs, with 24% saying that family traditions influence their choices, and 14% say it's based on their financial situation (Goodwin, 2020). Younger generations said their decisions were based more on family traditions than financial reasons, while older generations said their decisions were based on financial reasons according to the survey (Goodwin, 2020).

4.1.1.F Funeral Processions

Funeral processions in the contemporary United States are usually not grand for the average person, though they are probably more so for the upper elites, with most regular civilian coffins transported to the burial site by hearse in a funeral procession as a convoy of vehicles, or if cremated, carried by a loved one, though, "through the ages it has varied from people walking and carrying the deceased, to the modern entourage of limousines and automobiles," (Matthiesen, Wickert, & Lehrer, S.C., 2022). Since most processions are carried out by car, a funeral procession is defined as such: "A funeral procession is defined as two or more vehicles accompanying the body of a dead person from a funeral establishment to the place of final disposition or a place where additional funeral services will be performed (Matthiesen, Wickert, & Lehrer, S.C., 2022). A procession would consist of the mourners beginning with direct family members, followed by other relatives, and then other mourners following the hearse in an orderly manner, following the preceding vehicle "as closely as safely possible," however, in the United States, the laws vary from state to state which can cause confusion as the specifications can differ significantly (Matthiesen, Wickert, & Lehrer, S.C., 2022). If the coffin is transported to the gravesite by hearse, there are often family members or other mourners of the deceased that act as pallbearers and carry the coffin from the hearse to the burial site.

4.1.1.G Post funeral gatherings

The funeral is, ultimately, the last display of the deceased and the opportunity to say goodbye to them, but gatherings after a funeral are meant as a socialization of the bereaved with others who are grieving the same loss, as well as a way to ensure the bereaved are taking care of themselves, and is practiced among the religious and non-religious (Hay, 2020). These post-funeral gatherings offer light food and drink as a way to commune and continue to remember and celebrate the deceased (Hay, 2020). This meal is often referred to as dark or last hospitality, and predates written records, according to Hay (2020).

> "The development of the concept of the funeral meal can be traced back to classical Greece, where the mourners returned to the house of the deceased for the perídeipnon (the dinner after the burial)," (Hay, 2020).

This practice is nearly the same today, with the bereaved family inviting funeral attendees to a

home for this last meal, or perhaps a small event hall, bar, or restaurant. Hay (2020) also suggests that this last meal offers more than just a social gathering with other mourners, but that, "it helps to preserve the ideal of the family because it serves to 'affirm identity, strengthen kinship bonds [...] [and provides] [...] emotional support during periods of stress'." I argue, in addition to strengthening bonds between mourners, providing emotional support, and affirming identity, they facilitate conversations about death and the deceased in a more relaxed setting, allowing mourners to discuss the identity of the deceased that they are most familiar with, and allowing them to comment on memories or experiences of the deceased they wouldn't otherwise be able to share.

4.1.2 Funerary Traditions and Practices in Contemporary Egypt

This section will discuss the most common funerary traditions and practices of contemporary Egypt with the focus on Islam and Coptic Christianity, as Islam is the overwhelming religious majority (~90%) in the country and Coptic Christianity (<10%) is the largest minority (U.S. Department of State, 2020).

4.1.2.A Islam

Islamic traditions before death

Like in other cultures, when Muslims are on their deathbeds their loved ones should be there the care for them and comfort them until they pass, but they are also to pray for the dying person, encouraging them to recite verses from the Qur'an, in particular the faith statement – a profession of belief in God and that Muhammad is the true messenger of God – "I bear witness that there is no God but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God," (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The dying person is also positioned with their feet facing Mecca, where the repetition of the faith statement continues for the dying individual, in hope it will be their last words (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Traditions upon death

Immediately after death, the deceased person's eyes are closed and another prayer is recited on behalf of the deceased individual, asking Allah to grace them with His sight and ultimately take the deceased to a better place than they have been on earth (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Following this, the mouth is then closed and the jaw is tied shut to prevent any insects from entering – both the eyes and mouth are shut for this reason (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Succeeding the closing of the eyes and mouth the clothing of the deceased is removed and they are covered with a clean white sheet after their arms and legs are straightened (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). A weighted object is placed on the stomach at this time to prevent it from bloating, with exception for pregnant women with which no weight at all is placed on her stomach, meanwhile the body should be placed on a raised surface until it can be washed (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). A light must be left on in the room of the deceased to ensure the soul is able to leave the body (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Before the body can be buried it must undergo burial preparations, which are different for each sex, but include washing and shrouding the body (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The burial of the deceased must take place within 24 hours after death, so these preparations are carried out quickly, beginning with the washing of the body (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Specifications for the washing include that the person washing the deceased's body must be Muslim and the same sex as the deceased, with the exception of children; further the surviving spouse of the individual is able to perform this final cleansing of the body (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Washing of the body

To begin the washing of the body, it is placed on a high table in a private location, with any private parts covered while the rest of the clothing is removed entirely (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Before washing can begin and the brick(s) are placed on the stomach of the deceased, the person performing the cleansing is to chant, "In the name of Allah," while pressing on the stomach to ensure the release of any excretions from the body (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Once this step is complete the washing of the body can begin, which begins with clean hands and clean clothes for the body (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The body must be washed from head to toe five to seven times, but that number must be odd, and each washing consists of rolling the body on its left side to wash the right side and rolled on its right side to wash the left side, with inclusion of the teeth and nostrils, and in some cases underneath the fingernails (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Non-alcoholic scented waters and perfumes are used to scent the body after this cleansing (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Additionally, the deceased's hair must be styled in particular ways; for males, their hair must be washed, combed, and unbraided, however females' hair must be washed, combed, and braided into three individual braids on each side leaving loose ends, like that of the daughter of the prophet Muhammad (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Once all of the above steps have been completed and the body is completely dry the shrouding can begin (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Shrouding of the deceased

Shrouding should begin immediately after the body has been washed and dried effectively, which entails wrapping the body in series of clean, cotton cloths, preferably white, and the material should be inexpensive, as extravagance is disparaged in the cemetery, which would include silk or any gold in the material – which is forbidden (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

> "There are five different pieces of cloth used in shrouding: the winding sheets which is 7'x7', a long, loose sleeveless shirt (3'x14'), the body wrap which is 6'x3.5', the head veil which is 4'x4', and finally the loincloth which is 1'x4'," (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Once the body is correctly wrapped the sheets are perfumed, again, with alcohol-free perfumes and/or incense, and four ropes of about 7 feet are used to secure the wrappings around the body, however there are some distinctions between male and female shrouding (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Male shrouding

The shrouding for men is somewhat less complex and entails only three winding sheets and four ties (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The three winding sheets are laid flat and the deceased (covered with a sheet) is placed on top of them while lying on his back, where perfume or scents are placed in five places on the body – forehead, nose, hands, knees, and feet (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). If it is possible at this time, the left hand is placed on the chest and the right hand is placed on top of it, as if to resemble *salat* (prayer) (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). From this point the wrapping of the body can begin, wherein the right side of the sheets are folded over the body followed by the left side, where this process is repeated down the body until complete (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The four ropes are then used to secure the wrappings in place, with one being tied above the head and one below the feet using different knots to distinguish between the head and feet, while the other two are tied around the body (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Female shrouding

Female shrouding requires few more steps and a few more materials, which include two winding sheets, like males, a long, loose sleeveless shirt that reaches from neck to toes, a waist wrapper and a head veil (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). For women, the clothes must be laid out in order: "first the two winding sheets, second long shirt, third the waist wrapper, fourth the head veil and lastly the loincloth," (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). As was the process for the males, females too are covered with a cloth, and laid on their backs with the same scents and/or perfumes applied to the same areas of their bodies before the wrapping begins (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The loincloth is placed first, wrapping around her upper legs and secured with the waist wrap, as if to act as underwear, followed by the long shirt covering all of her body except her head, which is covered with the head veil (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Once her hands are placed on her chest in prayer pose, like the males, she is also wrapped in the same manner as the males (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Transporting the body for burial

The body must be transported carefully to the cemetery, or other place of burial, usually using a hearse followed by a funeral procession, though traditionally, the deceased would have been carried by several men to the cemetery, much like in the West (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The use of any military vehicle is considered inappropriate, and the following procession must remain calm and quiet, without pushing or crowding (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). At this time, the use of candles or incense, or the recitation of the Qur'an, loud crying (wailing), and music are prohibited (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

The funeral

Prayer

Funerals among Muslims are essentially the same, with exception for martyrs, who all receive the same ceremony, which is, for the most part, a silent remembrance of the deceased and funeral prayer (Salatul Janazah) – which is usually done outside of a mosque (Muslim place of worship) (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). This prayer is one that invites all to participate in, regardless of their connection to the deceased, and, in fact, Muhammad stated that there are rewards for

participating in this prayer and burial (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The Janazah cannot be done from sunrise to sunset, except under extreme circumstances, such as in the case of advanced decomposition and/or the corpse is in a distressed state, such as a result of warfare (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Funeral attendee dress code

At a Muslim funeral the dress code refers more to the level of modesty rather than the accepted colors, and this is applicable for men and women (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Men are required to wear a shirt covering their shoulders and trousers, while women should wear and ankle skirt, long-sleeved shirt with a high neck, and a headscarf, and both are expected to wear clean socks or stockings that are in presentable condition as shoes are removed during prayer (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Burial of the deceased

There is no section on cremation because it is considered desecration to cremate a Muslim corpse, so burial is the only true option for a Muslim (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Other desecrations include autopsies and embalming (Memorial Planning, 2022). “Muslim burial traditions are based on humility and simplicity and avoid glorifying the dead with large monuments,” so there will be no great monuments or large headstones glorifying the deceased (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). While women, and children, are allowed to attend and participate in the funeral and its processes, they are not permitted to attend the burial (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Furthermore, the burial itself is silent, a moment of reflection and a reminder to the living that they too will face death, and ultimately the silence is to prevent the disturbance of the deceased (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Muslims are buried in Muslim-only cemeteries or in sections of larger cemeteries that have a section for Muslims specifically, and furthermore, no non-Muslim can be buried alongside Muslims, though Muslims can be buried at their place of death since the window for burial is so short; this goes for Muslims who have died at sea and cannot be returned to shore within 24 hours for burial (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The body of the deceased should not be moved to other countries or cities unless the individual has explicitly expressed the wish to be in a specific place, though this is due to decomposition (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The body should also be buried without a coffin unless there are specific laws prohibiting such a burial (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The bodies of the deceased should be placed perpendicular to Mecca, “so that, once the body is placed in the grave, it can be facing Qiblah,” or Mecca (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

There are two styles of graves, the Al-Shaqq and the Al-Lahed; the Al-Shaqq is a simple vertical hole, while the Al-Lahed is both preferred and more common, making an “L” shape (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Only men are permitted to place the body of the deceased into the grave, as women are prohibited from attending, and are usually kin of the deceased; furthermore, they are required to abstain from sexual intercourse the night before the burial to maintain purity when burying the deceased (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). The corpse should be placed into the grave feet-first while those

placing the body recite, “In the name of Allah and the faith of the Messenger of Allah,” and a brick or stone is used to support the head of the deceased, like a pillow (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Once the body is correctly placed the ties at the top of the head and bottom of the feet should be undone with a brick or stone placed on the head so that when the earth covers the body it does not hit the head (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). According to Vansteenhuyse (2012) the graves are traditionally filled with sand, but the local soil is acceptable, so as the body is covered with the sand or soil, those who are burying the deceased should throw three handfuls of soil in the grave and with each handful recite one of the following phrases:

(First handful) – “From the (earth) did We create you
(Second handful) – And into it We shall return
(Third handful) – And from it shall We bring you out once again”

Once the filling in of the grave is completed a grave stone or grave marker is allowed to be placed but anything more than that is discouraged and even forbidden, and some family members may remain to continue to pray for the deceased (only the *Duaa* prayer), though all other prayer is generally discouraged at other times in an Islamic cemetery, as prayer is acceptable everywhere except toilets, graveyards, and garbage areas (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

4.1.2.B Coptic Christianity

Coptic Christianity, “is one of the most ancient forms of Christianity in existence,” (Robinson-Brown, 2020). Robinson-Brown (2020) reminds us that when looking at Egyptian culture we must remember that, “what is religious often becomes cultural and once this has occurred the lines of difference become harder to discern through the passing of time.” This section will focus on the funerary traditions and practices of Coptic Christians in Egypt.

Coptic Christians (Copts), like Muslims, believe in life after death, though Copts believe that when a person dies their soul reunites with the body and with Christ, so cremation is also prohibited within the religion as it will be resurrected and reunited with the soul, according to Coptic beliefs (Coriell, 2022).

Prior to death, like in Islam and among the non-religious, friends and family may gather with the person approaching death to tend to their needs in their final days, however among Copts, there should be a priest on hand to dispense the last rites (Memorial Properties, 2018).

Upon death

Immediately after death the body should be washed and perfumed, and later clothed, which is usually done with a priest present, so the priest can bless the deceased and those who are performing the cleansing, however, some families may opt to have a funeral home prepare the body, especially if they have died in hospital (Coriell, 2022). Women are often dressed in white linen, while men are dressed in everyday apparel or more formal clothing; however, if the person had saved clothing from a pilgrimage, they might be buried in that clothing (Memorial Properties,

2018). In some cases, the body is simply dressed in a shroud of white linen (Memorial Properties, 2018). The priest will also bless the casket once the body is placed in the casket (Coriell, 2022). Some choose to embalm their loved ones, as it is a permitted process by the Coptic Church, especially if they decide to have a traditional wake (Funeral Guide, 2019). Generally, however, Copts believe in an expedient burial – generally within the same day, or like Muslims, within 24 hours (Memorial Properties, 2018).

After death a prayer service is performed at the home of the deceased or in the funeral home, called the Trisagion service, and can be done immediately after death or the night before the funeral, but it can also occur at the gravesite after the service (Coriell, 2022). There is often a wake in the church, including the funeral mass, where family members recite readings for or about the deceased, and they may also serve as pallbearers, while the body is placed between two candles, one at each end of the body (Coriell, 2022; Memorial Properties, 2018). The wake was traditionally three days long, but is now often one day with a ceremony (Funeral Guide, 2019). The priest will recite prayers and give the eulogy, as he is the only one permitted to do so (Coriell, 2022).

A Coptic Funeral

It is typical that mourners wear black or dark colors, with women additionally wearing head covers (Memorial Properties, 2018). Before entering the church where the casket lies, wailing is traditionally heard, along with shrieks, known as *suwat.* These actions are meant to honor the deceased, though once they are in the presence of the dead all communications cease (Memorial Properties, 2018). A priest will lead mourners to the funeral at the church from the wake carrying a censer (a container made of metal, usually carrying incense) (Lasting Post, 2022), while reciting the Trisagion Hymn, and if there is no procession from the wake to the church for the funeral, then this hymn will often be sung at the wake (Funeral Guide, 2019).

The funeral itself will usually last no longer than an hour with a priest or bishop leading the service, with other church servicemen assisting (Funeral Guide, 2019). Throughout the actual funeral service, the priest is the only one who will speak, while the congregation stands, regardless if there are pews, with exception for the elderly and disabled (Coriell, 2022).

Upon entering the church for the funeral service each attendee will receive a lit candle that should stay lit throughout the ceremony (Funeral Guide, 2019). At the head of the coffin there will likely be a *Koliva*, a wheat dish with honey with a lit candle on top; the wheat is to symbolize the cycle of life and the honey to represent the sweetness of heaven (Funeral Guide, 2019). Unless otherwise organized with the family by special request, the casket will also remain open for attendees to view the deceased and give their last goodbyes to the body (Coriell, 2022). Some may see a band across the forehead of the deceased signifying they have completed the cycle of life, while in their hands one may see a cross, a small icon of Jesus Christ, or a patron saint (Funeral Guide, 2019).

All attendees should dress in dark, modest clothing – men should wear dress suits and women should wear dresses, covering their arms and legs as well. Attendees should approach the family and offer their condolences and prayers for the deceased after the burial; however, it is also customary to have a luncheon or reception, called *Makaria*, after the burial where people can also speak with family members (Funeral Guide, 2019).

Burial

Since cremation is forbidden, the church can deny a family a Coptic funeral if they have been cremated, and otherwise embalming is accepted.

After the funeral service, when all mourners have paid their last respects to the deceased, the casket is closed and the procession to the burial place begins, often singing the Trisagion Hymn again (Funeral Guide, 2019). Just before the burial, the priest or bishop may pour olive oil and earth on the coffin, making the shape of the Coptic cross, wheat may also be poured at this time (Funeral Guide, 2019).

The Makaria

The luncheon, or *Makaria*, is often small, hosted by the family of the bereaved or the congregation, and it often takes place at a home of a family member, restaurant, or church hall (Funeral Guide, 2019).

Mourning

After the burial and the days following many other mourners are likely to pass by the home of the deceased to console the bereaved family, traditionally women visit during the day and men visit at night (Memorial Properties, 2018). After three days a priest will visit the bereaved family to pray with them and spread water throughout the living space (Memorial Properties, 2018). It is customary that the mourning of an individual last forty days (Memorial Properties, 2018), wherein on the fortieth day there is another memorial service held at the same church as the funeral, where friends and family are expected to attend out of respect (Lasting Post, 2022).

4.2 Death in Ancient Egypt

This section will focus on observed ritual traditions and practices in death, both before and after, as well as their significance. This section will also dissect the cultural and religious representation of death through text and imagery. It will further discuss the implications of death and the promises of the afterlife through observations of visual references.

4.2.1 Saving and preparation for death

> "The Egyptians saw Egypt as the most perfect land in the world and the center for the universe. According to them, their country's environment and natural and social orders were decreed and established by the gods…To be Egyptian was to be of the best people, and to live and die in Egypt was the aspiration of every Egyptian," (Ikram, 2015, p.21).

Egyptians who lived in other lands or were in the military always wished to return to Egypt, and if they died or were killed abroad, all measures were taken to retrieve their bodies and return them to their homeland, as there was a very real fear that dying outside of Egypt meant that the Afterlife was not guaranteed (Ikram, 2015, p.21). They believed that, "after their transitory life on earth they would move to a more permanent life in a place that was an enhanced Egypt," (Ikram, 2015, p.23).

The body was the link to the hereafter and crucial for existence in it, and through its preservation it became an image of itself – a statue, and thus, "…it became a projection of the idealized and more permanent self," with the person's heart being the most important part of the physical body, where the soul, spirit, personality, and essence of the individual resided (Ikram, 2015, p.23-24). In addition to the physical body, Egyptians believed an individual was actually made of many parts, that when assembled, created a whole individual: the name, the shadow, the life-force, and the personality or soul (Ikram, 2015, p.24). However, without a name person lacked identity and would cease to exist, therefore their name as part of their identity was one aspect that was crucial for survival and recognition, which was safeguarded at all costs, but was also placed on nearly all of their belongings (Ikram, 2015, p.24). The shadow was an aspect that was created by the sun, therefore was a reminder of their daily rebirth as the sun died each night and was reborn, as would they in the next life (Ikram, 2015, p.26).

With life on earth being a transitory phase and the Afterlife being the eternal life, greater than what exists on earth, it was not uncommon for people to begin preparing for death early in life (Ikram, 2015, p.23). This meant saving for coffins, funerary goods, such as shabtis, furniture, along with daily provisions, though, for the common Egyptian, they worked to afford an economic coffin that might be painted by a less skilled artisan in order to achieve the minimum necessary to survive comfortably in the afterlife, let alone the necessities required for one's corpse to arrive well enough preserved (Ikram, 2015, p.23). Since death was a very religious matter, and religion was the only real way of life, with no separation between politics and religion, death became the ultimate goal and one's life centered around achieving eternity with a family to continue to maintain you on the other side (Ikram, 2015, p.23).

4.2.2 Mummification and preservation of the deceased

Mummification is the process of artificially preserving the body of a human or animal and is believed to be the, "quintessential manifestation of death in ancient Egypt," (Ikram, 2015, p.47). Originally Egyptologist believed mummification began as a practice to preserve the body from the consumption of animals that may have discovered the body, but later studies showed a greater connection between mummification and religion and tradition as a way to preserve the body for the afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.49-50). Early mummification (Predynastic Period) revealed cut marks on the body as if it had been dismembered and rejoined, with little evidence as to why, the only text that sheds some light on this is in the Pyramid Texts, Utterance 373, that ties the dismemberment of the king to that of Osiris; that like Osiris the king should put himself back together for regeneration (Ikram, 2015, p.51).

Embalmers provided the family a variety of options for embalming, usually displayed on wooden models and graded by quality, and the family was able to choose the appropriate quality based on their needs or economic availability (Ikram, 2015, p.53). The highest quality embalming would include more detailed work. For this high-quality embalming, the embalmers would begin, with the first process – the complete removal of the brain, or as much of it as possible, through the nostrils (Ikram, 2015, p.54). The left flank, or left side of the body, is then cut open with a flint knife and the whole contents of the abdomen removed, with exception of the heart, where it is then thoroughly washed and cleaned with palm wine and then an infusion of ground spices (Ikram, 2015, p.54, 24). The intestines are separated, washed, wrapped, and placed into their specific canopic jars (Ikram, 2015, p.56). The body is then packed with aromatic substances, excluding frankincense, and sewn up, left to cure completely covered in natron, for about forty days and no longer than seventy (Ikram, 2015, p.54, 57). Natron is associated with thermonatrite, is a naturally occurring mineral, which is a type of salt, that would have been used to dehydrate the soft tissue of the body (Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. b., n.d.). When this process finished the body would have been washed, oiled, and wrapped from head to toe in strips of linen smeared with gum on the underside of each piece (Ikram, 2015, p.54, 56). After this process was complete, it would have been returned to the family to be placed in its coffin (Ikram, 2015, p.54).

When expense was an issue, another type of embalming that occurred was of lower quality and the process was indeed different; this process had no incision or removal of the intestines, and instead cedar oil was injected into the body through the anus and stopped up to prevent any fluids from escaping (Ikram, 2015, p.54). Similarly, the body is also cured in natron for the same period of time, wherein which the body is drained, and in doing so, the solution is so powerful that as it drains it evacuates all of the internal organs in a liquid state, and nothing is left of the body but skin and bones, where it is returned to the family in said state with no other attention (Ikram, 2015, p.54).

The third method was the most economical and often reserved for the poor, as the process was to wash out the intestines and cure the body in natron, as done in other methods, for seventy days (Ikram, 2015, p.54).

Other materials used in mummification included resins, or sap from fir or pine trees, imported from Lebanon and Syria, as well as frankincense and myrrh from Southern Arabia and East Africa (Ikram, 2015, p.55). The resins were melted and used to fill the body cavities, including the cranium, as they have antibacterial and deodorizing properties (Ikram, 2015, p.55). Oils were also used to perfume the body, these included juniper, cedar, lettuce, and castor oils; they also provided some flexibility to cured limbs prior to wrapping (Ikram, 2015, p.55).

The wrapping of the body was one of the most important parts as it had not only physical implications, but spiritual ones as well; the bandages were used to protect the physical exterior of the body, but also “magico-religious” protection as well (Ikram, 2015, p.56). Spells would be read aloud by a lector priest, specific spells that were meant to secure the bandages and enclose the

Mummies wrapped in linens in various degrees of preservation.
The Egyptian Museum in Cairo 2024 Theresa Wilshusen

corpse (Ikram, 2015, p.56). According to Egyptologist, Salima Ikram (2015), this cocoon of bandages, interspersed with amulets, were meant to provide both physical and metaphorical protection for the deceased on their journey to the afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.56).

Ikram (2015) explains that the total process from embalming to interment would have lasted seventy days, with the embalming usually lasting forty days. Though she states that the embalming process was not consistent throughout Egyptian history, with new techniques and methods evolving and becoming prominent (Ikram, 2015, p.56-57).

Ultimately the objective of embalming was the overall preservation of the body in the most accurate way, with attempts to retain the physical attributes of the individual so they would further be recognized in the afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.47, 66). Stuffing the body in specific part in order to preserve their shape was common among the elite and royals, as well as attempts to preserve royal penises so they would not be lost in the curing process, and could be used in the afterlife for regeneration (Ikram, 2015, p.66). Identity in death was extremely important for religious purposes, such as regeneration of oneself in the afterlife, but as well as identifying their bodies so they could be recognized by the gods accurately and live the afterlife they had prepared for themselves (Ikram, 2015, p.50).

4.2.3 Preparing the body for the afterlife with coffins, tombs, and provisions

Shrouding the body

In the New Kingdom, the shroud that covered the body appeared to have some decoration, after previously being left plain, but may have also included bead net dresses, which had faience amulets threaded into the lozenge pattern, usually found on women (Ikram, 2015, p.101). In the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth Dynasties these elaborate net dresses became popular among both sexes, alluding to the night sky of Nut (Ikram, 2015, p.101). Decorative papier mâché-like cartonnage bandages were also found on mummies used to mimic the lateral bandages used to hold the shroud in place (Ikram, 2015, p.102). Later in the Ptolemaic period other external elements, such as a collar, an apron over the legs, and boots or greaves were used to protect and enhance the wrapping of the mummy as they were inscribed with spells (Ikram, 2015, p.102).

Further decoration and jewelry

Since extremities, such as the fingers and toes, were fragile, special coverings were developed to protect them; reserved for the elite classes and royals, they were often made of precious metals, most notably gold (Ikram, 2015, p.103). These protective finger- and toe-stalls were used in the New Kingdom and later, acting as gloves or sandals for the deceased (Ikram, 2015, p.103).

An assortment of jewelry was used to adorn the deceased, with materials ranging from shells and ceramic beads to gold and semiprecious stones, and was not only used to adorn the corpse, but was also used in the funerary equipment (Ikram, 2015, p.104). Ikram distinguishes between two types of jewelry found, the first made specifically for burial, perhaps for the decoration of the

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-d). *Sandals: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Finger stalls

Toe stalls

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-d). *Finger stall: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Collar with falcon head

Vulture breastplate

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-f). *Vulture pectoral: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

corpse or excess for the tomb, and other was actually used during the lifetime of the deceased (Ikram, 2015, p.104).

Burial jewelry was often flimsy or thin, often made of gold foil (thin sheets of gold) rather than solid gold; thin gold bands for the wrists and ankles were also produced, though most burial jewelry was amuletic in function – hammered, stamped, or incised, and usually in the shape of protective animal goddesses, such as the vulture or cobra (Ikram, 2015, p.104). Actual wearable jewelry would have been the 'real' jewelry, that had solid construction and appeared in a variety of objects, like rings, neck-ornaments, anklets, and bracelets (Ikram, 2015, p.105). These would have acted as the provisions they were taking with them to enjoy in the next life (Ikram, 2015, p.105).

Mummy masks

Masks, or mummy masks, were another decorative aspect of burial that served various purposes, including to adorn the corpse, identify the individual, and also acted somewhat as a support for the head, neck, and shoulders of the mummy (Ikram, 2015, p.105). Since they were usually made of cartonnage, wood, or plaster, and, in rare occasions, made of solid gold, they were meant to support and protect the deceased, and thus were further inscribed with protection spells (Ikram, 2015, p.105). Primarily they were used to identify the individual and support the corpse, however the depictions were somewhat standardized, especially in the lower classes, though some individual features were portrayed (Ikram, 2015, p.105). The elite classes were often able to afford gilded masks to accentuate their features and liken them to the gods, whose skin would shine like gold (Ikram, 2015, p.106).

Mummy boards

Mummy masks that ended at the collar were used until the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, in conjunction with "openwork", which were separate pieces of cartonnage that covered the different parts of the corpse as a protective layer – think medieval armor, separate pieces that, combined, protected the entire body (Ikram, 2015, p.107). The mummy board was the fusion of these individual pieces that ultimately covered the body head to toe, and were often carved of wood, which was further plastered and painted, used from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-second Dynasty (Ikram, 2015, p.107). Some of these mummy boards were painted as if the deceased individual were alive, and led to the, "all-enveloping cartonnage cases that were painted with funerary motifs," and were a cross between a mummy board and a coffin (Ikram, 2015, p.107).

Coffins

Ikram (2015) explains that, "…the coffin was one of the most important articles of funerary equipment." We have seen that the mummy boards or masks helped to protect the mummy, but coffins were the primary protection for the deceased, rooted in the myth of Osiris – a prototype of the chest Osiris was locked into before he was cast away by his brother Seth (Ikram, 2015, p.108). They were made of wood, such as sycamore, or cedar for the elite, imitating the tree that Osiris' chest was caught in (Ikram, 2015, p.108). Cedar was preferred by the elite because it

Various style and periods of mummy masks, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2024 Theresa Wilshusen

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee . (n.d.). *Egypt, burial mask of unidentified mummy at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo*. University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

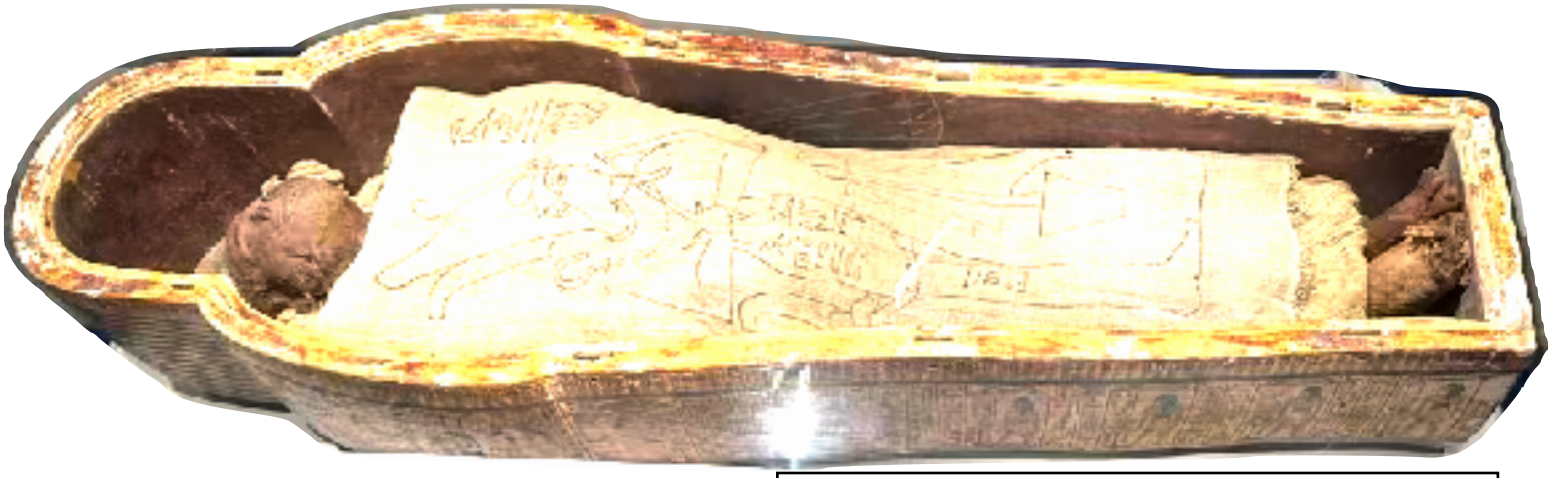
smelled sweet and both discouraged bacterial growth, but also insect infestations, while the use of sycamore is that the goddess Hathor took on the appearance of Lady of the Sycamore, and provisioned the dead (Ikram, 2015, p.109).

While coffins evolved over time, two main forms remained, rectangular and anthropoid and their popularity varied depending on the period – anthropoid coffins were almost always made of wood, while the rectangular coffins were made of cartonnage (different from the mummy boards), stone, or gold (Ikram, 2015, p.109).

Ikram (2015) points out, "Coffin design and decoration changed to accommodate evolving ideas of the Afterlife and were possessed of very complex iconography." Over time, coffins took over the role of the tombs, becoming the houses of the mummy, rather than the tomb (Ikram, 2015, p.109). A coffin or a nest of coffins, would have been enclosed within the sarcophagus, which acted as another protective layer for the deceased, made of wood (sycamore, cedar, or acacia) or stone (limestone, Egyptian alabaster, quartzite, granite, or basalt) (Ikram, 2015, p.109). The sarcophagus, translates from Egyptian as "lord of life", and signified the power it was deemed to have; they are often rectangular while the coffins they contain within them could also be rectangular or anthropoid (Ikram, 2015, p.109).

The coffins and the sarcophagi were both extensively decorated; the sarcophagi were usually covered in text and small depictions of what was inscribed, but the texts were often written in two forms: horizontal and vertical, with different intentions (Ikram, 2015, p.111). The vertical bands of texts strengthen and support the horizontal offering texts, and professed the importance of the deceased before different deities (Ikram, 2015, p.111). These texts were not only on the interior, but on the interior, often consisting of "Coffin Texts" and the "Book of Two Ways," and even the bottom of the sarcophagus, where the coffin was placed, would have elaborate maps of the underworld, providing a clear passage for the deceased to reach the underworld safely and without getting lost (Ikram, 2015, p.112). Some of the depictions within the sarcophagus or coffin included functional and practical goods the deceased would need or use in the afterlife: natron, shoes, weapons, furniture, jewelry, and any emblems of royalty that might associate the deceased with Osiris, all located where they might be used by the individual – head rest at the head, jewelry at the arms and hand, shoes at the feet, etc. (Ikram, 2015, p.113). Ikram (2015) suggests that these were indicators not just of what the deceased needed in the afterlife, but showed the importance of the perspective of the deceased, that they would in fact, be looking unto these objects, so the interior decorations became more elaborate, making the magic of the interior of the coffin available to be absorbed by the deceased (Ikram, 2015, p.113). Significant depictions of Nut, representing the sky, were also placed on the underside of the lids of the coffins or sarcophagi, and as Ikram explains, this was a protection image, as she reached from head to toe, encompassing the deceased, protecting them, and perpetuating the sense for rebirth (Ikram, 2015, p.113).

Anthropoid coffins, developed during the Middle Kingdom, were essentially fully developed



Mummy in arthropod coffin, Museum of Mummification, Luxor 2024 Theresa Wilshusen

Arthropod coffins, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2024 Theresa Wilshusen

versions of the cartonnage mummy masks, that became the mummy boards that slowly gained popularity, which were meant to represent the white shrouded mummy wearing a mask and false beard, painted with elaborate collars and bands of text reminiscent of the bands that held the shroud in place (Ikram, 2015, p.114). Later, these anthropoid coffins were placed inside rectangular sarcophagi on their left sides, to be closer to their hearts, thus the sarcophagi acted as the tomb for the coffin and added another layer of protection for the body (Ikram, 2015, p.1140).

The development of the anthropoid coffin grew more and more realistic in its representations of the deceased that contained within, embellishing the face, ears, and neck of the deceased with a decorative collar, also exposing the feet, while the rest of the coffin was wrapped in feathers, like wings wrapping around it, called a *rishi*-coffin (Ikram, 2015, p.114). As they the coffins evolved, so did the designs, and by the middle of the Eighteenth Dynasty, anthropoid coffins took on similar, though more ornate, designs to that of earlier dynasties – painted white, with gold or yellow vertical and horizontal bandings, with black wigs, and faced painted the typical colors for males and females (red for males, yellow for females) (Ikram, 2015, p.115). The white spaces between the bands were also more detailed, depicting the deceased receiving offerings, mourners, and/or the voyage to Abydos (the underworld) (Ikram, 2015, p.115).

The varnishes coating these coffins helped to transform the individual into the divine entity, with the verb “to varnish” translating to “to make divine” thus providing the act and the physical material necessary for the transformation to divinity (Ikram, 2015, p.117). The individuals wealthy enough to afford three nesting coffins were able to customize each of them; the first, or innermost coffin, would have been painted yellow or covered in gold, with the next they would have been more expressive of their identity, perhaps portraying themselves in their typical clothing, with the outermost coffin likening to Osiris (Ikram, 2015, p.117; Heininger & Cooney, 2009). Some important individuals made their outermost coffin not of wood, but of stone, typically basalt or granite were used for these, including limestone, a softer stone, though there are few instances of all three being made of stone (Ikram, 2015, p.117). It was not uncommon for coffins to be embellished with precious metals and semi precious stones, as they were an outward expression of one’s belief in their divinity on the other side, as well as their belief in who they were in life, which was expressed with the materials and designs of their coffins (Ikram, 2015, p.118). The name of the individual was essential on the sarcophagi and coffins, so it was seen in the banding or in cartouches (usually vertical oval shapes with the hieroglyphic names of the individual inside them) presented on the lids to ensure they could be matched with their proper owner in the afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.120).

Raised relief within the coffins begins to appear in the Third Intermediate Period, with elaborate floral collars and raised hands, funerary divinities, winged deities, and lines of text covered the coffins; the interiors were just as ornate, even some of the royal images were appropriated by non-royals and used in their decoration (Ikram, 2015, p.123).

Arthropod coffin, The Mummification Museum, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Arthropod coffin, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Arthropod coffin, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

The coffins of the Twenty-third Dynasty presented or reflected the appearance of the god Osiris with large amounts of texts scrawled across them, and raised up on a pillar or pedestal mounted just under the coffin, representative of statuary of the time (Ikram, 2015, p.123).

Coffins and sarcophagi acted as vehicles to the underworld, tombs for the deceased, protectors of the body, and identifiers of the individual in the afterlife, serving as multifunctional artworks that relayed information as well as expressed identity of the deceased individual, and were one of the most important aspects of the funerary process and for the above mentioned it is evident why.

Tombs

> "That the tomb provided one with an eternal cosmos is evident from its name: the House for Eternity," (Ikram, 2015, p.139).

Ikram (2015) explains the importance of the tomb for the individual, as building a tomb was crucial to survival in the afterlife, as much as building a house to live in, or having a family, as the "house of death is for life," (Ikram, 2015, p.139). Homes that people actually lived in were constructed of perishable materials, often mudbrick; tombs, on the other hand, had to withstand time and were constructed out of much more durable materials as their survival meant the survival of the individual (Ikram, 2015, p.139).

Tombs were divided into two sections: the offering place, or chapel, and the burial chamber below; the chapel was where the cult of the deceased (usually family members, and other individuals who had close relations to the individual) could come and celebrate the deceased and was considered the land of the living (Ikram, 2015, p.139). The burial chamber, located under the chapel, below ground, was considered the underworld, or land of Osiris, and was not entered or interacted with after burial, with the exception of additional burials or relocation (Ikram, 2015, p.139). In the chapel was associated with solar imagery, the sun god Ra and Osiris, both divinities involved with resurrection, rebirth, and eternal life, according to Ikram (2015, p. 139-140). Like with their coffins, Egyptians were competing for the most elaborate and beautifully decorate tomb to attract visitors and grow their cults, as these visitors would speak the name of the deceased and recite formulas so the deceased would have abundance in the Afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.140).

Tombs and cemeteries were usually located on the West side of the Nile River and living settlements were on the East side, as this was a metaphor for the parallels of human life and the path of the sun – rising in the East (being reborn each new day) and setting in the West (dying each night) (Ikram, 2015, p.140-141). Crossing the river was symbolic for Egyptians as well, as it represented the sun's journey each day from rebirth to death as it crossed the sky (Ikram, 2015, p.141). One's status in life determined where they would be buried and their place in the cemetery, being closer to the elite, or even royalty, was believed to increase their importance and reflect their divinity (Ikram, 2015, p.141). This was also the case for materials, with the more elite tombs being built higher up in cliffs where better quality rock existed, with the less rich lower with

Tomb in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Tomb in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Tomb in the Valley of the Kings Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Tomb in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

the poorer quality rock, and even the poorest being built on the edge of the desert (Ikram, 2015, p.141). The expression of one's status and identity in death provided them safety in the Afterlife as their tombs were less likely to be robbed, usurped, or destroyed, ensuring their survival and continuation for eternity (Ikram, 2015, p.141).

Tombs were painted to depict not only communications and offerings with the gods, but of daily activities, these scenes would demonstrate the production of society to ensure the deceased would benefit from these things in the next life, but scenes also depicted leisurely things that the individual would have enjoyed in their life, such as fishing, hunting, and feasting (Ikram, 2015, p.171). They believed that their illustrations and inscriptions were magical, bringing these scenarios to life once they were described, written, or said aloud, "similar to the later Biblical equivalent of the power of the "thought" and the "word" that was conceived and spoken, thus creating the world," (Ikram, 2015, p.171).

While daily life scenes were depicted and believed to benefit them in a very literal sense, they were also believed to be metaphors or symbolical narratives, perpetuating the concept of *maat* (the cosmic order of life); through these daily scenes the deceased manifested control over the universe, "contributing to the establishment of order," (Ikram, 2015, p.171-172). These paintings and carvings did help the deceased in the continuation of their eternity through agricultural scenes, but also represented creation, death, and rebirth in a new form, just as seeds create new life, which grows and dies, but is reborn as nourishment (Ikram, 2015, p.172). These depictions remained in the chapel of the tomb, within the superstructure, while the substructure (where the body was interred) was usually left bare, with no decorations, though some examples exist of paintings in these areas (Ikram, 2015, p.173).

In the New Kingdom tombs an autobiographical element arises in the decoration, showing specific events from the deceased's life in great detail and even explained in accompanying texts (Ikram, 2015, p.176). This personalization of one's tomb becomes a reflection of the individual, not solely of their aspirations for the Afterlife; such scenes include funerary scenes with rituals, festival scenes including the god Amun (Ikram, 2015, p.176). The deceased began expressing intimate details of who they were in life in an effort to make their next life more meaningful, giving details about their jobs and families, as well as including their hobbies to be the ones who define them.

Canopic equipment and its importance

Canopic jars were important in the embalming process, as they held the organs removed from the individual after each organ was also mummified, though there is no specific ancient Egyptian term to describe these jars, as they were called *qebu en wet* or "jars of embalming" (Ikram, 2015, p.125). These jars were generally placed near the feet of the deceased in the sarcophagus or tomb and identified the different organs, typically with different heads as the lids to the jars – one for each Son of Horus (Ikram, 2015, p.125-127). According to Ikram (2015), in the New Kingdom each one of the Four Sons of Horus protected an organ: Imseti (human head) protected the liver, Hapy (ape head) protected the lungs, Daumutef (jackal head) protected the stomach, and

Qebehsenuef (falcon head) protected the intestines – they were often placed within their own chest, similar to a sarcophagus, made of wood or stone (Ikram, 2015, p.127).

Shabtis

Shabtis, also called *shawabti* or *ushabti*, are small servant figures that were collected and used as funerary equipment, providing labor, entertainment, and sexual arousal, but they also took the form of loved ones the deceased wished to reunite with in the Afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.128-129). Their general purpose was to make life easier for the deceased in the afterlife as they would magically waken in the Afterlife and provide the labor needed for the deceased to have a very comfortable life; these tasks would have included all aspects of making beer, grinding grain, baking, and other mundane household tasks (Ikram, 2015, p.128-129). They have been made of a variety of materials to accommodate all economic levels, including wood, glass, clay, wax, stone, bronze, and most commonly found faience (glazed earthenware clay); their sizes also vary from a few centimeters to half a meter in length; however, the most common sizes were about 15-20 cm (Ikram, 2015, p.129; Mark, April 2017). The quality of craftsmanship of these *shabtis* also varied, some were exquisitely carved or crafted, to lumps of clay vaguely resembling the human form, to mere pegs of wood, though all came with their own coffin or vertical shrine storage (Ikram, 2015, p.129). *Shabtis* not only took the form of servants of family members, but they were also likened to the deceased, with their own coffin and the names inscribed on them; this could have served as a stand in for the deceased, as the gods are believed to ask the deceased to perform work for them, and these *shabtis* would be awakened to perform these tasks in place of the deceased (Ikram, 2015, p.130). The number of *shabtis* an individual might have in their provisions depended on what they could afford, as well as their need, some sets contained anywhere from 5-7 pieces, while elites and royals had numbers in the hundreds, equipped with tools and even overseers (Ikram, 2015, p.130-131).

Other provisions in tombs

Provisions, aside from servants, were also necessary for the continuation of life in the afterlife and, again, to make it a luxurious and comfortable eternity, so these items included things used in everyday life, objects from furniture and linens, to toys and games were required (Ikram, 2015, p.131). Large quantities of food supplies and beer and/or wine were also stored, as were luxury goods such as oils, perfumes, cosmetics and toiletries were seen as necessary provisions (Ikram, 2015, p.133-134). Upon rebirth in the afterlife, Egyptians believe they would need provisions for every age in life, as if they were being reborn from infancy, so many of the furniture goods and linens were in all sizes, many of which were used during the lifetime of the deceased individual (Ikram, 2015, p.134). This was an attempt to relive one's life with their most prized possessions while expressing their true identities, if not inflating their statuses to some degree. The items they packed in their tombs were a direct reflection of both who they were in life and who they aspired to be in the Afterlife.

4.2.4 Funerals, processions, and burials

Once the tomb was constructed and decorated, the body mummified, the funeral and burial were

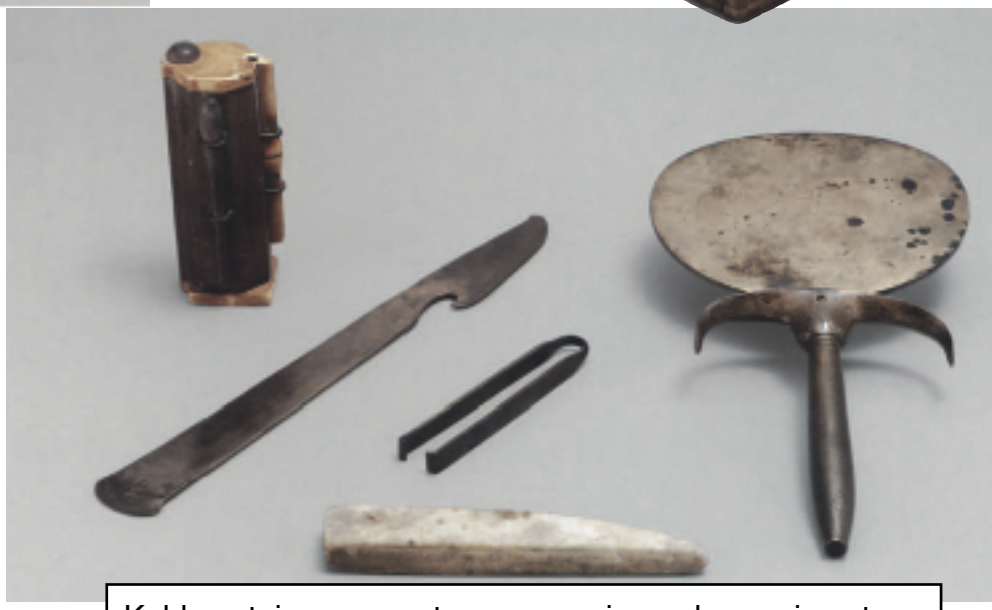
Ushabtis, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Provisions (dates), The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Liquid Provisions, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Toilet Box

Game



Kohl container, razor, tweezers, mirror, sharpening stone

Chair

Headrest

Roehrig, C. H., Dreyfus, R., & Keller, C. A. (2005). *Hatshepsut, From Queen to Pharaoh*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Yale University Press.

the next steps in the process of life after death, this meant the deceased would finally leave the living and be resurrected on the other side to live for eternity with their cult to support them (Ikram, 2015, p.183).

> "Egyptian funerals were large, elaborate affairs with the funerary procession and a feast, similar to a wake, being of key importance," (Ikram, 2015, p.183).

The processions pictured on the walls of tombs show very dramatic scenes, proving them to be a spectacle and memorable to behold, which consisted of a walking procession of people carrying offerings for the deceased, carrying a variety of grave goods (Ikram, 2015, p.183). Priests would have been following them, chanting and waving incense burners, with the coffin behind them on a sled, being carried by a pair of oxen (Ikram, 2015, p.183). Professional mourners would have surrounded the coffin as they cried wailing, like what is seen today at funerals in contemporary Egypt, ululating, tearing their clothes and throwing dirt and ash over their heads (Ikram, 2015, p.184). These professional mourners would have been joined by family and friends of the deceased also crying and they would be followed by more priests and others carrying more grave goods (Ikram, 2015, p.184). Once they reached the tomb, the grave goods would have been deposited while the coffin remained outside for the last goodbyes, meanwhile sacred dances would be performed to help the deceased's soul continue in the Afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.185).

The "Opening of the Mouth" ceremony was the next step, performed by a priest in a leopard skin, which reanimated the deceased in the Afterlife, and was the most important funerary ritual, according to Ikram (2015, p.185). The ceremony was complex, as it reanimated different senses and used birthing instruments to evoke a sense of rebirth, principally a set that contained a flint knife which would have been used to cut the umbilical cord and use its own senses to survive, so evocation was done for the deceased in their rebirth in the Afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.186). The priest would have recited magical spells to restore the sensed of the deceased while touching those parts on their body, and once this was complete it was believed that the individual was reanimated on the other side, therefore they joined the mourners in a funerary feast (similar to a wake) (Ikram, 2015, p.186).

Once the funerary feast ended the corpse would be entombed with the appropriate prayers and rituals completed, and mourners would have placed garlands over the body or coffin (much like Americans do today), and the tomb closed and sealed, wherein the journey of the deceased would begin in the Afterlife having achieved "the kingdom of Osiris" and would flourish in their rebirth evermore (Ikram, 2015, p.187). A mortuary cult (a following of friends, family, and any others who would visit or pass by the tomb) had to be established to ensure the survival of the individual in the afterlife, as they would visit and recite spells and prayers that would replenish provisions of the deceased, however, the inscriptions and illustrations served that purpose if visitors did not come or if the cult died out (Ikram, 2015, p.189-191).

Funeral Procession, Temple of Ameophis, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Funeral Procession, Temple of Ameophis, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Funeral Procession, Temple of Ameophis, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Conclusion

Based on my research experience and personal observation, I have noticed certain tensions between contemporary funerary rituals and the complex ways in which identity is lived and expressed today. This impression, although subjective, leads me to explore in the next chapter how art—especially from feminist and queer perspectives—can open symbolic spaces where these evolving identities find alternative forms of representation, thus expanding cultural narratives surrounding life and death.

While death occurs in every culture, in every religion, to everyone, many of the beliefs associated with death overlap and seem to be founded on the need to be recognized and valued for who we really were on earth, as well as remembered after death, regardless of what happens to us after. We, as humans, seem to want to be seen and sometimes even elevated for our successes, and aspects of our lives that we deem important, forming part of our identities, the greatest parts of ourselves that we want to project for eternity both in life and in death.

Western and Oriental burial practices have some overlap. The preparation of the body, cross-culturally, is generally the same, providing care and consideration for the deceased, as well as respect for their religion (or non-religion), culture, and final wishes. Deceased individuals are all treated with respect as they are ushered out of this life, and as some believe, into the next. During this time, while practices differ about how the body is presented, more often than not, the individual is given a ceremony of some kind. These ceremonies range from a sparse gathering to a large ceremonious farewell; however, the commonality is the opportunity for the living to be remembered and released from the care of the living.

While the manner in which the body can be exhibited depends on the deceased individual's wishes, religious beliefs, and manner in which they died, they are remembered. Since funeral proceedings contrast between communities, cultures, and religions, the general processes are the same. They are not extremely different from those of Ancient Egypt either. From the moment of death, the body is handled with care in order to give the individual the respect they deserve. They are cleaned and clothed in some manner. Some undergo a form of embalming, others may not, and some are cremated. If the body is to be observed, the deceased may be dressed and given makeup to appear lifelike and perhaps further, given a finished look, similar to one they would have in life. This allows the deceased to not only be viewed lifelike, but also viewed more authentically.

Some individuals decide to have a service or ceremony allowing survivors of the deceased to gather, mourn their passing or celebrate their life, share stories, memories, and commune with one another. These services may have been planned by the deceased, prior to death, as a way of leaving in the way they had meticulously planned, however, oftentimes these services are planned by the survivors who piece together the identity of the deceased individual, creating a mosaic of the different identities of their life. This patchwork of an identity may be somewhat flawed, but generally with the best intentions. Some services may provide a slideshow of photos

of the deceased throughout their lives, allowing all in attendance to remember and relive some of those times of the deceased's life. This is perhaps a more authentic depiction of the deceased, though the photos could have been curated posthumously. In some of these services, objects belonging to the deceased may also be displayed, providing details from the life of the deceased, a look into their personal lives. Because people mourn in different ways, some may be crying, praying, laughing and sharing memories and stories, reflecting silently, or a combination of these. The deceased would be buried soon after this service, and, like in Ancient Egypt, would be followed with a train of mourners. In Ancient Egypt, there wouldn't necessarily have been a separate service, the train of mourners to the burial site/tomb, would have acted as the public service. The entombment would have been similar to that of the procedures today, identifying them, a final message for or about them, and the burial/entombment.

Since the Ancient Egyptians did not have photographs, they used other forms to ensure their likeness be remembered, and for the elite and royals, that could come in a variety of mediums, though principally stone sculptures, tomb paintings, and coffin decoration – a combination of text and images. This was crucial for the Ancient Egyptians, as their likeness carried them in the next life. The coffins, typically made of wood or stone, were elaborately painted or inscribed describing the person with intricate detail. The pictures were often religious, but would have depicted them associating or communicating with the gods, defining their piety, loyalty, and devotion. These images and texts were accompanied with a mask over the body and even carved into the coffins. These allowed the individual to be both likened to Osiris and below, themselves, providing them a safe passage to the afterlife. The coffin texts were exceedingly descriptive which allowed them to authentically describe who they believed themselves to be. And because these coffins were being created, in the majority of cases, throughout the life of the deceased, they were wholly in command of the messaging. This is something less common among contemporary funerary practices. Tombs of the deceased depicted all aspects of their life and afterlife, including the passage into the afterlife. This, also under their control, was in the chapel of the tomb, where loved ones would come and rejuvenate the deceased, nourishing them in the afterlife. They relied on their memory to encourage people to keep them sustained in the afterlife. The deceased created a tomb chapel in their memory where they could commune with the living, be remembered for their most authentic selves, in hopes they could live for eternity.

The similarities of procedure for the Ancient Egyptians and contemporary burials in both the West and the Orient show us the importance of the procedure itself. The detailed steps entailed in the funerary process in both epochs speaks to the importance of the individual. It also recognizes the value and gravity of identifying the deceased for who they were and remembering them in the identities they shared with the living. The evidence of their afterlife cannot be proven, so their life on this earth and the identities they shared become their legacy, and ultimately the colorful mosaic of their authentic self.

CHAPTER 5

IDENTITY

Chapter 5 – Identity

Introduction

Comparing contemporary methods of identity expression with that of the Ancient Egyptians, using art as the common factor is important in this artistic research because it allows the tracking of ideas and gender concepts over time, understanding how religious, cultural, and regional influences have impacted identity expression. Through this, we can also examine how heteronormativity is challenged in the pursuit of authentic identity expression. The first section of this chapter explains how identity expression has been subverted through religion and politics over decades of autocratic rule with the subjugation of vulnerable groups, including LGBTQIA+ and women, specifically in contemporary Egypt.

In the following section, I discuss the role of art in Western women's activism that compelled other groups to appear and demand better treatment, but ultimately the right of self-expression. I examine different types of identity: vertical and horizontal, and how this affects how identity is expressed, helping to understand the trajectory and influence of identity. Further, using these concepts I consider how art reinterprets materials and processes which can, in turn, increase awareness and develop empathy for individuals who are quite unlike each other.

I break down two different interviews of contemporary, feminist, female artists. One is an American, Buddhist, transgender ceramicist, the other is a single Egyptian, Muslim, visual artist working with a variety of mediums, but primarily includes ceramics and glass. These interviews examine the roles that their intersectional identities play in their art and, adversely, how their art serves them in their identity expression. Understanding the perspective of these women and why their identity tags are important to them and how it affects them and furthers the comprehension of intersectionality among minority and majority groups.

The contemporary methods in which identity is preserved and continued, though they may be based on traditions, religion, or simply a desire to be remembered, is an essential discussion as it affects nearly everyone and therefore should be addressed from artistic and anthropologic perspectives. The preservation of identity is commonly done through using personal possessions - ordinary objects of the deceased, often used in their life. They are often imbued with meaning and identity both from the deceased (in their lives) and/or by the survivors.

Common objects can become artifacts of one's identity and further turned into art through the process of memorialization – when someone places significance on an item that wouldn't otherwise be extraordinary. This artistic transformation can come in many forms, but can include preservation of the items in resin, framing such objects, or turning the piece into a wearable object, like clothing or accessory. Some individuals choose to leave behind previously held identities to bring to prominence others that perhaps make them out to be better people. These expressions are usually acts or practices that carry, or historically carried, meaning for the dying/deceased. I discuss how survivors celebrate and mourn the deceased in a way that perpetuates

their identities. This concept of memorialization tells us a lot about humanity and how we, as a species, long to not be forgotten.

Providing examples of ancient expressions of identity and how they defied the expectations or norms of the time in Egypt provides us with an understanding of the period, as well as a timeline of identity expression – what society deemed acceptable. Though, it should be noted that the terminology used now is not a direct reflection of the language used in Ancient Egypt as these terms did not exist. The provided examples give nuance to the significance of the usage of the mediums, societal norms, and taboos. The art and texts mentioned originate from cultural religious traditions and norms. The language used now describes these observations from a contemporary artistic lens.

I provide some exposure to the issues within Egyptology – an antiquated heterosexual male perspective of the findings, perhaps skewing understanding of the inscriptions and usage of the artworks. A western, colonial perspective as such can lead to misinterpretations of the art and culture, overlooking other aspects that would appear rare and significant to identity expression, that may have also supported non-binary concepts of identity, providing a better understanding of a rich, ancient culture.

This chapter synthesizes insights from the prior chapters by examining how contemporary artists across different cultures—particularly feminist and queer-identifying artists—use art to navigate death, gender, and identity. The artists and artworks selected here are not exhaustive but function as generative examples that align with the thesis's exploration of non-normative and evolving identities. These case studies reflect the challenges and possibilities of self-representation in visual art and expand the conversation on memorialization and personal narrative.

The purpose of this chapter is to directly inform the artistic production phase by identifying formal, material, and conceptual strategies already in practice and considering how they might be adapted, challenged, or extended through my own work.

Here, I begin to shift from academic research to a more practice-led mode of inquiry. While still grounded in scholarly literature and interviews, the chapter adopts a slightly more personal and reflective tone—appropriate to the interdisciplinary transition between contextual theory and embodied art practice.

5.1. Contemporary Expressions of Identity

5.1.1 Challenging heteronormative constructs of identity in Egypt

Homosexuality in Egypt is not technically a crime, but it challenges President Abel Fattah el-Sisi's perception of the Egyptian identity, which he has used to allow authorities to crackdown on individuals suspected of belonging to the LGBTQIA community (Bernstein, 2017; Clegg, 2019). The challenge to el-Sisi's Egyptian identity is one that counters heteronormativity and rejects binary

concepts as a sole means of existence. The challenge seems to be perceived as a threat to traditional masculine and feminine gender roles within contemporary Egyptian society and appears to upset frameworks in place that would continue to restrain or repress individuals from expressing their gender and sexual identities outside of established conservative, religious norms.

To examine this topic is also an examination of homophobia within conservatism and religion in Egypt, which both are what el-Sisi's regime proclaims to be (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). President el-Sisi has been using a mix of beliefs and traditions from Ancient Egypt and contemporary Islam to project a homogeneous identity of Egypt's contemporary society, however he is picking and choosing the aspects of those identities that will form part of the greater homogeneous "new Egyptian" identity (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

> "An analysis of the campaign reveals two main themes: first, the "new Egyptian" is conceptualized as an antithesis to "the Islamist other"; second, the Egyptian identity is built as a rich mosaic composed of seven pillars – Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, Coptic, Islamic, Arab, Mediterranean, and African," (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

El-Sisi has centered the "new Egyptian" identity on Islamic values, disregarding the country's minority religions, though mentioning one, with an intention to bring together the Egyptian people with regards to the "regime's political, economic, and social agenda and improving its international image," and meanwhile attempting to coalesce a variety of other religious and cultural identities (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). With Egypt's cultural identity in flux as it transitions from one generation to the next, and as their world views change, competing forces attempt to exploit the transitional identities with the pursuit of homogenizing a uniquely fractured Egyptian identity forcing the identity of small groups in power onto Egyptians as a whole (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

Egypt today is seen as an Islamic nation, and this is due, in part, by the Muslim Brotherhood which aimed to use their parliamentary and presidential elections as a means of institutionalize the Islamization of Egypt, "and managed to enact a constitution in 2012 that inter alia established that Egypt is part of the Islamic nation," (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Further, and more extreme, is the example of jihadist organizations doing the same, "the Salafist jihadi organization Ansar Bait al-Maqdis swore an oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2014, and became Wilayat Sinai, the "Sinai Province" of the Islamic State," forcing an extremist identity onto the country, and further the citizens of Sinai region, which few supported (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

After the 2011 Egyptian Revolution a new identity was forming among young people that threatened the goal of a homogenized identity, and further deteriorated with the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013, when Abdel Fattah el-Sisi instituted a coup of the government and subsequently took control (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). El-Sisi attempted to remodel an identity that served his regime's needs and policies with the intention of instilling it among the younger generations, while resolving to simultaneously weaken revolutionary identities (Winter & Shiloah,

2019). These changes were an attempt "to forge the character of Egypt's young population, cultivate their identification with el-Sisi's policies, and encourage norms that are consistent with his goals," as a further attempt to quiet protests and urgency for change among revolutionists (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

El-Sisi's reformation of the Egyptian identity was one of salvation from his perspective – he believed he was ultimately saving Egypt from Islamism that was believed to be a veiled terrorist organization acting as a democratic organization, that would have caused the destruction of Egypt's political, economic, and social elements had they been left in power (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). El-Sisi's regime focused on this aspect of ideals, particularly of the younger generations, that asserted Islamists antithetical to the true Egyptian identity, creating an extreme division between Islamists and all other Egyptians, nationalists, from his perspective, splitting and forcing Egyptians into one of two categories, Islamist terrorist or nationalist; both very extreme positions to take (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). This forced binary national identity allowed el-Sisi to claim himself as the protector of Egyptian identity as he called out domestic terrorism and converted many automatically to 'choose' nationalism, "an outcome of a revolution that rescued Egypt from an existential threat that sought to convert its unique identity to a supra-Egyptian pan-Islamic vision," (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Additionally, this action legitimized the ousting of the Muslim Brotherhood from power, appearing to return control of one's identity back to the people and out of the hands of extremists, identifying them as "being "thieves of conscience and common sense, robbers of identity, and traitors to their homeland."" Posing the ousting as a revolution carried out by the people who wanted to preserve their identity and were in fear of losing it (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

Usama al-Sayyid al-Azhari, the presidential advisor for religious affairs, explains in his 2016 column in *al-Ahram* that Egyptians have unique defining qualities, "including steadfastness in the face of crises; strong roots; innovative capability; broad horizons; passion for development; cultural depth; and belief in God," (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). This reconstruction of the Egyptian person implicated religion as one of the most defining qualities, along with other perceived aspects that are not necessarily rooted in fact, rather assumption. While it is true the majority of the country is Muslim, with minorities claiming other religions, it must be recalled that it isn't possible to be unaffiliated with a religion in Egypt; disassociation from Islam is prohibited, and the government itself requires everyone to identify as one of three religions (Islam, Christianity, or Judaism) on their identification cards (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Some of the other defining qualities mentioned by al-Azhari, such as having "strong roots," does not seem to have a broader reference to anything in particular as it remains unspecified and he further names "cultural depth" as another aspect, presuming reference to Egypt's ancient culture (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Al-Azhari claims "innovative capability" and "broad horizons" as qualities of the majority of the Egyptian people when, in reality, both descriptions refer to the aspirations of individuals rather than their identities, and further indirectly attribute the lack of innovation and expansion of horizons on Egyptians in general and as a whole, but more so on those who are incapable of achieving these aspirations because they choose more secure or traditional professions or do not

have access to them (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Choosing a more traditional profession, such as a medical profession, law profession, or government profession, provides more security with regards to job prospects, while other creative professions, such as in the arts, performing arts, digital arts, etc. provide little or no security. The previously mentioned professions are chosen over artistic professions more often to be able to provide rather than the pursuit of career passion. Winter and Shiloah (2019) suggest that, "The call to "build a new person" is not unique to the el-Sisi regime and that it appears in different countries throughout history, during times of revolutions, reforms, and dramatic changes, mainly under authoritarian or totalitarian regimes." They mention that it is perhaps foreshadowing el-Sisi's greater political strategy, but for the short term, el-Sisi suggests that contemporary Egyptians are flawed in their expression of identity and character, which needs to be corrected, projecting, "…a utopian ideal that civilians should strive to achieve, and the development of that character involves active educational, cultural, and ideological efforts dictated from the top down." Ultimately, el-Sisi's reeducation and reidentification of the modern Egyptian is one that aspires to erase the individual and local identities with a greater, all-encompassing identity that serves his political agenda and perpetuate his own sense of self-grandeur, acting as a savior for the country, perhaps with the intention for him to become Egypt's next 'democratically elected' autocrat.

El-Sisi's new Egyptian identity has other implications that have been grave with regards to human rights and the challenge to what he and his regime consider acceptable identities and that includes homosexuality and non-binary identities. To understand why these identities are unacceptable in contemporary Egypt we had to first discuss the strategy of el-Sisi and his regime with regards to identity. Now it is understood that el-Sisi's objectives are to reform the modern Egyptian identity through a series of programs that reeducates Egyptians, imposes nationalism and religious association, and reconstructs the Egyptian character after having been neglected (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

> "An article in a*l-Ahram* called for a multi-discipline reorganization of systems: an education system that will cultivate productive citizens; religious institutions that will instill values of respect, order, cleanliness, and integrity; cultural institutions that will encourage creativity; art that will disseminate values of tolerance; and communications that will focus on the positive instead of the negative," (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

While many of these aspects seem optimal for any society, el-Sisi places a lot of emphasis and responsibility on religious institutions for integrity, and art for values and tolerance, as well as communications for a positive spin; this attention to these specific areas contradict each other to an extent.

With religious institutions instilling their beliefs of integrity, this assumes that these institutions can be the definers of morality based on the regime's proposals of what constitutes the moral character of an individual. This complicates the concept further when individuals are expected, if not obligated, to attend these educational sessions, perhaps forcing individuals who are less

religious to attend when they may already be of high moral character without the influence of the religious entity, or non-religious, but tethered to their religion because they were born into it, unable to leave for threat of persecution, and/or forced to adhere to it for the inability to omit it on government documents (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Furthermore, religious entities, including Islam and Christianity, that condemn homosexuality, may be entitled to reeducation of homosexual individuals, also known as conversion therapy (Welle, 2020). This act alone is a personal mindset and belief of morality, based on a religious belief system, rather than a factual one, giving not only religious authority over morality, but also political authority. El-Sisi's regime has already proven their intolerance for homosexuality, labeling it sexual deviance or debauchery, and further condemning and punishing supporters and social liberation advocates (Bernstein, 2017).

Though el-Sisi's government had begun their crackdowns in his first term of LGBTQIA people, supporters, and advocates through a variety of undercover and catfishing (using someone else's identity and photos, to find friends or romantic relationships online (WebMD Editorial Contributors, 2020)) operations (Ameling, 2022) in an attempt to impede perversion and immorality (Clegg, 2019), he amped up these crackdowns in 2017 against the aforementioned people, but began including other activists and satirists, and nearly anyone who opposed el-Sisi's regime, but even including anyone who appeared 'different', which could include artists, filmmakers, actors, and other performers (Ameling, 2022). This targeting of people who even just appear different through the way they dress, act, walk, or wear their hair or makeup, could threaten the expression of identity of any given individual. Perhaps this is the purpose of such targeting by el-Sisi's regime, to maintain a specific idealized picture of the 'new Egyptian', a scare tactic that would repress the outward expression of any unapproved sexuality and/or identity (by the regime itself). Artists and those who work in art fields are often observed as 'different' and presumed to be individuals who experiment and push the limits of society through their creative thinking and creative expression, but el-Sisi's regime appears to be stifling these aspects in order to perpetuate a conservative, religious, artist that adheres to the social, political, and gender norms of a nationalist society, which is not fundamentally authentic.

The intersectionality of identities that exist within any given individual is important for any culture as it creates variety, challenges, and experiences that differ among individuals that could encourage growth and empowerment among them as they can expand their circles of knowledge, education, culture, belief, and aspiration which can lead to a richening of the society in large (The University of British Columbia, 2021). Repressing or the intent to eliminate these intersectionalities does not erase them from existence, but it may encourage individuals to express them underground, or out of the view of the repressive groups in power, which could ultimately lead to the opposite of what the current regime seems to expect through their efforts: revolution, or a revolt to reclaim autonomy of their identity, which was part of the cause for the 2011 Egyptian Revolution (Council of Europe, n.d.; Clegg, 2019; Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

To challenge heteronormative constructs in modern Egypt is a dangerous endeavor, as simply

appearing different could land an individual in incarceration for an undetermined period where they would likely be harassed at the least and violated, tortured, or even killed at most (Clegg, 2019). Advocates and LGBTQIA people continue to find different ways to express their identities, risking incarceration, with the hopes that they will make a difference and there will ultimately be slight change of some sort, but at minimum tolerance of their existence, allowing them some freedom in the expression of their identities (Ameling, 2022; Human Rights Watch, October 2020).

The "Egyptian mosaic" that el-Sisi's plan focuses on is composed of historic and geographic elements: historic - Pharaonic, Coptic, Islamic, and Greco-Roman, and geographic - Arab, Mediterranean, and African (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). El-Sisi reframes the religious aspects as historic fact rather than a belief system, seemingly in an attempt to perpetuate a sense of belonging to nationality rather than religion, which complicates nationalism if citizens see themselves separate from others. This movement also makes Egypt as a whole seem "moderate, tolerant, and cooperative" from a foreign perspective (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Egypt's use of the geographical identities aims to project Egypt as an intercultural meeting place, attempting to center itself in the world, being a link between the Arab, African, and European countries, as well as highlight its trade routes connecting Africa, Asia, and Europe (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). All of these are positive aspects to focus on when discussing the Egyptian identity, and it is not negative to associate Egyptian identity with being a liaison to many continents and regions, however, the exploitation of these relations to paint Egyptians as a colorful melting pot would likely serve as a thin veil to the reality of their tolerance foreign morality – attempting to cover their human rights violations to merely appear tolerant and accepting, while many groups still suffer from the oppressive regime.

This veil extends to the religious relations within the country as well, as el-Sisi's regime tries to exemplify peace between the religions, when, in fact, there is ample existing discrimination (Minority Rights Group, 2013). "The Coptic component and the Islamic component, jointly and independently, served to emphasize Egypt's openness and religious tolerance," as seen through the World Youth Forum exhibition (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). In the same breath, el-Sisi proposes that Christianity remains an authentic part of Egyptian heritage, while also conceptualizing Egypt as an Islamic country, and acknowledging Judaism, but in an historic context rather than as a living religion (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). By framing religions in an historical context, it seems to suggest that they are not part of a living identity, ultimately undermining, for many, a major part of their identity. Though in doing so, I suggest that el-Sisi is attempting to minimize the influence of other religions on the Egyptian identity, as he claims that it is a Muslim nation, and further, in doing so provides means for Islamic morality education nationwide, which could further more severely affect LGBTQIA people, leading to even more human rights violations as a result.

5.1.2 Challenging heteronormative constructs of identity in the West

Throughout modern history art has been a catalyst for individuals to challenge social, cultural, and political norms, as well as present themselves authentically, acting as a means of activism for

change to those norms and bringing visibility to concepts that test opposing perspectives (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.). These challengers were often underrepresented or minorities, such as women artists, artists of color, LGBTQIA+ artists, disabled artists, and indigenous artists, who found ways to express themselves, their identities, or simply confront established social norms, but also included challenges to race, gender, and sexuality (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.). These concepts gained traction in the 1970s and 1980s with the term 'identity politics' transforming them into more politicized statements, but since has become less used and contemporary artists are using more nuanced terminology that helps people to understand the complexities of identity and their many intersections, rather than leaving each aspect as an individual identity (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.). The visibility of identities and their vindication remains a major issue for art and artists, but it has been changing.

Artists working in identity artwork to not only redress art as a privileged, white male, hetero-normative experience, both made by and for them, but reframed art as a method of prioritization of questions of identity, a correction of imbalance of the historically systematically disadvantaged individuals, their identities, and their art, which has previously been overlooked and under-appreciated (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.). Art created by and for marginalized people, including black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), has helped encourage discussions about the intersectionalities of identity and decolonization efforts throughout the art world, like museums, but also including in politics and society (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.).

> "…identity can be taken by artistic practices as an "object" to be worked upon, and can, as any other ideological material, be elaborated in specifically artistic ways," (Močnik, n.d.).

Rastko Močnik (n.d.) suggests that an identity, be it a cultural or artistic identity, is one that is reconstructed and adapts to the needs of the people, unless it presents a threat to national identity, seemingly to preserve stereotypes and beliefs about homogenized cultural groups. Močnik (n.d.) further explains that the commercialization of "cultural diversity" is prevented to thwart exploitation, however, in doing so legitimizes "state intervention into the field of culture" which Močnik compares to "simplified version of the 19th century folkloristic enthusiasm promoted by nationalist intellectuals." This concept of discrete nationalism and/or state influenced "culture" is similar to what is seen in contemporary Egypt under the el-Sisi regime, which could pose a genuine threat to the true expression of identity, cultural, sexual, or religious, as a government's ideals change with each new leader, as it should. But in the case of the United States of America under former president Trump, religious and political identities dominated discourse and threatened the health and safety of women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA+ people as Trump himself accepted, promoted, and perpetuated violence against the 'other' to boost his support, including the seating Christian conservatives as judges on the Supreme Court in an attempt to change established laws protecting women's right to safe legal abortion, as well as gay marriage rights, and other non-discrimination laws put in place to protect LGBTQIA people (Canellos & Gerstein, 2022; Mangan, 2022). These judges break through the very important barrier of the

division between church and state, using their Christian beliefs as the rule of law rather than actual morality, violating religious rights for a large number of individuals, including Jewish individuals (Gersen, 2022). The manipulation of the government by religious conservatives of any type has very real implications for vulnerable individuals, which may even violate human rights in the process (Human Rights Watch, 2022, January 13(b)).

While gay or non-binary identities are not constructed in rebellious opposition to the norm, they are in contrast to dominant, or binary, identities. Močnik (n.d., p.2) describes identities as 'vertical' and 'horizontal'. Vertical identities relate to "identitary community" that belongs to a larger, more powerful group or entity, while horizontal identities are "of the same register," referring to like groups, those that are similar in many or most aspects, but different in specific or few aspects, i.e., Catholic vs. Orthodox, Canadian vs. American – having similarities within the cultures, but still being distinctly different (Močnik, n.d., p.2-3). Both forms pose problems in the structure, as vertical identities tend to create hierarchies among groups, using language that distinguishes the groups into tiers, such as 'majority' or 'minority' like in the case of religious or ethnic groups, and in the horizontal identity which tends to homogenize distinct groups through commonalities (Močnik, n.d., p.3). These strategies of "identity sets'' are often used by governments to perpetuate "traditional notions of social relations", which often mask, sometimes thinly, chauvinisms and sexism as culture or tradition and the gay and non-binary identities challenge these concepts (Močnik, n.d., p.3).

Močnik (n.d., p.8) proposes that identity is not a process, but an effect, that it automizes social fields in modern individualistic societies, and further suggests that, "As [an] ideological mechanism, identity de-politicized social relations, tensions and conflicts – and shifts both social cohesion and social conflicts into the cultural dimension." Through this social negotiation, identity is reformed through de-politicization, and allows society to either consciously or subconsciously form a more realistic, modern cultural identity, as Močnik states, through "identity-entrepreneurship", and yet the identity is reconstructed in a way that reinstates a sense of politics within it, through the dialogue of art itself (Močnik, n.d., p.8).

> "…identity as ideological mechanism blocks or even destroys the political articulation of social processes and relations. As the artistic treatment of identities necessarily de-constructs identities and their mechanisms, it brings back the excluded political dimension. In this case, as probably in many others, the presumed contemporary "politicization" of artistic practices results from their consequent performance of specifically aesthetic operations of "secondary elaboration" upon the ideological material. For all that, artistic politicization has real effects," (Močnik, n.d., p.8-9).

Močnik (n.d., p.9) further implies that the replication of a material, supplementing and transforming it, naming it to fit within the parameters of what the modern visual arts have established, a specific work of art can, through practical procedure, replicate "the historical trajectory of modern artistic practices," allowing it to be both a modern work of art as well as

historical, modernizing the techniques and materials, creating a contemporary work "inscribing" the artwork with abstracted historical aspects (Močnik, n.d., p.9).

> "…the process reflexively practices, and in this way practically criticises, its own historical determination: the emancipatory project of modernism can *concretely*, and thus effectively, be carried through only beyond the modernist horizon," (Močnik, n.d., p.9).

Art that reinterprets materials and processes, that attempts to maintain historical elements, can challenge how the viewer perceives the artwork either spatially or in time, allowing the viewer to experience a conflict of perception in a modern work of art (Močnik, n.d., p.10-12). The play of perception and emotion can allow the viewer to challenge their own understanding of the work of art, but also of their own self in that moment.

"Historically in Western culture, art has served as an uncensored means of expression, in which nudity, erotica, and intimacy have been considered permissible," (Cowley et al., 2016) and this lack of censorship has allowed for genuine self-expression, which includes sexual and identity expression – the creation of art helps an individual understand themselves and the world around them (Gehl, 2021). Gehl (2021) suggests: Learning about various identities through art can be a powerful tool to help increase awareness, develop empathy, and make better sense of the world. This, Gehl (2021) proposes, is done through the process of making art and through viewing art made by marginalized people, particularly LGBTQIA+ artists. In an interview with a transgender, non-binary artist, Rae Senarighi, they explain that viewing art that represents transgender and gender non-conforming individuals helps to "unravel oppression and generate respect for the transgender community" (Gehl, 2021). Artists who make art that reflects marginalized communities and people may create a pathway to discovery and respect for them, and it seems this cannot be done through censorship of art or those creating that art. In his interview, Senarighi went on to further explain that "…the art room is important. It is often one of the only places where people on the margins see reflections of who they can be," also suggesting that while making art one reflects on who they are and how they hope to depict other trans or gender non-conforming people to represent them in the most authentic manner (Gehl, 2021).

Keith Haring "created a visual language of symbols and visual semantics designed to dialogue with his audience," using art as a "visual language" to convey difficult concepts and start uncomfortable conversations that were previously deemed taboo to speak openly about in the public sphere throughout the 80s and 90s (Landis, 2021). Jean-Michel Basquiat's work addressed still relevant issues such as race, poverty, class, and police brutality through his mostly graffiti works throughout the late 1970s and 80s (Landis, 2021). Tourmaline, a trans, queer, activist, filmmaker, editor, and writer, creates work primarily centering around trans individuals, documenting their lives and stories (Landis, 2021). All of these American artists, though very different, were all using their art, among many others, in an attempt to challenge the status quo, the government's policies, and society's perception of major issues confronting and affecting

marginalized groups. They have used their artwork to express themselves through it while also challenging the same government that upholds their right to do so. Freedom of expression through art has drawn attention to major social and political issues, confronting those who disagree, and through their work, rebelling against repressive and oppressive norms, stigmas, and policies.

5.1.3 Identities of contemporary, feminist, female artists

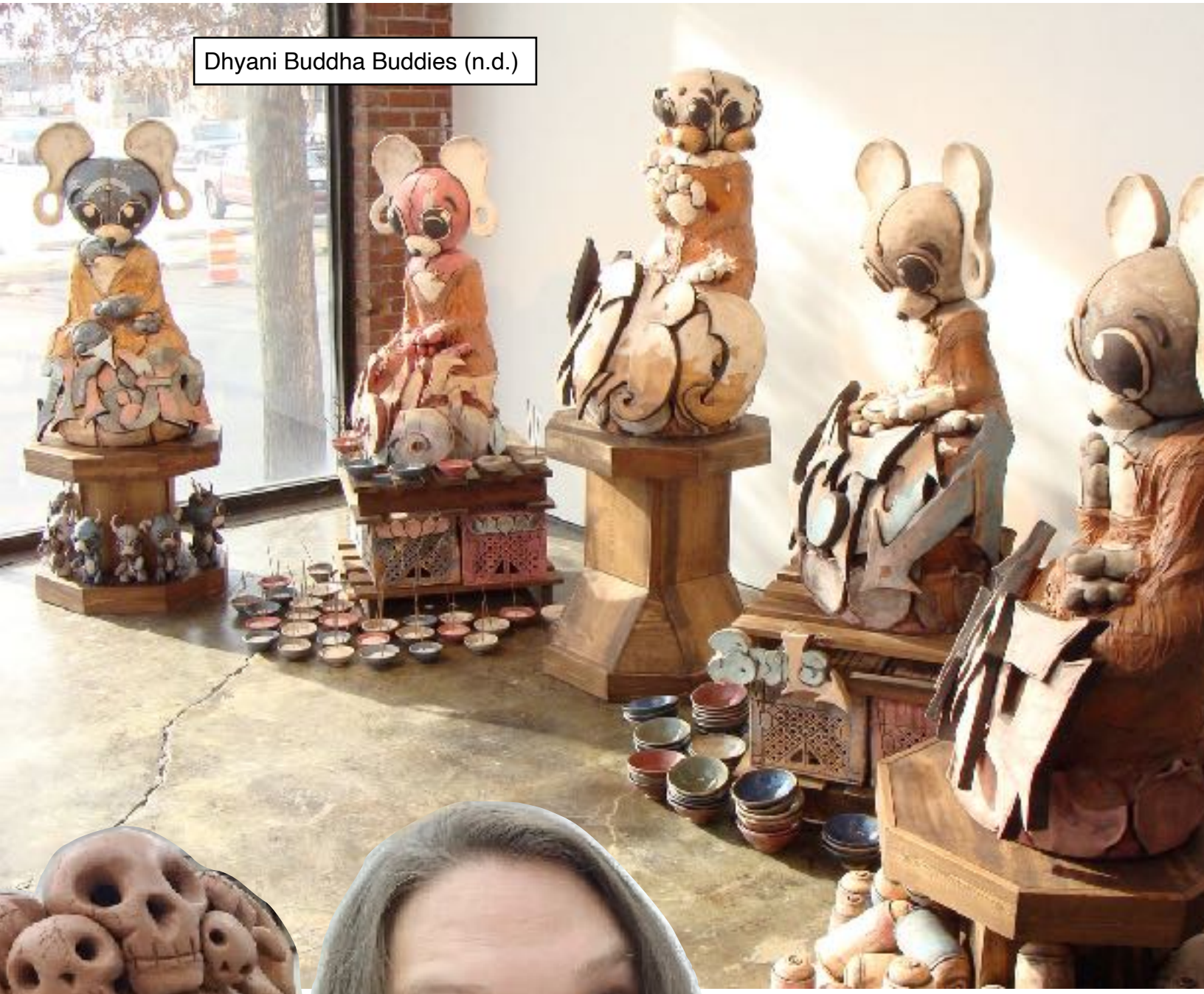
This section will look into the lives of two contemporary artists and their perspectives on gender identity in art, Heidi Schultz and Dr. Houreya El Sayed. Two separate and individual interviews took place between me and each artist. This section is based on those interviews conducted.

A. Heidi Schultz – interviewed in January 2019 online by Skype

The first artist this section will address is Heidi Schultz, an American, transgender ceramicist and educator. I knew Heidi before she transitioned as a very gentile, funny, somewhat composed or reserved person about their personal life, and very talented. Everyone waited around the trash bin for her to get her pots from the kiln, as she was known then for trashing any pot, mug, sculpture, or vessel that had practically any imperfection or simply because the color didn't come out as expected. I was one of her juniors that looked up to her and her skill, anxiously awaiting her discards. However, while this perfectionist attitude about her work was one to be admired, it could be seen as a veil into who she was hiding at the time.

Heidi's transition was gradual by her own design. As a Buddhist, and generally compassionate person, she was concerned about how her family would digest her transition. She provided her parents a letter beforehand explaining her motives, allowing them to process and begin navigating the process with her. She began hormone therapy and stayed with her parents throughout the transition so as not to shock them. She felt that for her parents to be with her through the process would help them understand that the core of who she is would remain the same and that simply the exterior would change. Heidi began filtering friends and loved ones, but didn't necessarily cut them out of her life, rather avoided "unsafe" people who could be problematic. As her transition began, she experienced a lot of anxiety about being out in public places, concerned about the reactions her presence might elicit, limiting how she interacted with the world around her, which she found discouraging, but said, "it came down to self-preservation," citing transgender murder rates and being targeted for being who they are.

Heidi found that in "the art world" people take changes such as her in stride and can manage to deal with the changes more easily. She expressed satisfaction with this situation, explaining that, in general, artists have a different mindset, which she supposed was due to exposure to diverse voices because of the fundamental openness of art itself. She said she hadn't encountered issues within the art world (with artists) that caused any significant strife, rather more frustration with the details and specifics of transitioning as an artist. She mentioned that one of the biggest hurdles was changing her domain name for her website and carrying over her existing followers to associate her and her work with her new identity. Curators seemed to redress her appropriately



Dhyani Buddha Buddies (n.d.)

Heidi Schultz

Schultz, H. (n.d.). Heidi Bobbette Schultz. http://heidi-schultz.squarespace.com/#/buddhabuddies2/

Anitya Buddha Buddy, 2018

Lord of the Black Land, (n.d.)

Sarasvati Buddha Buddy, 2015

Schultz, H. (n.d.). Heidi Bobbette Schultz. http://heidi-schultz.squarespace.com/#/buddhabuddies2/

without issue, but knew of her change. Heidi mentioned that artists are eccentric as it is, so it's "not a big deal" to change one's name, as she referenced pseudonyms artists might take, and people, especially artists, get used to it. She mentioned that though she has been an artist and a professor for a long time, it didn't make a huge impact, which she believes is because she's not "famous", and suggests that perhaps it would have been more difficult had she been, citing the Wachowskis (trans sisters that directed the Matrix films).

As an educator, she did not find it appropriate nor necessary to make a point to discuss her gender identity explicitly and again took a passive approach in being an example. While other professors might state their pronouns and the way they identify (cisgender) she stated that it never really bothered her if they asked, and that in her case, she felt that it was "pretty clear" and "people kind of know" so there wasn't much need for her to go out of her way, considering most people rarely say anything directly. She stated that as a ceramics professor, she likes to "stick to business" and remain professional, through this she expected to be taken seriously and set an example for trans people, but, as a professional educator, her role is to educate and set an example for her profession and skill to all students. She addressed having trans students over the years, explaining that her presence and success could be a positive example for them, showing them there is opportunity if you apply yourself. Heidi mentioned that it was important to be an example for trans students so they could see that things get better and prove that not everyone is conspiring against them, and that they too could go on to be examples for others as well, both in and outside the trans community..

As a ceramicist and educator at the university level Heidi explained that her experience transitioning was never really an issue, despite doing so in a conservative environment, though she admitted that the world of ceramics isn't a conservative one, there aren't a lot of diverse voices. She explained that she found herself more comfortable in a passive role when it came to outward gender expression, though she mentioned there has been opportunity to speak out. She explained that she would have no need to deny her gender identity if it came up, but that it was not discussed..

Heidi's "passive role" in the outward expression of her gender identity and transition is one that she holds true as an important aspect of her trans advocacy. She does not believe that her artwork has changed, rather improved throughout her life, which can be said for most artists who continue to practice with such consistency as Heidi. She believes that her gender is not expressed in her artwork, specifically her Buddha Buddies collection, as she attempts to create "genderless work", as they avoid sex and gender, and "they express something else" including street art, such as graffiti and spiritual expression, "but not gender". She explains that though her art does not reflect her own gender identity, being an artist has helped with her gender transition. Heidi elaborated on feelings that she says many trans people have about the expectations they grow up having, including being ashamed of who they feel they really are, as they don't match the people they had been groomed to be. She confessed regrets she had about not living her best life, going in circles about what to do and if or when she should face the reality of who she was hiding. She

continued to express doubt about who she would be if she transitioned, fear of comparison of her previous work with ideas she had for work she would make during and post transition, but was reassured that her work would be authentically hers. As she transitioned, she didn't question how it would be perceived anymore – as masculine or feminine work – but rather reflected her true self.

Through her process of art production as a ceramicist Heidi has found that some exhibitions have passed her by because she doesn't specifically make art that reflects her gender identity, but also, she explained, that "trans and religion don't go together" in the eyes of many. She wanted to emphasize that trans people are not invisible and trans artists aren't obligated to express their gender identity through their art; much like many other artists she wants her other intersectional identities to be reflected. However, she does believe that she is making a difference through exposure. As an educator and self-proclaimed "passive" role model she thinks that she is making a big difference in the lives of her students that may not otherwise interact or know trans people. Heidi believes that her passive, yet authentic role in their lives through exposure and interaction with her may change perspectives and preconceptions or misconceptions about trans people. Heidi suggests that this method allows others to accept and understand her (and other trans people) at their own pace, relieving anxiety and fears about them as their walls come down through their teacher-student relationship. Heidi also suggested that giving students space to be themselves in class will ultimately make them comfortable in class, which will allow them to fully express themselves without judgment, which she believes produces great artists who are capable of finding their voice through their art, like she did.

Heidi suggests that her art does not express her gender identity, but I would argue that her genderless *Buddha Buddies* express that and much more. Heidi herself explains her fear of truly expressing herself through her work as she was worried to change the 'look', which would make it lean to one direction or the other on the gender spectrum, however, in creating colorful, spiritual, genderless "buddies" she inadvertently expressed her desire for inclusion across the spectrum in a peaceful way. While the Buddies are sexless and genderless, they are colorful and expressive, something Heidi herself muted in her work leading up to her transition. She reflects on her gender transition as a gradual process, much like the evolution of the Buddha Buddies. And though the subjects do not transition from one gender to another, when compared with Heidi's previous work, there is a transition in mood and identity, one that feels authentic and expressive, perhaps representing the challenges of her own transition through a colorful, playful, collection of 'buddies'.

B. Dr. Houreya El Sayed – interviewed in April 2017 in Harem City, Egypt
Dr. Houreya El Sayed is a feminist, Egyptian, visual artist located in Harem City, within an artist's compound, in the 6th of October Governorate in Egypt. The Sawiris family, an investor family, and Egypt's richest business family, built Harem City through Orascom Housing Communities (OHC), their affordable housing project, which aimed to provide affordable, high-quality housing to low-income individuals, and in this case, a compound reserved for artists to continue to create and

produce art at reduced rates (Tryhorn, 2010; Orascom Housing Communities, n.d.). Surrounded by artisan neighbors in the small desert community, Houreya lives alone in one of the many humble artist apartments with her two cats. Her workshop is a few steps outside her front door. With a large electric kiln, many dusty shelves full of work, and a throwing wheel, she makes due as a living/working artist. Dividing her workshop and home into sculpture and ceramics it's hard to find the separation between the two as she primarily sculpts '*carrara*' (white marble) and throws porcelain, the dust from both is almost indistinguishable. Her life is her art and she is surrounded daily with what brings her joy – creating art.

She works daily on various unfinished sculptures and other commissioned works in progress. Houreya finds herself dedicated to creating art from ideas and influences she finds on the daily. Waking each day, she readies herself with two even braids wrangling in her dark curly hair, dressed in a *galabeya* (traditional Egyptian dress) over street clothes and gets to work on one of her ongoing projects. She can be found drinking tea as she hand-sands smooth handcrafted sculptural figures.

Houreya began, principally, as a painter in her undergraduate fine art studies. She felt a need to express herself and found that painting aided in doing so. After painting, she began sculpture and delighted in architectural sculpture. She soon moved on to installations, mainly individual sculptures of the human figure, which won her prizes for her work, both nationally and internationally. During this time, she worked closely with Egypt's Ministry of Culture. She encountered that within sculpture she could articulate her internal dialogue, but soon found herself looking for more ways to convey her ideas and concepts. Houreya found herself searching for ways of representing and simulating the soul. She felt that so many materials, like paint on canvas, stone, and ceramics, limited her ability to demonstrate the true essence of the soul. She experimented with various other materials intending to capture this essence, like light and smoke, but they all fell short. While exploring translucent and transparent materials she encountered glass. This intermediate between the hard materials she was accustomed to: stone and ceramics, and the materials that lacked tact: light and smoke, she found that glass was a material worth undertaking.

Houreya began learning glass blowing and molding from a simple man with a workshop. She took the opportunity to learn from someone who was experienced in the material, but soon found that with experience came repetition and monotony. Though the material was intriguing and sufficiently expressive, she found herself in a rut with a teacher that preferred her to make functional pieces that she could make a living from rather than "waste her time" with expressive works that were mere experiments with no monetary value, from his perspective. She was able to experiment independently later on, but while apprenticing she learned the fundamentals of the art of glassblowing. She is grateful for her experience, but finished her practice and began exploring glass blowing independently.

As an Egyptian woman living in or around Cairo, Houreya had grown up hearing the tales of

Dr. Horeya El Sayed, Harem City, Egypt, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

Unfinished Glass Work, Harem City, Egypt, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

Unfinished Glass Work, Harem City, Egypt, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

ancient Egyptian gods and goddesses. She felt a connection with her ancient ancestry while many others in her generation pursued a more modern acquaintance with it. Houreya began investigating her heritage, reading stories about the gods and goddesses of ancient Egypt. She began to understand herself (and her heritage) more and began to develop a greater connection with her work in a primitive way, according to her. After visiting many temples and tombs of ancient Egyptians, as well as going to the Museum of Cairo almost daily, sketching and taking in more and more of the ancient imagery, Houreya found herself yearning for more understanding, since, as a child she only ever learned Arabic in school and little to nothing about ancient Egypt. The ancient times of her ancestors were being ignored, for whatever reason, and though she found herself surrounded by history she was unable to interpret it. Using the imagery of ancient Egypt as inspiration for her work she decided to take it one step further and began studying hieroglyphs. Her classes at the Library of Alexandria afforded her the ability to read hieroglyphs, taking strict lessons for many months. Learning a lot from her college professor, she began making progress but was dismayed when she found her teacher to be a very religious, conservative, closed-minded individual, which she passively mentioned as sexist, for which she had little patience. With her patience thinly strung she abandoned her studies of the ancient hieroglyphs, but not without taking away much information. These lessons gave Houreya the opportunity to connect with her ancient past and vaguely read the pictorial characters of her ancestors. She found the stories, scripts, and other texts to be highly informative, beautiful, and inspirational.

Houreya's experience with her hieroglyph professor, among many others throughout her life, pushed her to try harder to achieve greater things in life, not only as an artist but also as a woman. She has always been a strong-willed, hardworking woman, even as a child, but developed thicker skin and a drive for equality among her peers in the art industry and within her community and culture. A self-proclaimed feminist, she says she "fights hard" when she is treated differently. She mentions overcoming many battles for which she had to push harder each time she was rejected or ignored, speak louder when she was told to be quiet, and to stand up for herself, and her abilities all of the time. Houreya explains that being a woman in Egypt is not easy because it is a male dominated society, but it is, as she puts it, "just as hard in the art world" for which there is less room for women. She recounts being overlooked, deemed incapable, precisely because she was a woman and the dismay she felt after each happening. She optimistically states: With work, nothing is hard. With the right steps (time), it becomes easy.

With great strides she continues to move forward and, as she explains, lets her "portfolio speak for itself." Houreya explains that she is a strong feminist because when "women have less rights than men they become afraid." With this concept in mind she often gives workshops and teaches young people, boys and girls, the same skills she has learned throughout her career. She finds the most joy in workshops with young girls where she promotes independence and encourages them to be creative and think differently. She often has to clarify religious expectations and misconceptions about creating art, specifically the human form, explaining to her students that creating art is not a form of '*harram*' (replicating the human form in a way that undermines their God's creation of man) and why, giving them the security to develop great works without fear of

persecution or condemnation. She believes that with the correct religious education they can be successful artists without betraying their religious beliefs and morals.

She acknowledges that she is a talented, independent artist and woman, knowledgeable in many areas of art, history, and culture, yet she is humble with a realistic, yet beautiful outlook on life. Houreya is a true beacon of feminism in a masculine, revolution-hungry culture.

Both of these women have shown strength, courage, and empathy throughout their artistic journeys in practice and as educators. They each show distinct identities and how they use their art as a means of both self-expression as well as tools of growth, individually as people and as artists. Women like Heidi and Houreya are examples of diverse artistic experiences and backgrounds who quietly make waves, confronting and challenging religious, cultural, and political norms, though they are not 'famous' they are using art both as a tool and a means to create change.

5.1.4 Cross-cultural expression of identity in death through funerary and memorial practices

As demonstrated in chapter four, *Death*, death is an opportunity for many to express who they believe themselves to be, regardless of the reality others see. We project and enact a variety of identities to different groups throughout our lives and in death, if we are lucky enough, we are given the opportunity to gather our loved ones and be remembered for all the identities we have had throughout our lives. If we are prepared, then perhaps we have meticulously selected how our final identity will be preserved and what it will look like. This concept, projection of our identity in death, is one that people across the world attempt to obtain. In chapter four I compared death and funerary practices in the United States and Egypt, demonstrating overlap of religious practices, as well as care and responsibilities in death, these aspects could be considered universal, especially when it comes to the desire to be remembered as we believe ourselves to be.

Notably, one must remember that the identities remembered by survivors of the deceased and the identities portrayed before or upon death are not necessarily rooted in fact, rather belief, presumably based on interaction and experience with or by the deceased. Survivors may carry emotional attachments of the deceased over long periods of time, and this paper does not attempt to pathologize this occurrence, rather acknowledge it and recognize it as part of the process of recognizing and perpetuating the deceased's identity (Unruh, 1983, p.340).

> "Death asks of us for our identity. Confronted by death, man is compelled to provide in some form a response to the question: Who am I?" (Fulton, 1964, p.359).

It is presumptively in human nature to want to be remembered as a great and wonderful person, admired by many, if not by all, but the identities we carry in our minds may be different than those held by others we relate to. Our personal identities are not always reflected in our actions and can be interpreted differently by others (Unruh, 1983, p.340). One may believe themself to be

a great leader in business, hardworking, reliable, and adaptable, and yet their family members or coworkers may understand them to be different or even opposite, such as an aggressive know-it-all, hyper focused on work (a workaholic), dismissive of family and their needs, indecisive or a people pleaser. Our perspective of identity is important and many of us carry different identities depending on the groups we are with (intersecting identities), and we are possibly most like ourselves when we are alone with ourselves, but maybe even then inflate our own egos perpetuating a false reality of our personal identity (Bolding, 2020). In death, we can only hope we are remembered for who we believe we are.

> "Dying people hope they will be remembered as good fathers, competent women, successful businessmen, creative artists, or peacemakers. Survivors are left with bundles of images, materials, objects, and wishes of the deceased. Their task is to make sense of this amalgam and selectively preserve certain identities of the deceased," (Unruh, 1983, p.340).

Unruh (1983, p.341) explains that in death, "Dying people and their survivors use a "hierarchy of prominence" to give some identities preference over others," creating strategies to preserve some identities, while ignoring or downplaying others, particularly when it may be beneficial to the survivors. To exaggerate personal or professional sacrifices of the deceased, often in an attempt to perpetuate one of their more acceptable or better identities, is one of these strategies (Unruh, 1983, p.341). Survivors often have an emotional attachment to the dying or deceased which affects their perspective of their memory or reminiscence of the dead/dying; this could be both positive or negative association (Unruh, 1983, p.341).

> "…survivors often maintain an attachment to the deceased that may never be completely lost; they continue to experience recurring images, thoughts, and memories of the deceased, though these usually decrease in intensity, emotional impact, and centrality to their daily lives… This emotional attachment is reinforced by actions on the part of people before they die and their survivors which preserve some of the deceased's multiple identities - often, long after death has occurred," (Unruh, 1983, p.340).

When people are aware of their passage of their time on earth, nearing death, they may begin to clarify aspects of their identities; they often "interpret and apportion their identities to survivors through the use of three strategies: solidifying identities, accumulating artifacts, and distributing artifacts," which allows them to be remembered on their terms (Unruh, 1983, p.342). Unruh explains that, "dying people begin to make sense of their lives by accentuating portions of their personal histories for which they wish to be remembered," which allows the individual to be explicit in their intentions and the purposes of these acts (Unruh, 1983, p.342). Through research of the elderly in Venice, California, it was found that their intentions were not to be remembered for their merits or great successes, rather through reminiscing their lives they searched for great shifts in perspective or fractures of beliefs that helped them to understand themselves and better

“communicate to others who they were” (Unruh, 1983, p.342). When questioned, Unruh discovered that the majority of these elderly mentioned aspects of their identities that could not be seen or counted – moral aspects of their identities – attempting to solidify them through “memos, letters, notes, journals, poems, and spontaneous reflections they planned to leave behind,” (Unruh, 1983, p.342).

> “When people think they are dying, they begin documenting pieces of their personal history through autobiographies, diary entries, and stories which leave portions of themselves with survivors,” (Unruh, 1983, p.342).

When people are dying, their possessions become “artifacts” of their life – objects that carry significance about their existence and perhaps their importance in life – and Unruh (1983, p.343) explains that this accumulation of artifacts of an individual is a way of preserving their identity over time; in which these artifacts can form what he calls an “identity kit” when combined with personal feelings about oneself that are “located, invested, and stored in material possessions.” Unruh (1983, p.343) suggests that these items can include “scrapbooks, photo albums, mementoes, souvenirs, and jewelry which symbolize personal histories (as well as shared biographies).” A variety of objects can serve as artifacts of the deceased’s identity, and often hold greater sentimental value or meaning for the survivors, however, the aspect of one’s identity is not lost, as Unruh (1983, p.344) suggests in an example he provides:

> An acquired rocking chair may be described to visitors as "the one my grandmother used for 60 years as she raised her family."Thus, the grandmother’s identity of caring mother may become intertwined with the object itself.

The distribution of one’s artifacts also invokes the expressed selection of the identities that should dominate, as Unruh (1983, p.344) explains, final testaments (Wills) not only help determine the deceased’s final wishes, but they help allocate and distribute their possessions (artifacts) as desired by the deceased. Wills and testaments often follow kinship lines, but when they deviate from the traditional hierarchy of prominence, which can lead to the reordering of multiple identities held by one individual (Unruh, 1983, p.344). An example of this could be when a husband or wife dies, instead of leaving their things to their children, who would be next in line for inheritance, the possessions would go to the surviving spouse, allowing their identity of husband or wife to take priority over being a parent, to some extent partially excluding the children from inheritance, at least immediately (Unruh, 1983, p.344). This signifies that the deceased felt more compelled to be identified as a generous partner (husband or wife) rather than be identified by any other identity they perhaps embodied, but perhaps this is more notable when the deceased or dying has bestowed certain items to specific people with noted obligations attached to the control and protection of the items in question (Unruh, 1983, p.344). One’s identity can endure through this process as well, as Unruh (1983, p.344) explains, “One obligation may be the survivor's desire to preserve and protect specific memories or images of the deceased - that is, to become a guardian of the deceased's persona.” In this situation the person receiving

the artifact may desire to perpetuate the identity of the deceased, or be obligated to in order to receive it. This process may divulge more authentic and "true" identities of the deceased as wills and testaments help disclose quiet preferences, some of which can be revealing; for example, someone who had quiet political beliefs or causes, who was engaged in philanthropy but did not want to appear to take sides may reveal their true beliefs, and in doing so, their "true" identities upon death, perhaps in the form of donations, however the same can be said for beneficiary exclusions, which may reveal more complex aspects of one's identity (Unruh, 1983, p.344-345).

Death provides a path for one's true identity to be made clear and honest in many ways, and as previously mentioned it also provides a way to project an identity that is more idealized rather than categorically true, however, death reveals a collective identity as well as intersectional identities of an individual via relation and experience with the deceased, so presumably the multitude of identities that one can encompass could also be contradictory. Memorials and remembrances of the deceased can call out hidden or less prominent identities, which could be both positive or negative in reference to the deceased, though memory and legacy seems to be the aspects that perpetuate the identity.

In chapter four, *Death*, I discussed funerary practices and some memorial practices as ways of remembering the deceased and will now examine more contemporary methods and rituals of not only memorial and remembrance, but those that also serve to perpetuate one's identity.

> "In and through rituals the deceased and the bereaved become anchored in a specific common culture, in a specific value system and world-view, which is expected to persist, regardless of the demise of its singular constituents. Besides being meant to show respect for the deceased and support for the bereaved, death rituals can consequently be regarded as tools for the construction of individual and collective identity," (Reimers, 1999).

Airbrushed commemorative T-shirts, known as "R.I.P. tees", are one method of memorialization that peaked in the 90s and became part of hip-hop fashion in the United States of America, but continue to today, still highly popular among urban people of color (Sanders, 2017). These R.I.P. tees are usually white cotton or polyester, crew-neck (standard fit) T-shirts with graffiti style designs, that often depict the deceased either figuratively, and/or have identifying factors that would be identifiers unique to the individual's personal identity (Sanders, 2017). Some of these images are hyper realistic, seemingly photographic, incorporated into surrealistic, multidimensional design (Sanders, 2017). Sanders (2017) explains that for some who use the shirts as a memorial artifact for the deceased, use the shirts also as an artifact itself, as if the deceased embody the T-shirt, embedded with their likeness, names and aliases, aspects of who they were, they carry a great meaning to those who wear them. They can be seen at funerals and memorials, as well as worn regularly as a reminder of both the individual, and often how they died (Sanders, 2017; May, 2012). Some of these memorials, especially among close communities, hold annual gatherings to remember the deceased, each year using a new design of the R.I.P. tees

Bluegrass Airbrush. (n.d.). *Rest in peace memorial airbrush shirt*. Bluegrass Airbrush. https://bluegrassairbrush.com/products/rest-in-peace-memorial-airbrush-shirt

as a way of almost imitating the deceased, and as the brother of one individual described, it the only way his children would know their father, so the T-shirts perpetuate his identity and the memorial itself supports it by offering important people in his life and the things he enjoyed in life (Sanders, 2017; May, 2012).

> "People employ rituals to demonstrate where they belong and who they are. But rituals are not merely ways to present an alleged identity… A ritual is not only a means to demonstrate a preferred identity, but actually engenders this identity," (Reimers, 1999).

Memorials and funerals are precise examples of making a ritual into an outward expression of identity, as the family members who organize it, along with any prior planning of the deceased, combine to create a collective identity of the individual and one that reflects the identities the individual wished to express, either to individuals or groups. In this section I will use my personal experience with my own mother's death as an example.

My mother, Arlene, passed away fairly young, at 64 years old. My mother was originally from New York state, but we had not visited since I was about four or five years old, and lived in Missouri. My mother had only kept in contact with her immediate family after leaving New York in her 20s, but we rarely saw them, and many of them had also left for other regions, namely Florida. When my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer and it was clear she would soon pass, I took on the role of social outreach (for the most part), connecting with her family, extended family, co-workers both in the United States and in India, along with current and old friends. I received messages from all over the United States and India with people telling me about their relationship to my mother, sharing memories and their perception of her as her friend, co-worker, and family. Many of the identities expressed were mixed as they came from both different social groups and time periods throughout her life. Old friends, family, or co-workers knew her very differently than those who knew her later in life. There were many commonalities among their descriptions, but the identities they shared about her were still quite distinct. I learned about these new identities from my aunts and uncle, and her cousins, as her identity evolved over time. It was fascinating to learn about her at different ages in her life, all of which I wish she would have shared more openly, the good and the bad. However, I discovered among my two brothers and I, we all had different versions of our mother in our minds as well. My mother had not made many funeral plans prior to her death, only ones she had prepared many years before, but none since she was diagnosed as she died just over a month after diagnosis, which left no time for her to prepare as she had been hopeful treatment would prevail. When it didn't and my brothers and I had to begin planning, while she was still alive, we were trying to decide on colors, flowers, artifacts for the memorial, etc. and we all had different information about her preferences, and while these can change over time, it was clear that she herself had been performing 'mother' differently to each of us. My older brother and his wife thought that her cowboy boots and saddle were most fitting for one aspect of the memorial, along with turquoise accents. I thought burgundy was more suitable as it was the color she most used and seemed to be drawn to, apart from that I had hoped to include more aspects of her adventurous life with her somewhat recent travels and her

love of rock music. My younger brother thought it more fitting to focus on her love of the sea and include her collection of seashells and use lighter colors, such as blues and greens. None of us were wrong in our pursuit to bring out aspects of her identity, but the identities that she perhaps shared most with each of us was different. The colors and flowers that we 'knew' she loved were perhaps the colors she associated with us rather than the contrary. She had created micro-identities with each of us.

Upon her death we had to distribute her possessions, which is complicated for many reasons, but we all have sentimental attachments to different objects, for different reasons, and not one is necessarily more important than another. Through this process we discovered that with each of us she had a shared interest, one that was unique to each of us that the other did not share. It was something that only we shared with her and not between us. I discovered that my older brother collected coins with my mother – something I only vaguely knew about as a child – they also discussed ranch life in Texas (where my brother lives and where we were all born), and guns. My mother and I both loved horses, but we mostly admired and designed jewelry together, which my brothers were very aware of, though we had many other hobbies, such as gardening, discussing and sharing music, and following our hometown baseball team. My younger brother and my mother often discussed parenting as he was a new father at the time, they talked often about hunting different kinds of game as well. Our mother made efforts to connect with each of us individually and find something we could enjoy together and, in that way, she expressed different aspects of her identity with us on an intimate level. The stories about my mother from her family were equally as interesting to me, her coworkers knew her in almost an opposite light than we did as her children – very focused, diligent, calming or reassuring, and somewhat reserved, while her family knew her as unfocused, somewhat idle and careless, sometimes erratic with a short temper, and blunt and open. Her death revealed so many facets of her identity that I am so grateful to have learned through her death. The micro identities she created – a western ranching woman, a jewelry designing, rocker, baseball fan, and sea-loving parental guide – were subdued identities she shared with us intimately, and that she had talked about to friends.

At her memorial(s) we attempted to represent her authentically, not referring to her hobbies, but talking about who she was in our eyes and the minds of others who knew her; we did this through using photos of her engaging in those activities related to her and aspects that she embodied. Photos and stories were the best examples of expressing her identity. Storytelling and photographic documentation connected everyone to who she really was, as we could all find parts of those identities she shared with others in our own experiences with her. The differences in the identities she expressed individually, helped to create a collective identity collage. While they were all a little different, they helped us to see her in all her complex identities.

> "Different cultures and different religions employ a variety of rituals. Funer-ary rituals in Islam are not the same as funerary rituals in Catholic Christianity.Rituals performed by Muslims from Bosnia depict similarities with, but also considerable deviations from, those of Muslims from Iran. Similarly, it is possible to delineate a common framework

Memorial of Arlene Wilshusen, United States of America, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

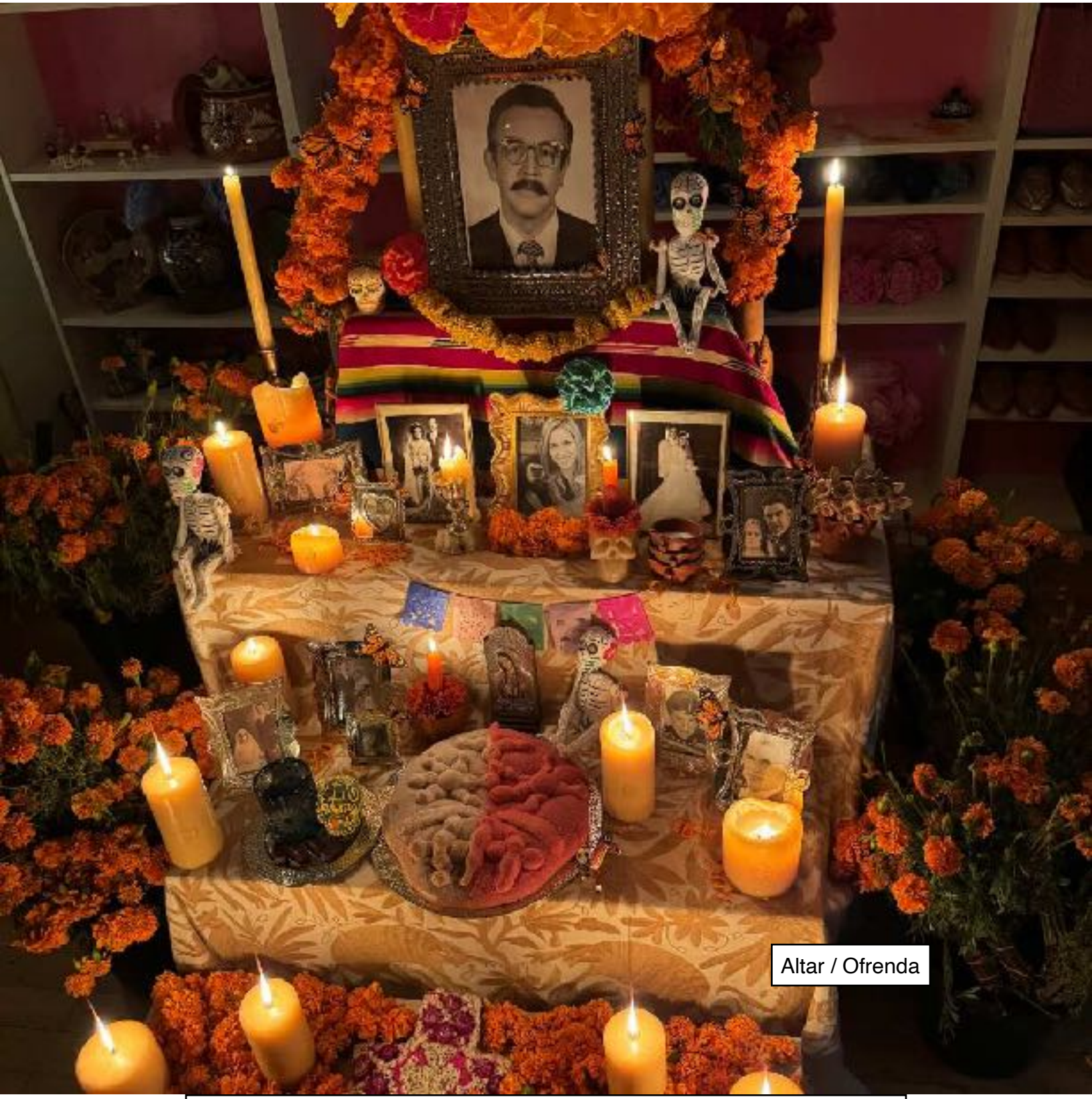
> for Catholic funerals, yet within this frame recognize multiple regional, national and ethnic differences. How people choose to make their last farewell, and how they choose to remember their dead can therefore be regarded as part of their individual and collective self-presentation," (Reimers, 1999).

The process of death and burial is similar across North America despite differences in the cultures, particularly contrasts between Mexico and the United States, but Mexico has some rich memorial practices carried over from their indigenous roots that continue today among many as tradition (Ward, 2021). This thousands year old tradition and celebration began with the Aztecs, Toltec and other Nahua people who believed that it was disrespectful to mourn the deceased, rather the dead, still members of the community, should be kept alive through memory and spirit (Ward, 2021). On November first, The Day of the Dead, the dead returned to Earth to be among their living family, and which carried over to November second; this celebration is a "mash-up of pre-Hispanic religious rites and Christian feasts," (Ward, 2021).

At the heart of this celebration is the deceased, which is celebrated with an altar built both in homes and cemeteries, used not for worshipping but for welcoming the dead back among the living (Ward, 2021). These altars are full of offerings, usually pertaining to the food and drink enjoyed by the deceased, and any given altar can host several deceased, usually including their photo and a candle for each one (Ward, 2021). The altars are covered with marigold flowers and petals, which are often scattered from the altar to the gravesite, while copal incense is burned to purify the area around the altar (Ward, 2021). This elaborate celebration of the dead includes calaveras, which while it means "skull" it also is another name for short stories or poems that poke fun at the living, called "literary calaveras" (Ward, 2021). These literary calaveras are a way for the living to perhaps remember their deceased and make light of the ways in which we cope, even making political and social commentary about what the living experience that the dead no longer have to (Ward, 2021).

During this festival, special bread is made, "pan de muerto", eaten by the family and any guests that come by, and many children eat candy skulls, brightly colored and decorated (Lopez, 2021). Artist Diego Rivera created a mural of a lithographer and social commentator at the time, José Guadalupe Posada, donning a large feminine hat which he named Catrina, called "Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Park," which has since become a major symbol of the holiday (Ward, 2021). Posada had commented "we are all skeletons," signifying that beneath our man made trappings we are all the same, and with this commentary and Rivera's mural, the skeleton Catrina now dominates the costumes during this festival, with many painting their faces and dressing in traditional Mexican dresses, donning the same style hat (Ward, 2021).

> "Four strategies enable survivors to preserve an emotional attachment: reinterpreting the mundane; redefining the negative; continued bonding activities; and sanctifying meaningful symbols.," (Unruh, 1983, p.345).



Altar / Ofrenda

Navarro, L. (n.d.). *What is a day of the dead altar (Ofrenda) and how is it prepared?*. Mexico In My Pocket. https://mexicoinmypocket.com/blogs/blog/how-to-build-a-day-of-the-dead-altar

Pan de muertos

Navarro, L. (n.d.). *What is a day of the dead altar (Ofrenda) and how is it prepared?*. Mexico In My Pocket. https://mexicoinmypocket.com/blogs/blog/how-to-build-a-day-of-the-dead-altar

This celebration includes remembering the dead in a beautiful altar, feasting with loved ones, remembering and celebrating their deceased loved ones, and while for some it has been converted to have more religious meaning, its essence remains the same. Mexicans have utilized the four strategies Unruh (1983, p.345) suggests to preserve emotional attachment.

> "Man's unconscious is convinced of its own immortality, yet at the same time one finds one of its motive forces to be the pursuit of death itself. The coexistence of these two incompatible elements within the unconscious of man provides an inherent contradiction in human existence," (Fulton, 1964, p.361).

Fulton explains that humanity both believes it is immortal – by believing we may either continue living in another realm or that our entity can carry on through our memory in a loved one – and yet actively searches out death, as a post-Christian attitude of students, the mentally ill, or terminally ill (Fulton, 1964, p.362-363). Unruh (1983, p.345) describes the ordinary and mundane as how an individual told jokes, ordered wine at a restaurant, dealt with children, or how they left clothes lying around the house, explaining that, "Reinterpreting the mundane emphasizes how survivors sift through the deceased's life to preserve – and create – identities." The "little things" we experience on a daily basis can also trigger reminiscences of the deceased, often while performing a certain task or being in a certain place, just as much as when we expect a reaction that does not materialize – like that of shout from a parent, or the nagging tone of a partner. These are examples of what Unruh (1983, p.346) explains as "redefining the negative", as not turning something once bothersome into a positive, rather cherishing the memory as part of their identity, and "empathizing its function". Through shared activities we can also create a sense of bonding: Upon death, these activities may stimulate memories, thoughts, and images of the deceased, and the accompanying identities (Unruh, 1983, p.347). Providing an activity, event, process, or simple act can create this sensation and connect with the identity of the deceased through this shared action. These routes, acts, or activities can become actions that make the survivor feel as though they are in communion with the deceased, but even more common is transforming regular objects into meaningful symbols of the deceased (Unruh, 1983, p.347). "Some survivors imbue a small number of objects with meanings symbolic of "special" or exemplary identities of the deceased," and these can range from places of birth to needlepoint projects, becoming embodiments of the identities of the deceased, while photographs "may become objects of worship" or felt communication with the dead", with a small number of objects becoming sanctified in such a way that they would be mourned if they were lost or destroyed (Unruh, 1983, p.347).

There are many ways that we both find and express our identities in death, and how our identities are perpetuated after our death, in positive or negative ways, however it can be said that these ways are creative both in mind and execution. We express our identities throughout our lives, creating a lasting impression on those with which we often interact, and further, nearing or upon our deaths, we are given the opportunity to be remembered for who we were in life, as we expressed ourselves – in the way we lived, what we made, and how we dressed – and through

those same things we leave behind, as well as what is created in our memory.

5.2. Ancient expressions of identity-associated expectations

As discussed in reference to the tombs of the ancient Egyptians, tombs were one of the main manners in which to express oneself ultimately, both authentically and grandiosely to an extent.

5.2.1 Pictorial – The tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep

Among the elite and upper classes, tombs were the main way to express oneself for all eternity, so it was necessary to be accurate, if not somewhat embellished. Because tombs were painted or, if funds available, engraved with shallow raised relief, they offered an exquisite look at the self-expression of these individuals in the way they wished to be remembered for all eternity. One Fifth Dynasty tomb in Saqqara has proven to be at the center of controversy – the tomb of two royal manicurists, Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep – a joint tomb of these two men with questionable iconography and texts (Salvo, n.d.; Atkinson, 2021).

These two men were considered “royal confidants”, as they are described in hieroglyphs, and their tomb, of high class, depicts the two men embracing and holding hands in various situations throughout the tomb iconography (Salvo, n.d.; Atkinson, 2021). The manner in which they are depicted is usually reserved for husbands and wives as it is intimate portrayal, particularly one where they are embracing and their noses touching, “the most intimate pose allowed by canonical Egyptian art,” (Salvo, n.d.). The argument about their depiction comes into play with the evidence that supports their coupledom as homosexual relationship who had wives and children and the contrary that supports the likelihood that they were twin brothers wanting to be together in life and in death (Salvo, n.d.; Atkinson, 2021).

The exact relationship of the two men is not explicit, which is why there is so much debate around this tomb, as they may be the first recorded same-sex couple in history (Salvo, n.d.). Since the evidence of the habitual depictions of husband and wife posed together suggests this relationship was more than kinship, we can examine other factors that provide supporting evidence of them being a same-sex couple – Khnumhotep is often placed in the position of woman in usual tomb depictions, one of such he is smelling a lotus flower – and he is one of only three men depicted doing so in all of the discovered tombs of the Fifth Dynasty (Atkinson, 2021). Since homosexuality was accepted and practiced during this period, we could practically assume their sexual identity as such, or at least as a bisexual/polyamorous one, especially with no supporting texts explaining the nature of their relationship, and considering social attitudes would have accepted this behavior (Atkinson, 2021).

Some scenes of the tomb depict the men with their wives and children, which would have fit with the majority of the other tombs of the time, but usually not in a shared tomb setting, such as this one (Atkinson, 2021). Considering that these men held high positions that put them in direct contact with royalty at the time, they would have had respectable positions that they would want to pass down to their own sons, and the only way to do so was to marry a woman; and since

The tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (n.d.). *A virtual tour through the tomb of the two brothers*. Discover Egypt's Monuments - Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. https://egymonuments.gov.eg/news/a-virtual-tour-through-the-tomb-of-the-two-brothers/

The tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (n.d.). *A virtual tour through the tomb of the two brothers*. Discover Egypt's Monuments - Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. https://egymonuments.gov.eg/news/a-virtual-tour-through-the-tomb-of-the-two-brothers/

The tomb of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (n.d.). *A virtual tour through the tomb of the two brothers*. Discover Egypt's Monuments - Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. https://egymonuments.gov.eg/news/a-virtual-tour-through-the-tomb-of-the-two-brothers/

women often did not work in the same way that they can today, they needed a man to support them, so they sought financial support, which provided them safety (Robbins, 1993, p.56). With women eager to be a wife of a royal (in their harem), of an elite person, or scribe, this job too, would have provided the woman with security for life, so it is not absurd to think that perhaps the wives of Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep married for financial stability and security, while agreeing to allow their husbands to maintain their relationships with each other, while it could very well have been a surrogacy relationship with the wives (Atkinson, 2021). These possibilities are not necessarily off the table considering the status of the men and the need for women to be taken care of. Furthermore, inscribed at the entrance of the tomb, is the phrase: "JOINED IN LIFE AND JOINED IN DEATH," a phrase that one would use for married couples in modern times, to expression their union, or finding each other and coming together, rather than the alternative narrative of being born together (as twins) (Salvo, n.d.; Atkinson, 2021).

Double entendres could also explain some of the miscommunications when interpreting texts from the past to the present as “brother” could most certainly mean, cousin, close friend, or even partner, as they do today in many countries (HarperCollins Publisher Ltd., n.d.). The expression of identity was not black and white in Ancient Egypt, just as it is not today, and while generalizations can be made for the period, making heteronormative assumptions undermines the rich openness of Ancient Egyptian culture.

5.2.2 Sculptural - Statues of Queen/King Hatshepsut

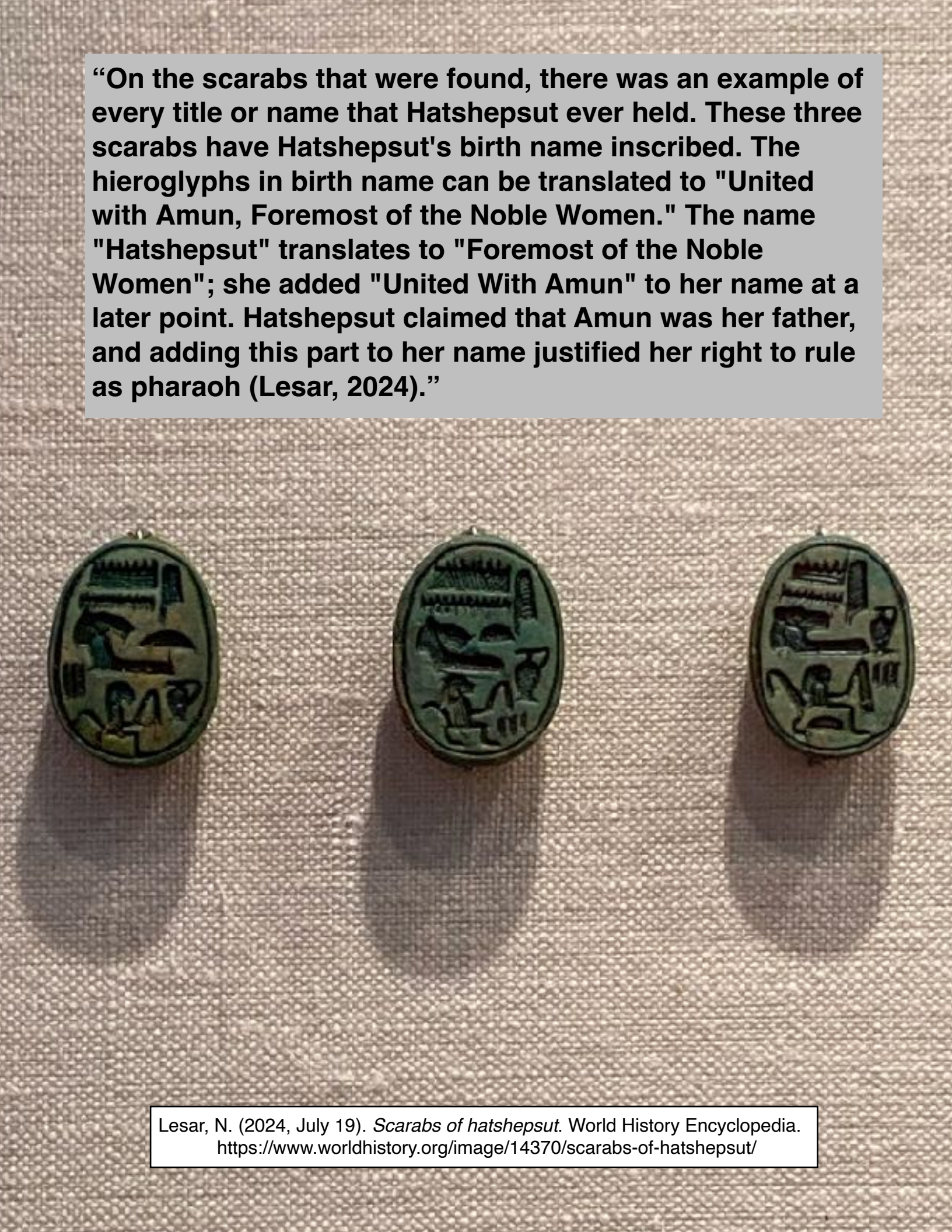
Hatshepsut, the queen, and later king, of Egypt depicted herself in a variety of ways through sculpture and because she transitioned from titles of “queen” to “king” depicting herself masculinely up until her record ends, I will further refer to her using they/them pronouns. Throughout the regency and co-regency of queen Hatshepsut through their transition to kingship and masculinization of their own accord, Hatshepsut was deeply religious and honest with themself. They were clear to document their time in power throughout the different stages, being careful to maintain linage to their father Thutmose to be able to maintain power and control of Egypt (Robins, 1993, p.45). Hatshepsut grew into their role as a true leader of Egypt by doing great things to maintain and build Egypt’s wealth and power, and through this and other campaigns they were able to build trust among the people allowing them to be more and more clear and, perhaps, honest about their true identity (Robins, 1993, p.47). They created, constructed, and rehabilitated great works around the kingdom and with each personal realization Hatshepsut documented it by either changing existing statues or obelisks, or erecting new ones to replace them. Hatshepsut was a forward thinker and progressive in their own right (Robins, 1993, p.47).

Throughout their time as regent, as they raised their step-son, heir to the throne, to eventually be King; Hatshepsut felt as though they were the rightful heir and should themself be King, however, no queen could be king, only ‘King’s Wife’ (Robins, 1993, p.45-46). As Thutmose III grew up and was coming of age where he should be receiving the throne, Hatshepsut was not yet ready to yield power and decided to name themself co-regent, making Thutmose III the other co-regent,

Statue of Hatshepsut and identifying plaque, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Statue of Hatshepsut kneeling in offering, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

“On the scarabs that were found, there was an example of every title or name that Hatshepsut ever held. These three scarabs have Hatshepsut's birth name inscribed. The hieroglyphs in birth name can be translated to "United with Amun, Foremost of the Noble Women." The name "Hatshepsut" translates to "Foremost of the Noble Women"; she added "United With Amun" to her name at a later point. Hatshepsut claimed that Amun was her father, and adding this part to her name justified her right to rule as pharaoh (Lesar, 2024).”



Lesar, N. (2024, July 19). *Scarabs of hatshepsut*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/image/14370/scarabs-of-hatshepsut/

allowing Hatshepsut to continue to rule while providing Thutmose III more time to learn the ways of the kingship (Robins, 1993, p.46). Hatshepsut was, at this time, slowly masculinizing themself, first in name only, changing their name from Hatshepsut to Maatkare; other progressive changes followed, such as the wearing of the King's crown of Egypt, though not yet declaring themself King (Robins, 1993, p.23; Cooney, 2015, p.155; Wilson, 2006). Soon after, Hatshepsut began wearing traditionally male garments, altering statues, obelisks, and reliefs to depict themself as King, rather than Queen, King's Wife, or God's Wife of Amun (Robins, 1993, p.50). From this moment on, all works created or constructed bore the name of King Hatshepsut (King Maatkare) allowing them to live in their masculinity more authentically through their masculine iconography going forward, but also through altering previously made sculptures (Robins, 1993, p.51-52; Wilson, 2006).

Hatshepsut made sure that their lasting legacy identified them in a way that was accurately depicted (Cooney, 2015, p.155, 165-167). In many sculptures and reliefs Hatshepsut's depictions were stylized to that of any other king before them, so there would be no questions about their identity (Ikram, 2015, p.109; Cooney, 2015, p.155, 166). They were sure to mask their feminine qualities as they no longer, or perhaps never, identified with them. Ancient Egyptians were quite open as a society, as previously mentioned they did not find homosexuality problematic, rather they embraced it as a part of normal life, but they had not seen a queen transition to become a king (Atkinson, 2021). While this could have been upsetting or confusing for many to see, from texts describing this period, there doesn't seem to have been issues with revolt or contestation of this event, though it was a progressive one, which perhaps allowed civilians to adjust slowly to the concept; and since Egypt was thriving economically, there had been no plagues or famine, people could believe that these actions were accepted by the gods, because had they not been, surely there would have been punishments from the gods in the aforementioned ways (Cooney, 2015, p.163).

Hatshepsut both as queen and king, provides examples of their greatness and authenticity. Through courageous acts for both power and identity, even if self-serving, challenged the status quo and changed it drastically. Hatshepsut proved to be not only an intelligent, determined, courageous queen, but an equally endowed king, who, in the end, fairly relinquished power to the next rightful King of Egypt, and in doing so changing the lives of many, through example, even thousands of years after their death.

5.2.3 Relief- Akhenaten's stelae reliefs and statuary

Akhenaten (Amenhotep IV) was the son of Amenhotep III, husband of Nefertiti, and ruled in a controversial period, known as the Amarna Period, where he denounced all other gods in Egypt, except for Aten, the sun disc god, creating the first ever documented monotheistic religion (Mark, 2014).

Akhenaten declared himself to be an actual god incarnate, closing all other temples and suppressing religious practices; as Barbara Watterson describes the time as: "a very serious

Stela of Akhenaten & colossal statue of Akhenaten, The Egyptian Museum in Cairo, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

matter, for these institutions played an important part in the economic and social life of the country. Religious persecution was new to the Egyptians," (Mark, 2014). Ultimately, Akhenaten ceased to perform his duties as king, as he believed them to be beneath him, while his, "religious reforms was the neglect of foreign policy," (Mark, 2014).

As an actual god incarnate, he believed he was above all and moved the capital of Egypt to virgin land from Thebes to a new city of his own creation which came to be known as Amarna (Mark, 2014). In this new city, with the new religion in place, Akhenaten and Nefertiti ruled as deities, crossing the city, as the sun crossed the sky each day, projecting their divinity in all the things they associated with, including their art. Unlike previous dynasties, with specific stylized depictions of gods and kings, Akhenaten's portrayal of he and his family were distinct (Mark, 2014). The relief stelae around Amarna did not adhere to typical depictions, instead they depicted he and the family with elongated necks, which some Egyptologists suggest Akhenaten could have suffered from Marfan syndrome – "People with Marfan syndrome are usually tall and thin with unusually long arms, legs, fingers and toes," (Mayo Clinic, 2022) – as they are depicted with not only elongated necks, but thin legs, arms, and long slender fingers (Mark, 2014), but Egyptologist Zahi Hawass has since ruled it out stating that Akhenaten preferred the androgynous form as he believed Aten (sun disk god) created him (Akhenaten) as a reflection of both men and women: 'you are the man ... you are the woman' (Awad, 2010). It was uncommon for royalty to be depicted realistically, as they were meant to be gods incarnate, and Akhenaten was revealing himself to be an actual god, perhaps he believed that his distinguishing features set him apart from others and this was further proof of his divinity, representing both sexes.

Depictions of primarily himself with these features, some also include his family with the same features, though it would not have affected Nefertiti, however, this may have been an attempt to further deify her and legitimize it. Another distinguishing aspect about Akhenaten's features is his figure; as mentioned, most statuary and relief portrayals depict the king in a very masculine and rigid way, somewhat muscular, with only perhaps a slight belly, in powerful stances. Akhenaten, on the other hand, was often portrayed more voluptuously with wider hips, a more pronounced belly, lower on the abdomen, and a curved waist. This was paired with the aforementioned features likened to that of Marfan syndrome – elongated limbs – which made him look somewhat feminized as his features were softer than those of kings before him. He rejected other styles depicting him and his family (Mark, 2014).

Additionally, Akhenaten was often pictured with his family or wife in intimate settings, such as in the Stele of Akhenaten showing them enjoying each other's company (Mark, 2014). "Images of pharaohs before and after this period depict the ruler as a solitary figure engaged in hunting or battle or standing in the company of a god or his queen in dignity and honor," (Mark, 2014). In the case of Akhenaten, he wanted to be depicted as "all-powerful, all-loving, deity, supreme creator and sustainer of the universe," which included familiar depictions of him being a caring father and husband (Mark, 2014).

Those these are perhaps idealized versions of reality, they do depict more authentic settings and portraiture of royalty, deities incarnate, which previous depictions would have hidden imperfections, deformities, or otherwise unmasculine qualities, where Akhenaten embraced them, allowing his supposed deformities to set him apart from other rulers, projecting authenticity through his statuary and relief stelae.

5.2.4 Textual – 'Literature' on papyrus and the autobiography

Some of the first examples of 'literature' are the Offering Lists and autobiographies, though they are not actual examples of what we consider literature today, they were, in fact, examples of the writing system at play (Mark, 2016). The Offering Lists were instructions inscribed on the walls of the tomb that would provide a detailed list of the goods needed by the deceased, including food, drink, and other offerings (Mark, 2016). The autobiography was actually written postmortem, but was always written in the first person as the deceased and came to be known as *Catalogue of Virtues*; Egyptologist Miriam Lichtheim explains:

> "The basic aim of the autobiography - the self-portrait in words - was the same as that of the self-portrait in sculpture and relief: to sum up the characteristic features of the individual person in terms of his positive worth and in the face of eternity," (Mark, 2016).

The general purpose of this autobiography was to accentuate the good the person had done in their life, proving their worth and providing proof of their worthiness to be remembered for eternity, not unlike eulogies and obituaries performed today (Mark, 2016). Furthermore, it provided evidence of the moral character of the individual, reflecting the ethical standards of society, demonstrating that the deceased had adhered to those standards; some were brief, perhaps intending not to perpetuate falsehoods about the deceased, especially if they were not the most upstanding citizen, while others were long and detailed inscriptions, like that of the *Autobiography of Weni*, that was inscribed on a large monolithic slab, written in prose (Mark, 2016). These transformed into what were later known as the Pyramid Texts, which were initially reserved for royalty, and served the same purpose of describing and accentuating their virtues throughout the entirety of their life, and many included their journey into the afterlife as well as creation myths (Mark, 2016).

Literature advanced through the early dynasties and by the Middle Kingdom hieroglyphs had reached their height, known as Middle Egyptian. Rosalie David, Egyptologist, explains about the literature of this period:

> "The literature of this era reflected the added depth and maturity that the country… New genres of literature were developed including the so-called Pessimistic Literature, which perhaps best exemplifies the self-analysis and doubts that the Egyptians now experienced," (Mark, 2016).

While the complexities and depths of literature had changed over time, it grew in a way that reflected life at different levels in society, expressing strife of the working class, doubts of the religious, questioning power dynamics, and expressing satire regarding all aspects and classes of life (Mark, 2016).

> "Works such as *The Admonitions of Ipuwer* were interpreted by later Egyptologists as accurate accounts of the chaos and disorder of the era preceding the Middle Kingdom but actually, if it were not for the freedom of exploration and expression in the arts the First Intermediate Period encouraged, the later scribes could never have written the works they produced," (Mark, 2016).

Self-expression through art throughout Egyptian history allowed for the diverse self-expression and social criticism that occurred in later dynasties; it paved the way for common people to be documented, their situations validated, and their identities recognized and accepted as relevant in the afterlife (Mark, 2016). The literature of Ancient Egypt became another tool of self-expression.

5.3. Contradictions to societal norms and the lack of representation in Egyptology

Egyptologists would have us believe that all the discoveries that have been found fit the standard accepted narrative of social norms of the period by assuming that all oddities must, in fact, revert back to heteronormative structures, leaving no room for non-binary representation in the funerary art, tombs, and literary works. They assume heteronormative concepts to be the only acceptable form of expression at the time, based on little evidence, while ignoring clearer signs of the contrary. It is very presumptive and seemingly unrealistic to assume that all speculative evidence of homosexuality must have a contrary heteronormative reasoning. Given the current regime and the laws surveillance the prohibit the outward expression of non-heterosexual identities it is no wonder why there is pushback among Egyptian Egyptologists, and perhaps among more well-known Egyptologists, as el-Sisi has shown he and his regime will silence these people and for foreign Egyptologists, prohibit entry into Egypt due to supporting such evidence. One must look at this situation from both a political-academic and social-academic perspective with concern for the risks involved. However, the lack of diversity in Egyptology has certainly played a role in not addressing and perhaps ignoring non-heterosexual evidence.

> "Ancient Egyptian history is often distorted to reflect the culture and mores of contemporary Egyptian or Arab society. In many cases, history or archaeology lecturers have considered such representations of homosexuality as offensive to their conceptions of history, thereby attempting to erase large swathes of antiquity," (Fathi, 2017).

Homosexual content exists in the mythology of ancient Egypt, specifically between gods Horus and Set, and evidence leads us to believe that Ancient Egyptians were familiar with the practice of homosexuality as it was accepted as a cultural norm (Fathi, 2017). Some of the physical artifacts

that support these claims are “surviving papyri, statues, and tombs, dating back to the different Egyptian dynasties,” including both female and male homosexuality, though the evidence for lesbianism is sparse (Fathi, 2017). What is warned against and somewhat demonized is infidelity, regardless of sexual preference; in one account a woman was berated for having a dream about sexual intercourse with a married woman, where in which the infraction was not that the dreamed act was with a woman, rather that it was with a married person (Fathi, 2017).

Homosexuality was not demonized in Ancient Egypt, but also not celebrated, if anything it was just as mundane as heterosexuality, though served no purpose (Robbins, 1993, p.72), the purpose of marriage was procreation for the man and support and safety for the woman. Men were eager to ‘marry’ to have children, as they could be beneficial to the family, and if the individual was of high standing, elite status, or simply had a revered or important job, they would want to pass that position on to their son (Robbins, 1993, p.111-113). A homosexual relationship did not produce offspring and was therefore considered by most to be disadvantageous for the inability to produce an heir to a position or title within the family (Robbins, 1993, p. 111-113).

The expression of one’s sexual identity was not of importance in the greater scheme of life in Ancient Egypt, and the act of self-expression was somewhat limited with regards to other aspects of identity, such as one’s profession (professional identity) which equated to social standing in many cases, but one’s sexuality was less of a concern (Robbins, 1993, p.111-113). Misconceptions of how gender or sexual orientation was represented and later misinterpreted by Egyptologists seems to have hindered understanding of Ancient Egypt’s advanced society with some believing that homosexuality didn’t exist prior to Sodom and Gomorrah, but it is clear from cultural artifacts and literature that this is not the case, so demonization for this aspect of identity is baseless – it was not alien to the culture nor deviant (Fathi, 2017).

Egypt as the center of a great and powerful empire was visited by many foreigners to Egypt, not all of whom perhaps condoned homosexual behaviors, and with consistent exposure and influence on Egyptian culture, homosexual behavior began to take on negative connotation, though only as a receiver of the sexual act (Fathi, 2017). It was not until the creation of Abrahamic faiths were created that homosexuality and homosexual acts became forbidden (Fathi, 2017). The previously mentioned influences from outside Egypt and ultimately the development of Abrahamic religions were two major factors in the degeneration of both the tolerance and acceptance of the expression of one’s sexual identity in Ancient Egypt.

> “Yet, despite the existing evidence, Ancient Egyptian history is often distorted to reflect the culture and mores of contemporary Egyptian or Arab society. In many cases, history or archaeology lecturers have considered such representations of homosexuality as offensive to their conceptions of history, thereby attempting to erase large swathes of antiquity,” (Fathi, 2017).

Conclusion

A través del análisis de la expresión de la identidad artística en diferentes culturas, este capítulo posiciona el arte como un acto emancipador, especialmente para quienes se identifican fuera de los límites normativos. Estos hallazgos orientan directamente las exploraciones materiales del siguiente capítulo, donde presento y reflexiono sobre los tres proyectos artísticos originales producidos como parte de esta tesis. En conjunto, funcionan como respuestas creativas a las preguntas planteadas a lo largo de la investigación.

Homogenization of any group, especially an entire culture, can prove to be problematic in a number of ways, as well as dangerous, and even deadly. However, because of the current governmental regime of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Egyptians are at risk of losing their contemporary and individual identities. His regime – military and police forces – prohibit individuals from expressing themselves authentically. This is not only an attack on people of the LGBTQIA community, but a considerably larger group – anyone who even appears 'different'. While the description of what 'different' means or the attributes it consists of are unclear, that has not stopped the regime from detaining individuals, without cause, for causing debauchery. Detention for debauchery can include anyone who does not conform to el-Sisi's Egyptian identity, one that he created based on Islamic religious beliefs and his own perception of morality. Detention of this kind results from dressing 'differently', having long hair or having unique hair, walking 'differently', circulating with known "debaucherous" individuals, being involved in theater, cinema, or the arts, and what el-Sisi considers some of the worst offenders – people of the LGBTQIA community because he believes the exist to corrupt the population with their immorality. All of these aspects are unfounded principles for detention, therefore people detained for "debaucherous" acts are often held without a deadline of release or hearing. Further, people are held without any other charges and may be beaten or violated while in custody. Some consider it a scare tactic, to encourage people engaging in debauchery to change their ways, so many vulnerable people attempt to live heteronormative lives on the surface and secret lives on the side. Other people suspected of such engagement continue to be monitored out of suspicion.

This inability to live authentically as oneself poses a real threat to Egyptian culture and arts. Though el-Sisi proclaims he supports culture and the arts, it's from a religious conservative one that aims to benefit him and his regime. It does not necessarily have the interest of the Egyptian people at heart. Forced homogenization of an identity that the majority does not sincerely identify with may create an environment where artists do not create authentically for fear of retribution, or could have further unintended revolutionary consequences where artists aid in disseminating messages through their art. However, both signify a repressive government that aims to control and suppress rather than one that supports and empowers. Intersectionality within a culture that respects opposing ideals and religions, is one that is rich. Suppressing controversial perspectives does not erase them as they will find ways in which they are expressed. The current Egyptian regime appears to be clinging to religious fundamentalism and idealized aspects of their ancient culture rather than having a hard look at the people and who they are, the values they currently hold, and how they truly identify. Culture and people evolve, they must

from an evolutionary standpoint, and so will their identity expression, as well as the artistic means with which they do.

Reinterpreting material of art changes its interpretation and thus is perceived differently by the viewer, according to Močnik (n.d., p.9). Močnik (n.d.) also helps us to understand that the reinterpretation of art, specifically historical works, using new mediums can challenge the viewer's emotional connection to the work and/or materials, but moreover their own understanding of the work. With the use of new mediums to recreate or reinterpret ancient techniques and works of art, create a new identity. This can be said for culture as well if we consider culture as a work of art that is evolving. Culture forms a part of our identity and therefore through the reinterpretation of previously held cultural values, ideas, and traditions newer generations have different perceptions of their own culture. Understanding one's origins and continuing traditions does not equate to lack of change within oneself or one's culture. Further, people who embrace their heritage and culture, especially if they are from marginalized communities, bring awareness to their people/culture/heritage, but they also have a role in breaking stereotypes, bringing light to oppression, and even generating respect to said community. Some contemporary artists are doing that in subtle ways through their art. They impregnate their work with their culture, values, and identity allowing the viewer an opportunity to interpret and consider the background of the individual as well as their message.

In death humanity attempts to be remembered, or, at least, create a legacy. Unlike the Ancient Egyptians most contemporary societies and individuals don't plan their funerary events in great detail. However, in general, human nature desires us to be understood and not forgotten. Art helps us to be understood and remembered. In death objects, photos, and other mementos are chosen to become artifacts of our lives, representing us in a way, and creating an outlet for us to be remembered. For many, in death it is important to clarify one's identity, solidifying it in a sense that it will be the lasting image of us. All the objects chosen to identify us can be gathered and displayed as an altar of sorts – a collective work of art. Through a variety of different artistic mediums we remember the deceased for whom they were using a collection of memories, stories, experiences, in some cases their own writings, and through artifacts they themselves found important to their identity. Generally, the survivors redefine the negative aspects of the deceased and aggrandize their positive aspects, however this emotional grief response is one that allows us to maintain them at the front of our minds. It keeps the memories of them vivid in our mind.

Contemporary humans are not unlike their ancient ancestors with regards to their funerary practices, though the funerary art forms have changed. The Ancient Egyptian funerary art was reflective of both who the individual was and who they aspired to be, but was really an inflated version of their reality. However, because of their concern for perpetual life through visual and textual references, it was imperative their names and likenesses were as accurate as possible. They not only wished to be remembered for as long as possible, but it was a necessity to existence in the afterlife. Because of the strong religious aspects of Ancient Egyptian life, their

funerary trappings were the best they could afford, some individuals even having multiple options as their job title improved or they had more to spend on higher quality funerary art. They spent their lives preparing for the next and wanted to be certain they did all they could to be remembered in a positive light, one that not only family would want to visit, but anyone who knew them, to ensure they were nourished in the afterlife. Their bodies, coffins, and tombs all reflected the best of them, identifying them explicitly and authentically. It was crucial that their tombs be filled with the best artifacts from their lives, as these were believed to be carried into the next life. We gain a better understanding of their beliefs through the artifacts they had in their tombs, the quality of artisan work in their tombs and coffins, and who and what was depicted on the walls of their tomb chapels.

Reliefs, sculptures, and tomb paintings gave us great reference to the individuals and what they believed in and cared about, as well as who they were on a basic level. The texts and images on their coffins reflected more deeply who they were in some of the most authentic ways. We can read into the funerary art of contemporary societies and see just that as well. We may see groups of people carrying mementos or artifacts of the deceased – jewelry, personal belongings, clothes, etc. These artifacts in ancient Egypt would not have been privy to removal, but today we let individuals take pieces of us. They keep pictures, make memorial T-shirts, and hold reunions to remember the deceased, because they do not want to forget, and perhaps they want to be remembered too. When survivors visit the graves of the deceased, they take adornments to further beautify the grounds. They create an artistic memorial again and again, perhaps talking with them, praying for them, or just thinking about them. All of these are artistic methods of memorialization, a conscious act carried out in remembrance. Though the mediums have changed, we continue to execute artistic practices to remember the deceased, which allows us the ability to reinterpret the artistic materials, giving them new meaning.

CHAPTER 6

PROJECTS IN REFERENCE TO RESEARCH

Chapter 6 – Projects in reference to research

Introduction

Chapter six is a breakdown of the methodologies of each of three projects created throughout the investigation of this thesis. Each project touches on one of three aspects of the expression of identity in death – the layered assembly and preservation of identity using artifacts through resin, [de]construction and reconstruction of fractured identities in ceramics, and articulating an identity narrative through the use of imagery (instant photography).

Each project uses materials that correlate to one material that was used to express and preserve identity in Ancient Egypt, however, repurposed and modernized using contemporary materials to demonstrate their importance in the preservation and expression of identity in contemporary society. Each type of material permits a range of expression through its unique characteristics. An individual may choose one or a variety of the materials to safeguard the expressions of their identities that also allow them to grow in their identities and transform throughout their lives, like the funerary work of the Ancient Egyptians. I have chosen to use resin, clay (ceramics), and instant photography as the mediums / materials for identity preservation in the following artworks.

The three projects created during the course of this thesis investigation bring into focus the feminist theory, and through this context, this theory questions structures of power, representation and exclusion, especially with regards to intersectional identities as a critical framework. Foundational scholars, such as Simone de Beauvoir (2015), bell hooks (2014), and Judith Butler (1990), offer key insights into how identity is continually negotiated across axes of gender, race, class, and sexuality through their work. These contributions from feminist theory form part of the theoretical foundation on which this thesis is built. This underlying aspect helps illuminate the layered complexities of self-representation and the importance of inclusive visibility in both personal and cultural narratives. Behind these projects lies artistic investigations that aim to provide reconceptualized methods with which individuals express and share their intersectional identities that are accessible, inclusive, and authentic to the individual.

Private Views is a resin collage series that layers conceptualized identities of real individuals through the use of a variety of 2D and 3D materials. The contemporary resin acts like that of the Ancient Egyptians, daring to preserve a curated identity, picking and choosing which artifacts to be encapsulated that best represent the individual, their beliefs, and express who they were to the desired specifications of the [deceased] individual (reference Chapter 4, section: *Mummification and preservation of the deceased*).

The Gender Veil is a sculptural installation of hundreds of ceramic triangles. These triangles are created from a variety of different clays, impregnated with images, colors, textures, and symbols, meant to be interpreted differently on an individual basis. Each strand contains different types of triangles hung head to foot, with every other triangle inversely hung. The mixing of clays, slips,

and glazes represent both the variety of individuals and their path in life, as well as the complexities of identities that each of us possess.

Seeking Self, an instant photography installation, allows its viewers to question aspects of their lives that have shaped them, allow them to find commonalities with others much different than themselves, and encourages an open discussion about what makes up one's identity, all through the lens of the 'other'. It questions sexual, cultural, personal, and gender identity, as well as the range of factors that make up each within a multicultural context. The project further questions the capacity of identity expression through instant photography.

These three projects have overlapping concepts about the expression of identity and that importance in death. Apart from being reinterpretations of materials used in Ancient Egyptian funerary art, they serve as reminders of preservation materials each in their own way. These materials are versatile and can be shaped, manipulated, and molded in a variety of ways to accommodate every individual's needs. These materials act as the vessels in which identities can be held, creating a dialogue in the art they create. Art, however, is not necessarily an explicit dialogue of language, therefore it provides space for [mis]interpretation. This fluidity within these artforms allows the creator a practical way to develop work that evolves along with the individual throughout their life. The produced works, no matter the stage of production, best represents the individual in their most recent stage of identity. This provides the viewer an accurate, up-to-date version of the individual posthumously – a retrospective in one's own voice.

The preservation of the identity of an individual through these artworks saves their identity in that moment in time, as a last known point of reference. I suggest that this is a more accurate way of preserving an identity as it can be paused and resumed at any moment throughout the life of the individual, but act as reference points in the development and change of their identity. If the individual dies at some point during the process and development of any of these projects, their last known identity is preserved, assuming they were actively working on them. This reflects on and pays tribute to the Ancient Egyptians who prepared their funerary pieces throughout the longevity of their lives. Some of which were completed before their deaths, others upon death, and some halted because of untimely death. The concept remains the same in these contemporary works as that of the Ancient Egyptians, however the artist is not necessarily an artisan, rather any willing individual to create artwork using these methods.

For the sake of clarity, it is important to note that throughout the project descriptions the perspective of writing will occasionally shift from third person to first person. This is to ensure clarity of who carried out the work and to provide a better understanding of the background of the artist, curator, collector, and producer within the projects. The aim is to clearly situate the artist within the context of the research and methodology of the projects to more accurately articulate the processes.

This chapter presents the original art projects developed through the course of this thesis as

creative responses to the research findings presented in Chapters 1 through 5. The artistic practice presented here is not isolated, but deliberately shaped by the foundational inquiries into gender, feminism, Egyptian funerary traditions, and identity representation in both ancient and contemporary contexts. Each project—*Private Views, The Veil of Gender, and Seeking Self*—was developed through a reflection on the previously analyzed academic material and artistic precedents.

Feminist theory reshaped my perspective and understanding on both the ancient and contemporary worlds, while simultaneously offering a clearer lens through which to examine my own values and motivations. Despite being raised in a relatively conservative environment, I found myself surprised by my alignment of feminist principles, which was an awareness that emerged throughout my engagement with feminist texts and theories. It deepened my desire to not only understand feminist theory more deeply, but also motivated me to explore how it could inform and enrich my artistic practices. I became interested in how feminist concepts might be integrated into my work in more subtle ways and through symbolic narratives that could gently prompt reflection or reorient the viewer. My goal was to coalesce these values visually into the artworks, allowing feminist thought to be experienced through materials and storytelling, rather than explicitly through messaging.

My master's research focused on the representation of identity through tattoo art, and through it, I began my exploration of ancient Egyptian funerary practices, as tattoos were found on individuals preserved in Egyptian tombs. This research was informed by questions of self-identification and its permanence, and ultimately led me to recognize profound connections between ancient and contemporary funerary traditions. These explorations unexpectedly coincided with the death of my mother, during which I confronted firsthand the emotional, conceptual, formal, and social complexities that accompany the passing of a loved one and the task of posthumously representing their identity. This experience deepened my commitment to understanding the role of artifacts, rituals, and images in the preservation of identity and revealed the importance of these aspects to our humanity. The convergence of mourning, research, and artistic examination reinforced the importance of exploring how people's memories are remembered, understood, and ultimately honored and their identities represented.

My research and artistic practice were deeply influenced by the tactile material culture of Ancient Egypt. Firsthand experiences visiting archeological museums, tombs, mortuary temples, and temples throughout Egypt deepened my appreciation for the physicality and symbolism of funerary artifacts. This amplified my curiosity and interest in the preservation of tomb goods, not only in terms of their material composition, but in what they signified about identity, memory, and the afterlife. As I studied Ancient Egyptian mortuary and funerary practices and the use of resin, ceramics, and other preservation tools, I became increasingly drawn to the ritualized aesthetics of funerary traditions and their resonance with contemporary practices.

It was during this period of academic engagement that I experienced the unexpected and deeply

personal loss of my mother. This event marked a turning point in my research—not conceptually, but viscerally. What had previously been a historical investigation into posthumous identity suddenly became immediate and personal. While working on *Private Views*, I found myself reflecting not only on ancient funerary rituals but on the complex process of negotiating identity after death. Trying to accurately represent my mother's identity made it clear to me how difficult it is to preserve a coherent identity in the absence of her own voice. I was taken aback by how easily fragments, omissions, and contradictions could accumulate, and how identity could become a point of tension rather than a point of togetherness, if not actively curated.

This experience intensified my focus on the need for self-authored memorial practices. I began experimenting with instant photography. I was initially drawn to the aesthetic parallels with analog images from my own family archives. As I shared these new explorations, I received responses from others who described the photographs as deeply nostalgic. Despite not knowing the subjects in the images, they expressed a deep emotional connection with the medium itself. Many noting its physical surface texture and thickness, unpredictable development, and the inconsistent quality of its color tones as aspects that contributed to a sense of personal memory. These reactions highlighted the material's potential as a vessel for affective connection and underscored its relevance as a tool for identity expression.

Simultaneously, my research into gender and feminist theory, with particular focus on the erasure of non-binary and gender-nonconforming individuals in visual culture, led me to initiate *The Gender Veil*. This project was designed to offer a participatory space for expressing identity without the pressure of full disclosure – an important lesson from *Private Views*. People could contribute symbolic or visual fragments of themselves, selecting only those aspects they felt comfortable sharing. The structure of the installation allowed these contributions to exist independently, but also in relation to others. This not only provided a sense of disguise among the others, but also suggested the fluid and intersecting nature of identity across communities. The outcome was a sculptural composition that reflected both individuality and collective resonance. This decision was shaped by feminist principles of embodied knowledge, anonymity as protection, and the deconstruction of fixed categorization (Butler, 1990).

Through these projects, I sought to challenge the expectation that identity be coherent, fixed, or singular. Instead, I embraced models of expression that allowed for fragmentation, secrecy, multiplicity, and transformation. These qualities mirror both the ambiguity of memory and the lived realities of those navigating marginal or fluid identities. In doing so, the artworks aim not to resolve identity, but to protect its complexity and create spaces where it may continue to unfold—before and beyond death.

Rather than illustrating the research, the artworks serve as parallel knowledge-making tools, extending and challenging the frameworks that inspired them. Therefore, this chapter completes the research arc, exposing how artistic practice can be a method of knowledge production based on academic research.

This final chapter presents the three artistic projects—*Private Views*, *The Gender Veil*, and *Seeking Self*—as both outcomes of and contributions to the research process. In keeping with the structure of research through art practice, this chapter adopts a reflective voice that blends first-person narration, process documentation, and theoretical framing.

The works presented here are not intended to be conclusive answers, but rather propositions: artistic approaches to the questions of identity, death, and commemoration reviewed throughout the thesis. This chapter marks a full shift into the creative domain, though it remains tethered to the academic frameworks introduced earlier, particularly material culture, feminist theory, and funerary symbolism.

6.1 Private Views – Solidifying Identity through collage of information and artifacts

6.1.1 Development of concepts

To preface this section, I had no previous experience working with resin in any capacity before undertaking this series. As a degree artist, it was not a material I was familiar with, but that I was interested in specifically for this project for its preservative quality. My previous experience was self-taught paper collage. This project in particular is apt for anyone with or without experience with resin or collage. I curated the artifacts in each of the resin collages, in which I used my foundational artistic knowledge of artistic principles to guide the compositions, those of which I sketched and then layered as practice before pouring the resin. The artifacts collected are also personal and therefore obtained by the individual creating the collage. The same techniques can be repeated through a simple guide.

Resin collage can be carried out using regular household items and is not limited to professional artists or specialized equipment. The materials used in these collages often carry personal significance—objects that are found, natural, sentimental, or even inherited. Since the collage of artifacts can be collected items, they do not need to be prepared in any particular way, as their value and service are reclaimed as a simple, but meaningful, means to express the identity of the individual at that moment in their life.

Further, this process of layering resin allows for both improvisation and reflection. The layering process to create a resin collage can be executed over both long or short periods of time. A standard baking pan can serve as a base for the collage (as the mold). Once the objects are arranged, a layer of resin can be mixed and poured over the objects to encase the first set. Because the resin remains receptive over time, additional layers can be added later—whether days, months, or even years afterward. This open-ended timeline mirrors how personal identity is formed: not all at once, but gradually, through time and experience.

Private Views provides an intricate layered composition of one's identity over time, preserving details of their identities between the layers of resin that continues to age like amber over time. This series retains and protects aspects of one's identity so that these aspects form part of a

layered past of the individual, recorded, but not unchanged throughout time as the resin color changes and the work itself will have added layers with the frequency desired by the creator. *Private Views* allows for an intimate look into the lives of individuals that have chosen to express themselves through collage – the collection and layering of artifacts from their lives. This allows them to imbed their meaningful, treasured, and mundane objects into the resin as a means to express themselves in that given moment in time, dictating their own identity, as a decree of who they are in that very moment, without objection from others.

6.1.1.A The use of common objects to create identity

Private Views initiated from the concept of collaging aspects of identity into one whole unique piece, creating one unique identity with layers of personal contradictions, definitions, and diversity. The objective was to consider the intersectionality of identities of individuals, basing this collection on people I had encountered throughout the creative process of this series, with whom I had discussions about how they expressed their identities in life. The goal was to interpret and recreate the iconography of their identities based on that individual and their layered self, which would then further be concentrated and encapsulated. Many of the materials used in *Private Views* were found objects, including handmade or organic objects, objects from my own childhood, or purchased, such as paper from magazines, newspapers, or books. Through this process, an individual would be able to build on their identity over the years adding layer upon layer, or create another life stage resin collage, much like individuals do today, going through major phases in life – infancy, childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, senior. The works in *Private Views* are biographies of others retold through my own creation. That is to say that individuals have provided me with their stories or life instances to create the artworks that represent them using my own materials. However, the concept is that these are examples of what individuals can do to preserve their own identities, so while I have used my own personal objects - found, gathered, etc., the majority reflect the identities of others and serve as examples of such identities.

To understand the materials that would be needed for each individual I had to first look at the characteristics of each individual, basing my findings from interactions or learned knowledge of them, directly from them or others. Like in our natural experience when getting to know people, we begin to understand them first through their introduction from others, then, through more direct interactions where we gain a more intimate understanding of who they are – I used this technique when gathering an understanding of any given individual. I took notes of what this person represented to me, how I connected with them, noted where we did not connect, and began breaking down my understanding of them as I experienced them, and this perception may have changed little by little through more exposure to them or revelation from them, just as in any other relationship. *Private Views* is a sample of some of the possibilities of a variety of identities, with many not depicted, as they would be unique to the individual, using their own personal artifacts.

Once a more complex profile of them was formed and noted, I was able to begin the process of

sourcing the materials that best fit my comprehension of them. The iconography for each individual in *Private Views* depended on my perception and understanding of the individual, so finding the exact necessary items required research and even testing of a variety of materials. In practice, the individual creating and curating their own identity narrative for this project would not have the same necessity I did to source and find materials in the same way, as they would be creating the work about themselves, using their personal items, their own found objects, private artifacts, etc. This was also done during mummification in Ancient Egypt – as individuals were being mummified, amulets representing different aspects of the deceased's identity would be placed within the wrapping layers, through mostly religious objects – pertaining to or relating to specific gods, or miniatures of objects that would help them on their journey to or in the Afterlife – they served as pieces of the deceased in a form that could be used as payment if necessary (Ikram, 2015, p.95-100).

In some instances throughout my investigation, the individual did not express depth to their identity, which left a sense lacking, so through reflection or even questioning, I began searching for more basic concepts that I correlated to them, such as colors, shapes, or textures. These more basic concepts added a general imagery for the individual which I was able to further reflect on, probing for more understanding of the individual. This allowed me time to experiment with materials that I could better associate to them as well, especially as I began layering items together to compare my understanding of the individual to the visual composition before me. If these combinations worked then they likely remained within the work, however if they felt forced or inaccurate then they were removed and other objects were tested. Through this curation process I found that, when speaking about how people wanted to be remembered, it was different to how they themselves behaved in their current life. Some hid parts of themselves in how they wanted to be remembered, they obscured parts they were embarrassed of, unsure of, or aspects that were conflictive with family beliefs, morals, or religion. Some individuals were afraid of being remembered for one particular aspect, instead of with a comprehensive perspective. These individuals were hesitant about relating their sexuality with their identity for how they would be remembered posthumous. Though they would be dead, their fear was that their sexuality would change how the friends or family that survived them would perceive them. Obscuring these facts provided me with the understanding that they preferred to suppress, camouflage, or even withhold this aspect, so some artworks have thin veils and other censorship covering parts of them. I also used dyes and other mixtures in order to cloud the resin to further show the intention to hide, appearing to almost drown them in the obscurity.

The identities expressed in *Private Views* aren't verbatim reflections of an individual, rather an interpretation – a projection of my perception of them. Much of our sensory perceptions of individuals are based on our feelings about that person after they have revealed aspects of their identities to us (Burkitt, 2013). The construction of our perceptions also has much to do with our previous experiences with other individuals, who, perhaps, held similar qualities, which can reveal prejudices and stereotypes each of us hold. These biases can be challenged when we address them or they are addressed externally, which can result in both explicit and implicit challenging of

these beliefs and ideas. By specifically using controversial identities, *Private Views* brings controversy to attention, like other forms of art.

6.1.1.B The use of resin to fix and preserve identity

Contemporary resin is a transparent material, though it does yellow somewhat over time as it ages, creating change within a seemingly fixed appearance, and allows for the secure fixture of the collage materials through a layering process. The process of creating *Private Views* was an individual process, but was achieved through soaking, or coating, the pieces that would be placed into the collage in the resin to ensure they were saturated. A thin layer of resin was poured into the silicone or tin molds, previously sprayed with a non-adhesive grease to ensure the easy release of the resin plaque and pieces upon completion of curing. The resin was heated to bring unwanted air pockets and bubbles to the surface with each layer added, though, air was sometimes unavoidably trapped in fine particles or cavernous objects, and other intricate pieces. The use of a heat gun helped to resolve some of the bubbling issues, however some arose throughout the curing process. The resin used in *Private Views* is one typically used for coating wood to seal it – often used in artisan preservation, as well as for boats and furniture. Further, contemporary resins must cure completely before an additional layer can be applied, which can take anywhere from 24 hours to a few days; I found that this depended on the humidity and heat of the location and the thickness of resin. With an even thickness of one centimeter or less tended to dry within 24 hours when dried indoors between 25 to 28 degrees Celsius.

The decision to use resin as the fixer for the work, instead of traditional collage, was primarily based on the use of resin in Ancient Egypt as a preservation tool for mummies. The Ancient Egyptians used natural resins from trees to preserve the corpse in an attempt to fix the appearance of the individual so they would be able to maintain their physical presentation in the afterlife so they could be recognized more accurately – believing that the body would be later used in the afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.55). Resin was a fundamental material used in the preservation process, therefore essential to the recognition of the individual expressing themselves. Their physical identity was a crucial aspect of their identity as a whole (Ikram, 2015, p.23).

The use of resin as a fixer in the case of *Private Views* focused on a similar purpose to that of the Ancient Egyptians – making it an essential part of the identity creation and preservation process; it would be used to fix the identity being expressed in each piece of artwork, along with other existing artifacts displayed in other mediums within the collage. This allowed the objects to be suspended in, on, and/or around the individual being represented in the artwork. The use of resin in this series also acted as a means of showing transparency and, as previously mentioned, the multitude of layers that fix one's identity.

6.1.2 Expression of transparency and opacities in identity of the subject

Another factor when deciding to use resin was the ability to alter the transparency of the material. Since resin is transparent in its base form, it can be altered in a variety of ways, but

includes the ability to opacify it. One intention was to create obscurities within the layers through manipulation of the resin. One way in which this was achieved was through the creation of bubbles in the material, which is often an undesirable effect. Since resin is heated to raise and remove air pockets and bubbles, then without heating it and with intense mixing, one can create more bubbles than normally preferred. Through intense stirring of the resin air gets trapped in the material and creates an obscuring effect, which can be intensified through further agitation, and even more so through adding colorants. Some bubbles will release – rise to the surface and be expelled – but when the bubbles are numerous, they create almost a barrier, preventing all of them from being able to rise to the surface, which creates a bubbly milky color in resin without any added color. This technique can be altered, as previously mentioned, through heat, allowing the surface bubbles to pop and others to rise to the top, reducing the opacity, however, the intent behind creating opacity or translucency was to create depth in the layers, as well as a sense of unintelligibility within the layers as some aspects would be revealed clearly and others obscured with, effectively, erroneous material. The viewer could then question the technique as perhaps a mistake at some step in the process, or an attempt to hide or mask certain aspects of the identity.

The play between what the viewer interprets from the workplaces ambiguity of both the intention of the artist and the work itself. If the intention to obscure was an intentional part of the artist's plan then perhaps it functioned, or malfunctioned, as desired, but the process was a success if the masking of certain aspects was achieved, if only for the sake of aesthetics. If the viewer interprets the ‘defects’ or blurred or obscured parts as the intention of the artist then perhaps the viewer will question the purpose of these sections, layers, or aspects, when they find clarity in other areas. The viewer may believe the artist did not intend for certain aspects to be hidden, and that perhaps it was a result of the process, material, or technique being of poor quality. In either case, the viewer is correct in this situation. Micro errors occurred in some parts of the process, with the material, and with the technique, however, sometimes those errors were intentional and sometimes they were unintentional. Since this material was experimental in this project, I was not expecting perfect results, especially after broad testing of all of the aforementioned materials and techniques.

Opacity and translucency were important aspects of this project as they added layers to each piece of the series. These obscured sections allowed parts of the whole to be hidden, with the intention that questions would be asked about the intentionality or unintentionality, as well as if they were meant for certain artifacts and/or aspects. Each layer does, in fact, create a translucency to the preceding layer. Not only is the manipulation of the material through technique important in creating translucency, but so is just adding a simple layer alone. The purpose of creating layers, which itself creates translucency or opacity, is to build the identity one layer at a time, such as in life through experiences, culture, and family through the process (Wilshusen, 2020).

6.1.2.A Construction processes of the artwork

The process begins with choosing the mold needed for the final artwork, where it is sprayed with

greased lubricant to ensure the final piece can be released from the mold. I chose to use tin molds as they were easy to use and replace as needed, but also allowed for faster drying, compared to the silicone molds.

Once the molds are prepared, the design for the first layer can be planted, this may entail a thin layer of resin to first be poured to ensure the objects do not move, which requires that the two-part resin be mixed in a small 360ml transparent cup. I used a wooden craft stick to mix the resin in a transparent cup to ensure that I was able to see its translucency while testing its viscosity. The resin could not be mixed too vigorously as it would cause micro bubbles to form that would cause the material to appear opaque. The mixing had to be slow and intentional to avoid unwanted bubbling (as explained in the previous section). Once sufficiently mixed, it could be poured to form the first layer of the mold, which acted as the back of the artwork, with each later building up and outward from the mold. Additionally, if the two-part resin was not mixed adequately or proportioned correctly then it would not cure correctly and would remain sticky to the touch.

Each artwork required anywhere from 4-8 layers, depending on the materials and artifacts within the artwork. When the objects within the piece were voluminous the piece required fewer layers to build depth. Each layer needed at least 24 hours to cure, often needing 48 hours to cure due to the heat and humidity.

6.2 The Gender Veil –The manipulation of clay as a metaphor for the process of life and identity expression

6.2.1 Development of concepts

For the development of *The Gender Veil*, I entered into a two year course of ceramic decoration in order to carry out this project. I already had a basic understanding of ceramics before enrolling in this course, as I had two semesters of ceramics in university as part of the core curriculum. This course provided me with an even more complete understanding of all of the ceramic processes, which until this moment, I had not previously studied. I did begin this project with a genuine interest in ceramic construction, though the course provided a much more extensive ceramic education.

The Gender Veil is a reflection of a variety of genders and their intersections through abstraction and reunification. *The Gender Veil* expresses the normalcy of gender fluidity and that it expresses how gender can be constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed over and over again, while manipulating it to fit the context of the individual. *The Gender Veil* is an expression of the individual that creates their own identity, regardless of what society has shown them about who or what they should be.

This project is a sculptural ceramic installation that allows the viewer to reflect on the concept of gender and how it is built and adapted, the changes it goes through when being created, and its ability to be manipulated and altered in order to fit the individual. However, it also exemplifies

conformity in some aspects, reflecting on how society attempts to maintain the form of identity through homogenization, without considering the journey of each individual.

6.2.1.A Use of the triangle as trinity

The use of the trinity can be found across the world, used in culture and religion to express certain beliefs and identities. The use of the triangle in *The Gender Veil* is symbolic for a variety of trinities that this project discusses:

1. Birth, life, and death
2. Construction, destruction, and reconstruction of identity
3. Earth, water, and fire – with regards to ceramic construction

1. Birth, life, and death

The trinity, in many religions, represents a spiritual entity divided in three facets, such as in Christianity – "God the father, Jesus the son, and the Holy Spirit" (Ferguson, 2023); *The Gender Veil* veers away from religion as a belief, and instead focuses on three definitive aspects: birth, life, and death. Since, in this case, the triangle represents the trinity with its three points/sides, it was useful to express that. There are many different kinds of triangles that could represent an assortment of expressions of birth, life, and death, with a variety of possibilities in between – long/short lives or deaths, for example. This project focuses on an equilateral triangle that imitates the standard societal expectation for any given individual. The equilateral triangle does not take into account physiological or psychological changes in individuals, their ability or inability to achieve its standards, or circumstances that would leave them unable to fit into the predetermined shape – the triangle.

2. Construction, destruction, and reconstruction of identity

Construction, destruction, and reconstruction of identity through the use of the trinity explains the aforementioned trinity of birth, life, and death to some extent. Construction of identity in this case, begins at birth, if not before (prenatally), determined by our genetics, families, and what they project onto us and expose us to. In this phase in our lives, we are unable to necessarily change our circumstances and change how we are developing our identities, while also being compelled to obey our parents, guardians, or other religious or family members. The construction of our early identities could be a result of childhood traumas that are perceived as personality or character traits that affect us emotionally, psychologically, and perhaps also physically, that change us long-term. Construction can be both conscious and unconscious (as well as willing and unwilling), as exemplified above. When the construction is willing, then it is determined by us, usually in response to our unconscious construction, perhaps this is exemplified by found interests within an area that we were compelled to be involved, for example; if one is forced to participate in the church (coercion), the individual might further join the church's drama team, where they might develop a connection with pageantry, cross-dressing, makeup, or even acting as someone they would rather be (masking parts of themselves to appease others) (de Valverde, et al., 2017). As demonstrated, a situation in which one is forced to engage in cultural or religious acts they would not otherwise want to, can prove to be both positive and negative for the

individual. That is to say, they are explicitly rejecting the want of the forced participation of one aspect, but benefiting by still being able to participate in acts that are implicitly forming another part of their identity.

The deconstruction of one's identity could be related to the evolution of a new identity, where one identity evolves, slowly breaking down previously held aspects that defined their identity that allowed for separation from those other aspects. This is a form of growth in one's identity, and is likely positive, though can also be consistent with extremism if the individual becomes inundated with the same message or belief with no other perspective (de Valverde, et al., 2017). Another aspect of identity deconstruction could be a shift in beliefs and ideas once held by an individual that have changed over time, and instead of growing vertically within the same mindset, they change direction horizontally, shifting perspectives. This could also be considered growth, however growth away from one belief to another, which, again, could be positive or negative for the individual. It is often seen as progressive change based on a somewhat linear trajectory, if we think about it in planes (de Valverde, et al., 2017). One must deconstruct preconceived ideas to be able to move forward in the direction they desire (consciously), this may mean letting go of beliefs held by family, friends, community, culture, or even about oneself. This is the moment where one considers that they are no longer 'X' and begin making changes to reflect that, effectively changing how they identify with respect to those elements, perhaps identifying as 'Y' or 'Z'. Ultimately, it is affiliation and belief, identifying with a group or a label that best reflects one's current identity.

3. Earth, water, and fire with regards to ceramic construction

Three natural facets we can consider a trinity as well are: earth, water, and fire. Within ceramics, these aspects are important as they are the foundation of the process. Earth is the mixture of the elements to create a variety of clays, permitting both a physical process to be undertaken, as well as a chemical one. The different combinations of the elements produce different varieties of clay, which have different strengths, weaknesses, textures, and chemical components. The differences within these mixtures of the clay are what is to withstand different structural formations, temperatures, and even manipulation, including ornamentation. Different ratios of certain elements could create either more fragile and brittle clays, while others may make it more plastic and flexible, more easily molded, or resistant (Breuer, 2012).

The ability to shape and mold these elemental mixtures would not be possible without water. Water allows the elements to temporarily fuse together to take on the desired form of the creator. Water acts as the binder within the mixture, and while the elements truly incorporate, they can be molded in different ways. The addition of too much water could deteriorate the mixture making it unsuitable for different types of manipulation, too little water and it becomes brittle and unmalleable. One must understand the needs of the conglomeration – the clay. Understanding the type of clay and the needs of the clay, with the final design in mind, is important as they will determine the success of the first stage in the process – drying (pre-firing).

The temperature that the clay can withstand depends on the type of clay concocted. The melting point of the elements is different and therefore, some clays cannot withstand higher temperatures, while others can withstand significantly higher temperatures. However, all clays will reach a point where they are no longer viable and could melt or incinerate due to the excess temperatures, as they are not viable beyond certain temperatures (Breuer, 2012). The heat of the fire must arc and create a kind of heat wave that is steady over a specific number of hours to ensure the elements have adequately fused. The combination of the clay and the fire determines the results of the final piece.

The trinity, in this case, provides a kind of lifecycle again, but one of identity.

Ceramics played a crucial role in the lives of the Ancient Egyptians. Ceramics are one of the most common types of artifacts found in excavations still today, serving domestic, religious, and commercial purposes (Bader, 2017). The use of ceramics in funerary practices were versatile, including canopic jars (varying in material – wood, stone, or ceramic), *shabtis* (also called *shawabti* or *ushebti*) (servant statues), as well as containers and vessels for tomb goods (Bader, 2017, Ikram, 2015, p.127-128). These ceramic artifacts demonstrated the social class and means of the individual, as well as the age. Large ceramic pots were used as cost effective sarcophagi replacements. Pot burials were often associated with lower classes and child burials, but were widely used (Power & Tristant, 2016). This distinction of materials from the upper and elite classes formed part of the identity of the buried individual.

Shabtis were small figures that were most commonly made of wood or clay, but also glass, wax, stone, or bronze. Varying in quality, they were used in burials to ensure the deceased would be taken care of in the afterlife by these servants, some also identified as family members – this would ensure their presence in the afterlife (Ikram, 2015, p.128-129). They were depicted in scenes of daily life or in mummiform, ranging in size as well. Each *shabti* would have the name of the owner etched into it, ensuring identification, as recognition in the afterlife was paramount. Importantly, the deceased could also be a *shabti*, allowing them to serve in the function of the *ka* (one's life force) (Ikram, 2015, p.24, 129-130). The use of *shabtis* in burial ensured the afterlife would be better than the current one, therefore the number of *shabtis* grew over time from around 2 *shabtis* in the time of Amenhotep II, to seven hundred by the Late Period (Ikram, 2015, p.129). The number of *shabtis* a person could afford, along with the material and artisan quality, very much identified the deceased individual, forming part of their eternal identity.

6.2.1.B Intersecting images, symbols, and orientation in representation

The Gender Veil uses a variety of collected iconography relating to sexual orientation, gender identity, and then abstracts them. The iconography may also include symbols out of context or appropriated to mean or represent something different than it was originally intended to. Other imagery is created through abstraction of other objects, including genitalia, shapes, lines, letters of the alphabet/characters, the human figure, animals, etc. Many of these objects are broken down and abstracted to represent something other than their original meaning, which might

include sexualizing or desexualizing, gendering and misgendering, using color and line to create meaning through its use or its absence. The imagery is applied or removed from the hundreds of triangle tiles that form *The Gender Veil*. The collection of triangle tiles represents the fragmented self – how we are a collection of identities tied together through our experiences and connections through life, and though these connections may not appear to everyone, they link our identities one to another, forming a whole version of ourselves.

Each of these triangular tiles are suspended from a bar in four long vertical strings on each bar. Each string contains a variety of triangles each hung top to bottom and bottom to top joined together with transparent string – the string uniting them all. The collection of triangles on each string are diverse and no two triangles are the same. Each one was created and decorated by hand. Some are chipped, nicked, fractured, or repaired and pieced together, representing the fragments that have occurred to us throughout our lives, some of us pristine, created exactly as we were intended, others mended, reshaped, too thin or too thick, merged with other pieces or designs to ensure survival, regardless of perfection. Each piece is unique, with similarities among them, yet different even when they appear the same. They are each hand decorated with different techniques, methods, clays, slips, and glazes to ensure they reflect each of us in our variety of colors and forms.

The orientation of each piece isn't necessarily a concern as some pieces will appear right-side up and others upside down, which plays with the concept of perception of identity. To some the perspective is skewed, incorrect, or even inverted, however, for another individual, they may perceive it perfectly normal and fitting for themselves. The mixing of perspectives in this work is reflective of society's perception of non-normativity - incorrect, standing out, upside down, etc. While all the pieces were derived from the same or similar ingredients and materials, some have more of and others less of the same elements, and came out the same, but their journeys were different, some overcoming a more complicated creation process, others surviving more distressing circumstances, both attempting to come out the other end in the same form – triangular – and though they were all cut from the same mold they appear differently, as some also had longer periods of neglect and others had more consistent attention and care. The processes of creation and decoration affected them differently and thus the way we perceive them is also altered, both positively or negatively depending on perspective.

6.2.2 (Re)Position and (Re/De)constructions of identity

Throughout the process of creating *The Gender Veil* there were many experiments that were undertaken to determine which clays would work best, however in this journey it was discovered that there was no reason to select one specific type of clay as the combination of different colored clay tiles showed diversity and therefore different types of clay were continually used and experimented on, despite the type. The construction of the tiles was important as they were taken with the same mold – allowing for consistency overall, however, not all the tiles survived the experiments at different moments in their creation. Some did not survive the wet manipulation stage, where they were altered when the clay was fairly fresh and malleable, as they

broke in the process, or perhaps dried out too much and became brittle, unable to be altered or fixed, some disintegrated when they were attempted to be recovered, forcing their deconstruction. Some of the pieces that did not survive early on were able to be reused and the triangles reconstructed to form new triangles that could be altered and remade with more focused attention. These pieces would have looked somewhat different, repositioned among their previous counterparts, but perhaps they appear darker, even contaminated, in comparison.

6.2.3 Construction process of the artwork

The subject of the piece is the expression of gender. Each piece (10x10x10cm triangles) is made of a variation of types of clays, from a range of temperatures from low to high fire. Each triangle is colored with slips, glazes, or under-glazes, and has textures, patterns, painted images, modeled, or relief images on them divulging the immense differences, and similarities among them. This representation of the diversity of humanity and how individuals identify expresses the complexities of backgrounds, culture, race, sex, and personal experiences that shape how one identifies whether on a superficial or biological level.

Each triangle has undergone its own individual process of creation, like that of every individual. Some have survived until the end of the process, those of which they are displayed, modeled, painted and colorful, other pieces have been under other stresses throughout the process that have damaged, scarred, deformed, warped, broken, and, in some cases, transformed them. Some pieces have made for surprising results, while others did not result with the expected outcome, while others still were melted or destroyed in the process. However, the ones displayed have survived and serve as a beacon to all that the process is long, difficult, and all are fragile. No matter how each piece is identified or observed, the creative process for each piece was nearly the same, they were each created with the same basic elements, with only minor differences, and the pressure and heat of each piece as it developed proves different outcomes.

The triangles are all hung on strings side by side, implying that no matter their condition they are all equal, with the same capabilities. No gender has any particular role from which they cannot detach. The form they create by being hung like a veil (or curtain) in an overlapping zigzag pattern symbolizes the fluidity of which we function together as a society, all mingling, interacting, and existing together, supporting one another despite our brokenness or malfunctions, despite our appearances or background.

6.3 *Seeking Self* – The relationship between narrative and imagery of identity

Before beginning this project, I purchased my Fuji Instax Wide camera for personal use as an alternative to my Polaroid camera, as the Fuji film was cheaper. I began documenting my life as a visitor back in the United States weeks before discovering my mother was terminally ill. I had little experience with photography as an art medium, having taken only one or two semesters of analogue photography in university as part of the core curriculum. However, I had a great interest in documenting life in artistic ways. I did have a foundational understanding of artistic concepts, light and compositions before beginning this project. My goal with this project, beginning after my

mother's death, was to capture and reflect identity through all the moments and conditions of life (and death). I did take these factors into consideration when carrying out this project.

Seeking Self is an instant photography installation that combines storytelling and imagery as a means of self-expression and represents the intersectional identities we all possess as individuals. This project uses images of a variety of different kinds of people, objects, places, etc. to create moments that can be interpreted by the viewer to form an identity from shared experiences and exposure to memory triggers. Images and experiences that we collect and store in our memories can be triggered by the photographs from *Seeking Self* in a way that allows the viewer to connect with the photograph, or perhaps even just aspects within them, further associating them to their own lives, experiences, and identities. The format of the photography – instant film – evokes a sense of nostalgia, be it real or implied, but allows all viewers to connect with it through their experience with it or curiosity of it.

This exploration is not only outward-facing but also deeply introspective. *Seeking Self* has been developed not only as a study of collective and individual identity but also as a personal process, with myself—both as artist and subject—positioned at the core of the project. As the photographer, I have documented moments that resonate with and reflect my own lived experiences, identities, and evolving understanding of selfhood. These moments often reveal points of intersection between my identity and the identities of those I photographed. As I continue to travel and witness the lives of individuals across different cultures and settings, my own identity shifts in response, and new intersectionalities emerge. Thus, *Seeking Self* becomes both a record of discovery and a reflective lens through which I consider my past and present. The images are shaped by my perspective as a cisgender, white, immigrant American woman, and are presented as both documentation and interpretation of the dynamic interplay between self and other.

Using a direct, physical format of images is one used in Ancient Egypt in the form of reliefs and fresco paintings, to communicate in different ways, often as a way of recording events, perpetuating beliefs - such as those from royalty, or storytelling religious scenes, and this method is not so different from contemporary methods as we continue to document events and tell stories using photography (University of Memphis, n.d.). *Seeking Self* utilizes the images of everyday life or the odd intricacies of life and repurposes them from basic photographs to express identity through the selection of photographs taken around the world. This collection of photographs provide the viewer with the opportunity to form meaning and connection based on their own identities and experiences. The importance of *Seeking Self* is that it is a reflection of many, in one aspect or another. The photos are capturing the identities of unique cultures, as well as mundane attributes of life within them. This project collects these differences from across the world and unites individuals from distinct places and cultures through shared experiences through the mixed exhibition of the photographs. That is to say, people can connect with the unique and ordinary subject matter of the photographs, reflecting on their own lives, experiences, and identities. This act can expand one's comprehension of others, and, perhaps, broaden

empathy for, or curiosity about them.

> "Representation serves as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy to [women] as political subjects; on the other hand, representation is the normative function language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of [women]," (Butler, 1990).

When we see inclusiveness in representation through photography, we also see distortion of preconceived notions, which can include everyone—not just women, as Butler points out. When we are represented, others perceive us as a vital component of the larger social community. This suggests that their identity, or part of it, is reflective of my identity, creating connection as well as understanding.

6.3.1 Development of concepts

Seeking Self attempts to conjure such romantic emotions of admiration for cultural objects, places, and events, but refrains from the deep dive into the sorted emotions of nostalgia, though perhaps evoking their essence. This project uses the longing, yearning, sadness, happiness, romanticized pride and comfort of what one knows through photographs and mingles them among photos from other cultures to incorporate and impose those feelings among the foreign people, places, and objects that perhaps seem familiar and safe from the unknown of the future. It allows the viewer a moment of nostalgia, a step back into the security and familiarity of identities past, acknowledging them and using them as reference for who they have become, left to ponder what elements within the photographs could soon influence their future identities.

6.3.1.A Use of imagery as historical reference in life and memory

Historically, imagery has proved to be proof of the existence of an event, otherwise recorded in text in some manner, but which was considered to be hard evidence as an image helps us to understand our world by documenting it (Cohen, n.d.). Throughout history, imagery was a way of proving the validity of an event; acting as proof of its existence, it acted as a declaration of an event, being validated by being painted or carved into stone, with the understanding that the event had occurred because of its depiction, an expensive and arduous undertaking (Cohen, n.d.).

In contemporary societies, this method of covering entire buildings with graphics is common. Important historical events are shown everywhere from public murals and classroom walls to street graffiti or entire religious buildings, like the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain. Contemporary societies are willing to use visuals to emphasize the job of words, similar to the Ancient Egyptians, which leaves a lot of opportunity for interpretation. In some situations, especially religious ones, this may be on purpose. This provides a margin of error in some cases, but within religion, it provides room for interpretation where the teaching can be adapted to fit the situation. That is to say, that if there is not a clear answer in the text, then a general or vague answer should suffice in its place. Images provide that space. Whenever we make connections

The first batch of photos captured in *Seeking Self (1)*, Iceland, 2018, Theresa Wilshusen

The first batch of photos captured in *Seeking Self (2)*, Iceland, 2018, Theresa Wilshusen

The first batch of photos captured in *Seeking Self (3)*, Iceland, 2018, Theresa Wilshusen

between images, they convey a message — often a story or a warning.

6.3.1.B Use of instant film as conduit to nostalgia

Nostalgia was once considered a deadly illness, noticed among 1680s Swiss soldiers stationed abroad who were fainting, hallucinating – seeing ghosts and/or hearing voices, many unable to fight or eat, some unable to get out of bed; it's only cure was returning to one's homeland (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). It's a feeling that is hard to describe as it is a mixture of emotions, typically contradicting – happy and sad at the same time, a longing for the comfort of the time while simultaneously being uncomfortable with aspects of the moment. It created a longing for a seemingly normal period in one's life in the past (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). This feeling can be a distorted sense of memory, specifically picking the beautiful aspects of it, while blurring the reality of it. "…nostalgia, from the Greek words *nostos* and *algia*, which are homecoming and ache roughly translated," (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). Though nostalgia is imperfect in its presentation to us, it certainly offers a sense of escape to a perceived perfect moment in our reality. We rely on its certainty about our experience, though memory itself is imperfect, and look to it for stability and permanence in our understanding of ourselves – who and what shaped who we are. Nostalgia is a "warm, reliable place of before," (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). "People got homesick and yearned for an idea of home that no longer exists or never existed at all…saudade, a Portuguese word that doesn't have a direct English translation but refers to a deep, melancholic longing for something or someone lost or out of reach," is another example of the feeling, though many variations exist around the world (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

When soldiers returned home, their feelings continued, as their homes had changed and they had changed, so the constant they had longed for no longer existed, "It wasn't just about war, and it wasn't just about home. It's almost as if it had more to do with time than with place. It was about change," (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). This change, throughout history, refers to a modernizing world, where change was the new constant,

> "…there was a loss of control, a loss of what you once knew. It could be because you found yourself in another country, surrounded by new food, culture and language, or because, for the first time, you're leaving your land and showing up to a workplace," (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

As we continue to look at nostalgia throughout history, we can see that nostalgia persists – a longing for a period in time where things were great, peaceful, or perfect, but no such time exists. Even those who did not leave home experienced this phenomenon as the world changed around them with the introduction of industrial processes (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

> "This was a time when time itself started to be viewed differently, with the hours of the day designed around mass industrialization and in advancing the global economy. Things felt different. And there was a shared yearning for how things were, whether people left home or not. Nostalgia was showing up in factory workers, students,

> migrants - people adapting to a modernizing world. And this rise of industry naturally came with a counterculture movement," (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

Romanticism was the natural movement away from an industrializing world, where everything was rationalized and mechanized, that left people unable to escape their rigorous work schedules and responsibilities to themselves and their families, working to survive.

> "Romanticism was a cultural movement that reshaped art, music, literature and philosophy over the course of the 19th century. It was, in many ways, a direct reaction against the previous age of Enlightenment, which centered on rationalism and reason, as well as industry, with its tight schedules, repetitive motions and mechanization. Romanticism was about the exact opposite - the imagination, subjectivity and emotions. And nostalgia got absorbed into the movement and turned into a literary sensibility to help express the angst of the period," (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

The formation of countries also required a healthy dose of romantic nostalgia. A nation's past or history would become what we would term, perhaps, a heritage or the like, if there was a yearning for some long-lost country (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). This is relevant to places within a country as well, places that take on the role of a cultural artifact, such as the Notre Dame, in Paris.

At the time, Notre Dame was in terrible condition and a blight on the neighborhood. Additionally, Victor Hugo was not only a French author but also a supporter of architectural preservation who, in the 1800s, began to witness the demolition of Gothic-era structures all around Paris. Hugo was committed to restore Notre Dame, and in 1831 he created a book about Quasimodo, the cathedral's bell ringer and ardent admirer, set in the Gothic era of the 1400s. Nostalgia prevailed in this case and the Notre Dame restoration project began in 1844 (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

The irony is that the cathedral's ongoing restoration, which is based on this nostalgic Romantic inclination, actually increased the possibility that it would be damaged by things such as fire. It is thought that the Notre Dame fire in 2019 was actually caused by the cathedral being overly restored or renovated (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

> "And it's kind of this lesson we can learn about trying to restore the past completely and fully and that it might actually end up in destruction of the thing that we long for," (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

The Romantic era served as but one source of nostalgia that fed into a universal artistic expression of longing, yearning, and reckoning with the past and present. People held onto what was left, which was their memories of the places they had been, the things they had, and the people they had once been, as the world proceeded to change quickly and the old ways of life slipped from their grip. "Nostalgia became a name for the pleasure and pain in the space between the certainty of the past and the uncertainty of what was to come," (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

With the invention of Polaroid film, the first instant film on the market in 1948 with sepia tones, people were able to capture memories in the making on film nearly instantly, and were able to share them (American Chemical Society, n.d.). Everything has a fleeting, ephemeral quality in our contemporary world. There is little that we surround ourselves with that makes us feel a deep sense of connection, that makes us feel secure in something. Reliving moments through photographs helps us to preserve fragments of ourselves in time, and with a physical, tangible photograph we can build the narratives of our lives; Polaroid suggests, "…our lives are built by moments: moments that can change your life, and everyday moments that create your life," and I demonstrate this to be true through *Seeking Self* (Polaroid EU, n.d.).

Since Fujifilm's Instax (instant film) camera was introduced in 1998, instant photography has been regaining popularity. This trend peaked in 2009 when Polaroid announced it was leaving the instant photography market (Fujifilm, n.d.). The craze for physical photos has been revived by their appeal. There is a sense of nostalgia — genuine or implied — created by this withdrawal from the digital aspect of photographs. "Real" in the sense that the individual has previously engaged with instant photography first-hand in some way and yearns for the same sensation they experienced previously, in addition to the emotional ties they may have to that moment in their lives. Most people associate it with a simpler, more carefree period of their lives. "Implied" meaning that the person may have never actually taken an instant photo or been in one, so they may not be aware of the instant gratification of holding the physical representation of the moment they experienced in their hand at the time, which does not get lost among hundreds of other photos, as can be the case with digital photography, where hundreds of photos can be taken consecutively to achieve the best results in a matter of seconds.

Instant photography attracts larger audiences because many people sense nostalgia in it. The spectator is intrigued by this play on nostalgia since they are curious about the material and hoping to recognize something from their own past within it. The film itself and the process of content capture intrigue those who are unfamiliar with instant photography. Through this curiosity, the spectator develops a bond with a scene they wish they had been a part of, especially if they have a strong connection to the photograph's subject matter. They occasionally yearn for the sensation of snapping a quick photo and holding that particular moment in their hands. In either case, instant photography is both a contemporary and vintage manner of recording a moment, as well as a feeling of belonging to something – a time, place, group, genre – an identity of some kind. It is contemporary because it uses modern formats in the technological age, but old because it is reminiscent of childhood and 'simpler times' for many people, essentially less digital and more manual. It is a media that conveys the novelty and also the antiquity of a moment in time, a state of being, a location, or an object. We come to understand the value of these images and their application to our lives through time.

We can see evidence of this requirement to record significant events and provide instructions if we think about and examine Ancient Egypt. Like in many civilizations, pictures helped to explain how certain, significant events were depicted. The Ancient Egyptians not only created their own

pictorial language (hieroglyphics), but they also made sure to create enormous relief murals on their structures (often temples) and frequently painted frescoes in their tombs, in the chapel area for visitors (Cooney, 2007).

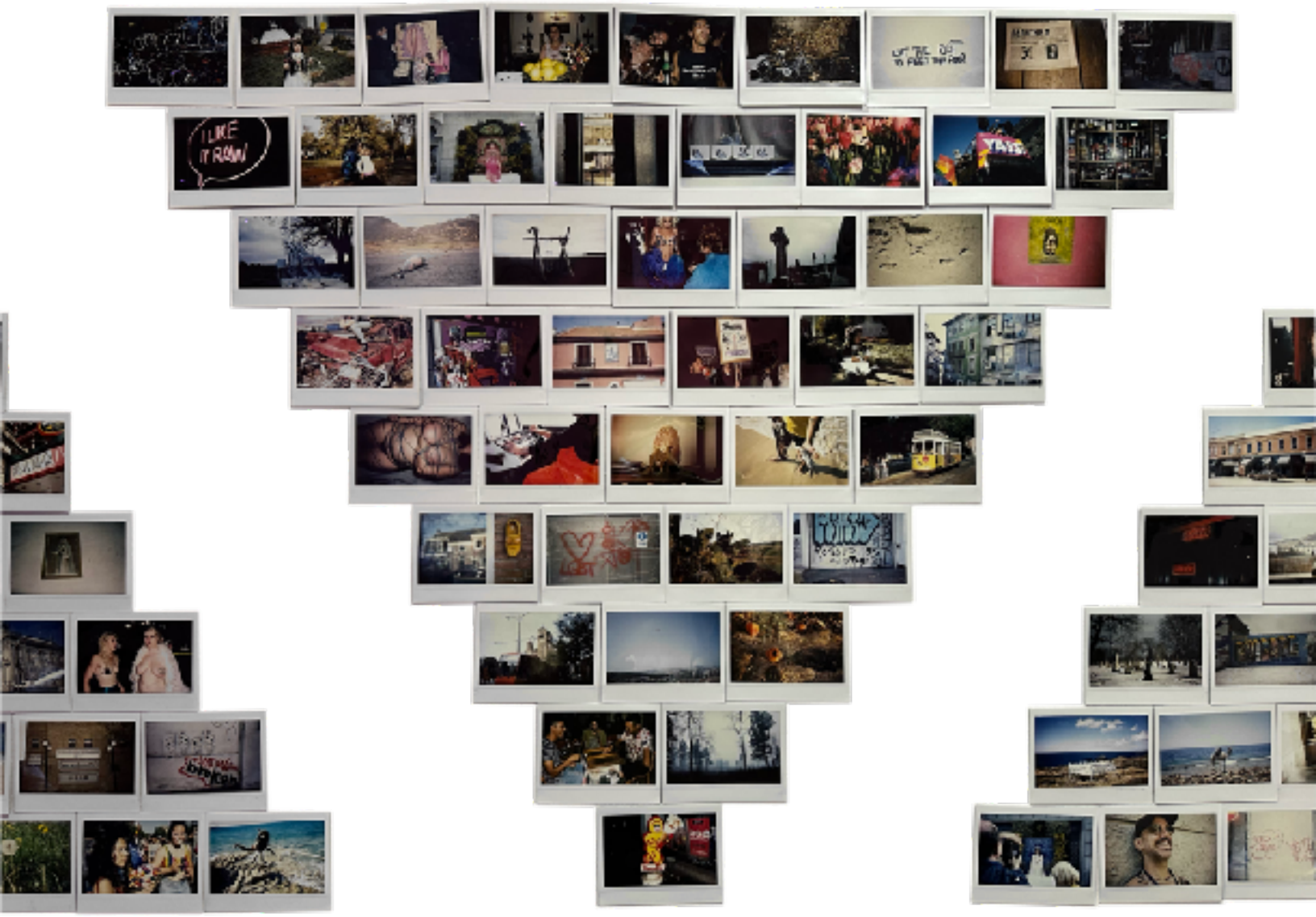
The idea of capturing a person, a moment, a mood, or a location has existed since the beginning of time even if photography was only established in 1830 (The British Library Board, N.D.) and instant photography even more recently, in the 1930s and 1940s (American Chemical Society, 2018). Certain early representations were frequently employed as manuals or as historical records for a scenario or a sequence of events, but they are crucial in understanding why we need to document these facets of existence through a visual medium.

6.3.1.C Cross-cultural coalescence of images as intersectionality of identities

"Intersectionality, the notion that subjectivity is constituted by mutually reinforcing vectors of race, gender, class, and sexuality, has emerged as the primary theoretical tool designed to combat feminist hierarchy, hegemony, and exclusivity," (Nash, 2008, p.2). Legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw's term "intersectionality" emphasizes the "multidimensionality" of lived experiences of marginalized individuals (Crenshaw, 1989, p.139).

For feminist and antiracist scholarship, intersectionality serves several theoretical and political objectives. First, it challenges race-gender binary thinking in order to theorize identity in a more nuanced way. To enable thorough assessments of cultural sites and/or displays that involve both race and gender, it is especially crucial to undermine the binary distinctions between race and gender (Nash, 2008, p.2). This is important not only within the race-gender binary, but others as well, such as race-sexuality, gender-sexuality, race-ethnicity, etc., as these crucial binaries intersect and may not only question societal norms, but cultural norms as well, and this may lead to confusion, rejection, and conflict between them and those that hold these intersectionalities. A goal of the terminology 'intersectionality' is to provide people a vocabulary to address identity politics criticisms. The true issue with identity politics, according to Crenshaw, is that it obscures intra-group distinctions, a problem that intersectionality attempted to address, while liberal critiques of identity politics condemn its failure to transcend difference, but exposes differences within the major categories, breaking down generalizations (Nash, 2008, p.2). I suggest that further breaking down generalized or homogenized groups more specifically through the use of photography, commonalities between cultures, races, ethnicities, customs, and traditions, can be recognized.

This project examines the Ancient Egyptian depictions in frescos and reliefs on temples and in tombs, as well as other funerary art, such as coffins and sarcophagi, and their purposes, to comprehend Ancient Egyptian identity and its purpose both in life and the afterlife. In doing so, *Seeking Self* references those aspects of identity and redefines them through photography. This project shows examples of intersecting identities and provides the viewer the opportunity to see themselves and their own intersectional identities reflected in this work. Through this project I propose that the viewer may find other intersections within their own identity. Additionally they


I LIKE IT RAW!

have the potential to reflect on their own life story, find commonalities among other cultures and groups, which would likely make them ponder the lives and existences of the other individuals behind the photos.

The collection of photos creates a mural-like pattern, somewhat like a collection of mosaics depicting events and truths that belong to those individuals, which are displayed to the public. This acts as a reference to that of the Ancient Egyptians in their own wall-side reliefs.

Like Ancient Egypt's enormous temple-side relief depictions declaring events and 'truths', projected to the public and solidifying what has specifically been chosen to be depicted, and tomb and coffin decorations disclosing authentic individual and family identities, the photos of *Seeking Self* use objects and scenarios, people and places from around the world, including over 25 countries on three continents, that have distinct religions, cultures, politics, and from a variety of different classes. This cross-cultural reference for the projects extends the reach to and visibility of unique and intersecting identities to people in small towns and villages that perhaps wouldn't have otherwise had access, as well as exhibit those from underrepresented communities to a wider audience. This allows the viewer to interact with the culture where they are, giving them an insight into a world they may not have experienced first-hand.

This project not only allows for cross-cultural exposure, but can also provide access to and visibility of vulnerable, oppressed, and/or overlooked groups, such as LGBTQIA+ people, native or indigenous people, and people with disabilities and further brings diversity to homogenized groups. The individual expression of each of these identities offer other intersecting identities that can perhaps also be interlaced with and influenced by other factors.

6.3.2 Methodology

As a qualitative research project, data collection was carried out through a variety of casual interviews and informal conversations. They were conducted across a variety of settings and social contexts. These included discussions with friends, acquaintances, passersby on the street, and participants in workshops. These dialogues took place in multiple countries including the United States, Egypt, Spain, Serbia, France, Ireland, Iceland, and Sweden. This more casual approach allowed for a diverse range of voices and perspectives to surface organically, contributing to a broader understanding of identity as influenced by place, context, and culture. These interactions were not formally structured but were instead conversational in tone, allowing participants to express themselves freely and without restraint. The insights gathered from these conversations were then reflected on and interpreted in relation to the conceptual artistic frameworks explored and written analysis.

To maintain the integrity of these diverse and informal interactions, careful attention was paid to the ethical considerations involved in collecting and representing participants' identities. Ethical considerations were central to the development of this research, particularly in relation to the representation of others' identities. In all instances, informed consent was sought and obtained

from participants who shared their stories, particularly those who appeared in the *Private Views* project. These individuals disclosed aspects of their identities within a safe, respectful environment, fully aware that their contributions would be shared publicly. For those featured in photographs—especially where subjects were visually identifiable—explicit consent was given with the understanding that the images would be included in the final body of work. To respect participant privacy, all interviews and personal narratives were documented anonymously, in line with the majority preference. This ethical framework ensured that the identities shared and explored in this research were treated with sensitivity, autonomy, and care throughout the entire process.

The importance of ethical representation connects directly to the conceptual foundation of this research, which explores how identity is formed through various social, familial, and cultural influences. The process by which one discovers their identity is just as significant as expression. There are three main influences on our identities that appear to be from which we derive elements that determine who we are and what we become. These elements individually shape our identities, whether they be sexual or otherwise, and their variety is what makes us all so unique. However, in the same breath, the similarities between them enable us to discover other "like" identities, thereby expanding the range of particular elements that make up identity. After all, our surroundings shape who we are, it is not improbable that these influencers shape not only who we are but also how we form our own identities (de Valverde, et al., 2017). These factors may alter how we ultimately feel about expressing our identities, given their influence over us.

These influences are not only discussed theoretically but are also embedded in the artistic structure of the thesis, most notably through the triptych framework that organizes and reflects the key identity components. The triptych structure used throughout the thesis is both conceptual and practical, serving as a unifying aspect that links the three core identity influences—family, culture/community, and personal experiences—with the three creative projects produced during the research process. This framework is further echoed in the use of three key materials, each with historical and contemporary relevance, drawn from Ancient Egyptian traditions and mirrored in present-day contexts. These layers of "threes" are not coincidental but are strategically embedded to create a multidimensional narrative. The format references religious triptychs, particularly those found in Christianity and other belief systems referenced in this thesis. They underscore the symbolic and structural cohesion of the work. In this way, the triptych becomes both a visual and conceptual response to the research questions, offering a coherent method for exploring and articulating complex intersections of identity.

6.3.2.A The Family

One aspect of who we are that defines us is our family. We are encouraged by this group to develop into capable adults early in childhood. Prejudices and insecurities within this group are passed down through generations, affecting our identities based on what our families find acceptable or not. Family can also be seen as the biological component of "family," such as a genetic component, which would suggest that this aspect is beyond one's control. However, in

situations like adoption, where the adoptee may unintentionally and unwillingly maintain family standards of identity, it is also necessary to take into account the independent influence of family. The "family" indication has a significant impact during childhood and even during some of the most difficult phases of a person's life, particularly puberty, when a person is essentially changing into a sexual being. Even if you identify with a majority group or with more widely used distinguishing characteristics, this is a struggle. Family is an identifying characteristic that we cannot control; as a result, values and views are forced or appropriated until we are exposed to different ideals that challenge or contradict those ideas.

6.3.2.B Culture / Community

Another factor in defining our identity is culture or community. Families and cultures are undoubtedly similar, but cultures serve as indicators since they involve a far larger number of people and have more widespread ideas, habits, and/or traditions. This has a significant impact since it involves significant change. One cannot rule out the possibility that an individual may feel unable or incapable of integrating into or adapting to the new culture because with each change of community, the identity of the individual may be highly influenced and more readily susceptible to diverse changes from previous cultures or adaptations to them. Over longer periods of time, smaller, more gradual cultural changes let people adapt more quickly. However, enormous changes can also take place, particularly in linguistics, mannerisms, and the acceptance of more society norms or ideas. Deborah Cameron talks about this idea of playing an identity in her book Performing Gender Identity. She is not excluding identity as a bigger construct even though she is speaking explicitly about gender identity.

6.3.2.C Experiences / Relationships

Last identifier is (Personal) Experiences/Relationships. Our intimate selves are shaped by these connections. Personal experiences and relationships differ from culture in a variety of ways, but especially because we frequently deliberately look for these identifiers. This is the role that our identities' virtually total autonomy plays. Experiences are dependent on the situations we place ourselves in, allowing us to choose our experiences (ideally), but they may also have a negative impact due to chance events as a result of our choices. Relationships are typically described as part of the "experience" identifier because they support our sense of self-awareness and help define who we consider ourselves to be. Whether romantic or platonic, we start using relationships to carry out our growing identities. How are connections and experiences interchangeable in this situation? because they perform in accordance with gender expectations and copy one another (Cameron, 1997). We learn how we like or dislike being treated through the relationships we have with other people and we also change other people via our interactions with them. We conform to the group with which we are interacting (friends, family, coworkers, etc.) in order to maintain these relationships, which are founded on societal conventions, frequently gender norms (Cameron, 1997). The way we have been conditioned to "perform" is also reflected in this performance, which is dependent on training from other factors like family or culture. We develop references for evaluating future relationships and guiding our actions and internal dialogues through these interactions, whether romantic or platonic. Should time spent

alone, apart from other people's groups of friends or loved ones, be regarded as experiences or relationships? Yes. As we engage with ourselves and sometimes even perform for ourselves, they should be regarded as (personal) experiences. But these are also relationships. Those experiences influence who we become. In this situation, our relationship is with ourselves rather than with another person. We establish an internal relationship with ourselves during these seemingly "solo" situations since our relationship with ourselves is defined by our inner speech and communication. In these circumstances, we have power over our responses and internal dialogue. We may alter the way we communicate to ourselves and the interactions we have with ourselves even when we occasionally find that it is rather unpleasant or cruel. However, this internal relationship that this dialogue fosters helps us to develop a different view of who we are and who we want to be.

We can then consider how we identify using these three distinguishing characteristics. One can start to comprehend themselves and the factors that led them to be who they are now by looking at themselves through the lenses of family, culture, and (personal) experiences. The triptych (3) is utilized for this in this project. Three photographs are presented together on the shelf. There are identity-related factors on each side of the triangle. As we develop and change, especially as we encounter a wider variety of cultures, build new families, and experience the world around us as well as notice the changes within, these identities are blended with other identities that have been developed throughout our lives. The smaller triangles' sides blend with one another, touching one another's sides to create a larger identity. While the interior identities represent who we once were, this bigger identity may still be unexplored. It may also be the identity we present to the outside world. Some people could experience it as the opposite; our interior selves are who we really are, whereas our outward selves are what we portray to others. The viewer's interpretation of this piece enables them to take in pictures of various identities that have influenced people in a wide range of diverse ways. This interpretation by the viewer suggests elements that might contribute to one's identity and explain how one has been guided through life to become someone they might not recognize as themselves, or on the other hand, one might discover the elements that have led them to be exactly who they are now. When the restrictions of gender norms are lifted and the concept is "freed," it extends beyond identification as a whole and can be focused on one's sexual identity as well. According to Judith Butler's interpretation of Simone de Beauvoir's The Second Sex, which makes use of de Beauvoir's advice,

> “To choose a gender is to interpret received gender norms in a way that organizes them anew. Rather than a radical act of creation, gender is a tacit project to renew one's cultural history in one's own terms. This is not a prescriptive task we must endeavor to do, but one in which we have been endeavoring all along.” (p.40)

6.3.3 Construction process of the artwork

This project specifically uses Fujifilm Instax Wide 300 (rectangular, horizontal format) of instant film instead of the more well-known Polaroid (square format). The use of the Instax Wide was born of necessity for a more economic material, costing less than half the price of Polaroid film

per photo, not necessarily for the format itself. However, it began as an experiment to determine if I could, in fact, obtain the same desired results using a lesser-known format of similar quality, which was achieved with the use of Fujifilm Instax Wide 300 camera.

The photos collected at each location were mounted on the wall in a triangular format, in an alternating head to foot layout, or, alternatively, were also mounted sandwiched within transparent plexiglas polymer panels that created one complete triangle with photos visible on interior and exterior sides, then four double sided triangles were mounted together to form a larger triangle. These triangles were mounted from the ceiling, hanging independently from one another, at different heights. Each mounted piece allowed for the triangle to be inspected manually. The former, 2D format – wall mounted, became the most used format for exhibition as it was less maintenance and easier for the viewer to interact.

Conclusions

The projects explored in this chapter illustrate how accessible, materially engaged creative practices can offer meaningful and adaptable frameworks for expressing identity before death. By drawing on Ancient Egyptian funerary aesthetics and adapting them to contemporary social conditions, these works demonstrate how artistic research can reclaim agency, amplify marginal voices, and preserve intersectional selfhood in new and relevant ways. These final reflections conclude the thesis, returning to the central question of how art can be used to shape identity.

Creating artwork, with identity at the center, allows the individual to ultimately be the curator of their own life, and in doing so they are in control of the narrative about them. This is particularly important for vulnerable individuals, but also allows space for people who are discovering themselves. Art as a creative process can provide many beneficial aspects to our lives, including stress relief. Creating and expressing oneself through these funerary artforms could serve as such a means.

By providing three different mediums to work in - resin, ceramics, and instant photography, the artist who uses any of these mediums does not need to have advanced knowledge of how to execute any of these processes, rather, they can be done in workshops or self-taught. Removing the costly artisan approach to controlling one's own narrative, these approaches to self-expression in funerary art become more attainable and achievable. This approach is not only practical, but rational and symbolic and is used to better express and represent one's own narrative. By doing this, it provides multiple layers of self-possession, [re]claiming autonomy posthumously while thinking and creating now. This happens as a result of preparing the artwork that will in turn serve as your last self-created artwork. It acts as a last testament (unofficial) to your identity. These mediums provide the artist with the ability to express an altered, adapted, or changed identity, keeping what they feel is important and valuable to them without great economic loss. In modern funerary art, such as gravestones or grave markers, changes can be costly or even impossible. These unconventional funerary artforms provide a unique and intimate perspective of the individual that they themselves created, making them even more valuable and

nostalgic to their survivors. Moreover, the democratization of artistic expression through workshops and self-guided exploration opens doors for individuals of all backgrounds and skill levels. No longer reserved for the elite few, art becomes a universal language—a medium through which people from all walks of life can connect and communicate. In this way, the boundaries between artist and audience blur, giving rise to a collective tapestry of human experience that transcends cultural and societal divides.

Using these methods and mediums provides an individual with time throughout their lives to be conscious about how their identity is expressed. Self-reflection and creation can provide an individual with clarity about who they are and how they want to be seen. An individual can feel whole and seen when they are given the opportunity to experiment without judgment or preconceptions. While this can be overwhelming at first, individuals can be guided by their emotions, experiences, and senses. Preserving one's identity in stages could make it easier to reflect on, as well as express in a given instance.

Harnessing contemporary mediums for artistic expression empowers individuals to delve into the depths of their creativity, transcending the confines of conventional representation. Whether through the meticulous collecting of personal artifacts, the tactile shaping of clay, or the intricate compilation of manual photographic compositions, these mediums serve as conduits for self-expression. Each photo, each form, each layer carries with it the weight of personal history and the nuances of individual experience, weaving together a tapestry of identity that evolves with the passage of time.

The significance of this creative endeavor extends far beyond the mere act of making art; it becomes a sacred process of self-discovery and self-definition. As individuals navigate the labyrinth of existence, grappling with the complexities of their own identity, art offers a sanctuary—a realm where raw emotion finds solace in the language of creativity. Through the transformative power of artistic creation, individuals transmute their innermost thoughts and feelings into tangible artifacts that bear witness to their journey through life.

These artifacts, imbued with personal significance and symbolic resonance, find their place not only in the realm of the living but also in the sacred spaces of remembrance and commemoration. At funerals and memorials, they stand as silent sentinels, speaking volumes about the lives they represent and the legacies they leave behind. Beyond mere commemoration, these artworks serve as vessels of memory, preserving fragments of the past and illuminating the reflected self of the individual.

Central to this process is the notion of agency—the ability of individuals to shape their own narrative and reclaim ownership of their identity. In a world where external forces often seek to define us, art becomes a means of resistance—a declaration of autonomy in the face of adversity. By wielding the artistic tools, individuals assert their right to self-expression, carving out space for themselves in the records of history.

Yet, amidst the boundless possibilities of creative expression, there exists a profound sense of responsibility—a duty to honor the authenticity of one's own story while respecting the narratives of others. In a world that often seeks to homogenize and commodify identity, art serves as a beacon of individuality—a reminder that each life is a masterpiece in its own right, worthy of celebration and reverence.

Ultimately, the journey of artistic self-discovery is a deeply personal one—a voyage into the unknown depths of the individual. It is a journey fraught with challenges and triumphs, setbacks and breakthroughs. But in the end, it is a journey worth taking—for in the act of creation, we can find not only ourselves but also develop a greater sense of identity and empowerment.

Each project represents an intervention into the question of posthumous authorship: who gets to define an identity once the subject is gone? *Private Views* stages identity as a layered and speculative archive, incorporating imagined and anonymous elements. *The Gender Veil* decentralizes authorship entirely, offering a participatory structure that invites fragmentation and anonymity as protection. *Seeking Self*, with its instant photography format, blurs intimacy and detachment, using nostalgia to gesture toward a future-oriented archive of selfhood. These projects aim to resolve identity and to hold space for it - to be revised by the author in life, avoid misinterpretations of hidden identities, and expose the authentic self through self-authored funerary artistic works. This approach challenges the closure typically associated with funerary art - reinvented by the survivors - insisting instead on an identity that resists misrepresentation.

CHAPTER 7

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 7 – Final Conclusions

Introduction

This dissertation has provided interesting connections between the funerary art of Ancient Egypt (primarily New Kingdom) and contemporary societies (primarily the United States of America, but also including some examples from North American indigenous peoples). It has also addressed the research questions at hand:

1. How can an individual authentically express their identity through funerary art so that it remains unedited by the survivors posthumously, with special attention to gender expression, like that of Ancient Egypt?

2. What are some of the best methods and mediums to do so?

3. What positive or negative effects do these methods have – effects on the individual and on society in large?

The final section of this chapter will provide a summary of the main research findings in connection with the research objectives and question(s), along with an exploration of their significance and contribution. Additionally, it will assess the study's limitations and suggest potential avenues for future research.

7.1 Overall Findings of research and research aims

I began my investigation looking at the effects of feminism as a contemporary concept on gender and identity as changing constructs. I needed to look at how feminism both aids and hinders gender expression and identity in a contemporary context. I focused primarily on The United States of America, as I have the closest understanding of that society as an American. I took an artistic perspective as that view also aligns with my own as an artist. Through this intersectional lens I examined the profound impact of feminism on society as it leads to greater visibility and support for equality, especially through social media platforms with regard to women and marginalized people, though not without its negative implications that nearly anyone with an online presence has experienced. This fosters a more inclusive environment, challenging misconceptions and promoting tolerance on a greater scale. I found that art, as a form of expression, reflects this ethos, offering avenues for self-expression and creativity, particularly for marginalized groups. The acceptance of diverse identities, such as non-binary or transgender individuals, is bolstered by increased visibility and peripheral influences, leading to societal changes in various aspects of life. Some of these findings demonstrate that feminism, intertwined with art, promotes inclusivity and equality, encouraging acceptance of distinctions among vulnerable groups in many ways including social discourse, empathy, and allyship.

The increasing acceptance of LGBTQIA+ identities in the United States is attributed to heightened visibility, enabling individuals to live openly. Countries like Canada have set examples, while

others, like Mexico, have surpassed the U.S. in progressiveness. Regional changes ripple across borders, influencing neighboring nations and paving the way for broader societal shifts.

Findings from my research demonstrates Latin America's rich history of embracing non-binary gender expressions on a macro level, exemplified by *muxes* in Mexico and concepts like the Two-spirit people in Canada. Art and artisan practices play a pivotal role in mainstreaming these concepts, particularly through traditional cultural practices, which transcends gender norms. The aim of these findings was to exhibit traditional, religious, and/or isolated cultures that embrace gender non-conformity, though simultaneously exposing the roles applied to those individuals, showing the freedom of choice still within limits, to some extent. While feminism acts as a balance in such groups it is constrained by other societal norms.

Despite patriarchal constraints in some regions such as Egypt, women and marginalized groups have a history of challenging traditional roles and utilizing art as a tool for resistance and social change. The role of women in movements like the 2011 Egyptian Revolution highlights the transformative power of art in challenging cultural norms and promoting individual agency, specifically for women. Embracing women's empowerment fosters authenticity and supports diverse identities, ultimately creating safer and more creative environments for *most* individuals to thrive. I have found through this research that these spaces are not categorically safe, and are not entirely inclusive, but are significantly more so.

My research suggests that small influences can have a significant impact on individuals, communities, and culture, highlighting the suppression of self-expression, particularly through art, in a variety of ways. Empowering women and marginalized people fosters societal growth and innovation in the face of misogyny and repression, yet they face these barriers to participation in Egypt with a great desire to progress. Despite challenges, undervalued people strive for justice and equality, advocating for their rights and contributing to societal improvement, which includes the art sector. Examining the social, religious, and cultural dynamics in Egypt underscores the importance of gender and authentic self-expression for societal well-being. While the current Egyptian government seeks control through repression, Egypt's resilience demonstrates its resistance to homogenization and extremism seen through resistance art such as graffiti and mural paintings, among other mediums such as film, and writing. Despite obstacles, Egyptians persevere for a more equitable society, enduring hardship for meaningful change, evident by their continued efforts to resist government restrictions.

How can Egyptians, who are surveilled and prohibited from authentic self-expression, safely be open and explicit about their identities? Studying artistic expression during the 2011 Revolution revealed that art was one of the boldest ways, though not necessarily the safest due to constant monitoring and by often unsubstantiated arrests. Egypt is not necessarily considered to be a safe state in which true self-expression is accepted, nor tolerated by the nationalist conservatives, looking at the violations the government and military commit against marginalized people, including artists, writers, and more specifically, women and LGBTQIA+ individuals. Through artistic

expression though, there is a margin of deniability for Egyptians if confronted, though that is not a safe avenue, it is one some choose to pursue as it provides an outlet for self-expression while maintaining some ambiguity and anonymity when facing the government and military entities.

The significance of subtle influences, even on a micro level, cannot be underestimated, as highlighted in my research, illustrating their profound impact on individuals, communities, and culture. While this discussion primarily addresses the suppression of individual self-expression, it's imperative to recognize that this extends to artistic expression in all its forms. Despite restrictions on authentic gender expression and other modes of self-expression, art serves as a powerful avenue for promoting non-conformity and resisting homogenization. Through subtle yet subversive means, art can amplify voices that are otherwise silenced, articulating sentiments beyond the limitations of words.

Exploring the social, religious, and cultural dynamics shaping gender and feminism in Egypt stresses the critical importance of authentic self-expression as governments, such as Egypt's, often resort to militarized and conservative tactics to enforce conformity, resorting to arrests, abuse, and coercion. However, such displays of control may fail to demonstrate underlying fragility within the regime, as evidenced by Egypt's ongoing resistance to homogenization and extremism.

While the influences of contemporary Egypt are important, I was most intrigued by Ancient Egypt, which sparked my interest in self-expression through funerary art. Shedding light on the lesser-known lives of lower classes in Ancient Egypt, and contrasting them with the well-documented elite and royalty, we discover the results of gender roles and a retrospective of feminism in Ancient Egypt, revealing inconsistencies in societal treatment of women, which was not necessarily a surprise, as I was expecting as much. While royal women held significant roles in governance and society, their autonomy varied. Despite being valued for their roles as birthers of the elite and royal classes and contributors to society, women faced limitations in autonomy and societal recognition. However, they wielded considerable influence in domestic affairs and economic transactions.

Records predominantly chronicle the experiences of the upper echelons, leaving a gap in our understanding of everyday life in Ancient Egypt. Despite this, insights into elite life, intertwined with religious, societal, and afterlife beliefs, offer valuable glimpses into gender dynamics and early manifestations of feminism in the ancient world. Women's identities and contributions were crucial both in life and in preparation for the afterlife, where authenticity and representation were highly valued. I also examined cases of gender identity transformation in Ancient Egyptian royalty, highlighting the complex relationship between gender expression and societal norms. Through various forms of art, individuals expressed their identities authentically, though embellished to some degree, leaving lasting impressions of their true selves in history.

Royal lineage in Ancient Egypt conferred divine status upon offspring, positioning them as near

equals despite hierarchical nuances within royal families. Unlike neighboring kingdoms where royal women were traded, Egyptian royal women held significant stature, considered equal to kings and thus untouchable. While their involvement in international diplomacy was limited, elite women played essential roles in various aspects of governance and religion, earning prestigious titles.

Although Ancient Egypt exhibited inconsistent feminist ideals, women's value transcended mere objects of supervision. They were honored for their multifaceted contributions to society, revered as protectors, entertainers, and nurturers. Despite societal constraints, powerful women left indelible marks through various art forms, asserting their identities and legacies. Women's economic autonomy was evident through property ownership and entrepreneurial endeavors, although inheritance rights were limited compared to men.

The pursuit of a prosperous afterlife was a central tenet of Ancient Egyptian society, shaping both earthly endeavors and posthumous representations. Funerary art served two purposes, the first was a way to self-evaluate where the individual was in control of the narrative, knowing they had to be honest with themselves about their character and identity, before being judged at the weighting of the heart. The second was more of a conversation with oneself, acting as a hopeful reframing of their narrative, with the ability to slightly enhance it. Giving hope that their current life results in the slightly idealized narrative, which would be perpetuated in the afterlife. I suggest that instances of gender identity transformation, such as Queen Hatshepsut's reign, hint at early forms of transgender identity, underscoring the complexity of gender expression in Ancient Egypt and the funerary art.

While it seems unjust to compare the ‘same’ society thousands of years apart, it is hard not to see that Ancient Egypt's social fabric was woven with diverse expressions of gender and identity, often interwoven with religious and afterlife beliefs, seemingly accepted among society. While gender dynamics varied across classes and time periods, women's contributions were indispensable to societal functioning, echoing notions of empowerment and agency that continue to resonate today.

The desire of the Ancient Egyptians to be remembered is one still held today in many cultures – another aspect of its society that echoes across the world. Through my research, I explored the universal human desire for recognition and remembrance in death, evident across cultures and religions. I highlight the similarities between Western, Oriental, and Ancient Egyptian burial practices, emphasizing the importance of honoring the deceased's identity and providing closure for the living.

Death is a universal experience, prompting shared beliefs about the importance of recognition and remembrance of individuals' true selves both in life and after death. Contemporary services often incorporate elements like photo slideshows and personal objects to celebrate the individual's life, echoing Ancient Egyptian practices of creating elaborate tombs, coffin

decorations, and amulet placement to preserve their likeness and identity for eternity. Humans inherently desire acknowledgment and elevation for their accomplishments and defining aspects of their identities, striving for eternal recognition. These shared traditions underscore the significance of honoring and remembering the deceased in accordance with their authentic selves, serving as a testament to their legacy.

The handling of the deceased's body, embalming practices, and presentation for viewing are influenced by personal preferences, religious customs, and circumstances of death. Despite diverse funeral proceedings, fundamental processes remain consistent, mirroring ancient Egyptian practices in their reverence for the departed.

Services or ceremonies often provide a space for mourners to gather, share memories, and celebrate the life of the deceased, like tomb chapels in Ancient Egypt. Whether planned by the deceased or survivors, these gatherings serve to construct a multifaceted portrait of the individual, drawing from shared experiences and personal anecdotes. Visual aids like photo slideshows or displays of personal belongings offer glimpses into the deceased's life, enriching the commemoration with tangible reminders of their identity.

Ancient Egyptian funerary customs, reliant on elaborate artworks and inscriptions, served a similar purpose of preserving the deceased's identity for eternity. Masks, coffin decorations, and tomb paintings depicted individuals' associations with deities, emphasizing their piety and devotion, as well as articulate and beckon to the identity of the deceased.

The meticulous attention to detail in both ancient and contemporary funeral practices calls to attention the significance of honoring and preserving individual identities. From the elaborately painted or carved coffins and sarcophagi of Ancient Egypt to the personalized tributes of modern funerals, the emphasis remains on authentic remembrance, ensuring the legacy of the deceased endures.

The ability for an individual to express oneself in life is one that cannot be taken for granted, as it is not an ability allotted to all. The ability to be remembered posthumously as one desires is also not one that is readily granted based on my research. I have found that the regime under Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Egypt poses a threat to individual identity and artistic expression through its suppression of diverse identities and dissent, rooted in fundamentalist Islamic beliefs and his subjective moral standards.. This repression extends to LGBTQIA+ individuals and anyone deemed ‘different’ by the regime, leading to arbitrary detentions and violations of human rights.

Despite claims of supporting culture and the arts, el-Sisi's regime promotes a homogenized identity based on religious conservatism, stifling authentic expression. However, artists continue to challenge these restrictions through their work, reshaping cultural narratives and advocating for change. In contrast to Ancient Egyptian funerary practices, contemporary societies may not plan funerals in detail, but they still seek to be remembered and understood through art and

memorialization, even martyrdom. Like their ancient counterparts, modern humans use artifacts and artistic mediums to honor the deceased, perpetuating their memory and preserving their identity. While the forms of artistic expression may have evolved, my research demonstrates the underlying human desire for recognition and remembrance remains unchanged throughout history.

The suppression of authentic self-expression poses a significant threat to Egyptian culture and arts. His approach reflects a conservative religious agenda serving his regime's interests rather than the broader Egyptian populace. This forced homogenization risks stifling artistic expression out of fear of reprisal, undermining the diversity and vibrancy of Egyptian culture. However, it may also fuel unintended revolutionary responses, with artists covertly disseminating dissent through their art, such as during the 2011 Revolution. Regardless, these efforts underscore a repressive government's attempt to control and suppress rather than foster empowerment and expression.

Artistic reinterpretation plays a crucial role in challenging established narratives and fostering cultural evolution. Based on my research by reinterpreting historical works through new mediums, such as those of Ancient Egypt, individuals can reshape collective perceptions and understanding of cultural identity. Contemporary artists, especially those from marginalized communities, imbue their work with cultural heritage and personal identity, offering viewers an opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives and narratives.

Unlike ancient Egyptians who meticulously planned funerary rites, contemporary societies generally approach death with less detail. Nevertheless, the desire for remembrance and understanding persists, with art serving as a conduit for commemoration. Through various artistic mediums, survivors honor the deceased's identity, preserving memories and experiences in tangible forms. While mourning rituals vary, they collectively contribute to maintaining the deceased's presence in the collective memory.

Ancient Egyptian funerary practices, characterized by elaborate artworks and inscriptions, aimed to immortalize the deceased's identity and ensure a prosperous afterlife. Similarly, contemporary societies continue to engage in artistic memorialization, albeit through evolving mediums and practices. While ancient artifacts offered insights into religious beliefs and societal values, modern artistic expressions reflect personal connections and interpretations, providing a continuum of remembrance and reinterpretation across generations.

Just as amulets, *shabtis*, and mummies are artifacts of the Ancient Egyptians that help us to understand their beliefs, their lives, and their identities, my research has also found links to the use of artifacts in modern and contemporary funerary practices in the West. I have explored the modern funerary practices of The United States of America and Egypt. Though the cultures are quite different and are distinguished from the Ancient Egyptian practices by thousands of years, there are still artistic elements in common. In the course of inquiry into this phenomenon, I

delved into the reasoning behind the use of artifacts in the ancient world, of course, but also in modern and contemporary societies and how they have or haven't changed. Little has changed in the mediums that encompass funerals and memorials, as my research shows three main aspects: visual format, often looking back on the life of the deceased, a storytelling composition, usually through people discussing the individual, such as in a eulogy or even visually through the aforementioned visual component, and finally through artifacts – possessions imbued with meaning and sentiment.

These artifacts, rich with personal meaning, find resonance not only in everyday life but also in moments of remembrance and commemoration. From funerals to memorials, they stand as silent witnesses, honoring lives lived and legacies left behind. More than mere symbols, these artworks serve as vessels of memory, preserving fragments of the past for future generations.

Creative pursuit transcends mere art-making; it becomes a sacred journey of self-discovery and self-definition. Amidst life's complexities, art provides a sanctuary where emotions find solace in the language of malleable clay and resin collage. Through artistic creation, individuals transform their innermost thoughts and feelings into tangible artifacts, documenting their life's journey. Throughout this research and the artistic processes, I became even more aware of the need for individuals to be able to express their authentic identities, the urgency in which it posed, and the emotional weight that it carried to keep their identities unacknowledged or concealed from their closest loved ones, and began to deepen my understanding of the fear and importance for them to be recognized for their authentic identities so as not to be erased, misunderstood, or relinquish control to their survivors due to lack of options.

This realization was rooted in perspectives I previously had the privilege of not needing to consider. It deepened my empathy and responsibility for these individuals. As someone whose identity will likely be accepted and preserved without question, I came to understand the great disparity in posthumous self-representation for vulnerable communities.

This understanding reshaped my practice: I prioritized developing creative methodologies that did not rely on prior artistic experience. Many participants were hesitant, as I was frequently told, "You can do that because you're an artist," and "But I'm not an artist." These sentiments challenged me to reconsider accessibility to the economic accessibility, practices, and materials. I prioritized finding mediums that could be adaptable to different tactile and visual preferences, economic availability, facility to engage with the medium and whether the process could be carried out successfully over longer periods of time. Ultimately, I chose media that allowed for long-term engagement, low-cost longevity, and adaptable expression. I centered usability, flexibility, and privacy in my selection of resin, ceramics, and instant photography.

My own art production investigation, as part of the overall research, allowed me to use artistic practices once left only to artisans to achieve to be available to regular people. Through contemporary mediums, individuals can create personalized artworks that serve as artifacts of

their identity, allowing them to control their narrative even after death. This form of expression, whether used in funerary practices or as personal artifacts to give as mementos in memoriam, empowers individuals to explore and define their identity throughout their lives. Unlike traditional funerary art, which may be costly and static, these contemporary mediums offer flexibility and accessibility, democratizing the process of self-expression.

By engaging in self-reflection and creation, individuals can navigate the complexities of their identity, finding clarity and empowerment along the way. Through art, they transcend conventional representation, weaving together a tapestry of personal history and experience. These artworks, infused with significance, serve as vessels of memory and commemoration, preserving the true essence of the individual for generations to come. In a world that often seeks to homogenize identity, art becomes a means of resistance, asserting the autonomy and authenticity of each individual story. Ultimately, the journey of artistic self-discovery is a deeply personal one, offering opportunities for growth, empowerment, and celebration of individuality.

At the heart of this process lies agency—the power of individuals to shape their own narrative and reclaim ownership of their identity. When others attempt to define us, art becomes a form available to many throughout their lives, and my research shows that though these mediums may seem unconventional, they are mere variations from the status quo.

There is a responsibility to recognize the truth of narratives the individual creates. In a world that tends to homogenize identity, these artistic mediums serve as beacons of individuality, celebrating the uniqueness of each life and honoring the true self. Ultimately, the journey of artistic self-discovery and authentic self-expression is deeply personal, filled with challenges and triumphs. But in the act of creation, individuals can not only find themselves but also cultivate a deeper understanding of their own identity. As my research aimed to do, I was able to connect artistic funerary practices of Ancient Egypt and, with contemporary alterations, adapt them to suit contemporary society in a way that best reflects the abilities of and access for a much larger population to truly be in control of their identity and narrative in death.

7.2 Contributions to the field

This research has provided me with much insight into the funerary practices of the past as well as understanding gender and identity on a much more profound level. In doing so I have published a number of articles regarding identity in death, as well as conducted workshops on the practical applications of one's expression of identity through the artistic practices in my dissertation, that provide examples in the ancient world of how gender nonconforming identities we able to express themselves at that time and that society's perspective on the matter. It has been very interesting to compare the sociocultural perspectives of identity in both the ancient and contemporary worlds, including distinctions between contemporary Egypt and contemporary United States of America.

In the process of researching, I was fortunate to meet many people from diverse backgrounds

who found great interest in the topic. The support from the general public about clarity of identity in death was encouraging. Many people were eager to discuss their own identities with me while investigating, though the majority did not want to be recorded. I discovered that many of the people I encountered around the world who participated with me in this research were at first weary of my motives, but then opened up and divulged their hopes of this research and the future of it and other projects like it. However, the hesitance to be identified and documented was a common occurrence, and for a variety of reasons. Many in 'safe' countries were still hesitant to disclose recognizable personal details or asked me not to include it, while very few didn't mind.

Throughout the interviews and investigations, both in artistic practices and feminist theory, I encountered unexpected challenges regarding participants' willingness to engage in the project. I assumed the individuals with whom I knew personally would be comfortable engaging openly in this research. However, I was confronted with a stark contrast between personal trust and public vulnerability. Many participants were candid in private conversations, but were much more reluctant when faced with the possibility of having their identities represented publicly, even within an artistic framework. This conflict between perceived openness and actual risk brought about a sobering realization: authenticity is often practiced privately, but its public expression remains conditional with regards to safety and social acceptance.

In the early stages of my investigation in the United States, , these hesitations were further intensified by the political climate. With the rise of a new ultra-right conservative administration there was increased fear and anxiety for individuals with non-normative identities, particularly within the LGBTQIA+ community. Fear of exposure, retribution, or long-term consequences grew more tangible, affecting even those who had previously expressed interest in participating.

Despite these setbacks, I remained committed to pursuing the research. What followed was a shift in method. Initial direct interviews evolved into anonymous contributions, which eventually narrowed further into observational work and interpretive portraits based on partial disclosures. Participants, understandably, withheld permission to publish or exhibit explicit personal identifiers. At the time, I was unaware of institutional mechanisms that might have offered an ethical workaround or protection for anonymous research in artistic contexts. As a result, I chose to prioritize participants' safety and autonomy over data completeness. This reshaped both the content and form of the artworks. This experience revealed the delicate balance between artistic inquiry and lived vulnerability. It further informed my emphasis on fragmentary and anonymous forms of representation later on.

This research was aimed at finding creative solutions to a particular problem, but one that affects many people, and that main issue is the appropriate identity expression after death. It can be considered a morbid topic, but I found it to be an important one. With the sudden death of my own mother during my investigation and the mixed identities I was presented with about who she was made me reflect on people who had a much more complicated life. My mother was the spark

of inspiration to the deepened investigation into gender nonconforming individuals, as I wondered, if it difficult to accurately express the identity of my mother, a cis white woman from Midwest America, then how must it be for transgender individuals, non-binary people, queer people, and anyone who is uncomfortable authentically expressing themselves. I believe my mother was her authentic self, but it made me realize that she held a multitude of identities, as we all do, and how some of those were not for me, but how in death I learned of them. I wanted to refute some of them as I learned about them, and others I was happy to learn about, but it was confusing. I looked at my own research and realized I was working on this and could find artist mediums that could work for many others in order for them to express themselves without needing to explain. I found through this research that these mediums, instant photography, resin collage, and ceramics, that they could serve as those creative outlets, adaptable and unique to fit anyone.

The evolution of my art practice was directly informed by recurring themes in both historical and contemporary research. My visits to tombs, mortuary temples, and museums across Egypt revealed the material language of Ancient Egyptian funerary practices—resin-based coatings, clay containers, and pictorial narratives all centered around identity preservation. This material sensitivity greatly informed my choice of media and my visual strategies.

The most profound moment of convergence between research and personal experience occurred with the death of my mother during the development of *Private Views*. My confrontation with conflicting narratives about her identity—revealed through stories, objects, and photographs shared after her death—mirrored the ambiguity I had previously studied in ancient tomb inscriptions and visual iconography. This lived experience crystallized my efforts to inspire and enable other individuals to curate their own narrative before death.

Instant photography became a tool to address this: its material immediacy, nostalgic connotations, and affordability made it ideal for *Seeking Self*. During feedback sessions, individuals often noted their strong emotional response to the tactile and temporal qualities of these images—despite not knowing the people in them. This affirmed my intention to use photography as a symbolic and emotional medium for fragmented but meaningful identity expression.

In *The Gender Veil*, research into non-binary identity and feminist aesthetics drove my decision to allow for fragmented, anonymous, and modular contributions. Participants could share as little or as much of their identity as they wished—symbolized through ceramic pieces that were hung, inverted, and interwoven with others. The resulting sculpture offered no singular narrative, but rather a constellation of partial, layered selves. This decision was directly shaped by the limitations and needs voiced during earlier phases of participation.

While I am satisfied with the research I completed, I believe there are gaps that could have been filled that would have rounded out this research in a more active manner. In retrospect, and

based on feedback I received at exhibitions and workshops I gave on my research topic, I believe I should have given workshops that formed part of the research instead of presenting it. That is to say that providing workshops to the groups I discuss throughout this dissertation and collecting that work as both data collection as well as material could have provided an even deeper look into the expression of identity. I understand that these workshops would, in a sense, take away my artistic expression but would pass it on to the participants. I question the validity of such a workshop as my own work, or as research exclusively.

Additionally, I have found through this investigation that there are discrepancies in Egyptology concerning the contemporary language and concepts used, or lack thereof, when discussing same-sex partnerships as well as contemporary issues, such as those of the LGBTQIA+ community. The outdated language and revision in reference to these issues was discouraging and lacking in research. There are some great Egyptologists who are challenging these issues, but they are few and far between, which ultimately limited my ability to discuss these issues with support of Egyptologists and without hypothesizing too much. Unfortunately, history is not necessarily a topic that allows for revision of language. I found roadblocks with the use of outdated language and translation without conscious interpretation.

7.3 Limitations of the research

There were a variety of limitations to my research, the first being funding. As a self-funded and international investigator, I was limited in my ability to earn to support my research, and being outside of my home country was further limited to scholarships and grants that I would have been eligible for. I do believe that my research and production could have been expanded with more funding available to execute visits. I would have liked to expand deeper into Africa, South America, and Asia, specifically into tribal regions. With a limited annual budget and grants available for investigating an arts and humanities research project my scope was limited.

Though I am an ally to and advocate for the LGBTQIA+ community, I do believe my perspective was limited on the topic. Though I did an immense amount of research and classes in gender studies, I will always be lacking personal experience in this area. I believe that my research has helped individuals in the community and it is my hope that more research like this is carried out in the future to ensure an even more thorough perspective is taken and the gaps in my perspective are filled. I recognize that my research, as mentioned previously, could have been deeper with more research collection workshops, including more interviews and diverse perspectives, but I do believe that this research has been conclusive enough regarding this specific topic and considering these suggestions were proposed in fragments after the production aspect was completed.

Overall, given my resources and the connections made, I believe that the research executed has provided valuable information for further researchers and expanded the knowledge of this specific area.

While the works developed in this thesis are not meant for commercial reproduction, rather a small-scale individual practice, they gesture toward funerary culture as a more personalized, accessible, and identity-driven routine. The accessibility of materials, such as resin, clay, and instant photography, challenge the exclusivity of traditional funerary goods and practices. They challenge how personal expression is often filtered through religious, commercial, or institutional obligations. If these practices were more widely adopted, they could trigger broader cultural shifts regarding funerary art practices. This thesis suggests that creative control over one's posthumous narrative is not only an artistic opportunity but also speculates a sociocultural necessity, particularly for those whose identities are often suppressed or erased by dominant commemorative frameworks.

7.4 Recommendations for future research

I am pleased with the overall outcome of my research and investigation, as well as production. I do believe there is further research that could be done on this topic in particular, specifically the aforementioned investigative workshops. Further interviews or even follow-up interviews would be beneficial for future research on this topic. Because this research topic aims for the 'artist' to create works spanning their lifetime, it would be interesting to do so, perhaps meeting with the same participants every decade and engaging in one of the mentioned investigative workshops. Though it is not applicable to this doctoral research, given time restraints, I believe it would give better insight into the practical applications of the research that I have already completed. It would be fascinating to see how participants' identities change or don't change over time and how they feel these works or mediums actually reflect their identity self-expression. Another interesting aspect would be to see the effects of age, ability/disability, illness, and memory have on the research and art production itself. Finally, in the same study, document how the materials change over the years, including how policy changes affect the materials available or if they are improved over time.

These reflections on longevity and accessibility provide a natural entry point into further considerations about material innovation and the global applicability of these methods. The experimental projects conducted throughout this research act as examples as to how material-based art practices can serve as accessible and equitable tools for identity expression. The three creative methods explored provide flexible options that accommodate a range of needs, including those of individuals with disabilities, varying levels of artistic experience, and different socio-economic backgrounds. Each method invites active, meaningful participation and allows for the creation of layered, honest expressions of identity. Importantly, these approaches support identity as an evolving practice—something that can be developed and revisited over time. As argued throughout this thesis, these forms of creative engagement can empower individuals to take ownership of their identity narratives, intentionally shaping and reshaping them in response to their lived experiences. These projects serve as personal proposals and though they are not supported by sociodemographic evidence, they are an invitation based on personal life experience.

By closely examining three important mediums from Ancient Egypt and adapting their contemporary counterparts I accomplished three main goals throughout this research. First, by analyzing identity through the lens as an artist, I discovered that many people within the research wanted to express their authentic identities and by using resin as an adaptable medium I could create a layered identity through collage and the gathering of artifacts, all which exhibited the past self and the present self in a way that can be continually layered upon, giving flexibility to the 'artist' in discerning how much of their past would they be willing to expose, with a variety of methods to obscure it, if desired.

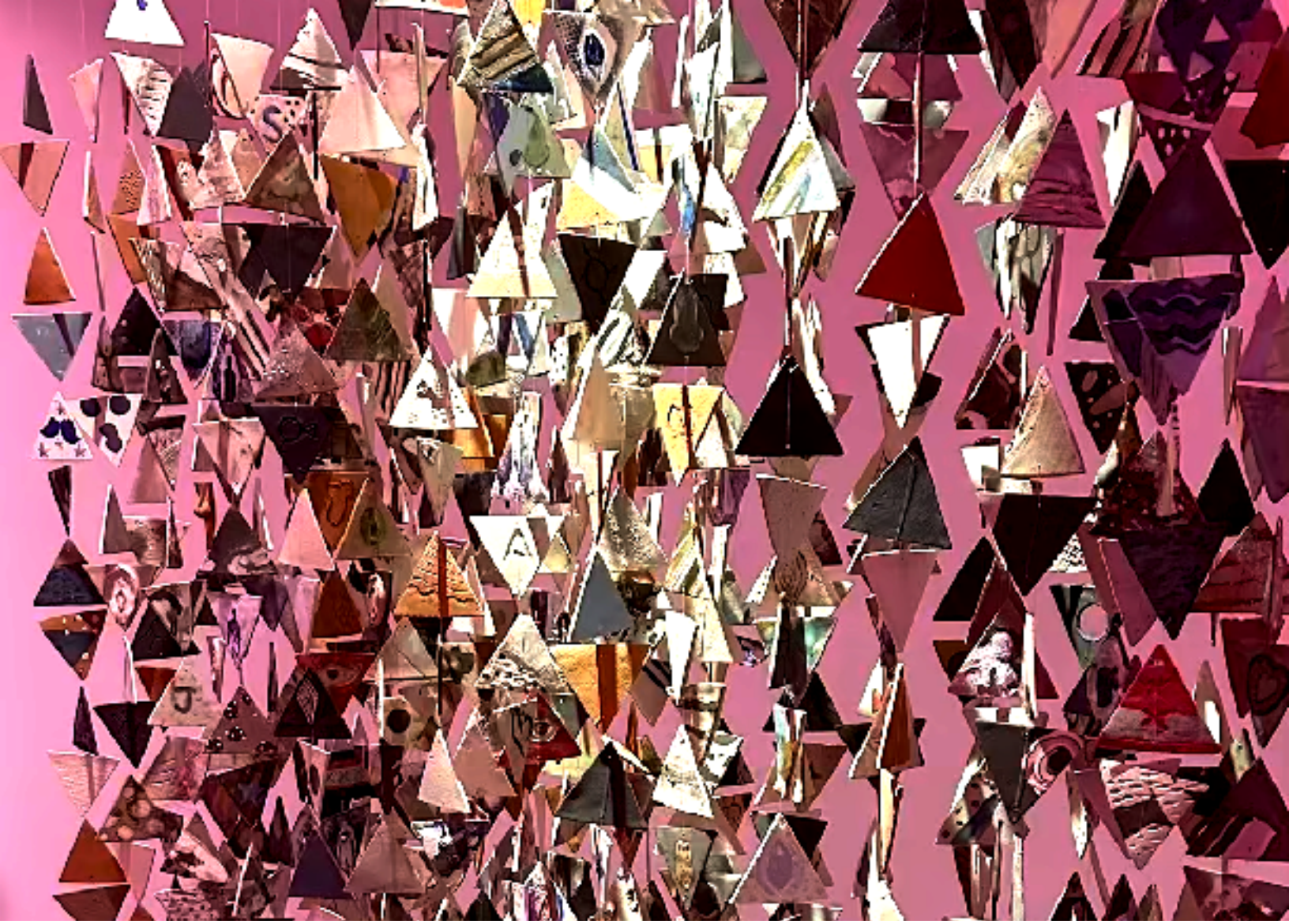
The projects carried out during this research period have highlighted the significance of three materials historically used in Ancient Egypt as successful mediums for conveying and preserving individual identity. Looking forward, there is potential for the development of new materials that are both more accessible in cost and more effective in encapsulating identity. These materials could also support more environmentally sustainable practices, making them suitable for broader use without requiring substantial financial investment. The methods explored in this research are not limited to any one cultural or socio-economic context, which supports their application across diverse communities. This adaptability allows individuals to select materials and processes that align with their own means and values, offering accessible and meaningful ways to engage in identity expression over time.

The incorporation of artistic practices into contemporary funeral industries may lead to changes in how societies commemorate death and construct posthumous identity. These artistic practices have the potential to allow individuals and families to reclaim authorship over death rituals (Cann, 2014). This personalization of identity not only challenges the homogenization of conventional funerals and funerary practices, but also introduces new mediums for cultural expression. This could foster a more inclusive and diverse landscape of mourning (Walter, 1996). Such shifts could influence societal attitudes toward death over time and encourage a move away from sanitized detachment of death. This could move society toward more reflective, creative, and participatory engagements with grief and memory.

In the course of my investigation, I discovered a very positive response to the use of my Fuji Instax photos, and began making connections with the Ancient Egypt research that I already had underway. Understanding the Ancient Egyptian methods of describing one's life through reliefs and frescoes in their tomb chapel, displayed in picturesque motifs, like snapshots, I found a medium that could function for a greater number of people, one that is accessible and easy to use, and functioned as an intimate means of expression. These nostalgic generating photos allow individuals to photograph specific aspects of their lives, group them and display them in the specific way that expresses their authentic identity. By doing this initially, providing examples of cross-cultural identity through this medium, with intimate to mundane images, I was efficient in demonstrating the ease of finding aspects and moments that could be deemed influential or expressive of oneself.

Through artifact collection in the first part of my investigation that produced *Private Views*, the resin collage series, I delved deeper into artifacts and their importance to both the deceased and their survivors. I made the same correlation with the Ancient Egyptians, theirs often made of stone, ceramics, or wood, among other materials. I found that many pieces made for the lower classes were made of clay, sparsely decorated or glazed, but offered this crucial aspect to a range of consumers at the time. Through this *The Gender Veil* was developed. This project allows the artist to design, create, and manipulate their artifacts in the exact ways they wish, with as little or as much detail as they would like. As another project that can also span a lifetime, this would permit the individual to change aspects of their observable identity simply and conveniently, while also providing artifacts that could be distributed posthumously.

These three projects, constructed throughout the research provides alternative artistic methods of authentic identity expression, a creative outlet for self-expression, as well as distributable personal and handcrafted artifacts posthumously, all while providing access to a variety of different people that furnish adaptable mediums to budgets, lifestyles, and abilities.



CONSTRUCCIÓN de IDENTIDAD A TRAVÉS del ARTE FUNERARIO DENTRO de los LENGUAJES CONTEMPORÁNEOS y SUS ADAPTACIONES

Theresa Wilshusen

Director: Carlos Barragán
Entregado: junio 2025

UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE VALÈNCIA

ÍNDICE

Introducción 310

Capítulo 1 322
Género y Feminismo en la Sociedad Contemporánea

Capítulo 2 353
Estudios Socioculturales Sobre Género y Feminismo en Egipto

Capítulo 3 404
Género y Feminismo en el Antigo Egipto

Capítulo 4 469
El Muerte

Capítulo 5 518
La Identidad

Capítulo 6 571
Proyectos en Referencia a la Investigación

Capítulo 7 615
Conclusiones Finales

Referencias 630

Apéndices

A 649
B 651
C 660

Construcción de identidad a través del arte funerario dentro de los lenguajes contemporáneos y sus adaptaciones

Theresa Wilshusen
Director: Carlos Barragán

UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA DE VALÈNCIA

INTRODUCCIÓN

Introducción

Esta investigación se centra en la capacidad de expresar la identidad auténtica mediante el uso de medios artísticos contemporáneos que hacen referencia a los utilizados en el Antiguo Egipto.

Esta tesis examina la muerte, el morir y la construcción de la identidad a través de la vida y su expresión en los ritos sobre la muerte. Esta tesis se centrará en la cultura occidental (Estados Unidos como país principal, con evidencia de respaldo de otros países americanos) y la cultura egipcia, que servirá de punto de comparación sobre las prácticas funerarias dentro de las religiones mayoritarias de estos países, junto con un desglose del arte funerario. Las comparaciones entre la cultura antigua de Egipto con su cultura contemporánea, nos permitirán examinar la expresión de las identidades sexuales y de género a través del arte. Esto nos permitirá examinar la cultura funeraria de los Estados Unidos desde poco después de su nacimiento hasta sus prácticas contemporáneas. De igual manera, esta tesis explorará cómo el feminismo contemporáneo empodera a los individuos no binarios y cómo el arte se ve influenciado por la expresión auténtica de la propia identidad, tanto en las culturas contemporáneas como en las antiguas. Esta tesis concluye con un examen de tres proyectos experimentales realizados y terminados durante esta investigación en los que se ha puesto de manifiesto la construcción de una identidad interseccional y su expresión a través del uso del arte, reinventado como obra de arte funeraria.

Esta tesis se enmarca como investigación artística, más precisamente como investigación a través de la práctica artística. La metodología es crítica y generativa, basada en la producción artística como modo de indagación. Mediante una combinación de análisis histórico, contextualización sociopolítica y experimentación creativa, exploro cómo la identidad puede expresarse ante la muerte a través de una práctica artística materialmente comprometida. Debido a esta estructura metodológica, alterno entre perspectivas en primera y tercera persona a lo largo de los capítulos. Esto refleja mi doble rol como investigador y artista, y refleja los registros cambiantes necesarios para moverme entre la teoría, la reflexión personal y la producción creativa. Cada capítulo comienza con una breve nota metodológica que describe su función específica y su enfoque disciplinario, lo que ayuda a enmarcar los diversos estilos de lenguaje, que van desde lo académico formal hasta lo íntimo y reflexivo, dependiendo del rol del capítulo dentro de la tesis en su conjunto.

Esta tesis sugiere que las identidades interseccionales de un individuo pueden representarse de manera más claras tras su muerte; al recopilar y hacer converger estas identidades antes de la muerte, uno puede utilizar el arte contemporáneo para tratar de expresarse después de la muerte, dejando instrucciones precisas y la infraestructura necesaria, tal y como lo hacían los antiguos egipcios a través de su trabajo funerario, mientras pasaban sus vidas preparándose para su otra vida. Al tener en cuenta la evolución de identidades variadas e interseccionales, el arte crea espacio para la flexibilidad, la alteración y la superposición de identidades mientras mantiene costumbres y/o tradiciones.

Discutiremos influencias políticas y militares recientes, cuestiones sociales y aspectos religiosos que influyen y afectan la expresión de género y otras identidades tanto en la vida como en la representación de la muerte desde la antigüedad, en el Antiguo Egipto, como en la época contemporánea. Presto mucha atención a la difícil situación de los grupos vulnerables, especialmente la comunidad LGBTQIA+ y las mujeres, en particular las egipcias, ya que se ven profundamente afectadas por la política y la religión. Hacemos referencia a una variedad de fuentes: artículos y estudios académicos, organizaciones de derechos humanos, artículos de noticias, publicaciones de egiptología y otros textos, entrevistas y otros estudios de investigación.

A lo largo de esta disertación se presentarán una variedad de temas que están interconectados a través de la expresión de género. Damos una mirada amplia a los fenómenos sociales y políticos, así como a las cuestiones sociales en Egipto y las Américas, y se analiza cómo afectan al género y otras formas de autoexpresión. También discutiremos los aspectos socioculturales que se ven afectados por las situaciones antes mencionadas para dar una perspectiva amplia de los asuntos prevalecientes y demostrar cómo las culturas nativas pueden ser un ejemplo para las sociedades contemporáneas de todo el mundo. Esta investigación me ha acercado a una realidad de los grupos específicos de Egipto, como es la comunidad LGBTQIA. Es parte importante del contexto de mi investigación y del trabajo creativo producido durante la producción de esta tesis. Esta investigación contextual contribuye a mi posicionamiento crítico como observadora externa pero comprometida. Como mujer heterosexual cisgénero de Estados Unidos con un interés constante en Egipto debido a interrelaciones personales, abordo el tema desde una perspectiva estadounidense, pero desde la observación participante y no desde una visión vivencial familiar de alguien que ha nacido y vivido en Egipto. Esta posición me permite seguir siendo reflexiva y mantener una conciencia crítica acerca de los materiales empleados en mi producción artística y su conexión con la cultura que los inspiró.

Actualmente descubrimos que hay una gran falta de autoexpresión en el arte funerario contemporáneo. Hemos observado que muchas personas no planifican su muerte más que un seguro o una póliza de fallecimiento, y muchos jóvenes hacen menos que eso, y hay menos personas capaces de ahorrar para tales situaciones. Mientras hacíamos las investigaciones preliminares, descubrimos que los preparativos para la muerte del Antiguo Egipto eran realmente profundos, profundamente arraigados en creencias religiosas de una vida futura que era mucho más importante que la vida en la Tierra. Si bien no somos personas religiosas, la preparación y la dedicación del arte funerario nos parecieron fascinantes y extravagantes, pero también cuidadosas y deliberadas. La devoción que tenían los antiguos egipcios por elegir al mejor artesano que les fuera asequible era inspiradora. Esto nos impulsó a examinar los hábitos occidentales con respecto a los preparativos para la muerte y este ha sido uno de los aprendizajes profundos obtenidos con esta investigación.

A través del estudio preliminar encontramos muchos obstáculos que debiera enfrentar la población en general para tener control de sus identidades y cómo se pueden expresar en el momento de la muerte, especialmente los problemas financieros para prepararse para tal

situación y que para muchos parece un plan lejano. Estas desventajas pueden volverse mayores cuando el individuo es parte de la comunidad LGBTQIA. Estas disparidades son a menudo transculturales y afectan a otros grupos minoritarios y desfavorecidos. Una de las propuestas de esta investigación es que hace que la autoexpresión (expresión de identidad) sea más precisa, asequible y adaptable para estos grupos que el arte funerario tradicional, al mismo tiempo que proporciona artefactos personales hechos a mano.

Este trabajo propone la posibilidad que puede tener cualquier persona para crear nuevas formas de autoexpresión de identidad a través de medios creativos que permiten al "artista", exponer con precisión la propia narrativa de sus vidas pre-mortem (antes de la muerte). Esto permite al 'artista' ser flexible, adaptar y alterar sus identidades como quiera, sin crear inconsistencias, sino una línea de tiempo más precisa, para que cuando llegue a la muerte, en cualquier momento, su última obra creada sea la más precisa y veraz expresión de su identidad.

El propósito de esta investigación fue encontrar una manera en que las personas normales, pero más específicamente, las personas subrepresentadas y vulnerables, tuvieran formas nuevas y creativas de autoexpresión que articulen con precisión su identidad a medida que evolucionan.

Los tres proyectos experimentales presentados en esta tesis (*Vistas Privadas*, *El Velo de Género* y *Buscando Uno Mismo*), como reinterpretaciones contemporáneas y personales de algunos ritos del antiguo Egipto, emplean materiales específicos que corresponden a temas conceptuales de identidad, memoria y muerte. El uso de resina, cerámica y fotografía instantánea es una reinterpretación de materiales tradicionales como sustancias para embalsamar, vasijas de arcilla y representaciones visuales de los difuntos. Estos materiales, propongo yo, tienen una resonancia simbólica e histórica con el Antiguo Egipto, a la vez que son muy accesibles para las personas contemporáneas. Fueron elegidos por su asequibilidad, portabilidad y facilidad de uso, requiriendo poca o ninguna capacitación técnica. Esto los hace inclusivos y factibles para que personas de diversos orígenes económicos y artísticos los utilicen para la conservación de su propia identidad funeraria en el caso de que sientan una identificación con esta propuesta. Su uso conecta las prácticas antiguas con la cultura material contemporánea, ofreciendo tanto continuidad histórica como flexibilidad adaptativa.

Esquema de los capítulos

El capítulo uno analiza las perspectivas contemporáneas de las culturas estadounidense y egipcia, utilizando como referencia al feminismo y su ausencia en ambas culturas, así como la expresión del género y su opresión. Este capítulo identifica las perspectivas occidentales actuales sobre género y feminismo y demuestra cómo las actitudes en torno a estos conceptos están cambiando y/o evolucionando a pesar de las medidas de unos pocos para interferir y detener el progreso. Continúa explicando cómo las redes sociales desempeñan un papel de extensión y comunidad para las personas LGBTQIA+ con poco o ningún apoyo, mostrando que la expresión de la propia identidad auténtica es necesaria para la experiencia humana, para sentirse aceptado y tal vez comprendido. Damos ejemplos de cambios a lo largo del tiempo en los Estados Unidos y ejemplos

contemporáneos en toda América, incluidos algunos pueblos indígenas, pero también proporcionamos algunos ejemplos de cambios que ya han ocurrido en Europa con respecto a la expresión de género.

En la segunda sección de este capítulo, hablamos de las perspectivas occidentales sobre Egipto y de cómo las ideas erróneas sobre el pueblo egipcio pueden dañar o sofocar los movimientos feministas que ocurren hoy en Egipto. Los ejemplos proporcionados por la historia de los movimientos de mujeres en Egipto ayudan a enmarcar una identidad cultural para las mujeres y cómo la fusión de política y religión retrasa el progreso de alguna manera. Este capítulo también examina cómo la Revolución Egipcia de 2011 sacó a la luz el papel de la mujer egipcia como activista, pero al hacerlo, también sacó a la luz el sexismo y la violencia contra las mujeres que aún persisten en el Egipto contemporáneo. Sin embargo, estos acontecimientos alentaron un mayor diálogo sobre las mujeres y sus roles en la política, especialmente aquellos que dan forma a las vidas de las mujeres, hablando de los cambios que han estado ocurriendo desde la Revolución, pero cómo con el régimen de El-Sisi. Algunos de los movimientos de mujeres han sido secuestrados para obtener beneficios políticos. Se explica cómo esto continúa afectando la identidad de muchas personas en Egipto, no sólo de las mujeres, a través de intentos de homogeneizar la identidad egipcia en versiones idealizadas de una cultura interseccional compleja. Examinamos la agencia de las mujeres en el Egipto contemporáneo tal y como es cuestionada y descartada en la política egipcia contemporánea.

El capítulo dos profundiza en los impactos sociales, religiosos y culturales sobre el género y la expresión de género, así como en cómo se percibe y [mal] usa el feminismo y cómo eso impide un mayor cambio. Examina cómo las mujeres egipcias siguen trayectorias diferentes a las de sus madres en general y cómo esto afecta y se ve afectado por la educación, el matrimonio, el divorcio, los roles de género en el hogar y fuera del hogar: ser cuidadora en el hogar, [doméstico], abuso, política y viudez. Analizamos cómo estos factores afectan la vida de las mujeres, así como su empoderamiento y, en última instancia, cómo afectan a todos los géneros.

Se analiza cómo la religión se ha apropiado de la cultura, la política y la identidad egipcias, demostrando, para bien o para mal, la influencia que la religión ha tenido en Egipto como nación. Explicamos cómo la religión niega la representación auténtica de las identidades interseccionales que existen dentro de la cultura y por qué eso es potencialmente destructivo para la misma. Este capítulo evita el uso de terminología identitaria fuerte para evitar posibles conflictos o restricciones, así como para futuras publicaciones en la región.

Los capítulos uno y dos forman parte de la investigación fundamental necesaria para comprender el contexto cultural. Esta es una parte crucial de la investigación, tanto para la referencia a la cultura egipcia como para la comunidad LGBTQIA+, ya que, como investigadora que no pertenece ni proviene de ninguno de los grupos, es importante comprender ambas comunidades al máximo de mis capacidades, ya que constituyen aspectos cruciales y fundamentales de esta tesis. Tratar cada una de estas comunidades, en particular en el Egipto prerrevolucionario, revolucionario

(2011) y posrevolucionario, como estudios de caso para la investigación de la identidad, es el medio idóneo para comprender el cambio de la identidad colectiva.

Analizamos cómo la cultura egipcia está siendo reformulada de manera idealista, poniendo a los grupos vulnerables en situaciones peligrosas y a veces mortales, y cómo apoyar o permitir a estos grupos vulnerables también puede ser motivo de prisión. Examinamos cómo la supresión de la expresión de identidad auténtica altera la cultura y puede crear animosidad hacia quienes restringen la libertad de expresión, lo que, a su vez, podría provocar más protestas o tal vez alimentar revoluciones futuras. Además, mostramos cómo los medios de comunicación, incluidas las redes sociales, pueden actuar como aliados en la lucha por la autoexpresión en Egipto, pero con grandes riesgos personales y profesionales, ya que pueden ser acusados y encarcelados por libertinaje. Por último, explicamos por qué la libertad de expresión de la identidad es importante, especialmente en Egipto, ya que afecta en gran medida a las personas LGBTQIA+, que son en gran medida las más violadas.

El capítulo tres se centra en los conceptos contemporáneos sobre género y feminismo incorporados y utilizados en el Antiguo Egipto, ampliando su aplicabilidad a las costumbres y cómo se vieron afectados por ellas. En la primera sección de este capítulo, demuestro cómo se retrataba el género en el Antiguo Egipto en la alta sociedad, en la religión y culturalmente, así como su papel en diferentes aspectos de la cultura del Antiguo Egipto: en el matrimonio, con respecto a la fertilidad, dentro del familia y hogar, cómo se veía fuera del hogar y sus implicaciones económicas y jurídicas.

En la segunda sección, *La representación de género en la muerte y su mayor significado para la identidad en la vida,* explicamos cómo los antiguos egipcios pasaban sus vidas construyendo sus identidades en preparación para la muerte, en la que podrían continuar eternamente una versión ampliada de la vida. En *lideraron en la tierra en la otra vida e*xplicamos cómo se creó y mantuvo la identidad en vida y qué significó eso para su vida futura.

Finalmente, en la tercera sección de este capítulo, *Qué significa ser un hombre/mujer en el Antiguo Egipto a través de referencias artísticas*, identificamos tres formas principales en que un individuo expresaba su identidad: a través de medios pictóricos, escultóricos y textuales. Si bien estos métodos a menudo estaban reservados para las élites y la realeza, parte de la clase media pretendía hacer lo mismo.

El capítulo cuatro investiga las tradiciones funerarias contemporáneas tanto en Estados Unidos como en Egipto, comparándolas con sus prácticas históricas previas en cada cultura respectivamente, e incluye las religiones mayoritarias tanto en Estados Unidos como en Egipto como referencia. Esta comparación permite establecer conexiones con respecto a las prácticas, costumbres y tradiciones de religiones y culturas, además, cómo los individuos expresan sus identidades en el momento de la muerte a través de una variedad de medios, incluidos la fotografía, la ropa, el maquillaje, los artefactos personales y los objetos compartidos. *Cuentos*

explica además el significado de la muerte y cómo afecta la identidad, con especial énfasis en el Antiguo Egipto, lo que da como resultado la expresión de las identidades verdaderas y preferidas del individuo a través del arte funerario artesanal.

Primero identificamos las prácticas funerarias en la América moderna y cómo la identidad se entrelaza y se revela en la muerte. Incluímos las prácticas funerarias como parte de la identidad del individuo, relacionadas con sus deseos finales, tradiciones religiosas y solicitudes de la familia sobreviviente. Comparamos estas prácticas y tradiciones con las del Egipto contemporáneo para proporcionar elementos identificables, mostrando la importancia de la identidad en los procesos funerarios y de entierro.

Posteriormente, comparamos las prácticas contemporáneas con las de los antiguos egipcios para demostrar los puntos en común en las tradiciones a lo largo de los siglos, así como resaltar la importancia fundamental de la identidad y cómo, en el Antiguo Egipto, era importante para la supervivencia tanto en esta vida como en la otra vida.

El capítulo cinco compara los métodos contemporáneos de expresión de la identidad con los de los antiguos egipcios, utilizando el arte como factor común. Este capítulo también examina cómo se cuestiona la heteronormatividad en la búsqueda de una expresión auténtica de la identidad. La primera sección de este capítulo explica cómo la expresión de identidad ha sido subvertida a través de la religión y la política durante décadas de gobierno autocrático con la subyugación de grupos vulnerables, incluidos LGBTQIA+ y mujeres, específicamente en el Egipto contemporáneo.

En la siguiente sección analizamos el papel del arte en el activismo de las mujeres occidentales que ha obligado a otros grupos a aparecer y exigir un mejor trato; y en última instancia el derecho a la autoexpresión. Examinamos diferentes tipos de identidad: vertical y horizontal, y cómo esto afecta la forma en que se expresa. Además, utilizando estos conceptos, consideramos cómo el arte reinterpreta materiales y procesos que pueden, a su vez, aumentar la conciencia y desarrollar empatía por individuos que son bastante diferentes entre sí.

Más adelante, analizamos dos entrevistas diferentes de artistas femeninas feministas contemporáneas. Una es un ceramista estadounidense, budista y transgénero; la otra es una artista visual egipcia, musulmána, que trabaja con una variedad de medios, principalmente cerámica y vidrio. Estas entrevistas examinan los roles que juegan sus identidades interseccionales en su arte y cómo su arte les sirve en la expresión de su identidad.

En la siguiente sección, analizamos las formas contemporáneas en que se preserva y continúa la identidad post-mortem, basadas en tradiciones, religión o simplemente un deseo de ser recordado. Estas expresiones suelen ser actos o prácticas que conllevan un significado para los familiares de los moribundos o fallecidos. Los objetos comunes pueden convertirse en artefactos de la propia identidad y convertirse en arte a través del proceso de conmemoración, cuando alguien otorga importancia a un elemento que de otro modo no sería extraordinario. Algunos

optan por dejar atrás identidades que tenían anteriormente para destacar otras que tal vez los conviertan en mejores personas en el más allá. Hablamos de cómo los sobrevivientes celebran y lloran a los fallecidos de una manera que perpetúa sus identidades.

Finalmente, se exponen los problemas de la perspectiva masculina heterosexual anticuada de la egiptología que distorsionan la comprensión de las inscripciones y el uso de las obras de arte. Una perspectiva occidental y colonial que da lugar a interpretaciones erróneas, que pasa por alto aspectos significativos para la expresión de la identidad, que pueden haber apoyado conceptos no binarios sobre la identidad.

El capítulo seis es un desglose de las metodologías de cada uno de los tres proyectos creados a lo largo de la investigación de esta tesis. Cada proyecto aborda posibles formas de expresión de la identidad después de la muerte: preservación a través de resina, construcción y reconstrucción de identidades fracturadas en cerámica y creación de una narrativa a través de imágenes (fotografía instantánea). Estos proyectos exploran tangencialmente la expresión de género a través de tres materiales específicos: resina, arcilla y fotografía instantánea, como una forma de conectar con la cultura egipcia antigua y contemporánea, así como con la comunidad LGBTQIA+, sin pertenecer específicamente a ninguna de ellas. La investigación sobre estas comunidades ayuda a encontrar paralelismos e intersecciones entre sus complejas identidades.

Cada proyecto se relaciona con un aspecto del material del Antiguo Egipto que se usó para expresar la identidad; sin embargo, se utilizaron materiales contemporáneos para demostrar su importancia en la preservación de la identidad en la sociedad contemporánea.

Vistas Privadas es una serie de collages de resina que superponen identidades conceptualizadas mediante el uso de una variedad de materiales 2D y 3D. La resina contemporánea actúa como la de los antiguos egipcios, preservando la identidad seleccionando artefactos encapsulados que representen mejor al individuo.

El Velo de Género es una instalación escultórica de cientos de triángulos cerámicos. Estos triángulos se crean a partir de una variedad de arcillas diferentes, impregnadas de imágenes, colores, texturas y símbolos, destinados a ser interpretados individualmente de manera individual. Cada hilo contiene diferentes tipos de triángulos colgados de la cabeza a los pies y cada dos triángulos los restantes se colocan al revés. La mezcla de arcillas representa la variedad de individuos y las complejidades de identidades que cada uno de nosotros posee.

Buscando Uno Mismo*,* una instalación escultórica de fotografía instantánea, permite a los espectadores cuestionarse sobre aspectos que los han moldeado, les permite encontrar puntos en común con otros muy diferentes a ellos y fomenta una discusión abierta sobre lo que constituye la identidad propia. Cuestiona la diferencia entre identidad sexual e identidad de género y la variedad de factores que conforman ambas. El proyecto cuestiona también si la identidad se puede representar en el arte, a través de una variedad de formas, pero

específicamente a través de la fotografía instantánea.

Metodología

Esta investigación comenzó con indagaciones residuales sobre la decoración en tumbas y el uso de objetos funerarios como identificación de los difuntos en los estudios de maestría. El trabajo comenzó a desarrollarse a través de más investigaciones sobre el uso de *shabtis* en prácticas funerarias en el antiguo Egipto, junto con frescos y relieves de tumbas. A través de un enfoque cualitativo, se comenzó a investigar los materiales y sus propósitos, junto con el "¿por qué?".

A través de esta investigación sentimos curiosidad por saber si esta identidad de clase y autoexpresión eran sólo entre la élite o si era común en toda la sociedad egipcia. A medida que la investigación reveló más información, comenzamos a formular la hipótesis sobre grupos históricamente subrepresentados, como los gays y las lesbianas en el mundo antiguo. Descubrimos contenidos que apuntaban hacia la idea de que existió la autoexpresión de identidades homosexuales. Estos contenidos, sin embargo, son producto de egiptólogos de la época victoriana, quienes tenían su propios sesgos de género, propios de su época histórica, que concluyeron que estas tumbas con representaciones homosexuales eran de "hermanos" de los difuntos, por ejemplo.

Cuestionamos la legitimidad de estas conclusiones ya que no había referencias concluyentes a tumbas de gays o lesbianas. Esto nos llevó a la pregunta de si existía una autoexpresión precisa en el Antiguo Egipto. A través de esta investigación descubrimos que la expresión de identidad auténtica existió y se documentó en varios casos. Descubrimos que la autoexpresión de género era mucho más accesible para las clases de la élite y la realeza y que los artesanos eran la columna vertebral de este proceso. Ellos hicieron posible que los individuos tuvieran lo que necesitaban para ser identificados después de la muerte, para que el difunto siguiera adelante en la otra vida y fuera reconocido con precisión. Esto se hizo a través de sus medios artísticos. Los antiguos egipcios dependían de los artesanos y sus producciones para la correcta identificación del difunto, así como para tener los elementos materiales necesarios para el sustento en el más allá.

Tuvimos que comparar estos aspectos del arte funerario del mundo occidental (los Estados Unidos de América en este caso) con el del mundo antiguo, para tener una perspectiva. Al comparar los dos descubrimos que había algunas similitudes: imágenes de los difuntos, historias sobre sus buenas obras en la tierra y versiones idealizadas de los difuntos, así como artefactos y otros aspectos funerarios, como la preservación y el ocultamiento de los restos del cuerpo antes del entierro.

Descubrimos que pocas personas se preparaban para la muerte como los antiguos egipcios. Hubo muchos factores que determinaron el razonamiento detrás de este fenómeno, pero la accesibilidad fue un aspecto importante. Para muchos, los medios financieros para prepararse para la muerte resultaron estar fuera de su alcance y confían en que los sobrevivientes sean

quienes gestionen ese asunto. Por lo tanto, los familiares sobrevivientes son los que asumen las tareas funerarias y también, la representación del difunto, lo que significa que se retrata al difunto desde la perspectiva de los sobrevivientes, a pesar de que éstos no tengan necesariamente una representación precisa del difunto.

Esta investigación nos llevó naturalmente a observar la muerte y las prácticas funerarias egipcias contemporáneas. Explorar los aspectos religiosos de los procesos funerarios nos llevó a los aspectos políticos que afectan en gran medida la identidad religiosa en Egipto. Al inspeccionar más a fondo la política sobre la identidad religiosa en Egipto, nos quedó claro que una identidad religiosa era aquella que estaba obligada por el gobierno egipcio y que las alternativas estaban prohibidas. Muchos procesos funerarios en Egipto, a pesar de la religión, son bastante similares a los de Occidente. Se descubre que las prácticas funerarias contemporáneas en Occidente y Egipto son menos representativas del individuo y versiones más genéricas o idealizadas del individuo.

Todo esto nos condujo a abordar el problema de la expresión precisa de la identidad en el arte funerario contemporáneo y, por tanto, en las prácticas funerarias. ¿Puede un individuo expresarse auténticamente, a través del arte funerario, como el del antiguo Egipto? Queríamos encontrar formas de sortear las normas, leyes y barreras culturales de las sociedades para brindarles a las personas una manera en la que pudieran expresarse de manera precisa y auténtica sus identidades después de la muerte, a través de una preparación previa. Teniendo en mente el trabajo y los métodos artesanales del Antiguo Egipto y a partir de las investigaciones anteriores, encontramos la importancia conectar los mundos antiguo y contemporáneo, lo que en última instancia proporcionó tres medios para realizar nuestra propuestas: resina, cerámica y fotografía (imágenes) [instantáneas].

Comenzamos con la cerámica, ya que desempeña muchas funciones importantes en las prácticas funerarias del antiguo Egipto: desde amuletos, *shabtis* y vasijas canópicas hasta cosas más prácticas, como recipientes para sus alimentos y bebidas. A través del proyecto cerámico, no queríamos, simplemente, utilizar el mismo método y medios en un contexto contemporáneo, sino que queríamos utilizar la cerámica como una representación del proceso de la vida con todos sus peligros y triunfos, así como una plataforma en la que se podían construir y descomponer conceptos, fragmentar identidades, reconstruirlas e incluso fusionarlas con otras. Mediante el uso de una variedad de arcillas de diferentes texturas, estilos y temperaturas, *El Velo de Genero* proporciona iconografía, lenguaje y los siete elementos del arte (línea, color, textura, forma, espacio y valor) para adaptarse y formar la identidad del creador, proporcionando un medio accesible y adaptable para que uno pueda expresar “auténticamente” su identidad. El individuo podría construir su identidad a lo largo del tiempo, a lo largo de años de su vida, conectando, mostrando y preservando su expresión artística de la forma que desee, mientras es creado por él mismo. Este, al igual que los otros proyectos que discutiremos, proporcionan artefactos que potencialmente pueden distribuirse póstumamente a los familiares sobrevivientes de manera individual.

El siguiente proyecto *Vistas Privadas*, que comenzó durante el proceso del proyecto antes mencionado *El Velo de Genero,* estuvo limitado en tiempo y temas. Este proyecto comenzó a través de pequeñas entrevistas a muchas personas con las que teníamos cierta familiaridad. Presentamos el plan de expresar identidades a través de capas fijadas en resina. Muchos participantes estaban comprometidos y emocionados al ver el resultado de sus identidades, pero muchos dudaban en que se incluyeran sus nombres, por precaución. Con respecto a eso, no proporcionamos ningún artefacto personal real suyo en estos collages y más bien interpretamos sus identidades, como si nosotros fuéramos los sobrevivientes que los describen. El concepto en la práctica sería que el propio individuo crearía las obras que se exhibirían, superponiendo sus propios artefactos en la resina, permitiendo nuevamente la accesibilidad y adaptabilidad en cualquier momento. Explicamos cómo este proyecto puede adaptarse a las necesidades individuales.

Durante la producción de *Vistas Privadas* mi propia madre falleció repentinamente y este proyecto adquirió una nueva profundidad. La investigación que había iniciado, de repente se volvió muy personal y mientras se completaba el trabajo, se hizo más evidente la necesidad de encontrar otro método. Al luchar por combinar y representar las identidades en conflicto que tantas personas me expresaban sobre mi madre, tuve que encontrar intersecciones de su identidad y aceptarlas como verdaderas, aunque tal vez ocultas para mí. En ese momento, esperaba más claridad y menos confusión sobre quién era ella y quién no era, pero en lugar de eso tenía que ser portadora de sus identidades ante su familia y amigos. Sabía que no necesariamente podía rechazar ninguna identidad específica como falsa, porque no podía estar segura, ella no había sido explícita sobre esos asuntos. Mientras miraba fotos que me enviaban de mi madre, mostrándome su infancia, de la que a ella no le gustaba hablar, sus primas me hablaron de ella. Aprendí sobre sus identidades pasadas a través de ellas. Encontré lo mismo en tumbas del antiguo Egipto, que mostraban las vidas pasadas de los difuntos. Esta conexión me llevó a encontrar otro medio en el que pudiera trabajar para expresar auténticamente mi identidad.

Para realizar las fotografías consideré varios tipos de películas y soportes, pero sentí que las imágenes debían ser algo intergeneracional y táctil, así que evité la fotografía digital. Primero, comencé con cámaras desechables, pero se volvió bastante complicado encontrar sitios para el revelado y la impresión de los carretes y el revelado e impresión independiente resultó ser demasiado costoso y/o difícil, menos accesible. Tenía la vieja cámara Polaroid de mi madre junto con algunas otras cámaras, así que la probé porque todavía tenía película. Cuando intenté comprar más películas, encontré que el formato Polaroid era bastante caro, pero proporcionaba el efecto deseado de una fotografía táctil, que es una mezcla de colores más oscuros manuales y automáticos que recordaban el pasado. Encontré una cámara FujiFilm (Instax Wide 300) que tenía un formato de fotografía diferente, ligeramente más pequeña que la Polaroid cuadrada, que logró los mismos objetivos por aproximadamente la mitad de precio. Tanto la cámara como la película resultaron accesibles a un mayor número de personas.

Buscando Uno Mismo se convirtió en el último de los tres proyectos que mejor facilitaron la

expresión auténtica de la identidad. Este medio resultó ser portátil y fácil de usar y se centra en capturar imágenes que uno podría ensamblar para construir una identidad desde cualquier aspecto minúsculo hasta lo grandioso de la vida. Esto permitiría echar una mirada íntima a la vida cualquiera, aspectos que a menudo no se ven desde una perspectiva externa. Este medio permite al "artista" capturar también escenas de grupos o culturas específicas. La portabilidad de este medio otorga al individuo la capacidad de organizar y reconstruir las fotografías de la manera que mejor las represente y exprese su identidad. Las imágenes se pueden adaptar a la actividad de cualquier individuo y, además, proporcionan artefactos que se pueden distribuir al morir, como los otros proyectos.

CAPÍTULO 1

GÉNERO Y FEMINISMO EN LA SOCIEDAD CONTEMPORÁNEA

Capítulo 1 – Género y feminismo en la sociedad contemporánea

Introducción

Actualmente, en nuestra sociedad, es importante entender cómo afecta el género en muchos de sus ámbitos, siendo el feminismo clave en el desarrollo social. Comprender el progreso que se ha producido en materia de género o la falta del mismo en una sociedad, puede ayudarnos a comprender la evolución de la misma hacia la inclusión de individuos de género no binario y analizar los efectos de la sociedad. Dichos estudios nos permiten identificar las áreas que precisan mejoras, definir la formación y preparación necesarias, además de otras aplicaciones prácticas para promulgar la inclusión. En la era contemporánea, tanto el estudio y posterior análisis podría, sin duda, ayudar a las comunidades involucradas a comprender mejor la importancia del feminismo en la sociedad y cómo puede servir mejorar sus comunidades, promover la innovación, la ciencia y la tecnología, expandir las artes y la cultura, y proporcionar una sociedad más segura para que todos forman una parte y participen equitativamente en ella.

Este capítulo se enmarca en la estructura general de esta tesis, tanto como trabajo de base contextual como indagación crítica. Desde un punto de vista metodológico, se basa en la teoría feminista, los estudios de género y el análisis sociocultural, a la vez que mantiene un diálogo con las artes visuales y la práctica artística. El lenguaje empleado en este capítulo reflejará un registro académico apropiado al contenido teórico crítico que aborda, mientras que los capítulos posteriores variarán en tono según su función, ya sea analítica, reflexiva o creativa. Esta variación se alinea con la naturaleza de la investigación artística como un proceso dinámico y complejo que se adapta a cambios de voz, enfoque disciplinario y compromiso posicional.

Como investigadora y artista, mi enfoque está determinado por mi posicionamiento específico: soy una mujer heterosexual cisgénero de Estados Unidos con un interés personal y académico en Egipto. Si bien no tengo vínculos familiares ni culturales con la región, mi investigación busca abordar Egipto de forma respetuosa y reflexiva, basada tanto en la distancia crítica como en el estudio continuo. Mi identidad inevitablemente informa la forma en que interpreto los datos y me relaciono con los sujetos, y soy consciente de las consideraciones éticas de trabajar interculturalmente, particularmente en regiones donde los discursos sobre género y feminismo a menudo son controvertidos o están políticamente y socialmente censurados.

En relación con esta tesis, abordar estos temas desde una perspectiva artística ha resultado necesario para descubrir maneras en que las personas vulnerables pueden expresar sus identidades de forma segura, imaginativa y auténtica. Partiendo de una comprensión fundamentada en las normas de género contemporáneas de la sociedad egipcia, tanto la metodología de investigación como las prácticas artísticas, se adaptaron conscientemente para ser culturalmente receptivas y contextuales. Estas adaptaciones fueron cruciales para crear entornos inclusivos y propicios para la exploración y expresión de la identidad a través del arte.

Este capítulo analiza la importancia del género y el feminismo en la sociedad contemporánea

como una forma de comprender dónde se encuentran actualmente las culturas occidental y oriental y por qué el desarrollo en este ámbito es importante, ya que, además de ser importante, su influencia en las regiones podría afectar de manera muy positiva en las vidas de muchas personas, individuos y comunidades, a través de las culturas basadas en principios feministas. No se puede subestimar la fuerza de la unión (intersección) del género y el feminismo, ya que se impulsan y se apoyan mutuamente. La interseccionalidad es “la manera compleja y acumulativa en que los efectos de múltiples formas de discriminación (como el racismo, el sexismo y el clasismo) se combinan, se superponen o se entrecruzan, especialmente en las experiencias de individuos o grupos marginados” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-b).El continuo crecimiento de la expresión de género necesita el apoyo de los ideales feministas para evolucionar de manera segura y justa ya que su ausencia puede crear surcos en los que un gran número de personas son ignoradas, desfavorecidas o, peor aún, perseguidas por su identidad.

Centrarse en estos aspectos impactan directamente sobre el arte ya que ofrece la posibilidad de expresarse de manera segura y auténtica. A través de la investigación se puede observar cómo una sociedad crece y se adapta a la igualdad de género, pudiendo adoptar el feminismo como base estructural y funcional, retratando una visión diferente a las comunidades que no han integrado el feminismo; la evolución en el arte y la autoexpresión afecta la capacidad de uno mismo a expresarse de manera auténtica y sin miedo.

Además, identificar cómo reaccionan los países en diferentes regiones a la expansión del reconocimiento y la inclusión de la igualdad de género puede conducir a mejores condiciones de vida de las personas marginadas. Este hecho podría resultar clave para comprender el simbolismo en el arte y la importancia de las formas en que se crea y exhibe, así como los medios utilizados. Podría, además, proporcionar información sobre una comprensión más profunda de la expresión individual de la sociedad a través de sus diferentes formas de arte.

Este capítulo aborda el género y el feminismo desde una perspectiva sociocultural e interseccional con raíces en la sociología y los estudios de género. Si bien no pretende ofrecer una visión general exhaustiva, el capítulo se basa en ejemplos seleccionados que ilustran los cambios sociales contemporáneos y su relación con la autoexpresión y la identidad. La investigación se fundamenta en metodologías feministas cualitativas, críticas e interseccionales, centrándose en cómo el feminismo y la teoría de género evolucionan en relación con las narrativas culturales, las redes sociales y la representación artística.

Como parte de un marco de investigación artística, el propósito no es solo establecer un contexto teórico, sino también crear la base conceptual necesaria para las obras que se desarrollan posteriormente en la tesis. Este capítulo adopta un tono académico alineado con la investigación en estudios de género y sienta las bases para comprender por qué los temas feministas y de género son cruciales para la autoexpresión artística en la sociedad contemporánea.

1.1 La perspectiva occidental: puntos de vista occidentales sobre el género y el feminismo

La "perspectiva occidental" se basa en una visión poscolonial de las visiones sociológicas actuales sobre el género y el feminismo en el mundo occidental contemporáneo. Estos se observan desde esta perspectiva con cierta consideración por los pueblos nativos, la religión y la política, mientras se utilizan ejemplos de las costumbres y culturas de los pueblos indígenas para navegar por los conceptos contemporáneos de feminismo y género. Al hacerlo, la "perspectiva occidental" se apropia de esas creencias nativas para reforzar la existencia de individuos no conformes con su género. Estos puntos de vista se basan en investigaciones sobre los pueblos nativos y sus tradiciones y creencias antes de su identificación oficial en Canadá en 1990, precolonización existente (Robinson, 2019). Por lo tanto, la "perspectiva occidental" demuestra la rica historia y la comprensión que los pueblos nativos han tenido del género y cómo han sido ejemplares al demostrar cómo las sociedades de todo el mundo pueden aceptar, comprender y apoyar las diferencias de género en un contexto contemporáneo (Robinson, 2019). La "perspectiva occidental" surge de la comprensión de las creencias y prácticas nativas precoloniales que han influido en los conceptos progresistas poscoloniales de individuos de "dos espíritus" o de "tercer género" (HRC Staff, 2020). (No estoy de acuerdo con estas afirmaciones. Si afirmas que los pueblos indígenas tienen una perspectiva de género anterior al feminismo, debes dar datos sobre de ello porque lo que conocemos es un muchos casos, una diferenciación de trabajos y lugares sociales ligados al género).

Esta sección discutirá las interseccionalidades del género y el feminismo analizando las actitudes actuales hacia el género y las personas no conformes con el género. Además, analizará los cambios sociológicos y políticos con respecto al género y el feminismo, así como las tendencias sociales que han ayudado y desalentado a las personas que no se ajustan al género a encontrar salidas para expresarse. Esta sección también discutirá el progreso intercultural en género y feminismo en occidente, incluyendo América del Norte y América del Sur.

1.1.2 Actitudes occidentales actuales

La visión occidental del género está evolucionando a medida que la sociedad observa las creencias y prácticas de los nativos con respecto a las personas no binarias, o aquellas que no se ajustan al género binario: hombre o mujer. El mundo occidental aún no es progresista, ya que solo hay unas pocas naciones en Occidente que reconocen oficialmente los géneros no binarios, lo cual discutiremos más adelante. A medida que evoluciona el reconocimiento del género no binario, como ya ocurre en la mayoría de las grandes ciudades tales como Nueva York, Los Ángeles, Chicago, Toronto o Vancouver, es probable que con el tiempo abarque a más y más personas.(Liszewski, et al., 2018). Y al igual que la expansión de las ciudades, la expansión del género también podría comenzar a incluir a más personas y, a través de ese acto, incorporar extensiones familiares y familias basadas en el diálogo, ya que de alguna manera están conectadas a un ser no binario. Esto no quiere decir que estén conectadas directamente, sino más bien a través a una asociación, ya que muchos no se verán afectados directamente en absoluto, dependiendo de la asociación más próxima al individuo no binario. Sin embargo, esta relación indirecta con el ser no binario permite la conversación y el conocimiento de los conceptos,

aunque sea desde una distancia significativa. Si bien esta simple conexión puede parecer insignificante, el hecho es que vincula a más seres binarios con un ser no binario y que amplía el alcance de los afectados, aunque solo sea mínimo, por un pequeño margen.

Esta conexión crea un diálogo, ya sea positivo o negativo, lo que permite la difusión del concepto y expone a las personas que de otro modo no estarían expuestas a estos conceptos e identidades. La exposición continua a un concepto a lo largo del tiempo comienza a normalizarlo, deteriorando lentamente la discriminación creada por ello. Si el individuo binario acepta o refuta los conceptos es irrelevante, ya que con el tiempo, el público en general normalizará el concepto (ya sea positiva o negativamente) sin necesidad de aceptación individual. Este es el caso de muchos otros temas no relacionados, como los programas sociales y los roles de género. A medida que cambian nuestras necesidades, también lo hacen nuestras expectativas. (No tengo claro la normalización negativa. Por ejemplo, se decía de las mujeres que no tenían las mismas facultades que los hombres y esta idea sigue siendo una realidad en muchas sociedades. O sea que si la sociedad repite una concepción negativa sobre lo no binario al final se creará un fuerte rechazo hacia eso, una discriminación).

Esta asociación afecta en gran medida al feminismo. Si bien puede parecer que no lo haría, de hecho tiene un gran impacto en él. El feminismo no es solo la causa de igualdad entre los sexos, sino de los géneros, independientemente de su estatus, raza, etnia, educación, ubicación, casta, etc. El feminismo es un acto consciente para comprender las desigualdades de género, las relaciones de poder, crear igualdad para todos, basado en las experiencias de roles y relaciones de género (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Aunque todavía hay rechazo por parte de algunas "feministas" sobre lo que se considera igualdad entre los géneros y dónde se debe trazar la línea, la idea fundamental detrás del feminismo es exactamente esa: crear igualdad para todos, independientemente del género (Álvarez, 2021). El diálogo sobre el género es un tema feminista, ya que tiene un efecto dominó en la sociedad: cuando un grupo se ve afectado negativamente, los efectos negativos se ven en otros grupos (Barsade, 2002).

Debido a la cantidad significativa de inacción y protección de los gobiernos conservadores, religiosos o fundamentalistas en Occidente, el progreso es lento tanto las leyes de inclusión como un amplio espectro de protecciones en los trabajos que no están vigentes para garantizar crecimiento y evolución sano y seguro de la sociedad (Davaki, 2012). A nivel local, se está haciendo más, en gobiernos locales y en pequeñas empresas, que proclaman voluntariamente que no discriminan y aceptan abiertamente a los trabajadores no binarios sin prejuicios (Cusick, et al., 2017). Los gobiernos locales y las personas pueden ayudar a acabar con los estigmas a través de políticas de discriminación cero, fomentando la tolerancia y las operaciones de género. Las innovaciones tecnológicas y científicas amplían sus plantillas como resultado de la diversidad de género, especialmente entre las empresas más grandes que pueden obtener una población empresarial más grande y diversa; pero también, a través del tipo de innovación en cuestión (Teruel & Segarra-Blasco, s.f.). A menudo, las comunidades pequeñas que aceptan y celebran la diversidad, no solo entre sexo y género, sino también a través de la raza y el origen étnico,

muestran una resolución de problemas más creativa que las que son monolíticas (Dickey et al., 2016). Esto es evidente en sectores como las artes, la tecnología, el desarrollo de productos y en política, incluidos otros sectores (Zheng, 2020). Diversas culturas piensan de manera diferente y, a través de la experiencia cultural, han desarrollado sus propios métodos para resolver problemas que se adaptan a sus entornos específicos y necesidades sociológicas. Es crucial tener una gama de diversidad dentro de una comunidad para fomentar el crecimiento y la aceptación de la evolución del género a medida que cambia la mentalidad de la sociedad.

1.1.2 Cambios en las actitudes de las personas no conformes con el género

Inevitablemente, las conversaciones acerca del género en las personas que no están conformes con su género, tendrán lugar entre los seres queridos, donde a menudo existen síntomas de duelo, tales como las etapas de negación, incredulidad, ira y negociación, entre otras (Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2021). Si bien este no siempre es el caso, no es raro, ya que las personas se están abriendo a un nuevo concepto que cambia su comprensión general del individuo no binario (Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2021). Cuando se revela el yo auténtico, a menudo hay verdades subyacentes que surgen y las actuaciones previas de la norma de género dejan de existir o ya no se realizan. Esto puede resultar molesto para aquellos que no están acostumbrados al verdadero yo del otro, ya que el yo auténtico puede aparecer como una actuación repentina. A la persona que reconoce el “nuevo género” le puede parecer que ha "perdido" a la persona que conocía antes, por lo que los sentimientos a menudo se presentan en el duelo (Pullen Sansfaçon et al., 2021). Es probable que otros casos sea menos dramático, pero pueda existir confusión o incredulidad del amigo o familiar para con el individuo no binario; puede darse una sensación de comprensión o conocimiento, lo que lleva a la aceptación inmediata y rápida por parte del individuo conforme al género, dependiendo de su comprensión y antecedentes del concepto. Es posible que este ser querido sea consciente de la circunstancia, dando más espacio para que el individuo no binario salga con menos explicaciones y más aceptación.

Este último contexto de comprensión se está volviendo más común, pero siguen dándose muchos casos del primer supuesto, especialmente en comunidades rurales, conservadoras o religiosas, aunque no exclusivamente (Kaplan et al., 2019). Algunas comunidades rurales a menudo se consideran "tradicionales" o "conservadoras" porque existen normas vigentes que no se han alterado durante muchas generaciones. Esto conduce a una sensación de estancamiento en el crecimiento de la familia o comunidad en cuanto a conocimiento del género. Cuando las normas no se cuestionan, con el tiempo puede parecer que cualquier cambio o desafío a dichas normas es "incorrecto" y puede crear confusión. Se puede llegar al caso de expulsión a los miembros de la familia o comunidad que no piensan de la misma manera, permitiendo que el ciclo se perpetúe. Las comunidades que son desafiadas y finalmente aceptan las diferencias que se les presentan, comienzan a abrirse y prosperar más (Kaplan et al., 2019). ¿Por qué prosperaran? Simplemente, porque están diversificando sus ideas. Al hacerlo, están, como algunos dirían, “abriendo sus corazones” a diferentes tipos de personas. Esa aceptación se transmite a los demás de diversas maneras: tolerancia en otros temas difíciles, e incluso la posterior aceptación de los mismos; se convierte en algo común y la comunidad puede crecer en formas que quizás antes no se conocían

o no se veían. Esto también permite que el individuo no conforme con el género tenga el espacio para crecer y comprenderse a sí mismo y sus relaciones con sus comunidades actuales (Kaplan et al., 2019).

El cambio es difícil de aceptar cuando la frase coloquial "Así es como siempre se ha hecho" es el statu quo. Las transiciones significativas son generalmente más difíciles de aceptar entre las personas mayores porque tienen una forma de pensar arraigada y, a menos que esas ideas hayan sido cuestionadas, también están apegados a las normas que conocen, ya que no alcanzaron la mayoría de edad con la progresión de tales conceptos. La sociedad contemporánea busca maneras de desafiar viejas ideas difíciles, mejorarlas y evolucionar como cultura o comunidad, pero a menudo se encuentra con una resistencia inicial. Esta resistencia a menudo es miedo a algo nuevo o desconocido porque puede cambiar algo que se considera "bueno" o "normal" en algo indeseable (Fundación HRC, n.d.).

¿Por qué esto parece una tendencia repentina? ¿Por qué hay más casos de esto? Aun no siendo la única razón, las redes sociales juegan un papel muy importante en el aumento de estos casos, pero también podemos ver la exposición en general como uno de los facilitadores de este fenómeno. Los medios de comunicación desempeñan un papel importante en la exposición al proporcionar una variedad de nuevas formas de recopilar y consumir información. Anteriormente, los medios de comunicación se limitaban a medios específicos como periódicos, revistas, radio y televisión. Con la invención de Internet y la expansión de nuestro acceso a información nueva y actualizada, hemos podido ver más historias de diferentes personas de todo el mundo, se arroja luz sobre sus situaciones y algunos se sienten menos excluidos. Además, con el auge y el uso de las plataformas de redes sociales, ahora podemos acceder y consumir la misma información en una forma aún más condensada, así como ser selectivos con lo que elegimos consumir (Farrar, 2019). En última instancia, con el avance de las tecnologías, tales como teléfonos inteligentes, tabletas y otros dispositivos, podemos recopilar, acceder y consumir grandes cantidades de información en segundos, desplazarnos por la información con facilidad y, a menudo, estar expuestos a cosas que de otro modo no haríamos ver.

Los familiares de personas no binarias pueden estar expuestos a una mayor influencia en línea de personas que comparten sus experiencias conocidas como “salida del armario”, ya que el acceso está más disponible con más frecuencia y, en definitiva, más accesible. Este es un fenómeno mundial y con los algoritmos en juego, que atienden a datos demográficos específicos, con la ayuda de aplicaciones y tecnología, es probable que vean más casos de lo que ya han visto hasta el momento (Bivens, 2016). Es posible que tengan menos exposición a estas páginas o personas en su vida real, sin embargo, su presencia en las redes sociales los expone a instancias más análogas de las que tendrían sin ella. Esto puede parecer algo 'tendente' cuando en realidad los algoritmos están determinando la naturaleza y la frecuencia del contenido que uno consume.

1.1.3 La Moda online de la autoexpresión y su valor

Las redes sociales pueden actuar como un refuerzo positivo para los seres queridos de las

personas no conformes con el género, al alentar y brindar explicaciones y una forma de comprender mejor a las personas no conformes con el género de una manera casi anónima (Wortham, 2018). Jenna Wortham sugiere que, a través de este tipo de exposición, también se utilice como una herramienta de aprendizaje o capacitación para ayudar a involucrarse y hacer preguntas indirectamente sobre técnicas de diálogo, alianza, terminología, así como, mostrar apoyo y aceptación en general. Esto actúa como una herramienta educativa complementaria para las personas conformes con el género, por lo que la persona no binaria no tiene porque ser también el educador, sino que simplemente se le permite existir y crecer (Wortham, 2018).

Las personas que se ajustan al género también pueden usar las redes sociales como una herramienta de apoyo para las demás y para ellas mismas, dándoles acceso a apoyo individual y grupal para gestionar emociones y preocupaciones, además de aprender de otros que han tenido experiencias similares (Wortham, 2018). También puede proporcionar una plataforma en la que puedan relacionarse con otros para ayudarse a ser un mejor aliado, amigo o familiar para su ser querido no binario (Wortham, 2018).

Con el aumento en el uso de las redes sociales como medio de comunicación, algunas personas no binarias y de género no conforme, optan por usarlas como una plataforma para salir del armario, educar a sus seguidores, ya sean familiares, amigos u otros, y además, como manera de expresarse y compartir sus experiencias (Statista, 2022). Esto es particularmente importante para las personas no conformes con el género que están geográficamente lejos de comunidades más grandes de las que podrían beneficiarse siendo parte (Wortham, 2018). Es importante que tengan visibilidad, especialmente a través de las redes sociales, ya que la persona promedio consume aproximadamente dos horas y media (2,5) al día en redes sociales de alguna forma, mientras que los adolescentes consumen un promedio de tres (3) horas al día. (Statista, 2022). La representación de personas no binarias desafía y modifica conceptos erróneos, además de proporcionar una exposición de los aspectos positivos y negativos de vivir sus vidas de manera auténtica (Wortham, 2018).

Actualmente se puede decir que las redes sociales tienen muchas funciones; nos brinda un nuevo medio para comunicarnos con amigos y familiares, así como con personas extrañas, comunicarnos con otros miembros de la comunidad y grupos de apoyo, siendo, además, una herramienta para la autoexpresión, sin incluir los aspectos capitalistas de estas mega corporaciones (Pathak, 2019). Esto parece una gran responsabilidad para un género mediático, ya que también puede ser complicado de gestionar, pero uno de los resultados obtenidos es que brinda consuelo a muchas personas que no se ajustan al género y que quieren expresarse auténticamente. ¿Podrían las redes sociales ser un paliativo del estrés en lugar de un inductor del mismo? Francamente, es mucho más fácil decir la verdad detrás del anonimato percibido de una pantalla que en un cara a cara, esto según Farrar, se conoce como efecto de desinhibición en línea (Farrar, 2019).

Los conceptos de los que es particularmente difícil hablar se discuten más fácilmente cuando los individuos no se ven obligados a sentir la tensión o percibir el lenguaje corporal del otro. La

pantalla y la distancia de la situación brindan una sensación de protección donde las personas pueden ser más honestas sobre sus creencias, especialmente cuando el tema es tan complicado como el género (Wortham, 2018; Farrar, 2019). Este concepto va más allá cuando se considera que las redes sociales, con su anonimato, permiten un cierto alivio a quienes aún no han "salido del armario" como una forma de ser honestos consigo mismos, encontrando primero una manera segura y anónima que los lleva a ganar coraje para salir del armario con sus más allegados, si es que aún no lo han hecho, lo que, como se mencionó anteriormente, puede ser más difícil de hacer, ya que uno puede encontrarse cara a cara con un posible rechazo (Farrar, 2019).

Pero las redes sociales no son solo un medio de apoyo, ya que también son una vía para la destrucción y el abuso, debido a que la pantalla da una falsa sensación de protección, y de hecho, no brinda protección real contra aquellos que intentan causar daño. Hay un gran número de personas dispuestas a expresar sus opiniones y hacer valer sus creencias a través de las plataformas de redes sociales sin preocuparse por la persona que está al otro lado, ya que ellos también sienten una sensación de protección. Los comentarios pueden ser especialmente odiosos y perjudiciales para la autoestima cuando se trata de cuestiones relacionadas con el género. El trauma emocional y psicológico no solo puede ocurrir en línea, sino que también puede acontecer abuso físico, produciéndose después de que previamente hubieran habido amenazas en línea (Wortham, 2018).

Las redes sociales como forma de comunicación, ya sea positiva o negativa, son un lugar común y el modelo actual. Con él vienen riesgos y recompensas al formar parte de él. Sin embargo, la visibilidad a través de las redes sociales es increíblemente importante para difundir positividad y aceptación, por más duro que sean los aspectos negativos. La ruptura de los estereotipos de género y las normas binarias de género no son necesariamente una tendencia real, sino que se están volviendo más visibles para una audiencia mayor que antes. No solo han cambiado las leyes que permiten a las personas revelar su verdadero yo, sino que el acceso a esos ejemplos es más evidente que nunca. Los desafíos perceptibles al espectro de género, las normas y expectativas de la sociedad se transmiten al mundo ahora en lugar de ocultarse y de esconder estas noticias de los pueblos pequeños, esto ya es progreso y se presenta de muchas formas, pero la visibilidad es una de ellas.

1.1.4 Progreso en la expresión de género en todo el mundo

La visibilidad de las mujeres en una variedad de sectores anteriormente dominados por hombres se considera una señal de progreso, en áreas como la Ciencia, Tecnología, Ingeniería y Matemáticas (STEM), pero a menudo siguen siendo una minoría entre sus compañeros. Es menos probable que las personas no binarias divulguen abiertamente información personal por una variedad de razones, algunas de las cuales incluyen su seguridad personal, la protección contra la persecución por parte de sus compañeros y la posible expulsión (Zheng, 2020). Esto sugiere que las industrias dominadas por hombres en Occidente aún se enfrentan a desafíos en el lugar de trabajo con respecto a lograr la tolerancia y la igualdad para todos los trabajadores, independientemente de su sexualidad y/o expresión de género.

Las actitudes hacia la homosexualidad han cambiado drásticamente en los últimos 30 años en los Estados Unidos según el sociólogo Michael Rosenfeld. Utilizando datos de una encuesta de larga duración sobre las actitudes estadounidenses, se pudo determinar un cambio en la aceptación de la homosexualidad del 11,6 % en 1988 al 68 % en 2018 (NPR, 2019). Estos puntos de vista cambiaron lentamente y, hasta el día de hoy, permanecen justo por encima del cincuenta por ciento, pero como explicó Rosenfeld, es raro que las opiniones sobre temas muy controvertidos cambien tanto. El psicólogo Mahazrin Banaji tiene datos similares que rastrean los sesgos implícitos de las personas, y los cambios más sorprendentes ocurren en las pruebas de sexualidad, con una caída del 33 % en los sesgos antigay (NPR, 2019). Rosenfeld sugiere que esto se debe a una mayor visibilidad de los homosexuales, principalmente en las décadas de 1980 y 1990, cuando los homosexuales comenzaron a salir del armario debido a la crisis del SIDA que dio lugar en Estados Unidos (NPR, 2019).

Ver el progreso es difícil cuando hay muchos obstáculos que impiden que se realice un cambio palpable en la sociedad, como la legislación gubernamental actualmente estancada, la cual beneficiaría a todos en las comunidades LGBTQIA, incluyendo las leyes nacionales contra el odio y la discriminación (NPR, 2019). Los gobiernos de Occidente, aunque aparentemente más liberales que otras naciones, siguen siendo conservadores en general, considerándose gobiernos "moderados" (Saad, 2021). Los políticos están poco dispuestos a “molestar” a la mayoría que votó por ellos para mantener sus votos y optan por hacer pequeños cambios para mantenerse moderados y apaciguar a ambos lados. Esto es más evidente en los Estados Unidos de América y Canadá, donde América Latina a menudo se reconocen como países progresistas, pero simplemente se están moviendo hacia la izquierda progresista (Fundación Global para la Democracia y el Desarrollo, 2022).

América Latina en su conjunto es religiosamente conservadora, sin embargo, las generaciones más jóvenes (alrededor de 45 años o menos) están siendo los propios ejemplos del progreso que quieren ver, apoyando a los funcionarios que respaldan o postulándose para un cargo (The Economist Newspaper, 2022). El desarrollo progresista es más visible en América Latina con las recientes elecciones de varios líderes de izquierda, o quizás porque aún son vistos externamente como países religiosamente conservadores y que a menudo tienen que protestar por cuestiones de igualdad y derechos humanos, con una corrupción más flagrante sin grandes repercusiones (Human Rights Watch, 13 de enero de 2022), sin embargo, esto también sucede en los Estados Unidos. Entonces, cuando se realizan cambios significativos en la política allí, parece que se está produciendo un cambio importante. Han conseguido cambios monumentales por los que han estado luchando y protestando en las últimas décadas, han trabajado por el progreso que ha venido, no ha sido un simple cambio de mentalidad, sino por protestas intensas y agotadoras (Human Rights Watch, 13 de enero de 2022). Su progreso en su conjunto es nada menos que convincente.

Mirando hacia el cambio progresivo con respecto a los derechos de género y el feminismo, hay muchas acciones progresistas en las últimas dos décadas. Si bien no todos los países

latinoamericanos reconocen legalmente a las personas no binarias, parece tener raíces en la región (López Torres, 2021). Muchas tribus nativas de las Américas, incluidos los cuervos, los apaches y otras tribus nativas americanas, no solo de América Latina, reconocen y celebran un tercer género o, en algunos casos, más de tres géneros (López Torres, 2021). “Los antropólogos también han notado la aceptación de la fluidez de género en el México precolombino, citando relatos de travestismo entre los sacerdotes aztecas, así como dioses mayas que eran simultáneamente hombres y mujeres” (López Torres, 2021).

La colonización y la cristianización atrofiaron la expresión del tercer género cuando los colonizadores de Europa comenzaron a imponer sus creencias a los nativos. Esto es cierto tanto para los nativos de América del Norte como del Sur, sin embargo, algunas comunidades indígenas continúan aceptando y celebrando la inconformidad de género (López Torres, 2021, HRC Staff, 2020). Entiendo que más allá de una singular división de género, se reconoce un intercambio de actitudes y rasgos entre lo masculino y lo femenino. Es importante reconocer que, si bien los roles eran distintos, se los veía a través de una lente distinta desde nuestra perspectiva occidental moderna.

En el sur de México, en la región del Istmo de Tehuantepec de Oaxaca, la gente reconoce y celebra el tercer género de los indígenas zapotecas llamado muxes (pronombres: elle/elles), conocido desde la época prehispánica (Synowiec, 2018; López Torres, 2021). El concepto no es nuevo, y dentro de esta comunidad son respetados y bienvenidos a ser elles mismes. El antropólogo Pablo Céspedes Vargas (2015) explica:

> “Lo que conocemos, 'bajo los ojos occidentales', como 'travestido de hombre a mujer', 'transexual de hombre a mujer', 'gay afeminado' o 'gay masculino' parece estar incluido dentro de la categoría de 'muxe' siempre y cuando también haya un fuerte componente de identidad étnica”.

En la región, los muxes se celebran en su propio festival, donde invitan a compartir en sus mesas para celebrar juntos. Los invitados son atendidos por la familia de los muxes, ya que se consideran una bendición para la familia y, además, para la comunidad. Su trabajo también constituye gran parte de la economía local trabajando como artesanas, costureras, dueñas de salones de belleza e incluso en trabajos heteronormativos dentro de la comunidad (Synowiec, 2018). También son cuidadores dentro de la familia, atendiendo a los niños y ancianos de la familia. A los muxes se les cuida desde el principio cuando empiezan a expresarse.

> “Cuando los niños expresan afeminamiento, algunas madres zapotecas comienzan a entrenarlos en los roles femeninos tradicionales. Del mismo modo, muchas madres no desautorizan a los jóvenes que muestran interés por trabajos tradicionalmente asignados a las mujeres” (López Torres, 2021).

Aunque México todavía se considera religiosamente conservador en comparación con los EE. UU.

y Canadá, en Tehuantepec son parte integral de las iglesias católicas. Dentro de la iglesia se les considera como uno de los tres sexos, y los sacerdotes dan sermones sobre el respeto de todos los individuos, con sus diferencias y su ser (Synowiec, 27 de noviembre de 2018). Específicamente, llaman la atención sobre los muxes, un tercer género reconocido en el estado de Oaxaca en México, y piden a sus feligreses que los comprendan y los acepten, una lección que no es difícil de aprender, ya que son honrados en la comunidad por su ser y responsabilidades dentro de la comunidad (Synowiec, 27 de noviembre de 2018; Synowiec, 28 de noviembre de 2018). Grandes progresos como este en pequeñas comunidades pueden generar mayores cambios cuando se fomentan y transmiten, brindando visibilidad y referencia para otros que no pueden hacerlo en sus regiones y enriqueciendo también a las comunidades en las que crecen.

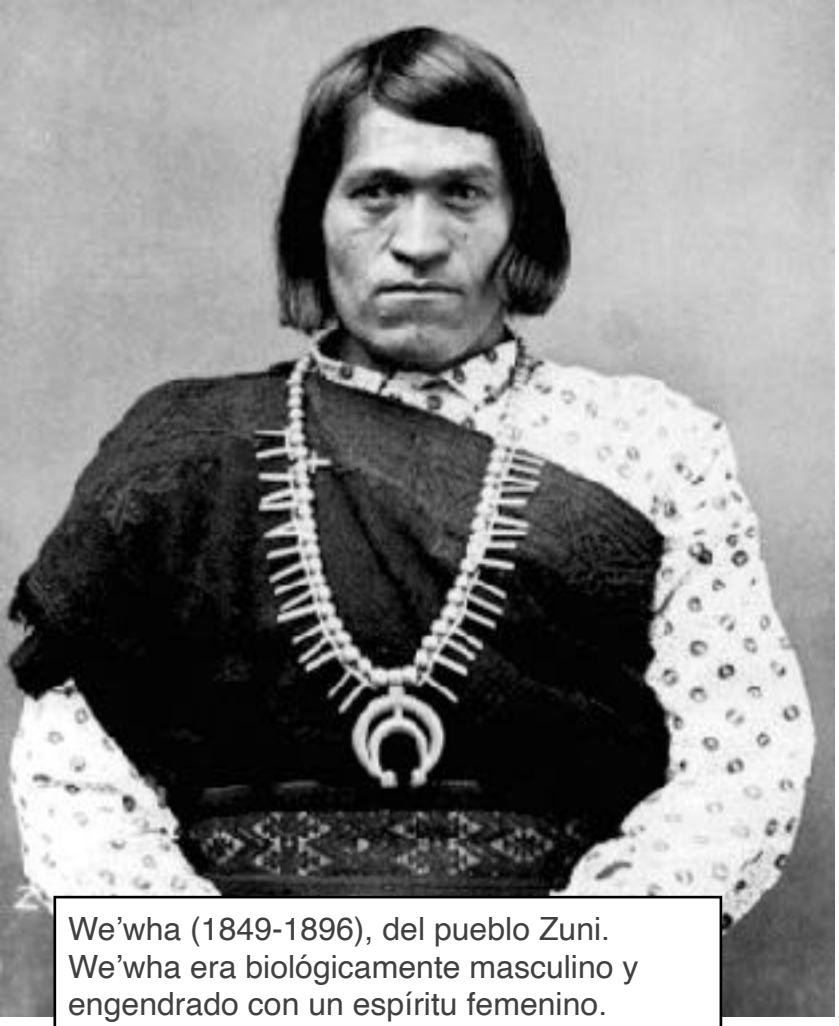
Si bien los muxes son miembros célebres de la familia y la comunidad, no se les permite dejar la familia. Desde la infancia permanecen bajo la supervisión de sus padres, dentro de los límites del hogar familiar y con la prohibición de salir para formar sus propias familias. No pueden vivir de forma independiente ni con sus parejas. Si bien se les tiene en alta estima, su albedrío es limitado.

Argentina, Colombia, Canadá y los Estados Unidos de América son algunos países de las Américas que están dando pequeños pasos para proporcionar a las personas no binarias la capacidad de ser identificadas como no binarias (Fung, 2021; Lavers, 2015).

En Canadá, es a través del censo que son contados como tales oficialmente. Los canadienses pueden elegir entre tres géneros en el censo de 2021. Aunque es un pequeño paso, marca la diferencia para las personas que antes dejaban la casilla sin marcar por completo, lo que hizo que el gobierno se preguntara el por qué. En 2019, Canadá comenzó a aprobar los géneros 'X', como una tercera opción de género en los pasaportes y, en algunas provincias, también en las licencias de conducir y los certificados de nacimiento, aunque aún no es nacional (Fung, 2021).

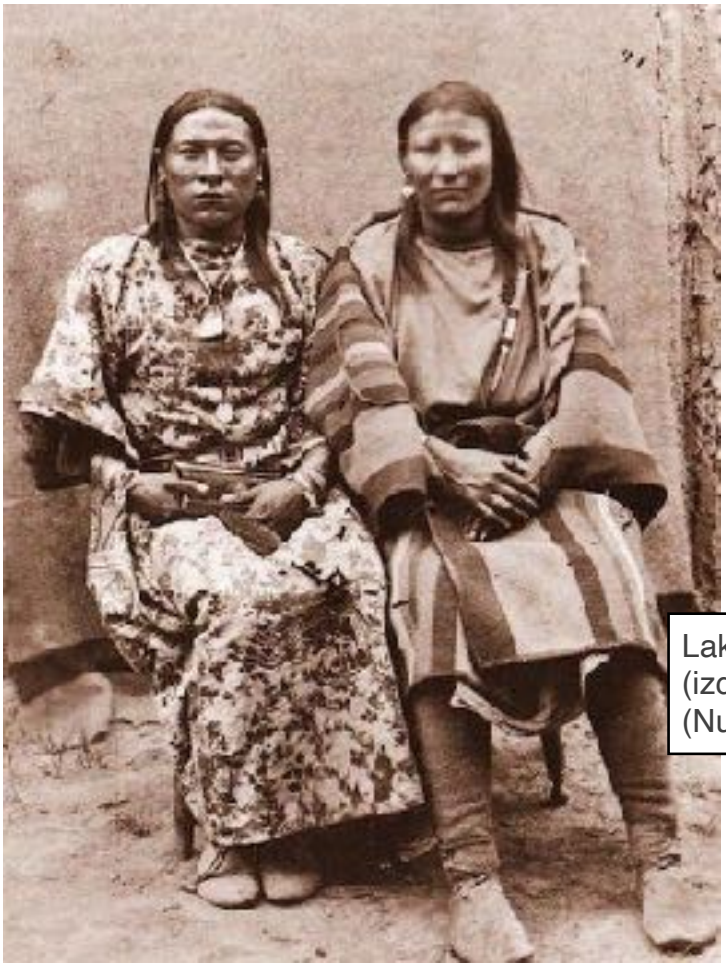
De manera similar, los Estados Unidos de América están permitiendo la selección de géneros 'femenino', 'masculino' o 'X' en los pasaportes, lo que consideran un gran esfuerzo para permitir que los estadounidenses se identifiquen con precisión (Fung, 2021), aunque esto actualmente forma parte de una mayor expansión del reconocimiento de género no binario en todo el país no lo es reconocimiento real. A pesar de esto, los Estados Unidos de América aún están un poco atrasados en el progreso temas relacionados con el género, entendiendo que se considera un país del primer mundo 'progresista', tiene un largo camino por delante, ya que el matrimonio homosexual solo se legalizó a nivel nacional hace menos de una década (Cusick, et. al., 2017). Se argumenta que Estados Unidos debería estar a la par con sus vecinos del norte, Canadá, aunque el actual primer ministro canadiense, Justin Trudeau, es mucho más liberal que los presidentes actuales y anteriores de los Estados Unidos de América (Wallenfeldt, n.d.).

Las personas de dos espíritus se reconocen hoy en día en Canadá, pero se han reconocido históricamente en las costumbres indígenas de América del Norte. Dos espíritus, “se refiere a una persona que encarna tanto un espíritu masculino como femenino” (Filice, 2015). El pueblo tiene



We'wha (1849-1896), del pueblo Zuni. We'wha era biológicamente masculino y engendrado con un espíritu femenino. (Numinous, 2019)

Un intérprete Hopi (izquierda) y Charlie, Diné (derecha), 1895, por Adam Clark Vroman (Maxwell Museum of Anthropology, 2022)



Lakota Two Spirit Osh-Tisch (izquierda) con su esposa (derecha) (Numinous, 2019)

una terminología para describir a las personas que se vestían como travestis. La gente de Siksika (Blackfoot) tenía términos para los hombres que asumían roles tradicionalmente femeninos, como la cestería y la alfarería. Ktunaxa (Kootenay) tenía nombres para lo contrario, mujeres que asumían roles tradicionalmente masculinos, como la curación, la caza y la guerra. El pueblo Zuni tenía un término para "género mixto". “En varias culturas indígenas, el temperamento, los roles de trabajo, la vestimenta y el estilo de vida distinguían a los individuos de dos espíritus de hombres y mujeres” (Filice, 2015). Los indígenas no distinguían a los individuos como homosexuales o heterosexuales, y en realidad consideraban heteronormativas las relaciones entre parejas del mismo sexo. Fue la colonización de las Américas por parte de europeos y misioneros cristianos lo que trajo ideologías y terminologías colonialistas a los nativos americanos (Filice, 2015). Two-spirit es un término moderno y abarcador, acuñado en 1990, “...el activista Albert McLeod propuso el término two-spirit para referirse a la comunidad LGBTQ indígena, (Filice, 2015). Esta es una anotación importante ya que los nativos de muchas tribus diferentes no sienten que encajen en las categorías de la terminología contemporánea y/o prefieren el término más compasivo de dos espíritus, ya que también refleja su herencia indígena (Filice, 2015).

Argentina es el primer país latinoamericano en proporcionar el marcador de identidad 'X'. Este es un gran paso adelante para el progreso en América Latina, ya que la lidera al dar este paso progresivo para las personas no binarias (González Cabrera, 2021).

> “El cambio se produce por un decreto del presidente Alberto Fernández, que establece que “X” se utilizará para denotar los siguientes significados: “no binario, indeterminado, inespecífico, indefinido, no informado, autopercibido, no registrado; u otro significado con el que pudiera identificarse la persona que no se siente incluida en el binomio masculino/femenino” (González Cabrera, 2021).

De cara al futuro, esto puede sentar un precedente para que otros países latinoamericanos adopten identidades no binarias, o al menos ofrecer la opción para que las personas decidan por sí mismas cómo quieren ser identificadas legalmente.

En 2015, Colombia comenzó a permitir que las personas transgénero cambiaran legalmente su género y nombre legal en las identificaciones emitidas por el gobierno para frenar los exámenes traumáticos e invasivos que justificaban la necesidad de cirugía (Lavers, 2015). En cambio, esto se ofrece a cualquier persona, independientemente de la etapa de transición o la falta de ella. Yesid Reyes, Ministro de Justicia, fue citado en El Espectador, diario colombiano, “La construcción de la identidad sexual y de género es un asunto que no depende de la biología” (Lavers, 2015).

Desde que la medida para permitir que las personas cambien legalmente su género en los documentos gubernamentales, la Corte Constitucional de Colombia ha dictaminado que las personas con marcadores de género no binarios serán reconocidas legalmente en todos los documentos oficiales del gobierno (González Cabrera, 2022).

> "El tribunal sostuvo que cuando el nombre y el sexo en los documentos de identidad no reflejan la propia identidad "dificulta la proyección del propio género en la sociedad y propicia escenarios de discriminación y exclusión en el ámbito público y privado"" (González Cabrera, 2022).

Es inminente un mayor progreso en la expresión de género, ya que se han dictado sentencias similares en tribunales inferiores de México y Brasil, aunque no a nivel nacional. Estos fallos allanan el camino para las personas no binarias de América Latina.

Varios países de Europa han tomado medidas previas para ofrecer dichos marcadores de identidad, incluidos Austria, Dinamarca, Alemania, Islandia, Irlanda, Malta, Bélgica y los Países Bajos, y éstos últimos, intentan eliminar los marcadores de género por completo (González Cabrera & Galvis Caballero, 2022) (Galindo, 2020) (Fung, 2021).

España también ha dado pasos en relación con las personas LGBTI con el avance de la "*ley para la igualdad real y efectiva de las personas trans*". Esta ley permite a las personas mayores de 16 años cambiar legalmente su género y nombre legal en documentos gubernamentales sin una evaluación médica, como la ley mencionada en Colombia.

> "La ministra de Hacienda y Portavoz del Gobierno, María Jesús Montero, ha destacado que con esta ley el Gobierno pretende superar la invisibilización, estigmatización y falta de reconocimiento de los derechos de las personas lesbianas, gays, bisexuales, transexuales e intersexuales (LGBTI) y situar a España a la vanguardia de Europa en la defensa de sus derechos" (Consejo de Ministros, 2021)

El proyecto de ley fue recibido con la desaprobación de organizaciones feministas como Contra la Eliminación de la Mujer y el Movimiento de Convergencia Feminista, que en conjunto representan alrededor de 140 grupos, junto con el Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE) expuso un memorando interno, sugiriendo, "…que el género propio -la identificación "elimina" la experiencia de la mujer" (Álvarez, 2021). Irene Montero, ministra de Igualdad de España y miembro del partido Podemos, refutó: "…era una legislación "feminista" diseñada para garantizar derechos y libertades básicos" (Jones, 2021). La evolución de las ideas lleva tiempo, y la aceptación de esas ideas requiere paciencia y comprensión. Irene Montero describe esto como que España está tomando medidas lentamente para "crear vidas que valga la pena vivir" (Consejo de Ministros, 2021). Si bien hay feministas de todo tipo, hay un rechazo significativo de la experiencia de todas las mujeres del Movimiento Contra la Eliminación de la Mujer y la Convergencia Feminista. El feminismo es complejo, pero inclusivo e interseccional.

El feminismo no es un concepto exclusivo y, a medida que la palabra "feminismo" evoluciona, incluye a más individuos, que es la premisa del concepto. Los grupos "feministas" en España, como los mencionados anteriormente, que varían en extremos, no son únicos en el mundo, ya que hay cantidades masivas de grupos que quisieran infringir los derechos de las mujeres "no

tradicionales" a algunos grado. Estos grupos tienden a expresar indignación por las cuestiones de derechos de las personas transgénero, ya que algunos creen que no se debe proteger la autonomía del cuerpo, especialmente si su sexo no coincide con su identidad. Cuando, en realidad, el simple hecho de que sus vidas sean ampliamente ignoradas y, además, incluso desprotegidas, es motivo para reevaluar esas creencias fundamentales. El despido de las personas transgénero y/o no binarias no las elimina de la existencia, sino que alimenta rebeliones y mayores esfuerzos por encontrar un lugar para su existencia.

1.2 La perspectiva oriental: Egipto – el impacto del cambio de actitudes socioculturales y políticas en la situación actual de la mujer en Egipto

1.2.1 Egipto contemporáneo y prerrevolucionario

La reputación de Egipto de conservadurismo religioso extremo oculta el hecho de que el apoyo a la promoción del feminismo se toma en serio. El Egipto contemporáneo sufre los estigmas de la represión de las mujeres, los estrictos roles de género y el ultra conservadurismo mientras que la visión occidental percibe a las mujeres egipcias como reprimidas; la realidad es más compleja ya que muchas mujeres egipcias son religiosas, pero no necesariamente religiosamente reprimidas. Aunque algo de esto existe, sería injusto afirmar que las mujeres egipcias no tienen voz, una plataforma en la que hacer que se escuche esa voz, o comunidades y movimientos que apoyan a las mujeres.

Aunque el mundo occidental agrupa a Egipto con muchos otros países mucho más conservadores, como Qatar, Arabia Saudita, los Emiratos Árabes Unidos, Jordania y Omán, difiere mucho con respecto a las mujeres y sus roles en la sociedad. Mientras el país lucha con un gobierno militar y una influencia islámica conservadora especialmente dentro de ese gobierno, los movimientos de mujeres existen y existen desde hace algún tiempo. Estos conceptos erróneos y agrupaciones regionales invalidadas de normas sociales en todo el Medio Oriente dicen poco sobre las libertades reales, religiosas y de otro tipo, de las mujeres egipcias.

Durante siglos, las mujeres egipcias han demostrado ser francas y tener agendas feministas y confrontar constantemente a los líderes religiosos y gubernamentales para validar su competencia y capacidades iguales a las de sus contrapartes masculinas, lo que evidencian en los escritos de las mujeres periodistas nacionales y extranjeras y en los escritos publicados, obras de la época y obras inéditas (hasta ahora). Desde el primer movimiento feminista en Egipto a principios de 1800, Egipto ha estado actualizado y activo durante mucho tiempo en lo que respecta a los problemas de las mujeres (Hagg, n.d.). Las mujeres egipcias son menos cómplices con los regímenes patriarcales que dictan las normas sociales.

El observador occidental siempre ha estado intrigado, si no desconcertado, por la cultura, la historia, las artes y la gente de Egipto, pero las mujeres con velo son particularmente foco de atención (Pequot Library, 2018; Alexander, 2016, p.1). Los velos y la libertad no se excluyen mutuamente, lo que suele ser el malentendido por el mundo occidental, tanto para Egipto como

para otros países que adoptan esta práctica. Todo tipo de mujeres a lo largo de la historia egipcia han utilizado el velo por diversas razones, concretamente por pudor religioso (Alexander, 2016, p. 2). Sin embargo, esto no significa que todas las mujeres que usan el velo estén controladas; un velo no significa opresión y sumisión, ya que algunas mujeres usan el velo como una resistencia a la cosificación sexual (Alexander, 2016, p.2).

Como resultado de los movimientos feministas y de la 'Nueva Mujer' tanto en los Estados Unidos como en Inglaterra, y la atracción de la aventura en Egipto, las mujeres egipcias estuvieron expuestas a muchas mujeres extranjeras que se aventuraban en Egipto. Estas mujeres europeas y americanas eran aparentemente feministas, lo que influyó mucho en los movimientos de mujeres en Egipto después de la ocupación británica. Estas mujeres feministas viajaron a Egipto, a veces como escritoras de viajes en busca de mujeres afines, con la esperanza de emancipar a las mujeres egipcias de todas las clases (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.77, 156-157, 188-189;).

El Cairo fue el hogar de la realeza egipcia y, a través de la educación privada, las mujeres egipcias de élite no solo fueron educadas, sino que también fueron motivadas e inspiradas por estas mujeres extranjeras para perseguir sus propios ideales para mejorar Egipto. Una de las mujeres líderes en la causa que aportó una gran educación para todas fue la princesa egipcia Ayn-el-Hayat, quien no solo fue un muy buen referente en educación, sino que es recordada como la fundadora de la Sociedad Benevolente Mohamed Ali, un consultorio que brindaba educación y habilidades básicas y de formación a mujeres y niñas. Ayn-el-Hayat autofinanció gran parte de la Sociedad, complementada con otras donaciones a principio del siglo XIX (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.236). Amplió su alcance a la sociedad a las provincias de Egipto y se jactó de que su comité de supervisión estaba compuesto exclusivamente por mujeres y solo recibían asesoramiento de hombres con fines médicos y financieros. Habiendo estado casada y divorciada, y con cuatro hijos propios, se la consideraba una gran contribuyente al éxito de la educación de las mujeres en Egipto y perpetuó la importancia de continuar educando a las niñas y mujeres para fortalecer la sociedad (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, pág. 236). La sociedad, bajo su liderazgo, no solo impulsó la educación de niñas y mujeres, sino que se expandió a los ámbitos del bienestar social y la salud, abriendo centros de bienestar social para familias y hospitales (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.240-2). Y en medio de la progresión del feminismo no sólo había mujeres, sino también hombres junto a ellas, apoyando los movimientos a través, y principalmente, de contribuciones financieras, pero también mediante consultas. Hubo oposiciones entre la clase alta a la educación de las mujeres, ya que se consideró innecesaria y fuera de lugar, desafiando los roles de género tanto para hombres como para mujeres en ese momento. Esto llevó a que las mujeres asumieran más roles públicos en la sociedad y que los hombres asumieran más roles domésticos que requerían una mayor participación familiar en lugar de ser solo el sostén de la familia. Luego comenzaron a desdibujarse las líneas de lo que significaban los roles de género para hombres y mujeres, así como quién los desempeñaría.

Las primeras feministas egipcias, como Huda Shaarawi, provenían de una familia respetable de El Cairo, y ella tenía una buena educación, como muchas mujeres de élite, pero solo en las materias

que su padre consideraba necesarias. Esto era común, que las jóvenes fueran educadas en base a lo que los hombres de la familia consideraban pertinente. Shaarawi recibió tutoría en muchas materias en casa que incluían leer, pero no escribir árabe, así como memorizar el Corán, turco (tanto gramática como caligrafía), francés y música (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.188-9). De niña y joven fue más rebelde y siguió sus pasiones, por inapropiadas que pudieran parecer a sus parientes varones. Aunque rodeada de intelectuales y haber sido criada y educada en un hogar de élite, fue excluida de conversaciones estimulantes porque ¿para qué se necesitaría una chica con perspicacia? Formó la Asociación Intelectual de Mujeres Egipcias en 1914. Shaarawi cuenta en sus memorias que el movimiento nacionalista de la década de 1910 y principios de la de 1920 reunió en política a mujeres de diversas religiones y clases sociales. Politizar a las mujeres de todos los orígenes dio más voz a la hermosa diversidad de mujeres en todo Egipto y alentó el cambio. Comenzó el diálogo entre parejas que de otro modo habrían sido mudas, creando una cercanía entre ellos, pero con opiniones diferentes, la repentina proximidad entre la política y el cónyuge pasaba a ser incómoda. Shaarawi se retiró de los movimientos nacionalistas reconociendo las derivas entre ella y su marido y fundó la Unión Feminista Egipcia en 1923. Ese mismo año obtuvo reconocimiento internacional cuando, tras regresar de un movimiento por el sufragio femenino en Roma, se quitó públicamente el velo facial en la estación del tren de El Cairo (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.190).

El feminismo contemporáneo en Egipto es importante debido a las tradiciones culturales que han sido fundamentales para dar forma a las creencias de las mujeres jóvenes sobre su identidad cultural y su papel en la sociedad. Huda Shaarawi se crió en un sistema de harén de élite, luego “se casó infelizmente en 1892 con un primo mayor” a la edad de trece años y vio que esta experiencia había motivado su anhelo de reforma para las mujeres (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.188). Shaarawi pudo cambiar el sistema para permitir que niñas y mujeres como ella, que también eran apasionadas por las artes, la educación y el debate, tuvieran los recursos necesarios para desarrollarse de forma independiente, proporcionándoles todas las necesidades, incluida la financiación de médicos, ciclos de conferencias. y foros de debate (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.193-195). Las mujeres egipcias contemporáneas se benefician de otras mujeres fuertes, pero también del apoyo de sus homólogos masculinos y de sus roles para ayudar a dar forma al feminismo temprano en Egipto. Shaarawi usó su estatus de élite y su dinero para brindar más a sus compatriotas y, al hacerlo, hizo avanzar a las mujeres en la cultura durante generaciones a través de su trabajo filantrópico (Lewis & Micklewright, 2006, p.193). A pequeña escala, estaba brindando servicios básicos a niñas y mujeres para mejorar sus vidas y el país, pero a gran escala estaba enriqueciendo la cultura egipcia, los roles de género, los estándares tanto para hombres como para mujeres, así como alentando el avance de las artes. Con una ascendencia ya creativa y culta en Egipto, las mujeres contemporáneas finalmente estaban rompiendo las normas sociales y haciendo lo que hicieron sus antiguas antepasadas feministas y tomaron la iniciativa y comenzaron a hablar con autoridad y propósito.

El Egipto contemporáneo no está exento de prejuicios e ideales fundamentalistas; Sin embargo, el Egipto prerrevolucionario fue explícito en estos casos y mostró poca o ninguna preocupación por

las abominaciones que ocurrieron contra las mujeres en particular, en relación con el sexismo, la misoginia, la violencia doméstica, el acoso sexual, las expectativas sociales discriminatorias, la pobreza como madre soltera y otras cuestiones. (Abouelnaga, 2016, Khorshid, 2021). Protocolos como la militarización del país, la continuación de las pruebas de virginidad llevadas a cabo por los militares, la homogeneización de "la identidad egipcia" a través de campañas militares y políticas, la conformidad forzada de las mujeres a adherirse a las construcciones de la imagen "moderna" del egipcio. Las mujeres son algunos ejemplos de cómo opera el gobierno actual, lo que impide que Egipto avance en materia de género (Abouelnaga, 2016). Si bien muchos de los aspectos misóginos prerrevolucionarios existen, salieron a la luz durante la Revolución de 2011 y la sociedad los cuestionó aún más.

1.2.2 Cambios en el Egipto revolucionario (2011)

Durante la Revolución Egipcia de 2011 (del 25 de enero al 11 de febrero), muchas cosas cambiaron y la gente se unió para repudiar al gobierno. En el intento de expulsar a Morsi, se vio a mujeres de todo tipo protestando en una variedad de formas diferentes durante y después de la revolución. La mayoría de las mujeres egipcias, también luchaban para conseguir el derecho a protestar y ser escuchadas. La multitud de manifestantes tuvo múltiples reacciones ante las diferentes mujeres, algunos fueron apoyadas mientras que otras fueron abusadas por sus compañeros manifestantes (hombres). Las mujeres comenzaron a cambiar la imagen de la "mujer egipcia moderna" de "cuerpos dóciles" a las de feroces luchadoras por el cambio (Abouelnaga, 2016).

Las mujeres en la revolución egipcia cambiaron las líneas de las estrategias de resistencia a través de nuevos discursos. Se hicieron presentes a los ojos del público y de los medios. El levantamiento dio más visibilidad a las mujeres en su conjunto y mostró diferentes distinciones entre ellas, lo que dio una mayor confirmación tanto de la unidad como de la individualidad. Al usar su presencia, sus cuerpos físicos, que fueron alguna vez usados contra ellas - violadas, silenciadas, ejerciendo la violencia contra ellas, descalificadas, o simplemente pasarlas por alto- permitió que sus voces fueran escuchadas y que el mundo tomara nota de sus habilidades no solo para estar "presentes", sino también para protestar, alborotar, luchar, opinar y poner en primer plano las identidades individuales que existían entre la versión homogeneizada de las mujeres egipcias retratadas por los políticos y los medios (Abouelnaga, 2016). Las mujeres egipcias utilizaban consciente o inconscientemente el cuerpo femenino como herramienta o arma, para generar autonomía a través de un esfuerzo colectivo y refutar al gobierno, su mala conducta contra las mujeres.

Shereen Abouelnaga afirma que "la presencia directa y sin mediación de las mujeres en la revolución egipcia fue tan inspiradora que no podía pasar desapercibida…" y muchos sugirieron que creó un "espacio de aparición". Abouelnaga continúa diciendo: "Desafortunadamente, en la encrucijada tóxica de la cultura, la religión y la política, las mujeres perdieron su *espacio de apariencia*, y el cuerpo femenino se convirtió en un sitio de diferentes ideologías". Las mujeres no sólo estuvieron presentes, protestando y provocando disturbios, sino que ellas mismas fueron

utilizadas como una herramienta para que quienes estaban en el poder, como los medios de comunicación, pudieran proyectar sobre ellas sus causas por estar presentes (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.48-55). También fueron utilizadas como un "lugar" dentro del contexto de la revolución: cada mujer tenía la revolución en su interior y, por lo tanto, la revolución eran mujeres, dentro de ellas, contenidas en un punto específico en cada mujer, una participante o provocadora aparentemente improbable. Esto se utilizó tanto positiva como negativamente para la revolución, negativamente para instigar malestar y desconfianza ante la presencia de las mujeres (como invasoras), así como positivamente para mostrar que, si bien la presencia de las mujeres estaba siendo cooptada contra ellas, demostraban que eran, y habían sido fundamentales para la revolución en el pasado, y también lo fueron en la Revolución actual (2011). Las mujeres revolucionarias egipcias no se dejaron cooptar, utilizando sus propios cuerpos como herramientas de oposición, recurriendo a "violaciones físicas en una herramienta para reescribir la cultura del cuerpo y es esencial para comprender las nuevas posiciones de género". (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.4).

Después de la Revolución, las mujeres encontraron formas comunes de permanecer en el ojo público. Las mujeres reanudaron sus actividades normales después de haber salido a la calle y luchar durante tanto tiempo resistiendo una identidad homogénea. Continuaron la resistencia, como lo expresó Asef Bayat, antes de la Revolución, como una "acción colectiva de actores no colectivos" (Abouelnaga, 2016). La "micropolítica" de la vida cotidiana es lo que permitió a las mujeres avanzar en su visión. Hicieron esto al traer los aspectos personales de la vida a la vista del público y continuar estando presentes. Abouelnaga explica además que,

> "La Revolución creó un contexto en el que las rúbricas generales 'mujeres del Tercer Mundo' o 'mujeres musulmanas', por ejemplo, no reflejan las circunstancias novedosas que las mujeres egipcias tienen que enfrentar y con las que deben enfrentarse. Estas rúbricas tampoco explican la compleja interacción de poderes donde la agencia y la posición de las mujeres se negocian constantemente".

El nuevo discurso desafía la preocupación por la identidad, permitiéndole la libertad y la flexibilidad que requiere en contextos geopolíticos más amplios. Este acceso a la libertad de identidad permite a las mujeres ejercer el nuevo texto, "Así, repensar el género a la luz del nuevo discurso revolucionario es un medio para reescribir la cultura o, mejor dicho, leerla a contrapelo" (Abouelnaga, 2016). Abouelnaga explica además que, a través de un resurgimiento del discurso nacionalista-feminista, las voces de las mujeres han sido subyugadas, reprimiendo aún más las cuestiones de género y priorizando las preocupaciones nacionalistas sobre ellas.

Entre la resistencia siempre ha habido mujeres, encontrando formas creativas de protestar, como se mencionó anteriormente, sin embargo, a través de la presencia, las mujeres también han contribuido a la expresión artística que en sí misma funcionó como una herramienta para la resistencia. Abouelnaga describe la conversación sobre ir más allá del género como complicada, ya que también se considera contradictorio hablar de la performance del arte con género, pero como un acto notable e inolvidable:

> "Sin embargo, es un hecho inolvidable que las mujeres y el arte fueron los dos fenómenos que dirigieron la atención del mundo hacia la Revolución Egipcia. ¿Podemos hablar del papel de la mujer y el arte en la Revolución? No se les asignó un rol; estaban comprometidos con el acto revolucionario". (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 7).

Ella explica la complicada historia y relación de la política, el arte y el género antes de la Revolución como, "el aparato del Estado (deep state) apoyó una escena artística homogénea que garantizó, lamentablemente, una perfecta alienación de las artes" (Abouelnaga, 2016). Además, promover el uso del arte no solo como un medio de expresión, sino también como un medio de resistencia a través de medios no convencionales, como canciones, joyas, cánticos, pancartas, así como los graffitis.

Muchos de los graffitis que aparecieron durante la revolución hablaban de justicia para dos mujeres mártires, Sally Zahran e Iman Salama. La maternidad se materializó como uno de los temas, un grafito de la madre de uno de los mártires, una imagen de la madre con la amenaza "kjafi mena ya bukuma (temednos, gobierno)" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.45). Otros grafitis que aparecieron se basaron en violaciones cometidas por militares relacionadas con pruebas de virginidad y la golpiza y desnudamiento de una joven en público. Este se convirtió en uno de los graffitis más notables que surgieron durante la revolución: el sujetador azul, basado en "la chica del sujetador azul" que fue agredida en la plaza Tahrir por los militares. El grafito es de un sostén azul con la leyenda "la li ta'riyat al-sha'b (no a desnudar al pueblo)" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.45). Los grafitis posteriores utilizaron imágenes faraónicas reinterpretadas para el movimiento revolucionario: Nefertiti con una máscara de gas, un mural de *Ma'at* (diosa de la justicia) liderando un grupo de mujeres y otros ejemplos incorporaron ciertos conceptos islámicos a la Revolución (Abouelnaga, 2016, p.45).

El objetivo general del gobierno era parecer estar a favor de la igualdad de género y ser proactivo en la aprobación de más leyes a favor de los derechos de las mujeres, sin embargo, la realidad mostró un resultado diferente. La realidad de la situación fue la eliminación de las mujeres del ojo público para que otros asuntos pudieran ser considerados y priorizados en su lugar, sin tener que abordarlos realmente.

> "El borrado de la mujer de la memoria cultural y de todas las formas de archivo, acompañado de las prácticas discursivas que tergiversan la posición de la mujer, alimentó la lucha por la memoria. Es decir, lo que la cultura recuerda y lo que opta por olvidar o borrar se convirtió en un espacio disputado (similar al cuerpo y las artes)" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 10).

Los regímenes anteriores hubieran preferido el borrado antes que el mero desconocimiento de las mujeres para no tener que hacer frente a los desprecios, abusos y abandonos de género por parte de ellas, así como por parte de la sociedad en muchos aspectos. Borrar la importancia de las mujeres como un todo, esto borra una suma de identidades. El sexismo internalizado que existió

(Amaria, La 'chica del sujetador azul' 2011)

(Khalil, Grafiti de sujetador azul (Bahia Shehab) 2014)

Detalle (graffiti de Khalil, sujetador azul) (Bahia Shehab) 2014)

(y continúa existiendo) en el Egipto revolucionario condujo a la violencia contra las mujeres en el hogar y en las calles, incluso cuando protestaban contra tal aversión hacia las mujeres. El sistema patriarcal que intentó borrar a las mujeres de la memoria colectiva, como si sus esfuerzos pudieran ser atribuidos a otros (hombres), fue el que apoyó las leyes de derechos de las mujeres detrás de una fachada de nombres importantes.

Las leyes creadas bajo regímenes anteriores para proteger a las mujeres también se utilizaron en ocasiones contra ellas, o se utilizaron como herramienta de negociación. Leyes como "Leyes de Suzanne", en honor a Suzanne Mubarak, "Leyes de Gihan [Sadat]" establecieron una relación con las mujeres que las crearon, lo que resulta problemático cuando hay personas que están fervientemente en contra de apoyar regímenes anteriores (y a sus cónyuges). Esa conexión empaña cualquier progreso real que pueda provenir de ellos, ya que esas leyes están vinculadas a individuos falibles. Cuando se realizan cambios progresivos a dichas leyes que llevan el nombre de personas precarias, también se vincula a ellas la progresión, lo que podría desvirtuar sus valores reales. De hecho, estas leyes particulares se usaron para proliferar y hacer cumplir los valores conservadores y patriarcales proyectados de las "mujeres modernas" en Egipto en un esfuerzo por crear aún más una representación nacionalista falsificada de las mujeres (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 16).

Abouelnaga examina la homogeneización de mujeres (y hombres) de regímenes anteriores para propagar versiones idealizadas y falsificadas de los egipcios y del país en su conjunto. Esto provocó una hostilidad radical hacia las mujeres cuando se combinó con las representaciones apropiadas y manipuladas de las mujeres por parte de activistas para cambiar el diálogo. Las mujeres activistas corren peligro frente a otras mujeres progresistas simplemente por apoyar e intentar ampliar las leyes que existen para ayudarlas debido a su asociación con la ex Primera Dama, Suzanne Mubarak (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 16). Al ser contraproducente, tanto para la causa como para las mujeres en general, es importante reconocer el feminismo transnacional. Reconocer la solidaridad de las causas feministas globales puede ampliar la comprensión de la importancia de reescribir las leyes y el apoyo a las leyes existentes que protegen a las mujeres, por desafortunados que sean sus nombres y las circunstancias en que se aprobaron.

El apoyo, la asistencia o la solidaridad externa es visto como una amenaza a la identidad nacional de las mujeres egipcias, y de la misma manera que a Egipto como una entidad homogénea construida, es decir, inexistente. Abouelnaga ilustra,

> "…el género se establece como uno de los principales constituyentes de la identidad, y esto explica por qué el exrégimen se preocupó tanto por controlar y legitimar cierto sistema de género como la representación cultural dominante; es decir, "equivalió a la institucionalización sancionada de la diferencia de género" al hacer cumplir el feminismo estatal".

Homogeneizar a las mujeres para controlar la imagen de la sociedad es peligroso en el mejor de

los casos, pero es devastador para las generaciones futuras que se ven obligadas a vivir bajo falsas narrativas sobre sus propias identidades y agrupadas en categorías que no las representan a ellas ni a sus intereses en la búsqueda de la unificación de una nación rota. Este escenario crea un "otro", que es una herramienta para la demonización de quienes se oponen a los mandatos del Estado. Se pueden resumir en "…los que pretenden deformar la imagen de la nación y sabotear el proyecto nacional" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 18). Deniz Kandiyoti (2015) explica este escenario como populismo utópico: la unidad social se logra sobre la base del acuerdo sobre la posición de las mujeres, como piedra angular de la autenticidad cultural (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 18).

El 'otro' no solo podría ser el forastero, alguien en el exterior del propio Egipto, sino también aquellos en el interior que refutan la homogeneización de toda una secta de una cultura. Kandiyoti (2015) aclara que el popularismo utópico "intenta eliminar tales divisiones demarcando los límites de la comunidad 'verdadera' y excluyendo al 'Otro interior'" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 19). Además, el uso del populismo utópico por parte del exrégimen, facilitó el conflicto y la fusión del régimen y las activistas por los derechos de las mujeres, lo que resultó ser la paradoja de que proyectaba diversidad, pero en realidad retrataba la fantasía de esta, utilizando imágenes positivas para construir esa diversidad, la identidad nacional que necesitaba el régimen (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 19). Esto no es un nuevo concepto,

> "…la cuestión de la mujer nació con la Revolución de 1919. Y, desde entonces, los derechos de las mujeres nunca han logrado mantenerse independientes de los discursos en competencia del Estado, los islamistas y los nacionalistas" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 20).

Las mujeres egipcias se han encontrado, desde el principio, luchando contra políticas de identidad y sin tener suficiente representación para dictarlas ellas mismas. Hala Kamal (2015) explica que incluso en la Constitución de 1923 se excluían los derechos de las mujeres al tiempo que se reconocían otras características de diversidad de la sociedad egipcia, incluida la diversidad étnica y religiosa y la discriminación. Esta homogeneización de la mujer egipcia, y más aún, de la familia egipcia, puso específicamente a las mujeres en una posición precaria en la que tenían que encajar en un molde de "cierto tipo de mujer" para ser aceptable a los ojos del régimen actual y contaminar, aún más, las expectativas de la sociedad en general.

Además, "el carácter genuino de la familia egipcia" se convirtió en un debate legítimo en 2012 con la formación del nuevo parlamento con el auge del islamismo y la llegada del nacionalismo, aunque no quedaron fuera. Los islamistas se hicieron cargo de la disputa por el poder y el control de los cuerpos de las mujeres y sus derechos.

> "El artículo 10 de dicha constitución dice:
> La familia es la base de la sociedad fundada en la religión, la moral y el patriotismo. El Estado desea preservar el carácter genuino de la familia egipcia, su cohesión y estabilidad, y proteger sus valores morales, todo ello regulado por la ley" (Abouelnaga,

> 2016, p. 22).

Con un gobierno islamista que ahora controla los derechos de las mujeres y, por consecuente, sus cuerpos, ellas se ven obligadas a desempeñar las identidades exigidas por el estado. Su propio carácter en cuestión, deben de invalidarlo, ya que están obligadas por un gobierno islamista conservador a ser actrices en una religión de algunos, ya que en ocasiones no es ni siquiera la suya propia, negándoles representación. "…obligados política y discursivamente a ajustarse a una imagen monolítica y a un discurso de género que pasa por alto todas las diferencias sociopolíticas y culturales" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 22). La negación de la representación se puede considerar abuso o violencia contra las mujeres (y cualquier persona que lo sufra), ya que se presenta en muchas formas, tanto como física como verbal, además de simbólica, "Percibida como la representación icónica de la cultura y el marcador de las fronteras nacionales" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 23).

Puesto que Egipto ha luchado por formar y mantener una identidad nacional como si fuera un aspecto necesario de las sociedades contemporáneas, al hacerlo, sin embargo, ha aumentado la violencia contra las mujeres. Mujeres que no se ajustan a los estándares del estado y, además, de la sociedad, se ven obligadas a luchar contra el gobierno acérrimo o los partidarios/creyentes religiosos. Las mujeres sufren el abuso de la sociedad mientras la sociedad misma todavía lucha por afirmar su identidad. La Revolución de 2011 expuso la verdad de esta identidad, en el sentido de que debe ser flexible, fluida e interseccional, lo que lleva a la necesidad de repensar las restricciones de género en relación con el nacionalismo.

> "La redefinición definitivamente no es discursiva, sino que surge a través de las acciones y reacciones hacia la micropolítica cotidiana de la vida de las mujeres. Es una voz cargada de la conciencia donde la identidad es flexible y cambiante y que, la búsqueda de la autenticidad no significa nada, si es que hay algo, en primer lugar, que pueda llamarse "auténtico" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 23).

1.2.3 Autonomía / Representación de mujeres

La teoría humanista sobre la asociación es útil para comprender el significado de ser una entidad individual, dando sentido al individuo autónomo. Apoya la idea de que, como seres libres, homogéneos, racionales e integrados, en control de la propia autoridad moral y conciencia, somos independientes de aquellos y del mundo que nos rodea. Abouelnaga (2016) argumenta que la teoría humanista limita la comprensión del individuo: aquel que no cumple con el statu quo, que desafía su posición discursiva, puede sufrir discontinuidad y fragmentación, y busca la reconstrucción de la identidad en "posiciones de sujeto". Existe el entendimiento de que somos individuos libres, pero solo si nos relegamos a las expectativas de la sociedad sobre cómo debe ser el individuo. El argumento en contra de esta teoría es que existen conflictos de creencias sobre cómo el individuo puede formar autonomía y actuar como su propio órgano de gobierno.

Abouelnaga (2016) cita la teoría postestructuralista como un concepto que apoya las posiciones

de sujeto y la asociación de las mujeres en el área sociopolítica en 2011 y los años siguientes. Su ejemplo de la ocupación femenina trascendental de la Plaza Tahrir durante la Revolución de 2011 prueba la creencia contradictoria de que las mujeres ayudaron y, a pesar de, no fueron bienvenidas después. También menciona la presencia de mujeres como parte de las protestas contra el Consejo Superior de las Fuerzas Armadas (SCAF) e identifica que incluso la única abogada que asistió a las investigaciones de los detenidos durante las protestas fue una mujer. El posicionamiento y la presencia de las mujeres es fundamental para la revolución misma y la propia identidad de las mujeres que participaron no como un todo homogéneo. Su experiencia en la revolución y después de ella son los aspectos cruciales. Bronwyn Davies (1991) explica que "agencia y experiencia en la teoría postestructuralista tienen significados diferentes". No gira en torno a la identidad; se trata más bien de experiencia" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 25). Davies (1991) explica que la subjetividad está constituida por el diálogo dentro de la posicionalidad de una persona a través de sí mismo o de las palabras o escritos de otros. Los discursos contradictorios no necesariamente cuestionan completamente la verdadera naturaleza de uno, sino que es su subjetividad la que está en contradicción. Esto se ve a menudo en las elecciones, y específicamente en la elección de Morsi contra Shafiq. Las mujeres se vieron obligadas a elegir el menor de los dos males en cierto sentido, ya que ninguno se preocupaba genuinamente por los derechos de las mujeres y, de hecho, a menudo los socavaba. La elección entre dos candidatos problemáticos proporciona dos elecciones: elecciones forzadas. Ninguno de los dos es ideal o incluso aceptable para la mayoría. Se puede decir que tal elección no es realmente una elección en absoluto, es una falta de representación cuando se trata de determinar qué es lo mejor. Sin embargo, existe una tercera opción en este escenario, abstenerse de votar. Esto es discutible como elección, ya que en realidad es fundamentalmente la ausencia de elección. "Las mujeres egipcias tuvieron que negociar las mejores opciones disponibles en situaciones políticas específicas" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 25). Votar por Morsi, en ese momento, parecía la única opción posible, o la "mejor" opción dada la selección. Las mujeres fueron colocadas en una posición de poder percibido, pero en realidad fueron oprimidas por el poder, perdiendo un sentido de autonomía.

Los discursos guiaron el posicionamiento de sometimiento de las mujeres, a veces contradictorio, lo que sugiere una sensación de ambigüedad y ambivalencia sobre sus elecciones. Sin embargo, había mucho más que advertía las elecciones de las mujeres. La interseccionalidad de su religión, raza, clase, género, educación, ubicación y experiencias son algunos de los aspectos que ayudaron a darles forma. En Mappings, Susan Friedman (1998) escribe que estas interseccionalidades se convierten en nuevos posicionamientos de identidad, explica que estas nuevas geografías crean una nueva posicionalidad, ya sea un sitio físico, perspectiva, conexiones, decisiones, conocimiento o terreno real.

> "No articula el despliegue orgánico de la identidad, sino más bien el mapeo de territorios y fronteras, los terrenos dialécticos de adentro/afuera o centro/margen, las intersecciones axiales de diferentes posicionalidades y los espacios de encuentro dinámico" (Freidman, 1998).

La articulación de la identidad con sus interseccionalidades complejas requiere apertura y asociación para que el individuo use sus experiencias y situaciones personales para expresar mejor sus identidades sin la amenaza de violencia contra ellas por hacerlo. Estas nuevas geografías de identidad allanan nuevos caminos para que las generaciones posean más autonomía y continúen resistiendo interpretaciones erróneas o juicios fijos. Si bien las elecciones de las mujeres parecen estar constantemente al frente de las críticas y el escrutinio, están informadas sobre las políticas y leyes a las que se enfrentan (Kamel, 2020). Han sido persistentes y probablemente seguirán tomando decisiones más informadas en función de sus necesidades dada la agencia (la experiencia de su autonomía) y, sin duda, utilizando las nuevas geografías como guías para hacerlo (Kamel, 2020).

La 'cuestión de la mujer' no se descarta como una cuestión de género, sino que se recategoriza como otra para evitar confrontarla. Muchos argumentan que el Egipto contemporáneo ejemplifica la igualdad con las mujeres trabajadoras y educadas, hasta la Revolución misma, incluso cuando sus palabras inflan sus horribles acciones.

> “Cuando se trata de comprender el (con)texto revolucionario, es demasiado fácil afirmar que hombres y mujeres recibieron las balas por igual y que no hay necesidad de señalar o especificar el género”. (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 31).

Por cierto, que sea cierto el hecho de que las balas impactaron en todos los cuerpos, matando e hiriendo tanto a hombres como a mujeres, la realidad sigue siendo la misma: abordar cuestiones específicas de género es necesario y, a menudo, se le quita prioridad en el mejor de los casos, si que no se le ignora abiertamente.

El género sigue siendo un tema de discusión, aunque algunos intentarán considerar que el tema e incluso el vocabulario están desactualizados en un intento de cambiar el enfoque hacia otros temas, tal vez para diluirlo y enfocarlo en problemas mayores. Sin embargo, descartar el tema y reducir el tema de los derechos de la mujer es hacer que parezca un tema sin importancia, aunque prácticamente está escrito en la Constitución egipcia a través de su texto, pero evitando el uso de palabras específicas. Abouelnaga (2016, p.31) explica que,

> “Eliminar el género, o incluso implicar la idea, trasciende la agencia, la resistencia y el poder de las mujeres. El género es una categoría de análisis esencial y legítima, y las condiciones materiales que pusieron en práctica la ginocrítica y la gynesis aún existen.”

Friedman (1998) está de acuerdo en que la demanda de visibilidad y uso de las nuevas geografías es crucial en la creación de una sociedad más fuerte y flexible, y que el género debe ser una prioridad. Ella afirma que “incorpora diversas formaciones porque su análisis posicional requiere una especie de alfabetización geopolítica construida a partir de un reconocimiento de cómo diferentes tiempos y lugares producen sistemas de género diferentes y cambiantes a medida que estos se cruzan con otras estratificaciones y movimientos sociales diferentes y cambiantes para

fines sociales". justicia" (Abouelnaga, 2016, p. 32). La alfabetización de la que habla Freidman es aquella que no oprime a las mujeres ni directa ni indirectamente, lo que significa utilizar diálogos diferentes y abordar temas de género en primer lugar.

Sin duda, el género es un aspecto crucial para diseccionar las necesidades de muchos en tareas de tamaño alcanzable. Sin embargo, no puede ser ignorado o minimizado, como ocurre a menudo. Es necesario que se discuta, especialmente dadas las nuevas geografías que ayudan a evidenciar las diversas interseccionalidades que existen dentro de un grupo homogeneizado. El Egipto contemporáneo lucha por otorgar agencia a las mujeres y otros grupos vulnerables porque el patriarcado teme perder el poder y el control. Dar poder a los grupos que más lo necesitan solo enriquece a la sociedad en general haciéndola más rica, sostenible y saludable. La alfabetización geopolítica es necesaria para entender a la sociedad y dadas las nuevas geografías, es hacer cambios que beneficien a las mujeres que han y seguirán luchando por un mayor cambio.

Conclusión

Este capítulo ha esbozado las intersecciones entre género y feminismo en la sociedad contemporánea a través de ejemplos seleccionados de contextos estadounidenses e internacionales. Con fundamento en la teoría social, el feminismo interseccional y los estudios culturales, el análisis enfatizó cómo las concepciones cambiantes de la identidad de género se ven influenciadas por los sistemas políticos, el discurso mediático y los marcos culturales. Estos ejemplos se eligieron no como representaciones exhaustivas, sino como puntos de partida significativos para comprender cómo se permiten, fomentan o restringen la identidad y la autoexpresión en diferentes sociedades.

Como parte de la estructura más amplia de la investigación artística de esta tesis, este capítulo establece el contexto sociopolítico en el que opera la identidad. Sus perspectivas orientan directamente los capítulos posteriores, en particular los que abordan la especificidad cultural y la continuidad histórica. El siguiente capítulo enfoca el alcance de la investigación al abordar Egipto como estudio de caso, lo que permite un análisis más detallado de cómo las fuerzas locales configuran la expresión de género y las posibilidades de intervención artística en ese contexto.

Comprender los efectos del feminismo en una sociedad puede ser muy profundo en el crecimiento y desarrollo dentro de las comunidades, países y regiones. Las personas comienzan a ver y ser vistas a través de la lente de la igualdad, con mayor visibilidad, con comunidades más solidarias, incluso a través de las plataformas de redes sociales. El uso de una presencia en las redes sociales como salida y conexión para "otros" grupos y minorías, como las personas no binarias, puede cambiar los conceptos erróneos, educar a la población y comenzar a construir una sociedad más tolerante e inclusiva.

La correlación con una sociedad tolerante e inclusiva y el arte no es un concepto inconcebible en este caso. El trato justo y equitativo de las personas en todos los espectros podría proporcionar el espacio para la libertad de expresión, en una variedad de formas, incluido el arte. La libertad de

expresión en la vida, puede afectar la forma en que uno se expresa de otras maneras: cuando uno se reduce a un uniforme, encuentra formas más sutiles de autoexpresión, como a través del cabello creativo, uñas, maquillaje, zapatos, piercings, tatuajes, etc. Según el Diccionario de Cambridge (n.d.), el arte se entiende comúnmente como la manifestación o utilización de la imaginación y la capacidad inventiva humana, a menudo en formatos visuales, con la intención de crear piezas valoradas principalmente por su atractivo estético o su capacidad para evocar emociones. Por lo tanto, estas formas artísticas de autoexpresión pueden alentar aún más a un individuo a expresarse externamente de maneras más abiertas en el futuro. Cuando la autoexpresión es limitada o suprimida, el arte proporciona la salida a la autoexpresión, anclando un sentido de auto-reconocimiento o comprensión en su proceso o resultado creativo; uno que no necesariamente podría expresarse con seguridad de otras maneras. Las redes sociales perpetúan y crean un lugar generalmente seguro para hacerlo, ya que todavía existe algo de anonimato en línea.

Un aumento en las tasas de aceptación de la homosexualidad e individuos no binarios en los Estados Unidos de América se debe a que la visibilidad ha permitido que las personas vivan con más transparencia y de forma abierta en las últimas décadas. Canadá fue un ejemplo para los Estados Unidos; México ha estado utilizando a los Estados Unidos como ejemplo, e incluso superando a los Estados Unidos en su mayor progresismo. El cambio regional influye en las regiones/países vecinos, allanando el camino para el cambio, aunque a veces lento. En Occidente, hemos visto ejemplos de esto desde América del Norte hasta América del Sur. Estos cambios afectan en cómo los individuos se ven a sí mismos y a su futuro, cómo crean, se expresan, gastan su dinero, determinan en qué sectores podrían trabajar y, en general, cómo viven sus vidas, determinando incluso qué bares, restaurantes, discotecas/clubes, etc. podrían patrocinar.

América Latina tiene una larga historia de adopción de la autoexpresión de géneros no binarios, específicamente a través de muxes en México, y otros conceptos nativos americanos de lo no binario, como el pueblo de dos espíritus de Canadá, otro concepto nativo americano. El feminismo lleva estos conceptos a nuestra nueva realidad y puede lograrse específicamente a través del arte, que no tiene género ni conformidad. Un objetivo feminista es la inclusión y la igualdad, no reducir ni imponer la feminidad a nadie, sino abrir la puerta para que la feminidad sea aceptada en todo el espectro y para que se reconozca su valor.

Las mujeres egipcias han demostrado ser francas y tener agendas feministas, mientras confrontan constantemente a los líderes religiosos y gubernamentales para validar su competencia y capacidades como iguales a las de sus contrapartes masculinas. Sin embargo, a menudo reciben respuestas discriminatorias que subestiman su valor fuera del hogar, ya que los conceptos patriarcales están profundamente arraigados en las religiones fundamentales y conservadoras, a las que uno debe pertenecer en Egipto. Esto prohíbe que muchas mujeres participen en actividades no relacionadas con roles sexistas dentro del hogar, lo que limita su participación en educación, carreras, pasatiempos y otros intereses no tradicionales, lo que afecta su capacidad para vivir auténticamente.

La historia de las mujeres egipcias que propusieron ideas feministas en el Antiguo Egipto, así como a principios del siglo XX, es una prueba de que las mujeres egipcias tienen un historial de salirse de los roles tradicionales y muestra sus habilidades para liderar y ser creativas, así como sus intereses. en la política y el emprendimiento, todo con la intención de mejorar el país. Aunque a través de la militarización moderna y una mayor reducción de la identidad individual, las mujeres han sido reducidas nuevamente a roles sexistas, independientemente de su educación, experiencia o interés, enfocándose nuevamente en su importancia en sus roles de cuidadoras y productoras (de niños para los hombres).

La revolución egipcia de 2011 cambió la forma en que los egipcios veían a las mujeres egipcias: eran vistas como valientes, luchadoras, mártires y ruidosas. Aunque también se redujeron a símbolos u objetos de la revolución, su presencia se vio y se escuchó, lo que resonó en gran parte del arte callejero de la Revolución de 2011. Esta creación de un "nuevo" discurso, a través del arte callejero, permitió que las mujeres fueran vistas bajo una luz diferente a la que se veía anteriormente. Las mujeres como tema ayudaron a reescribir la cultura detrás de la Revolución, convirtiéndose en participantes activas, agentes de cambio a través del arte. Esta expresión artística se convirtió en una herramienta de la resistencia, y tanto una forma de arte no convencional (graffiti) como una luchadora no convencional (mujeres) estuvieron al frente de la resistencia. Podemos usar estos aspectos de la Revolución para comprender el peligro de homogeneizar una cultura, por grande o pequeña que sea, ya que frena el crecimiento, la oportunidad y la creatividad individuales, al mismo tiempo que fomenta la ira, la resistencia y la hostilidad hacia los opresores.

Dar autonomía a las mujeres les permite experimentar la vida de manera auténtica, empoderándolas para encontrarse a sí mismas, y las alienta a apoyar a otras mujeres, así como a otras personas, independientemente del género, lo que les permite ser agentes activos en su propia identidad. A través del avance del empoderamiento y la autonomía de las mujeres, a través de la implementación de conceptos, leyes y activismo feministas, todo tipo de personas pueden prosperar, creando y perpetuando entornos seguros y creativos para vivir y ser ellos mismos auténticamente.

CAPÍTULO 2

ESTUDIOS SOCIOCULTURALES SOBRE GÉNERO Y FEMINISMO EN EGIPTO

Capítulo 2 – Estudios socioculturales sobre género y feminismo en Egipto

Introducción

Hay profundos impactos sociales, religiosos y culturales sobre el género y la expresión de género en todo el mundo, sin embargo, estos impactos se pueden sentir aún más profundamente en Egipto, así como también cómo se percibe y hacer [mal] uso del feminismo y cómo eso afecta un mayor cambio dentro de el país, pero a una escala más micro, las familias y las comunidades. Al analizar las estructuras sociales dentro de una cultura o país, es probable que encontremos grandes diferencias entre comunidades en muchas áreas de la vida diaria porque estas comunidades están influenciadas por otros miembros dentro de ella, exposición a comunidades exteriores/vecinas, afiliación religiosa, creencias políticas y otros factores significativos, incluido el acceso a la educación, la exposición al abuso (de cualquier tipo) e incluso las costumbres dentro del hogar. Estos factores tienden a dictar cómo funciona la sociedad, determinando qué es y qué no es aceptable o apropiado para los miembros de esa sociedad.

La religión y la política en Egipto son dos factores que están entrelazados y, a veces, son difíciles de distinguir, lo que provoca agitación y descontento en todo el país. Esta combinación afecta la vida de cada individuo en Egipto, incluso la de los visitantes. Esta fusión de religión y política puede restringir aún más que las personas vivan las vidas que quieren, en la forma en que quieren vivirlas, no porque sean malas personas, sino porque no se suscriben a la política/religión de quienes están en el poder. Es necesario tener en cuenta las dificultades que esta síntesis provoca a mayor escala y su impacto en la calidad de vida de todos en Egipto, ya que su alcance es amplio y no solo influye en comunidades enteras, sino que dictamina las libertades de cada persona, independientemente de su creencia o afiliación política.

Reformular una cultura para que se ajuste a ideales poco realistas es un esfuerzo peligroso, tanto política como socialmente, ya que las personas están sujetas a expectativas poco prácticas o improbables, y tienen una tendencia a resentirse ante sus opresores y, en última instancia, a rebelarse, como ya sucedió en Egipto durante el 2011 con la Revolución. Sin embargo, la recreación de una identidad cultural no solo fomenta el descontento, sino que pone en peligro a casi todos, porque la protesta y la revuelta comprometen a todos, no solo a los que desean un cambio.

La supresión de la expresión de la identidad auténtica perturba la cultura y puede crear animosidad hacia quienes restringen la libertad de expresión, lo que, a su vez, puede incitar a la violencia hacia esos agresores, así como hacia los grupos vulnerables. No se debe tolerar el castigo y el abuso de quienes no se ajustan a una homogeneización cultural, y además desacredita el ideal. Teniendo en cuenta todos estos factores, podemos comprender la importancia de comprender el actual clima cultural, político y social que enfrentan los egipcios y, además, la necesidad de profundizar en estos factores para comprender la realidad y la importancia de la libertad de expresión en un país empeñado en homogeneizar y negar las libertades de expresión.

Este capítulo constituye la segunda parte del componente de investigación fundamental de esta tesis, que investiga las perspectivas socioculturales sobre género y feminismo en Egipto desde la perspectiva de la teoría feminista poscolonial, la sociología y los estudios culturales. La información obtenida con este análisis es la que servirá para enmarcar la producción artística, dentro de una metodología de investigación que aborda el análisis cultural y político no como una investigación aislada, sino como una base que informa la práctica creativa.

Este capítulo se centra en estudios de caso seleccionados y dinámicas sociales que nos acercan a la forma en cómo se moldea, restringe y cuestiona la identidad en la sociedad egipcia contemporánea. El tono que utilizo trata de ser lo más neutral y objetivo posible aunque vuelvo a indicar que esta información es la que nutre la propuesta personal de la práctica artística y que establece relaciones entre el contexto cultural y político y las prácticas artísticas necesarias para las investigaciones materiales posteriores.

2.1 Sociológico: cómo el estatus de las mujeres egipcias está siguiendo una trayectoria diferente a la observada en Occidente

Los egipcios modernos enfrentan muchos desafíos sociológicos diferentes con respecto a la identidad de género debido a una historia compleja de religión y política, así como a la globalización. El Egipto moderno es un crisol, muy parecido a lo que se considera hoy en día a los Estados Unidos de América y Canadá con una variedad de gente con herencias de otros países (State Information Service, n.d.). A lo largo de la historia de Egipto, éste ha sido centro de poder y comercio continental, sin embargo, debido a que la religión está tan entrelazada dentro de la sociedad y el gobierno, es difícil separar ejemplos específicos de normas sociales sin considerar o aludir a la religión como un factor fundamental (Servicio de Información del Estado , n.d.). Entre otros factores, Egipto ha luchado por crear y mantener una identidad nacional como se discutió en el capítulo uno pero sus gobiernos a menudo intentan homogeneizar a los grupos para que encajen en ciertas normas preconcebidas con las mujeres como centro de atención.

La perspectiva occidental de Egipto está sesgada de manera problemática por varias razones, una de las cuales es que la mayor parte de Occidente no está dictada por una cultura conservadora religiosa explícitamente entrelazada como la de Egipto. Sin embargo, existen contradicciones notorias en la separación de la iglesia y el estado por la que Estados Unidos afirma caracterizarse, que es comparable al gobierno islámico egipcio moderno. En Occidente, el cristianismo es la religión mayoritaria, y aunque hay conservadores en el gobierno que lo controlan, podría decirse que son menos poderosos que el régimen egipcio, pero es una amenaza creciente con consecuencias ya visibles (Leppert & Fahmy, 2022) . Si bien muchos occidentales se identifican como pertenecientes a alguna secta del cristianismo, son pocos los que dicen ser seguidores activos, o que no pertenecen a una iglesia o asisten con frecuencia (Jones, 2022). Mientras que los occidentales creen que son más libres que la mayoría musulmana o las naciones controladas por musulmanes, tal vez estén cegados por el hecho de que los cristianos conservadores en el gobierno son igualmente conservadores, si no más, que los que están en el poder en Egipto u

otras naciones de mayoría musulmana. Con el nacionalismo en ascenso en Estados Unidos sus libertades pronto podrían disminuir (Whitehead, 2021). Esta farsa amplifica una falsa sensación de libertad en los occidentales y puede crear opiniones hostiles y sentenciosas de las naciones de mayoría musulmana. Sin embargo, el comportamiento cristiano varía entre sectas y sustancialmente entre individuos, y aunque el uso de la religión como un medio para justificar o negar las propias acciones no es exclusivo de una religión o individuo, “las personas religiosas interiorizaron estereotipos sobre la superioridad moral de su grupo religioso, (Dolan, 2020).

Comprender la perspectiva occidental es importante en este capítulo porque los datos y la cultura se interpretan a través de la lente de una mujer estadounidense nacida en el cristianismo, con educación universitaria, de la CEI, heterosexual y blanca. Aparte de estos factores, existen diferencias culturales y normas de género que son diferentes en ambas culturas y que afectan la perspectiva general de cada una. La mayoría de las mujeres occidentales heterosexuales participan activamente en tareas de género, especialmente en lo que respecta a la crianza de los hijos y las hijas y las tareas del hogar (Barroso, 2021). Si bien la mayoría de las mujeres occidentales heterosexuales confían en los roles de género estereotipados en los hombres, como realizar trabajos de jardinería, el mantenimiento del automóvil y del hogar, además de beneficiarse de su empleo remunerado, tienden a ser más independientes y autosuficientes; además de tener otras expectativas para que sus parejas ayuden en las tareas del hogar, la crianza de los hijos y las hijas y el cuidado de las mascotas. Estos roles de género se perpetran sin pensarlo mucho en la mayoría de los casos y pueden llegar a ser la causa de muchos de los enfrentamientos domésticos (Barroso, 2021). Si bien esto puede variar de una región a otra, incluso de una familia a otra, existe una gran responsabilidad compartida. Las familias heterosexuales a menudo caen en roles de género más estereotipados debido a la dicotomía de las normas de género perpetuadas y vividas por cada individuo. Las familias no conformes con el género tienen una mayor capacidad para compartir las obligaciones familiares de manera más equitativa (Miller, 2018).

Cuando se observan familias no tradicionales o familias que no se ajustan al género, como las relaciones homosexuales, las relaciones de múltiples parejas (poliamorosas o polígamas), los roles de género estereotipados son menos consistentes que en las relaciones heterosexuales (Miller, 2018). Estas familias pueden exhibir más a menudo ejemplos regulares de feminismo dentro de la esfera familiar, especialmente en lo que respecta a las responsabilidades familiares. Tienden a tener una visión más equilibrada de las responsabilidades de la casa, optando por delegar responsabilidades en función de la capacidad o preferencia en lugar de permitir que las normas de género arraigadas dicten. Esto crea una microlección de feminismo en el ámbito doméstico, enseñando feminismo sin prejuicios (Miller, 2018).

Los hogares monoparentales también pueden crear un entorno de responsabilidad en el hogar más equilibrado y equitativo porque a menudo requieren la ayuda de los niños para cumplir con todas las tareas del hogar de manera efectiva y oportuna: enseñar el equilibrio entre el trabajo y

la escuela, las tareas del hogar y las actividades sociales y tiempo personal, sin diferenciar sexos o géneros ni considerar los roles de género desde el principio. Si bien éste no es siempre el caso, en las familias monoparentales, son capaces de proporcionar tales ejemplos a través de responsabilidades compartidas equitativamente en una variedad de formas: asignación aleatoria de tareas, ruedas de tareas, listas rotativas de tareas, etc. Sin embargo, en algunos casos, si hay una hija en la familia, gran parte de los roles de género estereotípicos en el hogar aún pueden recaer en ella para cumplir con poca o ninguna consideración por los hermanos, como las tareas básicas de limpieza, lavandería, cuidado de los hermanos y cocina, entre otros (Ratini, 2021). El padre puede mirar a la hija automáticamente con sesgo de género para que se ocupe de estas tareas domésticas, mientras que a su(s) hermano(s) se le asignan otros roles de género estereotípicos, como cuidar el jardín o las responsabilidades de las mascotas.

Esta sección analizará cómo el género y el feminismo afectan los aspectos sociológicos de los egipcios modernos, específicamente las mujeres, considerando las interseccionalidades que existen en un régimen gubernamental altamente religioso.

2.1.1 Educación: educación general y superior

Las mujeres egipcias toman la iniciativa cuando se trata de crear la identidad de la nación, retratada como la base de la cultura. A su vez, se espera sistemáticamente que las mujeres mantengan a la nación sin pensar en sí mismas o en sus propias necesidades, sino en las necesidades del bien mayor: la nación; y proporcionar familias numerosas para perpetuar y hacer crecer la fuerza laboral, generalmente de la clase media baja (Abouelnaga , 2016; Samari, 2020). ¿Cuál es la causa de la alta fecundidad y la baja educación en Egipto? La autonomía es uno de los factores predominantes en la determinación de las tasas de fecundidad, pero esto va de la mano con la educación. Sin embargo, la autonomía intrínseca y las creencias de género igualitarias chocan para influir en gran medida en las mujeres educadas (Samari, 2020).

Según Samari (2020), el aumento de la fecundidad en Egipto, posterior a la Revolución de 2011, se debe, en parte, a los cambios políticos y sociales que pueden haber amenazado la seguridad física y económica de muchas mujeres, pero también pueden haber perturbado la vida familiar ya que la planificación ponía en peligro su estatus social, ya que en otros países del Medio Oriente, cuando la seguridad se convierte en una amenaza, las mujeres se ven obligadas a casarse y, en última instancia, a tener hijos, para obtener una diversidad de protecciones fuera de la educación, así como de la fuerza laboral. Sin embargo, Samari describe investigaciones que muestran que las mejoras en el estatus de las mujeres a través de la educación superior y la educación en general, así como la integración en el mercado laboral, reducen significativamente la fertilidad entre las mujeres. Dado que Egipto ya tiene una tasa de natalidad alta, que se prevé que aumente de 88 millones a 128 millones de personas para 2030, es importante comprender los riesgos que acompañan a tasas de fertilidad tan altas (Samari, 2020).

> “Es probable que la alta fertilidad tenga graves implicaciones para Egipto al obstaculizar

> el desarrollo económico; crecientes desafíos relacionados con el clima; y limitando el acceso a la educación, el empleo, la alimentación y el agua potable, creando riesgos para la salud de mujeres y niños" (Samari, 2020)

Para comprender cómo las mujeres egipcias obtienen empoderamiento, además de autonomía intrínseca, debemos analizar qué se necesita para hacerlo. El empoderamiento de las mujeres comienza con los recursos, la autonomía y los logros (Samari, 2020). Estos tres aspectos están interconectados. A través de la educación, las mujeres encontrarán autonomía (autonomía) a medida que aumenta su estatus en la sociedad, brindándoles más oportunidades y llevándolas a lograr más logros personales y sociales a medida que se automotivan.

Con la educación se forma autonomía, proyectando así a las mujeres a tomar más decisiones sobre y por sí mismas y/o sus familias, utilizando el pensamiento crítico adquirido a través de la educación, convirtiéndose así en autonomía intrínseca y autonomía instrumental. Con las habilidades para pensar críticamente (autonomía intrínseca) y formular las propias elecciones estratégicas y para controlar los recursos (autonomía instrumental), uno está facultado para ser el líder de su propia vida, estableciendo y logrando objetivos que puede establecer y lograr de forma independiente (Samari, 2020). Esto lleva a las mujeres a gestionar los tres aspectos anteriores: autonomía , empoderamiento y logros. Cuando uno ha llegado a este nivel de autonomía personal, como resultado, toma decisiones más informadas para sí misma y sus familias. Estos resultados se pueden ver en las demandas de las mujeres en el mercado laboral, el gobierno y la salud (Samari, 2020).

> "La educación, como recurso y autonomía, son partes diferentes del proceso de empoderamiento; sin embargo, en ocasiones, la educación se usa de manera inapropiada para hacer operativo el empoderamiento. Si bien la educación se considera un correlato clave del empoderamiento, cuando se utiliza solo la educación para medir el empoderamiento, los investigadores no pueden desentrañar los efectos de los recursos habilitadores frente a los efectos de la autonomía " (Samari, 2020).

Esto quiere decir que la educación sirve como recurso, pero por sí sola es ineficaz para empoderar a las mujeres. Aparece como un componente clave para el empoderamiento y puede justificarse como tal, pero también debe usarse junto con otros aspectos para lograr el resultado deseado: la educación por sí sola no es la respuesta. Combinar la educación como recurso con la autonomía, crea más espacio para la expansión de los dos (Samari, 2020). El trabajo al unísono permite el empoderamiento por extensión. Con cada pequeña instancia y aplicación de autonomía, el establecimiento de una meta, algo que lograr, el nivel de autonomía se expande, al igual que las habilidades de pensamiento crítico, incluso si el resultado no es deseable, porque tuvieron autonomía durante todo el proceso. A través de la educación, posteriormente autonomía, se evidencia un crecimiento económico y una reducción de la pobreza (Samari, 2020).

Se sabe poco sobre las consecuencias de la disminución de la fecundidad en las mujeres educadas y si, de hecho, la educación es una causa directa de la disminución, pero la poca evidencia que existe sugiere que la educación a menudo compite con otros recursos en la familia. Si bien la educación tradicional es un aspecto del esquema más amplio, la educación alternativa también presenta a las mujeres otras oportunidades, como información médica, como los anticonceptivos actuales, que a su vez pueden proporcionar a las mujeres más tiempo para la planificación familiar (Samari, 2020).

Hay otras razones por las que la educación juega un papel en la tasa de fertilidad de las mujeres egipcias, además de una carrera por los recursos, y ese es el tiempo. Muchas cosas en la vida de una mujer requieren su atención y por lo tanto su tiempo. Cuando las mujeres priorizan su tiempo, descubren que eligen usar su tiempo en la educación, la capacitación o sus carreras en el mercado laboral. Las mujeres empoderadas que piensan críticamente pueden sopesar los resultados de tener hijos con sus objetivos y descubrir que los niños consumen mucho más tiempo y dinero del que les gustaría gastar en un momento dado, por lo que pueden optar por seguir una educación o avanzar en sus carreras y tener objetivos cronometrados manejables, en lugar de entrar en la maternidad con menos tiempo y otros recursos para hacerlo. Por lo tanto, se les brindan más opciones sobre lo que quieren hacer (o no hacer) con sus propios cuerpos (Samari, 2020).

Con la autonomía vienen las opciones y la capacidad de tomar decisiones informadas basadas en lo que es mejor para cada individuo, lo que afecta la fertilidad, con un mayor acceso a la planificación familiar, los anticonceptivos, así como la inclusión en las discusiones sobre la fertilidad. Cuando una mujer está bien informada y es activa en las discusiones sobre cuáles son sus opciones, teniendo en cuenta su nivel socioeconómico, es más probable que retrase o espacie los embarazos.

> “En Egipto, la autonomía de las mujeres, medida como la falta de participación en la toma de decisiones y la libertad de movimiento, está asociada con la necesidad insatisfecha de anticoncepción de las mujeres” (Samari, 2020).

Con una mayor autonomía, las mujeres pueden planificar mejor sus familias a través de la discusión conjunta con sus parejas, lo que brinda control sobre el futuro de una mujer, así como sobre su día a día. Este control la empodera aún más, ganando más autonomía doméstica. Y cuando a las mujeres empoderadas se les da un asiento en la mesa, hay mejoras significativas en la asignación de las finanzas y la priorización de las necesidades (Samari, 2020).

La educación en Egipto continúa mostrando disparidades entre géneros, pero no están estancadas. Las mujeres egipcias están alfabetizadas en un 65 % en comparación con los hombres en un 82 % y, aunque la educación se está volviendo más accesible para las niñas y las mujeres, solo alrededor del 25 % de las mujeres están activas en la fuerza laboral. Esto es alarmante ya que

el 61% de la población tiene menos de 30 años, lo que proyecta futuras dificultades para encontrar trabajo para la población más joven a pesar de una población más educada. Esto afectaría a toda la población, pero afectaría mucho a las mujeres que ya tienen un porcentaje tan bajo en el mercado laboral (Samari, 2020).

Las mujeres egipcias se casan más tarde, se vuelven más educadas y son parte de las personas que toman las decisiones en el hogar. Estas creencias intrínsecas igualitarias en género están igualando la balanza de las mujeres y la sociedad está tomando nota. "…las actitudes relacionadas con el género parecen estar cambiando: los adultos jóvenes en algunas partes de Egipto dicen que las mujeres y los hombres deberían compartir las decisiones del hogar" (Samari, 2020).

Sin embargo, las mujeres que no encuentran o no pueden encontrar trabajo en el mercado laboral, tienen más probabilidades de tener hijos antes que las que están trabajando, independientemente del acceso a anticonceptivos y programas educativos de salud. La tasa de fertilidad promedio en Egipto es de aproximadamente 3,5 nacimientos por mujer, siendo esta una expectativa generalizada para la mayoría de las mujeres (Samari, 2020). Es importante que las mujeres revisen sus propias necesidades y deseos a través de la educación y la comunicación abierta con sus parejas para decidir cómo será su familia y cuándo, dadas las situaciones socioeconómicas.

2.1.2 Matrimonio

El matrimonio en Egipto, como en la mayor parte del mundo, es una parte integral de la edad adulta. Su importancia es equiparable como acontecimiento vital a la finalización de una carrera o al ingreso al mercado laboral. Las leyes del matrimonio han ido cambiando a lo largo de los años en Egipto, principalmente para detener los matrimonios precoces (menores de edad). Pero el matrimonio sigue siendo una actividad universal en Egipto, con casi el 60 % de la población del país (15 años o más) actualmente casada, según un informe de 2011 (Roushdy et al., 2011). Hombres y mujeres en la treintena muestran un porcentaje casi unánime de matrimonio, rozando el 98% en personas mayores de cincuenta años (casadas alguna vez) (Roushdy et al., 2011). Con las tasas de matrimonio aumentando desde 2018, también se puede suponer que también lo están las tasas de divorcio. Las tasas de divorcio también están aumentando desde 2017, pero no en la misma medida que los matrimonios, con un 40 % de matrimonios que terminan dentro de los primeros cinco años (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Es cierto que la edad y la educación juegan un papel importante en el matrimonio, así como la ubicación, que tiende a ser la causa principal. Las áreas urbanas tienen un menor número de personas casadas, mientras que en las áreas rurales, el matrimonio sigue siendo una práctica común constante (Roushdy et al., 2011). Al considerar los factores discutidos anteriormente para el empoderamiento de las mujeres, ahora podemos entender que los matrimonios ocurren a edades más tempranas para las mujeres en áreas rurales debido a la falta de educación, autonomía y recursos. No quiere decir que siempre sea así, pero las investigaciones nos informan

que cuando las mujeres carecen de estos elementos, se encuentran en situaciones precarias en las que es posible que no tengan otras opciones, o que ni siquiera sean conscientes de otras opciones. Se casan porque así se hacen las cosas de donde son. Las mujeres que viven en áreas urbanas tienen más recursos disponibles, tal vez una comunidad más amplia de mujeres diversas, acceso a la educación, acceso a la educación para la salud, junto con más autonomía. El matrimonio entre mujeres analfabetas (62,5 %), jóvenes y rurales (48 %) se encuentra en las tasas más altas del país (Roushdy et al., 2011). El matrimonio entre las mujeres con educación secundaria cae considerablemente del 59% al 42,1%, y el 30% de las mujeres que completan su educación y se incorporan al mercado laboral están casadas. Como hemos visto a través de estas estadísticas, la educación juega un papel importante en la formación e información de las opciones de las mujeres sobre el matrimonio. Además, a medida que las mujeres buscan educación superior, los percentiles de mujeres que se casan continúan cayendo, ya que posponen el matrimonio y se enfocan en su educación en lugar de establecerse (Roushdy et al., 2011).

El matrimonio precoz sigue siendo en gran medida un fenómeno femenino y, como se mencionó anteriormente, suele ser entre mujeres que viven en zonas rurales con poca o ninguna educación. El matrimonio precoz se refiere a las mujeres jóvenes (niñas) que se casan antes de los 18 años. Sin embargo, debe tenerse en cuenta que la edad legal para contraer matrimonio ha seguido aumentando, anteriormente la edad legal para el consentimiento era 16 y ahora es 18 (Roushdy et al. al., 2011). De esto podemos entender que anteriormente el matrimonio precoz era entre niñas menores de 16 años.

> "…en las zonas rurales del Alto Egipto, donde el 15 % de las mujeres actualmente casadas se casaron antes de los 16 años y el 38 % antes de los 18. En las zonas urbanas, estas cifras se reducen a más de la mitad: el 4 % de las mujeres se casaron antes de los 16 años y el 13 % antes de los 18 años. 18", (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Entonces, podemos ver que la ubicación y el acceso a la educación y otros recursos fundamentales son cruciales para comprender las tasas de matrimonio en Egipto, "de mujeres actualmente casadas que se casaron antes de los 18 años por residencia. Alrededor del 37 % vive en zonas rurales del Alto Egipto y el 41 % en zonas rurales del Bajo Egipto" (Roushdy et al., 2011). Por el contrario, de las mujeres con educación universitaria, menos del 1% se habría casado temprano. La ubicación, los recursos y la autonomía son factores determinantes masivos para el matrimonio temprano y, estáticamente, podemos esperar que retrasen el matrimonio considerablemente (Roushdy et al., 2011).

El matrimonio consanguíneo, o matrimonio entre parientes consanguíneos, también es un fenómeno común entre las jóvenes.

> "En general, el 34,4% de los matrimonios entre los jóvenes son consanguíneos. Aproximadamente el 60% de estos matrimonios son con primos hermanos. La

> consanguinidad es más común entre las mujeres de 15 a 17 años, de las cuales el 63,7 % está casada con un pariente" (Roushdy et al., 2011).

La economía juega un papel importante en este tipo de matrimonios. El Alto Egipto tiene las tasas más altas de matrimonios consanguíneos en el país, pero eso no es sorprendente cuando nos enteramos de que estos matrimonios ocurren entre el 44% de esos matrimonios jóvenes. El Alto Egipto es en su mayoría rural, ofrece pocas oportunidades de trabajo y tiene una educación significativamente menor. El 44% mencionado son niñas en el quintil más bajo de riqueza (Roushdy et al., 2011).

> "El perfil de los jóvenes en matrimonios consanguíneos sugiere que estos jóvenes pueden casarse con familiares porque su posición socioeconómica desventajosa les limita el acceso a otras redes a través de las cuales pueden conocer a posibles cónyuges" (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Roushdy refuerza la importancia del empoderamiento femenino como medio de autonomía con sus estadísticas proporcionadas. La pobreza y el acceso inadecuado, incluso a personas de fuera de su comunidad, pueden causar grandes conflictos socioeconómicos, lo que hace que las jóvenes y las mujeres carguen con el matrimonio sin opciones alternativas, como cursar estudios superiores o buscar pareja en otras ciudades o regiones. Sin embargo, algunos matrimonios consanguíneos tienen por objeto aliviar, en parte, la carga financiera del matrimonio, o incluso para las familias (Roushdy et al., 2011). Estos matrimonios no son todos con hombres mayores (11 años o más), aproximadamente el 14% de ellos en ese supuesto. Hay, sin embargo, un porcentaje mucho más significativo de estos matrimonios que son con hombres entre seis y diez años mayores, un 36% (Roushdy et al., 2011). Esto nos lleva a la conclusión de que los matrimonios jóvenes reducen la autonomía de estas jóvenes, creando un matrimonio transaccional, que beneficia a todas las partes implicadas excepto a la joven.

Hay muchas expectativas cuando se contrae matrimonio y una de ellas es dónde vivir después de casarse. En Egipto, muchas parejas se mudan al hogar del marido al contraer matrimonio. No es estrictamente por razones económicas, ya que compartir una casa entre más personas es más barato que permitirse varias residencias; más bien, se hacía por obligación cultural. El hijo mayor, varón o mujer, tenía la obligación para con la familia de vivir con los padres hasta que ellos mismos se casaran y, en el caso del hijo mayor, tras el matrimonio seguiría viviendo con sus padres mientras envejecían y su nueva esposa se uniría a él. En este caso, la nueva esposa se consideraba cuidadora de los miembros mayores de la familia. Aunque es más común entre las clases baja y media-baja, puede verse en todas las clases. Las clases media-alta y alta tienen medios para permitirse otro tipo de alojamiento, pero prefieren permanecer cerca de sus padres.

La idea en sí, es aceptada por casi la mitad de los jóvenes egipcios (Roushdy et al., 2011). La autonomía de las mujeres, en este caso, está plagada de compromisos y de cierta renuncia al

poder. Aunque muchas mujeres están de acuerdo en que podrían vivir con sus suegros, no es la situación ideal para una pareja de recién casados, sin embargo, a menudo es una condición en su contrato matrimonial, pactado entre una serie de términos acordados antes del matrimonio (Roushdy et al., 2011). Estos contratos pretenden proteger a la mujer en caso de divorcio o fallecimiento del marido, ya que muchas mujeres no se incorporan a la vida laboral o la abandonan para casarse y fundar una familia o dedicarse a otras actividades (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Encontrar la pareja adecuada es un reto para la mayoría y, aunque los matrimonios concertados siguen existiendo en Egipto, no son lo que la mayoría de la gente percibe que son. Por lo general, en un matrimonio concertado, se trata simplemente de la presentación de dos individuos que las familias creen que serían una buena pareja - no son forzados en la mayoría de los casos, y son similares a un esquema de emparejamiento (Roushdy et al., 2011). En el caso de un matrimonio concertado, las personas se conocen a lo largo de una serie de encuentros acompañados y suelen casarse a los pocos meses de su primer encuentro si todo va bien (Roushdy et al., 2011).

Al elegir una pareja en Egipto, hay muchas expectativas y equipaje. Como en la mayoría de los lugares, la gente quiere casarse con alguien que mejore su calidad de vida y les brinde un entorno estable para crecer juntos. No es diferente en Egipto, sin embargo, las expectativas frente a las perspectivas son un gran desafío. Los hombres y mujeres egipcios tienen expectativas similares en lo que respecta a las características de buscar una pareja, incluida la religión y la educación. Las mujeres tenían otras características que consideraban importantes según lo consideraba la sociedad, como tener un trabajo respetable, tener un apartamento y tener una personalidad fuerte. Las mujeres a menudo eligen características basadas en las expectativas de la sociedad para que puedan ser atendidas en lugar de una asociación en la que trabajar juntos. Pocos hombres requerían la característica de estabilidad financiera en su pareja, probablemente asumiendo que sería el principal sostén de la familia, lo que también alimenta el estereotipo. Los hombres también buscaban cualidades más superficiales en las mujeres, como la belleza y la virtud. Cerca del 20% de ambos grupos buscaba el amor y la comprensión mutua, pero una característica interesante y alarmante es que la “tratan bien”, donde las mujeres seleccionaron este rasgo dos veces más que los hombres (Roushdy et al., 2011).

2.1.3 Divorcio

Las estadísticas que hemos visto muestran claramente la importancia de empoderar a las mujeres para que tomen decisiones informadas sobre sí mismas y sus necesidades, para que puedan crear autonomía, pensar críticamente sobre lo que quieren y no quieren y/o necesitan. Tienen acceso a los recursos que les ayudarán en sus acciones y decisiones, incluyendo si/cuándo casarse y más aún si/cuándo divorciarse. Cuando se trata de divorcio en Egipto, las mujeres tienen menos autonomía que su contraparte masculina. En la mayoría de los casos, ella está a merced de su marido, como veremos más adelante.

Como en cualquier lugar, el divorcio puede ser complicado, costoso y emotivo, especialmente cuando se navega por el sistema legal como una persona con menos educación o en una situación que requiere la autoridad de un organismo religioso para aprobar el divorcio antes de que se conceda. Estas son algunas cosas que afectan a los egipcios de hoy junto con los cambios socioculturales y económicos cambiantes.

A medida que más personas se mudan a las áreas urbanas para encontrar trabajo y las áreas rurales se urbanizan, más personas están expuestas a ideales diferentes de los que pueden estar acostumbradas. Las regiones urbanas tienden a tener perspectivas diferentes a las que las áreas rurales no están expuestas. Esto puede incluir desviaciones de las normas y roles de género estereotipados dentro de una familia (Mendoza et al., 2019). A medida que más mujeres se encuentran educadas y se integran en el mundo laboral para comenzar o avanzar en sus carreras, el matrimonio a menudo se retrasa; las mujeres se convierten en sus propias agentes y ahora comparten roles iguales o casi iguales en la familia, especialmente cuando se trata de la toma de decisiones. Con eso viene el conflicto en una sociedad patriarcal que todavía considera que el hombre es quien decide en última instancia en la familia. Dado que cada vez más mujeres están empoderadas en Egipto, esto se convierte en un punto de fricción y puede conducir al divorcio. Las leyes actuales en Egipto aún favorecen a los hombres, en el sentido de que tienen la capacidad de solicitar el divorcio de su esposa sin su consentimiento, alegando la "incompatibilidad" como causa (Mendoza et al., 2019). Las parejas que tienen más educación tienden a tener tasas más bajas de divorcio ya que hay un pensamiento más crítico en juego.

> "La investigación muestra que las personas con educación superior muestran un mejor juicio al seleccionar un cónyuge, son mejores en la comunicación y el manejo de conflictos, y tienen más control sobre la interferencia externa, particularmente de la familia", (Mendoza et al., 2019).

El divorcio tiene muchas implicaciones complicadas, especialmente en un clima como el de Egipto, pero más aún para las mujeres. Dado que los hombres tienen mucha ventaja en situaciones como el divorcio, muchas mujeres pasan por el divorcio con una variedad de sentimientos que van desde la culpa y el pecado hasta la criminalización y la discriminación. Están los estigmas de la sociedad que también deben enfrentar, que muchas veces mira a una mujer divorciada como una mala madre o esposa, mucho más que a los hombres. Debido a esto, muchas mujeres divorciadas tienen más dificultades para recuperarse del divorcio, sufren depresión y problemas de autoestima (Mendoza et al., 2019).

Las mujeres divorciadas con hijos a menudo son estigmatizadas más que las mujeres divorciadas sin hijos, a menudo excluyéndolas de sus grupos sociales habituales, así como la pérdida de amigos, lo que lleva al aislamiento. "Estas ramificaciones sociales a menudo dejan a las mujeres soportando matrimonios disfuncionales y abusivos para evitar esta discriminación y humillación social" (Mendoza et al., 2019). Con estos riesgos sociales y económicos, las mujeres

permanecerán en matrimonios que no son saludables ni seguros para evitar estos resultados del divorcio, sin embargo, a veces son inevitables. Dado que los hombres tienen la capacidad de declarar el divorcio a su esposa sin que ella tenga la capacidad real de resistir su voluntad, las mujeres a menudo se ven obligadas a sufrir estas estigmatizaciones.

> "La ley de divorcio es particularmente compleja en Egipto, con diferentes tipos de divorcio autorizados para hombres y mujeres. Los hombres se resistían a que las mujeres iniciaran el divorcio, con solo un tercio a favor del derecho de las mujeres a hacerlo, menos de la mitad de la proporción de mujeres que estaban a favor" (Feki et al., 2017).

Algunos hombres están a favor del divorcio iniciado por la esposa, pero otros lo encuentran aterrador, casi un ataque a su poder como esposo con la última decisión. Un hombre de cuarenta y cinco años en la encuesta de IMAGES MENA Egypt (2017) declaró:

> "Por supuesto, estas leyes han tenido efectos negativos. Antes, las mujeres eran ciegas [no conscientes] y su esposo era un Si Sayed [un patriarca ficticio] y ella tenía que obedecer sus órdenes. Ahora sus ojos se han abierto a todos los problemas grandes y pequeños, y puede amenazar a su esposo con khol' [divorcio iniciado por la esposa]".

En los casos de divorcio, una experiencia proclamada "traumática", las mujeres no solo son estigmatizadas negativamente en las formas anteriores mencionadas, sino que también son cosificadas por los hombres e incluso son consideradas una amenaza para otros matrimonios (Mendoza et al., 2019).

Existen leyes para ayudar a las mujeres que se han divorciado (o enviudado) como resultado de las leyes que les permiten ser ubicadas en esa situación, sin embargo, son débiles y brindan poca asistencia. Muchas mujeres se vuelven a casar por necesidad, aunque con precaución. A través del divorcio, una mujer experimenta una pérdida de autonomía ya que no puede defender explícitamente sus necesidades; sin embargo, la investigación ha demostrado mucha resiliencia entre las mujeres divorciadas. A medida que las mujeres se recuperan del divorcio y del trauma asociado al mismo,

> "En muchos casos, el divorcio es visto como una forma de salir de una situación que ya era dolorosa y, a pesar de experimentar duelo, las personas también experimentan libertad, felicidad y una reinvención de sí mismo" (Mendoza et al., 2019).

A medida que se procesa el trauma, pasa el duelo, junto con la depresión en algunos casos, las mujeres comienzan a recuperarse y encuentran la felicidad en su nueva libertad, especialmente si se trataba de una relación particularmente pobre. Esto no es específico de las mujeres egipcias, pero es importante tener en cuenta que las mujeres egipcias después del divorcio pueden sentir

que han recuperado su autonomía y como Mendoza et al. afirma que experimentan una "reinvención de sí mismas" que les permite vivir por sí mismas de manera más auténtica, tal vez volviéndose más empoderadas, ejemplificando la resiliencia y sofocando los estigmas.

2.1.4 Roles de género

Se están logrando muchos avances legislativos en Egipto en el frente de las cuestiones relacionadas con el género, especialmente después de la Revolución de 2011, pero son escasos y lentos (Feki et al., 2017). Egipto lucha contra la misoginia y los estrictos estereotipos de género, que a menudo se exageran en las regiones rurales de Egipto. Muchos de estos estereotipos se refuerzan durante la niñez y se perpetúan por la falta de educación o la exposición a roles equilibrados en el hogar (El-Behary, 2017).

La Encuesta Internacional sobre Hombres e Igualdad de Género (IMAGES) en Oriente Medio y Norte de África Egipto (MENA) fue realizada por ONU Mujeres, Promundo en 2017, que incluyó Líbano, Marruecos, Egipto y Palestina. Esta encuesta fue un “estudio sobre las realidades, prácticas y actitudes de los hombres con respecto a las normas de género, las políticas de igualdad de género, las dinámicas del hogar, el cuidado y la paternidad, la violencia de pareja, la diversidad sexual, la salud y el estrés económico, entre otros temas, (Feki et al., 2017). Proporciona una perspectiva precisa y actualizada de los hombres y mujeres de Egipto (y otros países). Con esta información podemos comprender el estado actual de la igualdad de género a partir de una experiencia de primera mano de los hombres y mujeres en Egipto y tomar medidas para educarlos e informarles sobre las prácticas modernas, así como proporcionar recursos que ayudarán a cambiar las perspectivas y acciones en el futuro. Crear una sociedad más equitativa.

Según una nueva investigación de Øystein Gullvåg Holter, informada por Ashild Lappegård Lahn (2015), “la igualdad de género les da a los hombres una vida mejor”. El informe de Lappegård Lahn sobre la investigación de Holter explica que es positivo para todos los involucrados cuando las escalas de género están equilibradas y hacen referencia a que todos los implicados tienen menos probabilidades de sufrir o experimentar depresión, divorcio o muerte violenta. Continúan explicando que un alto nivel de igualdad de género, de hecho, no beneficia a las mujeres a expensas de los beneficios y privilegios de los hombres, aunque no discute el hecho de que la igualdad de género afecta a las personas de manera diferente, y algunas se benefician más que otras; ese resultado a menudo se debe a mayores disparidades (Lappegård Lahn, 2015). Al considerar únicamente la brecha salarial en otras naciones, como por ejemplo Estados Unidos, podemos ver mejoras en la calidad de vida cuando la brecha es mucho más estrecha, como la de algunos estados dentro de Europa. Cuando la brecha salarial se reduce o elimina, los hombres no se ven afectados, pero las mujeres (y sus familias) se benefician. Holter explica en el informe que,

> “Tanto la igualdad salarial como la igualdad de género tienen aproximadamente los mismos efectos positivos en el bienestar. Al mismo tiempo, la igualdad de género también es un factor independiente. Parece que la igualdad de género tiene efectos tan

fuertes en la salud y el bienestar como los tiene la equidad salarial" (Lappegård Lahn, 2015).

A menudo ponemos a las mujeres al frente de la lucha por la justicia y la igualdad de género, pero Holter explica que los hombres son importantes para su éxito. Sus cifras muestran que cuando los hombres comparten tareas en el hogar, como el cuidado de los niños o de los ancianos, existe una correlación directa con el nivel de igualdad de género del país (Lappegård Lahn, 2015). Comienza en el hogar, no con las mujeres haciendo más, sino con los hombres dando un paso al frente y compartiendo la carga. La contribución de los hombres en el trabajo no remunerado que normalmente se delega a las mujeres afecta a la sociedad en su conjunto, afirmando: "No deja de ser significativo que los países que se han visto más afectados por la crisis financiera son también aquellos en los que los hombres participan menos en trabajo de cuidados no remunerado" (Lappegård Lahn, 2015). La carga de hacer realidad la igualdad simplemente no puede recaer sobre los hombros de las mujeres y las políticas gubernamentales temporales o defectuosas. Con estadísticas que muestran esta correlación, ¿por qué los hombres no toman la iniciativa y abordan acabar con la desigualdad de género? Holter sospecha que "esto tiene que ver con que los hombres no son conscientes de que una alta calidad de vida está relacionada con la igualdad de género" (Lappegård Lahn, 2015). Hay evidencia de ello entre los grupos con mayor nivel de educación, entendiendo que la igualdad en el hogar, por ejemplo, permite tener un hogar más productivo, beneficiándose de ambas partes involucradas (Samari, 2020).

En realidad, se investiga poco sobre cómo los hombres ven la igualdad de género y cómo deconstruir las desigualdades, ya que a menudo se centra en las mujeres como el problema y la solución (Feki et al., 2017). Como se mencionó, la igualdad de género es compleja y no puede enfocarse simplemente en un lado del debate cuando hay investigación y evidencia de algunos vacíos que se pueden llenar. La investigación realizada en IMAGES MENA Egypt explica aún más la falta de investigación sobre los puntos de vista de los hombres sobre la igualdad de género, continuando:

> "Tampoco hay muchos datos disponibles sobre el impacto de los cambios políticos, económicos y sociales en la visión de los hombres sobre su propio lugar en sus familias y comunidades; ni sobre cómo estas fuerzas configuran sus propias identidades como hombres y sus relaciones con los demás; ni sobre las formas en que estos temas difieren entre las generaciones. Estas actitudes y prácticas tienen un impacto directo en la vida y el bienestar de las mujeres y las niñas, como se refleja en tasas sustanciales de violencia de género, entre otros desafíos (Feki et al., 2017).

Lo anterior sugiere que se deben realizar más investigaciones sobre las realidades específicas de género de los hombres. Con las presiones sociales para desempeñar ciertos roles culturales de género y con la incapacidad de hacerlo debido a problemas socioeconómicos o socioculturales subyacentes, no podemos deshacer la tensión que existe como resultado (Feki et al., 2017). Comprender la posición de los puntos de vista de los hombres y los impulsores que existen detrás

de ellos, es igual de importante que la inclusión de las mujeres en el debate y el proceso. "…el desempleo y la pobreza a menudo se sienten como castradores" (Feki et al., 2017) y en una cultura con profundas raíces patriarcales no se puede asumir que eso se puede resolver rápidamente, ya que la ausencia de trabajo y el aumento de la pobreza continuarán y empeorar si no se abordan también las causas subyacentes.

El tema del trabajo no es solo un problema de los hombres, sino de las mujeres ya que "muchas, y en particular las mujeres más jóvenes, carecen de acceso a puestos de trabajo en el sector formal, lo que contribuye a las limitaciones en su movilidad física, social, económica y política". (Feki et al., 2017). Si bien prevalece la desigualdad de género, también lo hacen las oportunidades de empleo. Así como las oportunidades de trabajo afectan a los hombres, también afectan a las mujeres y tienen "implicaciones profundas" tanto para hombres como para mujeres (Feki et al., 2017). Cabe señalar, sin embargo, que si bien un número alarmantemente elevado de hombres egipcios creía que el lugar de la mujer estaba en el hogar (90 %) en lugar de trabajar fuera del hogar o en la arena política o pública, la realidad es que dos tercios de los hombres creían en la igualdad de condiciones e igualdad en el ámbito de la educación tanto para niños como para niñas (Feki et al., 2017).

> "…las condiciones económicas cambiantes hacen que esta expectativa sea cada vez más difícil de cumplir para los hombres. Al mismo tiempo, el estado cambiante de las mujeres está poniendo a muchos hombres en un terreno cada vez más incierto" (Feki et al., 2017).

Un hombre de sesenta y un años, participante en el estudio, dijo: "Un hombre es un hombre, una mujer es una mujer, trabajo duro y hago mi parte. Necesito ir a casa y encontrar las cosas listas, no me pidas que haga nada extra. Soy el hombre" (Feki et al., 2017).

Estos hallazgos de IMAGES MENA Egypt muestran el cambio de viejas ideas a otras más modernas, con algunas aún estancadas en las prácticas tradicionales basadas en el simple hecho de "Así es como siempre se ha hecho". Muchos hombres todavía creen que tienen obligaciones con las mujeres tanto a nivel personal como público, creyendo que deben ser los guardianes de las mujeres y de su familia, así como el principal sostén de la familia. La igualdad de género debe analizar las expectativas y necesidades socioculturales tanto de hombres como de mujeres para facilitar esta igualdad, además de la educación.

2.1.5 Cuidadoras en el hogar

La crianza de los hijos e hijas es, en gran medida, si no únicamente, el papel de la mujer en Egipto, tal y como lo ya era en el antiguo Egipto. Se considera que las mujeres de todo el mundo son cuidadoras naturales, suponiendo que los niños acudirán instintivamente a sus madres cuando lo necesiten. Sin embargo, es probable que los niños y los adultos acudan a la persona que les resulte más cómoda, y no todas las mujeres son madres naturales que ayudan a quienes lo

necesitan o a quienes buscan ayuda. A pesar de esto, las sociedades de todo el mundo están condicionadas a creer que el orden natural de las cosas es que las mujeres son las cuidadoras naturales. Condicionar a las mujeres a creer que tienen que ser las únicas cuidadoras puede causar problemas de autoestima en mujeres que no se sienten así o incluso cuando sus hijos no acuden a ellas de forma natural o tienen preferencia por su pareja. Esto provoca estrés y ansiedad y puede conducir a la depresión (Yuko, 2016). Las mujeres todavía tienen la carga de la tarea general de atender las necesidades de los niños, niñas y otros miembros de la familia, a menudo olvidándose de sí mismas y de sus propias necesidades en el proceso. Esto se puede ver en todo el mundo, pero es significativo en Egipto (Feki et al., 2017).

Se asigna una cantidad desigual de responsabilidad a las mujeres y niñas de cualquier familia egipcia determinada. Si bien algunas responsabilidades en el hogar son saludables para ayudar a fomentar el crecimiento personal adecuado con respecto a la gestión de las responsabilidades personales y domésticas, muchas mujeres egipcias están inundadas de expectativas sociales poco realistas dentro y fuera del hogar (Feki et al., 2017). Esto podría exacerbarse cuando se trata de padres solteros. Aunque no es raro en Egipto divorciarse, ocurre y ha ido en aumento (Feki et al., 2017). Y, como se mencionó anteriormente, las tareas domésticas a menudo se distribuyen de manera desigual entre los miembros femeninos restantes de la familia, pero predominantemente la esposa. Esto se puede atribuir a la idea de que los hombres de la familia tienen más probabilidades de encontrar un trabajo estable o trabajos ocasionales para ayudar a mantener a la familia. Sin embargo, los deberes domésticos recaen sobre los hombros de las hembras y se espera continuamente que realicen todos los deberes adecuadamente sin tener en cuenta otras circunstancias (Feki et al., 2017).

A menudo se considera que la madre es la figura vinculante de la familia a nivel transcultural, pero esa consideración conlleva una gran responsabilidad de mantener la unidad familiar intacta y cohesionada. Esto es parte de la crianza de los hijos e hijas, enseñarles a escuchar y obedecer lo que los padres requieren, y en esa obediencia deben seguir las normas establecidas en la familia y en la escuela. La madre también debe enseñar modales en el desarrollo de la crianza, aunque en Egipto esto se ve como un trabajo compartido junto al padre (Henry & Elwy, 2020). Los niños y niñas deben aprender modales apropiados mientras interactúan con los padres, hermanos, miembros de la familia extendida e invitados, así como mantener este comportamiento en la esfera pública.

En la encuesta IMAGES-MENA más del 90% de los hombres cree que ellos deben tener la última palabra sobre las decisiones en el hogar, concluyendo que ellos asumen la responsabilidad de lo que sucede en el hogar y lo proveen. Sin embargo, en la misma encuesta, el 98% de los hombres creía que el cuidado de los niños, incluido el cambio de pañales, el baño y la alimentación, era responsabilidad de la madre (Feki et al., 2017). Esta inquietante realidad de que los hombres se creen responsables del cuidado de la familia y del hogar, pero descuidan deberes de trascendencia demuestra que su criterio de provisión es mucho más general y menos enrevesado.

Esto lleva a otras preguntas sobre la intención. ¿Los padres tienen hijos por el deseo egoísta de tener un sucesor como ellos sin tener que hacer nada del esfuerzo físico o psicológico de criarlos, beneficiándose puramente del esfuerzo de las mujeres? Estos ideales problemáticos se perpetúan de generación en generación a medida que los niños y niñas crecen viendo las disparidades entre sus padres sin necesariamente cuestionarlas (Feki et al., 2017). Las contradicciones en el pensamiento sobre los roles de género en el hogar son sorprendentes, ya que el estudio IMAGES-MENA mostró que un porcentaje minúsculo de hombres no encontraba vergonzoso ayudar con los niños y hacer el trabajo doméstico y (como se mencionó anteriormente) creía que la educación es igualmente importante tanto para niños como para niñas, por el contrario, también creía que para una mujer era más importante casarse que tener una carrera (Feki et al., 2017).

El estudio ilustra y describe el impacto de la educación como un impulsor de apoyo a la igualdad, ya que tanto los hombres y mujeres que recibieron educación, como aquellos cuyas madres también recibieron educación demostraron respuestas más equitativas en la encuesta, aunque las mujeres lo hicieron más (Feki et al. , 2017). Este estudio también mostró que "los hombres y las mujeres cuyos padres participaban en las tareas del hogar también tenían actitudes más equitativas de género" (Feki et al., 2017). "Solo alrededor de un tercio de los hombres, principalmente aquellos con trabajo o educación superior, apoyaron la idea de que las mujeres trabajen fuera del hogar en las mismas condiciones que los hombres" (Feki et al., 2017). Muchas mujeres egipcias están de acuerdo en que el acceso de los hombres al trabajo era más importante que el suyo propio, lo que se refleja en las estadísticas del mercado laboral.

> "La tasa de participación femenina en la fuerza laboral de Egipto es inferior al 20 por ciento, una de las más bajas del mundo, y más de las cuatro quintas partes de las mujeres que respondieron la encuesta son amas de casa. Esto no solo aumenta la presión sobre los hombres para que provean, sino que deja a las mujeres en una situación dependiente, pero no necesariamente confiable" (Feki et al., 2017).

Las mujeres se vuelven miembros más vulnerables de la sociedad si están bajo el cuidado exclusivo de su esposo, quien tiene muchos más derechos que ellas en lo que respecta al matrimonio y el divorcio. Aunque el cuidado doméstico no remunerado es un trabajo, a menudo se ignora como tal, para los hombres que están ausentes del hogar. Si la perspectiva del cambio colectivo cuando la mujer es activa en el mundo laboral podemos decir en este escenario que,

> "…los hombres están dispuestos a compartir al menos algunas de las responsabilidades y beneficios correspondientes. Más del 70 por ciento de los hombres esperaban que una esposa trabajadora contribuyera a los gastos del hogar, en comparación con más del 90 por ciento de las mujeres. Casi las tres cuartas partes de los hombres creían en la igualdad de remuneración para los mismos puestos, mientras que las mujeres estaban casi universalmente a favor de la igualdad de remuneración (Figura 3.2.2b). Los hombres estaban casi tan dispuestos como las mujeres a trabajar con compañeras

> femeninas, aunque significativamente menos entusiasmados con el trabajo por tener una jefa" (Feki et al., 2017).

Los hombres están dispuestos a ayudar si les beneficia o los alivia en parte de su carga financiera. La mayoría tampoco se opone a trabajar con compañeras mujeres, pero estarían en desacuerdo con una superiora. Cuando se enfrentan a la perspectiva de trabajar por debajo de una mujer, esto puede considerarse una amenaza o incluso un ataque a su masculinidad en algunos casos, lo que sienta un precedente peligroso en la fuerza laboral de que no están dispuestos a ejecutar sus deberes laborales si una mujer está en poder (poder significativo). La lucha de poder de los hombres que necesitan tener el control de las mujeres, ser sus guardianes y protectores, así como aquellos que toman las decisiones finales de la familia, debe abordarse, ya que tendrá efectos duraderos en sus hijos, perpetuando el ciclo de la desigualdad de género.

2.1.6 Abuso

El abuso doméstico no es un tema que sea fácil de discutir y, a menudo, es una parte secreta de la vida, ya que ciertamente no es un tema que se discuta regularmente o sin vergüenza. Las mujeres son a menudo víctimas de abuso doméstico, como se mencionó anteriormente, son los miembros más vulnerables de la sociedad, no porque sean débiles, sino porque normalmente se las coloca en posiciones de vulnerabilidad en las que pierden autonomía y cualquier intento de escape parece inútil.

En la región MENA no es raro que las mujeres sufran abuso doméstico, es bastante común, y el estudio IMAGES-MENA demuestra que ciertamente forma parte de la mentalidad en Egipto. El 53 % de los hombres que participaron en la encuesta estuvieron de acuerdo en que hay momentos en los que las mujeres deben ser golpeadas, y el 32 % de las mujeres también estuvo de acuerdo. Un asombroso 90 % de los hombres estuvo de acuerdo en que una mujer debe tolerar la violencia para mantener unida a la familia, y un asombroso 70 % de las mujeres estuvo de acuerdo en esta afirmación también (Feki et al., 2017). Estas mentalidades peligrosas representan amenazas para la salud y la seguridad de las mujeres, así como para el bienestar de las niñas que crecen con esta realidad. Pueden internalizar estas creencias y creer que están destinadas a soportar la violencia por el bien de los demás, perdiendo la autonomía, posiblemente desarrollando depresión y perdiendo su propia autoestima, sin mencionar que continúan perpetuando el ciclo de abuso y violencia contra las mujeres, a través de la ira mal dirigida. .

La idea colectiva de que las mujeres deben soportar la violencia para mantener una familia es inquietante, pero nuevamente el peso de esa tarea recae únicamente sobre los hombros de las mujeres. La conversación no se trata de que los hombres controlen sus emociones, sino de usar a las mujeres como madres, criadoras de niños, sirvientas, cocineras y, hasta cierto punto, como sus sacos de boxeo sin tener en cuenta que no son esclavas de los hombres y que poseen necesidades físicas y emocionales. La solución está dirigida a los hombres con una serie de preguntas: ¿Cómo pueden los hombres encontrar formas productivas de controlar su ira y cuáles son éstas? ¿De qué

manera pueden los hombres hacer frente a las situaciones desafortunadas que les presenta la vida? ¿De qué recursos disponen los hombres para gestionar las expectativas de la sociedad? ¿Cómo afectan otros aspectos de sus vidas en sus habilidades para manejar los factores estresantes en sus vidas? Brindar a los hombres recursos para hacer frente al estrés que genera estas expectativas sociales, culturales y religiosas los armará con más herramientas para manejar situaciones difíciles y no volver a la violencia contra las mujeres y quizás contra los niños y niñas. La proyección de ira y otras emociones como los celos es peligrosa, ya que los que realmente sufren no son los culpables de la situación, más bien son las víctimas, como resultado de las circunstancias. Los hombres también son víctimas de la ira y la proyección mal dirigidas. También es importante asegurar que los hombres no solo dispongan de los recursos para sobrellevar la situación, sino que estos mecanismos también se incluyan en la educación para que los niños y niñas, crezcan aprendiendo que la violencia no es el método correcto para manejar las emociones, y que la violencia o el abuso que ven o experimentan en el hogar no es normal ni aceptable.

Como la violencia contra las mujeres en Egipto y la región MENA es común, es importante continuar estudiando el progreso legislativo y cómo afecta directamente tanto a hombres como a mujeres. Con la institución y la educación continua sobre la violencia doméstica y el abuso, se conseguirán grandes cambios en las generaciones más jóvenes. La lucha contra la masculinidad tóxica en Egipto debe comenzar donde sea posible con la educación de los niños, así como proporcionar recursos a los hombres para hacer frente a los factores estresantes y, por supuesto, a las mujeres que son víctimas de violencia doméstica y abuso. El empoderamiento temprano de las mujeres les ayudará a tomar mejores decisiones a lo largo de sus vidas, pero lo mismo debe decirse y hacerse con los hombres. Si bien a menudo son los culpables de la violencia contra las mujeres, también deben empoderarse para manejar las dificultades socioeconómicas respetando a sus parejas e hijos.

> “Algunas mujeres también estaban preocupadas por el riesgo de una reacción violenta de los hombres contra las demandas de igualdad de género, haciendo que las mujeres cargaran con más cargas y responsabilidades”, (Feki et al., 2017).

Las mujeres están muy preocupadas por los hombres y el “retroceso” que podría darse dada la desigualdad de género. Con menos del 20% de mujeres formando parte del mercado laboral y combinado con la escasez de empleo, las mujeres naturalmente asumen más tareas para aliviar la carga de estrés de sus parejas. Sin embargo, no ocurre lo mismo con los hombres. El miedo que experimentan las mujeres por simplemente querer la igualdad es angustiante considerando que casi el 50% de las estudiantes universitarias son mujeres (Feki et al., 2017). Las mujeres están utilizando su tiempo y esfuerzo para educarse a sí mismas para luego perder sus oportunidades en apelar al ego masculino. Las mujeres no pueden ganar autonomía cuando delegan en los hombres la toma de decisiones sobre si, dónde, cuándo y cómo pueden trabajar cuando ya son personas educadas y competentes. Las mujeres tienen metas, al igual que los hombres, sin

embargo, la sociedad egipcia actual asume que son menos importantes que las de los hombres simplemente porque consideran que el trabajo de los hombres, cualquiera que sea, es más importante que el de las mujeres.

La experiencia de las mujeres con la violencia y el abuso en el hogar es algo que la mayoría ha aceptado (70%), por lo que no sorprende que hayan estado al frente de las protestas durante la Revolución de 2011 (Feki et al., 2017). Las elecciones políticas que siguieron a la Revolución demostraron la fuerza y persistencia de las mujeres con una participación inusualmente alta de mujeres votantes. Sufrieron la violencia durante la Revolución al igual que los hombres, e incluso sufrieron la violencia de sus compañeros manifestantes, pero persistieron (Feki et al., 2017; Abouelnaga, 2016).

> "Durante la última década, mujeres juezas, policías, notarias matrimoniales, gobernadoras y otras funcionarias públicas han sido nombradas en cantidades cada vez mayores, aunque con obstáculos una vez en el cargo" (Feki et al., 2017).

Las mujeres seguirán luchando por su asiento en la mesa electoral de Egipto a medida que se vuelve más progresista. Egipto ahora tiene el 15% de los escaños femeninos en el parlamento, pero eso es solo la mitad del umbral recomendado internacionalmente. Seguramente soportarán más violencia y abuso por querer el cambio, luchar por el cambio y ejecutar el cambio.

2.1.7 Política y vida pública

Anteriormente se dijo que, si bien Egipto está en la práctica de desarrollar la aceptación de las mujeres en el gobierno, todavía está muy atrasado. La política en Egipto ha estado tradicionalmente dirigida por hombres, siendo los regímenes anteriores muy conservadores o fundamentalistas musulmanes (Rubin, 1990). Hemos visto cómo la hipermasculinidad de los hombres da forma al país, haciendo que las mujeres crean que hay momentos en que deben ser golpeadas, que las mujeres deben soportar la violencia doméstica para mantener unida a la familia, que las mujeres son más adecuadas como amas de casa y cuidadoras, que deben de hecho serlo, y ni siquiera se les permite el acceso total a Internet (Feki et al., 2017). Esta mentalidad está dañando la autoestima de las mujeres, pero también favorece a más generaciones del mismo tipo de hombres. La existencia y participación de las mujeres en la Revolución y la posterior iniciación en el gobierno y los cargos públicos es una imagen sólida y necesaria para hombres y mujeres jóvenes y mayores por igual. Deben estar expuestas, si no educadas, sobre el éxito de las mujeres en el mercado laboral, pero aún más en los nombramientos políticos de liderazgo.

Según la encuesta de IMAGES MENA Egypt de 2016, solo el 29 % de los hombres creía que más mujeres deberían ocupar puestos de autoridad política, frente al 68 % de las mujeres. Más de la mitad de los hombres encuestados (53%) opinan que, si una mujer era una política capaz, no sería una buena cuidadora de su familia, asumiendo que debería mantener ambas posiciones en lugar

de que su pareja asumiera la responsabilidad total o parcial. Más de la mitad de los hombres (57%) también estuvo de acuerdo en que "las mujeres deberían dejar la política a los hombres". Setenta y siete (77 %) de los hombres y 89 % de las mujeres coincidieron en que "una mujer con las mismas calificaciones puede hacer un trabajo tan bueno como un hombre" (Feki et al., 2017). La cantidad de hombres, tanto educados como sin educación, rurales y urbanos, que creen que la mujer debe mantenerse fuera de la esfera pública y centrarse en ser madre, al mismo tiempo que recibe educación; el resultado es sorprendente y más si se tiene en cuenta que también creen que ellas son capaces de ocupar el mismo cargo cuando ella esté calificada, pero simplemente no debería, es asombroso. La obediencia de los hombres a las normas sociales y culturales supera la evidencia que demuestra que las mujeres son capaces de hacer tales trabajos sin evidencia contradictoria de que no pueden contribuir a formar una familia. Sin embargo, esta es la otra pregunta. ¿Pueden las mujeres criar bien a una familia mientras realizan un trabajo exigente? Las preguntas eximen por completo el deber de los hombres y se centran en las habilidades de las mujeres para hacer más de lo que les corresponde en el trabajo debido a que son mujeres y las normas culturales y sociales son el verdadero controlador.

La encuesta de IMAGES MENA Egypt también afirma: "...tres cuartas partes dijeron que las mujeres son demasiado emocionales para liderar. Los hombres más jóvenes se oponen particularmente al liderazgo político de las mujeres" (Feki et al., 2017). Dado que el 74 % de los hombres creen que las mujeres son demasiado emocionales para liderar la política u otros roles de liderazgo, debemos tener en cuenta el estado mental de los hombres egipcios. Los egos frágiles se desafían fácilmente cuando se empodera a las mujeres de confianza. Los hombres frágiles a menudo luchan con problemas de masculinidad y cualquier mujer que demuestre tener más control o poder es una amenaza para su masculinidad y, por ese mismo hecho, a su identidad masculina (Promundo ONU Mujeres, 2017). Disminuir la ira y las dudas que sienten los hombres egipcios sobre las mujeres poderosas no es una tarea fácil, pero se puede lograr a través de la educación y la exposición (Promundo ONU Mujeres, 2017). Las mujeres deben seguir creyendo en sí mismas y empoderar a otras mujeres para que hagan lo mismo, y el estudio mostró que, "las mujeres, en general, apoyaban más a las propias mujeres en la vida pública" (Feki et al., 2017).

> "Si bien la mayoría de los hombres aceptaron el liderazgo de las mujeres en la sociedad civil, los ministerios gubernamentales y los parlamentos, solo un tercio o menos aceptaron su participación en cotos tradicionalmente masculinos como los tribunales, el ejército o la policía" (Feki et al., 2017).

Está claro que la amenaza que perciben los hombres no es física, sino castrante. La mayoría de los hombres no quieren ver a las mujeres en posiciones de poder donde puedan instituir un cambio real y responsabilizar a los hombres por sus acciones, especialmente por su mala conducta contra las mujeres. Como vemos en el estudio, es aceptable que las mujeres participen en la sociedad civil, pero no en el gobierno, los tribunales o la policía, ya que estos puestos darían autoridad a las mujeres sobre los hombres en ciertas circunstancias y parece que supone renunciar a demasiado

poder para ellos.

El estudio se remite a los hechos de la Revolución de 2011 como ejemplo de la violencia de género que se da contra las mujeres en el ámbito público, aun cuando luchan aparentemente por la misma causa en manifestaciones públicas, “casi dos tercios de los hombres fueron los que dijeron que las mujeres no deberían participar en protestas políticas” (Feki et al., 2017). Sin embargo, la Revolución significó mucho más para las mujeres, ya que aprovecharon la oportunidad no solo para refutar las fechorías del gobierno, sino también para sacar a la luz las disparidades entre los géneros que sufren las mujeres.

Egipto ha estado tomando medidas para mejorar la vida de las mujeres, ya que gran parte de esta legislación ha demostrado encajar dentro de los parámetros de "la Convención sobre la eliminación de todas las formas de discriminación contra la mujer (CEDAW), siempre que dichos cambios no violen el shari' a,” (Feki et al., 2017). Se han modificado o creado leyes en las áreas de matrimonio, divorcio, nacionalidad, registro de nacimiento, entre otras, que la mayoría conocía. Lo cual explicó el estudio, es un progreso en el papel más que en la práctica.

> “Más del 60 por ciento de los hombres y mujeres de la encuesta conocían la existencia de leyes que promueven los derechos de las mujeres, principalmente leyes sobre el divorcio y la violencia de género, incluyeno el acoso sexual. Irónicamente, los hombres estaban mejor informados sobre estos temas que las mujeres, y casi una cuarta parte de las mujeres encuestadas desconocía la existencia de leyes para proteger sus derechos” (Feki et al., 2017).

Las mujeres dudan de la eficacia de estas leyes cuando las conocen, mientras que el 90% de los hombres las encuentran suficientemente eficaces. Sin embargo, existen limitaciones a estas leyes, así como una aplicación escasa, lo que genera escepticismo en muchas mujeres (Feki et al., 2017). Aunque el escepticismo no significa que las leyes en cuestión no funcionen, hay otras preocupaciones reales de las mujeres sobre la efectividad de estas leyes.

> “Otros obstáculos citados incluyeron el peso de las normas sociales que desalientan a las mujeres a hablar sobre estos asuntos, y el estigma y el escándalo que a menudo surgen cuando las mujeres sacan a la luz los casos” (Feki et al., 2017).

Si bien hay partidarios de estas leyes de todos los géneros, todavía existe el temor de que las mujeres tengan la ventaja o el control o la autonomía . Un participante en la encuesta IMAGES MENA Egypt (2017) declaró:

> ““Las nuevas leyes que apoyan a las mujeres las han vuelto muy valientes y difíciles de controlar. Ahora, pueden discutir y pelear contigo, porque sabes que están protegidas. En este momento, si hablas con una mujer, ella iría a la estación de policía y diría que la

estabas acosando y te meterías en problemas". Hombre, 64 años, El Cairo".

En última instancia, existe un temor generalizado de que los hombres rindan cuentas por sus acciones cuando antes había pocas o ninguna repercusión para ellas. Ahora, existe una posibilidad real de que tengan que responder ante una mujer a cargo, la cual, posiblemente, haya experimentado lo mismo que la mujer del caso expuesto. Con nuevos cambios en la ley y una mejor comprensión de las sanciones por sus acciones, los hombres egipcios están sintiendo la restricción de la ley y la presión para mejorar antes de que existiera. Ahora es cuestión de poner en práctica estas leyes y que tanto hombres como mujeres, defensores de la igualdad de género y los derechos de las mujeres, comiencen a elegir mujeres que tengan en el corazón el mejor interés del país. Las mujeres pueden continuar empoderándose unas a otras para entrar y permanecer en la fuerza laboral, asumiendo posiciones poderosas y creando el cambio que ellas mismas esperan.

2.1.8 Viudez y Herencia

La muerte de un compañero o padre también puede ser un estrés inmenso para la familia. La viudez puede causar problemas económicos en cualquier familia, pero especialmente en Egipto, donde las mujeres tienen menos opciones con la muerte de un cónyuge o de un padre, ya que los hombres aún conservan más derechos que las mujeres en términos de herencia y custodia [de los niños]. La muerte en sí misma nunca es una situación fácil, pero la discusión sobre la herencia justo después de la muerte, puede ser devastadora. Las mujeres que sobreviven a la muerte de sus maridos en Egipto no se benefician de las leyes existentes.

> "Las leyes también organizaron la manutención de las mujeres durante el matrimonio y la pensión alimenticia después del divorcio, así como el 'idda (período de espera después del divorcio o la viudez durante el cual una mujer no puede volver a casarse) y puso condiciones para que un repudio se considere válido. Estas leyes todavía están en vigor, aunque fueron enmendadas en 1985 por la Ley No. 100" (Proyecto de Promoción de los Derechos de la Mujer en Egipto, sin fecha).

Puede parecer que las leyes de 1985 no son tan antiguas y obsoletas, pero han sucedido muchas cosas en Egipto desde entonces, incluida una revolución. Los resultados del Índice de Género e Instituciones Sociales (SIGI) de la OCDE indican que las mujeres en Egipto y otros países del norte de África sufren "los niveles más altos de discriminación en recursos productivos y financieros en el mundo: 45%, en comparación con un promedio global de 27%, " (OCDE, 2020). Esto pone a las mujeres en una desventaja significativa cuando se trata de acceder a recursos financieros.

> "…según el SIGI, las viudas y/o hijas en los cuatro países no gozan de los mismos derechos legales que los viudos e hijos para heredar tierras y/o bienes no territoriales" (OCDE, 2020).

En casos como estos, las mujeres no pueden recibir su herencia completa y, a menudo, los miembros masculinos de la familia las presionan para que renuncien a su herencia para que la familia la herede por completo. Esto deja a la heredera con poca o incluso ninguna herencia. Dado que las mujeres ya son un grupo económico vulnerable, que depende del apoyo de su familia o esposo, es inherente que tengan los recursos para, al menos, recibir toda la herencia que se les debe. Sin embargo, poco ha cambiado en estas formas, por lo que las mujeres que deberían heredar una propiedad sustancial probablemente verán muy poco de lo que realmente se les debe. Otros miembros masculinos de la familia pueden beneficiarse de la vulnerabilidad de las mujeres en tales casos (OCDE, 2020). Esta situación podría dejar a las viudas mayores en necesidad de asistencia financiera y encontrarse repentinamente en la necesidad de ingresar a la fuerza laboral (Zeitoun, 2018). Las mujeres mayores que no pueden heredar las propias posesiones de sus difuntos esposos deben confiar en que los miembros masculinos de su familia y si realmente tienen en mente su mejor interés al transferirles su herencia. Deben, nuevamente, depender de los hombres para que las cuiden sin su verdadero consentimiento.

Conclusiones de la sección

A lo largo de esta sección hemos visto el impacto del empoderamiento femenino, cómo funciona y qué se necesita para promoverlo en Egipto. A través del uso de recursos, educación y autonomía, podemos empoderar a mujeres y hombres para luchar más diligentemente por la causa de la igualdad de género. Cambiar la mentalidad de la mayoría, junto con las normas culturales, no es una tarea fácil, pero es importante apoyar la causa de la igualdad de género, apoyando a las mujeres egipcias en sus luchas por ella a través de alianzas, apoyo financiero y apoyo educativo. Brindar recursos a las mujeres egipcias de todas las edades aumenta su capacidad para tomar mejores decisiones, junto con la educación de lo que está sucediendo en su país política y socialmente, y cómo les afecta a ellas y a su futuro, las preparará aún más para tomar las decisiones que consideren, y si son apropiadas para ellas y sus familias en el futuro.

También hemos discutido los resultados de la encuesta IMAGES MENA Egypt, que mostró muchas de las inseguridades de los hombres egipcios y cómo esas inseguridades afectan a las mujeres egipcias. A través de esta encuesta pudimos analizar la mentalidad sociocultural actual de los egipcios en general y evaluar el progreso que se está logrando en todo el país. Es importante considerar todos los factores en juego en la lucha por la igualdad de género en Egipto. Hay muchas batallas sociales y culturales por delante, pero un desafío aún mayor es combatir el problema de la masculinidad tóxica en el país. Las mujeres egipcias seguirán librando una ardua batalla contra la desigualdad de género mientras los hombres asuman el control de las mujeres. Estas diferentes formas de control (financiero, local, físico, laboral y político) mantienen a las mujeres egipcias vulnerables y dependientes de los hombres. Como se discutió anteriormente, el empoderamiento de las mujeres para encontrar su propia autonomía en una variedad de formas, las ayudará a recuperar su control al continuar su educación, retrasar el matrimonio y la fertilidad, seguir sus carreras y ser una parte equitativa de la toma de decisiones. en casa.

Un factor importante a tener en cuenta a lo largo de este proceso es la necesidad de participación de los hombres. Como se ha discutido en esta sección, los hombres no pueden ser eliminados de la conversación sobre la igualdad de género, ya que depende de su participación. Deben comenzar a compartir los roles que las mujeres han asumido durante tanto tiempo y comenzar a remodelar la identidad del hombre, padre, esposo y prójimo egipcio. Si los hombres continúan sintiéndose atacados, o si su masculinidad está en peligro, no creerán en la causa de la igualdad de género y probablemente seguirán siendo combativos y resistentes. La educación en igualdad de género no se detiene en las mujeres, ya que también se les debe enseñar e inculcar a los hombres junto con los niños.

Egipto continúa avanzando en la búsqueda de la igualdad de género, aunque sea lento. Desde una perspectiva occidental, tengo la esperanza de que las mujeres encuentren su voz, aunque sé que será un camino difícil el que tienen por delante. Creo que las mujeres egipcias son fuertes y lucharán en su deseo de igualdad, seguridad y protección y a medida que den forma a Egipto y al lugar de la mujer dentro de él, habrá orgullo por sus logros. El gobierno egipcio llegará a ver el valor de las mujeres en la política, como jueces y como cualquier otra cosa que no sean amas de casa. Mientras las mujeres continúan pagando el precio de la desigualdad, también lo está haciendo la sociedad. A través de la visibilidad y la presencia de las mujeres egipcias en la fuerza laboral, Egipto crecerá y enriquecerá sus propias vidas y, además, su cultura, progresando juntas. Egipto actualmente lucha por perpetuar una identidad falsa, homogeneizar a las mujeres y forzar su representación como portadoras de la cultura misma. Este falso sentido de identidad que tantas se ven obligadas a tener, se desvanecerá y se producirán variedades más verdaderas de identidades a partir de los esfuerzos colectivos.

2.2 El impacto religioso: el renacimiento islámico en Egipto desde la década de 1980 y una disminución de las opiniones liberales egipcias hacia las mujeres (Cómo el renacimiento islámico cambia las actitudes hacia el género y el feminismo)

2.2.1 Religión

Egipto es una nación musulmana social y políticamente conservadora, con ideales rígidos de normas de género, muchas de las cuales se derivan principalmente del conservadurismo religioso y el fundamentalismo. El país está formado por una gran mayoría de musulmanes sunitas (alrededor de 90 millones), y la población restante se clasifica como cristianos ortodoxos coptos u otra denominación cristiana en alrededor de 10 millones, sin embargo, también se estima que menos del 2% de la población es de otras creencias religiosas (CNEWA, 2022; Oficina de Libertad Religiosa Internacional y Misión de EE. UU. en Egipto, 2022). Debido a una ideología fundamentalista religiosa conservadora, junto con el debate sobre la identidad egipcia, en los últimos 30 años, Egipto ha estado sufriendo las ideas homogéneas forzadas sobre lo que es la identidad egipcia (Feki et al., 2017). Esto no está aislado de una religión en particular, sino del colectivo religioso a través del rechazo de las ideas seculares y los estilos de vida alternativos. ¿Qué significa esto para los egipcios?

Las generaciones más jóvenes de egipcios sienten los efectos del conservadurismo religioso de diversas maneras, incluida la obligación de apoyo financiero, independientemente de la capacidad, la restricción educativa o profesional, la adhesión a tradiciones y normas religiosas estrictas independientemente del nivel o la profundidad de las creencias, la incapacidad de seguir tendencias seculares (ropa, maquillaje, música, etc.), entre otros (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). Muchos jóvenes egipcios (de 18 a 25 años) buscan en sus mayores religiosos el conocimiento y la claridad del mundo que los rodea y, al hacerlo en sus años de formación, pueden volverse más fundamentalistas, ya que la opinión de las autoridades religiosas juega un papel importante en sus vidas, a menudo tienen una visión más limitada de los roles sociopolíticos de su religión y mantienen el apoyo a la ley religiosa, a pesar de que está dirigida a los no creyentes (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

> "Esta orientación distintiva hacia la religión de uno se caracteriza por una fuerte creencia en la universalidad de sus enseñanzas, la inmutabilidad de sus principios, la validez de sus afirmaciones sobre este y otros mundos, y su indispensabilidad para la felicidad humana" (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

Dado que los egipcios no pueden separarse de sus religiones, están política y socialmente atados a sus religiones. Con el matrimonio del gobierno y la religión, la sociedad se ve obligada a seguir la religión o al menos ser subyugada por sus leyes. Politizar la religión o religiosizar el gobierno crea un desequilibrio entre los dos y la distinción entre los dos se vuelve cada vez más borrosa. Cuando los dos encajan, puede aislar a partidos específicos, generalmente personas que no siguen la religión en la autoridad política. Esto crea una variedad de incidencias y es problemático ya que, en última instancia, obliga a los no creyentes a cumplir con las leyes religiosas con las que quizás no están de acuerdo o son contrarias a sus propias creencias. Tal vez el impulso se deriva de la necesidad de homogeneizar la sociedad bajo un sistema de creencias o una religión, como estados que combinan la política y el Islam o el cristianismo.

> "Estas concepciones se consideran diversamente como: (a) un conjunto de ideas registradas en el texto islámico; (b) un discurso producido por líderes intelectuales musulmanes; y (c) un movimiento dedicado a islamizar la sociedad" (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

Este apego o fusión con una religión puede prohibir que el individuo se exprese de manera auténtica, verbal o de otro modo, como en las plataformas de redes sociales. Esto podría ponerlos en riesgo de posibles reacciones negativas de sus comunidades religiosas o gobiernos, especialmente en Egipto, donde podrían encontrarse en situaciones legales complicadas (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). Cuando la religión se fusiona con el gobierno y las personas violan la ley religiosa, de hecho, también están violando las leyes sociales y viceversa. Las leyes sociales quedan entonces, ipso facto, a merced de la interpretación de los textos religiosos, que pueden tener diversas interpretaciones, mientras que la ley social se escribe de la manera más explícita

posible para evitar interpretaciones (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

> "…descansando en interpretaciones secundarias de las enseñanzas sociopolíticas del Islam, como la unidad de la religión y la política, la desigualdad de género sancionada por las Escrituras y el no reconocimiento de la individualidad en la tradición islámica. Se afirma que la visión distintiva de los fundamentalistas musulmanes sobre religión, género, política, cultura y ciencia se originó a partir de estos principios" (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

Como afirman Moaddel y Karabenick (2008), estas opiniones son las de los fundamentalistas musulmanes, que tienen desigualdades inherentes escritas en la religión y no reconocen una visión individualista, homogeneizando o islamizando aún más a todo un país. Es posible que las creencias de los musulmanes fundamentalistas no se compartan con el colectivo más amplio. Estas interpretaciones son realizadas por miembros intelectuales de la religión y, por lo tanto, pueden diferir entre sí teniendo diferentes consensos. Sus funciones como intérpretes no son las mismas que las de los traductores de texto, sino que toman decisiones basadas en lo que creen que es coherente con su religión, que nuevamente puede variar en función de una miríada de factores.

> "…estas ideas son producidas por líderes intelectuales musulmanes para resolver cuestiones históricamente significativas que enfrentan su fe como el estatus del razonamiento secular en la teología islámica, la relación entre religión y política, la forma de gobierno, la relación de los países islámicos con el mundo exterior , la identidad individual y el estatus social de las mujeres" (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

Con estos intelectuales interpretando en nombre del Islam, hay muchos otros en desacuerdo, ya que ellos mismos pueden tener diferentes experiencias y educación que han informado sus opiniones sobre sus creencias en su(s) religión(es). Esto es problemático cuando se justifica como igual a la ley de una manera no explícita, abierta a diferentes interpretaciones por parte de otros. Cuando las interpretaciones de un minúsculo número de 'líderes' que no fueron elegidos como representantes, se ponen en una posición de poder para dictar la voz, o la falta de ella, de la mayoría es cuando se vuelve problemático.

Si bien esto puede parecer una mera impotencia de la libertad de expresión, tiene mucho más alcance. Declararse ateo, agnóstico o incluso no creyente podría tener graves consecuencias, social y legalmente, incluso con la muerte o pena de muerte (van Nieukerk, 2019).

En algunas religiones, como el Islam, el catolicismo y el judaísmo, uno no puede divorciarse fácilmente de la religión, si es que lo hace (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). Uno nace en la religión y, aunque hay ceremonias, tradiciones y rituales específicos que pueden necesitar llevarse a cabo para confirmar la verdadera alianza de uno con ella, son mucho más difíciles de abandonar, en

algunos casos imposibles y se castigan con la muerte (van Nieukerk, 2019). Muchas de estas ceremonias y rituales se llevan a cabo a edades tempranas, cuando los niños son ingenuos a las implicaciones de convertirse en parte de una religión. Los niños a menudo siguen el ejemplo de sus padres y sus creencias en lugar de tomar la decisión clara e inequívocamente por sí mismos, a menudo sabiendo poco o nada sobre otras religiones y sus creencias. Los niños son impresionables y si crecen diciéndoles que pertenecen a cierta religión, por lo general continúan creyendo eso hasta que se demuestre que están equivocados, generalmente cuando son adultos. Este ejemplo genérico habla de la forma en que las familias presionan a sus hijos para que sigan sus propios sistemas de creencias, a veces es una declaración, en otros casos incluso te tatúan cuando eres un bebé y te vinculan a él (Myers, 1996). Uno solo puede imaginar que esto se hace con amor y con la intención de que reciban los beneficios de ser parte de la religión, tal vez tanto en el ámbito terrenal como en el más allá.

La tradición de la religión nace de la necesidad de que la religión continúe en gran número, para permitir su financiación, divulgación y entrega del mensaje, y la creencia debe continuar de una generación a la siguiente para que sobreviva (Myers, 1996). La tradición continua de la religión, un sistema de creencias, es aquella que continúa a partir de la necesidad humana de reafirmación y continuidad de la seguridad de una vida mejor en otro ámbito. Estos sistemas de creencias se basan en las congregaciones para brindar apoyo financiero y de otro tipo a la religión para que pueda continuar, pero solo porque hay una fuerza no identificada que desea que continúe (Myers, 1996).

Muchas religiones se aprovechan de las personas que están en necesidad o al final de su vida con promesas de una vida después de la muerte, una vida mejor y continua, que es perfecta y sin dolor ni sufrimiento, entre otras muchas otras promesas. Estas promesas son condicionales y parecen tener órdenes estrictas para que sus creyentes sean condonadas y apoyadas por los líderes de la religión. Estos líderes a menudo se seleccionan para guiar a los seguidores y asegurarse de que sigan las reglas y tradiciones, al tiempo que inculcan la fe de que los seguidores creen en el dios/dioses correctos, y también les imparten cierto temor de abandonar la religión o la creencia a modo de repercusiones por no creer, quizás perpetuado aún más por otros miembros de la familia que también son creyentes (Pretorius, 2004; Myers, 1996). Esta táctica similar se usa en la crianza de niños, para lograr que se comporten de manera razonable y responsable por temor a algo más grande.

2.2.2 Gobierno religioso

Cuando el matrimonio de la religión y el gobierno se concentra, se vuelve problemático ya que el gobierno de control comienza a crear y aprobar leyes y reglamentos con respaldo religioso, si no están escritos explícitamente a favor de una religión. ¿Qué significa esto? El gobierno comienza a construir e implementar leyes y reglamentos que interfieren con la vida cotidiana de las personas que no pertenecen a la religión del órgano de gobierno. Comienza a llevar a cabo aquellas leyes y reglamentos basados en interpretaciones de textos religiosos que rigen a individuos religiosos, en

lugar de a la sociedad en su conjunto. Si la mayoría del país pertenece a la religión del órgano de gobierno, ¿por qué sería problemático? Cuando las leyes están escritas sobre la base de una creencia y no sobre la moral básica en la que toda la sociedad puede estar de acuerdo, entonces aquellos de otras religiones, o de ninguna religión, están sujetos a esas leyes independientemente de su voluntad de participar, sin consideración de su propia creencias religiosas, que pueden estar en conflicto con estas (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008).

Si bien muchas religiones tienen similitudes en cuanto a su ética y moral para la sociedad, pueden variar mucho en lo que respecta a la implementación o al grado en que deben seguirse. Esto crea una forma peligrosa de gobierno debido a los sistemas de castigo, a menudo muy obsoletos, por no obedecer las leyes religiosas. A menudo se basan en escritos de miles de años, muchos de los cuales son traducidos e interpretados por intelectuales religiosos ya que entienden que el lenguaje y la sociedad han evolucionado (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). A medida que cambian las sociedades y las culturas, cambian los idiomas y también las religiones. Con base en los cambios sociales, la religión debe adaptarse de diferentes maneras. Si la religión no cambia y se adapta a la sociedad, pierden adeptos y pueden volverse minúsculos en tamaño y objetivamente insignificantes. Entonces se vuelven extremos porque no se han adaptado a los cambios de tecnología, normas sociales o matices culturales porque no intentan desviarse de la interpretación fundamental del texto, llevándolos a descifrar y seguir los textos más literalmente que semánticamente, cuando se podría haber pretendido una interpretación divergente, sobre todo porque el idioma era diferente en el momento de la redacción del texto, así como las diferencias culturales y tecnológicas que existían y que conducen a la mala interpretación.

Cuando los gobiernos comienzan a gobernar respaldados por una determinada entidad religiosa, puede tener consecuencias extremas para aquellos que no se adhieren a ella. El uso de la religión, especialmente cuando es mayoritaria, para crear una sociedad que se adapte a un grupo en lugar de intentar incluir a todos no solo puede causar resentimiento, sino que podría ser mortal. En naciones autodeclaradas cristianas y musulmanas, por ejemplo, donde las leyes se crean para gobernar a los creyentes con repercusiones estrictas para aquellos que no cumplen con las leyes religiosas, los individuos no conformes, implícitos o explícitos, se ven obligados a adoptar prácticas religiosas de las que quizás no estén de acuerdo (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008). A veces es un mero inconveniente cumplir con las leyes religiosas, pero a veces puede resultar en el encarcelamiento o la muerte cuando la ley religiosa prohíbe la expresión de la identidad sexual o de género. Para dar un ejemplo de esto en las dos religiones mencionadas en Egipto, un individuo no puede revelarse legalmente como homosexual; las implicaciones de hacerlo podrían resultar en el encarcelamiento o la muerte debido a las estrictas leyes conservadoras que les impiden hacerlo. Ser homosexual es un delito ya que entra en conflicto con ambas religiones, pero en Egipto, con un gobierno islámico, las repercusiones de ser homosexual y actuar en consecuencia pueden resultar en abuso mental y físico severo, incluso la muerte (Villarreal, 2020). Aunque la familia acepte la identidad sexual del individuo, no puede hacer pública su verdadera identidad por las repercusiones que sufrirá por parte de su propio gobierno y sociedad (Villarreal, 2020). Si

las leyes que rigen la sociedad solo reconocieran las verdades religiosas dentro de una religión, entonces estarían ilegitimando la libertad de expresión (de orientación sexual), y mientras algunos creyentes de esa religión entienden y aceptan algunas de las 'verdades' religiosas básicas pero rechazan las que condenan la homosexualidad, por ejemplo, estarían en contradicción con la ley porque se basa en puntos de vista religiosos que no tienen.

Algunas religiones, como las mencionadas anteriormente, interfieren con la ciencia y los descubrimientos científicos que apoyarían y quizás confirmarían las identidades no binarias (Eidhamar, 2014). Estas interferencias se basan únicamente en la creencia y la interpretación de los textos religiosos, donde la ciencia se basa en hechos y observaciones de la realidad. La exclusión de datos científicos que restan poder a creencias religiosas específicas genera conflictos en la sociedad, no solo en la política. Tal conflicto priva a las personas de la capacidad de vivir auténticamente, tanto dentro como fuera de las religiones con las que está en conflicto, e incluso puede culpar al individuo por vivir de esa manera. La religión, en general, intenta crear una hegemonía sobre otras que pueda ser contenida y controlada.

Los textos sagrados, las escrituras y los libros a menudo no se examinan desde dentro de la religión y, en cambio, se consideran infalibles tal como los interpretan los eruditos religiosos (Moaddel y Karabenick, 2008; Eidhamar, 2014). El concepto en sí mismo es falible como se discute, el idioma y la sociedad cambian con el tiempo y lo que una vez fue cierto, solo décadas después, podría resultar falso a medida que se realizan nuevas investigaciones y descubrimientos (Halim, 2015). Sin embargo, las creencias religiosas sólo pueden demostrarse inexactas si se cuestionan, nuevamente porque son interpretaciones, no están basadas en hechos. Si aquellos que cuestionan la precisión no son de confianza o no pertenecen a la religión, su perspectiva a menudo se pasa por alto o se ignora por completo, se trata como una amenaza a los fundamentos de la religión, que se cree que es confiable e incuestionable. Las críticas seculares se ignoran o se combaten utilizando los propios textos religiosos, en lugar de los textos seculares que apoyan la crítica. Sin embargo, un no hecho no puede ser sustanciado utilizando el mismo fundamento como fuente de justificación o exoneración.

Negar a un individuo el acceso a las interacciones sociales comunes y la inclusión básica en la sociedad debido a su identidad es discriminación. Ciertos grupos están siendo excluidos de participar plenamente en la sociedad debido a las creencias extremas de otros. Eso no quiere decir que todas las exclusiones sean injustificadas; sin embargo, las exclusiones basadas en creencias religiosas excluyen a las personas comunes de participar y hacer crecer la sociedad, lo que posiblemente impida los avances sociales, incluso en otros aspectos como la investigación y el desarrollo, la tecnología, la filosofía, las artes y las ciencias. Las diferencias morales están en el centro de estas exclusiones, sin embargo, algunas de las exclusiones son superficiales y aquellas que son interdependientes de la sana funcionalidad de la sociedad deben ser las que se apliquen y se refuercen. Estos también pueden cambiar con el tiempo, sin embargo, ninguno debe basarse en creencias religiosas.

2.2.3 Efectos de la religión en las mujeres

Las mujeres son a menudo una idea tardía cuando se hacen consideraciones sobre los efectos de los cambios sociales, especialmente en la sociedad patriarcal del Egipto moderno. No se consideran entre los afectados de manera significativa, ya que generalmente se les mantiene y cuida dentro del hogar, por lo que se toman pocas medidas en relación con sus necesidades (Feki et al., 2017). Esto no está aislado de la religión o el gobierno religioso, de hecho, existe una discriminación interseccional dentro de ambos, de manera no exclusiva.

Las mujeres no solo son ignoradas y discriminadas, son incluso intencionalmente excluidas u objetivadas para apoyar otros problemas (Feki et al., 2017). Estos dos conceptos parecen imposibles de coexistir, sin embargo, lo hacen. Se considera que las mujeres son una parte integral de la sociedad y la religión, así como un objeto aparentemente desechable entre los dos. Objetivamente hablando, las mujeres son necesarias para la reproducción, por lo tanto, son muy apreciadas, sin embargo, en el mismo contexto, sus sacrificios no necesariamente son considerados en un grado tan alto y, a menudo, son abusadas, utilizadas como peones en las negociaciones e incluso rechazadas de la mano de obra. Se espera que cuiden a sus hijos, mantengan sus hogares, cocinen y se cuiden a sí mismas incluso después de un evento físico y psicológico intenso. Este es un ejemplo entre cientos de cómo las mujeres son altamente estimadas por sus habilidades fisiológicas y, sin embargo, su dolor es ignorado al mismo tiempo.

Las mujeres en la religión y las sociedades respaldadas por la religión a menudo se consideran intelectual y físicamente insuficientes en comparación con los hombres; este concepto inexacto es arcaico, cobrando prominencia junto con los ideales patriarcales, con un flujo y reflujo de evidencia endeble (Halim, 2015). El patriarcado, al oprimir más aspectos además que el de las mujeres, ha creado una visión inexacta de la mujer y su lugar en el mundo moderno, así como en la historia. Dicho esto, las mujeres han demostrado ser capaces, inteligentes y fuertes en una variedad de formas, sin importar cuán descartadas hayan sido. Egipto tiene una relación tumultuosa con las mujeres en el poder a lo largo de su larga historia. Las mujeres en el antiguo Egipto luchaban por el reconocimiento y el poder al igual que las mujeres egipcias modernas, pero lamentablemente todavía no se las consideraba poderosas (Khalil et al., 2015). Es fácil mirar atrás en la historia y decir que era una época diferente, incivilizada, brutal, bárbara, etc., pero en realidad era una cultura avanzada, poderosa y civilizada. También estaba dirigida por mujeres muy poderosas e inteligentes, y otro ejemplo de indicios históricos puede considerarse como signos de congruencia de 'otro' en género, como el caso del Rey (antes Reina) Hatshepsut. Continúan los debates sobre la interpretación de los puntos de vista del Corán sobre las mujeres, así como sobre sus roles en la sociedad:

> “Los versos del Corán y los hadices (pronunciamientos del Profeta) que tratan sobre las mujeres, sin embargo, no definen sistemáticamente los roles y el estatus de las mujeres. Su ambigüedad ha provocado una controversia considerable con respecto a las opiniones e intenciones del Profeta” (Halim, 2015).

Con roles sociales indefinidos basados en textos religiosos, las mujeres todavía están subvertidas en términos de igualdad de género en una variedad de campos. Sin embargo, dentro de la misma religión, utilizando los mismos textos religiosos, existen variaciones en la interpretación de los roles de las mujeres: “Además, las cuatro principales escuelas jurídicas dentro de la tradición islámica han diferido en su interpretación de las fuentes de la revelación, incluso sobre el tema de condición y derechos de la mujer” (Halim, 2015). Esto por sí solo es prueba suficiente de que el uso de interpretaciones religiosas no debe ser la base de las leyes que gobiernan la sociedad. Estas interpretaciones continuarán variando y cambiando con el tiempo, y cada nuevo erudito islámico las interpretará de manera diferente.

Históricamente, Egipto no siempre ha sido una nación islámica, y el Egipto anterior al Islam era relativamente libre y mostraba mucha más igualdad de género que el Egipto moderno, con excepciones para el matrimonio y el divorcio (Halim, 2015).

> “La poesía preislámica, por ejemplo, retrataba a las mujeres como capaces de interactuar libremente con los hombres y participar activamente en los asuntos comunitarios, incluso en el ámbito espiritual” (Halim, 2015).

Las sociedades fijas y patriarcales luchan por ceder el poder a aquellos que consideran inadecuados, insuficientes o débiles, que a menudo se consideran mujeres, pero que históricamente también han considerado a los pobres, la clase trabajadora, discapacitados, deformados, enfermos, ancianos, sin educación, y 'otros' (Capurri, 2006). Quienes están en el poder pueden ser parte de los grupos antes mencionados, pero la característica común entre quienes están en el poder patriarcal es que a menudo son ricos o provienen de la riqueza, tienen educación o tienen la capacidad de recibir educación. Ni siquiera se les exige que sean inteligentes para participar en el patriarcado, siempre y cuando sean únicamente hombres; sin embargo, sí aplican exclusiones, siendo éstas algunas de las insuficiencias mencionadas anteriormente. El patriarcado se construye sobre la exclusión y el elitismo, y considerablemente la masculinidad [tóxica] que excluye parcial o totalmente a las mujeres en los grupos minoritarios (Capurri, 2006).

> “Un factor importante que contribuyó a la evolución conservadora de la sociedad islámica con respecto a la interpretación de los roles adecuados para las mujeres fue la presión del ideal del honor tribal” (Halim, 2015).

Esto lleva al concepto de que el honor de la familia se sustenta en la virtud de las mujeres de la familia. “Al mismo tiempo, la imagen que los hombres tenían de las mujeres enfatizaba la sexualidad femenina y postulaba que las mujeres eran débiles e irresponsables” (Halim, 2015). Asumiendo, por tanto, que la mezcla de hombres y mujeres, en última instancia, los condujo a actos sexuales, deshonrando a la familia. Como resultado, “La reclusión y el velo de las mujeres cumplían el propósito de proteger a la familia de una posible humillación por las transgresiones

de sus mujeres" (Halim, 2015). Además, atribuye a las mujeres la vergüenza de cualquier acto sexual perpetrado por la pareja y devalúa a las mujeres y su carácter.

> "En última instancia, las mujeres se mantuvieron separadas de los hombres para proteger a los hombres de las tentaciones que inevitablemente ofrecían las mujeres, que eran inherentemente poco confiables. El confinamiento de las mujeres en el hogar obviamente limitó los roles que podían asumir y su capacidad para hacer valer sus derechos" (Halim, 2015).

Halim explica cómo la interpretación del Corán ha cambiado drásticamente de otorgar derechos a las mujeres a quitárselos. Es la interpretación de las leyes religiosas, y no el texto mismo, lo que ha traicionado a las mujeres en su lucha por la igualdad. Interpretaciones de hombres, que no desean ser culpados por sus propios impulsos y falta de autocontrol. Las mujeres no necesariamente tienen la culpa, pero es la falta de reconocimiento de que los hombres han culpado históricamente a las mujeres por su propia falta de autocontrol y eso ha perpetuado los falsos ideales de las mujeres, eliminando gran parte de su albedrío y creando un sistema de honor basado en la virtud. confiando en el poder sobre las mujeres y sus cuerpos.

2.2.4 Revivalismo islámico en Egipto desde la década de 1980

Un declive en las opiniones liberales egipcias hacia las mujeres: cómo el renacimiento islámico cambia las actitudes hacia el género y el feminismo

Egipto ha luchado con la igualdad de género durante mucho tiempo, pero comenzó a sufrir aún más con el resurgimiento del Islam a mediados de la década de 1980. El Islam no es la causa fundamental de esto, sin embargo, los extremistas religiosos tienen algo de culpa (Carvahlo, 2009). Esta sección discutirá los factores que fuera de la religión misma podrían ser la causa del renacimiento religioso y preguntará a quién afecta más y por qué. Tiene como objetivo explicar brevemente la transformación de Egipto de una sociedad secular a una religiosa fundamentalista.

A fines de la década de 1970 hubo un aumento en la participación religiosa dentro de las comunidades musulmanas en Egipto. Sin embargo, antes hubo cambios políticos hacia ideales más seculares y un alejamiento de la participación religiosa, con muchos de éstos participando pasivamente en el Islam pero dejándolo como un aspecto fraccional de su identidad (Carvahlo, 2009). El Islam se había convertido en una "cultura heredada en lugar de una fuente de orientación práctica" entre la élite educada. El Islam se estaba desvaneciendo como punto de contacto para la dirección religiosa o personal (Carvahlo, 2009). La gente estaba viviendo fuera de los límites de la Ley Sharia (ley religiosa), y las tradiciones religiosas ocurrían con menos frecuencia y con menos entusiasmo, también apareció un aumento en el consumo de alcohol. En ese momento, el velo [de las mujeres] era casi inexistente en El Cairo ya que la gente disfrutaba del secularismo (Carvahlo, 2009).

Hay muchas teorías sobre cómo ocurrió el cambio de una sociedad cada vez más secular a un cambio repentino y exagerado hacia valores religiosos conservadores. Una teoría sostenida por Jean-Paul Carvahlo (2009) es que comenzó como una crisis económica. Ante el suceso de una disminución de la mano de obra, las personas se encuentran desesperadas por encontrar trabajo y al mismo tiempo siguen comparándose con los demás. Aunque las familias habían trabajado para asegurar que sus hijos recibirán educación para tener más oportunidades en el mercado laboral, de repente se encontraron con muy poco o sin trabajo. Carvalho (2009) explica este tiempo como "envidia y aspiraciones insatisfechas" o preferencias dependientes de la referencia: un momento en que los individuos tenían que tomar decisiones sobre sus vidas dándose pocas opciones en función de lo que envidiaban y lo que aún tenían que obtener, incluso, (1) continuar trabajando arduamente al extenderse o extenderse demasiado para obtener trabajo, cualquiera que sea el medio o (2) abandonar la carrera para dedicar su tiempo al Islam y las prácticas religiosas.

> "El mecanismo psicológico crítico requerido para que la creciente privación relativa conduzca a un renacimiento religioso es que la actividad religiosa produce valores religiosos que permiten a los agentes hacer frente a la envidia y las aspiraciones insatisfechas" (Carvahlo, 2009).

Los jóvenes musulmanes educados utilizaron esta práctica para tomar decisiones importantes sobre lo que veían por sí mismos. Tuvieron que preguntarse si querían hacer el trabajo extra con la esperanza de poder encontrar un empleo o un empleo secundario para mantener su estilo de vida y/o mejorar sus condiciones, o por lo contrario, reducir su estrés y optar por no participar. Optar por no participar en la carrera por el estatus para encontrar empleo tampoco fue fácil, pero se utilizó como excusa para su situación. Si se retiraron de la sociedad secular que les decía que desearan más, lograran más y fueran más, entonces ya no tendrían que competir por esas cosas. En cambio, al sumergirse en la religión, una que prometía riqueza, salud y todas las cosas que uno desea en la próxima vida simplemente por vivir de acuerdo con el Corán, podían crear para sí mismos y construir una vida "más rica" a través de la religión. Tendrían menos estrés ya que no tendrían que competir por la riqueza en esta vida si pueden vivir con modestia y rectitud. Junto a esto, podrían estar exentos incluso de la presión de desempeñarse en el mismo grado en la sociedad secular. Podrían utilizar la piedad como excusa para su sufrimiento y, al hacerlo, reducir las comparaciones negativas de ingresos, así como reducir sus aspiraciones seculares (Carvahlo, 2009).

> "Como tal, rastreamos los orígenes del renacimiento islámico contemporáneo a una combinación de dos desarrollos: (1) una reversión del crecimiento en las sociedades musulmanas y (2) una creciente desigualdad de ingresos y empobrecimiento de la clase media baja" (Carvahlo, 2009).

Carvahlo (2009) examina las crecientes aspiraciones de los jóvenes egipcios en las décadas de

1950 y 1960 que aprovecharon el desarrollo estatal de la educación gratuita en todo el país, en particular los de las zonas rurales. Estaban motivados por el crecimiento y la movilidad ascendente que trajo la educación, aunque no consistente. La reversión del crecimiento que ocurrió afectó a estos jóvenes egipcios, en su mayoría rurales, que no tenían las conexiones sociales necesarias o carecían de otras habilidades deseables, como el dominio del idioma inglés. Estas aspiraciones insatisfechas llevaron a muchos de ellos a volcarse en la religión, como se explicó anteriormente, para dedicarse a otras áreas en las que creían que no tendrían que competir, aumentando drásticamente la participación religiosa (Carvahlo, 2009). Por el contrario, Carvahlo (2009) encuentra que, "…los salarios reales han estado cayendo en las sociedades musulmanas desde mediados de la década de 1970", dejando una excusa menos razonable para la salida de la fuerza laboral o del mercado laboral, considerando que fue no es una circunstancia nueva. Carvahlo (2009) explica además a partir de su investigación,

> "El mecanismo psicológico clave que identificamos es que dedicar más tiempo a la actividad religiosa genera valores religiosos que 'inmunizan' a los agentes contra las comparaciones negativas de ingresos".

Carvahlo (2009) y muchos otros autores, sugiere, plantean la hipótesis de que "los jóvenes frustrados se unen a las organizaciones políticas islámicas en un intento por alterar sus circunstancias económicas forzando un cambio en las instituciones políticas". Sin embargo, esto deja a las personas vulnerables a una mentalidad colectiva que puede cambiar gradualmente y que se vayan radicalizando potencialmente. Y adversamente, el colectivo se topa con problemas de "free-rider" (Carvahlo, 2009). Carvahlo (2009) continúa,

> "…que la actividad religiosa produce valores religiosos, que ayudan a las personas a sobrellevar la envidia y las aspiraciones insatisfechas al dar menos importancia al objeto de la envidia/aspiración (p. ej., ingresos, riqueza)".

Si bien este énfasis hacia las necesidades seculares ayuda al individuo a separarse de las comparaciones y la competitividad, todavía son vulnerables, ya que el enfoque únicamente ha cambiado. La inmersión religiosa puede ayudar a restar importancia a la competencia material y aumentar los valores morales religiosos, pero en última instancia acentúa las comparaciones morales. En un intento por devaluar las comparaciones seculares, comienzan a construirse comparaciones morales religiosas, lo que sugiere que "la satisfacción de la superioridad moral que ayuda a los agentes a sobrellevar mejor la privación relativa" (Carvahlo, 2009).

> "Como consecuencia, proponemos que el proceso de renacimiento religioso en las sociedades musulmanas se intensificó por la revolución sexual en Occidente y la rápida urbanización causada por la concentración urbana de los esfuerzos de modernización dirigidos por el estado. Un gran número de migrantes recientes a las ciudades se encontraron cara a cara con los valores ajenos adoptados por las élites urbanas"

(Carvahlo, 2009).

La implementación y apropiación de las normas culturales occidentales junto con los esfuerzos de modernización del estado impulsaron aún más la desviación del laicismo hacia el compromiso religioso, sin embargo, todo esto también se combinó con la inestabilidad económica, "Por lo tanto, la polarización cultural y económica iban de la mano" (Carvahlo, 2009). Muchos creen que este es el camino hacia los grupos militantes y terroristas, pero eso es refutado por el gran movimiento islámico. La culminación de estos factores en ese momento no es la única razón para el renacimiento del Islam, pero si son partes de un todo aún mayor.

A través de la investigación de la Encuesta Mundial de Valores (WVS), Carvahlo (2009) descubrió que las sociedades musulmanas eran mucho más propensas a considerar la homosexualidad, el divorcio, la prostitución y el aborto como nunca justificables, más que de lo que se consideraba en los Estados Unidos, estado altamente religioso; concluyendo que la mayor discrepancia entre Occidente y el Islam no era la democracia, como se creía fuertemente en ese momento, sino la igualdad de género y la liberación sexual, temas principales que consumían a Occidente en ese momento (Carvahlo, 2009).

El carácter público es un aspecto definitorio del renacimiento religioso en Egipto, además de los movimientos políticos. Esto viene en forma de saludos y expresiones religiosas, trabajo misionero informal y dos de las características más reconocibles, el velo de las mujeres y las largas barbas de los hombres. Estas formas espontáneas de expresión de la identidad islámica actuaron como enfoques deliberados para rechazar el secularismo y mostrar el 'carácter público' o los valores religiosos de uno, actuando como símbolo de la devoción religiosa personal, una competencia ya informada entre otros individuos religiosos que supuestamente habían abandonado (Carvahlo, 2009). Carvahlo (2009) argumenta: “El velo es quizás el símbolo más potente del renacimiento islámico. En países como Egipto, el velo es un fenómeno muy contrario a la intuición. Después de que Huda Shaarawi se quitara el velo de la cara en El Cairo en 1923, las mujeres egipcias de las clases media y alta adoptaron modos de vestir occidentales”. Es sorprendente ver el cambio drástico en la perspectiva y el uso del velo en solo 30 años, de casi ninguna mujer con velo en 1969 a actualmente, usarse alrededor del 80% de las mujeres, incluso en los barrios más "occidentalizados" en 2000 (Carvahlo, 2009).

En contra de la secularización política y cultural de la sociedad egipcia, se formó la Hermandad Musulmana (en 1928), “pidiendo justicia social a través de la estricta adhesión a la sharia y el establecimiento de un estado musulmán” (Carvahlo, 2009). Pero no fue hasta la década de 1970, con la crisis económica generalizada, que ganaron popularidad, pero eso incluyó la derrota de la Guerra de los Seis Días que fue un punto de inflexión importante. Tras esa derrota, Anwar El Sadat emprendió otra guerra con Israel en nombre del Islam (Carvahlo, 2009).

“A pesar de la severa oposición estatal y la represión en países como Egipto, Turquía y

> Argelia, los principios y partidos islámicos han asumido un papel muy destacado en la política de las sociedades musulmanas" (Carvahlo, 2009).

Los musulmanes se desesperaron por mostrar su carácter público y defender el estado respaldado por la religión. Esto condujo a otras organizaciones se respaldaran también por la religión, tales como bancos e instituciones educativas, escuelas y universidades, así como a un incremento de los libros islámicos y servicios de bienestar social (Carvahlo, 2009).

> "En Egipto, las organizaciones islámicas representaban al menos la mitad de todas las organizaciones de asistencia social a fines de la década de 1990, y el número de beneficiarios de los servicios de salud de tales organizaciones aumentó de 4,5 millones en 1980 a 15 millones en 1992" (Carvahlo, 2009).

El aumento de la visibilidad de la organización liderada por musulmanes crecía rápidamente, no solo en los sectores público y político, sino también en el ámbito educativo, donde los intelectuales seculares de izquierda alguna vez controlaron los sindicatos de estudiantes y los líderes estudiantiles islamistas eran el control mayoritario a fines de la década de 1970. También se duplicó la construcción de mezquitas en poco más de diez años. El avance del Islam como un medio para expulsar el secularismo e instalar la creación de un estado islámico había tenido éxito. "Además, la Hermandad Musulmana había obtenido el control de muchas de las asociaciones profesionales de Egipto a principios de la década de 1990, incluidas las asociaciones de ingenieros, médicos, farmacéuticos, científicos y abogados" (Carvahlo, 2009), lo que permitió un mayor impacto económico, afectando las prácticas y políticas comerciales. El establecimiento de la economía islámica, fundada por Mawdudi, "impulsó el desarrollo de un sector bancario islámico multimillonario, el apoyo estatal para la distribución de la riqueza a través del sistema zakat (diezmo) y un énfasis en las normas islámicas en los negocios" (Carvahlo, 2009) . La Hermandad Musulmana asumió roles más asertivos en combinación con el régimen actual y tuvo un enfoque más práctico de la reforma política, uniendo fuerzas con otras entidades que no compartían sus ideologías, en un esfuerzo por reafirmar su presencia política (El-Din Shahin, 2007). Publicitaron su plataforma como inclusiva, respetando el pluralismo, pero también promoviendo la adhesión a la Ley Sharia, respetando los valores de la democracia:

> "…respeto a las libertades públicas; aceptación del pluralismo; transferencia de poder a través de elecciones limpias y libres; soberanía del pueblo; separación del poder; rechazar el uso de la violencia y adoptar medios graduales y legales para lograr la reforma; aceptación de la ciudadanía como base de los derechos y responsabilidades de musulmanes y no musulmanes; y apoyo a los derechos humanos, incluidos los de las mujeres y los coptos" (El-Din Shahin, 2007).

La postura de los Hermanos Musulmanes como una entidad incluyente, pluralista, respetuosa de la sociedad y la política, que apoya los derechos humanos, incluidos los de las mujeres y los

coptos, parece socavar su mensaje original de inclusión cuando relega a la mitad de la población (mujeres) y al menos al 10 %. de la población (cristianos coptos) como una ocurrencia tardía. Su intento de proyectarse de esta manera parece una fachada débil, sin embargo, contaron con el apoyo de la mayoría de la nación. Con la rigidez del partido, comenzó a fragmentarse y el Partido Wasat que fue formado por miembros más jóvenes que creían que tenían falta de claridad ideológica además de ser bastante inflexibles (El-Din Shahin, 2007).

Es este sentido de inflexibilidad e idealismo fundamentalista, con falta de claridad, mostró a los Hermanos Musulmanes lo que realmente era, una fachada de ideales integrales que atraían a los musulmanes, pero que en realidad eran fundamentalistas conservadores detrás de todo, retratando el partido como uno que quiere hacer progresar al país sobre la base de la ley religiosa, pero en realidad rechazaba todo tipo de secularismo y, de hecho, no promovía los derechos humanos de las mujeres, mientras trataba de mantener su influencia (El-Din Shahin, 2007). Sin embargo, al Partido Wasat se le negó el reconocimiento varias veces citando que no se distinguía claramente de otros partidos,

> "Según su programa, la visión del Islam del partido se basa en tres pilares fundamentales: una ciudadanía que proporcione los mismos derechos a musulmanes y no musulmanes; el derecho de todos los ciudadanos a asumir todos los cargos públicos; y la convivencia con otras culturas sobre la base del respeto por las especificidades culturales, la justicia y la igualdad, la interdependencia y los intereses mutuos" (El-Din Shahin, 2007).

Carvahlo cita a Dekmejian (1988):

> "Una sensación de xenofobia impregna la sociedad musulmana, la sensación de que el propio Islam se enfrenta a una amenaza mortal. En opinión de los intelectuales renovadores, la integridad misma de la cultura islámica y la forma de vida se ven amenazadas por las fuerzas no islámicas del secularismo y la modernidad, alentadas por los gobiernos musulmanes... Los valores y costumbres culturales occidentales son rechazados con vehemencia por ser ajenos al Islam. Con este fin, se ordena a los medios de comunicación que propaguen los valores y prácticas islámicos en lugar de difundir influencias culturales extranjeras". [pags. 10-11]

Este sentimiento de xenofobia, el rechazo del secularismo de la cultura occidental y a todo lo ajeno al Islam creó extremistas religiosos. Esta forma de extremismo religioso fue la que imperó para cambiar un gobierno laico y revertir el progreso que había logrado el país y al mismo tiempo instituir leyes religiosas que obligaban a la población a seguir, independientemente de sus propias creencias. Se creó un precedente peligroso para la igualdad de género y los derechos de las mujeres. Allanó el camino para que el extremismo religioso engendrara sectas insurgentes radicales. Ha impactado en la economía egipcia de manera tanto positiva como negativa, pero en

última instancia ha creado tensión y división innecesariamente.

2.3 Impacto cultural en las perspectivas de autoexpresión – Restricciones a la autoexpresión artística y con una comparación en los medios, el arte y entre la élite

Egipto ha estado en un proceso de gran cambio y progreso desde la Revolución de 2011 y, aunque estos cambios han sido lentos y desafiantes, el progreso continúa. Sin embargo, Egipto sigue siendo uno de los principales perpetradores de violaciones de derechos humanos, ya que el gobierno "toma medidas enérgicas" contra lo que considera un uso indebido de las redes sociales, además de acusar a los periodistas de terrorismo por criticar al gobierno (Amnistía Internacional, 2021). La Revolución desafió muchas normas culturales y de género cuando las mujeres asumieron roles activos y visibles en las protestas. Esto revivió la cuestión de las mujeres (anteriormente discutida en este capítulo). Todavía grandes amenazas desafían a la sociedad, afectando en gran medida a las mujeres y las minorías, así como a todos los miembros de la sociedad LGBTQI+, sin excepción para los hombres. Estas restricciones limitan la capacidad de la sociedad para criticar abiertamente a su gobierno y restringen a las personas a vivir auténticamente, con temor a la violencia o la muerte. Desde la Revolución, en los últimos años, "las autoridades continuaron reprimiendo severamente el derecho a la libertad de expresión y reprimiendo las voces críticas en línea y fuera de línea" (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).

En esta sección, discutiré las restricciones a la autoexpresión a través del uso de una variedad de formas de arte en línea, a través de las plataformas de redes sociales y los medios y explicaré cómo esto afecta a los diferentes géneros y clases.

2.3.1 Libertad de asociación

El Egipto actual está actuando como un gran ejemplo de lo que no se debe hacer en términos de derechos humanos, han tenido una historia tumultuosa y contradictoria con los mismos. Egipto lucha por tener una aplicación consistente de la ley sin la interferencia de la policía y otras fuerzas internas y externas que desean alterar los resultados. Con cada nuevo régimen, las leyes se ejecutan de manera diferente, dejando que cada individuo reflexione sobre su destino. Egipto mantiene el arresto y encarcelamiento arbitrarios de una variedad de personas, algunas en particular son aquellas que luchan por los derechos humanos, incluidos activistas y defensores.

> "Oficiales de la Autonomía de Seguridad Nacional (NSA), una fuerza policial especial, intimidaron a defensores de derechos humanos y activistas políticos al convocarlos ilegalmente y someterlos a interrogatorios coercitivos y medidas extrajudiciales de libertad condicional policial" (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).

Esta inconsistencia entre arrestos y encarcelamientos no impide que los defensores y activistas luchen por sus derechos, aunque los pone en mayor riesgo de sufrir más violencia e incluso, la muerte. El régimen militar egipcio actual, bajo Abdel-Fatah El-Sisi, no tolera las críticas,

especialmente cuando quienes critican al gobierno lo hacen por las violaciones de derechos humanos.

> "Las autoridades detuvieron arbitrariamente y procesaron injustamente a decenas de defensores de los derechos humanos y políticos de la oposición por cargos infundados de "terrorismo" y "difusión de noticias falsas". En julio, Hossam Bahgat, director de una destacada ONG, fue condenado y multado por expresar pacíficamente sus opiniones sobre las elecciones de 2020 en Egipto. Los jueces de instrucción interrogaron al menos a cinco directores de la ONG en julio y reavivaron las investigaciones sobre la evasión de impuestos por parte de las ONG, como parte de la investigación criminal, con una década de duración políticamente motivada sobre las actividades y la financiación de las organizaciones de derechos humanos conocida como Caso 173. Las autoridades abandonaron las investigaciones contra 12 ONGs pero continuaron sometiendo a sus directores y personal a prohibiciones de viaje y congelación de activos. Al menos otros 15 permanecieron bajo investigación y sujetos a restricciones similares". (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).

Los abogados no están exentos de la reacción del gobierno. Como representen y hablen por aquellos que han sido injustamente acusados, arrestados, encarcelados e incluso asesinados, ellos mismos son objetivos de lo mismo. Se enfrentan a encarcelamiento, inclusión en listas de terroristas, prohibición de viajar e incluso la congelación de sus activos como represalia por trabajar y ayudar a otras personas que hayan sido tratadas injustamente por el gobierno egipcio. A través de la asociación con activistas, políticos de la oposición y otros defensores de los derechos humanos, los abogados experimentan un trato similar, si no el mismo, de aquellos a quienes defienden. Además, se encuentran indefensos para continuar con sus luchas ya que cuando son liberados, se les prohíbe la posibilidad de reincorporarse al mundo laboral si son declarados culpables de cualquiera de sus cargos (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).

> "Las autoridades agregaron arbitrariamente a 408 personas, incluidos activistas y políticos de la oposición, a la "lista de terroristas", prohibiéndoles de hecho participar en trabajos cívicos o políticos y viajar al extranjero durante cinco años. En noviembre, el Tribunal Supremo Administrativo confirmó una decisión de inhabilitar a seis abogados de la "lista de terroristas"" (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).

Aunque el gobierno egipcio ha ido liberando a algunos presos injustamente detenidos, incluidos periodistas, activistas y defensores de los derechos humanos, estos presos han pasado años en prisión con muchas personas presionando por su liberación en el exterior (Human Rights Watch, 4 de mayo de 2022). Mada Masr informó que las liberaciones fueron "con la condición de que, una vez libres, los activistas guarden silencio y se abstengan de criticar a las autoridades" (Human Rights Watch, 4 de mayo de 2022). El silenciamiento de estos defensores de los derechos humanos es clave para que El-Sisi parezca tener más apoyo del que realmente tiene; si parece no

tener críticas públicas, entonces aparentemente parece tener seguidores. Durante años, estas violaciones de derechos humanos han sido perpetradas por las autoridades egipcias sin impunidad permitiendo su continuación (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Masr explica que estas liberaciones, con condiciones tan específicas y estrictas, en realidad no prueban un cambio positivo para la libertad de expresión, incluidas las críticas al gobierno y las numerosas violaciones de derechos humanos y el historial general de Egipto (Human Rights Watch, 4 de mayo de 2022). Esta fachada de progreso es socavada rápidamente por el propio gobierno, ya que se realizaron nuevos arrestos el mismo día:

> "…el mismo día que se anunciaron las liberaciones, las autoridades egipcias arrestaron a la presentadora de televisión Hala Fahmy, y la periodista Safaa al-Korbagy recibió una orden de detención de 15 días por parte de la Fiscalía de Seguridad del Estado, tres días después de su arresto", (Human Rights Watch , 2022, 4 de mayo).

Las órdenes de detención de 15 días actúan como tácticas de miedo para los presuntos infractores, pero también permiten que se presente un caso contra los individuos. Son encarcelados por cargos sin detalles y una vez que se recopilan pruebas endebles en su contra, se los retiene en espera de juicio. Es así como muchas de las otras personas injustamente detenidas antes mencionadas permanecieron encarceladas durante meses y años (Human Rights Watch, 4 de mayo de 2022). El gobierno continúa usando injustamente las leyes antiterroristas para tomar represalias contra los críticos pacíficos, y también las usa como tácticas de miedo para futuros críticos (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

2.3.2 Autoexpresión en un entorno restrictivo

Hemos visto las consecuencias de hablar abiertamente del gobierno cuando uno es activista, periodista o defensor de los derechos humanos en Egipto; sin embargo, ¿cuáles son las implicaciones de expresarse apolíticamente? Debido a que El-Sisi continúa homogeneizando la identidad egipcia y creando una que utiliza a las mujeres y ostenta su virilidad y fuerza como base de una sociedad moral (Abouelnaga, 2016), continúa existiendo una represión de la expresión fuera de las normas aprobadas. Las mujeres están sujetas a estándares morales más altos que los hombres en general, ya que deben exhibir y simbolizar la cultura egipcia. Los hombres dictan la vida de las mujeres en general en Egipto, ya que las mujeres todavía están sujetas a sus tutores masculinos, por lo que sus voces suelen ser las primeras en suprimirse (Halim, 2015).

Las mujeres no solo son vulnerables a la supresión de la autoexpresión, sino que en Egipto cualquiera puede ser un objetivo de represalia. Mientras que las mujeres que son exteriormente contradictorias a la "identidad egipcia" de moralidad feroz, el hombre también sufre de esta identidad forzada. Human Rights Watch (2022, 27 de abril) informó sobre la continua "represión" contra cantantes y otros artistas que violan los valores familiares de la sociedad egipcia. Los cargos suelen ser vagos, pero están dirigidos a artistas "mahraganat", "un género relativamente nuevo y muy popular de música electrónica egipcia de bajo presupuesto desarrollado desde 2007,

que a menudo retrata historias de la vida y las luchas de los egipcios de bajos ingresos" (Human Rights Reloj, 2022, 27 de abril). The Musicians' Syndicate ha prohibido a varios artistas mahraganat por su uso de lenguaje como "alcohol" (una sustancia legal) y "hachís" (una sustancia ilegal) como una forma de frenar aún más la autoexpresión, especialmente de personas de clase baja y familias con pocos ingresos, ya que a menudo describen las condiciones de pobreza en las que viven y existen (Human Rights Watch, 2022, 27 de abril). Human Rights Watch (27 de abril de 2022) explica que el jefe del Sindicato de Músicos cree que “la prohibición tiene como objetivo “purificar la situación” y que está en contra de las “malas palabras y sonidos”.

Los artistas intérpretes o ejecutantes de todo tipo están siendo sancionados, se les revocan sus permisos o no se les vuelven a emitir permisos de actuación debido a acciones o declaraciones que violan esta ley de moralidad. Estas acciones podrían ser: usar ropa “inapropiada” o, en el caso del actor Mohamed Ramadan, por actuar sin camisa; o Marwan Pablo, un rapero egipcio que presentó a un rapero palestino que alteró un himno islámico. Algunos investigadores de grupos de derechos humanos han dicho que el gobierno ha autorizado a los diversos sindicatos de artistas para restringir las libertades de los miembros, “sobre la base de violaciones de la moralidad”, limitando aún más la autoexpresión con un período de restricción no revelado (Human Rights Watch, 2022 , 27 de abril).

> “El arte no puede ser así [mahraganat] en la era del presidente al-Sisi. Avanzamos hacia la nueva república y el arte como ese no se acepta”, dijo Hany Shaker en un comunicado televisivo en noviembre de 2021 (Human Rights Watch, 27 de abril de 2022).

Al régimen actual le gustaría asegurarse de que tanto los músicos como los artistas, silenciar cualquier crítica al gobierno, como ha quedado claro; sin embargo, debido a que no está claro qué constituye una crítica y qué es un discurso normal, los artistas de todo tipo se encuentran en peligro de perder los derechos de libertad de expresión y además, no poder ganarse la vida a causa de ello. La falta de uniformidad dentro de la ley es la causa de tal confusión entre los artistas, algunos de los cuales pretenden mantenerse dentro de los límites de la ley para evitar tal destino.

Más allá de las críticas gubernamentales o políticas, es claro que las leyes en materia de moralidad son deliberadamente vagas, dando lugar a silenciamientos injustificados, una forma de que el gobierno tergiverse la verdad y logre los resultados que desea. Una de las tácticas de El-Sisi es evaluar no solo la moralidad del contenido, sino decidir si ‘mejora las condiciones de las personas’, como explicó el propio Sisi en la inauguración de un nuevo complejo médico (Egypt Independent, 2021). El-Sisi declaró en la toma de posesión: “…las personas tienen derecho a expresar sus opiniones y objetar las cosas… Sin embargo, el objetivo de tal expresión debe ser mejorar las condiciones de las personas”. Continuó: “La contrariedad no debe ser el objetivo de la oposición, y la libertad de expresión no debe ser para que las personas solo hablen, deben hablar para decir 'presta atención a esto”, hacer lo contrario está mal (Egypt Independent , 2021). Este

tipo de discurso es una advertencia al público, no una explicación de cómo funciona la ley. Explica que toda expresión debe tener un propósito constructivo, incluso la expresión artística, de lo contrario está mal. Sin embargo, él y su gobierno constituyen lo que está bien y lo que está mal a través de la forma en que implementan las leyes. En esencia, le está dejando claro al país que ellos, incluidos los artistas, deben seguir muy cuidadosamente los códigos morales para no infringir la ley sin darse cuenta, mientras ellos continúan dejando las leyes vagas.

Los derechos humanos seguirán siendo cuestionados en Egipto mientras se le imponga al país una identidad forzada, que exije a sus ciudadanos acatar leyes vagas e intrusivas que restringen la capacidad real de una persona para expresarse auténticamente. Human Rights Watch (2022, 27 de abril) declaró:

> "Egipto es un estado que forma parte del Pacto Internacional de Derechos Civiles y Políticos, que permite restringir la libertad de expresión debido a la moral pública, pero tales restricciones no pueden ser arbitrarias y deben basarse en leyes claras que establezcan las prohibiciones de manera que la gente puede predecir razonablemente lo que constituye una violación. Cualquier restricción de expresión debe ser proporcionada y no puede ser discriminatoria".

2.3.3 Los medios de comunicación: redes sociales, medios de comunicación, etc.

Hasta ahora, he discutido cómo el gobierno egipcio ha arrestado, encarcelado y finalmente silenciado injustamente a activistas y defensores de los derechos humanos y la poca evidencia que se necesita para mantenerlos encarcelados indefinidamente. Los artistas también han sido silenciados de diversas formas, ya que sus actos son más públicos y hay más testigos de sus presuntos delitos contra la moral. Esta sección tiene como objetivo discutir el egipto común y cómo estas mismas leyes los afectan a un nivel muy específico.

Periodistas, reporteros, fotógrafos, corresponsales e incluso productores de televisión, aquellos que son considerados "los medios", están todos en la línea de tiro cuando se trata de las leyes de moralidad. Deben informar con precisión y veracidad de los hechos que sucedan. Sin embargo, como se discutió anteriormente, pueden ser arrestados o encarcelados con evidencia débil o incluso evidencia sin fundamento, solo por criticar al régimen actual; sus trabajos son de gran riesgo en todo el mundo ya que el mundo entiende que decir la verdad e informar con precisión es peligroso, especialmente en países como Egipto. Si hablan en contra del gobierno, son conscientes de los riesgos que corren al divulgar información veraz pero poco halagadora al régimen, no obstante, creen en la verdad y en su difusión.

> "Fuerzas de seguridad arrestaron arbitrariamente al menos a seis periodistas por su trabajo u opiniones críticas. El 19 de julio (2021) arrestaron al periodista Abdelnasser Salama luego de que éste pidiera la renuncia del presidente. Él y otros 24 periodistas permanecían en prisión después de condenas o investigaciones pendientes por

> acusaciones de “uso indebido de las redes sociales”, “difusión de noticias falsas” y “terrorismo”” (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).

No es raro que regímenes como el de El-Sisi limiten el acceso a transmisiones de radio y televisión que son críticas pero también a los que hacen esos intentos en línea. El régimen de El-Sisi pretende cortar la interacción de los ciudadanos con tales noticias y, si es posible, con las propias organizaciones que las propician.

> “Las autoridades continuaron bloqueando al menos 600 sitios web de noticias, derechos humanos y otros, según grupos de derechos humanos” (Amnistía Internacional, 2021).

Los intentos de bloquear sitios web de noticias, derechos humanos y otros contenidos no son la solución al problema, aunque el gobierno egipcio hace esfuerzos para hacerlo, y lo ha hecho tanto en el pasado como durante la Revolución de 2011. “La respuesta de las autoridades egipcias fue cerrar Internet y los servicios móviles; esto finalmente no tuvo éxito ya que las redes sociales sirvieron como catalizador para difundir la idea de protesta” (Abdelsalam et al., 2013). Sus esfuerzos a menudo sólo tienen éxito durante un corto tiempo, ya que los medios para obtener información en Internet, son vastos y de gran alcance. El régimen de El-Sisi ha subestimado continuamente el poder de las redes sociales y la extensión de Internet, así como la forma en que las personas consumen información y noticias.

> “Las autoridades egipcias a menudo se basan en el cargo de valores familiares abusivos y mal definidos para ejercer el control de las redes sociales. Desde 2020, las autoridades egipcias han arrestado y procesado al menos a 12 mujeres influyentes en redes sociales acusadas de violar la ley, y los tribunales condenaron a muchas a fuertes multas y penas de prisión de hasta 5 años” (Human Rights Watch, 27 de abril de 2022).

Las leyes que se utilizan en estos casos son a menudo las que establecen la inmoralidad, la violación de los valores familiares, el libertinaje y/o las noticias falsas, las cuales son razones débiles para las cuantiosas multas, los arrestos y/o el encarcelamiento que estas presuntas infractoras enfrentan o son acusadas (Human Rights Watch, 2022, 27 de abril; Human Rights Watch, 2015). El gobierno egipcio va más allá para usar las redes sociales contra la población. En múltiples ocasiones desde la Revolución de 2011, pero incluso más recientemente, los ciudadanos egipcios han sido abordados en las calles por la policía y los controles policiales exigiendo una identificación, lo cual no es inaudito, siendo incluso una práctica común en los controles policiales, sin embargo, también han estado ordenando a los ciudadanos que entreguen sus teléfonos desbloqueados para que la policía los registre (Al-Monitor, 2021); en estos casos, buscan sentimientos anti-Sisi. La policía registra las plataformas de las redes sociales en busca de comentarios negativos sobre El-Sisi, el gobierno, simpatizantes de los derechos humanos, entre otros. Sus fotos y mensajes privados se examinan, además de las aplicaciones, en estas búsquedas

arbitrarias (Al-Monitor, 2021).

> “La constitución egipcia establece que el derecho a la privacidad es irrefutable y que las conversaciones telefónicas y las comunicaciones electrónicas no pueden ser confiscadas, accedidas sin permiso o censuradas por las autoridades” (The New Arab, 2019).

De acuerdo con la Constitución egipcia de 2014, los registros flagrantes de teléfonos constituyen una conducta indebida inconstitucional por parte de la policía; sin embargo, el régimen de El-Sisi no tiene en cuenta esto y a pesar de ello, continúan los registros, arrestos y traslados a celdas de detención sin revelar la supuesta violación. La policía y el gobierno han dicho que son parte de las investigaciones, los detenidos no pudieron contactar con sus familiares o buscar representación legal (Al-Monitor, 2021). La realidad es que estos registros aleatorios de todas y cada una de las personas que intentaban ingresar o salir de la plaza Tahrir (y muchos otros lugares destacados) fueron registrados física y digitalmente, en un intento de capturar a activistas y posibles manifestantes (The New Arab, 2019); todo esto viola la Constitución de Egipto de 2014. El gobierno afirmó que cualquier informe de los ciudadanos registrados ilegalmente y su movimiento monitoreado o limitado eran noticias falsas y era un intento de sembrar confusión (Al-Monitor, 2021).

> “El artículo 54 de la Constitución egipcia de 2014 establece: “La libertad personal es un derecho natural que está protegido y no puede ser infringido. Excepto en los casos de flagrante delito, los ciudadanos sólo podrán ser aprehendidos, registrados, arrestados o restringidos en sus libertades por orden judicial causal que requiera una investigación. Todas aquellas personas cuyas libertades hayan sido restringidas serán inmediatamente informadas de las causas de la misma, notificadas por escrito de sus derechos, podrán contactar de inmediato a sus familiares y abogado, y comparecer ante la autoridad investigadora dentro de las 24 horas siguientes a la restricción de sus libertades, (Al-Monitor, 2021).

El gobierno comenzó a usar la Constitución contra los ciudadanos y los acusó de “delito flagrante” para realizar estos actos contra ellos (Al-Monitor, 2021). Además, el gobierno ha intentado repetidamente encubrirlo como noticias falsas o justificarlo con cargos con evidencia débil, muchas personas que experimentaron estas búsquedas se han pronunciado sobre ellas en línea y han advertido a otros que utilizan las mismas plataformas, las que el gobierno ha intentado cerrar constantemente para detener el flujo de comunicación entre aliados (The New Arab, 2019). El gobierno está trabajando activamente contra sus ciudadanos en un intento de controlar la historia y la perspectiva. En última instancia, estos métodos son tomas de poder mal ejecutadas, y mientras la gente sufre, están usando Internet y las redes sociales para su beneficio.

2.3.4 LGBTQ+

Si es peligroso tener opiniones que entren en conflicto con lo que el gobierno quiere que creas en general, es aún más peligroso para algunos colectivos concretos. Las personas lesbianas, gais, bisexuales, transgénero, queer o en duda, intersexuales, asexuales y pansexuales (LGBTQ+) tienen mucho que perder cuando se trata de expresar sus identidades. Hay leyes que prohíben ser homosexual en Egipto. Y aunque no se pueden hacer cumplir a menos que haya una acción que apoye las sospechas o las pruebas, el gobierno y la policía no tienen miedo de buscar a las personas sospechosas para castigarlas. Vivir una vida homosexual secreta en Egipto es muy arriesgado.

Egipto ha tomado una variedad de medidas enérgicas contra las críticas al gobierno, las protestas y el activismo, la autoexpresión, la difusión de la verdad y, por supuesto, la moralidad. Las sociedades LGBTQ+ han vivido bajo tierra, temiendo por su seguridad y la de sus seres queridos. Son uno de los grupos interseccionales más diversos, ya que muchos son activistas de derechos humanos, críticos con el gobierno e intentan difundir su propia verdad, demostrar que son morales y humanos, así como desestigmatizar el ser LGBTQ+; pero todo es peligroso. Hemos visto las endebles pruebas que se pueden presentar contra un individuo con la esperanza de que pueda ser acusado de los delitos más arbitrarios. ¿Cuál es el objetivo? “El motivo profesado es la autenticidad cultural unida a la higiene moral. Los medios incluyen detención, acoso policial y tortura” (Human Rights Watch, 2004). El gobierno egipcio no se ha quedado callado sobre sus abusos y torturas, como si fueran comportamientos aceptables cuando se está detenido; han normalizado estos abusos a los detenidos, aunque en realidad esto es tortura.

Estas detenciones comenzaron a principios de 2001, siendo condenados estos hombres por tener relaciones sexuales con otros hombres de forma consensuada. Estos arrestos comenzaron bajo la apariencia de “libertinaje” para luego tener cargos más atroces (Human Rights Watch, 2004). La realidad de estas medidas enérgicas contra la homosexualidad o el “libertinaje” es realmente una ofensa velada contra los grupos marginados, como hemos visto con los artistas mahraganat. Cada uno de estos ataques abusivos a los ciudadanos es un ataque a la privacidad de cada individuo. “La dignidad y la integridad de todos los egipcios están amenazadas en tiempos de tortura, cuando la ley acepta la violencia como investigación y el estigma como certeza” (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Cuando un grupo marginado es atacado, no pasará mucho tiempo antes de que el gobierno encuentre razones para perseguir a otros. La conformidad forzada con una identidad que no existe es una tortura en sí misma, pero estos detenidos están expuestos a una tortura insoportable.

> “La policía tortura rutinariamente a los hombres sospechosos de conducta homosexual, a veces para obtener confesiones y, a veces, simplemente como un recordatorio sádico de la carga de vergüenza en la que incurre su presunto comportamiento. Los hombres han contado a Human Rights Watch cómo fueron azotados, golpeados, atados y suspendidos en posiciones dolorosas, salpicados con agua helada y quemados con

> cigarrillos encendidos. Los hombres capturados durante redadas masivas pueden ser torturados con electrochoques en las extremidades, los genitales o la lengua. Los guardias animan a otros presos a violar a presuntos homosexuales. El tormento psicológico complementa el trauma físico" (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Podemos imaginar el alcance de las atrocidades cometidas mientras estaban detenidos. El gobierno también ha instituido controles de la cavidad anal. "Los hombres detenidos por conducta homosexual son sometidos a la fuerza a exámenes anales por parte de la Autoridad Médico Forense, organismo del Ministerio de Justicia" (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Estas búsquedas realizadas por profesionales médicos tienen como objetivo encontrar evidencia de que han sido "usados habitualmente" en "sodomía" (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Este tipo de examen, como el de la virginidad que se hace a las jóvenes y mujeres, es pseudociencia. Sin embargo, esto no impide que los médicos a favor del régimen inventen nuevos métodos de tortura para "probar" que tienen razón en su cruzada homofóbica (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

En 2001, entre los primeros arrestos se encontraban cincuenta y dos hombres, detenidos en una discoteca llamada "Queen Boat" que se creía frecuentada por hombres homosexuales. Los hombres arrestados fueron acusados de una serie de delitos, considerados "adoradores de Satanás" y "pervertidos sexuales" cuando se hicieron públicos sus arrestos. Estos hombres fueron demonizados por encontrarse en un club supuestamente conocido por comportamiento homosexual, aunque en realidad no fueron atrapados en tal comportamiento en ese momento. Eran, hasta ese momento, invisibles para la sociedad, no estaban desafiando a la autoridad y, ciertamente, no mostraban públicamente su sexualidad (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Los hombres alguna vez pudieron asociarse entre sí, compartir entre sí y comunicarse entre sí, pero cuando comenzaron estas medidas enérgicas, los hombres en todo Egipto comenzaron a temer ser identificados erróneamente como homosexuales o participar en un comportamiento homosexual a medida que los casos de otros hombres se hicieron públicos.

> "Incluso antes de la redada en el bar, los agentes de Vice Squad (un [escuadrón] de policía moral dentro de la policía nacional del Ministerio del Interior, con divisiones en cada jurisdicción) habían comenzado a vigilar Internet, respondiendo anuncios personales colocados por hombres que buscaban hombres, concertar reuniones con ellos y arrestarlos.

En otros casos, la policía de El Cairo y otros lugares ha allanado apartamentos privados, o intervenidos teléfonos para recopilar y arrestar contactos, o utilizado "fuentes secretas confiables" para señalar a hombres sospechosos de conducta homosexual. Vice Squads mantiene listas de homosexuales; pueden seguir redadas masivas si un hombre gay es asesinado, con decenas o incluso cientos de detenidos arbitrariamente" (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

La policía utiliza técnicas de trampa para encontrar y señalar a hombres sospechosos de ser

homosexuales, en un objetivo patrocinado por el gobierno para defender los valores culturales de Egipto. Argumento que rompe la confianza de la sociedad, tanto con el gobierno como entre los individuos, así como los lazos culturales y religiosos. Si uno se siente amenazado por miembros de su propia religión o dentro de sus comunidades, se distanciará de ellos para protegerse y llevar una forma de vivir más auténticamente.

> “Los funcionarios egipcios han afirmado engañosamente que el país no señala “ninguna distinción o discriminación basada en la orientación sexual de una persona”. De hecho, como lo muestra Human Rights Watch en este informe, la legislación originalmente destinada a penalizar la prostitución se convirtió, durante su redacción, en un amplio instrumento que castigaba la "promiscuidad" en general” (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

Durante las últimas dos décadas, estas medidas enérgicas han continuado y cada vez más personas se muestran reacias a hablar o mencionar que son homosexuales. Quienes conocen o sospechan que las personas son homosexuales, especialmente los jóvenes urbanitas, a menudo protegen sus identidades y niegan a conocer a alguien que sea homosexual. Cada vez hay más personas en silencio, y quizás en secreto, que muestran solidaridad con las personas LGBTQ+ simplemente permaneciendo en silencio frente al acoso. En septiembre de 2017 se llevó a cabo un concierto en El Cairo, donde varios miembros de la audiencia levantaron banderas de arcoíris en apoyo al líder de la banda, quien era abiertamente gay. Los medios progubernamentales, los políticos conservadores y los líderes religiosos pidieron su arresto y la policía se puso a atrapar y capturar a quienes ondeaban estas banderas del arcoíris en el concierto, revisando las publicaciones en las redes sociales que mostraban fotos y videos del evento (Human Derechos de Vigilancia, 2017). Los arrestados fueron, nuevamente, acusados de “libertinaje” y/o “incitación al libertinaje” hasta que pudieran ser investigados y acusados de delitos mayores. El primero de los arrestados fue condenado a seis años de prisión por su supuesta sexualidad y seis años adicionales de libertad condicional (Human Rights Watch, 2017). “Desde que al-Sisi asumió el poder en 2013, más de 230 personas han sido procesadas por cargos de “libertinaje”, según un informe de noviembre de 2017 de la Iniciativa Egipcia por los Derechos Personales (EIPR)” (Human Rights Watch, 2018).

> “Las fuerzas de seguridad rutinariamente sacan a las personas de las calles basándose únicamente en su expresión de género, las atrapan a través de sitios de redes sociales y aplicaciones de citas, y registran ilegalmente sus teléfonos. Los fiscales utilizan este contenido para justificar las detenciones prolongadas, ya que aprueban los informes policiales y enjuician injustificadamente a los mismos” (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

El mundo observa cómo se cometen estas atrocidades en Egipto y otras naciones, pero se hace poco. Hay rumores de que el silencio internacional es la mejor manera de mantener un Egipto pacificado. En esta sección se documentan informes recopilados desde 2001, con declaraciones de testigos sobre el abuso y maltrato de los detenidos, lo que demuestra la necesidad de que las

personas tengan libertad de expresión. La policía egipcia puede detener a cualquier presunto homosexual en función de su expresión de género, registrar sus teléfonos y potencialmente encarcelarlo simplemente por no ser binario. Los abusos de los ciudadanos egipcios en manos de un régimen homofóbico crean mucho más que desconfianza en el gobierno y la policía, fomentan la hostilidad, el miedo, la vergüenza, la impotencia y la urgencia por el cambio.

La expresión de género es parte de la identidad. El actual gobierno egipcio quisiera homogeneizar a la población, por improbable que sea, y esconderse detrás de una fachada de falsas narrativas, velos mal construidos e imponer la violencia contra quienes los rechazan. La identidad egipcia propuesta por El-Sisi y su gobierno es una versión idealizada de la heterosexualidad. Este gobierno impone no solo sus creencias religiosas en el país, sino también estándares culturales y morales que incluso ellos no pueden cumplir. Cometen atrocidades en nombre del Islam y al mismo tiempo demonizan el terrorismo, cuando ellos mismos están cometiendo actos terroristas contra su propio pueblo. Han robado y continúan robando la privacidad y la tranquilidad de su gente a través de registros y arrestos arbitrarios, al encarcelar a personas no conformes con el género que no han hecho nada más que expresarse de manera diferente. En el clima actual de Egipto, nadie está a salvo de la persecución cuando los requisitos para la detención son escasos y faltan pruebas.

Usemos a Egipto como ejemplo de aquello contra lo que debemos seguir luchando y por lo que debemos luchar. Entendamos que la inconformidad de género no es una abominación, como al gobierno Egipcio le gustaría que todos creyéramos, sino el orden natural. No nos hagamos cómplices de la injusticia contra los grupos marginados, ya que algún día podríamos serlo nosotros por cualquier razón real o percibida. Entendamos que la construcción de la propia identidad es crucial para la autenticidad y la creación de una identidad cultural de aceptación, que será tan brillante que enceguecerá a quienes deseen que su extinción.

Conclusión

Mediante el análisis de las historias feministas, las influencias religiosas y las presiones sociopolíticas específicas de Egipto, este capítulo describe los desafíos y las estrategias de la expresión de género en un entorno cultural altamente regulado. Estos hallazgos constituyen una parte crucial de la base de la tesis, ayudando a contextualizar las elecciones estéticas y los temas simbólicos de las obras artísticas que siguen. En el siguiente capítulo, amplío el marco temporal abordando las prácticas mortuorias del Antiguo Egipto, continuando así el proceso de conectar la investigación crítica con la exploración creativa.

El impacto de las influencias pequeñas, incluso micro, no puede pasarse por alto ni negarse, ya que este capítulo demuestra el efecto crucial y el alcance que tienen en las personas, las comunidades y la cultura. A lo largo de este capítulo he señalado muchos factores subyacentes en la supresión de la expresión, hablando en general de la autoexpresión individual, pero esto no excluye la autoexpresión a través del arte, en todas sus formas. Si bien, no se permite la auténtica

expresión de género y otras formas de autoexpresión, también se censuran y ocultan, los medios artísticos de auténtica autoexpresión que fomentan la inconformidad y rompen las tácticas de homogeneización; aunque subversivos y sutiles, pueden hablar en voz alta donde las voces son silenciadas y las palabras no alcanzan para expresarlo todo.

Empoderar a las personas, en particular a las mujeres, permite el crecimiento en muchas direcciones dentro de una sociedad, ya que son fundamentales para el éxito de una familia. Crear igualdad en la sociedad para que las mujeres participen por igual, crea espacio para la innovación y la creatividad antes filtrada o descartada. A lo largo de este capítulo hemos visto la importancia de los muchos roles que tienen las mujeres en la sociedad egipcia y cómo no se les da una voz justa, aunque también hemos visto la fuerza y el impulso que tienen las mujeres para contribuir a la sociedad y mejorar las condiciones de vida, a ellas mismas y a sus familias. El empoderamiento de las mujeres beneficia a todas, ya que muchas veces buscan la justicia y la igualdad porque no siempre se la han proporcionado. Como grupo vulnerable en Egipto, las mujeres entienden la necesidad de justicia y la de tener un lugar en el gobierno, como sucede en muchos otros países. Empoderar a las mujeres y promover la singularidad podría permitir que la política continúe cambiando gradualmente, permitiendo que otros grupos más vulnerables también tengan voz en sus propias vidas y autoexpresión.

A través de la investigación de los impactos sociales, religiosos y culturales sobre el género y el feminismo en Egipto, se puede discernir que la importancia de la expresión de género y la autoexpresión auténtica es crucial para una sociedad sana y funcional. Gobiernos como el de Egipto, militarizados y religiosos conservadores, intentarán someter a la sociedad una y otra vez, utilizando arrestos, abusos e incluso torturas, para que se ajusten y se adhieran a sus leyes extremistas. Esta toma del control total por el poder, podría implicar que el gobierno, de hecho, no es tan fuerte como parece y la única forma posible de crear la sociedad que imaginan es a través del control total. Sin embargo, Egipto sigue demostrando que no es homogéneo, no es extremista y no será controlado por completo.

Es importante comprender la cultura y la política de la sociedad para comprender mejor cómo la identidad se ve influenciada y se expresa en relación con estos aspectos, incluida la religión. Comprender a fondo estos conceptos y cómo influyen en la expresión de la identidad a lo largo del tiempo, contribuye no solo a una mayor comprensión de la cultura y las personas, sino que también proporciona información fundamental para esta investigación, permitiéndole ser más completa y relevante. Sin esta comprensión del Egipto contemporáneo, podría existir una desconexión con la realidad de la situación actual y de los objetivos que he planteado. Gracias a esta investigación, pude comprender cómo las personas sienten que pueden expresarse, lo que es clave para la metodología de esta tesis.

CAPÍTULO 3

GÉNERO Y FEMINISMO EN EL ANTIGUO EGIPTO

Capítulo 3 – Género y feminismo en el Antiguo Egipto

Introducción

Este capítulo se centra en los conceptos contemporáneos de género y feminismo tal como se incorporaron y utilizaron en el Antiguo Egipto, ampliando su aplicación a las costumbres y cómo se vieron afectadas por ellas. En la primera sección de este capítulo, demostraré cómo se representaba el género en el Antiguo Egipto en la alta sociedad, en la religión y culturalmente, así como su papel en diferentes aspectos de la cultura del Antiguo Egipto: en el matrimonio, con respecto a la fertilidad, dentro de la familia y hogar; cómo el género fue visto fuera del hogar y sus implicaciones económicas y jurídicas. Es pertinente considerar las influencias culturales del Antiguo Egipto con respecto al género y el feminismo, ya que su larga historia y sus ricas costumbres son interculturales que continúan teniendo influencia en la actualidad. Comprender cómo el género afectó en la vida cotidiana del egipcio promedio y de la élite ayudará a revelar la necesidad de la expresión de género tanto en la vida como en la muerte. Además, nos permitirá ver cómo y cuándo se implementó el feminismo y qué efectos tuvo sobre los individuos y la cultura en su totalidad.

Los antiguos egipcios pasaban sus vidas construyendo sus identidades en preparación para la muerte, en la que serían capaces de continuar eternamente una versión engrandecida de la vida que llevaron en la tierra, en el más allá. Dentro de este capítulo explico cómo se creó y mantuvo la identidad en vida y lo que eso significó para su vida después de la muerte. Interpretar y examinar más a fondo la importancia de la muerte y el papel que jugó la identidad en ella es crucial para comprender la autoexpresión en el arte del Antiguo Egipto y el arte funerario/mortuorio. Usaban métodos tradicionales artesanales, tanto pictóricos como textuales, y podemos afirmar que era de suma importancia, para cualquier individuo, hacer lo posible para tener los medios para adquirir materiales funerarios. Además, a través de estos métodos artesanales, podemos explorar más técnicas individualistas y quizás incluso cuestionables como medio de autoexpresión a través del arte funerario.

Finalmente, cuestionando lo que significa ser hombre o mujer en el Antiguo Egipto utilizando referencias artísticas, he identificado tres formas principales en que un individuo expresa su identidad: a través de medios pictóricos, escultóricos y textuales. Si bien estos métodos a menudo estaban reservados para las élites y la realeza, algunas clases medias intentaron hacer lo mismo. A través de esta investigación, descubrimos la importancia de encajar en la sociedad ajustándose a la tradición y las prácticas funerarias, al mismo tiempo que se desafía el statu quo, la religión, las costumbres culturales y el género binario. Mediante el uso de diferentes materiales, también pudieron hacer declaraciones sobre quiénes eran. Del mismo modo, se describió algo importante sobre con quiénes fueron representados en sus tumbas, así como también quién fue descrito en sus textos o en sus ataúdes. Las artes funerarias y mortuorias eran un reflejo de quién era el individuo y quién creía que era o esperaba ser en el más allá.

Este capítulo inicia una revisión de la información que se centra en las representaciones de género e identidad en el Antiguo Egipto, considerando su arte mortuorio y sus prácticas culturales como ejes principales de esta revisión. En lugar de ofrecer un estudio exhaustivo, se basa en ejemplos seleccionados de contextos funerarios de élite que son particularmente relevantes para los debates contemporáneos sobre la identidad, la transformación y el simbolismo visual. Estos casos se seleccionan por su visibilidad académica, riqueza material y alineamiento conceptual con la propuesta personal de práctica artística que se explorará más adelante en la tesis.

El objetivo de esta investigación no es solo la comprensión histórica, sino también extraer principios y estrategias visuales de las tradiciones del Antiguo Egipto que se extrapolan a las interpretaciones que he realizado en mis prácticas artísticas y que tocan en algunos de los problemas de la construcción de la identidad.

Este capítulo se sitúa en la intersección de la investigación histórica, la arqueología de género y el análisis visual. Contribuye al marco general de investigación artística de la tesis al rastrear cómo se representaba, representaba y preservaba la identidad de género en el Antiguo Egipto, en particular a través del arte funerario. Al igual que en el resto de la tesis, mi enfoque metodológico se basa en una investigación práctica impulsada por la indagación artística.

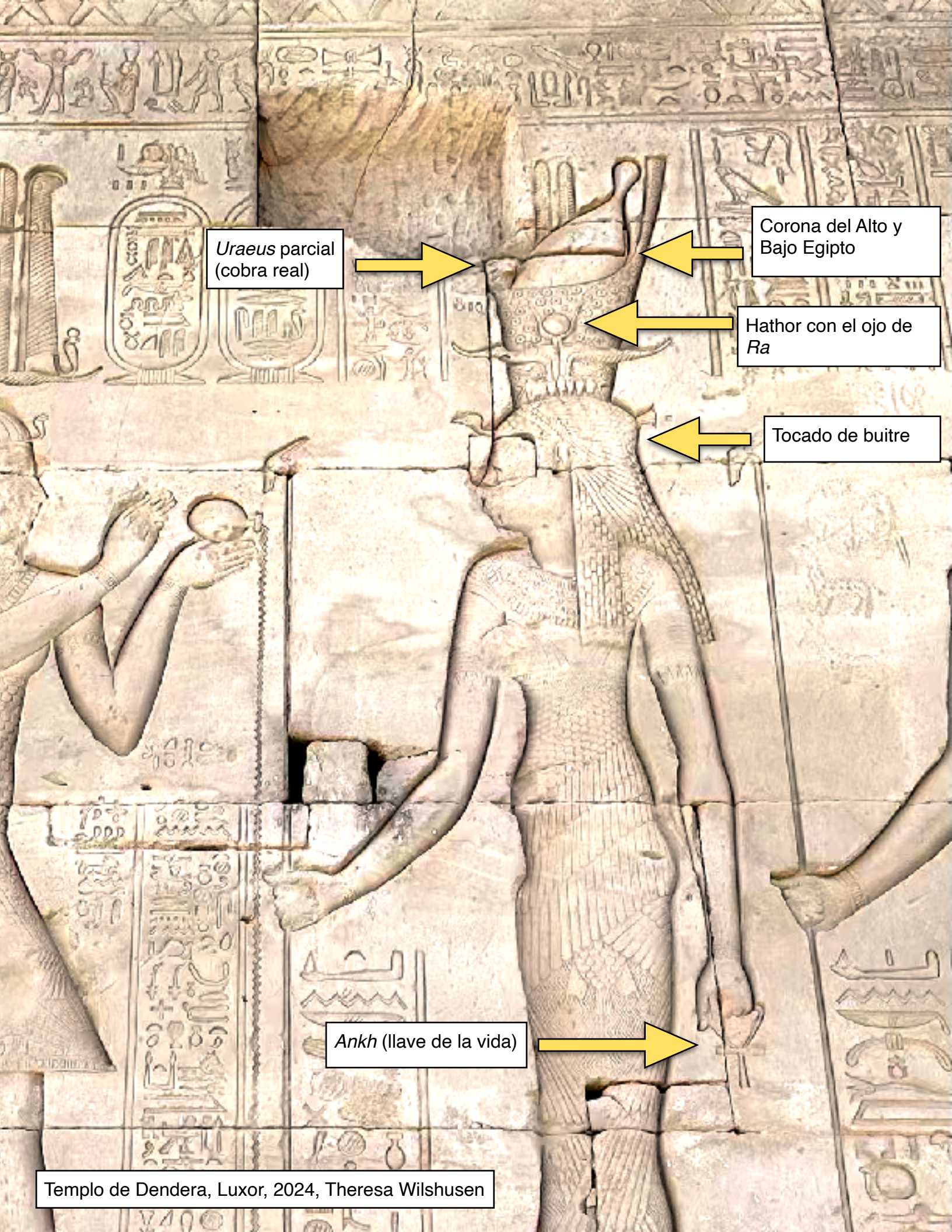
La redacción de este capítulo mantiene el tono académico necesario para mantener la mayor objetividad posible sobre los estudios de egiptología y los de cultura visual y cultural, consciente de que sus conclusiones son de carácter individual y que proporcionarán una base histórica comparativa para los proyectos artísticos desarrollados en capítulos posteriores.

3.1 El género tal como se representa en la cultura [del Antiguo Egipto] y sus implicaciones

3.1.1 Realeza y alta sociedad

A lo largo de la historia del Antiguo Egipto hay demasiada evidencia de los hombres, particularmente de la realeza, y de sus vidas. Como la realeza (el rey) era el enlace con los dioses, el descendiente directo de ellos, desempeñaba un papel fundamental en la vida de todos. Así éste era aún más infalible e incuestionable. El rey no solo era realeza, quien controlaba la tierra y el pueblo, sino que también era la máxima autoridad religiosa como descendiente directo de los dioses (Robins, 1993, p.21). El rey era, con muy pocas excepciones, varón, y por su realeza y divinidad se diferenciaba de todos los demás seres. Cuando el rey ascendió al trono, a través de un ritual, se le otorgaron dones divinos que le concedían la autoridad para gobernar, de acuerdo con *ma'at*, el orden correcto de las cosas establecido por el dios creador. La realeza estaba destinada a pasar de padre a hijo, por lo que era importante que se casaran y engendraran familias para garantizar que un sucesor tomara su lugar, pero ¿Dónde estaban las mujeres? Están representadas a lo largo de la historia antigua en fachadas, tumbas y textos (Robins, 1993, p.21).

Los hombres estaban rodeados de mujeres debido a sus familias numerosas; sus círculos a



Templo de Dendera, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

menudo incluían mujeres reales como madres, esposas e hijas. Aunque se sabía poco sobre las mujeres, se puede observar más sobre las mujeres reales y su importancia y sus roles en la vida de la familia real. Tres milenios de evidencia sobreviviente han permitido a los investigadores estudiar los cambios a lo largo de la historia, como sus títulos, insignias y los contextos en los que fueron representadas (Robins, 1993, p.21).

Los hombres, en el papel real divino, eran los creadores de sus reinos y, por lo tanto, determinaban el estatus de quienes los rodeaban, incluido el estatus de las mujeres directamente. En el Antiguo Egipto, los títulos de las mujeres se referían a su posición con respecto al rey: madre del rey, hija del rey, esposa del rey e incluso títulos más exclusivos, como esposa principal del rey y hermana del rey. Si bien todos estos títulos se refieren a los roles de las mujeres en la realeza, uno puede cuestionar si las mujeres también eran, de hecho, divinas, aunque sus títulos parecen ser propiedad del rey (Robins, 1993, p.23).

Aunque los contextos son vagos, a partir de las insignias, los investigadores han descubierto que, de hecho, las mujeres fueron retratadas como divinas a través de conexiones con deidades. Esto a menudo venía en forma de tocados y representaciones con la llave de la vida (*ankh*). Esta conexión se hizo a través de afiliaciones directas con las diosas mediante el uso de los animales que correspondían a esas deidades (dioses y diosas). Por ejemplo, uno de los más comunes era el tocado de buitre que se ajustaba a la cabeza de la reina, alas que envolvían los costados, con la cabeza que sobresalía hacia adelante. El *uraeus*, o el símbolo de la cobra real, era otro tocado común y podía sustituir al buitre. Ambos son vestigios del Reino Antiguo, pero se siguieron utilizando durante más tiempo. La diosa buitre Nekhbet era la protectora del Alto Egipto (en el sur), Wadjyt era la diosa cobra y la protectora del Bajo Egipto (en el norte). Las reinas, a lo largo de la historia faraónica, usaron tocados de estas dos diosas que significan su control sobre las dos partes de Egipto, y mientras que otras diosas más tarde también usaron estos animales como su insignia, las reinas faraónicas continuaron usándolos como símbolos de su control, así como para representar su relación con las diosas a lo largo de la historia. Algunos eruditos también creen que existen correlaciones con el dios sol Ra, con la diosa Hathor como el ojo de Ra. A través de esta combinación de dioses, Ra actuó como protector del rey de sus enemigos, haciendo una correlación directa entre el rey y estas deidades, así como las mujeres que portaban los tocados representativos. El atributo o insignia más destacado del rey era el *uraeus*, que es otra razón potencial para que la reina lo usara por derecho propio (Robins, 1993, p.23).

Otro factor de identificación para determinar la piedad (la devoción religiosa) de las personas fue el uso del *ankh* (la llave de la vida). Esta figura de cruz con una parte superior redondeada tiene un poder extremo en las representaciones de dioses y humanos. El *ankh*, cuando lo lleva un ser humano, significa su piedad o su conexión directa con los dioses. También se usa en representaciones de la reina cuando está rodeada de otras personas por debajo de su estatus. Nuevamente, representa que ella es superior a ellos al mostrar su conexión con los dioses y hacerla distinguible de quienes la rodean como un dios. Este símbolo también se utiliza en

contextos de culto y funerarios, simboliza que el individuo está muerto (Robins, 1993, p.25).

Todos estos identificadores eran indicadores de piedad usándolos como una insignia para mostrar un linaje a lo divino, determinando así que las mujeres reales, que eran representadas de esta manera, eran divinas al igual que el rey. Algunos eruditos sugieren que el derecho al trono era de hecho a través de mujeres reales y solo se efectuaba cuando se casaban con un hombre real (generalmente su hermano o medio hermano), dándole así pleno poder divino del trono, sin embargo, algunas esposas de reyes no eran de sangre real y, sin embargo, estaban considerados como algo divino (Robins, 1993, p.26-7).

En el Imperio Nuevo, los reyes eran polígamos, muchos tenían esposas reales y no reales, aunque el proceso de selección de esposas no reales no está claro. Fue entonces cuando se empezó a usar el título de "esposa principal del rey". Esto creó una jerarquía entre las esposas, lo que indica que probablemente había algunas que eran reales y no reales, pero la importancia de ellas radicaba en quién proporcionaba un heredero al trono, que tenía que ser un hombre (Robins, 1993, p. 27) . Esto muestra que los reyes tenían el control de elegir a sus esposas; Robins (1993) afirma que las mujeres que no pertenecían a la realeza y seleccionadas como esposas tenían un estatus elevado y sus familias se beneficiaban de su ascensión. Robins (1993) sugiere que las familias de las mujeres no se estaban beneficiando de los matrimonios en la misma medida que sus hijas, pero sus vidas mejoraron significativamente ya que tenían conexiones con la realeza y podían ser consideradas para trabajos que no se les habrían encomendado de lo contrario.

En el Antiguo Egipto, como en otras culturas antiguas con realeza, el matrimonio actuaba como una herramienta para las relaciones internacionales. El matrimonio con esposas extranjeras creó la diplomacia entre los reinos, lo que permitió el comercio de bienes y productos, así como el trabajo y la educación. Los reyes extranjeros a menudo ofrecían [una de] sus hijas al rey para aplacarle, tal vez para evitar conflictos y mostrar sumisión; sin embargo, también se hacía después de un conflicto fallido en el que el rey extranjero había perdido. Se ofrecían hijas como pago, generalmente junto con esclavos sanos, animales y carros. En este sentido, se comerciaban como bienes en sí mismos y no como simples símbolos diplomáticos de buena fe. Las mujeres, en estas situaciones, eran propiedad de sus reyes (padres o hermanos) y, aunque valiosas, carecían de poder para decidir con quién se casarían por el “bien mayor” de su país (Robins, 1993, p. 30). Estas mujeres que se comercializaban como objetos de alto valor eran princesas de poder sustancial en sus países/reinos de origen y, por lo tanto, fueron "sacrificadas" al rey contendiente. Solo las mujeres de alto estatus eran comercializadas de esta manera (Robins, 1993, p.30-31).

Los reyes egipcios tomaban esposas extranjeras como premio después de la guerra, como tributo o con fines diplomáticos, evidenciando que eran una superpotencia en la región. Los registros muestran que los reyes egipcios a menudo tomaban novias extranjeras y su dote junto con ellas, pero a menudo se negaban a casar a sus propias mujeres en otras circunstancias similares. Hay evidencia de reinos externos, como los Hititas, que eran excelentes registradores, que

documentaron que los reyes egipcios no proporcionaron mujeres o princesas en el comercio. Tenían alta estima por sus mujeres reales y no fue hasta que comenzaron a perder poder y estatus en la región que comenzaron a casar a sus mujeres reales (Robins, 1993, p.32-33). Los valores de las mujeres fluctuaron con el estado del reino. Cuando el reino era rico y poderoso, también lo eran sus mujeres, muy buscadas y, sin embargo, exclusivas de la realeza egipcia. Cuando el reino comenzó a mostrar signos de angustia y necesidad, se convirtió en una moneda de cambio de valor mediocre, que necesitaba intercambiarse con otros bienes de igual valor, incluidos los animales.

En tiempos buenos de estabilidad económica y poder en Egipto, las mujeres eran consideradas en alta estima, pero a menudo no formaban parte de las negociaciones. Hay casos raros en los que las reinas participaron en ellas, pero generalmente quedaron fuera a menos que ellas mismas fueran las iniciadoras del discurso (Robins, 1993, p. 34). Las mujeres que fueron intercambiadas como esposas por los egipcios fueron tomadas y aceptadas como esposas, pero se sabe poco sobre cómo fueron tratadas una vez que llegaron. La poca información que existe sugiere que, en pocos casos y mediante negociaciones, fueron asumidas como “esposa principal del rey”, pero eso fue muy raro. Hubo correspondencia entre los Hititas y los egipcios con respecto a las princesas que habían enviado en varias ocasiones, afirmando francamente que no habían sabido nada de ellas y que no sabían si realmente estaban vivas o muertas. En estas correspondencias pedían pruebas de vida, o enviar uno de los suyos que la conociera bien, que pudiera venir a verla y hablar. Había un temor real de los reinos subordinados de que los egipcios estuvieran tomando a sus valiosas mujeres y quizás descartándolas, o peor aún, matándolas y evitando el contacto con su país de origen (Robins, 1993, p.34-35).

En ese momento, cualquier estatus que las mujeres tuvieran como miembros de la realeza en sus propios países, parecía haber sido despojada cuando llegaba a Egipto; a menudo se las consideraba "esposas del rey", que generalmente había muchas y se las olvidaba simplemente. Robins (1993) explica que las novias extranjeras venían con séquitos de mujeres para cuidarlas, y algunas como obsequios, ya que no eran miembros de la realeza. Según Robins (1993), estas mujeres probablemente fueron puestas a trabajar en uno de los muchos talleres de lino que quedaron del Imperio Antiguo, repartidos por todo Egipto. Es poco probable que muchas de estas novias extranjeras hayan vivido alguna vez con el rey, y más bien fueron atendidas en otros recintos para mantener la paz y la alianza.

Las mujeres de élite en el mundo antiguo, mujeres reales con poder y dominio, eran tratadas como propiedad. Estas mujeres fueron importantes para las negociaciones, pero no pudieron participar en ellas. En cambio, las mujeres fueron intercambiadas como objeto valioso. Los hombres controlaban su existencia junto con las vidas de sus asistentes reales y, aunque se comerciaban como bienes, eran cruciales para el funcionamiento de todo el proceso.

“No tenían voz en su destino y, sin embargo, se convirtieron en piezas importantes en el

> funcionamiento del sistema diplomático internacional; mientras que el sistema estaba dirigido por hombres, se necesitaban mujeres para que funcionara" (Robins, 1993, p. 36).

Con tantas esposas, uno podría esperar que hubiera muchos hijos. Aunque los reyes a menudo tenían muchas esposas por necesidad de las relaciones internacionales, no necesariamente tenía relaciones sexuales con todas ellas. Sin embargo, un ejemplo de lo contrario es Ramsés II. Hay registro de más de cien niños originarios de él. Se desconocen las madres, pero es significativo que se tenga constancia de su descendencia, siendo tan numerosa. Como podemos ver incluso a través del mantenimiento de registros del patrimonio, las mujeres no eran consideradas una parte importante del linaje, sino el rey, como descendiente directo del dios sol, Ra (Robins, 1993, p.36). Esto puso a las mujeres, reinas, en una posición aún más inferior que sus contrapartes, ya que mientras sus hijos serían nombrados descendientes del rey, sus propios nombres se perderían y olvidarían, actuando simplemente como un recipiente para que la descendencia del rey sea producida.

La importancia de tener varias esposas entonces no es la misma que la poligamia hoy. En la antigüedad había muchas razones por las que una madre o un niño no sobrevivirían al parto. Como sabemos hoy, el parto es peligroso y, sin embargo, en el Antiguo Egipto lo era mucho más. Las mujeres y los bebés tenían que luchar contra las bacterias, las enfermedades, las plagas y los animales e insectos. A lo largo de la infancia estuvieron expuestos a muchos más peligros que los niños de hoy, con muchos menos recursos para combatir enfermedades como medicamentos, vacunas, cirugías y tratamientos. También estaba la cuestión del incesto, que a menudo producía niños enfermos o deformes que vivieron vidas cortas, sobre todo del rey Tutankamón (Awad, 2010).

Los niños reales estaban bien cuidados, tenían muchas mujeres cuidándolos que también tenían una jerarquía. Al igual que con las madres (las esposas del rey, las reinas), nació en un sistema de rangos. Por supuesto, el estado de su madre era importante, pero también lo era su sexo. Todas las reinas esperaban proporcionarle al rey su heredero al trono. Una vez que nacía el primer hijo, era cuidado de manera diferente a cualquiera de sus hermanas. Era tratado como el heredero y experimentaba una crianza superior con las expectativas de quién sería un día, suponiendo que sobreviviera hasta entonces (Robins, 1993, p. 37). La esperanza de vida de los adultos era corta, pero era más corta para los niños, como se mencionó anteriormente, se enfrentaban a muchas batallas biológicas, por lo que su existencia y supervivencia eran de suma importancia. No siempre era el hijo primogénito el que se convertía en heredero, ya que el rey podía elegir en última instancia quién sería su heredero, suponiendo que tuviera una selección (Robins, 1993, p. 37).

Las hijas no tenían expectativas reales y, por lo tanto, se consideraban menos importantes en términos de educación formal; sin embargo, dado que Egipto no reconocía a las mujeres reyes, no

había presión para que se criara de la misma manera. Sin embargo, dado que eran reinas potenciales, fueron criadas para poder realizar estos roles (y otros). La hija de la madre del rey y la esposa principal del rey, las tres formaban una tríada muy parecida a la de la persona, la diosa Hathor, y el dios del sol, Ra, creando una estrecha conexión entre las mujeres reales y, en algunas ocasiones, fueron capaces de aparecer con sus padres en escenas rituales (Robins, 1993, p.37). Las hijas fueron educadas en base a los roles que asumirían en el futuro, y dado que en ese momento no podían convertirse en reyes, fueron entrenadas y educadas para ser esposas, hermanas y madres, y tal vez se les permitió aprender a leer y hacer matemáticas para poder ayudar con deberes y en otras diferentes áreas, para los cuales había muchas responsabilidades, pero todavía se consideraban inferiores a la del heredero de la realeza (Robins, 1993, p.21-23).

Cuando los reyes tomaban esposas, siempre tenían una esposa principal, o esposa "favorita", a menudo llamada "esposa principal del rey". Las reinas tenían deberes reales que atender, pero las reinas importantes tenían sus propios establecimientos. Estas eran fincas compuestas, a veces incluso en su propio nombre, pero eran administradas por hombres. Los *harenes* estaban situados en todo Egipto, generalmente a lo largo del río Nilo. Eran establecimientos independientes a la par de los del rey. Se les abastecía de ganado, pescado, cereales, aceite y otras provisiones. Algunos textos sugieren que estos establecimientos estaban a cargo de las reinas, muchas veces utilizando los talleres textiles para producir precisamente eso, y contribuir de alguna manera a su mantenimiento como reina, como se mencionó anteriormente con la llegada y mantenimiento de novias extranjeras (Robins, 1993, p. pág. 39). Si bien los harenes fueron administrados y mantenidos por algunas de estas reinas favoritas, algunas incluso de propiedad independiente de estas reinas, estaban dirigidos fundamentalmente por hombres. Esto da la apariencia de reconocimiento para las mujeres, particularmente para las mujeres poderosas (reinas), pero de hecho esto socavaba su autoridad con el control implícito de hombres de otro nivel, no necesariamente de posición real. Estas reinas estaban siendo controladas (Robins, 1993, p.39).

He mencionado la importancia de los títulos entre las mujeres reales, ya que les otorgaba estatus entre las otras mujeres, pero las dos posiciones más importantes eran "madre del rey" y "esposa principal del rey". El contexto en el que fueron representados con sus insignias y nombres reales fue lo que les dio estatus, por lo que era importante que se dieran a ver o aparecieran en importantes escenas rituales (Robins, 1993, p. 40). Las escenas que representaban el nacimiento divino del rey eran de suma importancia para la madre del rey, ya que Amón-Ra la veía embarazada y, a través de este acto, estaba en conexión directa con el dios Amón-Ra sin ningún intermediario (Robins, 1993, pág. 41). Estas representaciones de las reinas sin la presencia del rey le otorgan poder y divinidad, asumen su importancia en la creación del rey divino y aseguran su prominencia. Ella es, en estas representaciones, la actriz de su propia autonomía y capaz de llevar el linaje del reino, lo que la coloca en un nivel muy alto de estima como miembro de la realeza, pero también dentro del reino. “Esto significaba que la madre de cada rey había sido, en una ocasión la consorte terrenal del dios Amón-Ra, y esto puede deberse a su importancia” (Robins, 1993, p.41).

La madre del rey también recibió un segundo título, el segundo más importante: la esposa principal del rey. Hay sugerencias de que los dos títulos se usaron de la misma manera, porque en algunos casos, a la esposa principal del rey también se le dio el título de madre del rey. Esto podría ser en referencia al futuro rey, no al rey en funciones, pero no está claro. Se supone que era similar a un título honorífico otorgado a la madre del rey reinante (Robins, 1993, p.41). Si bien los títulos honorarios ayudan a proporcionar o mejorar el estatus de una reina, parecían ser algo insignificantes si se agregan después de la ascensión del rey (el hijo de la madre que recibía el título).

Los reyes y reinas del Antiguo Egipto obtuvieron su divinidad y poder de la creencia en cultos y rituales religiosos. Funcionaron juntos, uno dependiendo del otro para asumir y mantener el poder. Aunque las mujeres ocupaban grandes posiciones de poder, tenían poco que hacer en cuanto a la toma de decisiones, sin embargo, eran necesarias para el trono. A las mujeres reales a menudo se les otorgaban atributos divinos ya que su existencia era complementaria a la del rey. "…la interconexión de los dos significaba que uno no podía existir sin el otro" (Robins, 1993, p.42). La confianza mutua significaba que uno no podía simplemente eliminar al otro para gobernar de la manera que deseaban, y esto estaba claro. Algunas reinas eclipsaron a sus maridos, o al menos se convirtieron en excelentes ejemplos para sus maridos. Una de esas reinas fue Ahmose Nefertari.

Ahmose Nefertari era la esposa principal de Ahmose, pero también era su hermana (o media hermana) y la madre de su sucesor. Ella no usó ninguno de los títulos habituales dados a las reinas, y en su lugar usó "la esposa del dios de Amón", que le dio su hermano-esposo, Ahmose (Robins, 1993, p.43). No solo se le dio este título, sino un importante cargo sacerdotal que se llevó a cabo en el culto de Amón en Tebas. Ella sobrevivió a su esposo y a su hijo (Amenhotep I) y vivió bajo las riendas de Thutmosis I, con quien no estaba emparentada. Sin embargo, fue venerada ya que hay estelas y representaciones de ella, incluidas ofrendas para ella. "La importancia de Ahmose Nefertari no terminó con su muerte. Junto con su hijo Amenhotep I, fue deificada y adorada por los trabajadores de Deir el-Medina como su patrona" (Robins, 1993, p. 44). Su culto se prolongó por todo el Reino Nuevo, dando testimonio de su grandeza como gran reina. Las mujeres como ella eran raras, ya que eran poderosas y autoritarias. Estaba profundamente involucrada en el culto de Amón, lo que la convertía en una mujer particularmente religiosa, quizás por necesidad, pero se preocupaba por contribuir a su reino.

La hija de Thutmosis I, Hatshepsut, fue otra mujer fuerte y poderosa, muy conocida por su forma de gobernar. Ella también tomó el título de esposa del Dios de Amón. Sin embargo, no estaba relacionada con Ahmose Nefertari. Si bien Thutmosis I fue seleccionado por Amenhotep I como su heredero, su madre no era real y no tenía título; esto sugiere que Thutmose tampoco era real y probablemente fue seleccionado por Amenhotep I porque no tenía descendencia masculina sobreviviente. Poco se sabe sobre Hatshepsut durante el reinado de su padre y su medio hermano. Ella aparece en algunas estelas junto a su marido, Tutmosis II, y aunque ella le

sobrevivió, seguía apareciendo con él. La evidencia sobreviviente, la biografía de un funcionario, afirma que “Thutmosis II ‘subió al cielo y se unió a los dioses. Su hijo subió a su trono como rey de las Dos Tierras y gobernó en el trono de quien lo engendró. Su hermana, la esposa del dios, Hatshepsut, controlaba los asuntos de la tierra” (Robins, 1993, p.45).

Este es el momento en que comenzó una nueva vida para Hatshepsut, la hija de un no real y reina de Egipto. Thutmosis III subió al poder cuando era niño, pero no era hijo de Hatshepsut, que solo tenía una hija. Hatshepsut estaba decidida a mantener el control y se convirtió en regente del joven Thutmosis III, permaneciendo como el individuo controlador hasta que alcanzó la edad para gobernar por sí mismo (Robins, 1993, p.45). Hatshepsut repentinamente pasó a controlar el poder y el material. Mantuvo su título de esposa de Dios y renunció a la mayoría de sus deberes de reina, pero siguió siendo una fiel sirvienta del culto de Amón. Fue representada en la iconografía real, usando títulos reales, títulos usados exclusivamente para reyes, pero con su propia reinvención de ellos, como "señora de las Dos Tierras". Construyó templos, erigió obeliscos y asumió importantes títulos de autoridad. Actuó como rey, se representó a sí misma como rey y siete años después del reinado de Thutmosis III y ella como regente, abandonó los títulos que la marcaban como reina y se consideró rey (Robins, 1993, p.46). Hasta ese momento había estado actuando como rey, mientras Thutmosis III crecía, gobernó Egipto como rey. Su iconografía se cambió para representarla con ropa masculina y en los textos se la menciona como rey. Afirmó que su padre la había elegido como heredera al trono y la había ofrecido a la corte ya todos los dioses de Egipto. Y al igual que los nacimientos de los reyes, su concepción y nacimiento se representaron en su templo mortuorio para garantizar que se viera que nació como el rey de Egipto, tal como lo habían hecho todos los demás en el mito (Robins, 1993, p. 46) .

A Hatshepsut le resultó difícil ceder su poder a Thutmosis III cuando alcanzó la mayoría de edad y, en cambio, decidió co-gobernar con él. Esto no era del todo raro, ya que era una forma de asesorar y preparar al nuevo rey para su nuevo puesto. Mientras ella era oficialmente rey titular, y reinaba junto con él. Sin embargo, ella fue representada con más frecuencia que su co-rey en las estatuas, aunque él apareció con ella en las escenas del templo (Robins, 1993, p.47). Ella entendió que su capacidad para continuar reinando como co-rey era mantener la paz y permitir que Thutmosis III se sintiera con control, mientras que en realidad ella continuaba gobernando Egipto principalmente.

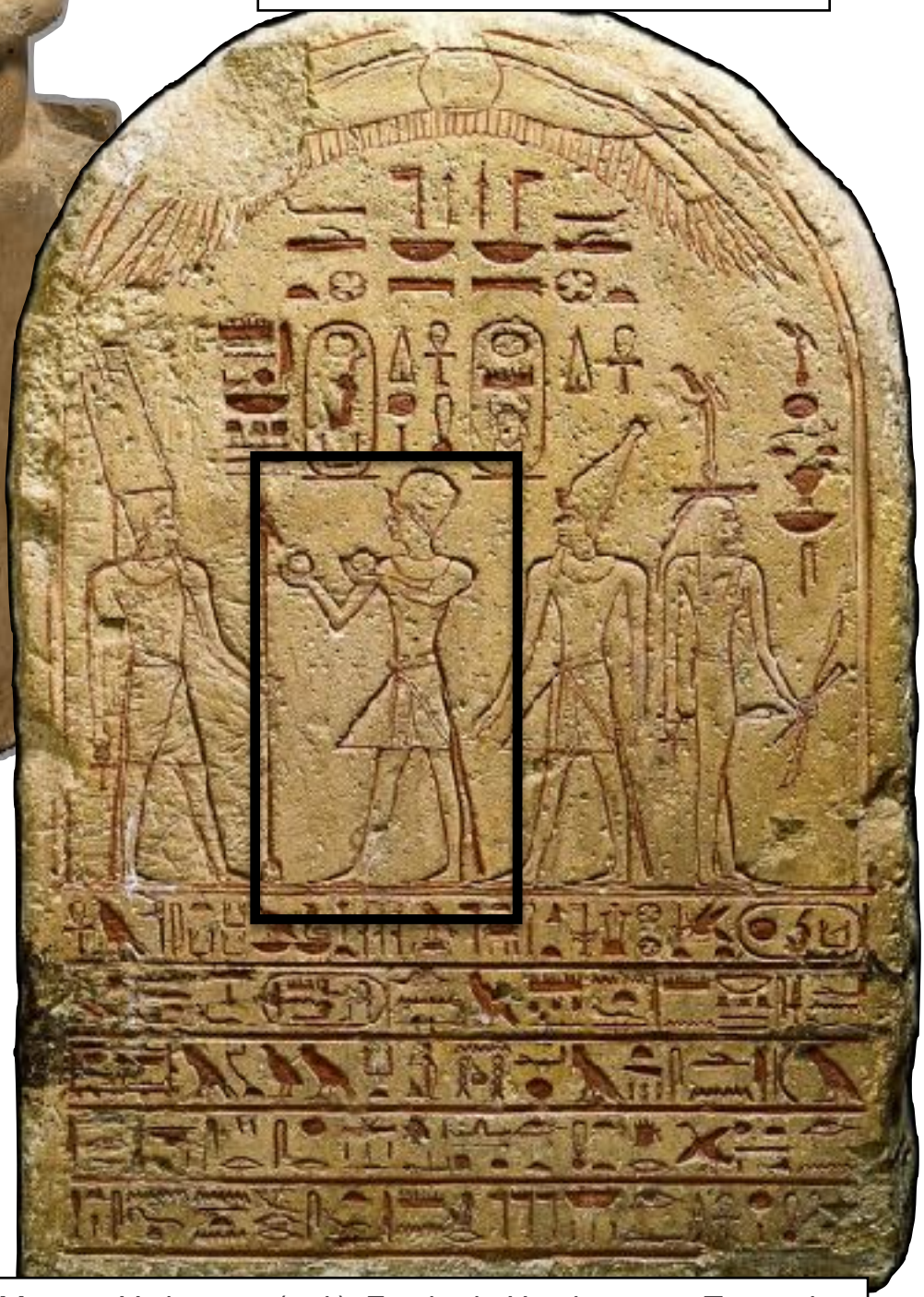
Era un ser inteligente, tenía un carácter fuerte y era favorecida por su gente. Rompió con las normas culturales y de género tradicionales de la época, no sólo para mantener el poder y control que disfrutaba, sino también para tomar el control de su identidad. Cambió su nombre, su vestido, su título y destrozó las expectativas de lo que significaba 'rey'. Ella reinó, ya sea como regente, reina o rey, durante 20 años (Robins, 1993, p.49). Tuvo grandes proyectos de construcción que beneficiaron a los trabajadores, mandó crear numerosas estelas, obeliscos, fachadas y otras representaciones de ella que pusieron a trabajar a los artesanos; Egipto era rico y próspero, y aunque no era un gran líder de la guerra, y hoy se le considera pacifista, sí tuvo

MFA Boston. (n.d.). Fragmento de la estatua de Hatshepsut

Gran estatua arrodillada de Hatshepsut: Imperio Nuevo. Museo Metropolitano de Arte. (n.d.-a).

Estatua sedente de Hatshepsut: Imperio Nuevo. Museo Metropolitano de Arte. (n.d.-a).

Hatshepsut como regente de Tutmosis III



Museos Vaticanos. (n.d.). Estela de Hatshepsut y Tutmosis III. Estela de Hatshepsut y Tutmosis III

Ofrenda sentada de Hatshepsut, Deir el Bahri, Luxor 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Estatuas de Osiride de Hatshepsut, Deir el Bahri, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

campañas de guerra (Robins, 1993, p.47). Su inteligencia superaba a la de otros reyes, ya que era una excelente negociadora en el comercio y le permitió a Egipto acceder a ricos recursos gracias a ello (Cooney, 2015, p.90, 95).

Hatshepsut era una mujer que finalmente se convirtió en hombre, ya sea a través de rituales, travestismo, títulos, declaraciones pictóricas o mediante tecnicismos funerarios. Se convirtió en un hombre de todas las formas que creía que podía en ese momento, con una clara percepción de sí misma como rey. Aunque la sociedad tenía sus dudas sobre una mujer rey, se dieron cuenta de su capacidad para liderar y hacerlo bien. Su expresión de género no era social ni culturalmente aceptable, pero cambió la percepción al desafiar todas las partes de esas expectativas y normas mientras continuaba liderando con éxito un país próspero (Cooney, 2015, p. 95). Sus escribas la detallaron usando pronombres masculinos y formas gramaticales y, sin embargo, hoy en día todavía nos referimos a ella con pronombres femeninos. Horus femenino, una contradicción de géneros para el dios Horus (Robins, 1993, p.50). Ella era la contradicción de *ma'at*, el orden natural de las cosas, pero demostró que era más que capaz de ser rey, o en realidad, corregente. Thutmosis III ascendió al trono como único rey después de la muerte de Hatshepsut y algún tiempo después comenzó a borrar sus imágenes reales. Hay dudas sobre el motivo, ya que se sabe que esto no ocurrió inmediatamente después de su muerte, sino algún tiempo después, años de hecho. Una teoría es que a medida que llegó a su reinado con confianza, comenzó a querer borrar su existencia como rey para legitimar aún más la suya. No fue visto como un acto de venganza sino como un acto de asumir el papel de liderazgo natural del rey, con tal vez cierta intimidación de sus imágenes como rey. Sin embargo, dejó intactas sus imágenes como reina y regente. Esto podría ser un signo de intolerancia por su ascenso "antinatural" al trono, y/o también una especie de rechazo por su expresión de género (Robins, 1993, p.51-52).

Nefertiti es otra reina influyente y conocida. Ella es más conocida gracias a que su busto sobrevive a día de hoy en Berlín, Alemania (Robins, 1993, p.54). Nefertiti fue la esposa principal de Akhenaton, también conocido como Amenhotep, quien cambió su nombre a Akhenaton en honor a su dios Aten. Nefertiti fue una reina amada; "Ninguna otra reina se mostró con tanta frecuencia en los monumentos, templos, tumbas y estatuas" (Robins, 1993, p. 53). Al igual que Hatshepsut, Nefertiti fue representada en los templos haciendo ofrendas directamente a Atón, el único dios al que adoraban Nefertiti y Akhenaton, ya que abandonaron la adoración de todos los demás dioses egipcios. Nefertiti se puede ver en estelas con Akhenaton y el dios del disco solar, Aten, creando una tríada, "… haciéndose eco de las tríadas de deidades que habían sido comunes en la religión tradicional" (Robins, 1993, p.54). También parece haber recibido oraciones directamente de los ciudadanos, cerrando la brecha entre Dios y los mortales, actuando ella misma como un dios.

Nefertiti fue una reina con un poder sustancial dentro del culto de Atón. Este papel fundamental le dió el poder no sólo del culto, sino más poder como reina. Llevaba insignias que eran comunes a las reinas, "…incluidas las plumas dobles, los cuernos y el disco, el *uraeus* y el doble *uraeus*, todos los cuales tenían un significado solar" (Robins, 1993, p.54). Estas coronas tradicionales no

eran únicas, como su corona inolvidable usada en su notable busto en Berlín; además, usó coronas reales, principalmente durante los últimos años del reinado de Akhenaton. Algunos eruditos dicen que era un símbolo de la transición del poder, sin embargo, también se la ha representado golpeando enemigos que tradicionalmente eran representaciones reales (Robins, 1993, p.54). Estos casos no tienen un gran significado sobre sus ideologías sobre su lugar como rey o reina, específicamente porque tiene una historia más larga y convincente como reina.

3.1.2 Religión y Rituales

Los seres religiosos en el Antiguo Egipto incluían la élite superior de la población. Tenían acceso a los puestos de trabajo en los templos como cualquier otro sector, por nombramiento de un miembro superior, o más comúnmente, por herencia del cargo de padre a hijo. Solo a los hombres se les permitía trabajar en trabajos gubernamentales y en la mayoría de los demás trabajos; esto también incluía trabajos religiosos, como en templos de culto; estos trabajos, como otros, a menudo se heredaban del padre u otro pariente cercano. Dado que los hombres eran educados, habiéndose formado como escribas, podían heredar este tipo de trabajos, mientras que las mujeres, aunque estuvieran alfabetizadas, no. Por lo tanto, los líderes del culto eran todos hombres, pero tanto hombres como mujeres ocupaban otros puestos dentro de los templos del culto. Esto no quiere decir que las mujeres, incluso las mujeres de la élite, tuvieran trabajos religiosos bien remunerados dentro de las sectas. Sin embargo, dado que estaban casadas con hombres de estatus, se les otorgaban títulos de honor equivalente, a pesar de no poder trabajar en ningún rol administrativo real, y aún así ser supervisadas por hombres (Robins, 1993, p. 144).

Muchas mujeres, como discutiremos con más detalle más adelante, recibieron títulos honoríficos debido a las posiciones de sus esposos, por lo tanto, si había una 'sacerdotisa de Hathor', entonces significaba que el esposo de la mujer era un sacerdote en el templo de Hathor, proporcionándole un título similar, aunque tal vez no pudo ser una sacerdotisa en funciones del templo de Hathor, probablemente no tuvo un papel activo, pero retuvo el título, aunque solo de nombre. Las mujeres cuyos maridos ocupaban otros altos cargos oficiales podían recibir otros títulos, como "músico de Amón", generalmente en el templo de una diosa, o podían recibir títulos más específicos, como "músico de Amón en el templo mortuorio de Ramsés". II' demostrando que esta mujer tenía un título aún más prestigioso, sirviendo como músico en el mismo templo que dirigía su marido, revelando en última instancia un estatus superior (Robins, 1993, p.145). Dado que sabemos mucho más sobre las mujeres de élite, podemos ver que las mujeres de élite se aprovecharon del estatus de sus maridos y, por lo tanto, obtuvieron autonomía que de otro modo no habrían tenido. Las mujeres de las clases bajas también servían como músicas en los templos, pero podrían haber sido llamadas simplemente “músicas” en lugar de un título completo como el de la élite (Robins, 1993, p.145).

Las mujeres asumieron muchos roles "menores" en los templos aunque mantuvieron su estatus de élite, sin embargo habían muchos otros músicos e intérpretes conectados con los templos de culto (Robins, 1993, p. 145). No parece haber restricciones reales en cuanto a quién podría

participar activamente, y si debían estar calificados. Tanto hombres como mujeres servían como músicos, además de participar en coros y actuar como acróbatas de los templos de culto. Hay mucha evidencia que representa grupos mixtos de las compañías antes mencionadas. Estos músicos en realidad tocaban instrumentos, cantaban y bailaban (Robins, 1993, p.145-146). Su género no era un aspecto excluyente, lo que era raro, especialmente para las mujeres que trabajan fuera del hogar. Sin embargo, todos estos artistas fueron supervisados por los sacerdotes del templo, que eran hombres. Las mujeres carecían de la capacidad de asumir roles de supervisión como los de sus contrapartes masculinas, incluso si fueran mujeres de élite, usando sus títulos honorarios (Robins, 1993, p. 145).

> "El templo no era simplemente un edificio religioso, sino que también tenía aspectos administrativos de los que las mujeres normalmente estaban excluidas. Esto no significó que las mujeres fueran excluidas de una participación significativa en el culto, sino que forjaron una identidad basada en proporcionar música para el culto de diversas maneras" (Onstine, 2010).

'Cantante' o 'Cantante de Dios' apareció como un título popular en el Nuevo Reino para la mujer laica promedio, que se consideraba un título bastante prestigioso para obtener y registrar. Muchos monumentos y estelas fueron creados para mujeres con este título, por lo que su registro oficial quedaría atrás, y al ser tan prestigioso, habría sido un título que ellas usaron por encima de otros, incluso con familiares cercanos como esposos e hijos. Debido a que los templos eran solo para aquellos sacerdotes y sacerdotisas, y otro personal del templo que trabajaba para el templo, significaba que excluía la entrada de laicos. Los primeros egiptólogos solían identificar a las cantantes como pertenecientes al harén del templo y, al hacerlo, proyectaban connotaciones sexualizadas que no eran precisas para estas mujeres. Eran performers que traían ofrendas y peticiones a los dioses, no concubinas sexuales, y podrían describirse mejor como tropas de entretenimiento (Lesko, 2019).

Gran parte de la religión del Antiguo Egipto se centró en el renacimiento, que se centró aún más en los roles de las mujeres en la continuación del linaje real, así como entre los propios dioses. En el contexto de la realeza, es importante señalar que el centro de atención seguía estando en los reyes, ya que eran quienes conectaban a los dioses y los humanos, sin embargo, la historia de nacimiento de cada uno se centró en las madres de los reyes (Robins, 1993; Onstine , 2010).

> "La religión del antiguo Egipto estaba especialmente preocupada por los aspectos de género debido a su enfoque en la fertilidad y el renacimiento espiritual, conceptos que a menudo se expresaban usando lenguaje de género y metáforas visuales" (Onstine, 2010).

La dicotomía de la importancia de los roles de género y el género del individuo está plagada de contradicciones. Las perspectivas que tenemos del Antiguo Egipto son desde el punto de vista

masculino y, como resultado, las mujeres están muy poco representadas. Si bien las mujeres desempeñan un papel más dominante en la mitología egipcia, ha sido analizada por hombres durante cientos de años sin diversidad entre las perspectivas, especialmente en relación con el género y las acciones de las mujeres en ese momento. Los hombres han creado una dualidad para las mujeres, simplificando su importancia y quizás sus roles en general (Onstine, 2010). Debemos comprender a las mujeres en la mitología del Antiguo Egipto para comprender sus roles humanos en la religión.

En la mitología, el dios creador, Atum, eyaculó y dio a luz a los creadores de los elementos:

> Atum "…eyaculado los gemelos Shu (macho, aire) y Tefnut (hembra, humedad). Shu y Tefnut dieron a luz a Geb (la tierra masculina) y Nut (el cielo femenino). Geb y Nut juntos dieron a luz dos hijos y dos hijas; Osiris y Seth, e Isis y Nepthys", (Onstine, 2010).

Este mito muestra que el dios creador poseía dentro de sí mismo tanto al hombre como a la mujer, y ya generaba una metáfora de género para la existencia misma. En este ejemplo también vemos que el acto masculino de la eyaculación fue el centro de la creación, poniendo énfasis y una importancia adicional en el hombre. Las mujeres aparecen como vasijas importantes que llevaban la semilla de la vida, pero eran solo eso, las portadoras, en lugar de poseer los elementos necesarios para la vida. La diosa del cielo, Nut, es un excelente ejemplo de esto, ya que se traga al dios sol todas las noches para protegerlo en su viaje por el inframundo con su renacimiento cada mañana. Está claro incluso en la mitología que los antiguos egipcios entendían la importancia fundamental (y los procesos generales) de la inseminación y el parto, pero creían que el semen tenía el potencial para la vida dándole más relevancia, mientras que la mujer era infravalorada en su posición de recipiente (Onstina, 2010).

Si bien esta dualidad extrema existió dentro de la mitología, no se adhirieron al binario físico estático. Algunos de los dioses y diosas eran andrógenos o tenían rasgos físicos ambiguos.

> "La diosa Neith, la diosa muy antigua y tutelar de Sais en el Delta, a veces se describe como 'el hombre que actúa como mujer y la mujer que actúa como hombre' o que ella es 2/3 masculina y 1⁄3 femenino" (Onstine, 2010).

Se la representa en representaciones pictóricas como mujer, pero su iconografía y adornos son masculinos o se relacionan con actividades masculinas, como la caza o la guerra (Onstine, 2010). Neith es un ejemplo de una diosa aparentemente no binaria. Sin embargo, otro dios interesante y crucial es Hapy, el dios del Nilo. Hapy es un dios que se deja andrógino a propósito, ya que representa la fertilidad potencial del Nilo y la tierra circundante (Onstine, 2010). Onstine (2010) explica que la fertilidad dependía tanto de los elementos femeninos como masculinos, por lo que se representa a Hapy como un hombre con senos colgantes para demostrar no solo el valor de la dualidad, sino también enfatizar la importancia de ambos juntos. Dado que las personas

dependían tanto de las inundaciones del Nilo como de la tierra para la agricultura, una dependía de la otra para su existencia.

El pene era un símbolo poderoso en la mitología y la religión, ya que representaba tanto la creación (fertilidad) como la regeneración (renacimiento en el más allá). “Las ofrendas votivas de penes de madera encontradas en Deir el Bahari y que datan del Imperio Nuevo son una prueba más de que era un símbolo potente que podía invocarse en un contexto religioso” (Onstine, 2010). El pene en su forma votiva se usaría para orar por los niños, pero Onstine (2010) sugiere que probablemente tenían significados más complejos para ellos, especialmente en un contexto religioso.

Aparte del ámbito mitológico y entre la humanidad sabemos que la participación administrativa en los cultos (y en los templos) la realizaban los hombres. En hogares como Deir el-Medina y el-Amarna hay evidencia de práctica religiosa, muy parecida a un santuario en el hogar, incluida una estela que llevaría el nombre del difunto. Esta era probablemente una pieza central en el hogar donde podían rezar por la intervención divina del difunto, ya que esta era una creencia común (Onstine, 2010). Se desconoce si hombres y mujeres practicaban las tradiciones religiosas de la misma manera en el hogar o si el acto tenía género. Se podría suponer que el cuidado del altar habría sido responsabilidad de la mujer, sin embargo, hay evidencia de que tanto hombres como mujeres solicitaron a los muertos asistencia y/o intervención en sus tumbas, por lo que no sería extremo asuma que lo mismo podría ser cierto en casa (Robins, 1993).

Los músicos dentro de los cultos del templo eran imprescindibles para el mantenimiento de las deidades, ya que requerían canto, danza y sustento. Los músicos se usaban para apaciguar a los dioses y, dado que tanto los hombres como las mujeres estaban unidos a los templos, se les representa en una variedad de rituales y actuaciones. Eran cruciales para la función de los templos, ya que eran los hogares de los dioses y, por lo tanto, requeridos (Onstine, 2010). El uso de músicos, tanto hombres como mujeres, proporcionó canciones, bailes y música a través de la ejecución de instrumentos. Dentro de los rituales de mantenimiento del culto, aparentemente eran iguales, sin embargo, las mujeres tenían prioridad como músicos en el culto de Hathor, la diosa de la música y la danza.

> “…instrumentos musicales llamados sistrum (un sonajero de mano) y menat (un pesado collar de cuentas) eran considerados sus emblemas sagrados. Se creía que el uso de estos instrumentos invocaban a la diosa y confería a los participantes del ritual la bendición de la diosa” (Onstine, 2010).

A lo largo del Nuevo Reino, el uso de estos instrumentos por parte de las mujeres estaba muy extendido tanto en entornos de culto como funerarios, y trascendía sus representaciones hathoricas, y las mujeres los usaban en una variedad de cultos, no exclusivamente el de Hathor, e incluso fueron utilizados por el común de mujeres, fuera del sacerdocio (Onstine, 2010). El uso de

estos instrumentos por las sacerdotisas y entre las mujeres comunes en todo el Reino Nuevo muestra que eran instrumentos de género, especialmente cuando se usaron al principio del culto de Hathor. Fue casi una revolución religiosa femenina, ya que las mujeres estaban ejerciendo sus deberes religiosos de manera extrema dentro y después fuera del culto, sin dejar de ser un acto casi exclusivamente femenino.

Las mujeres continuaron asociándose con cultos poderosos, no solo el de Hathor, sino también el de Amón. No había división entre religión y gobierno en el Antiguo Egipto, ya que los templos actuaban como recaudadores de impuestos (Onstine, 2010; Lesko, 2019). Asociarse a un culto popular y poderoso o a un templo específico podría haber proporcionado mejores circunstancias a las mujeres de élite y a los músicos que trabajaban para ellos. Las mujeres laicas pudieron obtener títulos prestigiosos por su trabajo para los templos como Chantresses, ganándose un respeto y una posición que de otro modo no habrían tenido (Lesko, 2019). El poder de la religión y, por lo tanto, el título religioso no puede subestimarse, ni tampoco los esfuerzos de las mujeres que mantuvieron los templos, continuaron con los rituales tradicionales y ayudaron en las celebraciones y los funerales.

3.1.3 Expectativas y normas socioculturales

3.1.3.A Matrimonio

Definir el matrimonio en el Antiguo Egipto es más claro y directo de lo que cabría esperar. El concepto de matrimonio en el Antiguo Egipto se dictaba como grupos familiares que se centraban en tres aspectos: un hombre, una mujer y sus hijos. Hay un registro que se remonta al Reino Nuevo y que confirma a los habitantes de la aldea de los trabajadores. Este registro muestra a cada uno de los trabajadores por nombre y los miembros de su hogar, estos detalles son explícitos al seguir sus nombres con 'esposa', y los nombres de sus hijos y sus filiaciones, si las hay. Si bien no hay una mención real de ceremonias de matrimonio o rituales como los de los cultos o la ascensión de la realeza que lo formaliza como un acto específico. De lo que sí hay evidencia es en realidad del acto de cohabitación, que parece haber sido el factor importante por el cual se promulgó el matrimonio (Robins, 1993, p 56).

El “matrimonio” de la pareja parece ocurrir cuando uno de los individuos se muda a la casa del otro; este suele ser el caso de las mujeres, ya que dejan sus hogares familiares y se van a vivir con su pareja. “Esto se ve en algunos de los términos egipcios que consideramos que significan 'casarse', como 'establecer un hogar', 'entrar en un hogar' y más tarde 'vivir juntos'' (Robins, 1993, pág. 56). Esto significa que no hubo documentación oficial de matrimonio, ceremonias o rituales involucrados además de simplemente mudarse juntos. Entonces, esto significaría que el divorcio sería todo lo contrario, de hecho, el divorcio fue la ‘expulsión’ o ‘salida’ de un individuo del hogar, nuevamente, generalmente la mujer (Robins, 1993, p. 56). Esta simplificación del matrimonio y el divorcio dejaría la posibilidad a hombres y mujeres de casarse y divorciarse a voluntad, sin repercusiones legales para ninguno de los dos.

El matrimonio en el Antiguo Egipto era aparentemente simple, ya que prácticamente no había trámites ni procedimientos necesarios para hacerlo. Sin embargo, dado que los matrimonios eran tan sencillos, también se debe considerar que había otras implicaciones para el matrimonio. Como vimos entre la realeza en el Antiguo Egipto, el matrimonio era, a veces, parte de negociaciones o esfuerzos de mantenimiento de la paz más que por amor. Esto tampoco era inusual para los civiles. Hay que mirar la 'carga' que tenía la familia por tener hijas, ya que probablemente no trabajaban en posiciones que reportaran grandes salarios (puestos de élite), ya que la mayoría de los trabajos bien remunerados pertenecían a hombres, aunque trabajaran en la agricultura y manufactura textil (Robins, 1993, p.64). Las mujeres jóvenes eran una carga para sus familias si no estaban contribuyendo, por lo que, lo mejor para las familias, era casarlas. Con los procesos de matrimonio tan fáciles, todo se redujo a negociaciones. Las mujeres eran “regaladas” de la familia, generalmente por el padre, en algún tipo de negociación. Esto pudo haber sido beneficioso para ambas partes, tanto para la familia que se deshacía de una hija o hermana, como para el hombre que recibía una esposa (Robins, 1993, p.58-59). Cuando las mujeres de las familias reales, hijas de deidades por derecho propio, son tratadas como propiedad para ser regaladas o negociadas políticamente para la expansión de un reino y para el mantenimiento de la paz, entonces no es un pequeño salto ver lo mismo entre los que pertenecían a la clase trabajadora. Los hombres a menudo intercambiaban a sus hijas o hermanas por cosas de valor, incluidas tierras o propiedades (Robins, 1993, p. 59). A veces, esa riqueza se mantiene dentro de la familia cuando las hijas se intercambian entre la familia, generalmente un hijastro o un hijo adoptivo (hijos nacidos por subrogación, idealmente para tener un heredero de los trabajos y la propiedad de la familia) (Robins, 1993, p. 59). Sabemos que los padres habían invertido intereses en el intercambio de sus hijas, y era algo así como un negocio, ya que potencialmente podrían ganar mucho con estos intercambios. El hombre que se casara sería el que proporcionará un regalo al padre de la novia y esto se consideraría y, en última instancia, decidiría si ella se casaría con él. Sin embargo, poco se sabe si las mujeres jóvenes involucradas en estas interacciones tuvieron algo que decir al respecto. Hay poca evidencia que demuestre que lo hicieron, aunque algunos estudiosos creen que algunos padres consideraron las preferencias de sus hijas antes de hacer tales arreglos, pero se sabe poco según Robins (1993, p. 60).

Los contratos fijos aparecen más tarde, en el siglo VII a. C., que aseguraban los derechos de las mujeres (y los hombres) durante el matrimonio, pero principalmente que las mujeres recibirían una compensación por el matrimonio en caso de repudio por parte de su marido o en el caso de que ella se fuera por su cuenta ejerciendo su libre albedrío. Por lo general, se acordó como cantidad cierta y acordada, que una parte se le daba a ella (o a su padre) como regalo en el matrimonio, y luego la cantidad fija contractual si llegaran a separarse (divorcio). Sin embargo, también existían otras estipulaciones financieras, donde el hombre debía proporcionar a la mujer un tercio de todas sus posesiones desde el momento del matrimonio, lo que obviamente era ventajoso para la mujer (Robins, 1993, p.60).

Se entiende que en el Antiguo Egipto, especialmente entre la élite y la realeza, tenían múltiples

esposas con el fin de proporcionar un heredero a su posición. Asimismo, entre la clase trabajadora esto también se puede ver, pero debido a que la vida cotidiana de la clase baja no fue documentada en la medida de las élites y la realeza, existen menos ejemplos, como algunos procesos judiciales que han sobrevivido, con algunos matices. Mientras que a nivel real, los reyes tenían una "esposa principal" y luego una "esposa", la palabra "esposa" en sí misma parece tener diferentes significados entre las clases bajas. En estos procedimientos judiciales, las mujeres a veces son declaradas como "esposas" y otras veces como "concubinas", y el cambio entre estos títulos. Los hombres han declarado que tienen múltiples esposas, y luego una de las cuales podría ser referida como una concubina al mismo tiempo (Robins, 1993, p.61). Esto sugiere que las mujeres no solo fueron utilizadas como moneda de cambio, sino que también podrían haber sido utilizadas sexualmente por su "esposo" con poca capacidad para refutar su posición. Algunos textos sugieren que las mujeres podían abandonar los matrimonios, lo que finalmente resultó en el divorcio, ya que ese era el concepto general; sin embargo, como concubina, es posible que la mujer no haya estado necesariamente casada con el hombre, sino que se la tomó como amante para proporcionar un heredero. Esto sugiere que tal vez estas concubinas fueron negociadas en esa posición y después de proporcionarle hijos al hombre, tuvieron que asistir a la corte para dejar su situación. Robins (1993) sugiere afirmar lo contrario, que el término "concubina" tiene fuertes connotaciones y cree que no era aplicable a la sociedad egipcia en ese momento, mientras que otros no están de acuerdo.

Así como los hombres podían divorciarse de sus esposas, las mujeres también podían divorciarse de sus maridos. Ambos pudieron volver a casarse después del divorcio y eso se ve en múltiples casos judiciales, aunque no está del todo claro cómo se aceptó el matrimonio. Algunas de las causales de divorcio eran la infidelidad y la infertilidad, entre las más comunes. Sin embargo, en este caso, ¿no se considerarían también infieles los hombres que se casaron con varias esposas? Los términos del matrimonio no están claros en el Antiguo Egipto. Algunas evidencias apuntan a que los hombres han tenido múltiples esposas, es decir, que tuvieron relaciones monógamas consecutivas, generalmente debido a la muerte de una esposa que resultó en volverse a casar. Sin embargo, en algunos casos (evidenciados en documentos judiciales) algunas mujeres habían declarado que eran una de cuatro (o múltiples) esposas. Esto podría significar que el hombre había estado previamente casado y divorciado, o viudo y vuelto a casar, pero también podría significar que tenía múltiples esposas concurrentes (Robins, 1993, p.61-64). Al discutir la terminología del matrimonio, incluida la "concubina", parece que es posible que los hombres estuvieran casados con varias mujeres al mismo tiempo. Si bien los textos nos llevan a creer que esto era viable, especialmente considerando las ventajas de tener varias esposas, asumiendo que ellas son parte de la fuerza laboral, ya sea agrícola o textil, las mujeres podrían haber sido contribuyentes financieros a la familia, por lo que valía la pena tener varias esposas. La evidencia física que queda hace que esta teoría sea menos probable para la clase trabajadora. Los restos en Deir el-Medina, la ciudad de los trabajadores, prueban que las casas eran pequeñas y proporcionaban poco o ningún espacio extra para la posibilidad de múltiples esposas bajo el mismo techo. Y como los documentos mantienen registros probatorios de todos los trabajadores

que vivieron allí y sus esposas (e hijos), no existe tal evidencia para respaldar este tipo de relación dentro del complejo Deir el-Medina (Robins, 1993, p.64-65).

Si bien no hay evidencia física de que los hombres tengan más de una esposa al mismo tiempo, es una posibilidad basada en los textos que dejan suficiente espacio para esa suposición. Si es cierto, de hecho, que los hombres podían casarse con más de una mujer al mismo tiempo, como sugiero en base a la evidencia del texto, Robbins (1993) indica que no hay absolutamente ninguna evidencia de lo contrario. Las mujeres pudieron volver a casarse después del divorcio y la viudez, pero en ninguna parte hay evidencia que demuestre que ella pudo tener varios maridos al mismo tiempo. Debe mencionarse nuevamente que las mujeres todavía eran objeto de comercio y aparentemente vendidas en lugar de "regaladas" a partir de la información que existe sobre el proceso del matrimonio como una construcción para la posesión y adquisición de propiedades. No es sorprendente que las mujeres no pudieran casarse con varios hombres al mismo tiempo, pero su capacidad para divorciarse por su propia voluntad sí lo es. Robbins (1993) afirma que no existía ningún estigma ni para los hombres ni para las mujeres acerca de volverse a casar después del divorcio, por lo que era un lugar común que las mujeres hubieran tenido varios maridos a lo largo de su vida, especialmente considerando la corta edad a la que se casaban.

La discusión sobre el matrimonio es inevitable ya que es un acto simple pero significativo en el Antiguo Egipto, pero al igual que hoy, había personas que no se casaban; no se mudaron de la casa de sus padres, o nunca se mudaron con otra persona. Se consideraba que algunas de estas personas simplemente tenían mala suerte en términos de encontrar pareja, sin embargo, otros casos son los de la homosexualidad, donde los hombres no toman esposa. Esto es evidente con un fragmento narrativo de una aventura homosexual entre el rey Neferkara y su general Sasenet (en el Reino Antiguo), Sasenet sin esposas (Robins, 1993, p.72). Robins (1993) explica que se desaconsejó la homosexualidad tal como aparece en varios textos, incluidas las Instrucciones de Ptahhotep, y en el Libro de los Muertos del Nuevo Reino en las "Confesiones negativas". Uno instruye contra los actos homosexuales y el otro es una confesión de no haberlos realizado. Robins describe las condiciones:

> “El problema con la homosexualidad era que no se ajustaba al ideal egipcio de vida familiar basada en el concepto de fertilidad, mientras que en una conexión funeraria, la naturaleza estéril de la relación podría haber impedido el renacimiento en el otro mundo” (Robins, 1993, p.72).

La realidad del problema con la homosexualidad no era que los actos fueran antinaturales, sino que no conducían a la descendencia. Esto significaba que no había nadie a quien dejarle su patrimonio, ni su trabajo, ya que estos se heredaban, se transmitían de una generación a la siguiente. Además de no proporcionar herederos, la homosexualidad dejaba a uno vulnerable en su capacidad de pasar al más allá, ya que tenían que hacer confesiones negativas: confesar las cosas que no habían hecho que podrían prohibirles pasar, una declaración de inocencia (Mark ,

abril de 2017). Si uno no pudiera cruzar, simplemente dejaría de existir y no tendría derecho a los beneficios del más allá que habría estado planeando durante la mayor parte de su vida; y aunque la homosexualidad se practicaba y era aceptable en ese momento, varias confesiones son explícitas o implícitas al actuar fuera del matrimonio de uno o interrumpieron los matrimonios de otros (adulterio), aunque esto podría ser cierto para los hombres, aunque las traducciones se refieren al adulterio con mujeres (Mark , abril de 2017).

3.1.3.B Fertilidad

Podría decirse que la fertilidad era el aspecto más importante de la vida en el Antiguo Egipto. Solidificó herederos y la continuación del reino. Era un medio que proporcionaba mano de obra gratuita para muchos sectores, pero específicamente a la agricultura; aseguraba la preservación de la familia, así como el cuidado de los mayores de la familia. Era tan importante que la infertilidad era incluso motivo de divorcio, un factor muy importante, entre las dos razones principales. Se crearon cultos religiosos en torno a la fertilidad, con santuarios construidos en las casas o figurillas que adornaban las paredes y alrededor de la cama (Robins, 1993, p. 75). Figuras y figurillas de fertilidad aparecieron en tumbas que alguna vez se pensó que proporcionaban concubinas para el hombre fallecido en el más allá, sin embargo, también se encontraron en tumbas femeninas, lo que más tarde demostró ser la esperanza de un renacimiento en el más allá, ya que también se encontraron en las tumbas de niños de ambos sexos (Robins, 1993, p.76).

Los antiguos egipcios creían que los dioses de la fertilidad, como Hathor y Bes, no solo podían ayudar con la fertilidad y traer hijos, sino que también creían que los muertos podían tener influencia en tales casos. Las personas que esperaban tener hijos ofrecían estas ofrendas de fertilidad (llamadas *shabtis* o *ushabtis*) a los familiares fallecidos en un entorno funerario, como una ofrenda en una tumba; escribían cartas a los muertos pidiéndoles que aclararan los problemas en el reino de los muertos, para que pudieran concebir en el reino de los vivos Robins, 1993, p.75). Dado que los muertos, se creía, podían afectar a los vivos para bien o para mal, algunos intentaron hacer las paces con exesposas o maridos muertos, para que renunciaran a cualquier vínculo malicioso con ellos (Robins, 1993, p.76-77).

Estos actos de buena fe no siempre funcionaron, como lo demuestran los registros de piedra, generalmente en forma de monumentos a los dioses de la fertilidad, mostrando ofrendas a los dioses de la fertilidad, o en su semejanza y en honor a ellos pidiendo hijos. Con la muerte de estos individuos, podemos ver que a veces fueron en vano, ya que sus antecesores no fueron sus hijos, sino otros individuos, no familiares en absoluto. Cuando fallaron las ofrendas y los monumentos, algunos tuvieron hijos de otras maneras. Algunos, como sabemos, buscaban hijos a través de la gestación subrogada, generalmente el hombre embarazaba a una concubina u otra mujer, como una esclava, para tener hijos. Esta esposa entonces adoptaba a los niños y los reclamaba como propios. La adopción era una forma de tener hijos cuando el embarazo, el parto y los primeros años de vida eran muy peligrosos para las mujeres y los niños. Y cuando las mujeres eran estériles, esta era una alternativa positiva para ellas (Robins, 1993, p. 77).

Pilares con cabeza de la diosa Hathor en el templo de Hathor, Dendera, Egipto 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Ushabtis en el Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Relieve de Bes en el templo de Hathor, Dendera, Egipto, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Sabemos que los antiguos egipcios eran conscientes de la menstruación y, en última instancia, que no tenerla era un posible signo de embarazo. A las mujeres se les hizo una variedad de pruebas para probar el embarazo, pero se sospechaba que algunas de estas pruebas también podían identificar el sexo del niño. Muchas de estas pruebas giraron en torno al uso de la orina de la mujer y sus efectos en diferentes granos. A las mujeres se les prescribían medicamentos para estimular o mantener el embarazo, aunque todavía hoy no entendemos completamente los ingredientes debido a las diferencias léxicas. Sin embargo, también se hacían pruebas físicas a las mujeres, como el examen de la piel, los senos y el pulso, que ayudaban a comprender su estado de fertilidad (Robins, 1993, p. 79). Las mujeres eran examinadas minuciosamente para asegurar la continuación del embarazo y ayudar en el proceso del mismo.

Si bien la fertilidad no solo se esperaba de las mujeres, sino que se exigía, no siempre estaban contentas con estar embarazadas, ya que era una condición peligrosa tanto para la mujer como para el niño. Hay evidencia de anticonceptivos recetados; algunos de estos incluyen miel y estiércol de cocodrilo, ambos para insertarse vaginalmente, aunque no se usaban juntos. Estas formas actuaban como un bloqueo contra el paso de los espermatozoides, por lo que se entendía bien la conciencia de los procesos de embarazo. Otros anticonceptivos más efectivos incluían puntas de acacia molidas. Como explica Robins (1993), “Estos contienen goma arábiga, que tiene un efecto químico en el esperma y retarda activamente la concepción”. También había métodos anticonceptivos menos efectivos, incluidos los tés y algunos alimentos. Robins (1993) continúa diciendo que no hay evidencia de formas de anticoncepción para hombres.

Hemos visto el uso de la religión para convocar a los dioses de la fertilidad para ayudar en la concepción y el embarazo mediante el uso de altares a estos dioses, pero el embarazo rara vez se representa en el arte formal. La mayoría de las imágenes de mujeres son de cuerpos femeninos esbeltos. Se representan algunos cuerpos embarazados, pero generalmente en escenas de parto, donde las mujeres son conducidas a salas de parto, o escenas que representan el nacimiento del rey divino, demostrando su legitimidad para gobernar. Una deidad femenina se muestra embarazada y es Taweret, la protectora de las mujeres embarazadas. Se la representa como una amalgama de una variedad de animales.

> “Toma la forma de un hipopótamo con las extremidades de un león, la cola de un cocodrilo y senos humanos planos y colgantes. Se para erguida sobre sus patas traseras y su barriga obviamente hinchada sobresale por delante” (Robins, 1993, p. 80).

Hay otras pocas representaciones de la operación más importante en la vida de una mujer, significativas tanto para hombres como para mujeres. Este desprecio por el sufrimiento de las mujeres, así como por el trauma y el riesgo que asumieron para proporcionar un heredero (no para ellas mismas sino para sus maridos) parece ser común a lo largo de la historia egipcia, tanto desde el mundo antiguo como desde antaño moderno. En el mundo antiguo, sin la defensa de la enfermedad, las enfermedades graves relacionadas con el embarazo u otras, junto con los riesgos

*Estatuilla de la diosa Taweret: periodo ptolemaico.*The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Taweret, Mosaico callejero en Alejandría, Egipto 2015, Theresa Wilshusen

corporales para la mujer, incluidas las complicaciones, hacían del embarazo una condición que amenazaba la vida, condición que la mayoría de las mujeres experimentaron varias veces a lo largo de sus vidas desde la pubertad hasta la menopausia. Como se mencionó en esta sección, los hombres a menudo se volvían a casar si su esposa moría, casándose regularmente poco después, generalmente con mujeres más jóvenes que ellos, en busca de un heredero. Aparentemente, las mujeres eran consideradas desechables. Teniendo en cuenta que los hombres se divorciaban de las mujeres con infertilidad, se consideraba que tenían mucho menos valor en el esquema general de las cosas. Había una depreciación para la vida de una mujer, especialmente cuando no podía tener hijos o dar a luz a un varón, por causas ajenas a ella.

3.1.3.C Familia y hogar

Las mujeres del antiguo Egipto llevaban diferentes títulos para mostrar su posición en la sociedad y en el hogar. El título más común observado en los monumentos para mujeres de élite era el de "señora de la casa", lo que supone que incluso las mujeres de élite se enorgullecían de este título, ya que tenían el control de los asuntos del hogar. Robins (1993) examina un pasaje de la Instrucción de Any del Nuevo Reino, que establece:

> “No controles a tu mujer en su casa, cuando sabes que es eficiente; no le digas: “¿Dónde está? ¡Consíguelo!" Cuando ella lo ha puesto en el lugar correcto. Deja que tu ojo observe en silencio, entonces reconoces su destreza” (Robins, 1993, p. 92).

Se esperaba que las mujeres estuvieran en el hogar, pero también eran respetadas como cuidadoras del hogar. Como muestra la selección anterior, los hombres no debían interferir con una mujer en su hogar, dándole el control del hogar y el cómo se manejaba o administraba. En textos y cuentos encontramos más ejemplos de esto, como en el cuento “Dos hermanos”. En esta historia, el esposo espera que su esposa esté en casa esperando su llegada después del trabajo (o de la caza). Robins (1993) explica además que estas distinciones de género eran proporcionales a las de las escenas de la capilla de la tumba que mostraban pocas ocasiones en las que las mujeres acompañaban a los hombres mientras participaban en actividades fuera del hogar o sus propiedades.

Los deberes domésticos de las mujeres de la élite eran bastante diferentes de los de las mujeres comunes, esto se debe, en parte, a las propiedades a menudo inmensas que poseía la élite. Si bien las mujeres de élite no se ocupaban de todos los aspectos de la propiedad porque probablemente tenían sirvientes o esclavos para hacer este trabajo, lo supervisa hasta cierto punto. A través del arte funerario podemos ver ejemplos de estos diferentes aspectos de las extensas propiedades de la élite, que incluyen un granero, un establo de ganado, un cobertizo de carnicería u otro edificio similar, una panadería, una cervecería, un taller de carpintería y un cobertizo de tejido. Estos se encontraban entre los altos funcionarios más comunes y estaban repartidos en grandes extensiones de tierra que también pueden haber incluido cocinas separadas de la casa principal, jardines con árboles, flores y vegetales. Estas haciendas eran

similares a complejos, muchas con altos muros que rodeaban la propiedad (Robins, 1993, p.94). Gracias al arte funerario encontrado dentro de las tumbas, pudimos comprender los elementos y el funcionamiento de estas grandes propiedades de la élite. Nos brindan una ventana a la vida de los antiguos egipcios con pocos restos físicos de estos sitios.

Las casas dentro de estas propiedades también eran bastante grandes, ya que la casa principal generalmente era de planta cuadrada con habitaciones que rodeaban un espacio central con techos sostenidos por altas columnas de madera con ventanas en lo alto de las paredes. Alrededor del espacio habitable central estaban las habitaciones familiares principales, con el dormitorio principal colocado junto a un baño y un lavabo sin drenaje. Otras habitaciones habrían incluido una sala de recepción y salas de almacenamiento. Muchas de estas casas tenían escaleras internas que se cree que conducían al techo que se usaba para una variedad de otras funciones: área para comer, espacio de trabajo o lugar alternativo para dormir (durante temporadas específicas), lo que habría permitido una extensión del espacio (Robins, 1993, p.94). Las élites tenían espacios de vida exagerados y muchas de las habitaciones más sucias no estaban unidas a la casa principal, lo que permitía espacios más limpios e higiénicos para las familias de élite.

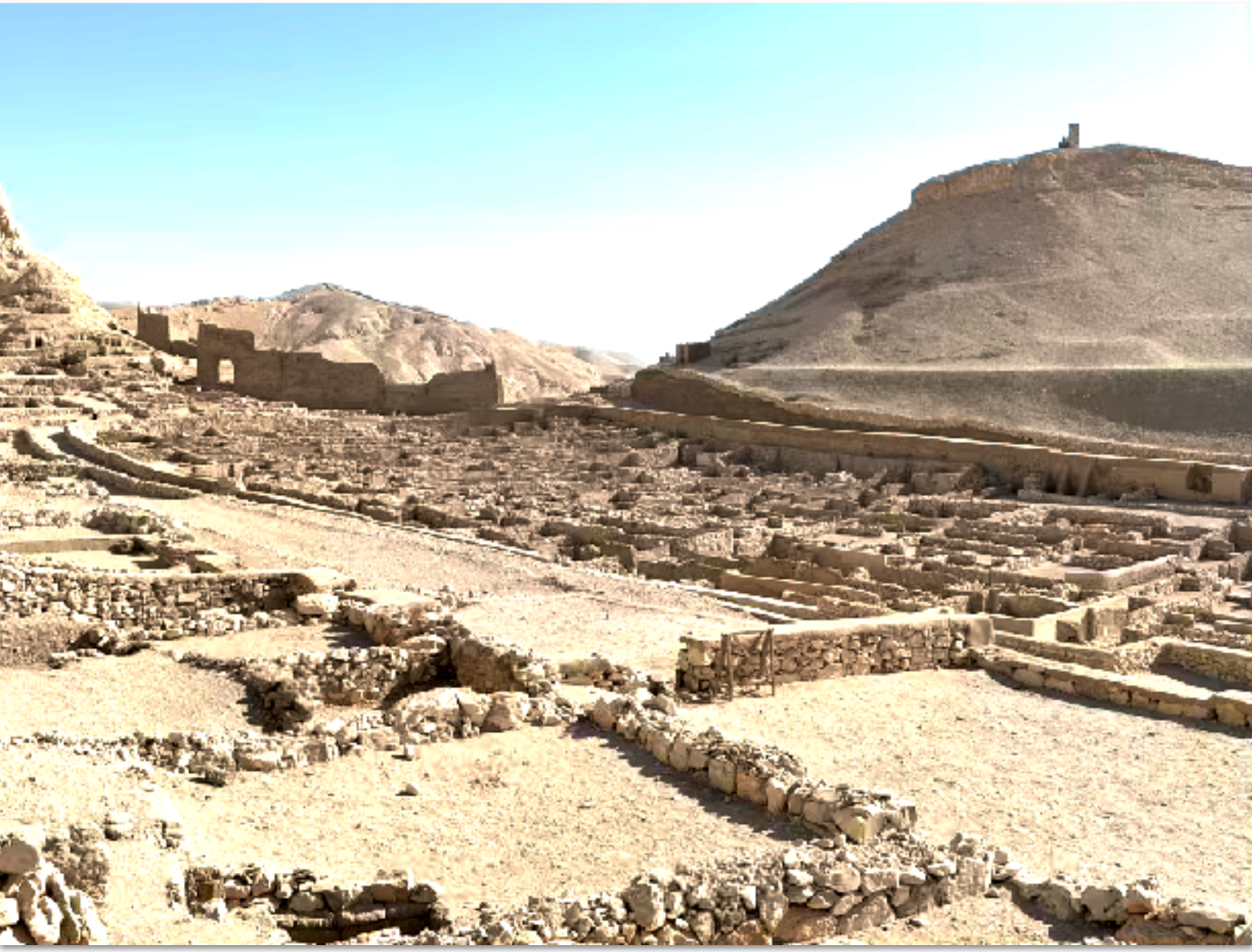
Uno puede imaginarse entonces las viviendas de la clase obrera, específicamente la del obrero de Deir el-Medina, de la que se tiene la mayor evidencia física de las situaciones de vida de la clase obrera media. Estas casas se construyeron dentro de límites específicos y fueron solo para los trabajadores y sus familias en Deir el-Medina, que trabajaron para construir las tumbas reales en el Valle de los Reyes (Robins, 1993, p.93-94). Robins (1993) describe el diseño de este pueblo como tal:

> “Hileras de casas daban a las calles, y cada casa era rectangular en lugar de cuadrada. En Amarna cada casa ocupaba un área de poco menos de cinco metros por diez, y estaba dividida en tres partes desiguales de adelante hacia atrás”.

Robins (1993) continúa describiendo los diferentes estilos de casas, incluidas las diferencias de tamaño entre las casas de Deir el-Medina y Amarna, algunas de las cuales fueron construidas para incorporar ganado, con comederos, algunas equipadas con morteros de piedra caliza instalados para moler el grano; se prepararon otras viviendas para la producción artesanal, como el tejido o el hilado. Algunos de los restos indican que las paredes interiores probablemente estaban cubiertas de yeso y pintadas y decoradas.

> “…fragmentos de escenas sobrevivieron en las habitaciones delanteras de dos casas en el momento de la excavación. Uno mostraba un grupo de figuras de Bes bailando mirando hacia una figura de la diosa Taweret. La otra representaba una procesión de mujeres aparentemente bailando” (Robins, 1993, p.95).

Los restos de las viviendas de la clase obrera muestran tal decoración dentro de las casas



Aldea de trabajadores de Deir el-Medina, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

diseñadas para el trabajo y para preservar al trabajador y su familia, sin embargo adaptaron sus viviendas y las convirtieron en bellas obras de arte. Las imágenes descritas anteriormente son de dos dioses de la fertilidad, y aunque fueron pintadas en las habitaciones delanteras, un área común dentro de la casa, en lugar de en el dormitorio, se puede inferir que estas imágenes no siempre se usaron exclusivamente con fines rituales o de oración, sino simplemente como decoración, agradable a estas familias particulares. Otras representaciones en toda la casa podrían haber incluido otras deidades conocidas como Horus o Isis. Las mujeres habrían estado a cargo de estas pinturas como 'dueñas de la casa'.

La mayor parte de la evidencia de mujeres trabajando en el hogar o administrando fincas se ve en escenas de tumbas. No son del todo confiables, ya que los hombres solían ser los dueños de las tumbas y las mujeres de su familia simplemente se agregaban a ellas. Las escenas de la tumba pertenecían al propietario y, por lo tanto, eran representaciones que serían prósperas para él en el más allá. Sin embargo, hay mujeres propietarias de tumbas, y las escenas de sus tumbas también muestran a hombres supervisando los deberes de la casa o la hacienda, donde las mujeres estaban realmente a cargo (Robins, 1993, p.99-101). Dado que las mujeres estaban presumiblemente a cargo del hogar y los hombres se concentraban principalmente en deberes fuera del hogar, debemos cuestionarnos si las representaciones de las tumbas también eran responsabilidad de los hombres, incluso cuando eran propiedad de mujeres, ya que era un deber fuera del ámbito de las mujeres de la época. También debemos considerar las implicaciones de ser mujer en el Antiguo Egipto, ya que el entierro tenía requisitos específicos (que se discutirán en un capítulo posterior), pero no necesariamente permitía a las mujeres pasar al más allá, pasando por cambios de género para poder hacerlo (Wilshusen , 2018, p.11). Esto puede haber impedido que las mujeres propietarias de tumbas se representaran a sí mismas en las escenas y, en cambio, permitieron que apareciera un hombre.

Si bien las mujeres pasaban gran parte de sus vidas embarazadas, eran responsables de sus hogares, pero como sabemos, las mujeres de clase alta tenían sirvientes, y los trabajadores en Deir el-Medina y Amarna eran trabajadores estatales y se les proporcionaba un cierto número de horas de trabajo esclavo cada semana, lo que habría mitigado la tensión doméstica sobre las mujeres embarazadas en particular. Sin embargo, las mujeres de la élite podrían haber sido completamente atendidas durante el embarazo y después del embarazo, confiando en sirvientes para criar a sus hijos también (Robins, 1993, p.101-102). Dado que se esperaba y era obligado que las mujeres proporcionaran hijos a sus maridos, junto con las expectativas culturales de tener familias numerosas con una multitud de hijos, las mujeres no habrían estado dispuestas a tener trabajo burocrático fuera del hogar, con excepción de las mujeres de élite, quienes, como sabemos, estaban involucrados en actividades de culto como el trabajo de sacerdotisa y músico de templo de culto (Robins, 1993, p.101-102).

Tal sacrificio por parte de la mujer es aparentemente una forma de esclavitud doméstica, especialmente entre las clases medias y bajas donde probablemente no podían contratar

enfermeras, cuidadoras para sus hijos y sirvientas para sus casas. Estaban atadas a sus hogares por normas culturales y de género que les exigían producir herederos para los hombres a toda costa. Este era el costo de ser mujer en el Antiguo Egipto. Las mujeres sacrificaron sus cuerpos, y a veces sus vidas, para cumplir con altas expectativas culturales y familiares de género. Las mujeres del Antiguo Egipto parecen ser cuidadas y mantenidas por sus maridos trabajadores, pero en realidad, una vez que estaban en edad fértil, se casaban o incluso se convertían en sirvientas en casas más grandes (Robins, 1993, p. 101). En última instancia, se trata de esclavitud doméstica para las clases media y baja. Las mujeres de élite, con más oportunidades disponibles para ellas, estaban menos atadas a la casa y por eso se las representa realizando algunos trabajos de culto importantes y ocupando puestos sacerdotales que mejoraron su estatus (Robins, 1993, p.102).

Prácticamente no se sabe nada sobre la clase baja del Antiguo Egipto, ya que obviamente no era algo representado en las tumbas de las clases alta y de élite. Cuando se representan, son generalizados y algo neutrales, no representan la realidad de la vida a ese nivel y, a menudo, se ignoran por completo (Robins, 1993, p.107-108). Además, dado que las mujeres trabajaban en el hogar, las mujeres de clase baja no aparecían necesariamente en las pinturas de las tumbas a menos que fueran sirvientas. Las mujeres de clase baja que trabajaban en el hogar, criaban a sus hijos y quizás vendían los bienes excedentes del hogar, no habrían sido representadas y, por lo tanto, son esencialmente invisibles (Robins, 1993, p. 107). El arte formal en el Antiguo Egipto cometió una injusticia cultural, ya que omitió parte de su sociedad esencialmente necesaria, las mujeres de clase baja, de su registro, ya que la élite estaba decidida a no exponer lo desagradable de la realidad, incluidas las deformidades o los cuerpos envejecidos. Hay más elitismo con respecto a los escribas. Este trabajo sólo podía ser realizado por hombres y los textos escritos por élites para estudiantes de escribas son prácticamente promocionales. El sesgo incorporado de estos textos intenta motivar a los estudiantes de escritura a continuar trabajando duro y continuar con sus estudios describiendo las duras realidades de todos los demás, aparte de esto, debemos recordar que estos textos están dirigidos a una audiencia exclusivamente masculina, por lo que las mujeres no pudieron realizar este trabajo y mejorar sus condiciones. Además, excluyendo a las mujeres de este rol, y describiendo las condiciones de los hombres en la fuerza laboral promedio, las mujeres son eclipsadas por completo (Robins, 1993, p. 108).

3.1.3.D Fuera del hogar

El papel de la mujer en el hogar variaba, pero no se puede subestimar su importancia en el hogar. Sin embargo, dado que las mujeres tenían el control de sus hogares, debemos imaginar que no estaban únicamente atadas a la casa, sino que realizaban tareas fuera del hogar que habrían requerido que ella se fuera, como comprar en el mercado, traer otros bienes hacia o desde la casa; tal vez vendiendo bienes excedentes. Si ella estaba trabajando en el hogar, tal vez tejiendo o fabricando textiles, podría haber salido a vender estos productos también. No se puede afirmar que estuvo restringida al hogar en todo momento, pero aunque consideremos esto, es importante tener en cuenta otros aspectos de este tipo de vida, incluidas las habilidades que la benefician (Robins, 1993, p. 111).

Dado que las mujeres generalmente no trabajaban fuera del hogar en trabajos burocráticos, no había una necesidad real de que realizaran estudios formales para alfabetizarse, aunque eso no significa que no lo fueran. Casi no hay evidencia que demuestre que las mujeres sabían leer y escribir, fuera de la élite, y esos casos también son muy raros. Como ya sabemos, no hay forma de saber si las mujeres sabían leer y escribir. Los hombres eran los únicos a los que se les permitía estudiar formalmente para ser escribas y, aunque hay algunas representaciones de mujeres sentadas con kits de escriba debajo de sus sillas, están sentadas junto a sus maridos y eso puede inferir que el kit de escriba habría sido de él y se guardó debajo de su silla cuando no estaba en uso. Dado lo que sabemos sobre la sociedad del Antiguo Egipto, podemos entender que las mujeres no eran las que usaban los kits de escribas. Aunque es posible, y más probable entre la élite, que las mujeres estuvieran, hasta cierto punto, alfabetizadas,y tal vez transmitieran sus habilidades a sus hijas para que ellas también se beneficiaran de ello (Robins, 1993, p. 113).

Poco se sabe de la sociedad en general, menos aún de las mujeres. Lo que podemos entender son las posiciones de las mujeres en la sociedad en función de sus títulos, a menudo otorgados por el papel de su propio esposo en el gobierno. A menudo tomaban una versión feminizada de los títulos de sus maridos, aunque ellos mismos no estuvieran involucrados. A través del matrimonio recibieron un título honorífico. Otros títulos de mujeres de élite incluían "sacerdotisa de Hathor" y "única dama de compañía", aunque no está claro si los recibieron de forma independiente o si también reflejaban el título de su marido. Las mujeres de una clase un poco más baja habrían tenido títulos como 'ciudadana', 'dama de honor', que es la forma diminuta de la mencionada 'única dama de honor', 'servidora de un gobernante', aunque no necesariamente refiriéndose al rey, funcionarios de menor rango, como gobernador, y 'wab-sacerdotisa' que es el femenino de 'wab-sacerdote' (Robins, 1993, p.115). Las mujeres de la clase trabajadora más baja, que a menudo servían en hogares o fincas, tenían otros títulos, según sus trabajos en el hogar y si "supervisaban" algo en particular. Estos títulos cambiaron y fueron diferentes con el tiempo. Algunos de estos títulos en el Reino Antiguo eran los de 'guardián de la cámara', 'mayordomo', 'supervisor de la cocina', 'mayordomo' y 'sellador'. Si bien los puestos de supervisor parecen ser ejecutivos, aún eran supervisados por hombres. Estos títulos del Imperio Antiguo eran descriptivos y ofrecían a las mujeres algún tipo de rango o jerarquía entre el resto del personal, pero por lo demás eran bastante nominales (Robins, 1993, p. 116-117). Estos títulos no sirvieron a las mujeres fuera de su trabajo, en el ámbito público y podrían equipararse a los títulos que se otorgan en los trabajos de hoy, que tienen poco valor fuera del lugar de trabajo. Una nota importante sobre los títulos para las mujeres de clase baja: los hombres controlaban su "poder", ya que había títulos equivalentes para la mayoría de los trabajos, lo que socava aún más los roles de las mujeres en puestos de autoridad incluso en el trabajo. Muchas versiones femeninas de trabajos masculinos fueron ocupados por mujeres, e incluso servían directamente a mujeres (Robins, 1993, p. 116).

Si bien las mujeres desempeñaban funciones de 'panadera' o supervisora de la cocina, también realizaban otros trabajos, como moler, hilar y tejer, así como crear música y danza, lo que puede

no ser sorprendente. Pero si bien estaban involucradas en gran parte de la preparación de alimentos, el trabajo textil y el entretenimiento, había trabajos a los que no tenían acceso, a pesar de trabajar en el mismo dominio. Algunos trabajos de los que las mujeres estaban excluidas o en los que tenían mucha menos participación eran la elaboración de cerveza, la preparación y la cocción de la carne, la producción artesanal y las actividades agrícolas en grandes propiedades (Robins, 1993, p. 117). Tanto hombres como mujeres usaban la música para entretenerse con representaciones de hombres y mujeres actuando juntos en banquetes (Robins, 1993, p. 120). Las mujeres tampoco estaban muy involucradas en el trabajo agrícola. Rara vez se les ve fuera de los jardines de las fincas, y cuando se les representa o se hace referencia a ellas, tienen un papel de apoyo en lugar de un papel maestro. Se ve frecuentemente a las mujeres proporcionando agua a los hombres, siguiendo a los hombres, recogiendo la cosecha no recolectada o restante. Los hombres también tomaron otros trabajos agrícolas, como la cría de animales, la recolección de papiros y la captura de aves (Robins, 1993, p.121).El papel de apoyo de las mujeres, sin el reconocimiento de su relevancia, socavó su importancia en la vida diaria.

El trabajo laborioso de las mujeres a menudo se consideraba una falta de estatus, y esa podría ser una de las razones por las que hay tan pocas imágenes de mujeres haciendo ese trabajo (Robins, 1993, p. 122). Además de los castigos para los desertores, las mujeres realizaban algunos de estos trabajos destinados a los hombres, si no en el dominio público, probablemente lo harían en privado. Los textos, como poemas y cuentos, muestran a mujeres atrapando pájaros con redes y luego se los llevaban a casa de su madre (Robins, 1993, p.123-124). No sería necesariamente digno de mención agregar tales eventos a la ficción si no ocurrieran también en la vida real. Si bien estas historias y poemas pueden tener como objetivo representar a las mujeres como capaces, cordiales y entrañables, es probable que muchas mujeres desempeñaran tales funciones mientras sus padres o esposos trabajaban. Y dado que las mujeres podían arrendar tierras con fines agrícolas, es posible que lo hayan hecho para ampliar sus ingresos utilizando el excedente y así ayudar a mantener a sus familias. En estos casos de mujeres de clase trabajadora, podemos suponer que no pudieron contratar cultivadores para trabajar la tierra y probablemente lo hicieron ellas mismas (Robins, 1993, p. 124).

Aunque las mujeres no tenían mucha autoridad sobre asuntos burocráticos o relacionados con la legalidad, podían usar la autoridad de sus maridos. Entre la élite, podemos ver a las mujeres tomando prestados los títulos oficiales de sus maridos y, por lo tanto, usándolos para su propio estatus, pero en los niveles inferiores, las mujeres ejercían la autoridad de sus maridos directamente (Robins, 1993, p. 124). Robins (1993) relata cartas que se refieren a la recepción de granos y otros problemas posteriores; el esposo está fuera y la esposa, "… está sustituyéndolo. Ella permanece fuera de la estructura burocrática oficial, obteniendo su autoridad no por derecho propio sino porque es la esposa de Nesamenemipet. Si Nesamenemipet hubiera perdido su trabajo o muerto, su autoridad también habría terminado" (p.124). Este y otros casos muestran que las mujeres ayudaron a sus maridos en sus capacidades laborales/profesionales, mientras que ellas mismas no tenían poder ni autoridad. Lo mejor para la familia era asegurarse de que el

padre/esposo de la casa mantuviera su puesto/estado laboral para poder extender los derechos a sus esposas.

En estos casos de mujeres fuera del hogar, vemos que a las mujeres no se les da una agencia auténtica en general, pero descubren que usan la autoridad, el estado y la agencia de su esposo para sí mismas. Las mujeres del Antiguo Egipto podían utilizar el trabajo de sus maridos para hacer valer sus propios derechos. Aunque no vemos mujeres ejerciendo estas autoridades o tomando el control en las áreas que les era permitido, en las estelas y en los textos de los procedimientos judiciales, somos conscientes de su impacto.

3.1.3.E Económico y legal

De testamentos finales y casos judiciales vemos la autonomía de las mujeres del Antiguo al Nuevo Reino. En el Imperio Antiguo y Medio, sabemos que las mujeres podían poseer tierras; también pudieron heredarlas según los testamentos finales de los esposos y padres, aunque esto parece ocurrir sólo en la élite superior, según los textos sobrevivientes (Robins, 1993, p.127). También hay evidencia de que las mujeres tenían su propia agencia para presentar demandas, como fue el caso de una mujer contra su padre. El proceso describió la discrepancia entre ella y el padre en relación con la propiedad y los esclavos que la mujer creía que le pertenecían en parte. El factor importante aquí es que se sentía con derecho a la propiedad por herencia (probablemente de su difunta madre) y estaba legalmente en condiciones de presentar el caso por sí misma. Ella aparece sola en el caso, no representada por su esposo ni compareciendo con él. El caso revela que la mujer pudo heredar bienes (y eso es lo que estaba demandando) y que pudo presentar documentos legales de forma independiente en su propio nombre (Robins, 1993, p.128-129).

Dado que las mujeres no estaban involucradas en la burocracia, no tenían derecho a los salarios como sus contrapartes masculinas. Las mujeres, de esta manera, eran vulnerables, dependiendo de los hombres en sus vidas para su supervivencia: padres, hermanos, hijos u otros miembros masculinos de la familia. El gobierno pagaba bien a los hombres, en trigo y cebada por pan y cerveza respectivamente. También fueron pagados con otras provisiones, una de las cuales podría haber incluido el uso de esclavos propiedad del gobierno. A cada trabajador se le proporcionaba un cierto número de días de trabajo de los ungüentos, que también podía vender si no los usaban. Los hombres que recibieron estas provisiones pudieron hacer lo que quisieran con ellas, y dado que ganaban generosamente, generalmente lo suficiente para alimentar a una familia de 10, si incluía niños pequeños, pudieron pasar las provisiones excedentes a los miembros de la familia, que hay evidencia de que algunos hombres lo hacían. Parece que apoyaron a algunas mujeres, probablemente miembros femeninos de la familia, aunque hay muchas otras posibilidades de otros pagos fuera del hogar por otros bienes y servicios (Robins, 1993, p.129).

Aunque las mujeres dependían principalmente de los hombres para mantenerse, hay antecedentes de que las mujeres participan y se involucran en transacciones económicas por cuenta propia. Robins (1993) proporciona información y referencias a este tipo de transacciones:

> "…un trabajador común en Deir el-Medina recibía 4 *khar* (alrededor de 300 litros) de trigo emmer para pan y 1 ½ *khar* de cebada para cerveza al mes… Por ejemplo, a una mujer se le pagaban 29 deben de cobre, equivalentes a casi 15 *khar* de grano, para algunas ropas, que tal vez ella misma había tejido. Un deben era una unidad de peso aproximadamente equivalente a 91 gramos. En otro negocio, una mujer compró artículos por valor de 76 deben. Hizo un pago inicial de ropa y verduras por valor de 5 deben pero debía el resto. La acreedora debe haber creído que ella habría podido pagar esta deuda en un tiempo razonable" (p.129).

Las mujeres también estaban involucradas en transacciones relacionadas con el alquiler de tierras, burros y esclavos, lo que se sumaba a sus carteras de transacciones, aunque no se les permitía ocupar cargos gubernamentales. Las mujeres hicieron crecer la economía, especialmente en el Reino Nuevo. Las mujeres proporcionaban bienes y servicios mientras usaban sus provisiones a fondo. Las mujeres heredaban propiedades, participaban en transacciones económicas y mantenían a sus familias de muchas maneras, sin embargo, no podían heredar las posiciones de los hombres, como sus hijos. Los hijos únicos podían heredar las posiciones de sus padres (o tíos) (Robins, 1993, p.131-132).

Las mujeres del antiguo Egipto se consideraban iguales a los hombres ante la ley, incluidos los castigos. Las mujeres acusadas de los mismos delitos que los hombres fueron castigadas de la misma manera, ya que no se hicieron excepciones por sexo. Las mujeres también fueron interrogadas de la misma manera que los hombres, lo que las hizo responsables de sus acciones, en lugar de que el hombre de la casa fuera culpable, por lo que las mujeres recibieron castigos justos (Robins, 1993, p. 137).

Las viudas eran un grupo de mujeres que se consideraban las más vulnerables y eran tratadas con más compasión que ningún otro. Las viudas a menudo eran vistas como desafortunadas ya que su sustento dependía de sus maridos y algunas se encontraron sin nada después de la muerte de sus maridos. Podemos ver cómo las mujeres viudas fueron tratadas a través de la literatura de sabiduría, explicando cómo deben ser tratadas y en autobiografías de hombres suele encontrarse la idea de que son personas ideales para dar, cuidar. Esto parece una barra baja, pero debemos recordar que las viudas podrían haber sido un blanco fácil para que las personas aventajadas las explotaran dado que es posible que no tuvieran nada. Las viudas desfavorecidas tenían poco o ningún apoyo familiar. Los hombres del Reino Medio a menudo usaban autobiografías para mostrar su grandeza al escribir sobre sus habilidades para abstenerse de aprovecharse de otros, a menudo mujeres, como viudas, aunque se incluyen hijas. Un funcionario del Reino Medio declaró en su autobiografía: "…No me apoderé de la hija de un hombre, ni me apoderé de su campo" (Robins, 1993, p.139). Incluso Ramsés III afirma que él creó seguridad para que las mujeres viajaran libremente, "Permití que la mujer de Egipto siguiera su camino, extendiéndose sus viajes donde ella quería, sin que ninguna otra persona la asaltara en el camino" (Robins, 1993, pág. 139). Esto sugiere que no era seguro para las mujeres viajar solas, suponiendo que estuvieran en

peligro de ser asaltadas o violadas (Robins, 1993, p. 139). Las mujeres eran claramente un grupo vulnerable de la sociedad, que necesitaba la protección de los hombres en más de un sentido, pero eran vulnerables debido a los hombres, dejando que los hombres fueran tanto el problema como la solución. En tal situación, no sorprende que las mujeres fueran prisioneras en sus propias vidas.

3.2 Representación de género en la muerte y su mayor significado para la identidad en vida

3.2.1 Construcción de una identidad viva [de género]

La religión era el mayor poder en el Antiguo Egipto. El dios creador, Amón, creó sus propios descendientes divinos, Shu (dios del aire) y Tefnut (diosa de la humedad). Shu y Tefnut dieron a luz a Geb (la tierra) y Nut (el cielo). Geb y Nut (hermano y hermana) se enamoraron; Nut dio a luz a los primeros dioses reconocidos: Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys y Horus (el dios del sol, Ra). Los humanos fueron puestos en la tierra (Geb) y gobernados por Osiris (Mark, 2013). Ra embarazó a la esposa de un sacerdote, dando a luz al niño divino, que fue reclamado por Amun-Ra, y finalmente lo convirtió en rey (Haikal, n.d.). La realeza del antiguo Egipto eran dioses encarnados, ya que nacieron de la semilla de Osiris y, por lo tanto, nacieron como descendientes directos de los dioses (Robins, 1993, p.21). El parentesco con los dioses significaba que uno no solo era real, sino divino (Ikram, 2015, p.31, 41). Este estado era uno que era insuperable. Las asociaciones con la realeza, y por lo tanto con los dioses, era un honor al que todos los egipcios querrían estar afiliados (Robins, 1993, p. 16). Dado que el gobierno estaba compuesto por la realeza divina, entonces era un gobierno teológico, lo que significa que las agencias gubernamentales estaban directamente conectadas con la religión. Por extensión, los edificios religiosos, como templos y tumbas, también eran ipso facto edificios gubernamentales (Lesko, 2019). La unión de estos dos conceptos aparentemente individuales generó un elitismo ineludible entre los grupos sociales y económicos. Las personas habrían disputado posiciones de poder tanto dentro de las agencias gubernamentales como religiosas, ya que no había una separación real entre ellas (Lesko, 2019).

Como hemos examinado a lo largo de este capítulo, los títulos de las personas eran lo que elevaba a las personas de un estatus social a otro y, al hacerlo, se les permitía desarrollar su propio albedrío, riqueza y piedad. No se puede subestimar la importancia del estatus social, ya que permitía el acceso a trabajos exclusivos que luego podían transmitirse como una herencia de una generación a la siguiente, la capacidad de establecer y ampliar la familia, la propiedad privada y, en algunos casos, incluso el acceso a la familia real divina de estar en la presencia de los dioses a través del trabajo en cultos o en relación con los templos de culto (Robins, 1993, p.111). Dado que la religión (pasar al más allá) estaba en el centro de la vida de todos los egipcios, era pertinente que se les distinguiera, ya que su posición social era una relación indirecta con los dioses que, en última instancia, los juzgarían a ellos y a sus acciones (Ikram, 2105, p. 23; Ikram, 2015, p.24).

Con la religión entrelazada en la sociedad, dictando el estatus social, el estatus laboral y el moral,

Nut (diosa del cielo) y Ra (en su boca), Templo de Hathor, Dendera, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Horus, Neftis e Isis en el templo de Hathor, Dendera, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen; Ambientada en el templo de Karnak, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen; Osiris en el Valle de los Reyes, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

se convirtió en un aspecto de la identidad importante e inflexible en muchos sentidos. Los egipcios tuvieron que trabajar por su estatus en la mayoría de los casos, lo que no fue una tarea fácil ya que también quedaron vulnerables a su estatus económico. Muchos egipcios intentaron además asociarse con los templos de los cultos que seguían, para tener el favor de los dioses. Al acoplarse con los cultos de los templos, uno posiblemente podría brindar servicios en ellos y no solo ganar el favor de los dioses y sacerdotes, sino también avanzar socialmente ganando títulos que podrían elevarlos (Robins, 1993, p. 108). Dado que esto proviene de la posicionalidad de un hombre, también debemos considerar las posicionalidades de las mujeres que, como hemos examinado anteriormente, eran mucho más limitadas. Las mujeres estaban restringidas por normas de género bastante estrictas, aunque hay evidencia de que podían encontrar trabajo y contribuir al hogar, o por sí mismas, aunque estaba limitado porque los hombres aún dominaban la fuerza laboral (Robins, 1993, p. 109).

Los egipcios trabajaron toda su vida con la esperanza de ascender de estatus en preparación para el más allá, pero ¿por qué? El más allá prometía una vida sin el sufrimiento del mundo mortal, suponiendo que uno hubiera hecho buenas obras en vida (Ikram, 2015, p.24). Las creencias religiosas del antiguo Egipto no eran diferentes de las que sostienen las religiones modernas en la actualidad, aunque complicaron la vida de algunas personas. ¿Qué se constituía como una "buena" persona y cómo formaban las personas sus identidades eternas, identidades que mantendrían en el más allá?

Crear una identidad en el Antiguo Egipto se trataba de construir la propia identidad personal en el aquí y ahora, para que finalmente pudieran perpetuar su vida, engrandeciéndose en cualquier oportunidad, pero sin ser completamente engañosos (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6- 7). Lo que uno tenía en su vida mortal es lo que continuaría en la próxima vida, suponiendo que fueran capaces de pasar las pruebas de los dioses y proporcionarse las provisiones adecuadas, y otros ajuares funerarios; posiblemente entre los más importantes después de la muerte es el pesaje del corazón (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.14; Ikram, 2015, p.24). Idealmente, uno podría enterrarse en una tumba elaborada con pinturas ornamentadas, oraciones y cánticos que se desplazan por las paredes y, en algunos casos, incluir espacio para familiares cercanos, al mismo tiempo que se tiene una generosa cantidad de provisiones de la vida en la muerte, sin embargo, existían creencias conflictivas de las prácticas y necesidades funerarias en las sociedades egipcias, demostrando que no era homogéneo en sus ideales (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6).

Los antiguos egipcios no solo intentaban satisfacer las necesidades de la vida cotidiana, sino que mientras, también, intentaban prepararse para su muerte, buscaban diferentes vías para construir su riqueza y ganar estatus social. Esto no quiere decir que los egipcios estuvieran obsesionados con su propia muerte, sino que se estaban preparando para su renacimiento en el más allá, lo que les exigía tener reservas de lo que necesitarían en el má allá y cuanto más fino, mejor (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 11). Dado que la muerte era la parte más obvia e importante del renacimiento, los egipcios estaban muy preocupados por sus ataúdes, así como por sus tumbas, aunque sus

Máscara de momia compuesta de papel pintada a mano, calidad media

Máscara de momia de papel compuesto pintada con oro - alta calidad

Máscaras de momias en el Museo Nacional de Egipto, El Cairo, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

ataúdes eran lo que les permitía pasar al más allá para encontrarse con los dioses y ser juzgados (Ikram, 2015, p. .24). Los ataúdes actuaron como la cápsula de protección para sus cuerpos en su paso al más allá, pero también los protegieron en el ámbito humano de aquellos que pudieron haber querido hacerles daño (Ikram, 2015, p.25-26). Como se discutió anteriormente, los egipcios creían que los dioses y los muertos podían intervenir en la vida de los vivos y de forma recíproca, los vivos podían afectar la vida después de la muerte de un individuo a través de la destrucción de su nombre y su representación (Robins, 1993, pág.76). Por lo tanto, era crucial el uso de materiales de la más alta calidad para los ataúdes y otros bienes funerarios, tanto para la proyección del estado en sus vidas reales como para la observancia continua de dicho estado en el más allá. Sin embargo, lo más importante era la conservación del nombre del individuo asegurado a su cuerpo.

No todos los egipcios podían permitirse tumbas, sarcófagos o artículos funerarios de alta calidad, como los de la realeza y los miembros de la élite de la sociedad, ya que diferían tanto en el tipo de entierro como la ubicación; pero todos estaban decididos a garantizar que sus identidades fueran precisas y perfectas (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6-7, Ikram, 2015, p.25-26). Había elementos específicos que debían verse en los sarcófagos para que el individuo fuera identificado y reconocido, protegido y aceptado. “La exhibición funeraria se puede rastrear desde la prehistoria en adelante” (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.7). Esto muestra la importancia de los aspectos visuales de los procesos e iconografías funerarias. Estos aspectos cambiaron a lo largo del tiempo y parecieron volverse más representativos de las vidas auténticas vividas que en los reinos anteriores (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.6).

Las estrictas normas de género que existían en el Antiguo Egipto limitaban a la mayoría de las personas a la expresión binaria de género y la expresión de su identidad de género estaba limitada ya que la tradición y la religión limitaban en gran medida su capacidad de expresarse. El arte funerario, incluidas las estelas, los ajuares funerarios personalizados y los ataúdes, eran una forma de expresarse sin dejar de adherirse a la tradición y el ritual. De hecho, era común que el constructo de género en el arte de los ataúdes fuera mucho más flexible en algunos aspectos (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p. 99). Dado que el Antiguo Egipto era una cultura masculinizada, volviendo y facilitando el ser masculino, las tradiciones y los rituales se centraron en el ser masculino. Los textos escritos para guiar a un individuo a través del inframundo fueron escritos para hombres y las tumbas fueron encargadas por hombres, para hombres, aunque en pocos casos 'propiedad' de mujeres, y en cuyo caso todavía se necesitaba una figura de cabeza masculina (Robins, 1993, p. .100).

Se hizo una variedad de adaptaciones de género a los sarcófagos antes del entierro, ya que la persona fallecida tenía que presentarse como hombre, comparándose con los dioses Osiris o Re, una tarea fácil para los hombres, pero para las mujeres esto requería una especie de disfraz. Una mujer no podía simplemente presentarse como mujer y esperar pasar, aís es que tenía que sufrir cambios. Aunque el cuerpo de la mujer fallecida no fue alterado en el proceso de momificación ni

más allá en los demás ataúdes antropoides, su nombre y semejanza adquirieron rasgos masculinos.

> "…el nombre inscrito, fue re-genérico, mientras que el sexo inalterable del individuo estaba oculto dentro de capas de vendaje de momia. Externamente, el individuo femenino se asemejaba a Osiris; en el interior, se retuvo la personalidad humana con pleno género" (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p. 99).

Si bien este fenómeno ocurrió solo con los sarcófagos de mujeres de élite, los artesanos que llevaron a cabo estas transformaciones artísticas de género eran conscientes de la complejidad y la incertidumbre de intentar cruzar sin la semejanza y la insignia adecuadas. Los artesanos habían ideado algunas técnicas ingeniosas para transformar al individuo a través del nombre y la semejanza que incluían combinar el nombre de la mujer fallecida con el de Osiris, y además representar a Isis y Neftis a la cabeza y al pie del ataúd. Esto permitiría que el difunto se uniera a Osiris en nombre y, además, se asociara por familia. Otra técnica astuta de los artesanos y escribas educados fue comparar a la mujer fallecida con la del dios sol a través de los comandos del *Libro de los Muertos* junto con broncear su piel en las imágenes, que eran los colores masculinos utilizados en las representaciones, y además nombrándola como la hijo de Nut, la madre de Osiris, asociándola como pariente. Otras veces, el ataúd y el estuche de la momia podrían permanecer andróginos, "…dando a la mujer muerta un cuerpo de Osiriano nuevo y completamente ligado para su transformación" (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.100). Estas personas también podrían cambiar sus pronombres a 'él/él' para ayudarlos aún más en su transformación que habría aparecido en los sarcófagos más externos, lo que le permitiría a la mujer preservar su verdadera identidad debajo de los ataúdes más internos (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.100). Estas técnicas de enmascarar la propia identidad demuestran la necesidad de que las personas sean fieles a sí mismas al exhibir sus identidades auténticas y se adhieran a los rituales y tradiciones religiosos, adaptándose a su necesidad de autoexpresión (Wilshusen, 2018). Esta transformación es una forma de travestismo, que permitía a la mujer fallecida pasar segura como hombre por el inframundo para llegar al ritual del pesaje del corazón (Wilshusen, 2018; Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.100) . Esto no es diferente a otras formas de enmascaramiento de identidad que se ven en las sociedades contemporáneas, sin embargo, no se usa la misma terminología para describir las mismas acciones que en el mundo antiguo.

Las tumbas reales permanecieron distintas a las de la élite, aunque la élite emulaba a la familia real divina e intentaba imitarla perpetuando sus propia existencia a través de la construcción de templos mortuorios donde podían continuar recibiendo ofrendas de sus cultos a lo largo del tiempo (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.8). El egipcio laico a menudo experimentó una experiencia muy diferente en la muerte y antes de ella; aunque se sabe muy poco, se supone que muchos fueron eliminados de formas que son irrecuperables, específicamente a través de los medios de la arqueología actual (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, pág.6).

Si bien las superestructuras funerarias cesaron a partir del Tercer Período Intermedio en adelante, la élite todavía se centró en la proyección de su riqueza y estatus a través de sus adornos funerarios. Y aunque la gente todavía estaba preocupada tanto por el contenido de sus tumbas como por la calidad, la expresión externa de su estatus seguía siendo primordial (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 9). Esto podría considerarse la proyección de uno mismo en lugar de la verdadera realidad vivida, ya que es posible que hayan podido construir tumbas ornamentadas e incluso templos mortuorios en algunos casos, confiaban en sus cultos para perpetuar su existencia. Estas tumbas modelaron la realeza y la ultra-élite, pero, "…probablemente eran más públicas y políticas que comunales y mortuorias" (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.9). Esto exhibe además la necesidad de presentar el estatus en lugar del yo auténtico, perpetuando una vida o un estilo de vida que está más cerca de una fachada que de la realidad. Construir la propia tumba a lo largo de la vida estimuló la competencia entre los egipcios como símbolo de su estatus, o tal vez como competencia con la élite aún mayor (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.10). Esto habría estimulado la economía, por supuesto, ya que más artesanos, quizás no contratados a través del gobierno, habrían sido puestos a trabajar con grandes planes y trabajos detallados, brindándoles el equivalente a una mayor estabilidad financiera (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. .10). Por supuesto, estos grandes monumentos mortuorios llenos de bienes funerarios habrían comenzado a construirse o fabricarse una vez que el individuo hubiera alcanzado un título de élite específico o alcanzado la cima de sus carreras para garantizar que mantendrían esa posición por la eternidad en el más allá. No solo eso, sino que siempre serían reconocidos y asociados a ese aspecto específico de su identidad, ya que incluso el ajuar funerario pertenecería a estos aspectos de su identidad, que dependían de su estatus social y los trabajos desempeñados (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.10-11).

En el Imperio Nuevo, las tumbas se habían convertido en extravagantes monumentos a los muertos. No solo brindaron protección para el cuerpo del difunto y sus pertenencias para el más allá, sino que cuando el difunto pudo transformarse y regenerarse, permitió que hubiera un espacio para que los vivos se reunieran con los muertos, rezando oraciones y cantos para proporcionar sustento para los muertos (Hartwig, 2004, p.1). Sobre todo, la capilla de la tumba era un lugar donde la identidad viva de la persona se reflejaba en todas las paredes, así como la identidad que deseaba proyectar, una identidad que esperaba heredar en la próxima vida. Esta era una identidad idealizada, que asumía cierta realidad de la vida viva, pero se engrandecía para adquirirla en el más allá (Hartwig, 2004, p.1). Ambas identidades fueron tanto aceptadas como reconocidas en su propia identidad.

Comprender y descifrar las imágenes de estas tumbas es importante para entender las realidades cruzadas del individuo en ese momento, todo demostrado en las paredes y dentro de los materiales utilizados. Melinda Hartwig (2004) explica,

> "La pintura de tumbas tebanas y su iconografía llevan la impronta de las realidades sociales, religiosas, económicas y artísticas presentes en el momento de la creación de

> la pintura. Percibidas por una amplia gama de espectadores de la capilla, estas imágenes tenían el poder de impactar al visitante que dejaba testimonios sobre su apreciación de las imágenes y oraciones en beneficio de los enterrados en las cámaras subterráneas de la tumba" (p. 3).

Si bien podemos aprender mucho sobre estos factores, que difieren en cada tumba individual, debemos recordar que las tumbas existían entre la élite y no reflejaban la vida de las clases bajas y trabajadoras. Sin embargo, nos ayudan a comprender y beneficiarnos de las vidas que se compusieron dentro de ellos. Las tumbas conmemoraban a los muertos pero también les permitían reflejar lo que creían que eran sus verdaderas identidades. Dado que muchos pasaron sus vidas construyendo, desarrollando y decorando estas tumbas, pudieron proyectar su identidad viva en su autenticidad, como, "... la tumba en sí puede haber sido considerada como un aspecto de la persona" (Hartwig, 2004, pág.6). Los egipcios de élite aspiraban a tener una vida larga y exitosa, una familia numerosa, un hermoso funeral y una tumba exquisita. Su éxito en el más allá dependía de sus descendientes, así como de los aspectos físicos y no físicos del cuerpo y, "…la estructura protectora y mágica de la tumba" (Hartwig, 2004, p.7).

> "Además, la tumba también formaba parte de un vasto complejo de monumentos en el antiguo Egipto dedicados a la permanencia sagrada que vinculaba a la sociedad y reforzaba visualmente su identidad cultural" (Hartwig, 2004, p.1).

Las tumbas no solo eran de vital importancia para la perpetuación de la vida futura del difunto o un lugar para que los seres queridos y los descendientes se reunieran en recuerdo, sino que también servían como un símbolo de estatus para el propietario de la tumba, por supuesto, y todos los enterrados a partir de entonces, si es que fue construido de tal manera que ha servido como un monumento a una mayor identidad cultural. Esta identidad se reforzó una y otra vez, de una generación a la siguiente, a través de la construcción de tumbas elaboradas con aspectos tradicionales, como el trabajo artesanal tradicional y las imágenes estilizadas e idealizadas.

No fue hasta el Imperio Nuevo que aparecieron más tumbas familiares. Las tumbas anteriores a menudo se reservaban para el difunto (hombre) y su esposa. A partir del Imperio Nuevo es cuando aparecen las tumbas familiares que se preparaban tanto para el difunto como para su esposa, así como algunos familiares cercanos y otras personas dependientes, como hijos o mujeres de la familia que de noche se hubieran casado o enviudaron (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.11). Sin embargo, las tumbas agrupadas existían antes de esto, aunque a menudo eran para los menos ricos de la sociedad y quizás contenían personas no relacionadas. Sin embargo, esto permitió que las familias, o los menos ricos, se beneficiaran del entierro grupal ya que el comprador o la tumba lo habrían pagado y todos los enterrados allí tendrían pocos gastos adicionales cuando se reabriera la tumba. Esta parece ser una interpretación más auténtica de la familia, en lo que se refiere al cuidado de la familia mayor, en lugar de hacer alarde de una identidad individual, lo que dejó a la familia a cargo de preservar el culto y permanecer

relativamente egocéntrica, que es como se hacía antes del Nuevo Imperio (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.11).

En el Tercer Período Intermedio, la preservación del cadáver se convierte en uno de los aspectos más importantes del proceso funerario (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.11). La necesidad de parecer perfecto y preparado en todos los sentidos comienza a inundar a la sociedad a medida que la preservación del ataúd, la tumba y el ajuar funerario, junto con el cuerpo, se vuelven esenciales en lugar de un exceso, aunque lo era. Sin embargo, a medida que se hizo común, la brecha entre el proceso funerario de élite y los pobres comenzó a crecer, ya que la momificación era un procedimiento costoso y reservado exclusivamente a la élite y la realeza (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 11). Los miembros valiosos de la sociedad, como los artesanos, habrían tenido entierros menos exquisitos, a pesar de su éxito, prominencia e importancia a lo largo de sus vidas; simplemente no podían permitirse las insignias de la élite. Y en el caso de los pobres y desafortunados de la sociedad, hay evidencia de fosas comunes, aunque la mayoría reportadas como formales (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.12). Todavía hubo individuos aún menos afortunados, que se vieron privados de un entierro adecuado por completo, en un caso cerca de la región del Delta,

> "…un cadáver desechado en un contenedor de almacenamiento había quedado expuesto y parcialmente consumido por los animales. Tal disposición, desprovista de ajuar funerario, sugiere que los miembros de los estratos sociales más bajos o quizás los marginados podrían no haber tenido ni siquiera un simple entierro en un cementerio" (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p. 13).

Las identidades de estas personas que quedaron sin un entierro adecuado no habrían tenido la capacidad de pasar al más allá, ya que carecían de la insignia adecuada y, por lo tanto, en la creencia de los antiguos egipcios, habrían dejado de existir (Ikram, 2015, págs. 25-26). Aquellos cuyos cuerpos fueron destruidos o descartados de otras formas, como quemados o consumidos por animales, habrían sufrido el mismo destino. Su falta de identidad en sus vidas, ya sea por falta de estatus o por haber sido marginados, los habría dejado sin los medios para continuar en el más allá, condenándolos a las vidas miserables que llevaron en la tierra y no a una existencia posterior (Ikram , 2015, p.24-25). De acuerdo con las creencias del Antiguo Egipto, era necesario ser identificado en la muerte para ser conducido de manera segura y además, ser juzgado por las acciones de uno. Sin esto no hay posibilidad de una vida después de la muerte. La identidad fue crucial para renacer en el más allá, y su continuación a través de sus medios en la vida, desafortunadamente.

La falta de identidad podría haber significado muchas otras cosas en el Antiguo Egipto, la disociación de los cultos religiosos, el ostracismo de la familia o la sociedad, ser viudo y/o sin hijos, estar soltero sin el apoyo de un hombre y ser esclavizado son algunos de ellos. Esto fue significativo para los egipcios en ese momento, ya que significaba que había poca o ninguna esperanza de buscar la vida después de la muerte. Una creencia es que uno debe tener

seguidores en el culto para mantener su vida en el más allá, repitiendo oraciones/cantos de sustento y pronunciando vida en su nombre (Ikram, 2015, p.24). Esta creencia de tener una familia que te sustente después de la muerte era intangible para algunos, ya que sus creencias dictaban que las provisiones de la tumba no serían suficientes para continuar con la vida. Las conexiones religiosas, familiares y laborales eran imprescindibles para la supervivencia tanto en la vida física real como en el más allá.

Crear la propia identidad a través de la asociación de cultos religiosos no siempre garantizaba el estatus, pero ayudaba a las personas a creer que se ganaban el favor de los dioses a los que pertenecían los cultos. Participar en rituales y tradiciones de culto proporcionó un propósito y para algunos un sentido de identidad, si no, no podían obtener títulos religiosos a través de sus servicios, como los músicos (Robins, 1993, p. 145-146, 148).

Encontrar la identidad a través del trabajo, ya sea religioso, gubernamental, agrícola o artesanal, era también una forma de pertenencia. Tener un trabajo fijo significaba que pertenecías a un grupo y estabas identificado con títulos específicos que le habrían permitido a cualquier individuo, reclamar la asociación de su grupo de trabajo; algunos incluso estaban enterrados en las mismas áreas que otras personas del mismo campo de trabajo. El trabajo formaba gran parte de la identidad y, además, de la identidad de la familia (Baines & Lacovara, 2002, p.9).

La creación de identidad a través del estatus es una de las formas más comunes vistas en el Antiguo Egipto, ya que era una amalgama de una variedad de aspectos de la vida de uno. La identidad a través del estatus significaba que uno había heredado el estatus de alguna manera, recibió un título a través de su trabajo o acciones después de ser educado, o ganó su estatus a través de la crianza, que fue lo más difícil ya que era un esfuerzo casi imposible (Robins, 1993, p.145-148).

No todas las identidades fueron aceptadas como verdad, ni siquiera por parte de los egiptólogos, ya que fueron descubiertas hace mucho tiempo y a través de una perspectiva colonizadora de lo que debería ser la identidad, así como las expectativas basadas en las identidades de la época. En muchos de los descubrimientos del Antiguo Egipto, ha habido una falta de revisión de dichos descubrimientos a través de la lente de los estudios e investigaciones de género. La revisión de textos, lenguaje y normas culturales, así como los aspectos disconformes deben ser considerados como algo distinto a lo que dice el texto. Mirar más críticamente la situación y los detalles, permitiendo una comprensión más allá de las perspectivas a menudo sexistas y obsoletas que han documentado los hallazgos, quizás exponga teorías más legítimas de identidades que explicarían conceptos "desconocidos" o "poco claros". Sin embargo, la homofobia que continúa existiendo en la investigación académica y de campo, socava hallazgos increíbles que no necesariamente se ajustan a las normas sociales, culturales o de género de la época, pero perpetúa la homofobia y/o la transfobia al restringir el vocabulario que se debería usar cuando está claro ejemplos de ellos (homosexualidad, comportamiento no conforme de género) y que son evidentes, como el caso de

la Reina/Rey Hatshepsut.

La identidad es una parte fundamental de la vida actual, tal como lo era para los antiguos egipcios, y para ellos y sus intentos de transmitir sus verdaderas identidades en la muerte era, como creían, lo más importante. No entendemos perfectamente la cultura del Antiguo Egipto, y tal vez nunca lo haremos, sin embargo, a través de la historia podemos obtener una mejor comprensión de la vida en ese momento y, como hemos visto en nuestro propio tiempo, el lenguaje cambia y se usa mal y se apropia para significar otras cosas , por lo que esto también puede decirse de nuestras interpretaciones del lenguaje y las imágenes del Antiguo Egipto (Robins, 1993, p.11, 13).

3.3 Qué significa ser hombre/mujer en el Antiguo Egipto a través de referencias artísticas

3.3.1 Manifestaciones físicas del feminismo y lo no binario

Este capítulo ha discutido muchos aspectos del género y el feminismo, o en algunos aspectos, la falta de ellos. Se han proporcionado ejemplos de cómo el género ha sido retratado y utilizado en diferentes facciones de la sociedad, aunque más notablemente entre la realeza y la élite. Se ha discutido cómo las expectativas de género diferían entre los sexos y el feminismo que existía incluso entre las clases más bajas. Se ha examinado la creación de identidad en la vida y la muerte, dando ejemplos de las necesidades para crear tales identidades y cómo mantenerlas tanto en la vida como en el más allá. Ahora, esta sección se centrará en las referencias artísticas de las identidades femenina y masculina representadas como “hombres” y “mujeres” y la fluidez que existía en la transición de unos a otros.

Como también se ha explicado en este capítulo, hay poca evidencia de la vida de las clases trabajadoras y bajas, ya que no tenían los medios para erigir monumentos sobre sus propias vidas, por lo que las que están documentadas son las de las clases élites y la realeza. Con esto en mente, esta sección analizará específicamente instancias pictóricas, escultóricas, de relieve y textuales, centrándose en una de las épocas más exitosas del Antiguo Egipto, el Nuevo Reino.

3.3.1.A Pictórico

Dado que la mayoría de los egipcios eran en su mayoría analfabetos o semianalfabetos, siendo la élite y la realeza quienes tenían más acceso a la educación formal, que incluía la formación de escribas, la mayoría de lo que se hacía público era en forma de imágenes, esto incluía directivas religiosas. (Zin, 2012). Se le dio una gran importancia a la semejanza de uno, ya que era una encarnación del individuo; la destrucción de la imagen era la destrucción del individuo, generalmente una vez que había pasado a la siguiente vida, lo que significaba que uno aún podía ser eliminado a través de la destrucción de su imagen (Jarus, 2019).

Las imágenes se encuentran en las paredes del templo, tanto en el interior como en el exterior, también las vemos decorando el interior de las tumbas en la sala de la capilla (Ikram, 2015, p.

146). Se han encontrado algunas imágenes en casas de trabajadores de Deir el-Medina (el pueblo de los trabajadores), actuando como pieza central o punto focal de la habitación (Ikram, 2015, p. 149; Weiss, 2009). Dado que la mayoría de la población en general era analfabeta o semianalfabeta, parece que se sentirían atraídos por la imagen. Las referencias pictóricas como las mencionadas anteriormente muestran la correlación entre la imagen y la conexión de uno con la imagen retratada, incluso entre la élite que sabía leer y escribir, es decir, que incluso entre las clases de élite, se sintieron atraídos por la imaginería de dioses e imágenes de sus propias semejanzas como una forma de arte esencial y una forma de expresión de identidad.

> "La pintura de tumbas tebanas y su iconografía llevan la impronta de las realidades sociales, religiosas, económicas y artísticas presentes en el momento de la creación de la pintura" (Hartwig, 2004, p.3).

Los antiguos egipcios le dieron poder y significado a la imagen, como se ha mencionado, ya que la imaginería no solo actuaba como una forma de comunicación entre las clases, sino también entre los dioses y los humanos, así como entre los vivos y los muertos. Con tanto énfasis puesto en las imágenes, se cargan de poder, por lo que la destrucción de una imagen bien podría significar la muerte de un individuo, socavando su existencia pieza por pieza, imagen por imagen. Por lo tanto, la importancia de representarse a uno mismo era importante para el estatus, así como un acto de apariencia para hacer ofrendas a los dioses y mantener la buena reputación de uno con ellos; el mantenimiento de la imagen de sí mismo se reducía a mantener buenas relaciones con los demás. Esto muestra lo que los egipcios valoraban en sus representaciones e imágenes, especialmente de sí mismos.

> "…la iconografía proporciona una ventana a lo que los antiguos egipcios valoraban en este mundo y aseguraban su vida eterna en el otro. La iconografía también revela las verdades ideológicas y las ideas religiosas que impregnaron la época" (Hartwig, 2004, p.3).

Debido a la falta general de inclusión de mujeres en las representaciones, aparte de las diosas, podemos conocer algunos de los trabajos que las mujeres realmente realizaban en la vida cotidiana, pero podemos comprender su importancia en los rituales.

> "Las imágenes en los muros de los templos muestran principalmente a hombres a cargo de estas tareas, pero en ocasiones se incluía a mujeres al frente de grupos que realizaban ofrendas diarias al dios en su rol de músicos" (Onstine, 2010).

Habiendo discutido previamente los roles de las mujeres como músicos en los templos, podemos entender mejor que cuando se les representa, es como músicos. Desempeñaron un papel importante en los templos (cantantes, bailarines, acróbatas y músicos), y más adelante incidiremos sobre su importancia en las ofrendas.

Las mujeres abarcaban un cuerpo que excitaba a los dioses, particularmente a Osiris. Se usaron imágenes que mostraban chicas y mujeres jóvenes desnudas para excitar a Osiris y alentar el acto de la masturbación, que es como uno renacerá en el más allá (Robins, 1993, p.75). Por lo tanto, estas imágenes aparecían con mucha frecuencia y en gran cantidad dentro de tumbas y ataúdes para asegurar que hubiera cantidades considerables de estas representaciones de mujeres jóvenes para excitar al difunto vestido como Osiris, para poder renacer (Robins, 1993, p.77-79).

Otras representaciones de mujeres aparecen en otras escenas de ofrendas, generalmente en templos o tumbas, y estas incluyen imágenes de mujeres desnudas o con el típico vestido ajustado de lino blanco, de pie o arrodilladas, ofreciendo bienes y alimentos a los dioses (Robins, 1993, p. 180-183). Asumen roles de sirvientes de los dioses, aunque su estatus social puede indicar su clase de élite.

Dentro del contexto del arte funerario, hay más representaciones de mujeres en servicio que de hombres como músicos, bailarines, acróbatas, dolientes, familiares, sirvientes, etc., aunque las mujeres tienen un papel extremadamente importante en el renacimiento; son sexualizadas y utilizadas como herramienta para beneficiar a otro, incluso a otras mujeres, disfrazadas de Osiris, para asegurar el renacimiento (Robins, 1993, p.142-148). Se muestran en escenas de ofrenda, ya sea con sus cuerpos, o en la presentación de bienes y alimentos para los dioses. La mayoría de las representaciones de mujeres son subordinadas y sumisas, lo que disminuye su valor en la sociedad, la cultura y la religión (Robins, 1993, p.160-161).

Hay casos de imágenes que no se adhieren a las normas culturales o tradicionales que se han debatido entre los egiptólogos en cuanto a su significado e interpretaciones. Gran parte de lo que se representa en las paredes de las tumbas y las construcciones públicas son versiones cuidadas e idealizadas que muestran explícitamente lo que el propietario o el individuo quiere que se exprese o muestre. Es posible que los resultados no se ajustaban completamente con los del status quo, pero en el caso de la élite, a menudo no se cuestionan y se ejecutan sin cuestionamientos. Es solo en la era moderna que estas imágenes son examinadas y reevaluadas, con más conocimiento y comprensión de la sociedad y el género, que descubren o desenmascaran realidades de la sociedad que tal vez eran tabú, no aceptadas o pasadas por alto porque aportan nuevos conocimientos incómodos a la investigación. En esta sección se examinarán algunos de estos ejemplos.

La reina (y más tarde rey) Hatshepsut, tuvo un reinado tumultuoso como reina, luego como regente y finalmente como rey. Empujó los límites de lo que se aceptaba y toleraba en función de sus creencias sobre su propia identidad de género y sus creencias sobre su relación con los dioses. Ella desafió las normas de género, las normas culturales y las normas religiosas a lo largo de su ocupación del trono. Era una mujer, y más tarde un hombre, de gran sustancia y carácter. Ella es uno de los pocos ejemplos de un género no conforme en el Antiguo Egipto.

Antes de discutir el ascenso al poder de Hatshepsut, primero debemos ver cómo su hijastro se erigió como rey cuando era un niño pequeño. Hatshepsut, que solo tuvo una hija, no proporcionó un heredero al trono de Thutmosis II, por lo que cuando llegó el momento de elegir al nuevo rey, tras la muerte de su hermano y esposo, el rey Thutmosis II, ella probablemente se mostró indiferente. El nuevo rey fue seleccionado, más tarde, durante su reinado; el evento milagroso fue conmemorado en piedra en el centro del Templo de Karnak. Thutmosis III quería asegurarse de que el evento, su elección divina, no pudiera ser cuestionada en el futuro (Cooney, 2015, p. 77). Al conmemorar esto en piedra, con su imagen y la del dios Amón, se proyectó a sí mismo como 1. el elegido, seleccionado directamente por Amón, 2. una selección irrefutable, y 3. refugio divino y poderoso que ha estado en contacto directo con el Dios. Tutmosis III dejó a Hatshepsut fuera de esta descripción, aunque lo más probable es que ella estuviera allí, ya que su madre no era de la clase alta, y ella misma era la Esposa de Dios de Amón (Reina) (Cooney, 2015, p.77). Esta eliminación de Hatshepsut del registro es significativa, ya que ella era reina y él era solo un niño pequeño, que aún no podía gobernar. Su poder y autoridad superaron a los del niño en ese momento y, sin embargo, como adulto, deseaba que ella estuviera ausente. Esto proyecta aún más la propia necesidad de Tutmosis III de aparecer como grande y todopoderoso, sin la ayuda de Hatshepsut, quien, de hecho, fue su regente y corregente durante muchos años (Cooney, 2015, p. 78). Su ego era frágil y, por lo tanto, anhelaba proyecciones de grandeza e influencia, nuevamente, sin la ayuda de ninguna mujer, cuando en realidad, "Thutmosis III gobernó como rey solo porque Hatshepsut estaba allí para que sucediera", ya que tuvo cuidado de permitir que el oráculo realizara la selección de manera que pareciera imparcial (Cooney, 2015, p.77).

Después de la selección del heredero al trono (Thutmosis III), Hatshepsut asumió el control como regente, ya que sería una década antes de tener la edad para asumir el trono. Y con su título de Esposa de Dios de Amón, un título que ella misma declaró, que afirmaba que tenía linaje directo con el dios Amón, le permitió mantener su poder y, en última instancia, la regencia (Cooney, 2015, p. 78). No era raro que los reyes jóvenes necesitaran preparación y orientación a medida que crecían en sus roles, ya que esto a menudo lo hacía un grupo de hombres y mujeres más cercanos al joven rey. Esta práctica era tan común que Cooney (2015, p.79) informa que, a pesar de los sistemas de poder patriarcales de Egipto, las mujeres en Egipto habían estado gobernando Egipto de manera informal y, por lo general, sin ser reconocidas, durante casi la mitad de los setenta años anteriores a que Thutmosis III fuera declarado rey.

> “La evidencia de la práctica de mujeres educadas y de alta cuna que gobernaban en nombre de sus jóvenes cargos masculinos se remonta al Reino Antiguo al menos, casi mil años antes, y la práctica probablemente se remonta aún más atrás, al Período Dinástico Temprano, otros cien años antes de eso” (Cooney, 2015, p.79).

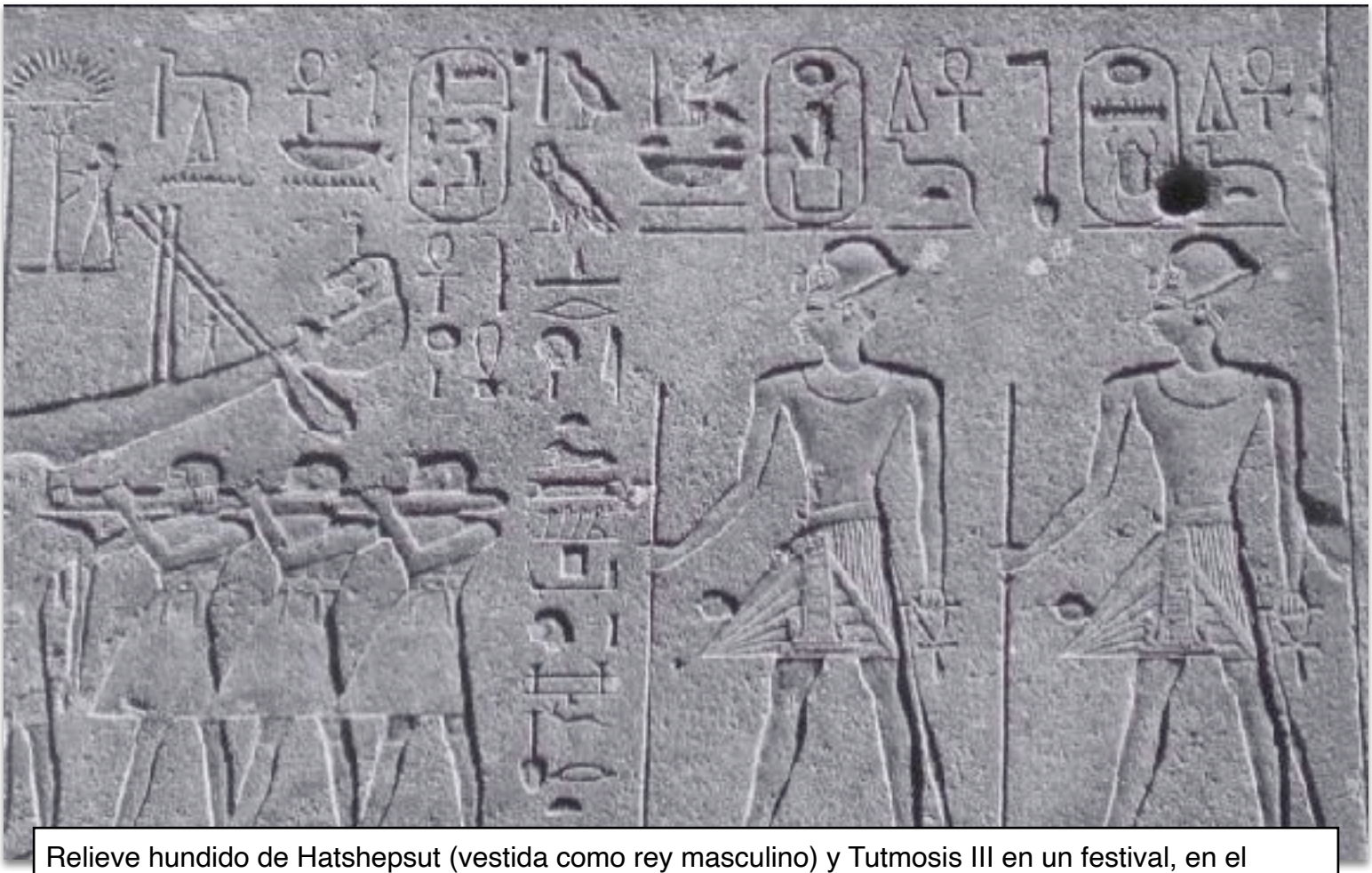
Entonces, si bien las mujeres tenían roles en el gobierno del país y en el desempeño de los deberes del rey, no se las consideraba figuras tan importantes y, ciertamente, no se las representaba como tales. Esta discriminación de género era un lugar común en ese momento,

pero cambiaría con el ascenso de Hatshepsut como regente de Thutmosis III.

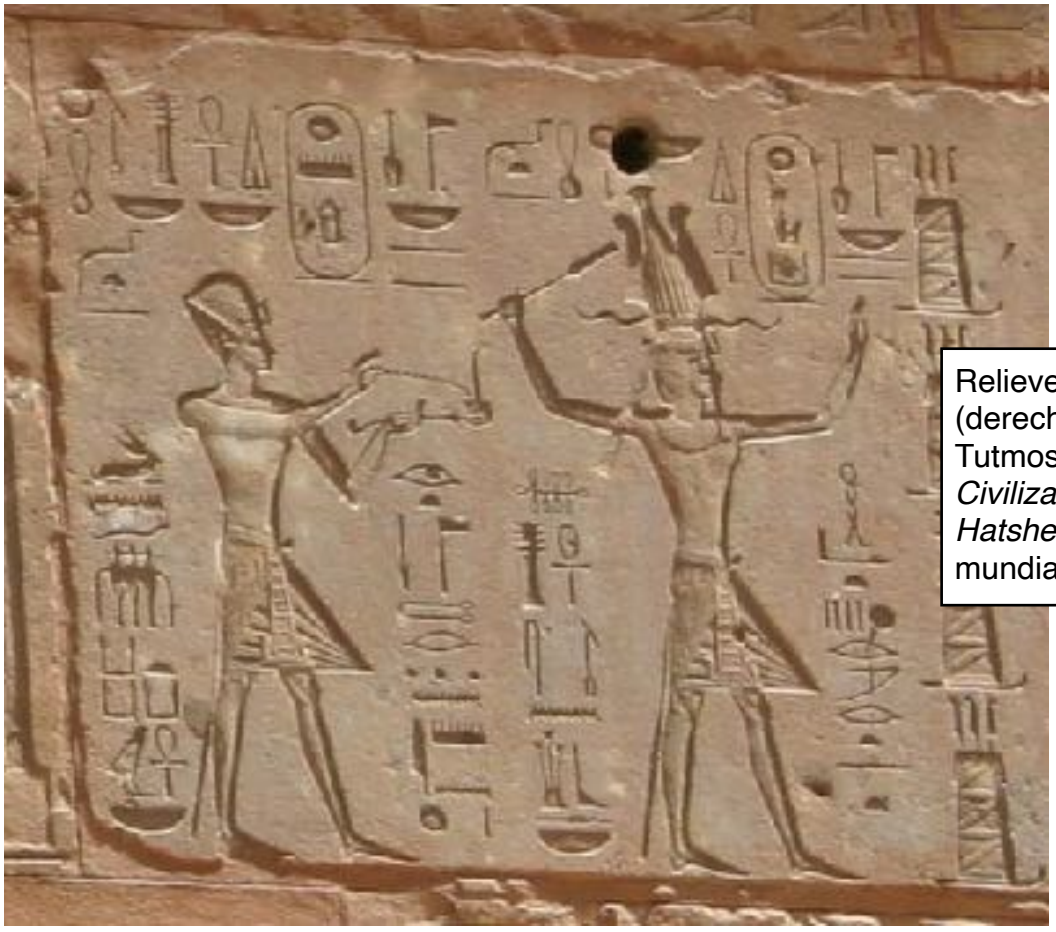
Hatshepsut había dirigido Egipto mientras Tutmosis II estaba enfermo y agonizante, por lo que ya era la líder que Egipto esperaba, pero no toleraba la insubordinación, o quizás incluso las críticas, como decía un texto encargado por ella: “Quien la alabe, él vivirá. El que hable maldad, ignorando su majestad, morirá” (Cooney, 2015, p. 79). Tenía que ser una líder fuerte, tal vez amenazando con mantener a todos y cada uno de los que desafiaran su papel y posición como regente subordinados e intimidados por su poder. Como regente, Reina de Egipto, Hatshepsut también continuó llevando y usando su otro título como “Esposa de Dios de Amón” como la sacerdotisa más alta de Egipto, ostentando los dos títulos más altos que una mujer de la época podía poseer (Cooney, 2015, p. 85). Mientras preparaba a Tutmosis III, Hatshepsut inició una campaña en su nombre, en beneficio de ella. Ella inició renovaciones de templos en toda Nubia, describiéndose a sí misma como la esposa de Dios de Amón y la esposa del rey, aunque Thutmosis III era solo un niño; sin embargo, en estas representaciones también se le representaba como un hombre, no como el niño que en realidad era (Cooney, 2015, p. 85). Hatshepsut se aseguró de que su imagen apareciera junto al joven rey, quien fue representado como un hombre, para demostrar su poder y liderazgo y mostrar que su imagen como mujer de autoridad fue tallada en los templos sagrados de Egipto, apareciendo junto al 'gran rey'. La madre de Hatshepsut, Ahmes, había hecho lo mismo por ella y Hatshepsut durante el reinado de Tutmosis II. Pero ahora Hatshepsut fue aún más lejos, reclamando más espacio para sí misma en los templos que construyó para su joven protegida. Tales representaciones de la Esposa de Dios no tenían precedentes, al igual que su poderosa regencia” (Cooney, 2015, p.85).

Hatshepsut entendió la importancia de la imagen proyectada y continuó erigiendo monumentos a su difunto esposo-hermano, Thutmosis II, para ilustrar aún más su conexión con el trono y demostrar su capacidad para ser regente (Cooney, 2015, p. 85). Esto permitió que el público en general viera imágenes del ex rey y Hatshepsut juntos, inscribiendo la relación y, además, una conmemoración, apareciendo como para informar también a la élite, que sabía leer y escribir, que su poder provenía del poder y continuaba como tal.

Se debate la fecha exacta, pero la fecha sugerida en que Hatshepsut fue coronado rey fue en el año 7 del reinado de Thutmosis III. Toda su planificación y organización le habían valido la pena y había tomado con éxito la corona, “conmemorando el poder que ya había acumulado” (Cooney, 2015, p. 100-101). Debido a que había estado planeando este momento durante años, hizo relieves para mostrar este momento, ya que estaba dando pasos de manera progresiva pero lenta, lo que le permitiría asumir más poder sin sobrepasar las líneas demasiado drásticamente. En el templo de Semna en Nubia, el relieve la muestra rodeada en la presencia de los dioses con una descripción de sus acciones, incluyéndola como "heredera", "constructora", "como oficiante ritual", todas acciones de un rey masculino. Se muestra realizando las acciones masculinas de un rey sin nombrarse formalmente como tal (Cooney, 2015, p. 101). En este momento, las inscripciones hechas en relieves u obeliscos estaban al tanto de los alfabetizados, por lo que



Relieve hundido de Hatshepsut (vestida como rey masculino) y Tutmosis III en un festival, en el Templo de Karnak, Luxor. Instituto Joukowsky de Arqueología y el Mundo Antiguo (sin fecha). Historia de Egipto I - XVIII Dinastía.



Relieve hundido de Hatshepsut (derecha, en el papel de rey) y Tutmosis III Lumen Candela. (n.d.). *Civilización mundial - Antiguo Egipto - Hatshepsut*. Hatshepsut | Civilización mundial

esencialmente la clase de élite, se darían cuenta de sus cambios sutiles mucho antes que el público en general, que era analfabeto.

Antes de su coronación, modificó constantemente sus representaciones, cambiando sus títulos en un esfuerzo por respaldar el poder que estaba asumiendo lentamente. Uno de estos cambios fue en un monumento que decía 'La esposa de Dios de Amón', que ella había alterado para que dijera 'La hija mayor del rey', que según Cooney (2015, p. 102), fue "un cambio que la movió de ser una reina, el papel de un heredero, como descendiente legítimo de Thutmosis I y uno que podría hacer un reclamo hereditario al trono a pesar de su género femenino". Si bien este fue un cambio de título que solo se podía leer, hizo otros cambios similares pictóricamente, como el de un bloque en el templo de Karnak. Este bloque muestra a Hatshepsut vestida con la túnica de una reina pero con una corona de rey sobre su cabeza, donde llevaba una peluca masculina corta. Este bloque fue encargado por ella antes de la coronación oficial que parecía revelar su nuevo estatus no solo por su vestuario, sino también por las imágenes que la representaban realizando los deberes reales de un rey, ofreciendo jarras de vino directamente a los dioses, actos que solo los reyes podían hacer y estar inscrito en las representaciones (Cooney, 2015, p.102). Este bloque fue un gran paso que mostró formalmente su ascensión, no solo textual, sino también pictórica. Este relieve también reveló su nuevo nombre como rey, Maatkare (El alma de Re es la verdad) (Cooney, 2015, p.103). Ella tomó un segundo nombre, tal como lo harían los reyes, un nombre de trono, transformando su papel a rey antes de que realmente tuviera lugar (Cooney, 2015, p. 103).

Si bien Hatshepsut se había coronado a sí misma como rey, continuó mencionando al joven rey, Tutmosis III, aunque solo fuera por las apariencias; intentó asegurarse de que el público viera sus esfuerzos por tratarlo bien, y lo hizo evidente a través de múltiples relieves que mostraban a los dos juntos realizando rituales reales, como co-reyes (Cooney, 2015, p.127). Con su antigüedad, Hatshepsut probablemente estaba agitada por el hecho de que se la representaba como co-rey con todos sus años de experiencia. Decidió inteligentemente modificar las representaciones para mostrar su condición de rey desde la muerte de su esposo, Thutmosis II, de modo que ella hubiera sido rey retroactivamente desde su muerte. Esto le dio más años de antigüedad sobre su sobrino-hijastro, Thutmosis III. Envió artesanos por todo Egipto para cambiar las representaciones, presentándola a ella en el poder y a él esencialmente como el rey a la espera (Cooney, 2015, p. 131).

A medida que Thutmosis III se convirtió en hombre y, por lo tanto, en su posición como rey, Hatshepsut sintió una gran presión para mantener su autoridad y estatus y, a través de sus acciones como rey durante la última década, había comenzado a sentir la responsabilidad de la posición de rey. Lentamente comenzó a cambiar su imagen, no solo en las representaciones, aunque fueron las primeras, sino también en la realidad. Tal vez comenzó como solo cambios privados, al tanto de aquellos dentro de su círculo cercano dentro del templo. Comenzó a cuestionar su propia identidad mientras luchaba con la forma de expresarse auténticamente, cómo se debía representar, si masculino o femenino.

Anteriormente, en los primeros años de su reinado, se la había representado como una mujer que había tomado el trono, con una identidad aún femenina. Adoptó aspectos de vestuario masculino, principalmente para generar respeto, vistiendo la corona del Alto y Bajo Egipto combinada con un vestido largo, como el de una reina. Sin embargo, año tras año las imágenes cambiaron de un híbrido de aspectos masculinos y femeninos a progresivamente más masculinos. Esto comenzó con la ampliación de los hombros y la extensión de su postura para imitar las posturas de los reyes, incluso cuando se la representaba con un vestido de gala. Más tarde, se le representó sin camisa y aparentemente con el pecho desnudo. En estas representaciones, claramente todavía era una mujer, ya que mostraban sus senos desnudos, pero estaba junto con la falda escocesa masculina y el pañuelo en la cabeza del rey (Cooney, 2015, p. 154). Estas representaciones eran experimentos en su sexualidad híbrida, que aún no estaba claro ni siquiera para ella, y esto habría sido una imagen impactante para cualquiera que la viera, ya que nunca se había hecho, por lo que este rey de las imágenes solo se mostró en las habitaciones más internas del templo Djeser Djeseru de Hatshepsut (Cooney, 2015, p.154).

Dado que estas representaciones todavía eran bastante femeninas, Hatshepsut comenzó a masculinizar sus imágenes aún más. Además de hombros más anchos, agregó un pecho pectoral fuerte, sin senos visibles (Cooney, 2015, p. 154). Como algunas de sus imágenes todavía poseían semejanzas femeninas, hizo crear algunas representaciones modificadas y otras nuevas. Las pinturas, por ejemplo, se cambiaron: las pinturas anteriores la habrían ilustrado con una piel de color amarillo, típica de las mujeres, pero cuando se pinta con el color habitual para los hombres, se usa un ocre rojo más oscuro; estos colores se mezclan para crear un tono naranja inusual, uno que no es tradicional en el arte egipcio (Cooney, 2015, p.154-155). Esta nueva combinación es casi un símbolo de la transición que la propia Hatshepsut había hecho, fusionando en última instancia sus identidades femenina y masculina a través de un aspecto de la representación tradicional. Claramente luchó para decidir cuánto de cada parte de su identidad debería exhibir, considerando qué atraería a su gente y a los dioses al mismo tiempo, sin sacrificar su propia autenticidad (Cooney, 2015, p. 155). Poco después, Hatshepsut asumió la identidad masculina, sin contemporizaciones híbridas.

> “A medida que pasaba el tiempo, sus imágenes se masculinizaron por completo en la cara y el cuerpo, lo que sugiere que incluso en la vida real pudo haber usado una falda escocesa de rey y atarse los senos o no usar camisa, al menos durante los rituales del templo. Hatshepsut no pudo obligar a la realeza egipcia a adaptarse a su género poco convencional; en cambio, tuvo que ajustarse a sus principios sagrados… ocultó sus aspectos femeninos hasta que casi no quedó mujer, excepto en los textos sagrados junto a la imagen que seguían refiriéndose a “ella” y “ella” (Cooney, 2015, p.156-157).

Hatshepsut se convirtió en dueña de su propia identidad. Ella sabía que el egipcio común no necesariamente entendería cambios tan grandes dentro de un período de tiempo posiblemente corto, especialmente con normas de género firmemente arraigadas dentro de la cultura, sin

embargo, la transformación ocurrió primero en jeroglíficos que la élite podía leer y, en última instancia, comprender y comprometerse con la transformación. Entonces, para la gente común, Hatshepsut se convirtió en el rey que necesitaban, uno que fuera un hombre fuerte, un arquitecto, un protector y viril, así como uno que pudiera realizar rituales para los dioses, manteniéndolos contentos (Cooney, 2015, p. .158).

> "…Hatshepsut no experimentó su transformación de género de manera manipuladora o cínica, sino piadosamente. Es muy posible que ella realmente creyera que Amón le había permitido trascender su propio cuerpo humano para convertirse en una entidad más grande que ella misma" (Cooney, 2015, p. 158).

3.3.1.B Escultórica

Las representaciones visuales en pinturas, estelas y relieves eran extremadamente comunes en el antiguo Egipto, junto con las representaciones de sarcófagos, ya que tenían un significado y propósitos específicos, generalmente derivados de rituales y tradiciones religiosas. Y aunque el relieve es técnicamente escultórico, esta sección se centrará en la escultura tridimensional.

La escultura tridimensional, por lo general, sirvió para una variedad de propósitos diferentes a los de la imaginería principalmente religiosa y funeraria que ya hemos discutido. Estas obras también fueron creadas por artesanos que quizás se especializaron en escultura tridimensional, ya que la mayoría de los artesanos tenían especialidades particulares (James & Dorman, 2021). La mayoría de las esculturas sobrevivientes del antiguo Egipto son exvotos funerarios, por lo demás privados, para rituales, y otros, en particular los colosos, estaban explícitamente destinados a ejemplificar la grandeza (James & Dorman, 2021).

Las esculturas se construyeron con diferentes materiales para diferentes propósitos. Algunos de estos materiales incluían madera y una variedad de diferentes tipos de piedras. Y como ya hemos visto antes, fue producido para la élite adinerada y la realeza, por lo que sus propósitos son similares a los de las representaciones pictóricas, destinadas a proyectar la grandeza y el estatus de un individuo, al mismo tiempo que cumplen algún propósito funcional, como en los rituales (James & Dorman, 2021). La artesanía pareció alcanzar su punto máximo en el Reino Nuevo (dinastía XVIII), tomando prestado lo mejor del Reino Medio (James & Dorman, 2021). La escultura del Nuevo Reino fue exquisita para esto, proporcionando materiales de alta calidad y detalles magníficos; lo que permitió que la obra fuera a la vez duradera y refinada.

Esta supremacía de la escultura en el Nuevo Reino también estuvo a la par con el pico de riqueza en Egipto en ese momento. Hatshepsut y Thutmosis II comenzaron su reinado en un auge económico de Egipto, que Hatshepsut perpetuó durante su tiempo como reina, regente y rey. Esto es importante porque permitió realizar más trabajos de construcción utilizando materiales de mejor calidad, materiales que podrían resistir los elementos y, lo que es más importante, el tiempo.

Representaciones femeninas de Hatshepsut

Representaciones masculinas de Hatshepsut

Roehrig, C. H., et al. (2005). *Hatshepsut, From Queen to Pharaoh*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Yale University Press.

Sabemos que Hatshepsut había trabajado duro para reforzar y mantener su imagen de poder a través de sus esfuerzos de construcción, erigiendo y renovando templos en todo Egipto, pero hemos visto a través de las esculturas sobrevivientes, que también se estaba eternizando a sí misma y a su estatus para siempre. Ella había intentado esto a lo largo de su reinado a través del relieve, que se modificó fácilmente para que coincidiera con su ascensión al poder y la transformación de género, pero podría haberse destruido con la misma facilidad, ya que el relieve era una talla superficial y se podía quitar fácilmente (Cooney, 2015), p.154-157), especialmente cuando se considera que los materiales utilizados para la construcción de muchos templos y esculturas colosales estaban hechos de piedra caliza o arenisca, piedras sedimentarias débiles y quebradizas (U.S. General Service Administration, 2019; Geology Science, 2019). Sin embargo, durante este tiempo, estas estatuas votivas se colocaron en templos de todo Egipto, junto con los proyectos de construcción y reconstrucción de Hatshepsut, lo que brindó aún más oportunidades para construir y colocar esculturas votivas (James & Dorman, 2021).

Como se mencionó anteriormente, las obras grandes se hicieron con materiales más blandos, que podían construirse con bastante rapidez y modificarse si era necesario. Las esculturas más pequeñas, sin embargo, estaban hechas de un material más fuerte, como el granito, una piedra colorida, densa y duradera (Geology Science, 2021). El uso del granito para esculturas votivas más pequeñas aportó dos cosas: resistencia y lujo. Dado que la principal prerrogativa de los egipcios era mantener su estatus tanto en el mundo de los vivos como en el más allá, el uso de su semejanza o imagen era un factor clave para hacerlo, por lo tanto, usar un material que fuera significativamente más resistente a los elementos naturales, así como a la destrucción, daba confianza al propietario de que podría durar para la eternidad. Esta capacidad, el acceso a la eternidad, en sí misma era rica, como si fuera una garantía para el más allá. Por estas razones, es muy poco probable que un egipcio común haya poseído una escultura votiva de sí mismo, ya que a menudo lucharon para proporcionar un sarcófago adecuado.

Lo que sí sabemos de las esculturas sobrevivientes es que el material, de hecho, marcó la diferencia, con muchas más esculturas de granito sobrevivientes que materiales más suaves. Estas esculturas eran más esbeltas y estilizadas para evitar las realidades de la figura del propietario. Las esculturas anteriores, como la de Akhenaton (Amenhotep III), habrían representado caderas anchas, cofres casi como senos en los hombres y rasgos faciales alargados (James & Dorman, 2021). Esta exhibición de sus rasgos femeninos se consideró grotesca de un rey, pero abrazó sus rasgos auténticos y fue representado en sus muchas esculturas colosales y votivas más pequeñas que representan su verdadera figura. Fue representado en estas esculturas, incluidos los relieves, realizando actos rituales y sentado con su esposa, Nefertiti (Domínguez, 2008). Se cree que Akhenaton fue ilustrado auténticamente en sus representaciones, ya que las imágenes de Nefertiti eran suaves, brillantes y realistas, lo que deduce que preferían mantener sus semejanzas con la mayor autenticidad posible, renunciando a las versiones estilizadas de la realeza (James & Dorman, 2021) .

Hatshepsut fue una reina que, como Akhenaton, quería ser retratada con precisión, como ahora sabemos. Si bien quizás exageró su autoridad, no distorsionó su identidad, sino que la enfatizó, al igual que Akhenaton, quería ilustrar no solo su poder y conexión con los dioses, sino mostrar su transición física y metafóricamente con respecto a su ascensión de la realeza (Cooney, 2015, p.117). Ya no ocultaba su "verdadero carácter propio" (Cooney, 2015, p. 117). En última instancia, y lo más importante para los egipcios, debía representarse con la mayor precisión posible, con excepción de los adornos de estatus y logros, y las afirmaciones negativas; los egipcios querían que sus esculturas personales reflejaran sus verdaderas semejanzas e identidades para que Osiris los reconociera y no hubiera dudas ni confusión sobre quiénes eran (James & Dorman, 2021). Las semejanzas, de todas las formas, tenían que coincidir con las inscripciones y podían considerarse como una forma de verificación de identificación. Por lo tanto, expresarse con precisión y autenticidad a través de sus representaciones, en cualquier forma, les ayudaría a asociarse con los textos que acompañarían a sus cuerpos.

> "Con este fin, la estatua no solo era una representación física, sino también un vehículo para los textos apropiados, que podrían inscribirse de manera molesta sobre superficies bellamente talladas" (James & Dorman, 2021).

Estos dos elementos: imagen y texto, proporcionaron al difunto un cuerpo físico que actuó como un recipiente para garantizar que fueran reconocidos, donde su cuerpo real podría haber fallado en esta enfermedad, lesión o envejecimiento, como debemos recordar. para proyectar la imagen que deseaban mantener en el más allá también, por lo que las imágenes deberían haber sido consistentes. Por lo tanto, es por eso que Hatshepsut alteró continuamente sus imágenes en los templos y su tumba, junto con las de las esferas públicas. Las imágenes en los templos estaban sujetas a los dioses, que creían que vivían allí, por lo que todas sus semejanzas eran coherentes y comparables.

3.3.1.C Texto

Los textos eran importantes para la liberación de información al público de élite, para hacer declaraciones, conmemorar, establecer el poder, así como para documentar o contar (Cooney, 2015, p.101-103). Los textos generalmente acompañaban imágenes en tumbas, en sarcófagos, en estatuas y otros monumentos, incluidos los relieves (Cooney, 2015, p.157-158, 162, 165-166, 176), hay instancias donde el texto sobrevive independientemente de cualquier imagen, tal es el caso de los obeliscos e incluso algunos templos, como el del templo de Habu, cuya fachada está cubierta de jeroglíficos hundidos (Cooney, 2015, p.115). Los textos escritos son ejemplos de dónde existía el texto sin el acompañamiento de imágenes. Los textos grandes, como los libros, a menudo servían como o funerarios, ya sean instrucciones, cánticos y declaraciones del difunto para el más allá, u otros fines como el mantenimiento de registros, la declaración de impuestos sobre cereales recaudados y adeudados, transacciones entre individuos e incluso registros judiciales (Robins, 1993, p.129 -131).

Los textos, como las imágenes, también eran explícitos en la descripción del individuo, aunque no su semejanza, sino su estado y hechos en la vida. Los textos funerarios en ataúdes, en tumbas y templos, y en textos funerarios, todos tenían diferentes propósitos, pero una cosa que todos tenían en común era que debían ayudar al difunto a llegar al más allá y adaptarse a las percepciones cambiantes del más allá (Ikram, 2015, p.109). El "Libro de los Dos Caminos", los "Libros del Inframundo" y el "Libro de los Muertos", por ejemplo, daban instrucciones, cánticos protectores y advertencias para los difuntos, con mapas que cubrían el fondo del ataúd para que los difuntos no perder su camino, mientras que los libros brindaban protección contra cualquier cosa que intentara desviarlos o dañarlos en su viaje (Ikram, 2015, p.38-41, 44, 112-113; Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.100). Eran bastante autoexplicativos en su función, aunque la cantidad de detalles en cada libro variaba: cuanto más detallado era el libro, más caro era, lo que dejaba a la élite adinerada una mayor oportunidad de sobrevivir al viaje y llegar a salvo sin incidentes (Ikram, 2015, p.38-39). Rara vez eran personalizables, a diferencia de otros bienes funerarios necesarios.

Los textos sobre y dentro de cada sarcófago o ataúd contenían inscripciones, denominadas Textos de ataúd, que ayudaban al difunto, pero también identificaban a un individuo (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p. 105). Estas inscripciones identificaron primero al individuo, explicando quiénes eran en vida, incluidos los nombres y/o títulos de trabajo, y su relación con los antepasados y, por supuesto, su conexión con los dioses mismos (Miatello, 2018, p.42, 46). Cada ataúd antropoide proporcionó información similar pero diferente sobre el individuo y las decoraciones. El que encierra a la momia, para algunos, es el único ataúd que podrían permitirse, por lo que este ataúd tendría que ser increíblemente detallado. Sin embargo, para la élite y la realeza, tuvieron la suerte de permitirse más ataúdes anidados. El ataúd más exterior debe ser el que saluda a Osiris, demostrando su semejanza con él (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p. 108). El texto de este ataúd más externo estaría casi escrito en el tipo de texto que proporcionó, pero también se personalizó para el individuo, incluido su nombre, relaciones familiares y su importancia para los dioses (Miatello, 2018, p. 42; Ikram, 2015, p.111). Con cada ataúd sucesivo, los textos podrían leerse más auténticos, ya que Osiris tiene que ser engañado, hasta cierto punto, para que acepte al individuo pareciéndose a sí mismo (Ikram, 2015, p.108-109). En última instancia, el sarcófago más externo era un velo de la verdadera identidad del individuo. Los otros ataúdes tenían que reflejar más la verdadera identidad del propietario, ya que creían que estas serían las identidades que llevarían por la eternidad (Ikram, 2015, p.120).

El texto era un aspecto increíblemente importante del proceso funerario, ya que el nombre debía escribirse en todos los objetos funerarios, junto con sus títulos, mostrando el estado (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.109). Aunque los nombres de los difuntos debían aparecer en todos los artículos funerarios para garantizar que se identificaran con el cuerpo, incluido el estatus social de uno con sus títulos, género e identidades que lo acompañan, las inscripciones del ataúd, en los *Coffin Texts*, eran un poco más flexibles (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.109). El idioma egipcio tiene género, por lo que las palabras utilizadas en los textos tenían género, dejando al difunto en una posición de incongruencia de género. Aunque era necesario que el individuo pasara por

separaciones de sus identidades: “Los muertos solo podían renacer a través de un complejo acto de separación: en espíritu, en cuerpo, en nombre e incluso en género. Esta fragmentación permitió la transformación” (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.110). La transformación fue la coalescencia de la identidad del difunto con la del dios Osiris, lo que permitiría que el individuo se manifestara como divinidad (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p. 109).

Usando los textos funerarios sobre y dentro de los ataúdes, los textos sobre los obeliscos y los de las estatuas, podemos entender la importancia del nombre (y el título) del difunto, sin embargo, lo que era más importante era el sentido de identidad asociado al nombre. Los nombres fueron transformados y/o manipulados, y los títulos y cargos algo exagerados, se enfatizaron las asociaciones con la familia y los dioses, unificando diferentes aspectos de la identidad. La identidad de género fue flexible en la muerte, fragmentada y reensamblada para renacer.

> “Solo cuando una persona era vulnerable y fragmentada, era posible la transformación en un dios o en otro género. Cuando se logró la transformación del renacimiento, se logró la totalidad” (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.113).

La vulnerabilidad todavía se considera una debilidad en el mundo moderno, sin embargo, en los textos del antiguo Egipto vemos que expresar y representar la vulnerabilidad de uno les permitía fragmentarse, romperse en pedazos, como la de Osiris (la Historia/Mito de Osiris puede se puede acceder en el apéndice), quien fue cortado en pedazos solo para ser reensamblado y renacido, dándole nueva vida a través de la reconstrucción de sus piezas. Pero el nacimiento y el renacimiento son imposibles sin aceptar los elementos masculino y femenino de la vida, lo cual también era cierto para los antiguos egipcios.

> “…Los egipcios creían que, para renacer, el difunto tendría que convertirse en ambos géneros. Por ejemplo, en el capítulo 17 del Libro de los Muertos, el difunto se compara a sí mismo no solo con los dioses masculinos de la creación, Osiris y Re, sino también con las diosas Isis y Nephthys que incorporan poderes de protección y sustento” (Heininger & Cooney , 2009, p. 113).

> “El capítulo 42 del Libro de los Muertos va más allá y compara cada parte del cuerpo con una divinidad diferente. El difunto se describe con partes que son tanto masculinas como femeninas; su cuerpo tiene senos y falo” (Heininger & Cooney, 2009, p.114).

Estos ejemplos, entre otros, muestran que la necesidad de transformación a la semejanza de Osiris no era meramente un velo, sino más bien un aspecto de la transformación, presentándose como masculino como una fracción de su identidad divina, y abarcando la fracción femenina a través de otras indicaciones, como el propio ataúd, como el falo y la matriz. El concepto “más masculino” y “más femenino” se pierde en el contexto funerario ya que la combinación de ambos da como resultado un individuo no binario, en la muerte y renacido, capaz de expresarse como la

amalgama de géneros sin preocuparse por una jerarquía de importancia ya que uno no puede existir sin el otro.

Las primeras interpretaciones de las prácticas mortuorias del antiguo Egipto fueron, en gran medida, moldeadas por académicos europeos de principios del siglo XX. Muchos de estos individuos abordaron el material desde una perspectiva colonial y patriarcal. Como Edward Said argumentó célebremente en Orientalismo (1978), la imaginación colonial a menudo exotizaba y distorsionaba las culturas «no occidentales» (las que están fuera de las culturas estadounidenses y europeas) para ajustarlas a los marcos ideológicos europeos. En la egiptología, esto condujo a interpretaciones que reforzaron los supuestos y las narrativas heteronormativas. Un ejemplo claro de esto es la designación de dos figuras masculinas enterradas juntas con iconografía íntima como «hermanos», en lugar de considerar las posibilidades queer (estamos conscientes de que el concepto queer no era de uso común en las prácticas funerarias del antiguo Egipto ni tampoco en los análisis arqueológicos y antropológicos de los finales de los 70, por lo que esta mención es una licencia interpretativa que me permito hacer para una mayor comprensión del problema). Estudios más recientes, incluyendo el trabajo de Gregory Thomas (2006) y Jean Winand (2010), han instado a reconsiderar tales interpretaciones desde una perspectiva poscolonial y queer. Esta tesis se alinea con estos esfuerzos revisionistas, cuestionando las lecturas normativas y destacando las expresiones de identidad alternativas como interpretaciones viables de la cultura material antigua.

Conclusión

Este capítulo se ha acercado al problema de la construcción identitaria y, a partir de unas teorías revisionistas, saber cómo los antiguos egipcios construyeron y representaron algunos aspectos de su género e identidad a través de formas materiales y artísticas, muchas de las cuales se integraron en sus prácticas funerarias. Estas expresiones culturales, aunque históricamente distantes con nuestra actualidad, tienen relevancia conceptual para el arte funerario contemporáneo que reinterpreta algunas acciones antiguas para atender algunas cuestiones relacionadas con la construcción identitaria. El siguiente capítulo regresa al presente, comparando las prácticas funerarias modernas en Egipto y Estados Unidos, y examinando cómo estas reflejan u ocultan la complejidad de la identidad en la muerte.

Se sabe relativamente poco sobre la vida de las clases bajas en el Antiguo Egipto, ya que las vidas de los faraones, deidades encarnadas, eran las que valían la pena registrar, así como las vidas de otras personas de clase alta que tenían escribas o registros públicos o tumbas. Dicho esto, las élites y la realeza hicieron bien en documentar sus vidas. A través de esta evidencia, mucha de ella religiosa o relacionada con el más allá, nos permitió vislumbrar sus vidas. Esto nos permitió la oportunidad de entender el género desde una perspectiva del Antiguo Egipto, así como también cómo se aplicaba el feminismo en ese momento, aunque la terminología aún no había nacido, el concepto existía.Pudimos ver que niños y niñas reales eran considerados descendientes directos de los dioses, mostrándose como casi iguales, aunque la literatura muestra una jerarquía dentro

de la familia. Mientras que otros reinos cambiarían a sus mujeres reales, los egipcios no lo hicieron. Creían que las mujeres reales eran iguales a los reyes en ese aspecto: intocables. Las mujeres de élite se utilizaron para las negociaciones, pero tuvieron poca participación, aunque crucial para el sistema diplomático internacional.

Los ejemplos que reconocimos en el día de hoy como observamos del feminismo en el Antiguo Egipto fue inconsistente a lo largo de la historia. Los descendientes masculinos eran preferidos y priorizados sobre las mujeres porque algún día recibirían el trono. Las hijas fueron educadas para los roles que desempeñarían en su reino, al igual que los niños fueron educados para su rol potencial como reyes. Las mujeres reales hacían mucho más que sentarse al lado del rey, sino que a menudo supervisaban la producción textil o incluso complejos completos. Reyes y reinas dependían unos de otros para el funcionamiento del reino y las relaciones internacionales. Sin embargo, las reinas, en algunos casos, eclipsaron a sus maridos, algunas los sobrevivieron y gobernaron en su lugar. Tales reinas fuertes tomaron el control de sus posiciones de poder y demostraron sus verdaderas capacidades de poder y control de manera beneficiosa, en estos casos, igual o mejor que sus maridos. Estas mujeres fuertes dejaron su huella en la historia a través de las diferentes formas de arte que dejaron atrás. Esto no era solo un símbolo de poder, sino un medio para ser recordados por quienes eran, en la forma en que sentían que se expresaban mejor.

Otras mujeres de influencia, específicamente la élite, adoptaron los títulos de sus maridos otorgándoles un estatus igual al de sus maridos, pero podían obtener títulos más prestigiosos que sus maridos si servían directamente con/para los templos o incluso las casas reales lo que, debido a la falta de distinción entre religión y gobierno, significaba que ambos tenían un alto nivel de gobierno y religión.

El valor de las mujeres en el Antiguo Egipto, aunque aparentemente disminuido por la "supervisión" de los hombres, era extremadamente valorado. Ambos fueron utilizados como objetos y también honrados por sus habilidades, principalmente por su servicio a la humanidad, siendo el recipiente que transportaba y protegía la vida, tanto en la realidad como en la mitología. Las mujeres también tenían otros papeles cruciales a los ojos de los dioses como protectoras, animadoras y estimuladoras.

El feminismo tal como lo conocemos hoy no era evidente en la vida cotidiana de los antiguos egipcios, sino que se veía más comúnmente en la mitología y en las representaciones del más allá. Ambos vistos como otros mundos donde el género aparentemente era menos importante, donde la androginia se aceptaba y se consideraba útil. Las mujeres en el Antiguo Egipto no estaban infravaloradas, pero no necesariamente se les daba la autonomía que realmente merecían; sin embargo, la creencia de la igualdad quedó impresa en sus mentes. Cuando las mujeres poderosas reinaron, no fueron cuestionadas, sino que fueron apoyadas e incluso elogiadas cuando demostraron ser líderes fructíferas.

A través del matrimonio, el divorcio y el control del hogar, las mujeres de todas las clases tenían un gran control sobre cómo se gastaba y usaba el salario (grano). Las mujeres de clase trabajadora cuidaban el hogar y lo controlaban por completo, mientras que las mujeres de clase alta todavía controlaban el hogar, pero tenían otras mujeres trabajando para ella para mantener su hogar y hacer su trabajo doméstico, mientras que ella también tenía trabajo fuera del hogar. Las mujeres de todas las clases eran las encargadas de los asuntos del hogar mientras que los hombres simplemente les proporcionaban el hogar y contribuían a los ingresos. Sin embargo, la carga de trabajo doméstico de una mujer era reconocida como trabajo. Los esfuerzos de las mujeres se notaron en las pinturas de las tumbas e incluso en los textos de los ataúdes, así como en sus distinciones de maternidad, lo que significó seguridad para la mujer en el más allá.

La burocracia de la época involucraba a todos, incluidas las mujeres independientes, casadas o solteras; sin embargo, a menudo estaban representados solos en las presentaciones judiciales. Las mujeres eran propietarias de tierras, participaban en transacciones económicas y dirigían negocios: eran empresarias. Las mujeres no podían heredar los trabajos de sus familiares, a diferencia de los hombres que podían heredar los trabajos de sus padres o tíos. Las mujeres se hicieron a sí mismas. Tenían derecho a la herencia de la propiedad, pero solo eso, por lo que algunos crearon sus propios medios de subsistencia.

La construcción del sustento y el estatus de uno mismo eran necesarios para sobrevivir y tener una vida decente, pero era importante para el más allá y es por eso que los egipcios trabajaron tan incansablemente para prepararse para ello. Como hemos aprendido, la construcción de la vida en la tierra se transfirió al más allá y se hizo aún más crucial morir en los niveles superiores de la sociedad, lo que garantiza de manera creíble esa calidad de vida en el más allá. No solo era importante la vida laboral de uno, sino también quiénes éramos. Uno debía haber hecho buenas obras en la vida o haber sido una buena persona, en última instancia, pesando su corazón con la verdad. La autenticidad era increíblemente importante y era casi equivalente a la muerte. La élite y la realeza del antiguo Egipto, aquellos que podían permitírselo, se aseguraron de que sus semejanzas fueran perfeccionadas y alteradas para reflejar lo mejor de sí mismos, como lo hacemos en los funerales de hoy. Sin embargo, la identidad no podía estar muy lejos de la verdad, por lo que tal vez las vidas fueron embellecidas, pero realmente representaron al individuo con la mayor precisión posible. Era necesario vivir la eternidad honesta y fructíferamente como uno mismo. Esto es evidente en las pinturas de las tumbas y el arte funerario.

La identidad cambió para alguna élite/realeza. Reina convertida en rey, Hatshepsut es un ejemplo flagrante de transgenerismo en el mundo antiguo, o interpretado como travestismo, como algunos egiptólogos conservadores preferirían no abordar. Los hechos son que estas transformaciones ocurrieron no solo para esta reina, sino también para otras mujeres que deseaban hacer la transición al más allá. Algunos ejemplos no son tan extremos como el de Hatshepsut, quien realizó acciones físicas, pictóricas y textuales para cambiar su identidad, sino que otros fueron un medio tradicional para lograr un fin: una forma de disfrutar la eternidad a

través del ligero enmascaramiento de una identidad femenina. Esto lo sabemos por las numerosas esculturas encargadas a lo largo de su reinado, así como por los relieves y las inscripciones de los obeliscos. Estas formas de arte le permitieron expresarse con autenticidad y, aunque literalmente fueron talladas en piedra, fueron alteradas para adaptarse a la expresión externa de su identidad de género; pero, en última instancia, estas formas de arte permitieron que los individuos fueran reconocidos auténticamente y en sus propios términos.

CAPÍTULO 4

LA MUERTE

Capítulo 4 – La Muerte

Introducción

El capítulo cuatro investiga las tradiciones funerarias contemporáneas tanto en los Estados Unidos como en Egipto, mientras las compara con sus prácticas históricas previas en cada cultura respectivamente, e incluye las religiones mayoritarias tanto en los Estados Unidos como en Egipto como referencia. Esta comparación permite establecer conexiones con respecto a las prácticas, costumbres y tradiciones de las religiones y culturas y cómo las personas expresan sus identidades en la muerte a través de una variedad de medios, que incluyen fotografías, ropa, maquillaje, artefactos personales y cuentos. Se explica, además, el significado de la muerte y cómo afecta la propia identidad, con especial énfasis en el Antiguo Egipto, lo que da como resultado la expresión de las identidades verdaderas y preferidas del individuo a través del arte funerario artesanal.

Primero, se identifican las prácticas funerarias en la América moderna y cómo la identidad se entrelaza y se revela en la muerte. Se incluyen las prácticas funerarias como parte de la identidad del individuo, en relación con sus últimos deseos, tradiciones religiosas o solicitudes de la familia sobreviviente. Se comparan estas prácticas y tradiciones con las del Egipto contemporáneo para proporcionar datos identificables, que muestran la importancia de la identidad en los procesos funerarios y de entierro.

Posteriormente, se comparan las prácticas contemporáneas con las de los antiguos egipcios para demostrar los puntos en común en las tradiciones a lo largo de los siglos, así como se resalta la importancia fundamental de la identidad y cómo, en el Antiguo Egipto, era importante para la supervivencia tanto en esta vida como en el más allá.

Partiendo de la indagación histórica del capítulo anterior, este capítulo se centra en una exploración comparativa sobre ritos y el significado de la muerte en las tradiciones funerarias del Egipto moderno y los Estados Unidos de América. Los ejemplos culturales y religiosos seleccionados no pretenden representar naciones o sistemas de creencias enteros, sino destacar rituales, costumbres y modos de expresión de la identidad particulares que ofrecen perspectivas sobre cómo se negocia el yo en la muerte. Estos ejemplos se eligieron por su frecuencia en el discurso público, su riqueza simbólica y su resonancia con los temas de transformación y preservación de lo que habla esta tesis. No se debe olvidar que esta revisión tiene como objetivo nutrir de datos la práctica artística individual y no establecer conclusiones acerca del comportamiento de tal o cual sociedad y cultura acerca de sus creencias religiosas y sus ritos funerarios.

La perspectiva comparativa busca descubrir dónde los valores tradicionales apoyan o socavan la visibilidad de la identidad en la muerte, y cómo estas dinámicas pueden reimaginarse a través de medios artísticos.

Las prácticas funerarias examinadas en esta tesis no son solo tradiciones materiales, sino rituales sociales que expresan y refuerzan valores culturales. Desde una perspectiva antropológica, los ritos funerarios funcionan como transiciones entre estados de identidad, rol social y posición cosmológica. El uso de arcilla, símbolos y sustancias para embalsamar puede interpretarse no solo como tecnologías de preservación, sino como sistemas de transición identitaria, de forma similar a cómo las sociedades contemporáneas utilizan fotografías, ropa o artefactos en contextos funerarios para simbolizar la continuidad relacional y personal.

4.1 Tradiciones y prácticas funerarias contemporáneas

4.1.1 Los materiales y acciones rituales utilizados en las prácticas funerarias en Occidente

Esta sección se centrará en las tradiciones y prácticas contemporáneas de los funerales en los Estados Unidos de América, con un enfoque en las tradiciones y prácticas funerarias cristianas y no religiosas comunes, ya que sostienen la mayoría de las creencias en los Estados Unidos de América. Más del 70 % de los estadounidenses se identifican como cristianos de alguna forma y los no afiliados (religiosos “no”) ocupan casi el 23 % de la población (Pew Research Center, 2022).

Las tradiciones y los rituales para las prácticas funerarias difieren entre las religiones, y los funerales no religiosos son ceremonias que no están específicamente asociadas con ninguna religión en particular (Memorial Planning, n.d.). El punto en común es que la tradición de recordar o conmemorar a un ser querido, ya sea un familiar o un amigo, es el objetivo principal. “La necesidad de una forma adecuada de recordar a un ser querido que ha partido y despedirse es universal, incluso entre los no religiosos” (Memorial Planning, n.d.). Muchas de las prácticas se implementan tanto en funerales religiosos como no religiosos, como elogios y lecturas (de material no religioso). Muchos servicios funerarios, independientemente de la afiliación religiosa o no, son una oportunidad para celebrar la vida de la persona fallecida (Memorial Planning, n.d.).

Ya sea que una persona muera en cuidados paliativos (cuidados al final de la vida en un entorno médico), un hospital o en el hogar, los seres queridos pueden realizar cualquier costumbre religiosa, cultural o tener tiempo para, simplemente, sentarse con el difunto (U.S. Departamento de Salud y Servicios Humanos, 2020). En la mayoría de los casos, no se hace nada con el cuerpo inmediatamente después de la muerte en situaciones que no son de emergencia. Por lo general, se encarga una funeraria de recoger el cuerpo del centro de atención, hospital, hospicio u hogar, y se hace cargo del cuerpo según los deseos del difunto: entierro o cremación (Barrett, 2020).

El primer paso después de que la persona fallece y llega a la funeraria, o a casa, para un funeral en el hogar, es que el cuerpo será limpiado y vestido o amortajado (Barrett, 2020). Si el cuerpo ha de ser velado, se vestirá con ropa proporcionada por la familia para el velatorio y se refrigerará hasta dicha hora. Sin embargo, algunos optan por embalsamar al difunto, intercambiando su sangre por líquido de embalsamamiento, lo que permite una mayor conservación del cuerpo. Los cuerpos de los difuntos pueden simplemente refrigerarse hasta el momento de la cremación o el entierro,

pero los diferentes estados tienen leyes diferentes con respecto al momento de estos eventos. En Pensilvania, por ejemplo, el estado estipula que: “si los restos humanos no se embalsaman dentro de las 24 horas posteriores a la muerte, entonces esos restos deben sellarse dentro de un recipiente que no permita que escapen los vapores u olores y esos restos deben mantenerse en refrigeración. ”, (Smith, sin fecha). Según el mismo código, se requiere que el cuerpo se entierre dentro de las cinco horas posteriores a haber sido retirado de la refrigeración si no está embalsamado, y además estipula que si solo está refrigerado y no embalsamado, el público no puede ver el cuerpo (Smith, n.d.). Si el cuerpo va a ser incinerado, entonces no hay necesidad de embalsamarlo, ni siquiera de un ataúd.

El proceso de embalsamamiento tiene tres objetivos principales, según la directora de la funeraria Samantha Smith (n.d.), "desinfección, preservación y restauración". Este proceso no es solo para preservar el cuerpo, como ella dice, sino para desinfectar el cuerpo para que pueda ser visto con seguridad y el difunto también pueda parecer más vivo, ya que la descomposición del cuerpo comienza inmediatamente después de la muerte (Smith, Dakota del Norte). Si bien el embalsamamiento no detiene la descomposición, la ralentiza, lo que brinda a los familiares y amigos más tiempo con su ser querido. Smith (n.d.) continúa explicando que, si bien la refrigeración hace un buen trabajo al retardar la descomposición, cada individuo se descompone a diferentes velocidades debido a una variedad de factores. “El peso, la altura, la edad y las condiciones médicas de una persona afectan la rapidez con la que se notan los signos de descomposición”, explica Smith (n.d.). La refrigeración por sí sola, puede causar otros efectos secundarios en el cuerpo que afectarían su presentación, como la sequedad de la piel y el hundimiento y la flacidez de los rasgos faciales, que según Smith (n.d.) puede cambiar significativamente la apariencia de una persona, lo que puede ser discordante incluso para sus parientes más cercanos.

A través del embalsamamiento del cuerpo del difunto, los cuerpos pueden ser restaurados a una forma más saludable, según Smith (s.f.). Ella continúa diciendo que a través del embalsamamiento, la persona fallecida puede verse libre de los efectos secundarios de las enfermedades, como ojos hundidos o mejillas hundidas (Smith, n.d.). “Los signos de trauma como heridas, raspaduras o cortes se pueden cerrar y restaurar la piel con un poco de cera especial y una fina capa de maquillaje mortuorio” (Smith, n.d.). Las heridas que ocurrieron durante el tratamiento o lesiones anteriores como causa de la muerte, también pueden ocultarse en muchos casos a través de la reconstrucción y el maquillaje, explica Smith (n.d.). Ella justifica el uso del embalsamamiento como una práctica para las familias que quieren ver al difunto por última vez, incluso si ha muerto en circunstancias trágicas. Smith (n.d.) ilustra que para algunas familias, ver a sus seres queridos "yacer en paz" y "con una expresión de serenidad" fue útil y sanador para los procesos de duelo. Ella explica, además, que aquellos que identifican los cuerpos de sus seres queridos, son testigos de sus muertes o los ven justo después de la muerte pueden quedar muy perturbados (Smith, n.d.). Y continúa diciendo que muchos miembros de la familia afirman que sus seres queridos fallecidos se ven como antes de su enfermedad, con energía y vida, lo que,

según ella, ayuda a procesar la muerte: “Cuando se ve el cuerpo, se confirma la muerte”, lo cual sugiere que “es un medio importante para romper el impulso natural de negar la muerte” (Smith, n.d.).

4.1.1.A Maquillaje de difuntos

Maquillar un cadáver tiene sus propios desafíos; según la directora de la funeraria, Amber Carvaly, se debe a que, aunque las técnicas de aplicación son las mismas en cuerpo vivo que en ino muerto, el cuerpo está mucho más suelto y puede dificultar el proceso de aplicación (Nguyen, 2019). Carvaly tiende a elegir el maquillaje teatral para cubrir la decoloración o los cuerpos con ictericia, aunque también usa maquillaje normal de farmacia (Nguyen, 2019). Carvaly a menudo usa una técnica de aerógrafo en la cara para que parezca más real y la cubra de manera uniforme. La queja más común asociada al maquillaje posterior a la muerte, proviene de las propias familias y amigos de los difuntos. La queja viene, por lo general, de que el maquillaje produce una visión del fallecido que se aleja de su apariencia en vida. El color del lápiz labial o la sombra de ojos que no “son cómo lo habría usado el difunto”, o el peinado o las partes del cabello tanto en hombres como en mujeres (Nguyen, 2019). Carvaly sugiere que las familias deben participar en los procesos de maquillaje y vestimenta por más de una razón; ella sugiere que cuando asisten al embalsamador (que también suele ser uno de los directores de funerarias) pueden ayudar a proporcionar colores de maquillaje más veraces para los difuntos, para que puedan ser recordados con más precisión como lo eran en vida (Nguyen, 2019). Carvaly también aboga porque las familias ayuden en este aspecto, ya que cree que tener una conexión con los aspectos físicos y artísticos del proceso, les ayuda a superar sus emociones sobre la muerte (Nguyen, 2019). “Recuperar el proceso de maquillaje puede ser un primer paso catártico, como una salida inesperada para el dolor y, finalmente, la aceptación de la muerte misma” (Nguyen, 2019).

El maquillaje posterior a la muerte cuesta alrededor de $250 USD (alrededor de 240 €) por funeral, por lo que por sí solo puede ser una adición costosa a los costos generales del funeral, por lo que Carvaly dice que si las familias están tratando de reducir costos, pueden hablar con la funeraria para proponer que los familiares maquillen a su difunto para ahorrar en los costos del funeral, y muchos se adaptarán a sus necesidades a medida que entiendan los costos asociados con los funerales (Nguyen, 2019). Aunque este paso se omite si el individuo es incinerado sin ver el cuerpo. En última instancia, el concepto de realizar este paso es mostrar un retrato físico del difunto de la manera más real y auténtica posible, para proyectar una identidad viva del individuo fallecido.

4.1.1.B Muertes domiciliarias en América

Las muertes domiciliarias fueron una práctica común en Estados Unidos hasta la década de 1860, cuando el difunto moría en su casa, rodeado de sus seres queridos, quienes iniciaban la atención post-mortal de inmediato (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Esto es lo que hoy hacen los directores de las funerarias: lavar el cuerpo con sus propias manos, vestirlo, peinarlo y acostarlo para que la comunidad vaya a llorar su fallecimiento, con los vecinos muchas veces construyendo el ataúd o

cavando la fosa, y en ocasiones, algunas comidas preparadas (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Los funerales en el hogar eran íntimos, ya que el cuerpo se depositaba en el hogar hasta por tres días para que las personas pasaran y lloraran con la familia o dieran sus condolencias (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). La ocurrencia de morir en el hogar y ser atendido allí hasta y después de la muerte era una práctica tan común que las personas incorporaron elementos "amigables para el funeral" en el hogar para tales ocasiones (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). “Algunos de los primeros hogares estadounidenses tienen una *puerta de ataúd* que conduce directamente desde el salón al exterior, construida sin escalones ni obstáculos y que proporcionaba un medio fácil para sacar el cuerpo de la casa” (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Algunas casas en el noreste de América tenían *ventanas de ataúd* que permitían pasar fácilmente el cuerpo del interior al exterior, con áticos que almacenaban tablas anchas de curado para tal ocasión, lo que permitía preparar a la familia para ese momento (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019) .

Las personas fueron enterradas en un sudario o ataúd de seis lados hasta la década de 1900, que mantenía el cuerpo de manera más equilibrada, ya que limitaba el movimiento del cuerpo y el cambio de peso al moverlo (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Este ataúd de seis lados también minimizó el trabajo necesario para cavar la tumba; un rectángulo completo significaba que había que mover más tierra, y con las esquinas del ataúd en ángulo hacia adentro, esto reducía la cantidad de superficie, lo que significaba menos excavación, y dado que las tumbas se cavaban a mano, esto ahorraba mucho tiempo y esfuerzo para los individuos excavando (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

Los familiares y amigos se sientan con el cuerpo del difunto esperando signos de descomposición y esperando el tiempo que fuera necesario para terminar de construir el ataúd y cavar la tumba (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). En esos tiempos, existían temores reales de ser enterrado vivo, pero esto también proporcionó tiempo para que las familias realizaran rituales con el difunto ya que muchos factores intervenían en el período de espera antes y después de de la muerte, incluidos los recursos económicos, el estado y la religión. (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

La teoría miasmática de la enfermedad era una creencia popular en ese momento; se creía que causaba otras enfermedades en los vivos y estaba causada por la descomposición de las cosas muertas:

> “Los miasmas son emanaciones venenosas, de cadáveres en putrefacción, vegetación en descomposición o moho, y partículas de polvo invisibles dentro de las viviendas. Miasmas podría identificarse por su mal olor” (Kannadan, 2018).

Debido a esta creencia, de que los difuntos pueden causar pestilencia u otras enfermedades como la malaria o el cólera, los cementerios que alguna vez existieron dentro de los pueblos y aldeas, comenzaron a ser trasladados a las zonas rurales para que los cuerpos expulsaran sus gases sin causar epidemias, especialmente cuando los pueblos se convirtieron en ciudades (Kannadan, 2018; Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

4.1.1.C Entierro durante la guerra y su comercialización

La Guerra Civil Estadounidense (1861-1865) fue uno de los primeros casos en los que los cuerpos se enviaron a largas distancias en tren para devolverlos a sus familias, que querían enterrarlos cerca de casa y no en el campo de batalla (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Como aún no se inventaba la refrigeración y el viaje a casa era extenso, los cuerpos llegaban en mal estado por la avanzada descomposición, sobre todo en verano (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Por lo tanto hubo necesidad de embalsamarlos, para ralentizar un poco la descomposición, que ya comenzaba en los campos de batalla. Allí se envolvía y se enviaban en tren, y al llegar, los conductores de librea los llevaban a sus hogares (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019) .

Debido a la inmovilidad de las personas en ese momento, los conductores de librea actuaron como enlace entre el gobierno y los civiles con respecto al regreso de sus seres queridos muertos; y dado que la guerra fue una instancia que causó muertes "inesperadas", muchas familias no estaban preparadas para ellas (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). En este momento, los constructores de muebles y ebanistas comenzaron a fabricar ataúdes para acomodar la afluencia de difuntos debido a la guerra; junto con los conductores de librea, los carpinteros comenzaron a competir por los muertos y comenzaron a producirse ataúdes en masa, lo que dio inicio al mercado de Emprender (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Cuando el público vio el cuerpo embalsamado del presidente asesinado de los Estados Unidos, Abraham Lincoln, comenzó otro comercio con la muerte, lo que permitió que el negocio funerario evolucionara y así, se comercializara la transición de la muerte (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

4.1.1.D El arte de morir

Con el auge del negocio funerario, con menos personas haciendo el trabajo duro de los procesos funerarios y subcontratando a los comerciantes de la muerte, la era victoriana se convirtió en una época de elegancia en los servicios funerarios (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

> "…los victorianos crearon un nuevo y elaborado conjunto de prácticas funerarias impulsadas por la moda que incluía vestimenta especializada, joyas, arte popular y fotografías de los muertos" (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019).

Muchas de las prácticas funerarias de la era victoriana todavía se practican hoy en día, ya que estaban bien documentadas y vivas en la memoria cultural, brindando a las familias tradiciones funerarias y de muerte (Schlageter Schmitt, 2019). Algunas de estas tradiciones incluyen el ahorro a lo largo de la vida, para asegurarse tener suficiente dinero para un entierro adecuado, pero esto también incluye la planificación del funeral, como los detalles que usarán, el estilo del ataúd y dónde serán enterrados. El comportamiento funerario y el atuendo de los invitados debían ser apropiados, debían comportarse tristes y usar colores oscuros, generalmente negros (Mendoza, 2018). El velatorio es otra tradición que todavía usamos hoy en día, era un momento en el que se vigilaba el cuerpo durante todo el día para asegurarse de que el individuo estuviera realmente muerto y no en coma; otra tradición era traer muchos ramos de flores frescas al velatorio/velorio

como una forma de cubrir el olor a descomposición (Funeral Basics, 2020). Salvar un mechón de cabello del difunto es otra tradición que no todos siguen practicando, pero es más común entre los padres que han perdido a un hijo, o en el caso de una muerte prematura de otros seres queridos (Henry Sheldon Museum, 2020; Mendoza, 2018). Tomar fotos de los muertos o mostrar fotos de ellos también fue un fenómeno común que muchos todavía practican hoy en día (Funeral Basics, 2020). Las lápidas más grandes y más elaboradas durante la era victoriana siguen siendo una práctica común hoy en día, ya que las lápidas suelen ser planas y están al ras del suelo y las lápidas victorianas son monumentos grandes, generalmente de piedra, que también marcan la tumba de un individuo (Funeral Básicos, 2020).

Las litografías que representan lápidas y dolientes fue una forma de arte funerario que se popularizó durante la Guerra Civil Estadounidense como una forma de recordar a sus muertos especialmente para las familias que no podían viajar a los grandes cementerios, donde estaban enterrados sus seres queridos fallecidos, especialmente si no podían permitirse el lujo de devolver sus cuerpos a casa; a estas tarjetas se les llamó: tarjetas estacionarias (Museo Henry Sheldon, 2020). Estas litografías actuaban como un objeto tangible que representaba el lugar de entierro de su ser querido, donde se podía escribir su información en la lápida, como si fuera una fotografía de donde yacía su ser querido (Henry Sheldon Museum, 2020). Una vez que se popularizaron, tomaron formas más pequeñas y se asemejaron a postales de luto, un pequeño recuerdo de sus amados difuntos (Mendoza, 2018).

El peinado, o la joyería para el cabello, fue otra forma de arte popular que surgió en la época victoriana, y aunque coleccionar cabello sigue siendo una práctica común, el oficio de convertirlo en joyería es mucho menos común hoy en día (Oshawa Community Museum, 2015). El cabello de los difuntos se usaba para hacer coronas, collares, broches, pulseras y medallones (Museo de la Comunidad de Oshawa, 2015). Era un oficio único de usar el cabello y el alambre del difunto y otros materiales maleables para crear diseños elaborados con el cabello (Museo de la Comunidad de Oshawa, 2015).

La fotografía post mortem era una práctica común en ese momento, una manera de recordar y documentar la memoria y no como una forma de arte y una forma accesible de las familias de tener una imagen duradera de sus seres queridos; dado que la fotografía era costosa, generalmente se realizaba en eventos importantes, como funerales, y se realizaba como un tributo amoroso a los difuntos (Oshawa Community Museum, 2015; Borgo et al., 2016). Los fotógrafos intentaron crear situaciones cada vez más realistas para los difuntos, para que aparecieran vivos en las fotografías, para que la familia pudiera, "…obtener la última "imagen de la vida" de "los muertos"" (Borgo et al., 2016). Había diferentes estilos de hacer posar a los difuntos, de formas que capturan su muerte inmediata, a través de las miradas perdidas en los rostros de sus familiares; fotos en las que los difuntos parecen estar vivos, posan de manera que parecen estar realizando una tarea activamente, como leyendo o jugando, otra forma de posar era mezclarse con la familia y captarse en grupo, y finalmente una postura en la que la madre

velatorio del irlandés

Depthandtime. (2012, February 21). *Mickie O'Hoolihan's wake, 1897.* Flickr.

tumba estadounidense

Goles, K. (2022, September 28). *Evolution of American funerary customs and laws: In Custodia legis*. The Library of Congress.

estaba cubierta con una sábana, sosteniendo al niño (generalmente un bebé), mientras que el niño de la foto parecía estar vivo (Borgo et al., 2016). La práctica de documentar a los muertos se convirtió, de hecho, en una práctica con valor artístico.

4.1.1.E Cremación en América desde la década de 1960

La cremación se ha vuelto más popular en los Estados Unidos desde la década de 1960 por una variedad de razones diferentes, incluido el estrés financiero y la reducción de su impacto ambiental (Goodwin, 2020; Nguyen, 2019). Hoy, alrededor del 44 % de los estadounidenses optan por la cremación, mientras que el 35 % de ellos todavía eligen los entierros tradicionales; además, solo el 6 % de los estadounidenses donan sus cuerpos a la ciencia y el 4 % prefiere los entierros naturales: entierros sin ataúd o con otro material biodegradable de forma rápida o natural (Goodwin, 2020).

Con la cremación en constante aumento, muchas personas eligen formas creativas para usar sus cenizas o, en este caso, desecharlas. Algunos eligen que sus cenizas sean lanzadas al espacio, otros prefieren que sus cenizas se compriman en diamantes, pero aún así, muchos estadounidenses eligen que sus cenizas se esparzan en un lugar específico de su elección (40% de los que eligen la cremación). Treinta y seis por ciento prefiere que un miembro de la familia guarde sus cenizas, y todavía uno de cada diez estadounidenses que desean ser incinerados le gustaría que las usen para plantarlas como un árbol (Goodwin, 2020).

La momificación sigue siendo una opción para algunas personas, aunque es muy costosa, a partir de $ 67,000 USD (alrededor de 65,300 €), por lo que no es asequible para la persona promedio, al igual que su disponibilidad en el antiguo Egipto, que se discutirá más adelante en este capítulo (Goodwin, 2020). Esta práctica tampoco es rutinaria, mientras que la cremación es mucho más común y rentable, aunque sigue siendo un método costoso. Los costes medios de entierro y funeral rondan los $8.500 USD (alrededor de 8.300€), pero no incluyen el terreno del entierro ni la lápida, mientras que los costes de cremación rondan los $6.300 USD (alrededor de 6.150€), excluyendo también el entierro y las marcas de tumba asociadas si se desean (Nguyen, 2019). Con estos costos adicionales, los funerales y entierros pueden costar más de $ 10,000 USD (alrededor de 9,750 €), excluyendo también cualquier otra reunión, incluidos los almuerzos o cenas familiares y/o comunitarios que a menudo siguen al funeral o memorial.

Lo que un individuo elige para sí mismo está influenciado por factores externos distintos a sus propias creencias personales, como la religión, las tradiciones familiares o las finanzas (Goodwin, 2020). Casi la mitad (47 %) de los estadounidenses elige su plan funerario en función de sus propias creencias; el 24 % dice que las tradiciones familiares influyen en sus elecciones y el 14 % dice que se basa en su situación financiera (Goodwin, 2020). Las generaciones más jóvenes dijeron que sus decisiones se basaron más en las tradiciones familiares más que en razones financieras, y las generaciones mayores dijeron que sus decisiones se basaron en razones financieras según la encuesta (Goodwin, 2020).

4.1.1.F Procesiones Fúnebres

Las procesiones fúnebres en los Estados Unidos contemporáneos generalmente no son grandiosas para la persona promedio, y probablemente lo sean más para las élites. La mayoría de los ataúdes civiles regulares son transportados al lugar del entierro por un cortejo fúnebre como un convoy de vehículos. Sin embargo, si es incinerado, es llevado por un ser querido: “a lo largo de los siglos ha variado [el cortejo] desde personas que caminan y cargan al difunto hasta el séquito moderno de limusinas y automóviles” (Matthiesen, Wickert y Lehrer, S.C., 2022). Dado que la mayoría de los cortejos se realizan en automóvil: “Un cortejo fúnebre se define como dos o más vehículos que acompañan el cuerpo de una persona fallecida desde una funeraria hasta el lugar de disposición final o un lugar donde se se realizarán servicios funerarios (Matthiesen, Wickert, & Lehrer, S.C., 2022). Una procesión consistiría en los dolientes comenzando con los familiares directos, seguidos por otros parientes, y luego otros dolientes siguiendo el coche fúnebre de manera ordenada, siguiendo al vehículo precedente "tan cerca como sea posible", sin embargo, en los Estados Unidos, las leyes varían de un estado a otro, lo que puede causar confusión, ya que las especificaciones pueden diferir significativamente (Matthiesen, Wickert y Lehrer, S.C., 2022). Si el ataúd se transporta a la tumba en un coche fúnebre, a menudo hay miembros de la familia u otros dolientes del difunto que actúan como portadores del féretro y llevan el ataúd desde el coche fúnebre hasta el lugar del entierro.

4.1.1.G Reuniones posteriores al funeral

El funeral es, en última instancia, la última exhibición de los difuntos y la oportunidad de despedirse de ellos, pero las reuniones después de un funeral están pensadas como una socialización de los dolientes con otras personas que están de duelo por la misma pérdida, así como una forma de asegurar que los dolientes se están cuidando a sí mismos; esta es una práctica entre religiosos y no religiosos (Hay, 2020). En estas reuniones posteriores al funeral, ofrecen comidas y bebidas ligeras como una forma de comunicarse y continuar recordando y celebrando al difunto (Hay, 2020). Esta comida a menudo se denomina hospitalidad oscura o última, y es anterior a los registros escritos, según Hay (2020).

> “El desarrollo del concepto de comida fúnebre se remonta a la Grecia clásica, donde los dolientes regresaban a la casa del difunto para el perídeipnon (la cena después del entierro)”, (Hay, 2020).

Esta práctica es casi la misma hoy en día, con la familia en duelo invitando a los asistentes al funeral a una casa para esta última comida, o tal vez a un pequeño salón de eventos, bar o restaurante. Hay (2020) también sugiere que esta última comida ofrece más que una mera reunión social con otros dolientes, sino que “ayuda a preservar el ideal de la familia porque sirve para 'afirmar la identidad, fortalecer los lazos de parentesco [...] [y brinda] [...] apoyo emocional durante períodos de estrés'”. Además de fortalecer los lazos entre los dolientes, brindar apoyo emocional y afirmar la identidad, facilitan las conversaciones sobre la muerte y el difunto en un ambiente más relajado, lo que permite a los dolientes discutir la identidad del difunto con el que

están más familiarizados, y permitiéndoles comentar sobre recuerdos o experiencias del difunto que de otro modo no podrían compartir.

4.1.2 Tradiciones y prácticas funerarias en el Egipto contemporáneo

Esta sección discutirá las tradiciones y prácticas funerarias más comunes del Egipto contemporáneo con un enfoque en el Islam y el cristianismo copto, ya que el Islam es la abrumadora mayoría religiosa (~ 90 %) en el país y el cristianismo copto (<10 %) es la minoría más grande. (Departamento de Estado de EE. UU., 2020).

4.1.2.A Islam

Tradiciones islámicas antes de la muerte

Al igual que en otras culturas, cuando los musulmanes están en su lecho de muerte, sus seres queridos deben estar allí para cuidarlos y consolarlos hasta que mueran, pero también deben orar por la persona moribunda, animándola a recitar versos del Corán, en particular, la declaración de fe, una profesión de fe en Dios y de que Mahoma es el verdadero mensajero de Dios: “Doy testimonio de que no hay más Dios que Dios, y doy testimonio de que Mahoma es el Mensajero de Dios” (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El moribundo también se coloca con los pies hacia La Meca, donde continúa la repetición de la declaración de fe para el moribundo, con la esperanza de que sean sus últimas palabras (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Tradiciones al morir

Inmediatamente después de la muerte, se cierran los ojos de la persona fallecida y se recita otra oración en nombre de la persona fallecida, pidiéndole a Allah que los honre con Su vista y, en última instancia, los lleve a un lugar mejor del que han estado en la tierra (Vansteenhuyse, 2012) . Después de esto, se cierra la boca y se ata la mandíbula para evitar que entren insectos; tanto los ojos como la boca se cierran por este motivo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Después de cerrar los ojos y la boca, se quita la ropa del difunto y se cubre con una sábana blanca limpia después de estirar los brazos y las piernas (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). En este momento se coloca un objeto con peso sobre el estómago para evitar que se hinche, con la excepción de las mujeres embarazadas en las que no se coloca ningún peso sobre el estómago, mientras tanto, el cuerpo debe colocarse sobre una superficie elevada hasta que pueda lavarse. (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Se debe dejar una luz encendida en la habitación del difunto para garantizar que el alma pueda abandonar el cuerpo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Antes de que el cuerpo pueda ser enterrado, debe someterse a los preparativos del entierro, que son diferentes para cada sexo, pero incluyen lavar y envolver el cuerpo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El entierro del difunto debe realizarse dentro de las 24 horas posteriores al fallecimiento, por lo que estos preparativos se realizan con rapidez, comenzando por el lavado del cuerpo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Las especificaciones para el lavado incluyen que la persona que lava el cuerpo del difunto

debe ser musulmana y del mismo sexo que el difunto, con excepción de los niños; además, el cónyuge sobreviviente del individuo puede realizar esta limpieza final del cuerpo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Lavado del cuerpo

Para comenzar el lavado del cuerpo, se coloca sobre una mesa alta en un lugar privado, con las partes íntimas cubiertas mientras que el resto de la ropa se quita por completo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Antes de que pueda comenzar el lavado y los ladrillos se coloquen en el estómago del difunto, la persona que realiza la limpieza debe cantar, "En el nombre de Allah", mientras presiona el estómago para asegurar la liberación de cualquier excreción del cuerpo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Una vez realizado este paso, se puede iniciar el lavado del cuerpo, que comienza con manos limpias y paños limpios para el cuerpo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El cuerpo debe ser lavado de pies a cabeza de cinco a siete veces, pero ese número debe ser impar, y cada lavado consiste en enrollar el cuerpo sobre su lado izquierdo para lavar el lado derecho y enrollarlo sobre su lado derecho para lavar el lado izquierdo, con inclusión de los dientes y las fosas nasales, y en algunos casos debajo de las uñas (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Se utilizan aguas perfumadas sin alcohol y perfumes para perfumar el cuerpo después de esta limpieza (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Además, el cabello del difunto debe tener un estilo particular; para los hombres, su cabello debe lavarse, peinarse y destrenzarse, sin embargo, el cabello de las mujeres debe lavarse, peinarse y trenzarse en tres trenzas individuales a cada lado dejando cabos sueltos, como el de la hija del profeta Mahoma (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).). Una vez que se han completado todos los pasos anteriores y el cuerpo está completamente seco, se puede comenzar con la mortaja (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Envoltura del difunto

La mortaja debe comenzar inmediatamente después de que el cuerpo haya sido lavado y secado de manera efectiva, lo que implica envolver el cuerpo en una serie de paños de algodón limpios, preferiblemente blancos, y el material debe ser económico, ya que en el cementerio se menosprecia la extravagancia, que incluiría seda o cualquier oro en el material, lo cual está prohibido (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

> “Hay cinco piezas de tela diferentes que se usan para cubrir: las sábanas que miden 7'x7', una camisa larga y suelta sin mangas (3'x14'), la envoltura corporal que mide 6'x3.5', el velo de la cabeza que mide 4'x4', y finalmente el taparrabos que mide 1'x4'”, (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Una vez que el cuerpo está correctamente envuelto, las sábanas se perfuman, nuevamente, con perfumes sin alcohol y/o incienso, y se utilizan cuatro cuerdas de aproximadamente 7 pies para asegurar las envolturas alrededor del cuerpo, sin embargo, existen algunas diferencias entre las mortajas masculinas y femeninas. (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Cubierta masculina

La mortaja para los hombres es algo menos compleja y consiste únicamente en tres sábanas enrollables y cuatro lazos (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Las tres sábanas se colocan planas y el difunto (cubierto con una sábana) se coloca encima de ellas mientras está acostado boca arriba, donde se colocan perfumes o esencias en cinco lugares del cuerpo: frente, nariz, manos, rodillas y pies (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Si es posible en este momento, la mano izquierda se coloca sobre el pecho y la mano derecha se coloca encima de él, como si se asemejara a salat (oración) (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). A partir de este punto puede comenzar la envoltura del cuerpo, donde el lado derecho de las sábanas se dobla sobre el cuerpo seguido del lado izquierdo, donde este proceso se repite hacia abajo del cuerpo hasta completar (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Luego, las cuatro cuerdas se usan para asegurar las vendas en su lugar, una se ata por encima de la cabeza y la otra por debajo de los pies usando diferentes nudos para distinguir entre la cabeza y los pies, mientras que las otras dos se atan alrededor del cuerpo (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). .

Cubierta femenina

La mortaja femenina requiere algunos pasos más y algunos materiales más, que incluyen dos sábanas enrollables, como los hombres, una camisa larga y suelta sin mangas que llega desde el cuello hasta los pies, una envoltura en la cintura y un velo en la cabeza (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Para las mujeres, la ropa debe estar dispuesta en orden: “primero las dos sábanas enrollables, segundo la camisa larga, tercero la faja, cuarto el velo de la cabeza y por último el taparrabos” (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Al igual que el proceso para los hombres, las mujeres también se cubren con una tela y se acuestan boca arriba con los mismos aromas y/o perfumes aplicados en las mismas áreas de sus cuerpos antes de que comience el envoltorio (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El taparrabos se coloca primero, envolviendo la parte superior de sus piernas y asegurado con la cintura, como si fuera ropa interior, seguido de la camisa larga que cubre todo su cuerpo excepto su cabeza, que está cubierta con el velo de la cabeza (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).). Una vez que sus manos se colocan sobre su pecho en posición de oración, como los hombres, también se envuelve de la misma manera que ellos (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Transporte del cuerpo para el entierro

El cuerpo debe ser transportado con cuidado al cementerio u otro lugar de entierro, generalmente utilizando un coche fúnebre seguido de una procesión fúnebre, aunque tradicionalmente, el difunto habría sido llevado por varios hombres al cementerio, como en Occidente (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El uso de cualquier vehículo militar se considera inapropiado, y la procesión debe permanecer tranquila y silenciosa, sin empujones ni aglomeraciones (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). En este momento, el uso de velas o incienso, o la recitación del Corán, los gritos fuertes (lamentos) y la música están prohibidos (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

El funeral

Oración

Los funerales entre los musulmanes son esencialmente los mismos, con la excepción de los

mártires, quienes reciben la misma ceremonia, que es, en su mayor parte, un recuerdo silencioso del difunto y la oración fúnebre (Salatul Janazah), que generalmente se realiza fuera de una mezquita. (Lugar de culto musulmán) (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Esta oración invita a todos a participar, independientemente de su conexión con el difunto y, de hecho, Mahoma declaró que hay recompensas por participar en esta oración y entierro (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El Janazah no se puede realizar desde el amanecer hasta el atardecer, excepto en circunstancias extremas, como en el caso de descomposición avanzada y/o el cadáver se encuentra en un estado de angustia, como resultado de la guerra (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Código de vestimenta para los asistentes al funeral

En un funeral musulmán, el código de vestimenta se refiere más al nivel de modestia que a los colores aceptados, y esto es aplicable para hombres y mujeres (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Los hombres deben usar una camisa que cubra los hombros y los pantalones, mientras que las mujeres deben usar una falda tobillera, una camisa de manga larga con cuello alto y un pañuelo en la cabeza, y se espera que ambos usen calcetines o medias limpias que estén en condiciones presentables como los zapatos que se quitan durante la oración (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Entierro del difunto

No hay una sección sobre cremación porque se considera profanación incinerar un cadáver musulmán, por lo que el entierro es la única opción verdadera para un musulmán (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Otras profanaciones incluyen autopsias y embalsamamiento (Memorial Planning, 2022). “Las tradiciones funerarias musulmanas se basan en la humildad y la sencillez y evitan glorificar a los muertos con grandes monumentos”, por lo que no habrá grandes monumentos ni grandes lápidas que glorifiquen a los difuntos (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Si bien las mujeres y los niños pueden asistir y participar en el funeral y sus procesos, no pueden asistir al entierro (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Además, el entierro en sí es silencioso, un momento de reflexión y un recordatorio para los vivos de que ellos también enfrentarán la muerte y, en última instancia, el silencio es para evitar que se moleste al difunto (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Los musulmanes están enterrados en cementerios solo para musulmanes o en secciones de específicamente para musulmanes y, además, ningún no musulmán puede ser enterrado junto a los musulmanes, aunque los musulmanes pueden ser enterrados en el lugar de su muerte; esto se aplica a los musulmanes que han muerto en el mar y no pueden ser devueltos a la costa dentro de las 24 horas para su entierro (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El cuerpo del difunto no debe ser trasladado a otros países o ciudades a menos que el individuo haya expresado explícitamente su deseo de estar en un lugar específico (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El cuerpo también debe ser enterrado sin ataúd, a menos que existan leyes específicas que prohíban dicho entierro (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Los cuerpos de los difuntos deben colocarse perpendiculares a La Meca, “para que, una vez que el cuerpo se coloque en la tumba, pueda mirar hacia la Qiblah” o La Meca (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Hay dos estilos de tumbas, la Al-Shaqq y la Al-Lahed; el Al-Shaqq es un simple agujero vertical, mientras que el Al-Lahed es el preferido y más común, con forma de “L” (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

Solo los hombres pueden colocar el cuerpo del difunto en la tumba, ya que las mujeres tienen prohibido asistir y, por lo general, son parientes del difunto; además, están obligados a abstenerse de tener relaciones sexuales la noche anterior al entierro para mantener la pureza al enterrar al difunto (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). El cadáver debe colocarse en la tumba con los pies por delante mientras quienes colocan el cuerpo recitan: "En el nombre de Allah y la fe del Mensajero de Allah", y se usa un ladrillo o piedra para sostener la cabeza del difunto, como una almohada (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). Una vez que el cuerpo está colocado correctamente, se deben deshacer las ataduras en la parte superior de la cabeza y la parte inferior de los pies con un ladrillo o piedra colocado en la cabeza para que cuando la tierra cubra el cuerpo no golpee la cabeza (Vansteenhuyse, 2012). . Según Vansteenhuyse (2012) las tumbas se rellenan tradicionalmente con arena, pero la tierra local es aceptable, por lo que a medida que se cubre el cuerpo con la arena o tierra, quienes entierran al difunto deben arrojar tres puñados de tierra en la tumba y con cada puñado recita una de las siguientes frases:

(Primer puñado) – “De la (tierra) te creamos
(Segundo puñado) – Y a él Volveremos
(Tercer puñado) – Y de allí te sacaremos otra vez”

Una vez que se completa el relleno de la tumba, se permite colocar una lápida o un marcador de tumba, pero se desaconseja e incluso se prohíbe cualquier cosa más que eso, y algunos miembros de la familia pueden quedarse para continuar orando por el difunto (solo la oración Duaa), aunque todas las demás oraciones generalmente se desaconsejan en otros momentos en un cementerio islámico, ya que la oración es aceptable en todas partes excepto en baños, cementerios y áreas de basura (Vansteenhuyse, 2012).

4.1.2.B Cristianismo copto

El cristianismo copto “es una de las formas de cristianismo más antiguas que existen” (Robinson-Brown, 2020). Robinson-Brown (2020) nos recuerda que al observar la cultura egipcia debemos recordar que “lo que es religioso a menudo se convierte en cultural y una vez que esto ha ocurrido, las líneas de diferencia se vuelven más difíciles de discernir con el paso del tiempo”. Esta sección se centrará en las tradiciones y prácticas funerarias de los cristianos coptos en Egipto.

Los cristianos coptos (coptos), al igual que los musulmanes, creen en la vida después de la muerte, aunque los coptos creen que cuando una persona muere su alma se reúne con el cuerpo y con Cristo, por lo que la cremación también está prohibida dentro de la religión ya que resucitará y se reunirá con el alma, según las creencias coptas (Coriell, 2022).

Antes de la muerte, como en el Islam y entre los no religiosos, los amigos y la familia pueden reunirse con la persona que se acerca a la muerte para atender sus necesidades en sus últimos días; sin embargo, entre los coptos, debe haber un sacerdote disponible para dispensar los últimos ritos. (Propiedades conmemorativas, 2018).

Después de la muerte

Inmediatamente después de la muerte, el cuerpo debe ser lavado y perfumado, y luego vestido, lo que generalmente se hace con la presencia de un sacerdote, para que el sacerdote pueda bendecir al difunto y a quienes están realizando la limpieza, sin embargo, algunas familias pueden optar por tener una funeraria y preparar el cuerpo, especialmente si han muerto en el hospital (Coriell, 2022). Las mujeres a menudo se visten con lino blanco, mientras que los hombres se visten con ropa cotidiana o ropa más formal; sin embargo, si la persona había guardado ropa de una peregrinación, podría ser enterrada con esa ropa (Memorial Properties, 2018). En algunos casos, el cuerpo se viste simplemente con un sudario de lino blanco (Memorial Properties, 2018). El sacerdote también bendecirá el ataúd una vez que el cuerpo sea colocado en el ataúd (Coriell, 2022). Algunos optan por embalsamar a sus seres queridos, ya que es un proceso permitido por la Iglesia copta, especialmente si deciden realizar un velatorio tradicional (Funeral Guide, 2019). Sin embargo, en general, los coptos creen en un entierro conveniente, generalmente dentro del mismo día, o como los musulmanes, dentro de las 24 horas (Memorial Properties, 2018).

Después de la muerte, se realiza un servicio de oración en la casa del difunto o en la funeraria, llamado servicio Trisagion, y puede realizarse inmediatamente después de la muerte o la noche anterior al funeral, pero también puede ocurrir en la tumba después del servicio (Coriel, 2022). A menudo hay un velatorio en la iglesia, incluida la misa fúnebre, donde los miembros de la familia recitan lecturas para o sobre el difunto, y también pueden servir como portadores del féretro, mientras que el cuerpo se coloca entre dos velas, una en cada extremo del cuerpo (Coriell, 2022; Memorial Properties, 2018). El velorio duraba tradicionalmente tres días, pero ahora suele ser de un día con una ceremonia (Funeral Guide, 2019). El sacerdote recitará oraciones y pronunciará el elogio, ya que es el único autorizado para hacerlo (Coriell, 2022).

Un funeral copto

Es típico que los dolientes usen colores negros u oscuros, y las mujeres también usan cobertores para la cabeza (Memorial Properties, 2018). Antes de entrar en la iglesia donde se encuentra el ataúd, tradicionalmente se escuchan lamentos y chillidos, conocidos como suwat. Estas acciones están destinadas a honrar al difunto, aunque una vez que están en presencia de él, cesan todas las comunicaciones (Memorial Properties, 2018). Un sacerdote conducirá a los dolientes al funeral en la iglesia desde el velorio llevando un incensario (un recipiente hecho de metal, generalmente con incienso) (Lasting Post, 2022), mientras recita el Himno Trisagion, y si no hay procesión desde el velorio a la iglesia para el funeral, entonces este himno se cantará a menudo en el velorio (Guía de Funerales, 2019).

El funeral en sí generalmente no durará más de una hora con un sacerdote u obispo dirigiendo el servicio, con la asistencia de otros miembros del servicio de la iglesia (Funeral Guide, 2019). Durante todo el funeral propiamente dicho, el sacerdote es el único que hablará, estando la congregación de pie, independientemente de que haya bancas, con excepción de los ancianos y discapacitados (Coriell, 2022).

Al ingresar a la iglesia para el funeral, cada asistente recibirá una vela que deberá permanecer encendida durante toda la ceremonia (Funeral Guide, 2019). A la cabeza del ataúd probablemente habrá un Koliva, un plato de trigo con miel con una vela encendida encima; el trigo es para simbolizar el ciclo de la vida y la miel para representar la dulzura del cielo (Funeral Guide, 2019). Salvo que se organice lo contrario con la familia por petición especial, el ataúd también permanecerá abierto para que los asistentes vean al difunto y den su último adiós al cuerpo (Coriell, 2022). Algunos pueden ver una banda en la frente del difunto que significa que ha completado el ciclo de la vida, mientras que en sus manos se puede ver una cruz, un pequeño ícono de Jesucristo o un santo patrón (Funeral Guide, 2019).

Todos los asistentes deben vestirse con ropa oscura y modesta: los hombres deben usar trajes formales y las mujeres deben usar vestidos que también cubran sus brazos y piernas. Los asistentes deben acercarse a la familia y ofrecer sus condolencias y oraciones por el difunto después del entierro; sin embargo, también es costumbre tener un almuerzo o recepción, llamado Makaria, después del entierro donde las personas también pueden hablar con los familiares (Funeral Guide, 2019).

Entierro

Dado que la cremación está prohibida, la iglesia puede negarle a una familia un funeral copto si han sido cremados y, de lo contrario, se acepta el embalsamamiento.

Después del funeral, cuando todos los dolientes han presentado sus últimos respetos al difunto, se cierra el ataúd y comienza la procesión hacia el lugar del entierro, a menudo cantando nuevamente el Himno Trisagion (Funeral Guide, 2019). Justo antes del entierro, el sacerdote u obispo puede verter aceite de oliva y tierra sobre el ataúd, haciendo la forma de la cruz copta, también se puede verter trigo en este momento (Funeral Guide, 2019).

La Makaria

El almuerzo, o Makaria, a menudo es pequeño, lo organiza la familia del doliente o la congregación, y a menudo se lleva a cabo en la casa de un miembro de la familia, restaurante o salón de la iglesia (Funeral Guide, 2019).

Luto

Después del entierro y los días siguientes, es probable que muchos otros dolientes pasen por la casa del difunto para consolar a la familia en duelo, tradicionalmente las mujeres visitan durante el día y los hombres visitan durante la noche (Memorial Properties, 2018). Después de tres días, un sacerdote visitará a la familia en duelo para orar con ellos y esparcir agua por todo el espacio habitable (Memorial Properties, 2018). Es costumbre que el duelo de un individuo dure cuarenta días (Memorial Properties, 2018), en donde el cuadragésimo día se realiza otro servicio conmemorativo en la misma iglesia del funeral, donde se espera que asistan amigos y familiares por respeto (Lasting Post, 2022).

4.2 Muerte en el Antiguo Egipto

Esta sección se centrará en las tradiciones y prácticas rituales observadas en la muerte, tanto antes como después, así como su significado. Esta sección también diseccionará la representación cultural y religiosa de la muerte a través de texto e imágenes. Además, discutirá las implicaciones de la muerte y las promesas del más allá a través de la observación de referencias visuales.

4.2.1 Ahorro y preparación para la muerte

> "Los egipcios vieron a Egipto como la tierra más perfecta del mundo y el centro del universo. Según ellos, el medio ambiente y el orden natural y social de su país fueron decretados y establecidos por los dioses… Ser egipcio era ser del mejor pueblo, y vivir y morir en Egipto era la aspiración de todo egipcio" (Ikram, 2015), p.21).

Los egipcios que vivían en otras tierras o estaban en el ejército siempre deseaban regresar a Egipto, y si morían o eran asesinados en el extranjero, se tomaban todas las medidas para recuperar sus cuerpos y devolverlos a su tierra natal, ya que existía un temor de que morir fuera de Egipto significaba que el Más Allá no estaba garantizado (Ikram, 2015, p.21). Creían que, "después de su vida transitoria en la tierra, se trasladarían a una vida más permanente en un lugar que era un Egipto mejorado" (Ikram, 2015, p. 23).

El cuerpo era el vínculo con el más allá y crucial para la existencia en él, y a través de su preservación se convirtió en una imagen de sí mismo: una estatua y, por lo tanto, "... se convirtió en una proyección del yo idealizado y más permanente", siendo el corazón la parte más importante del cuerpo físico, donde residía el alma, el espíritu, la personalidad y la esencia del individuo (Ikram, 2015, p.23-24). Además del cuerpo físico, los egipcios creían que un individuo en realidad estaba hecho de muchas partes que, cuando se ensamblaban, creaban un individuo completo: el nombre, la sombra, la fuerza vital y la personalidad o el alma (Ikram, 2015, p. 24). Sin un nombre, la persona carecía de identidad y dejaría de existir, por lo que su nombre como parte de su identidad, era un aspecto crucial para la supervivencia y el reconocimiento, que se salvaguardaba a toda costa, pero también se colocaba en casi todas sus pertenencias. (Ikram, 2015, p. 24). La sombra era un aspecto creado por el sol, por lo tanto, era un recordatorio de su renacimiento diario, ya que el sol moría cada noche y renacía, como lo harían ellos en la próxima vida (Ikram, 2015, p.26).

Dado que la vida en la tierra es una fase de transición y el Más Allá es la vida eterna, más grande que lo que existe en la tierra, no era raro que las personas comenzaran a prepararse para la muerte temprano en la vida (Ikram, 2015, p.23). Esto significó ahorrar para ataúdes, ajuar funerario, como shabtis, muebles, junto con provisiones diarias, aunque, para el egipcio común, había que trabajar mucho para permitirse un ataúd económico que podría ser pintado por un artesano menos hábil para lograr el mínimo necesario, para "sobrevivir" cómodamente en el más allá, por no hablar de las necesidades requeridas para que el propio cadáver llegue lo suficientemente bien conservado (Ikram, 2015, p.23). Dado que la muerte era un asunto muy

Momias envueltas en lienzos en distintos grados de conservación.
El Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

religioso, y la religión era la única forma real de vida, sin separación entre política y religión, la muerte se convirtió en el objetivo final y la vida se centró en lograr la estabilidad con una familia para continuar manteniéndolo en el otro lado (Ikram, 2015, p. 23).

4.2.2 Momificación y preservación del difunto

La momificación es el proceso de preservación artificial del cuerpo de un ser humano o animal y se cree que es la "manifestación por excelencia de la muerte en el antiguo Egipto" (Ikram, 2015, p.47). Originalmente, los egiptólogos creían que la momificación comenzó como una práctica para preservar el cuerpo para el consumo de animales, pero estudios posteriores mostraron una mayor conexión entre la momificación, la religión y la tradición como una forma de preservar el cuerpo para el más allá (Ikram, 2015, p.49-50). La momificación temprana (período predinástico) reveló marcas de corte en el cuerpo como si hubiera sido desmembrado y vuelto a unir, con poca evidencia de por qué; el único texto que arroja algo de luz sobre esto está en los Textos de las pirámides, Declaración 373, que vincula el desmembramiento del rey al de Osiris; que como rey, debe recomponerse para la regeneración (Ikram, 2015, p.51).

Los embalsamadores brindaban a la familia una variedad de opciones para embalsamar, generalmente exhibidas en modelos de madera y clasificadas por calidad, y la familia podía elegir la calidad adecuada en función de sus necesidades o disponibilidad económica (Ikram, 2015, p. 53). El embalsamamiento de la más alta calidad incluiría un trabajo más detallado. Para este embalsamamiento de alta calidad, los embalsamadores comienzan con el primer proceso: la extracción completa del cerebro, o la mayor parte posible, a través de las fosas nasales (Ikram, 2015, p. 54). El flanco izquierdo, o lado izquierdo del cuerpo, se abre con un cuchillo de pedernal y se extrae todo el contenido del abdomen, excepto el corazón, que se lava y se limpia a fondo con vino de palma y luego con una infusión de especias molidas (Ikram, 2015, p.54, 24). Los intestinos se separan, se lavan, se envuelven y se colocan en los vasos canopos específicos para ello (Ikram, 2015, p.56). Luego, el cuerpo se llena de sustancias aromáticas, excepto el incienso, y se cose, se deja curar completamente cubierto de natrón, durante aproximadamente cuarenta días y no más de setenta (Ikram, 2015, p. 54, 57). Natron está asociado con termonatrita, es un mineral natural, que es un tipo de sal, que se habría utilizado para deshidratar los tejidos blandos del cuerpo (Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., n.d.). Terminado este proceso, el cuerpo habría sido lavado, aceitado y envuelto de pies a cabeza en tiras de lino untadas con goma en la parte inferior de cada pieza (Ikram, 2015, p.54, 56). Terminado este proceso, habría sido devuelto a la familia para ser colocado en su ataúd (Ikram, 2015, p.54).

Cuando los gastos eran un problema, se realizaba otro tipo de embalsamamiento que era de menor calidad y el proceso era realmente diferente; este proceso no tenía incisión, ni extirpación de los intestinos, sino que se inyectaba aceite de cedro en el cuerpo a través del ano y se tapaba para evitar que se escaparan los líquidos (Ikram, 2015, p.54). Del mismo modo, el cuerpo también se cura en natrón durante el mismo período de tiempo, en el que se drena el cuerpo, y al hacerlo, la solución es tan poderosa que al drenar evacua todos los órganos internos en estado líquido, y

del cuerpo no queda más que piel y huesos, donde es devuelto a la familia en dicho estado sin otra atención (Ikram, 2015, p.54).

El tercer método era el más económico y muchas veces reservado para los pobres, ya que el proceso consistía en sacar los intestinos y curar el cuerpo en natrón, como se hacía en otros métodos, durante setenta días (Ikram, 2015, p.54).

Otros materiales utilizados en la momificación incluyeron resinas o savia de abetos o pinos importados del Líbano y Siria, así como incienso y mirra del sur de Arabia y África oriental (Ikram, 2015, p.55). Las resinas fueron fundidas y utilizadas para rellenar las cavidades corporales, incluido el cráneo, ya que tienen propiedades antibacterianas y desodorantes (Ikram, 2015, p.55). También se usaban aceites para perfumar el cuerpo, estos incluían aceites de enebro, cedro, lechuga y ricino; también proporcionaron cierta flexibilidad a las extremidades curadas antes de envolverlas (Ikram, 2015, p.55).

La envoltura del cuerpo era una de las partes más importantes ya que no solo tenía implicaciones físicas, sino también espirituales; los vendajes servían para proteger el exterior físico del cuerpo, pero también como protección "mágico-religiosa" (Ikram, 2015, p.56). Los hechizos serían leídos en voz alta por un sacerdote lector, hechizos específicos destinados a asegurar las vendas y encerrar el cadáver (Ikram, 2015, p.56). Según la egiptóloga Salima Ikram (2015), este capullo de vendajes, intercalados con amuletos, estaba destinado a brindar protección tanto física como metafórica a los difuntos en su viaje al más allá (Ikram, 2015, p.56).

Ikram (2015) explica que el proceso total desde el embalsamamiento hasta el entierro habría durado setenta días, y el embalsamamiento suele durar cuarenta días. Aunque ella afirma que el proceso de embalsamamiento no fue consistente a lo largo de la historia egipcia, con nuevas técnicas y métodos evolucionando y volviéndose prominentes (Ikram, 2015, p.56-57).

En última instancia, el objetivo del embalsamamiento era la preservación general del cuerpo de la manera más precisa, con intentos de retener los atributos físicos del individuo para que fueran reconocidos en el más allá (Ikram, 2015, p.47, 66). Rellenar el cuerpo en una parte específica para preservar su forma era común entre la élite y la realeza, así como los intentos de preservar los penes reales para que no se perdieran en el proceso de curación y pudieran usarse en el más allá para la regeneración (Ikram, 2015, p.66). La identidad en la muerte era extremadamente importante para fines religiosos, como la regeneración de uno mismo en el más allá, pero además de identificar sus cuerpos para que pudieran ser reconocidos por los dioses con precisión y vivir el más allá que ellos mismos habían preparado (Ikram, 2015, p. .50).

4.2.3 Preparación del cuerpo para el más allá con ataúdes, tumbas y provisiones

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-d). *Sandals: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Puestos para dedos

Puestos para dedos de pie

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-d). *Finger stall: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Envolviendo el cuerpo

En el Reino Nuevo, el sudario que cubría el cuerpo parecía tener alguna decoración, después de haber sido dejado previamente liso, pero también puede haber incluido vestidos de red de cuentas, que tenían amuletos de fayenza ensartados en el patrón de rombos, que generalmente se encuentran en las mujeres (Ikram, 2015, p.101). En las Dinastías XXV y XXVI estos elaborados vestidos de red se hicieron populares entre ambos sexos, aludiendo al cielo nocturno de Nut (Ikram, 2015, p. 101). En las momias también se encontraron vendajes decorativos de cartonaje de papel maché que se usaban para imitar los vendajes laterales que se usaban para mantener el sudario en su lugar (Ikram, 2015, p.102). Posteriormente en el período ptolemaico se utilizaron otros elementos externos, como un collar, un delantal sobre las piernas y botas o grebas para proteger y realzar el envoltorio de la momia ya que estaban inscritos con hechizos (Ikram, 2015, p.102).

Más decoración y joyería

Dado que las extremidades, como los dedos de las manos y los pies, eran frágiles, se desarrollaron cubiertas especiales para protegerlas; reservados para las clases élites y la realeza, a menudo estaban hechos de metales preciosos, sobre todo oro (Ikram, 2015, p.103). Estos puestos de protección para los dedos de las manos y los pies se utilizaron en el Reino Nuevo y más tarde, actuando como guantes o sandalias para los difuntos (Ikram, 2015, p.103).

Para adornar al difunto se usaba una variedad de joyas, con materiales que iban desde conchas y cuentas de cerámica hasta oro y piedras semipreciosas, y no solo se usaba para adornar el cadáver, sino que también se usaba en el ajuar funerario (Ikram, 2015, p. 104). Ikram distingue entre dos tipos de joyas encontradas, la primera hecha específicamente para el entierro, quizás para la decoración del cadáver o sobrante para la tumba, y otra que efectivamente fue utilizada en vida del difunto (Ikram, 2015, p. 104).

Las joyas funerarias a menudo eran endebles o delgadas, a menudo hechas de láminas de oro (láminas delgadas de oro) en lugar de oro sólido; También se produjeron delgadas bandas de oro para las muñecas y los tobillos, aunque la mayoría de las joyas funerarias tenían una función de amuleto: martilladas, estampadas o incisas, y generalmente en forma de diosas o animales protectores, como el buitre o la cobra (Ikram, 2015, p. .104). Las joyas portátiles reales habrían sido las joyas "reales", que tenían una construcción sólida y aparecían en una variedad de objetos, como anillos, adornos para el cuello, tobilleras y pulseras (Ikram, 2015, p.105). Estos habrían actuado como las provisiones que llevaban consigo para disfrutar en la próxima vida (Ikram, 2015, p. 105).

Máscaras de momia

Las máscaras de momia eran otro aspecto decorativo del entierro que servían para varios propósitos, incluso para adornar el cadáver, identificar al individuo y también actuaban como soporte para la cabeza, el cuello y los hombros de la momia (Ikram, 2015, pág. 105). Dado que

Collar con cabeza de halcón

Coraza de buitre

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-f). *Vulture pectoral: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Máscaras de momias de distintos estilos y períodos, Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee . (n.d.). *Egypt, burial mask of unidentified mummy at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo*. University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

generalmente estaban hechos de cartonaje, madera o yeso y, en raras ocasiones, de oro macizo, estaban destinados a apoyar y proteger al difunto y, por lo tanto, estaban inscritos con hechizos de protección (Ikram, 2015, p.105). Principalmente, se usaron para identificar al individuo y sostener el cadáver, sin embargo, las representaciones estaban algo estandarizadas, especialmente en las clases bajas, aunque se trataba de retratar algunas características individuales (Ikram, 2015, p. 105). Las clases élites a menudo podían permitirse máscaras doradas para acentuar sus rasgos y asemejarlos a los dioses, cuya piel brillaría como el oro (Ikram, 2015, p.106).

Tableros de momias

Las máscaras de momia que terminaban en el cuello se usaron hasta el final de la Dinastía XVIII, junto con los "calados", que eran piezas separadas de cartonaje que cubrían las diferentes partes del cadáver como una capa protectora; algo parecido a las armaduras medievales, piezas separadas que, combinadas, protegían todo el cuerpo (Ikram, 2015, p.107). El tablero de la momia era la fusión de estas piezas individuales que, en última instancia, cubrían el cuerpo de la cabeza a los pies y, a menudo, estaban talladas en madera, que luego se enyesaba y pintaba, y se usó desde la dinastía XIX hasta la XXII (Ikram, 2015, p.107). Algunas de estas tablas de momias estaban pintadas como si el difunto estuviera vivo, y conducían a las “cajas de cartonaje que envolvían todo y que estaban pintadas con motivos funerarios”; eran un cruce entre una tabla de momias y un ataúd (Ikram, 2015, pág.107).

Ataúdes

Ikram (2015) explica que, “…el féretro era uno de los artículos más importantes del ajuar funerario”. Hemos visto que las tablas de momias o las máscaras ayudaron a proteger a la momia, pero los ataúdes eran la protección principal para los difuntos, enraizados en el mito de Osiris: un prototipo del cofre en el que encerraron a Osiris antes de que su hermano Seth lo desechara. (Ikram, 2015, p.108). Eran de madera, como sicómoro, o cedro para la élite, imitando el árbol en el que quedó atrapado el pecho de Osiris (Ikram, 2015, p. 108). La élite prefería el cedro porque olía dulce y desalentaba el crecimiento bacteriano, pero también las infestaciones de insectos; el uso del sicómoro se debió a que la diosa Hathor asumió la apariencia de la Dama del sicómoro y aprovisionó a los muertos (Ikram, 2015, p.109).

Si bien los ataúdes evolucionaron con el tiempo, se mantuvieron dos formas principales, rectangulares y antropoides, y su popularidad varió según el período: los ataúdes antropoides casi siempre estaban hechos de madera, mientras que los ataúdes rectangulares estaban hechos de cartonaje (diferente de las tablas de las momias), piedra, o el oro (Ikram, 2015, p.109).

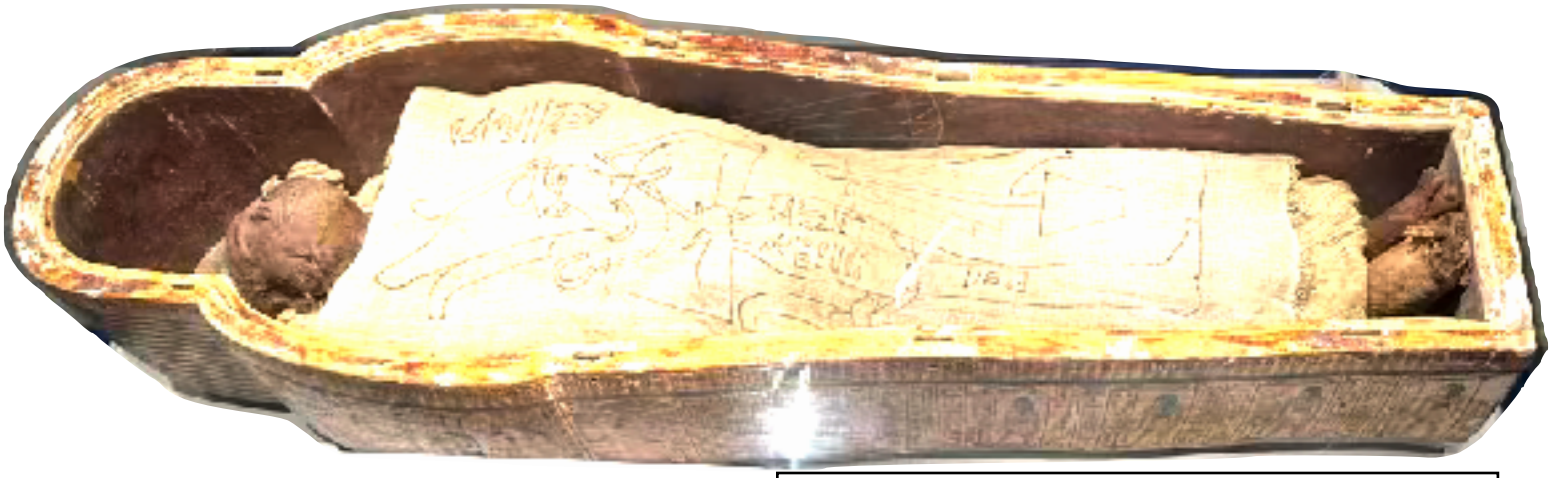
Ikram (2015) señala: "El diseño y la decoración de los ataúdes cambiaron para adaptarse a las ideas en evolución del Más Allá y poseían una iconografía muy compleja". Con el tiempo, los ataúdes asumieron el papel de las tumbas, convirtiéndose en las casas de la momia, en lugar de la tumba (Ikram, 2015, p.109). Un ataúd, o un nido de ataúdes, habría estado encerrado dentro del

sarcófago, que actuaba como una capa protectora más para el difunto, de madera (sicómoro, cedro o acacia) o piedra (piedra caliza, alabastro egipcio, cuarcita, granito o basalto) (Ikram, 2015, p.109). El sarcófago, se traduce del egipcio como “señor de la vida”, y significaba el poder que se creía que tenía; suelen ser rectangulares mientras que los ataúdes que contienen en su interior también pueden ser rectangulares o antropoides (Ikram, 2015, p.109).

Los ataúdes y los sarcófagos estaban ambos profusamente decorados; los sarcófagos generalmente estaban cubiertos de texto y pequeñas representaciones de lo que estaba inscrito, pero los textos a menudo estaban escritos en dos formas: horizontal y vertical, con diferentes intenciones (Ikram, 2015, p.111). Las bandas verticales de textos fortalecen y sostienen los textos de ofrenda horizontales, y profesan la importancia del difunto ante diferentes deidades (Ikram, 2015, p.111). Estos textos no solo estaban en el interior, sino en el exterior, que a menudo consistían en "Textos de ataúdes" y el "Libro de las dos vías", e incluso el fondo del sarcófago, donde se coloca el ataúd, tenía elaborados mapas del inframundo, proporcionando un paso claro para que el difunto llegara a él de manera segura y sin perderse (Ikram, 2015, p.112). Algunas de las representaciones dentro del sarcófago o ataúd incluían bienes funcionales y prácticos que el difunto necesitaría o usaría en el más allá: natrón, zapatos, armas, muebles, joyas y cualquier emblema de la realeza que pudiera asociar al difunto con Osiris, todos ubicados donde pueden ser utilizados por el individuo – reposacabezas en la cabeza, joyas en los brazos y manos, zapatos en los pies, etc. (Ikram, 2015, p.113). Ikram (2015) sugiere que estos eran indicadores, no solo de lo que el difunto necesitaba en el más allá, sino que mostraban la importancia de la perspectiva del difunto, que de hecho, estaría mirando estos objetos, por lo que las decoraciones interiores se volvieron más elaboradas, poniendo a disposición del difunto la magia del interior del ataúd para ser absorbida (Ikram, 2015, p.113). Representaciones significativas de Nut, que representan el cielo, también se colocaron en la parte inferior de las tapas de los ataúdes o sarcófagos y, como explica Ikram, esta era una imagen de protección, ya que se extendía de pies a cabeza, abarcando al difunto, protegiéndolo y perpetuando el sentido del renacimiento (Ikram, 2015, p.113).

Los ataúdes antropoides, desarrollados durante el Reino Medio, eran esencialmente versiones completamente desarrolladas de las máscaras de momias de cartonaje, que se convirtieron en los tableros de momias que ganaron popularidad lentamente, que estaban destinados a representar a la momia envuelta en blanco con una máscara y barba postiza, pintada con cuellos elaborados y bandas de texto, que recuerdan a las bandas que sostenían el sudario en su lugar (Ikram, 2015, p.114). Posteriormente, estos ataúdes antropoides fueron colocados dentro de sarcófagos rectangulares, así los sarcófagos actúan como tumba para el ataúd y agrega otra capa de protección para el cuerpo (Ikram, 2015, p.140).

El desarrollo del ataúd antropoide se hizo cada vez más realista en sus representaciones del difunto que contenía, embelleciendo el rostro, las orejas y el cuello del difunto con un collares decorativos, dejando también al descubierto los pies, mientras el resto del ataúd estaba envuelto en plumas, como alas envolviéndolo, llamado rishi-ataúd (Ikram, 2015, p.114). A medida que



Momia en ataúd de artrópodos, Museo de la Momificación, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Ataúdes de artrópodos, Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Ataúd de artrópodos, Museo de la Momificación, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Ataúd de artrópodos, Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

evolucionaron los ataúdes, también lo hicieron los diseños y a mediados de la Dinastía XVIII, los ataúdes antropoides adoptaron diseños similares, aunque más ornamentados, a los de dinastías anteriores: pintados de blanco, con bandas verticales y horizontales doradas o amarillas, con pelucas negras, y rostro pintado de los colores típicos para hombres y mujeres (rojo para hombres, amarillo para mujeres) (Ikram, 2015, p.115). Los espacios en blanco entre las bandas también fueron más detallados, representando a los difuntos recibiendo ofrendas, dolientes y/o en el viaje a Abydos (el inframundo) (Ikram, 2015, p.115).

Los barnices que cubrían estos ataúdes ayudaron a transformar al individuo en la entidad divina (el verbo "barnizar" se traduce como "hacer divino"), proporcionando así el acto y el material físico necesario para la transformación en divinidad (Ikram, 2015, p.117). Las personas lo suficientemente ricas como para permitirse tres ataúdes anidados pudieron personalizar cada uno de ellos; el primero, o el ataúd más interior, habría sido pintado de amarillo o cubierto de oro, con el siguiente habrían sido más expresivos de su identidad, tal vez retratándose a sí mismos con su ropa típica, con el ataúd más externo asemejándose a Osiris (Ikram, 2015, p.117, Heininger & Cooney, 2009). Algunas personas importantes hicieron su ataúd más externo no de madera, sino de piedra; usaron basalto o granito, incluida la piedra caliza, una piedra más blanda; hay pocos casos que los tres ataúdes están hechos de piedra (Ikram, 2015, p.117). No era raro que los ataúdes estuvieran adornados con metales preciosos y piedras semipreciosas, ya que eran expresión externa de la creencia de uno, en su divinidad, en el otro lado; también representaban lo que el difunto eran en vida; todo ello se expresaba con la materiales y diseños en sus ataúdes (Ikram, 2015, p.118). El nombre del individuo era esencial en los sarcófagos y ataúdes, por lo que se veía en las bandas o en los cartuchos (generalmente formas ovaladas verticales con los nombres jeroglíficos del individuo dentro de ellos) presentados en las tapas para garantizar que pudieran coincidir con su dueño en el más allá (Ikram, 2015, p.120).

El relieve dentro de los ataúdes comienza a aparecer en el Tercer Período Intermedio, con elaborados collares florales y manos levantadas, divinidades funerarias, deidades aladas y líneas de texto que cubrían los ataúdes; los interiores eran igual de ornamentados, incluso algunas de las imágenes reales fueron apropiadas por personas ajenas a la realeza y utilizadas en su decoración (Ikram, 2015, p.123).

Los ataúdes de la Dinastía XXIII presentaban o reflejaban la apariencia del dios Osiris con una gran cantidad de textos garabateados sobre ellos y elevados sobre un pilar o pedestal montado justo debajo del ataúd, representativo de la estatuaria de la época (Ikram, 2015, p.123).

Los ataúdes y sarcófagos actuaron como vehículos hacia el inframundo, tumbas para los difuntos, protectores del cuerpo e identificadores del individuo en el más allá, sirviendo como obras de arte multifuncionales que transmitían información y expresaban la identidad del difunto, y fueron uno de los los aspectos más importantes del proceso funerario.

Ataúdes de artrópodos, Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2016 Theresa Wilshusen

Tumbas

> "Que la tumba le proporcionaba a uno un cosmos eterno es evidente por su nombre: la Casa para la Eternidad" (Ikram, 2015, p.139).

Ikram (2015) explica la importancia de la tumba para el individuo, ya que construir una tumba era crucial para sobrevivir en el más allá, tanto como construir una casa para vivir, o tener una familia, ya que "la casa de la muerte es para toda la vida", (Ikram, 2015, p.139). Las casas en las que realmente vivía la gente estaban construidas con materiales perecederos, a menudo de adobe; las tumbas, en cambio, debían resistir el tiempo y estaban construidas con materiales mucho más duraderos, ya que su supervivencia significaba la supervivencia del individuo (Ikram, 2015, p.139).

Las tumbas se dividían en dos secciones: el lugar de ofrendas, o capilla, y la cámara funeraria debajo; la capilla era donde el culto de los difuntos (generalmente miembros de la familia y otras personas que tenían relaciones cercanas con el individuo) podía venir y celebrar al difunto y era considerada la tierra de los vivos (Ikram, 2015, p.139). La cámara funeraria, ubicada debajo de la capilla, bajo tierra, se consideraba el inframundo, o la tierra de Osiris, y no se ingresaba ni se interactuaba con ella después del entierro, con la excepción de entierros adicionales o reubicaciones (Ikram, 2015, p.139). En la capilla se asoció a la imaginería solar, el dios sol Ra y Osiris, ambas divinidades involucradas con la resurrección, el renacimiento y la vida eterna (Ikram 2015, p.139-140). Al igual que con sus ataúdes, los egipcios competían por la tumba más elaborada y bellamente decorada para atraer visitantes y hacer crecer sus cultos, ya que estos visitantes pronunciaban el nombre del difunto y recitaban fórmulas para que el difunto tuviera abundancia en el Más Allá (Ikram, 2015, p.140).

Las tumbas y los cementerios generalmente se ubicaban en el lado oeste del río Nilo y los asentamientos vivos estaban en el lado este, ya que esto era una metáfora de los paralelos de la vida humana y el camino del sol: naciendo en el Este (renaciendo cada nuevo día) y puesta en Occidente (morir cada noche) (Ikram, 2015, p.140-141). Cruzar el río también era simbólico para los egipcios, ya que representaba el viaje del sol cada día desde el renacimiento hasta la muerte mientras cruzaba el cielo (Ikram, 2015, p.141). El estado de vida de uno determinaba dónde serían enterrados y su lugar en el cementerio, se creía que estar más cerca de la élite, o incluso de la realeza, aumentaba su importancia y reflejaba su divinidad (Ikram, 2015, p.141). Este fue también el caso de los materiales, con las tumbas más elitistas construidas más arriba en acantilados donde existía roca de mejor calidad, con las menos ricas más abajo con roca de peor calidad, e incluso las más pobres se construyeron al borde del desierto (Ikram, 2015, p.141). La expresión del estado y la identidad de uno en la muerte les proporcionó seguridad en el Más Allá, ya que era menos probable que sus tumbas fueran robadas, usurpadas o destruidas, lo que garantizaba su supervivencia y continuación por la eternidad (Ikram, 2015, p.141).

Las tumbas se pintaban para representar no solo las comunicaciones y las ofrendas con los dioses, sino también las actividades diarias. Estas escenas demostrarían la producción de la sociedad para

Tumba en el Valle de los Reyes, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Tumba en el Valle de los Reyes, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Tumba en el Valle de los Reyes, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

Tumba en el Valle de los Reyes, Luxor, 2024, Theresa Wilshusen

garantizar que el difunto se beneficiaría de estas cosas en la próxima vida, pero las escenas también representaban cosas tranquilas que el individuo habrían disfrutado en su vida, como pescar, cazar y festejar (Ikram, 2015, p.171). Creían que sus ilustraciones e inscripciones eran mágicas, dando vida a estos escenarios una vez que se describían, escribían o decían en voz alta, de manera "... similar al equivalente bíblico posterior del poder del "pensamiento" y la "palabra" que fue concebido y hablado, creando así el mundo" (Ikram, 2015, p.171).

Si bien se representaban escenas de la vida cotidiana y se creía que los beneficiaban en un sentido muy literal, también se creía que eran metáforas o narraciones simbólicas, que perpetuaban el concepto de *Ma'at* (el orden cósmico de la vida); a través de estas escenas cotidianas, el difunto manifestaba control sobre el universo, "contribuyendo al establecimiento del orden" (Ikram, 2015, p.171-172). Estas pinturas y tallas ayudaron a los difuntos en la continuación de su eternidad a través de escenas agrícolas, pero también representaron la creación, la muerte y el renacimiento en una nueva forma, así como las semillas crean una nueva vida, que crece y muere, pero renace como alimento (Ikram, 2015, p.172). Estas representaciones permanecen en la capilla de la tumba, dentro de la superestructura, mientras que la subestructura (donde se enterraba el cuerpo) generalmente se dejaba desnuda, sin decoraciones, aunque existen algunos ejemplos de pinturas en estas áreas (Ikram, 2015, p.173).

En las tumbas del Reino Nuevo surge un elemento autobiográfico en la decoración, mostrando eventos específicos de la vida del difunto con gran detalle e incluso explicados en los textos que los acompañan (Ikram, 2015, p. 176). Esta personalización de la tumba de uno se convierte en un reflejo del individuo, no solo de sus aspiraciones para el Más Allá; tales escenas incluyen escenas funerarias con rituales, escenas festivas que incluyen al dios Amón (Ikram, 2015, p.176). Los fallecidos comenzaron expresando detalles íntimos de quienes fueron en vida en un esfuerzo por darle más sentido a su próxima vida, dando detalles sobre sus trabajos y familias, además de incluir sus hobbies.

Equipo canopico y su importancia

Los vasos canopos eran importantes en el proceso de embalsamamiento, ya que contenían los órganos extraídos del individuo después de que cada órgano también fuera momificado, aunque no existe un término egipcio antiguo específico para describir estos vasos, ya que se llamaban *qebu* en mojado o "vasos de embalsamamiento". (Ikram, 2015, p. 125). Estos frascos generalmente se colocaban cerca de los pies del difunto en el sarcófago o tumba e identificaban los diferentes órganos, típicamente con diferentes cabezas como tapas de los frascos, una para cada Hijo de Horus (Ikram, 2015, p.125-127). Según Ikram (2015), en el Reino Nuevo cada uno de los Cuatro Hijos de Horus protegía un órgano: Imseti (cabeza humana) protegía el hígado, Hapy (cabeza de mono) protegía los pulmones, Daumutef (cabeza de chacal) protegía el estómago, y Qebehsenuef (cabeza de halcón) protegían los intestinos, a menudo colocados dentro de su propio cofre, similar a un sarcófago, hecho de madera o piedra (Ikram, 2015, p.127).

Ushabtis, El Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Shabtis

Los *shabtis*, también llamados *shawabti* o *ushabti*, son pequeñas figuras de sirvientes que se recolectaban y usaban como ajuar funerario, proporcionando trabajo, entretenimiento y excitación sexual, pero también tomaban la forma de seres queridos con los que el difunto deseaba reunirse en el Más Allá (Ikram, 2015, p.128-129). Su propósito general era facilitar la vida del difunto en el más allá, ya que despertarán, mágicamente en el Más Allá y proporcionarán el trabajo necesario para que el difunto tenga una vida muy cómoda; estas tareas incluían todos los aspectos de hacer cerveza, moler granos, hornear y otras tareas domésticas mundanas (Ikram, 2015, p.128-129). Se han hecho de una variedad de materiales para adaptarse a todos los niveles económicos, que incluyen madera, vidrio, arcilla, cera, piedra, bronce y la loza, que se encuentra más comúnmente (arcilla de loza vidriada); sus tamaños también varían desde unos pocos centímetros hasta medio metro de largo; sin embargo, los tamaños más comunes rondaban los 15-20 cm (Ikram, 2015, p.129; Mark, abril 2017). La calidad de la artesanía de estos *shabtis* también variaba, algunos estaban exquisitamente tallados o elaborados, desde trozos de arcilla que se asemejaban vagamente a la forma humana, hasta meras clavijas de madera, aunque todos venían con su propio ataúd o santuario vertical de almacenamiento (Ikram, 2015, p.129). *Shabtis* no solo tomó la forma de sirvientes de los miembros de la familia, sino que también se los comparó con los difuntos, con su propio ataúd y los nombres inscritos en ellos; esto podría haber servido como sustituto del difunto, ya que se cree que los dioses le piden al difunto que realice un trabajo para ellos, y estos *shabtis* se despertarán para realizar estas tareas en lugar del difunto (Ikram, 2015, p.130). La cantidad de *shabtis* que un individuo podría tener en sus provisiones dependía de lo que pudiera pagar, así como de su necesidad, algunos conjuntos contenían entre 5 y 7 piezas, mientras que las élites y la realeza tenían cientos, equipados con herramientas e incluso supervisores. (Ikram, 2015, p.130-131).

Otras provisiones en las tumbas

Las provisiones, además de los sirvientes, también eran necesarias para la continuación de la vida en el más allá y, de nuevo, para que fuera una eternidad lujosa y cómoda, por lo que estos artículos incluían cosas que se usaban en la vida cotidiana, desde muebles y ropa de cama, hasta juguetes y juegos. se requerían (Ikram, 2015, p.131). También se almacenaban grandes cantidades de alimentos y cerveza y/o vino, así como artículos de lujo como aceites, perfumes, cosméticos y artículos de tocador que se consideraban provisiones necesarias (Ikram, 2015, p.133-134). Al renacer en el más allá, los egipcios creen que necesitarán provisiones para cada edad de la vida, como si estuvieran renaciendo desde la infancia, por lo que muchos de los muebles y ropa de cama eran de todos los tamaños, muchos de los cuales se usaron durante la vida de la persona fallecida (Ikram, 2015, p.134). Este fue un intento de revivir la vida de uno con sus posesiones más preciadas mientras expresaba sus verdaderas identidades. Los artículos que guardaron en sus tumbas eran un reflejo directo de quiénes eran en vida y quiénes aspiraban a ser en el Más Allá.

Provisiones (dateless), El Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

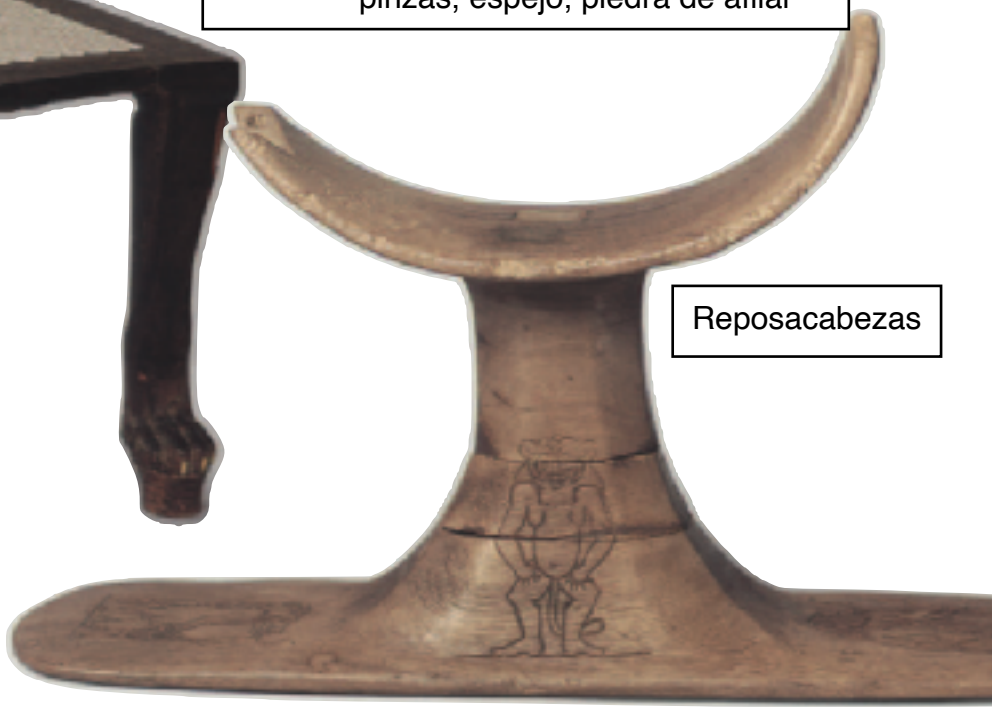
Provisiones liquidas, El Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Caja de baño

Juego

Recipiente para kohl, maquinilla de afeitar, pinzas, espejo, piedra de afilar

Silla



Reposacabezas

Roehrig, C. H., Dreyfus, R., & Keller, C. A. (2005). *Hatshepsut, From Queen to Pharaoh*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Yale University Press.

4.2.4 Funerales, procesiones y entierros

Una vez que la tumba fue construida y decorada, el cuerpo momificado, el funeral y el entierro fueron los siguientes pasos en el proceso de la vida después de la muerte, esto significaba que el difunto finalmente dejaría la vida y resucitaría en el otro lado para vivir por la eternidad con su culto para apoyarlos (Ikram, 2015, p.183).

> "Los funerales egipcios eran asuntos grandes y elaborados con la procesión funeraria y una fiesta, similar a un velorio, siendo de importancia clave" (Ikram, 2015, p.183).

Las procesiones representadas en las paredes de las tumbas muestran escenas muy dramáticas, demostrando que son un espectáculo memorables de contemplar, que consistían en una procesión a pie de personas que llevaban ofrendas para los difuntos, portando una variedad de ajuares funerarios (Ikram, 2015, p.183). Los sacerdotes van guiando, cantando y agitando incensarios, con el ataúd detrás de ellos en un trineo, llevado por una yunta de bueyes (Ikram, 2015, p.183). Los dolientes profesionales rodean el ataúd, mientras lloran lamentándose, aullando, rasgando sus ropas y arrojando tierra y ceniza sobre sus cabezas, como se ve hoy en los funerales en el Egipto contemporáneo (Ikram, 2015, p.184). A estos dolientes profesionales se les suman familiares y amigos del difunto, también llorando y les seguirán más sacerdotes y otros portando más ajuar funerario (Ikram, 2015, p.184). Una vez que llegan a la tumba, depositan el ajuar funerario mientras el féretro permanece afuera para los últimos adioses, mientras tanto, se realizan danzas sagradas para ayudar al alma del difunto a continuar en el Más Allá (Ikram, 2015, p.185).

La ceremonia de "Apertura de la Boca" era el paso siguiente, realizado por un sacerdote vestido con piel de leopardo, que reanimaba al difunto en el Más Allá, y era el ritual funerario más importante, según Ikram (2015, p.185). La ceremonia fue compleja, ya que reanimó diferentes sentidos y utilizó instrumentos de parto para evocar una sensación de renacimiento, principalmente un juego que contenía un cuchillo de pedernal que habría sido utilizado para cortar el cordón umbilical y utilizar sus propios sentidos para sobrevivir en el Más Allá (Ikram, 2015, p.186). El sacerdote recita hechizos mágicos para restaurar el sentido del difunto mientras toca esas partes de su cuerpo, y una vez que esto se completa se cree que el individuo estaba reanimado del otro lado, por lo que se unía a los dolientes en un banquete fúnebre (similar a un velorio) (Ikram, 2015, p.186).

Una vez que finaliza la fiesta funeraria, el cadáver es sepultado con las oraciones y los rituales apropiados completados, y los dolientes colocan guirnaldas sobre el cuerpo o el ataúd (al igual que lo hacen los estadounidenses hoy en día), y la tumba cerrada y sellada, donde el viaje del difunto comienza en el Más Allá habiendo alcanzado "el reino de Osiris" y florecerá en su renacimiento para siempre (Ikram, 2015, p.187). Se establece un culto mortuorio (un seguimiento de amigos, familiares y cualquier otra persona que visite o pase por la tumba) para asegurar la supervivencia del individuo en el más allá, ya que visitarán y recitarán hechizos y oraciones que

Cortejo fúnebre, Templo de Ameofis, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Cortejo fúnebre, Templo de Ameofis, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Cortejo fúnebre, Templo de Ameofis, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

repondrán provisiones del difunto; sin embargo, las inscripciones e ilustraciones sirven para ese mismo propósito en caso de que no llegaran visitantes o si el culto se extinguiese por alguna razón (Ikram, 2015, p.189-191).

Conclusión

Basándome en mi experiencia investigadora y mi observación personal, he observado ciertas tensiones entre los rituales funerarios contemporáneos y las complejas formas en que se vive y expresa la identidad hoy en día. Esta impresión, aunque subjetiva, me lleva a explorar en el siguiente capítulo cómo el arte, especialmente desde perspectivas feministas y queer, puede abrir espacios simbólicos donde estas identidades en evolución encuentran formas alternativas de representación, expandiendo así las narrativas culturales en torno a la vida y la muerte.

Si bien la muerte ocurre en todas las culturas, en todas las religiones, para todos, muchas de las creencias asociadas con la muerte se superponen y parecen basarse en la necesidad de ser reconocidos y valorados por lo que realmente éramos en la tierra y ser recordados después de la muerte, independientemente de lo que nos suceda después. Nosotros, como seres humanos, parece que queremos ser vistos y, a veces incluso, aclamados por nuestros éxitos y aspectos de nuestras vidas que consideramos importantes; y todo esto creemos que forma parte de nuestra identidad; creemos que es el aspecto más importante de nosotros mismos y que queremos proyectar para la eternidad, tanto en la vida como en la muerte.

Las prácticas funerarias occidentales y orientales tienen cierta similitudes. La preparación del cuerpo, transculturalmente, es generalmente la misma, brindando cuidado y consideración por el difunto, así como respeto por su religión (o no religión), cultura y deseos finales. Todas las personas fallecidas son tratadas con respeto cuando son expulsadas de esta vida y, como algunos creen, a la siguiente. Durante este tiempo, aunque las prácticas difieren sobre cómo se presenta el cuerpo, la mayoría de las veces, se le da al individuo una ceremonia de algún tipo. Estas ceremonias van desde una modesta reunión hasta una gran despedida ceremoniosa; sin embargo.

La forma en que se puede exhibir el cuerpo depende de los deseos, las creencias religiosas y la forma en que murió la persona fallecida, se recuerdan.Aunque que los procedimientos funerarios difieren entre comunidades, culturas y religiones, los procesos generales son los mismos. Tampoco son extremadamente diferentes de los del Antiguo Egipto. Desde el momento de la muerte, el cuerpo es tratado con cuidado para darle al individuo el respeto que merece. Se limpian y visten de alguna manera. Algunos se someten a una forma de embalsamamiento, otros no, y algunos son incinerados. Si se va a observar el cuerpo, se puede vestir y maquillar al difunto para que parezca real y quizás, además, se le puede dar un aspecto similar al que tenía en vida. Esto permite que el difunto no solo sea visto como vivo, sino también visto de manera más auténtica.

Algunas personas deciden tener un servicio o ceremonia que permita a los sobrevivientes

reunirse, llorar su fallecimiento o celebrar su vida, compartir historias, recuerdos y comunicarse entre sí. Estos servicios pueden haber sido planificados por el difunto, antes de la muerte, sin embargo, a menudo estos servicios son planificados por los familiares que reúnen objetos que representan la identidad del difunto, creando un mosaico de las diferentes épocas de su vida. Este mosaico sobre una identidad puede ser algo defectuoso, pero se hace generalmente con las mejores intenciones. Algunos servicios pueden proporcionar una presentación de diapositivas de fotos del difunto a lo largo de su vida, lo que permite que todos los asistentes recuerden y reviven algunos de esos momentos de la vida del difunto. Esta es quizás una representación más auténtica del difunto. En algunos de estos servicios también se pueden exhibir objetos pertenecientes al difunto, brindando detalles de su vida, una mirada a su vida personal. Debido a que las personas lloran de diferentes maneras, algunas pueden estar llorando, rezando, riendo y compartiendo recuerdos e historias, reflexionando en silencio o una combinación de estas. El difunto sería enterrado poco después de este servicio y, como en el Antiguo Egipto, sería seguido por un séquito de dolientes. En el Antiguo Egipto, no necesariamente habría habido un servicio separado, el tren de dolientes al lugar de entierro/tumba habría actuado como servicio público. El entierro habría sido similar al de los procedimientos actuales.

Dado que los antiguos egipcios no tenían fotografías, usaban otras formas para asegurarse de que su imagen fuera recordada, y para la élite y la realeza, eso podía venir en una variedad de medios, aunque principalmente esculturas de piedra, pinturas de tumbas y decoración de ataúdes, una combinación. de texto e imágenes. Esto fue crucial para los antiguos egipcios, ya que lo fiel de su representación les garantizaba llegar a la próxima vida. Los ataúdes, típicamente hechos de madera o piedra, estaban pintados de manera elaborada o tenían inscripciones que describían a la persona con detalles intrincados. Las imágenes a menudo eran religiosas: asociándose o comunicándose con los dioses, definiendo su piedad, lealtad y devoción. Estas imágenes y textos iban acompañados de una máscara sobre el cuerpo e incluso tallados en los ataúdes. Esto permitió que el individuo se comparara tanto con Osiris como con ellos mismos, brindándole un pasaje seguro al más allá. Los textos de los ataúdes eran excesivamente descriptivos, lo que les permitió describir auténticamente quiénes creían que eran. Y debido a que estos ataúdes se fueron creando, en la mayoría de los casos, a lo largo de la vida del difunto, reflejaban muy bien el desarrollo de su vida. Esto es algo menos común entre las prácticas funerarias contemporáneas.

Las tumbas en el antiguo Egipto, representaban todos los aspectos de la vida y el más allá, incluido el paso hacia allá. La capilla del sepulcro, adonde acudían los seres queridos y rejuvenecían a los difuntos, alimentándolos en el más allá, también era el lugar en donde podían estar en comunión con los vivos, ser recordados por su forma más auténtica, con la esperanza de poder vivir por la eternidad.

Las similitudes de procedimiento para los antiguos egipcios y los entierros contemporáneos tanto en Occidente como en Oriente nos muestran la importancia del procedimiento en sí. Los pasos detallados del proceso funerario en ambas épocas hablan de la importancia del individuo.

También reconoce el valor y la gravedad de identificar a los difuntos por lo que eran y recordarlos en las identidades que compartieron con los vivos. La evidencia de su vida después de la muerte no se puede probar, por lo que su vida en esta tierra y las identidades que compartieron se convierten en su legado y, en última instancia, en el colorido mosaico de su auténtico ser.

CAPÍTULO 5

LA IDENTIDAD

Capítulo 5 - La Identidad

Introducción

Comparar los métodos contemporáneos de expresión de identidad con los de los antiguos egipcios, utilizando el arte como factor común, es importante en esta investigación artística porque permite rastrear ideas y conceptos de género a lo largo del tiempo, así como comprender cómo las influencias religiosas, culturales y regionales han impactado en la identidad y su expresión. A través de esta comparación también podemos examinar cómo se desafía la heteronormatividad en la búsqueda de una expresión de identidad auténtica. La primera sección de este capítulo explica cómo la expresión de la identidad ha sido subvertida a través de la religión y la política durante décadas de gobierno autocrático con la subyugación de grupos vulnerables, incluidos LGBTQIA+ y mujeres, específicamente en el Egipto contemporáneo.

En la siguiente sección, analizo el papel del arte en el activismo de las mujeres occidentales que obligó a otros grupos a aparecer y exigir un mejor trato, pero en última instancia, a ejercer el derecho a la libre expresión. Examino diferentes tipos de identidad: vertical y horizontal, y cómo ésta afecta la forma en que se expresa la identidad, ayudando a comprender la trayectoria y la influencia de la identidad. Además, utilizando estos conceptos, considero cómo el arte reinterpreta materiales y procesos que, a su vez, pueden aumentar la conciencia y el desarrollo de la empatía por personas que son muy diferentes entre sí.

Desgloso dos entrevistas de diferentes artistas feministas contemporáneas. Una es un ceramista estadounidense, budista y transgénero y la otra es una artista visual egipcia, musulmana, que trabaja con una variedad de medios, pero principalmente la cerámica y el vidrio. Estas entrevistas examinan los roles que juegan sus identidades interseccionales en su arte y, adversamente, cómo su arte les sirve en la expresión de su identidad. Comprender la perspectiva de estas mujeres y el por qué de sus etiquetas de identidad, es importante para ellas como individuos; también es necesario para ver cómo las afecta y comprender su interseccionalidad entre grupos minoritarios y mayoritarios.

Los métodos contemporáneos en los que se preserva y se mantiene la identidad, aunque puedan basarse en tradiciones, religión o simplemente en el deseo de ser recordado, son un debate esencial, ya que afectan a casi todo el mundo y, por lo tanto, deben abordarse desde perspectivas artísticas y antropológicas. La preservación de la identidad se realiza habitualmente mediante el uso de posesiones personales: objetos comunes del difunto, que a menudo utilizaba en su vida. A menudo están imbuidos de significado e identidad tanto del difunto (en su vida) como de los supervivientes. Los objetos comunes pueden convertirse en artefactos de la propia identidad y, a su vez, en arte mediante el proceso de conmemoración, cuando alguien le da un significado a un objeto que de otro modo no sería extraordinario. Esta transformación artística puede presentarse de muchas formas, pero puede incluir la conservación de los objetos en resina, el enmarcado de dichos objetos o la conversión de la pieza en un objeto que se pueda llevar puesto, como ropa o

accesorio. Algunas personas optan por dejar atrás identidades que tenían anteriormente para dar protagonismo a otras que quizás las hagan parecer mejores personas. Estas expresiones suelen ser actos o prácticas que tienen, o tenían históricamente, un significado para el moribundo o fallecido. Analizo cómo los supervivientes celebran y lloran a los fallecidos de una manera que perpetúa su identidad. Este concepto de conmemoración nos dice mucho sobre la humanidad y sobre cómo nosotros, como especie, anhelamos no ser olvidados.

El hecho de ofrecer ejemplos de expresiones de identidad antiguas y de cómo desafiaban las expectativas o normas de la época en Egipto nos permite comprender el período, así como una cronología de la expresión de la identidad (lo que la sociedad consideraba aceptable). Sin embargo, cabe señalar que la terminología que se utiliza ahora no es un reflejo directo del lenguaje utilizado en el Antiguo Egipto, ya que estos términos no existían. Los ejemplos proporcionados matizan el significado del uso de los medios, las normas sociales y los tabúes. El arte y los textos mencionados tienen su origen en las tradiciones y normas religiosas culturales. El lenguaje utilizado ahora describe estas observaciones desde una perspectiva artística contemporánea.

Proporciono cierta exposición a los problemas dentro de la egiptología: una perspectiva masculina heterosexual anticuada de los hallazgos, tal vez distorsionando la comprensión de las inscripciones y el uso de las obras de arte. Una perspectiva colonial occidental como tal, puede conducir a interpretaciones erróneas del arte y la cultura, pasando por alto otros aspectos que parecerían raros y significativos para la expresión de la identidad y que también pueden haber respaldado conceptos no binarios de identidad, proporcionando una mejor comprensión de un rico, cultura antigua.

Este capítulo es una síntesis de los capítulos anteriores y se dedica a examinar cómo artistas contemporáneos de diferentes culturas, en particular artistas feministas y queer, utilizan el arte para abordar la muerte, el género y la identidad. Los artistas y las obras seleccionadas aquí no son exhaustivos, sino algunos ejemplos que se alinean con los objetivos de la tesis sobre identidades no normativas y en evolución. Estas obras que se toman de referenciare, flejan los desafíos y las posibilidades de la autorrepresentación en las artes visuales y amplían el debate sobre la conmemoración y la narrativa personal.

El propósito de este capítulo es orientar la fase de producción artística mediante la identificación de estrategias formales, materiales y conceptuales de las obras de referencia y la manera de adaptarse, cuestionarse o ampliarse a través de mi propio trabajo.

Aquí, comienzo a pasar de la investigación académica a un modo de indagación más práctico. Aunque se basa en literatura académica y entrevistas, el capítulo adopta un tono ligeramente más personal y reflexivo, apropiado para la transición interdisciplinaria entre la teoría contextual y la práctica artística encarnada.

5.1. Expresiones Contemporáneas de Identidad

5.1.1 Desafiando las construcciones heteronormativas de identidad en Egipto

La homosexualidad en Egipto no es técnicamente un delito, pero desafía la percepción que tiene el presidente Abel Fattah el-Sisi de la identidad egipcia, que ha utilizado para permitir que las autoridades tomen medidas enérgicas contra las personas sospechosas de pertenecer a la comunidad LGBTQIA (Bernstein, 2017; Clegg, 2019).). El desafío a la identidad egipcia de el-Sisi es estar en contra de la heteronormatividad y rechazar los conceptos binarios como único medio de existencia. El desafío parece ser percibido como una amenaza a los roles de género masculino y femenino tradicionales dentro de la sociedad egipcia contemporánea y parece trastornar los marcos existentes que continúan restringiendo o reprimiendo a las personas para que no expresen su identidad sexual y de género fuera de las normas religiosas conservadoras establecidas.

Examinar este tema es también un examen de la homofobia dentro del conservadurismo y la religión en Egipto, que es lo que proclama el régimen de el-Sisi (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). El presidente el-Sisi ha estado usando una combinación de creencias y tradiciones del Antiguo Egipto y del Islam contemporáneo para proyectar una identidad homogénea de la sociedad egipcia contemporánea, sin embargo, está eligiendo los aspectos de esas identidades que formarán parte de la mayor “nueva identidad” homogénea, la identidad egipcia” (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

> “Un análisis de la campaña revela dos temas principales: primero, el “nuevo egipcio” se conceptualiza como una antítesis del “otro islamista”; segundo, la identidad egipcia se construye como un rico mosaico compuesto por siete pilares: faraónico, grecorromano, copto, islámico, árabe, mediterráneo y africano” (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

El-Sisi ha centrado la identidad del "nuevo egipcio" en los valores islámicos, sin tener en cuenta las religiones minoritarias del país, aunque menciona una, con la intención de unir al pueblo egipcio con respecto a la "agenda política, económica y social del régimen y mejorar su imagen internacional”, y al mismo tiempo intentar fusionar una variedad de otras identidades religiosas y culturales (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Con la identidad cultural de Egipto en constante cambio a medida que pasa de una generación a la siguiente, y a medida que cambian sus visiones del mundo, las fuerzas en competencia intentan explotar las identidades de transición con la intención de homogeneizar una identidad egipcia única que obliga a asumir la identidad de los pequeños grupos en el poder, a todos los egipcios en su conjunto (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

Egipto hoy es visto como una nación islámica, y esto se debe, en parte, a que los Hermanos Musulmanes intentaron usar sus elecciones parlamentarias y presidenciales como un medio para institucionalizar la islamización de Egipto, “y lograron promulgar una constitución en 2012 que entre otras cosas, estableció que Egipto es parte de la nación islámica” (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

Más allá, y más extremo, está el ejemplo de organizaciones yihadistas que hacen lo mismo, “la organización yihadista salafista Ansar Bait al-Maqdis juró lealtad a Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi en 2014, y se convirtió en Wilayat Sinai, la “Provincia de Sinaí” del Estado Islámico”, forzando una identidad extremista en el país y más allá de los ciudadanos de la región del Sinaí, que pocos apoyaron (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

Después de la revolución egipcia de 2011, se estaba formando una nueva identidad entre los jóvenes que amenazaba el objetivo de crear una identidad homogeneizada y se deterioró aún más con el derrocamiento de los Hermanos Musulmanes en 2013, cuando Abdel Fattah el-Sisi instituyó un golpe de Estado y posteriormente tomó control (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). El-Sisi intentó remodelar una identidad que sirviera a las necesidades y políticas de su régimen con la intención de inculcarla entre las generaciones más jóvenes, mientras resolvía simultáneamente debilitar las identidades revolucionarias (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Estos cambios fueron un intento de “forjar el carácter de la población joven de Egipto, cultivar su identificación con las políticas de el-Sisi y alentar normas que sean consistentes con sus objetivos”, como un intento adicional de calmar las protestas y la urgencia de cambio entre los revolucionarios (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

La reforma de la identidad egipcia de El-Sisi fue una de salvación desde su perspectiva: creía que en última instancia estaba salvando a Egipto del islamismo, que se creía que era una organización terrorista velada y que actuaba como una organización democrática, que habría causado la destrucción del Egipto político, además de elementos económicos y sociales si se les hubiera dejado en el poder (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). El régimen de El-Sisi se centró en este aspecto de los ideales, particularmente de las generaciones más jóvenes, que afirmaban que los islamistas eran antitéticos a la verdadera identidad egipcia, creando una división extrema entre los islamistas y todos los demás egipcios nacionalistas, dividiendo y obligando a los egipcios a ser uno solo de dos categorías: terrorista islamista o nacionalista; ambas posiciones muy extremas a tomar (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Esta identidad nacional binaria forzada permitió que el-Sisi se proclamara a sí mismo como el protector de la identidad egipcia cuando denunció el terrorismo interno y convirtió a muchos automáticamente a 'elegir' el nacionalismo, “el resultado de una revolución que rescató a Egipto de una amenaza existencial que buscaba convertir su identidad única en una visión panislámica supraegipcia” (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Además, esta acción legitimó la expulsión del poder de los Hermanos Musulmanes, pareciendo devolver el control de la propia identidad al pueblo y fuera de las manos de los extremistas, identificándolos como “ladrones de conciencia y sentido común, ladrones de identidad, y traidores a su patria”. Se planteó el derrocamiento del estado Musulmán como una revolución llevada a cabo por personas que querían preservar su identidad y temían perderla (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

Usama al-Sayyid al-Azhari, asesor presidencial para asuntos religiosos, explica en su columna de 2016 en al-Ahram que los egipcios tienen cualidades definitorias únicas, “incluida la firmeza frente a las crisis; raíces fuertes; capacidad innovadora; amplios horizontes; pasión por el

desarrollo; profundidad cultural; y creencia en Dios", (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Esta reconstrucción de la persona egipcia implicó a la religión como una de las cualidades más definitorias de la identidad, junto con otros aspectos percibidos que no están necesariamente enraizados en hechos, sino más bien en suposiciones. Si bien es cierto que la mayoría del país es musulmán, con minorías que reclaman otras religiones, debe recordarse que no es posible no estar afiliado a una religión en Egipto; la desvinculación del islam está prohibida, y el propio gobierno exige que todos se identifiquen con una de las tres religiones (islam, cristianismo o judaísmo) en sus tarjetas de identificación (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

Algunas de las otras cualidades definitorias mencionadas por al-Azhari, como tener "fuertes raíces", no parecen tener una referencia más amplia a nada en particular, ya que no se especifican y además nombra la "profundidad cultural" como otro aspecto, suponiendo una referencia a la antigua cultura de Egipto (Winter y Shiloah, 2019), aunque la falta de explicación demuestra la insuficiencia del régimen para definir a la población en general.

Al-Azhari afirma que la "capacidad innovadora" y los "amplios horizontes" son cualidades de la mayoría del pueblo egipcio cuando, en realidad, ambas descripciones se refieren a las aspiraciones de los individuos más que a sus identidades y, además, atribuyen indirectamente a la falta de innovación y expansión de horizontes sobre los egipcios en general y en su conjunto, pero más aún sobre aquellos que son incapaces de alcanzar estas aspiraciones porque eligen profesiones más seguras o tradicionales o no tienen acceso a ellas (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Algunas de las otras cualidades definitorias mencionadas por al-Azhari, como tener "fuertes raíces", no parecen tener una referencia más amplia a nada en particular, ya que no se especifican y además nombra la "profundidad cultural" como otro aspecto, suponiendo una referencia a la antigua cultura de Egipto (Winter y Shiloah, 2019), aunque la falta de explicación demuestra la insuficiencia del régimen para definir a la población en general. Winter y Shiloah (2019) sugieren que, "El llamado a "construir una nueva persona" no es exclusivo del régimen de El-Sisi. Aparece en diferentes países a lo largo de la historia, durante tiempos de revoluciones, reformas y cambios dramáticos, principalmente bajo regímenes autoritarios o totalitarios." Mencionan que tal vez esto esté prefigurando la estrategia política más amplia de El Sisi, pero a corto plazo El Sisi sugiere que los egipcios contemporáneos tienen fallas en su expresión de identidad y carácter, lo cual necesita ser corregido, proyectando, "…un ideal utópico que los civiles deben esforzarse por alcanzar, y el desarrollo de ese carácter implica esfuerzos educativos, culturales e ideológicos activos dictados desde arriba". En última instancia, la reeducación y reidentificación del egipcio moderno por parte de el-Sisi aspira a borrar las identidades individuales y locales con una identidad mayor que lo abarque todo, que sirva a su agenda política y perpetúe su propio sentido de grandeza propia, actuando como un salvador para el país, quizás con la intención de que se convierta en el próximo autócrata 'elegido democráticamente' de Egipto.

La nueva identidad egipcia de El-Sisi tiene otras implicaciones que han sido graves con respecto a los derechos humanos y el desafío a lo que él y su régimen consideran identidades aceptables y

eso incluye la homosexualidad y las identidades no binarias. Para entender por qué estas identidades no son aceptadas en el Egipto contemporáneo, primero tuvimos que discutir la estrategia de el-Sisi y su régimen con respecto a la identidad. Ahora se entiende que los objetivos de el-Sisi son reformar la identidad egipcia moderna a través de una serie de programas que reeducan a los egipcios, imponen el nacionalismo y la asociación religiosa, y reconstruyen el carácter egipcio después de haber sido abandonado (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

> "Un artículo en al-Ahram pedía una reorganización multidisciplinaria de los sistemas: un sistema educativo que cultive ciudadanos productivos; instituciones religiosas que inculquen valores de respeto, orden, limpieza e integridad; instituciones culturales que fomenten la creatividad; arte que difundirá valores de tolerancia y comunicaciones que se centrarán en lo positivo en lugar de lo negativo" (Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

Aunque muchos de estos aspectos parecen óptimos para cualquier sociedad, el-Sisi pone mucho énfasis y responsabilidad en las instituciones religiosas para la integridad y el arte para los valores y la tolerancia, así como las comunicaciones para un giro positivo; esta atención a estas áreas específicas se contradicen hasta cierto punto.

Con instituciones religiosas inculcando sus creencias de integridad, esto supone que estas instituciones pueden ser las que definen la moralidad con base en las propuestas del régimen de lo que constituye el carácter moral de un individuo. Esto complica aún más el concepto cuando se espera que las personas asistan a estas sesiones educativas, si no es que están obligadas a hacerlo, tal vez forzando a las personas menos religiosas a asistir cuando ya pueden tener un alto carácter moral sin la influencia de la entidad religiosa o no religiosa , pero quedan atados a su religión porque nacieron en ella, sin poder salir debido a las amenazas de persecución y/o quedan obligados a adherirse a ella por la imposibilidad de omitirla en los documentos del gobierno (Human Rights Watch, 2007). Además, las entidades religiosas, incluidas el Islam y el cristianismo, que condenan la homosexualidad, pueden tener derecho a la reeducación de las personas homosexuales, (¿pueden o ejercen ese derecho? ¿Quién lo ejerce, la entidades o los individuos?) la conocida como terapia de conversión (Welle, 2020). Este acto por sí solo es una mentalidad personal (¿Te refieres a la terapia, que es un acto personal? ¿No es una imposición política?) y una creencia de moralidad, basada en un sistema de creencias religiosas, en lugar de uno fáctico, que otorga no solo autoridad religiosa sobre la moralidad, sino también autoridad política. El régimen de El-Sisi ya ha demostrado su intolerancia por la homosexualidad, calificándola de desviación sexual o libertinaje, y condenando y castigando aún más a los partidarios y defensores de la liberación social (Bernstein, 2017).

Aunque el gobierno de el-Sisi había comenzado a tomar medidas enérgicas en su primer mandato contra las personas, simpatizantes y defensores LGBTQIA a través de una variedad de actividades encubiertas y catfishing (utilizando la identidad y las fotos de otra persona para encontrar amigos o relaciones románticas en línea (WebMD Editorial Contributors, 2020)) (Ameling, 2022) en un

intento de impedir la perversión y la inmoralidad (Clegg, 2019), intensificó estas medidas enérgicas en 2017 contra las personas antes mencionadas, pero comenzó a incluir a otros activistas y satíricos y a casi cualquier persona que se opusiera al régimen de el-Sisi, incluyendo a cualquiera que pareciera 'diferente', lo que podría incluir artistas, cineastas, actores y otros artistas (Ameling, 2022). Esta focalización en personas que simplemente parecen diferentes por la forma en que se visten, actúan, caminan, se peinan o se maquillan, podría amenazar la expresión de identidad de cualquier individuo. Quizás este sea el propósito de tales objetivos por parte del régimen de el-Sisi, mantener una imagen idealizada específica del 'nuevo egipcio', una táctica de miedo que reprime la expresión externa de cualquier sexualidad y/o identidad no aprobada (por el propio régimen). Los artistas y aquellos que trabajan en los campos del arte, a menudo se consideran "diferentes" y se presume que son individuos que experimentan y superan los límites de la sociedad a través de su pensamiento creativo y su expresión creativa, pero el régimen de el-Sisi parece estar reprimiendo estos aspectos con el fin de perpetuar un artista conservador, religioso, que se adhiere a las normas sociales, políticas y de género de una sociedad nacionalista.

La interseccionalidad de las identidades que existen dentro de cualquier individuo, es importante para cualquier cultura, ya que crea variedad, desafíos y experiencias que difieren entre los individuos que fomentan el crecimiento y el empoderamiento entre ellos, ya que pueden expandir sus círculos de conocimiento, educación, cultura, creencias, aspiración y que puede conducirlos a un enriquecimiento de la sociedad en general (The University of British Columbia, 2021). La represión o el intento de eliminar estas interseccionalidades, no las borra de la existencia, pero puede alentar a los individuos a expresarlas de manera clandestina o fuera de la vista de los grupos represivos en el poder, lo que en última instancia podría conducir a lo contrario de lo que parece esperar, a través de sus esfuerzos, el régimen actual: una revolución para reclamar la autonomía de su identidad, que fue parte de la causa de la revolución egipcia de 2011 (Consejo de Europa, s.f.; Clegg, 2019; Winter & Shiloah, 2019).

Desafiar las construcciones heteronormativas en el Egipto moderno es una tarea peligrosa, ya que el simple hecho de parecer diferente podría llevar a una persona a la cárcel por un período indeterminado en el que probablemente sería acosada, como mínimo, y violada, torturada o incluso asesinada (Clegg, 2019). Los defensores y las personas LGBTQIA continúan encontrando diferentes formas de expresar sus identidades, arriesgándose al encarcelamiento, con la esperanza de marcar una diferencia y que finalmente se genere aunque sea, un ligero cambio de algún tipo, con una tolerancia mínima de su existencia, permitiéndoles cierta libertad en la expresión de sus identidades (Ameling, 2022; Human Rights Watch, octubre de 2020).

El "mosaico egipcio" en el que se centra el plan de el-Sisi está compuesto de elementos históricos y geográficos: faraónico, copto, islámico y grecorromano, y geográfico: árabe, mediterráneo y africano (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). El-Sisi reformula los aspectos religiosos como hechos históricos en lugar de un sistema de creencias, aparentemente en un intento de perpetuar un sentimiento de pertenencia a una nacionalidad en lugar de a una religión, lo que complica el nacionalismo si

los ciudadanos se ven separados de los demás. Este movimiento también hace que Egipto, en su conjunto, parezca "moderado, tolerante y cooperativo" desde una perspectiva extranjera (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Esto no es diferente a los Estados Unidos de América, en los que perpetúan la idea del 'crisol' donde todos son bienvenidos y juntos crean un país rico debido a las diferencias, no a pesar de ellas; sin embargo, esto es un falso sentido de aceptación ya que hay innumerables relatos de racismo e intolerancia de religión, raza y etnia (Booth, 1998). El uso que hace Egipto de las identidades geográficas tiene como objetivo proyectar a Egipto como un lugar de encuentro intercultural, tratando de centrarse en el mundo, siendo un vínculo entre los países árabes, africanos y europeos, así como resaltar sus rutas comerciales que conectan África, Asia y Europa (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Todos estos son aspectos positivos en los que centrarse cuando se habla de la identidad egipcia, y no es negativo asociar la identidad egipcia con ser un enlace con muchos continentes y regiones; sin embargo, la explotación de estas relaciones para pintar a los egipcios como un crisol de colores sirve como un velo delgado para tapara la realidad de su tolerancia moral a los ojos extranjeros, tratando de encubrir sus violaciones de los derechos humanos y parecer tolerantes, mientras que muchos grupos sufren por el régimen opresor.

Este velo se extiende también a las relaciones religiosas dentro del país, ya que el régimen de el-Sisi trata de ejemplificar la paz entre las religiones, cuando, de hecho, existe una amplia discriminación (Minority Rights Group, 2013). “El componente copto y el componente islámico, de manera conjunta e independiente, sirvieron para enfatizar la apertura y la tolerancia religiosa de Egipto”, como se ve a través de la exposición del Foro Mundial de la Juventud (Winter & Shiloah, 2019). Al mismo tiempo, el-Sisi propone que el cristianismo siga siendo una parte auténtica de la herencia egipcia, al mismo tiempo que conceptualiza a Egipto como un país islámico y reconoce el judaísmo, pero en un contexto histórico y no como una religión viva (Winter & Shiloah, 2019) . Al enmarcar las religiones en un contexto histórico, parece sugerir que no son parte de una identidad viva, lo que en última instancia socava, para muchos, una parte importante de su identidad. Aunque al hacerlo, el-Sisi está intentando minimizar la influencia de otras religiones en la identidad egipcia, ya que afirma que es una nación musulmana, y además, al hacerlo, proporciona medios para la educación moral islámica en todo el país, que podría afectar aún más gravemente a las personas LGBTQIA+ y, como resultado, provocar aún más violaciones de los derechos humanos.

5.1.2 Desafiando las construcciones heteronormativas de identidad en Occidente

A lo largo de la historia moderna, el arte ha sido un catalizador para que los individuos desafíen las normas sociales, culturales y políticas, así como para presentarse a sí mismos de manera auténtica, actuando como un medio de activismo para el cambio de esas normas y dando visibilidad a conceptos que ponen a prueba perspectivas opuestas (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.). Estos desafiantes a menudo estaban subrepresentados o eran minorías, como mujeres artistas, artistas de color, artistas LGBTQIA+, artistas discapacitados y artistas indígenas, que encontraron formas de expresar sus identidades y confrontar las normas sociales establecidas, a los conceptos de raza , y las conductas ligadas al género y a la sexualidad (The Art Story

Foundation, n.d.). Estos conceptos ganaron fuerza en los años 1970 y 1980 con el término "política de identidad", que los transformó en declaraciones más politizadas, pero desde entonces se han utilizado menos y los artistas contemporáneos están utilizando una terminología más matizada que ayuda a las personas a comprender las complejidades de la identidad y sus muchas intersecciones, en lugar de dejar cada aspecto como una identidad individual (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.). La visibilidad de las identidades y su reivindicación sigue siendo un tema importante para el arte y los artistas, pero ha estado cambiando.

Los artistas que trabajan en el arte de la identidad trabajan no solo para corregir el arte como una experiencia heteronormativa privilegiada, de hombres blancos, hecha por y para ellos, sino también para reformular el arte como un método de priorización de cuestiones de identidad, una corrección del desequilibrio en el que históricamente algunos individuos han estado sistemáticamente en desventaja, al igual que sus identidades y su arte, que simplemente habían sido pasados por alto y subestimado (The Art Story Foundation, n.d.). El arte creado por y para personas marginadas, incluidos indígenas y personas de color (BIPOC), ha ayudado a fomentar debates sobre las interseccionalidades de la identidad y los esfuerzos de descolonización en todo el mundo del arte, como los museos, pero también en la política y la sociedad (The Fundación Art Story, n.d.).

> "…la identidad puede ser tomada por las prácticas artísticas como un "objeto" sobre el que trabajar y puede, como cualquier otro material ideológico, ser elaborado de manera específicamente artística" (Močnik, s.f.).

Rastko Močnik (n.d.) sugiere que una identidad, ya sea cultural o artística, es aquella que está reconstruida y se adapta a las necesidades de las personas, a menos que presente una amenaza a la identidad nacional, aparentemente para preservar estereotipos y creencias sobre grupos culturales homogeneizados. Močnik (n.d.) explica además que se impide la comercialización de la "diversidad cultural" para frustrar la explotación; sin embargo, al hacerlo, se legitima la "intervención estatal en el campo de la cultura", que Močnik compara con una "versión simplificada del entusiasmo folclórico del siglo XIX promovido por intelectuales nacionalistas". Este concepto de nacionalismo discreto y/o "cultura" influenciada por el estado es similar a lo que se ve en el Egipto contemporáneo bajo el régimen de el-Sisi, ideales de un gobierno que cambian con cada nuevo líder, que representa una amenaza genuina para la verdadera expresión de la identidad cultural, sexual o religiosa.

En el caso de los Estados Unidos de América bajo el expresidente Trump, las identidades religiosas y políticas dominaron el discurso y amenazaron la salud y la seguridad de las mujeres, los BIPOC y las personas LGBTQIA+, ya que el propio Trump aceptó, promovió y perpetuó la violencia contra los "otros", para aumentar su apoyo, incluido el nombramiento de conservadores cristianos como jueces en la Corte Suprema en un intento de cambiar las leyes establecidas que protegen el derecho de las mujeres al aborto legal seguro, así como los derechos del matrimonio homosexual

y otras leyes contra la discriminación establecidas para proteger a las personas LGBTQIA (Canellos & Gerstein, 2022; Mangan, 2022). Estos jueces rompen la barrera muy importante de la división entre la iglesia y el estado, utilizando sus creencias cristianas como el estado de derecho en lugar de la moralidad real, violando los derechos religiosos de un gran número de personas, incluidas las personas judías (Gersen, 2022). La manipulación del gobierno por parte de conservadores religiosos de cualquier tipo tiene implicaciones muy reales para las personas vulnerables, que incluso pueden llegar a violar los derechos humanos (Human Rights Watch, 2022, 13 de enero (b)).

Si bien las identidades homosexuales o no binarias no son construcciones en oposición rebelde a la norma, están en contra de las identidades dominantes o binarias. Močnik (n.d., p.2) describe las identidades como "verticales" y "horizontales". Las identidades verticales se relacionan con la “comunidad identitaria” que pertenece a un grupo o entidad más grande y más poderosa, mientras que las identidades horizontales son “del mismo registro”, refiriéndose a grupos similares, aquellos que son similares en muchos o en la mayoría de los aspectos, pero diferentes en aspectos específicos, es decir, católicos frente a ortodoxos, canadienses frente a estadounidenses, que tienen similitudes dentro de las culturas, pero siguen siendo claramente diferentes (Močnik, s.f., p.2-3). Ambas formas plantean problemas en la estructura, ya que las identidades verticales tienden a crear jerarquías entre los grupos, utilizando un lenguaje que distingue a los grupos en niveles, como 'mayoritario' o 'minoritario' como en el caso de grupos religiosos o étnicos; y en el horizontal, la identidad que tiende a homogeneizar grupos distintos a través de puntos en común (Močnik, s.f., p.3). Estas estrategias de “conjuntos de identidad” a menudo son utilizadas por los gobiernos para perpetuar “nociones tradicionales de relaciones sociales”, que a menudo enmascaran, a veces sutilmente, chovinismos y sexismo como cultura o tradición (Močnik, nd, p.3).

Močnik (n.d., p.8) propone que la identidad no es un proceso, sino un efecto, que automatiza los campos sociales en las sociedades individualistas modernas, y además sugiere que, “Como [un] mecanismo ideológico, la identidad despolitiza las relaciones sociales, tensiones y conflictos – y traslada tanto la cohesión social como los conflictos sociales a la dimensión cultural”. A través de esta negociación social, la identidad se reforma a través de la despolitización y permite que la sociedad, consciente o inconscientemente, forme una identidad cultural moderna más realista, como afirma Močnik, a través de la "identidad-emprendimiento", y sin embargo, la identidad se reconstruye de una manera que restablece un sentido de política dentro de él, a través del diálogo del arte mismo (Močnik, s.f., p.8).

> “…la identidad como mecanismo ideológico bloquea o incluso destruye la articulación política de los procesos y relaciones sociales. Como el tratamiento artístico de las identidades necesariamente deconstruye las identidades y sus mecanismos, recupera la dimensión política excluida. En este caso, como probablemente en muchos otros, la presunta "politización" contemporánea de las prácticas artísticas resulta de su

> consecuente realización de operaciones específicamente estéticas de "elaboración secundaria" sobre el material ideológico. Por todo eso, la politización artística tiene efectos reales" (Močnik, s.f., p.8-9).

Močnik (n.d., p.9) implica además que la replicación de un material, complementándolo y transformándolo, nombrándolo para que encaje dentro de los parámetros establecidos por las artes visuales modernas; una obra de arte específica puede, a través de un procedimiento práctico, replicar "la trayectoria histórica de las prácticas artísticas modernas", lo que le permite ser tanto una obra de arte moderna como histórica, modernizando las técnicas y los materiales, creando una obra contemporánea que "inscribe" la obra de arte con aspectos históricos abstractos (Močnik, s.f., p. .9).

> "…el proceso practica reflexivamente, y de esta manera crítica prácticamente, su propia determinación histórica: el proyecto emancipador del modernismo puede llevarse a cabo de manera concreta, y por lo tanto efectiva, solo más allá del horizonte modernista" (Močnik, s.f., p.9) .

El arte que reinterpreta materiales y procesos y que intenta mantener elementos históricos, puede desafiar la forma en que el espectador percibe la obra de arte, ya sea en el espacio o en el tiempo, permitiéndole experimentar un conflicto de percepción en una obra de arte moderna (Močnik, s.f., p. 10-12). El juego de percepción y emoción puede permitir al espectador desafiar su propia comprensión de la obra de arte, pero también de sí mismo en ese momento.

"Históricamente, en la cultura occidental, el arte ha servido como un medio de expresión sin censura, en el que la desnudez, el erotismo y la intimidad se han considerado permisibles" (Cowley et al., 2016) y esta falta de censura ha permitido una genuina autoexpresión, que incluye la expresión sexual y de identidad: la creación de arte ayuda a una persona a comprenderse a sí misma y al mundo que la rodea (Gehl, 2021). Gehl (2021) sugiere: Aprender sobre varias identidades a través del arte puede ser una herramienta poderosa para ayudar a aumentar la conciencia, desarrollar empatía y dar un mejor sentido al mundo. Esto, propone Gehl (2021), se hace a través del proceso de hacer arte y de ver el arte realizado por personas marginadas, en particular artistas LGBTQIA+. En una entrevista con una artista transgénero no binaria, Rae Senarighi, explica que ver arte que representa a personas transgénero y de género no conforme ayuda a "desentrañar la opresión y generar respeto por la comunidad transgénero" (Gehl, 2021). Los artistas que hacen arte que refleja a las comunidades y personas marginadas pueden crear un camino hacia el descubrimiento y el respeto por ellos, y parece que esto no se puede hacer mediante la censura. En su entrevista, Senarighi continuó explicando que "…la sala de arte es importante. A menudo, es uno de los únicos lugares donde las personas en la margen [de la sociedad] ven reflejos de quiénes pueden ser", lo que también sugiere que, al hacer arte, uno reflexiona sobre quiénes son y cómo esperan representar a otras personas trans o no conformes con el género para representar ellos de la manera más auténtica (Gehl, 2021).

Keith Haring "creó un lenguaje visual de símbolos y semántica visual diseñado para dialogar con su audiencia", utilizando el arte como un "lenguaje visual" para transmitir conceptos difíciles e iniciar conversaciones incómodas que antes se consideraba tabú para hablar abiertamente en la esfera pública durante los años 80 y 90 (Landis, 2021). El trabajo de Jean-Michel Basquiat abordó temas aún relevantes como la raza, la pobreza, la clase y la brutalidad policial a través de sus trabajos, en su mayoría de graffiti, a finales de los años setenta y ochenta (Landis, 2021). Tourmaline, trans, queer, activista, cineasta, editora y escritora, crea obras centradas principalmente en personas trans, documentando sus vidas e historias (Landis, 2021). Todos estos artistas estadounidenses, aunque muy diferentes, estaban usando su arte, entre muchos otros, en un intento de desafiar el statu quo, las políticas del gobierno y la percepción de la sociedad sobre los principales problemas que enfrentan y afectan a los grupos marginados. Han utilizado su obra de arte para expresarse a través de ella y al mismo tiempo desafiar al mismo gobierno que defiende su derecho a hacerlo. La libertad de expresión a través del arte ha llamado la atención sobre los principales problemas sociales y políticos, confrontando a quienes no están de acuerdo y, a través de su trabajo, rebelándose contra normas, estigmas y políticas represivas y opresivas.

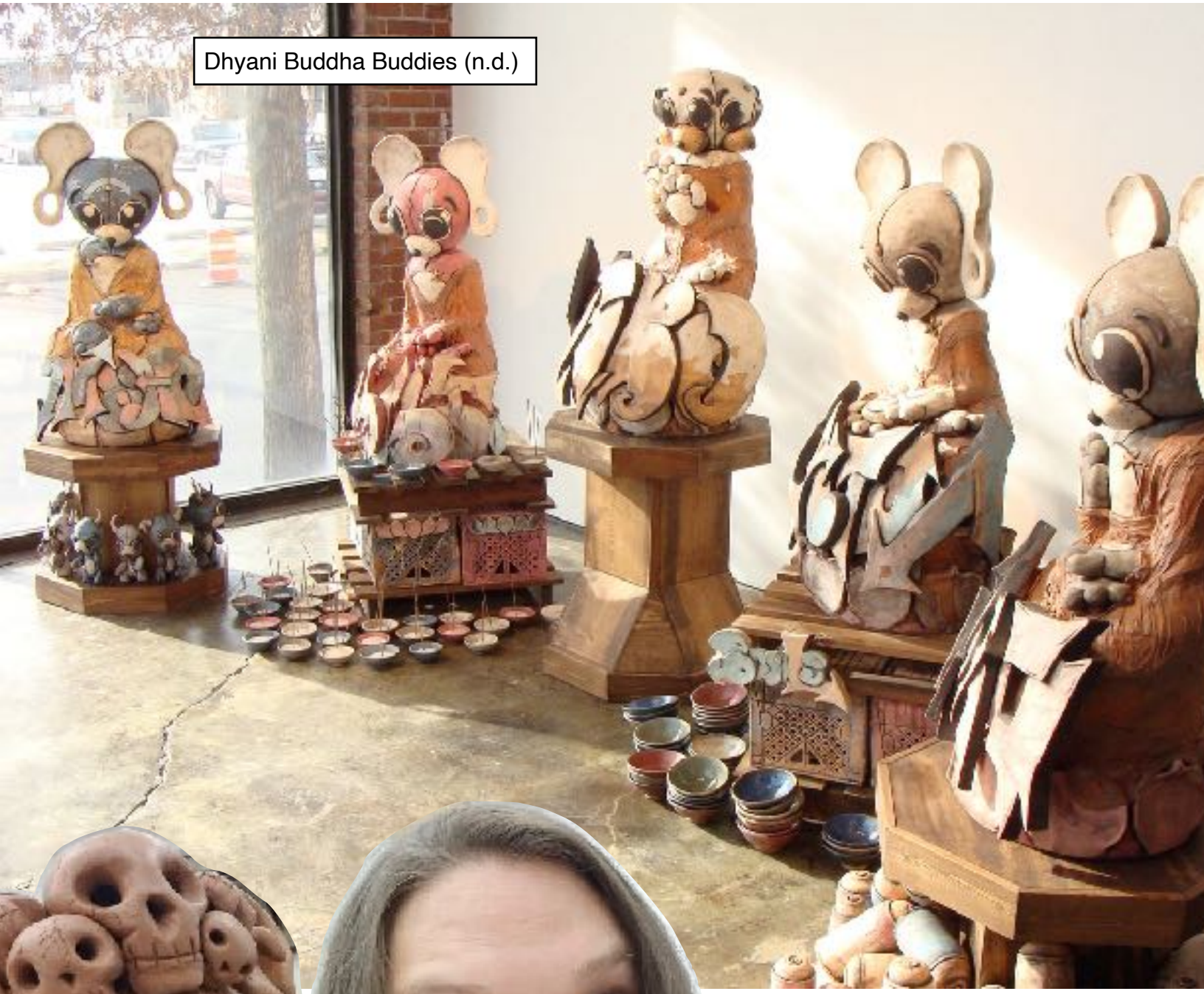
5.1.3 Identidades de artistas feministas contemporáneas

Esta sección analizará la vida de dos artistas contemporáneas y sus perspectivas sobre la identidad de género en el arte, Heidi Schultz y Houreya El Sayed. Se llevaron a cabo dos entrevistas separadas e individuales entre cada artista y yo misma. Esta sección se basa en las entrevistas realizadas.

5.1.3.A Heidi Schultz – entrevistada en enero de 2019 en línea por Skype

La primera artista a la que se dirigirá esta sección es Heidi Schultz, una ceramista y educadora transgénero estadounidense. Conocí a Heidi antes de que hiciera la transición como una persona muy gentil, divertida, o reservada sobre su vida personal y muy talentosa. Todos esperaban alrededor del basurero a que ella sacara sus vasijas del horno, así era conocida por tirar a la basura cualquier vasija, taza o escultura que tuviera alguna imperfección o simplemente porque el color no saliera como se esperaba. Yo era una de las jóvenes que la admiraba, a ella y a su habilidad, esperando ansiosamente sus descartes. Sin embargo, si bien esta actitud perfeccionista en lo que respecta a su trabajo era digna de admiración, podría verse también, como un velo de quién estaba escondiendo en ese momento.

La transición de Heidi fue gradual. Como budista y como una persona compasiva, le preocupaba cómo su familia iba a digerir su transición. A sus padres les proporcionó una carta previamente explicando sus motivos, lo que les permitió procesar y comenzar a navegar en el proceso con ella. Comenzó una terapia hormonal y se quedó con sus padres durante la transición para no crear un escándalo. Ella sintió que el hecho de que sus padres estuvieran con ella durante el proceso les ayudaría a comprender que su esencia seguiría siendo la misma y que simplemente cambiaría el exterior. Heidi comenzó a filtrar amigos y seres queridos, pero no necesariamente los eliminó de su vida, sino que evitó a las personas "inseguras" que podrían ser problemáticas. Cuando



Dhyani Buddha Buddies (n.d.)

Heidi Schultz

Schultz, H. (n.d.). Heidi Bobbette Schultz. http://heidi-schultz.squarespace.com/#/buddhabuddies2/

Anitya Buddha Buddy, 2018

Lord of the Black Land, (n.d.)

Sarasvati Buddha Buddy, 2015

Schultz, H. (n.d.). Heidi Bobbette Schultz. http://heidi-schultz.squarespace.com/#/buddhabuddies2/

comenzó su transición, experimentó mucha ansiedad por estar en lugares públicos, preocupada por las reacciones que su presencia podría provocar, lo que limitaba la forma en que interactuaba con el mundo que la rodeaba, le pareció desalentador, pero dijo: "Todo se redujo a la autoconservación", citando las tasas de asesinatos de personas transgénero y siendo atacados por ser quienes son.

Heidi descubrió que en "el mundo del arte" las personas se toman los cambios como ella, con calma, y pueden lidiar con los cambios más fácilmente. Expresó su satisfacción por esta situación explicando que, en general, los artistas tienen una mentalidad diferente, debido a la exposición a diversas voces por la apertura natural del arte mismo. No había encontrado problemas dentro del mundo del arte (con artistas) que causaran conflictos significativos, más allá de la frustración con los detalles de la transición como artista. Mencionó que uno de los mayores obstáculos fue cambiar el nombre de dominio de su sitio web y trasladar a sus seguidores existentes para asociarla a ella y su trabajo con su nueva identidad. Los curadores [de galerías de arte] parecían arreglarse apropiadamente sin problemas, pero sabían de su cambio. Heidi mencionó que los artistas son excéntricos, por lo que "no es gran cosa" cambiar el nombre de uno, ya que hizo referencia a los seudónimos que podría tomar como artista ya que en el mundo del arte, se acostumbra. Mencionó que aunque ha sido artista y profesora durante mucho tiempo, no ha tenido un gran impacto en sus alumnos; cree que esto se debe a que no es "famosa", y sugiere que tal vez hubiera sido más difícil todo su proceso si ella lo hubiera sido, citando a las Wachowski (hermanas trans que dirigieron las películas de Matrix).

Como educadora, no encontró apropiado ni necesario insistir en hablar explícitamente de su identidad de género y nuevamente adoptó un enfoque pasivo al ser un ejemplo. Mientras que otros profesores pueden indicar sus pronombres y la forma en que se identifican (cisgénero), ella afirmó que nunca le molestó que le preguntaran y que, en su caso, sintió que era "bastante claro" y que "la gente lo sabe" por lo que no había mucha necesidad de que ella se saliera de su camino, considerando que la mayoría de la gente, rara vez dice algo directamente. Afirmó que, como profesora de cerámica, le gusta "apegarse a los negocios" y seguir siendo profesional, Con esto esperaba que la tomaran en serio y ser un ejemplo para las personas trans, pero, como educadora profesional, su papel es educar y dar ejemplo de su profesión y habilidades a todos los estudiantes. Se refirió a tener estudiantes trans a lo largo de los años y explicó que su presencia y éxito podrían ser un ejemplo positivo para ellos, mostrándoles que hay oportunidades si te esfuerzas. Heidi mencionó que era importante ser un ejemplo para los estudiantes trans para que pudieran ver que las cosas mejoran y demostrar que no todos están conspirando contra ellos, ellos también podrían convertirse en ejemplos para otros, tanto dentro como fuera de la comunidad trans.

Como ceramista y educadora a nivel universitario, Heidi explicó que su experiencia de transición nunca fue realmente un problema, a pesar de hacerlo en un ambiente conservador, aunque admitió que el mundo de la cerámica no es conservador. Explicó que se sintió más cómoda en un

papel pasivo cuando se trataba de la expresión de género externa, aunque mencionó que ha tenido la oportunidad de hablar. Ella explicó que no tendría necesidad de negar su identidad de género si surgiera el tema, pero que no se discutió.

El “rol pasivo” de Heidi en la expresión externa de su identidad de género y su transición es algo que ella considera un aspecto importante de su defensa de los derechos trans. Ella no cree que su obra haya cambiado, sino que ha mejorado a lo largo de su vida, lo que puede decirse de la mayoría de los artistas que siguen practicando con tanta constancia como Heidi. Ella cree que su género no se expresa en su obra de arte, específicamente en su colección Buddha Buddies, ya que intenta crear "obras sin género", ya que evitan el sexo y el género, y "expresan algo más", incluido el arte callejero, como graffiti y expresión espiritual, “pero no de género”. Ella explica que, aunque su arte no refleja su propia identidad de género, ser artista la ha ayudado con su transición de género. Heidi explicó los sentimientos que dice que muchas personas trans tienen sobre las expectativas que tienen al crecer, incluida la vergüenza de quienes sienten que realmente son, ya que no coinciden con las personas para las que fueron preparadas. Confesó los arrepentimientos que tenía por no vivir su mejor vida, dando vueltas sobre qué hacer y si debería enfrentar la realidad de quién estaba escondiendo o cuándo. Continuó expresando dudas sobre quién sería ella si hiciera la transición, miedo a la comparación de su trabajo anterior con las ideas que tenía para el trabajo que haría durante y después de la transición, pero estaba segura de que su trabajo sería auténticamente suyo. A medida que hizo la transición, no se preguntó cómo se percibiría si como un trabajo masculino o femenino, sino que más bien reflejaría su verdadero yo.

A través de su proceso de producción artística como ceramista, Heidi ha descubierto que algunas exposiciones la han pasado por alto porque ella no hace específicamente arte que refleje su identidad de género, pero también, explicó, porqué “trans y religión no van de la mano” a los ojos de muchos. Quería enfatizar que las personas trans no son invisibles y que los artistas trans no están obligados a expresar su identidad de género a través de su arte; al igual que muchos otros artistas, quiere que se reflejen sus otras identidades interseccionales. Sin embargo, ella cree que está haciendo una diferencia a través de la exposición. Como educadora y autoproclamada modelo a seguir "pasivo", cree que está marcando una gran diferencia en la vida de sus alumnos que, de otro modo, no podrían interactuar ni conocer a las personas trans. Heidi cree que su papel pasivo pero auténtico en sus vidas, a través de la exposición y la interacción con ella, puede cambiar las perspectivas y los prejuicios o conceptos erróneos sobre las personas trans. Heidi sugiere que este método permite que otros la acepten y comprendan a ella (y a otras personas trans) a su propio ritmo, aliviando la ansiedad y los temores sobre ellos a medida que sus muros se derrumban a través de su relación maestro-alumno. Heidi también sugirió que darles a los estudiantes espacio para ser ellos mismos en clase en última instancia los hará sentir cómodos en clase, lo que les permitirá expresarse completamente sin juicios, lo que, en su opinión, produce grandes artistas capaces de encontrar su voz a través de su arte, como lo hizo ella.

Heidi sugiere que su arte no expresa su identidad de género. La propia Heidi explica su temor de

expresarse realmente a través de su trabajo, ya que le preocupaba cambiar el 'look', lo que haría que se inclinara hacia una dirección u otra en el espectro de género, pero al crear "amigos" coloridos, espirituales y sin género, evita esa posibilidad. Sin darse cuenta, expresó su deseo de inclusión en todo el espectro de una manera pacífica. Si bien los Buddies no tienen sexo ni género, son coloridos y expresivos, algo que la propia Heidi silenció en su trabajo previo a su transición. Ella reflexiona sobre su transición de género como un proceso gradual, muy parecido a la evolución de los *Buddha Buddies*. Y aunque los sujetos no hacen la transición de un género a otro, en comparación con el trabajo anterior de Heidi, hay una transición en el estado de ánimo y la identidad, una que se siente auténtica y expresiva, tal vez representando los desafíos de su propia transición a través de un colorido, lúdico, colección de 'amigos'.

5.1.3.B Dr. Houreya El Sayed – entrevistada en abril de 2017 en Harem City, Egipto
Dr. Houreya El Sayed es una artista visual feminista egipcia ubicada en Harem City, dentro de un complejo de artistas, en la gobernación del 6 de octubre en Egipto. La familia Sawiris, una familia inversora y la familia empresarial más rica de Egipto, construyó Harem City a través de Orascom Housing Communities (OHC), su proyecto de vivienda asequible, cuyo objetivo era proporcionar viviendas asequibles y de alta calidad a personas de bajos ingresos y, en este caso, un recinto reservado para que los artistas continúen creando y produciendo arte a precios reducidos (Tryhorn, 2010; Orascom Housing Communities, n.d.). Rodeada de vecinos artesanos en la pequeña comunidad del desierto, Houreya vive sola en uno de los muchos humildes apartamentos de artistas con sus dos gatos. Su taller está a solo unos pasos de la puerta principal. Con un gran horno eléctrico, muchos estantes polvorientos llenos de trabajo y una rueda de lanzamiento, se las arregla como una artista viva/trabajadora. Al dividir su taller y su hogar en escultura y cerámica, es difícil encontrar la separación entre los dos, ya que principalmente esculpe 'carrara' (mármol blanco) y arroja porcelana, el polvo de ambos es casi indistinguible. Su vida es su arte y está rodeada diariamente de lo que le da alegría: crear arte.

Trabaja a diario en varias esculturas inacabadas y otros trabajos por encargo en curso. Houreya se dedica a crear arte a partir de ideas e influencias que encuentra en el día a día. Al despertarse todos los días, se prepara con dos trenzas uniformes que se agitan en su cabello oscuro y rizado, vestida con una galabeya (vestimenta tradicional egipcia) sobre ropa de calle y se pone a trabajar en uno de sus proyectos en curso. Se la puede encontrar bebiendo té mientras lija a mano figuras escultóricas hechas a mano.

Houreya comenzó, principalmente, como pintora en sus estudios universitarios de bellas artes. Sintió la necesidad de expresarse y descubrió que la pintura la ayudaba a hacerlo. Después de la pintura, se inició en la escultura y se deleitó con la escultura arquitectónica. Pronto pasó a las instalaciones, principalmente esculturas individuales de la figura humana, que le valieron premios por su obra, tanto a nivel nacional como internacional. Durante este tiempo, trabajó en estrecha colaboración con el Ministerio de Cultura de Egipto. Descubrió que dentro de la escultura podía articular su diálogo interno, pero pronto se encontró buscando más formas de transmitir sus ideas

Dr. Horeya El Sayed, Ciudad del Harén, Egipto, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

Obra de vidrio inacabada, Ciudad del Harén, Egipto, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

Obra de vidrio inacabada, Ciudad del Harén, Egipto, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

y conceptos. Houreya se encontró buscando formas de representar y simular el alma. Sintió que tantos materiales, como pintura sobre lienzo, piedra y cerámica, limitaban su capacidad para demostrar la verdadera esencia del alma. Experimentó con varios materiales más con la intención de capturar esta esencia, como la luz y el humo, pero todos se quedaron cortos. Mientras exploraba materiales translúcidos y transparentes, se encontró con el vidrio. Este intermedio entre los materiales duros a los que estaba acostumbrada: la piedra y la cerámica, y los materiales que carecían de tacto: la luz y el humo, descubrió que el vidrio era un material digno de emprender.

Houreya comenzó a aprender a soplar y moldear vidrio de un hombre sencillo con un taller. Aprovechó la oportunidad para aprender de alguien que tenía experiencia en el material, pero pronto descubrió que con la experiencia venía la repetición y la monotonía. Aunque el material era intrigante y lo suficientemente expresivo, se encontró en una rutina con un maestro que prefería que hiciera piezas funcionales con las que pudiera ganarse la vida en lugar de "perder su tiempo" con obras expresivas que eran meros experimentos sin valor monetario, según su perspectiva. Más tarde pudo experimentar de forma independiente, pero mientras era aprendiz aprendió los fundamentos del arte del soplado de vidrio. Está agradecida por su experiencia, pero terminó su práctica y comenzó a explorar el soplado de vidrio de forma independiente.

Como mujer egipcia que vivía en El Cairo o sus alrededores, Houreya había crecido escuchando las historias de los dioses y diosas del antiguo Egipto. Sintió una conexión con su ascendencia antigua, mientras que muchos otros en su generación buscaron un conocimiento más moderno. Houreya comenzó a investigar su herencia, leyendo historias sobre los dioses y diosas del antiguo Egipto. Empezó a comprenderse más a sí misma (su herencia) y comenzó a desarrollar una mayor conexión con su trabajo de una manera primitiva, según ella. Después de visitar muchos templos y tumbas de los antiguos egipcios, además de ir al Museo de El Cairo casi a diario, dibujar y absorber más y más imágenes antiguas, Houreya se encontró anhelando una mayor comprensión, ya que, de niña, solo aprendió árabe en la escuela y poco o nada sobre el antiguo Egipto. Los tiempos antiguos de sus antepasados estaban siendo ignorados, por la razón que fuera, y aunque se encontraba rodeada de historia, no podía interpretarla. Usando las imágenes del antiguo Egipto como inspiración para su trabajo, decidió dar un paso más y comenzó a estudiar jeroglíficos. Sus clases en la Biblioteca de Alejandría le permitieron leer jeroglíficos y tomó lecciones estrictas durante muchos meses. Aprendiendo mucho de su profesor universitario, comenzó a progresar, pero se sintió consternada cuando descubrió que su profesor era una persona muy religiosa, conservadora y de mente cerrada, a la que mencionó de pasada como sexista y para la que tenía poca paciencia. Con su paciencia al límite, abandonó sus estudios de los antiguos jeroglíficos, pero no sin llevarse mucha información. Estas lecciones le dieron a Houreya la oportunidad de conectarse con su pasado antiguo y leer vagamente los personajes pictóricos de sus antepasados. Encontró que las historias, los guiones y otros textos eran muy informativos, hermosos e inspiradores.

La experiencia de Houreya con su profesor de jeroglíficos, entre muchas otras a lo largo de su vida, la empujó a esforzarse más para lograr cosas más grandes en la vida, no solo como artista sino también como mujer. Siempre ha sido una mujer trabajadora y de voluntad fuerte, incluso cuando era niña, pero desarrolló una piel más dura y un impulso por la igualdad entre sus compañeros en la industria del arte y dentro de su comunidad y cultura. Feminista autoproclamada, dice que "lucha mucho" cuando la tratan de manera diferente. Ella menciona haber superado muchas batallas por las que tuvo que esforzarse más cada vez que fue rechazada o ignorada, hablar más fuerte cuando le dijeron que se callara y defenderse a sí misma y sus habilidades todo el tiempo. Houreya explica que ser mujer en Egipto no es fácil porque es una sociedad dominada por los hombres, pero es, como ella dice, "igual de difícil en el mundo del arte" en el que hay menos espacio para las mujeres. Cuenta que la pasaron por alto, la consideraron incapaz, precisamente por ser mujer y la consternación que sentía después de cada suceso. Ella afirma con optimismo: Con el trabajo, nada es difícil. Con los pasos correctos (tiempo), se vuelve fácil.

A pasos agigantados sigue avanzando y, según explica, deja que su "cartera hable por sí sola". Houreya explica que es una feminista fuerte porque cuando "las mujeres tienen menos derechos que los hombres, les da miedo". Con este concepto en mente, a menudo imparte talleres y enseña a jóvenes, niños y niñas, las mismas habilidades que ha aprendido a lo largo de su carrera. Ella encuentra la mayor alegría en los talleres con niñas jóvenes donde promueve la independencia y las anima a ser creativas y pensar de manera diferente. A menudo tiene que aclarar las expectativas religiosas y los conceptos erróneos sobre la creación de arte, específicamente la forma humana, explicando a sus alumnos que crear arte no es una forma de '*harram*' (replicar la forma humana de una manera que socava la creación del hombre por parte de Dios) y por eso, dándoles la seguridad de desarrollar grandes obras sin temor a persecución o condenación. Ella cree que con la educación religiosa correcta pueden ser artistas exitosos sin traicionar sus creencias religiosas y morales.

Ella reconoce que es una artista y una mujer talentosa e independiente, conocedora de muchas áreas del arte, la historia y la cultura, pero es humilde con una perspectiva realista pero hermosa de la vida. Houreya es un verdadero faro del feminismo en una cultura masculina, hambrienta de revolución.

Ambas mujeres han demostrado fuerza, coraje y empatía a lo largo de sus viajes artísticos en la práctica y como educadoras. Cada una de ellas muestra identidades distintas y cómo utilizan su arte como medio de autoexpresión y como herramientas de crecimiento, individualmente como personas y como artistas. Mujeres como Heidi y Houreya son ejemplos de experiencias y antecedentes artísticos diversos que silenciosamente hacen olas, confrontando y desafiando las normas religiosas, culturales y políticas, aunque no son 'famosas', usan el arte como una herramienta y un medio para generar cambios.

5.1.4 Expresión transcultural de la identidad en la muerte a través de prácticas funerarias y conmemorativas

Como se demuestra en el capítulo cuatro La muerte, la muerte es una oportunidad para que muchos expresen quiénes creen que son, independientemente de la realidad que vean los demás. Proyectamos y representamos una variedad de identidades a diferentes grupos a lo largo de nuestras vidas y, en la muerte, si tenemos la suerte, se nos da la oportunidad de reunir a nuestros seres queridos y ser recordados por todas las identidades que hemos tenido a lo largo de nuestras vidas. Si estamos preparados, quizás hayamos seleccionado meticulosamente cómo se preservará nuestra identidad final y cómo se verá. Este concepto, la proyección de nuestra identidad en la muerte, es una preocupación de mucha gente de todo el mundo intenta obtener. En el capítulo cuatro comparé la muerte y las prácticas funerarias en los Estados Unidos y Egipto, demostrando la superposición de las prácticas religiosas, así como el cuidado y las responsabilidades en la muerte, estos aspectos podrían considerarse universales, especialmente cuando se trata del deseo de ser recordados como nosotros creemos ser.

En particular, se debe recordar que las identidades recordadas por los sobrevivientes del difunto y las identidades retratadas antes o después de la muerte no están necesariamente basadas en hechos, sino en creencias, presumiblemente basadas en la interacción y experiencia con o por el difunto. Los sobrevivientes pueden tener vínculos emocionales con el difunto durante largos períodos de tiempo, y este artículo no intenta patologizar este hecho, sino reconocerlo y reconocerlo como parte del proceso de reconocimiento y perpetuación de la identidad del difunto (Unruh, 1983, p.340).

> “La muerte nos pide nuestra identidad. Enfrentado a la muerte, el hombre se ve obligado a dar de alguna forma una respuesta a la pregunta: ¿Quién soy yo? (Fulton, 1964, p.359).

Presuntamente está en la naturaleza humana querer ser recordado como una persona grande y maravillosa, admirada por muchos, si no por todos, pero las identidades que llevamos en nuestras mentes pueden ser diferentes a las que tienen otras personas con las que nos relacionamos. Nuestras identidades personales no siempre se reflejan en nuestras acciones y pueden ser interpretadas de manera diferente por otros (Unruh, 1983, p.340). Uno puede creerse un gran líder en los negocios, trabajador, confiable y adaptable y, sin embargo, sus familiares o compañeros de trabajo pueden entender que son diferentes o incluso opuestos, como un sabelotodo agresivo, híper enfocado en el trabajo (adicto al trabajo), desdeñoso con la familia y sus necesidades, indeciso o complaciente con la gente. Nuestra perspectiva de identidad es importante y muchos de nosotros tenemos diferentes identidades dependiendo de los grupos con los que estemos (identidades que se cruzan), y posiblemente nos parecemos más a nosotros mismos cuando estamos solos con nosotros mismos, pero tal vez incluso entonces inflamos nuestros propios egos perpetuando una falsa realidad de nuestra identidad personal (Bolding, 2020). En la muerte, solo podemos esperar que se nos recuerde por lo que creemos que somos.

> "Los moribundos esperan ser recordados como buenos padres, mujeres competentes, hombres de negocios exitosos, artistas creativos o pacificadores. Los sobrevivientes se quedan con paquetes de imágenes, materiales, objetos y deseos del difunto. Su tarea es dar sentido a esta amalgama y preservar selectivamente ciertas identidades de los difuntos" (Unruh, 1983, p. 340).

Unruh (1983, p. 341) explica que en la muerte, "las personas que mueren y sus sobrevivientes usan una "jerarquía de prominencia" para dar preferencia a algunas identidades sobre otras", creando estrategias para preservar algunas identidades, mientras ignoran o minimizan otras, particularmente cuando puede ser beneficioso para los sobrevivientes. Exagerar los sacrificios personales o profesionales de los difuntos, muchas veces en un intento de perpetuar una de sus identidades más aceptables o mejores, es una de estas estrategias (Unruh, 1983, p.341). Los sobrevivientes a menudo tienen un vínculo emocional con el moribundo o el difunto que afecta la perspectiva de su memoria o la reminiscencia del muerto/moribundo; esta puede ser una asociación tanto positiva como negativa (Unruh, 1983, p.341).

> "…los sobrevivientes a menudo mantienen un vínculo con el difunto que quizás nunca se pierda por completo; continúan experimentando imágenes, pensamientos y recuerdos recurrentes del difunto, aunque estos generalmente disminuyen en intensidad, impacto emocional y centralidad en sus vidas diarias… Este apego emocional se ve reforzado por acciones por parte de las personas antes de morir y sus sobrevivientes, que preservan algunas de las múltiples identidades del difunto, a menudo mucho después de que ha ocurrido la muerte" (Unruh, 1983, p.340).

Cuando las personas son conscientes del paso de su tiempo en la tierra, acercándose a la muerte, pueden comenzar a aclarar aspectos de sus identidades; a menudo "interpretan y asignan sus identidades a los sobrevivientes mediante el uso de tres estrategias: solidificar identidades, acumular artefactos y distribuir artefactos", lo que les permite ser recordados en sus términos (Unruh, 1983, p. 342). Unruh explica que "los moribundos comienzan a dar sentido a sus vidas acentuando partes de sus historias personales por las que desean ser recordados", lo que permite que el individuo sea explícito en sus intenciones y los propósitos de estos actos (Unruh, 1983, p.342). A través de una investigación de adultos mayores en Venice, California, se encontró que sus intenciones no eran la de ser recordados por sus méritos o grandes éxitos, sino que a través de la rememoración de sus vidas buscaban grandes cambios de perspectiva o fracturas de creencias que les ayudaran a comprenderse a sí mismos y "comunicar a los demás quiénes fueron" (Unruh, 1983, p.342). Al ser interrogado, Unruh descubrió que la mayoría de estos ancianos mencionaban aspectos de sus identidades que no se podían ver ni contar -aspectos morales de sus identidades- intentando solidificarlos a través de "memorandos, cartas, notas, diarios, poemas y reflexiones espontáneas que planean dejar atrás" (Unruh, 1983, p. 342).

> "Cuando las personas piensan que se están muriendo, comienzan a documentar

> fragmentos de su historia personal a través de autobiografías, entradas de diarios e historias que dejan partes de sí mismos con los sobrevivientes" (Unruh, 1983, p.342).

Cuando las personas se están muriendo, sus posesiones se convierten en "artefactos" de su vida – objetos que tienen significado sobre su existencia y tal vez su importancia en la vida– y Unruh (1983, p.343) explica que esta acumulación de artefactos de un individuo es una manera de preservar su identidad en el tiempo; estos artefactos pueden formar lo que él llama un "kit de identidad" cuando se combinan con sentimientos personales sobre uno mismo que están "ubicados, invertidos y almacenados en posesiones materiales". Unruh (1983, p. 343) sugiere que estos artículos pueden incluir "álbumes de recortes, álbumes de fotos, recuerdos, recuerdos y joyas que simbolizan historias personales (así como biografías compartidas)". Una variedad de objetos pueden servir como objetos de la identidad del difunto y, a menudo, tienen un mayor valor sentimental o significado para los sobrevivientes, sin embargo, el aspecto de la identidad de uno no se pierde, como sugiere Unruh (1983, p. 344) en un ejemplo que él proporciona:

Una mecedora adquirida se puede describir a los visitantes como "la que usó mi abuela durante 60 años mientras criaba a su familia". Por lo tanto, la identidad de la abuela como madre cariñosa puede entrelazarse con el objeto en sí.

La distribución de los artefactos también invoca la selección expresa de las identidades que deben dominar, como explica Unruh (1983, p.344), los testamentos finales (Testamentos) no solo ayudan a determinar los deseos finales del difunto, sino que ayudan a asignar y distribuir sus posesiones (artefactos) según lo deseado por el difunto. Los testamentos a menudo siguen líneas de parentesco, pero cuando se desvían de la jerarquía tradicional de prominencia, pueden conducir al reordenamiento de múltiples identidades en poder de un individuo (Unruh, 1983, p. 344). Un ejemplo de esto podría ser cuando un esposo o esposa muere, en lugar de dejar sus cosas a sus hijos, quienes serían los siguientes en la línea de herencia, las posesiones pasarían al cónyuge sobreviviente, permitiendo que su identidad de esposo o esposa tenga prioridad sobre ser padre o madre y hasta cierto punto, excluyendo parcialmente a los hijos de la herencia, al menos inmediatamente (Unruh, 1983, p.344). Esto significa que el difunto se sintió más obligado a ser identificado como un socio generoso (esposo o esposa) en lugar de ser identificado por cualquier otra identidad que tal vez encarnara, pero tal vez esto sea más notable cuando el difunto o el moribundo ha otorgado ciertos artículos a personas específicas con señaladas obligaciones anejas al control y protección de los bienes en cuestión (Unruh, 1983, p.344). La identidad de uno también puede perdurar a través de este proceso, como explica Unruh (1983, p. 344): "Una obligación puede ser el deseo del sobreviviente de preservar y proteger recuerdos o imágenes específicas del difunto, es decir, convertirse en un guardián del difunto," osea el aspecto de carácter del difunto. En esta situación, la persona que recibe el artefacto puede desear perpetuar la identidad del difunto, o estar obligado a hacerlo para recibirlo. Este proceso puede divulgar identidades más auténticas y "verdaderas" del difunto, ya que los testamentos ayudan a revelar preferencias discretas, algunas de las cuales pueden ser reveladoras; por ejemplo, alguien que

tenía creencias o causas políticas discretas, que se dedicaba a la filantropía pero que no quería parecer que tomaba partido, puede revelar sus verdaderas creencias y, al hacerlo, sus "verdaderas" identidades al morir, tal vez en forma de donaciones, sin embargo, lo mismo puede decirse de las exclusiones de beneficiarios, que pueden revelar aspectos más complejos de la propia identidad (Unruh, 1983, p.344-345).

La muerte proporciona un camino para que la supuesta verdadera identidad de uno se haga clara y honesta de muchas maneras y, como se mencionó anteriormente, también proporciona una forma de proyectar una identidad más idealizada que categóricamente verdadera; sin embargo, la muerte revela una identidad colectiva así como identidades interseccionales de un individuo a través de la relación y la experiencia con el difunto, por lo que presumiblemente la multitud de identidades que uno puede abarcar también podría ser contradictorias. Los memoriales y recuerdos de los difuntos pueden poner de manifiesto identidades ocultas o menos destacadas, que pueden ser tanto positivas como negativas en referencia al difunto, aunque la memoria y el legado parecen ser los aspectos más importantes a la hora de perpetuar la identidad del difunto/a.

En el capítulo cuatro, Muerte, analicé las prácticas funerarias y algunas prácticas conmemorativas como formas de recordar al difunto y ahora examinaré métodos y rituales más contemporáneos no sólo de conmemoración y recuerdo, sino también aquellos que sirven para perpetuar la identidad.

> "En y a través de los rituales, el difunto y el doliente se anclan en una cultura común específica, en un sistema de valores y una visión del mundo específicos, que se espera que persistan, independientemente de la desaparición de sus constituyentes singulares. Además de ser medios para mostrar respeto por el difunto y apoyo a los dolientes, los rituales de muerte pueden, en consecuencia, ser considerados como herramientas para la construcción de la identidad individual y colectiva" (Reimers, 1999).

Camisetas conmemorativas aerografiadas, conocidas como "*R.I.P. tees*", son un método de conmemoración que alcanzó su punto máximo en los años 90 y se convirtió en parte de la moda hip-hop en los Estados Unidos, pero sigue siendo muy popular entre la gente urbana de color (Sanders, 2017). Estos "*R.I.P. tees*" son camisetas que suelen ser de algodón blanco o poliéster, con cuello redondo (ajuste estándar) y con diseños estilo grafiti, que a menudo representan al difunto en sentido figurado y/o tienen factores de identificación que serían identificadores exclusivos de la identidad personal del individuo (Sanders, 2017). Algunas de estas imágenes son hiperrealistas, aparentemente fotográficas, incorporadas a un diseño surrealista y multidimensional (Sanders, 2017). Sanders (2017) explica que para algunos que usan las camisetas como un artefacto conmemorativo para el difunto, usan las camisetas también como un artefacto en sí mismo, como si el difunto encarnara la camiseta, incrustada con su imagen, nombres y alias, aspectos de quiénes eran y tienen un gran significado para quienes los usan. Se

Bluegrass Airbrush. (n.d.). *Rest in peace memorial airbrush shirt*. Bluegrass Airbrush. https://bluegrassairbrush.com/products/rest-in-peace-memorial-airbrush-shirt

pueden ver en funerales y memoriales, además de usarse regularmente como un recordatorio tanto del individuo como, a menudo, de cómo murió (Sanders, 2017; mayo de 2012). Algunos de estos memoriales, especialmente entre las comunidades cercanas, realizan reuniones anuales para recordar a los difuntos, cada año utilizando un nuevo diseño del R.I.P. camisetas como una forma de casi imitar al difunto, y como describió el hermano de un individuo, era la única forma en que sus hijos conocerán a su padre, por lo que las camisetas perpetúan su identidad y el propio memorial lo respalda ofreciendo personas importantes en su vida y las cosas que disfrutó en la vida (Sanders, 2017; mayo, 2012).

> "La gente emplea rituales para demostrar a dónde pertenecen y quiénes son. Pero los rituales no son simplemente formas de presentar una supuesta identidad... Un ritual no es solo un medio para demostrar una identidad preferida, sino que en realidad engendra esta identidad" (Reimers, 1999).

Los memoriales y los funerales son ejemplos precisos de sobre cómo se convierte un ritual en una expresión externa de identidad, ya que los miembros de la familia que lo organizan, junto con cualquier planificación previa del difunto, se combinan para crear una identidad colectiva del individuo y una que refleje las identidades del individuo que se desea expresar. En esta sección usaré mi experiencia personal con la muerte de mi propia madre como ejemplo.

Mi madre, Arlene, falleció bastante joven, a los 64 años. Mi madre era originaria del estado de Nueva York, pero no la habíamos visitado desde que yo tenía unos cuatro o cinco años, vivía en Missouri. Mi madre solo había mantenido contacto con su familia más cercana después de dejar Nueva York, cuando tenía 20 años, pero rara vez los veíamos; muchos de sus familiares también se habían ido a otras regiones, como Florida. Cuando a mi madre le diagnosticaron cáncer terminal y estaba claro que pronto fallecería, asumí el rol de extensión social (en su mayor parte), conectándome con su familia, familia de segundo grado, compañeros de trabajo tanto en los Estados Unidos como en India, además de viejos y actuales amigos. Recibí mensajes de varias zonas de Estados Unidos y de India, de personas que me contaban sobre su relación con mi madre, compartían recuerdos y su percepción de ella como su amiga, compañera de trabajo y parte de la familia. Muchas de las identidades expresadas fueron mixtas, ya que provenían de diferentes grupos sociales y períodos de tiempo a lo largo de su vida. Viejos amigos, familiares o compañeros de trabajo la conocían de manera muy diferente a quienes la conocieron más tarde en la vida. Había muchos puntos en común entre sus descripciones, pero las identidades que compartían sobre ella seguían siendo bastante distintas. Aprendí sobre estas nuevas identidades de mis tías y tíos, y sus primos, y de cómo su identidad evolucionó con el tiempo. Fue fascinante aprender sobre ella en diferentes etapas de su vida, todo lo cual desearía que hubiera compartido más abiertamente, tanto lo bueno como lo malo. Sin embargo, descubrí que entre mis dos hermanos y yo, también teníamos diferentes versiones de nuestra madre en nuestras mentes. Mi madre no había hecho muchos planes para el funeral antes de su muerte, solo los que había preparado muchos años antes, pero ninguno desde que le diagnosticaron la enfermedad, ya que

murió poco más de un mes tras el diagnóstico, lo que no le dejó tiempo para prepararse como le habría gustado ya que confiaba en un tratamiento esperanzador. Cuando no fue así, mis hermanos y yo tuvimos que empezar a planificar su despedida, mientras ella aún vivía; estábamos tratando de decidir sobre colores, flores, artefactos para el memorial, etc. y todos teníamos información diferente sobre sus preferencias y de cómo éstas habían podido cambiar con el tiempo; estaba claro que ella misma había estado interpretando el papel de 'madre' de manera diferente a la que teníamos cada uno de nosotros. Mi hermano mayor y su esposa pensaron que sus botas de vaquero y su silla de montar encajaban mejor con un aspecto del momento, junto con detalles en turquesa. Pensé que el burdeos era más adecuado ya que era el color que más usaba y parecía atraerlo, aparte de eso, esperaba incluir más aspectos de su vida aventurera con sus viajes algo recientes y su amor por la música rock. Mi hermano menor pensó que era más adecuado centrarse en su amor por el mar e incluir su colección de conchas marinas y usar colores más claros, como azules y verdes. Ninguno de nosotros se equivocó en nuestra búsqueda de resaltar aspectos de su identidad, pero las identidades que quizás compartió más con cada uno de nosotros fueron diferentes. Los colores y las flores que 'sabíamos' que amaba eran quizás los colores que asociaba con nosotros y no al contrario. Ella había creado micro-identidades con cada uno de nosotros.

A su muerte tuvimos que repartir sus bienes, lo cual fue complicado por muchas razones, ya que todos tenemos vínculos sentimentales con diferentes objetos, por diferentes razones, y no necesariamente uno es más importante que otro. A través de este proceso descubrimos que cada uno de nosotros tenía con ella un interés individual, uno que era único para cada hijo y que el otro no compartía. Era algo que cada uno compartía con ella y no entre nosotros. Descubrí que mi hermano mayor coleccionaba monedas con mi madre, algo que solo recordaba vagamente de cuando era niño, también hablaban sobre la vida en el rancho en Texas (donde vive mi hermano y donde nacimos todos) y las armas. A mi madre y a mí nos encantaban los caballos, pero principalmente admirábamos y diseñábamos joyas juntas, algo de lo que mis hermanos eran muy conscientes, aunque teníamos muchos otros pasatiempos, como la jardinería, debatir y compartir música, y seguir al equipo de béisbol de nuestra ciudad natal. Mi hermano menor y mi madre a menudo discutían sobre la crianza de los hijos, ya que él era un padre primerizo en ese momento; también hablaban a menudo sobre la caza de diferentes tipos de animales. Nuestra madre se esforzó por conectarse con cada uno de nosotros individualmente y encontrar algo que pudiéramos disfrutar juntos y, de esa manera, expresó diferentes aspectos de su identidad con nosotros en un nivel íntimo. Las historias sobre mi madre de su familia eran igual de interesantes para mí; sus compañeros de trabajo la conocían casi de manera opuesta a como lo hacíamos cuando éramos sus hijos: muy concentrada, diligente, calmada o tranquilizadora, y algo reservada, mientras que su familia la conocía como desenfocada, algo ociosa y descuidada, a veces errática, con mal genio, franca y abierta. Su muerte reveló tantas facetas de su identidad que estoy muy agradecida de haber aprendido a través de su muerte. Las microidentidades que creó (una ganadera occidental, una diseñadora de joyas, una rockera, una fanática del béisbol y una guía paterna amante del mar) eran identidades moderadas que compartía íntimamente con

Memorial de Arlene Wilshusen, Estados Unidos de América, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

nosotros y de las que había hablado con amigos.

En su(s) memorial(es) intentamos representarla auténticamente, sin referirnos a sus pasatiempos, sino hablando de quién era ella a través de nuestros ojos y en la mente de otros que la conocieron. Hicimos esto mediante el uso de fotos de ella participando en aquellas actividades relacionadas con ella y los aspectos que encarnaba. Las fotos y las historias fueron los mejores ejemplos de expresión de su identidad. La narración de historias y la documentación fotográfica conectaron a todos con quién era ella realmente, ya que todos pudimos encontrar partes de esas identidades que compartió con otros en nuestras propias experiencias con ella. Las diferencias en las identidades que expresó individualmente ayudaron a crear un collage de identidad colectiva. Si bien todos eran un poco diferentes, nos ayudaron a verla en todas sus identidades complejas.

> "Diferentes culturas y diferentes religiones emplean una variedad de rituales. Los rituales funerarios en el Islam no son lo mismo que los rituales funerarios en el cristianismo católico. Los rituales realizados por musulmanes de Bosnia muestran similitudes, pero también desviaciones considerables de los de los musulmanes de Irán. De manera similar, es posible delinear un marco común para los funerales católicos, pero dentro de este marco se reconocen múltiples diferencias regionales, nacionales y étnicas. La forma en que las personas eligen hacer su último adiós y cómo eligen recordar a sus muertos puede, por lo tanto, considerarse como parte de su autopresentación individual y colectiva" (Reimers, 1999).

El proceso de muerte y entierro es similar en toda América del Norte a pesar de las diferencias en las culturas, particularmente los contrastes entre México y los Estados Unidos, pero México tiene algunas prácticas conmemorativas ricas que se heredan de sus raíces indígenas y que continúan hoy entre muchos como tradición (Ward, 2021). Esta tradición y celebración milenaria comenzó con los aztecas, toltecas y otros pueblos nahuas que creían que era una falta de respeto llorar a los difuntos, ya que los muertos, aún miembros de la comunidad, debían mantenerse vivos a través de la memoria y el espíritu (Ward, 2021). El primero de noviembre, el Día de los Muertos, los muertos regresan a la Tierra para estar entre su familia viva, esta visita se prolonga hasta el dos de noviembre; esta celebración es una "mezcla de ritos religiosos prehispánicos y fiestas cristianas" (Ward, 2021).

En el corazón de esta celebración está el difunto, que se celebra con un altar construido tanto en los hogares como en los cementerios, que no se usa para adorar sino para recibir a los muertos entre los vivos (Ward, 2021). Estos altares están repletos de ofrendas, generalmente relacionadas con la comida y bebida que disfrutan los difuntos, y un mismo altar puede albergar a varios difuntos, normalmente incluyendo su foto y una vela para cada uno (Ward, 2021). Los altares están cubiertos con flores y pétalos de caléndula, que a menudo se esparcen desde el altar hasta la tumba, mientras que se quema incienso de copal para purificar el área alrededor del altar (Ward, 2021). Esta elaborada celebración de los muertos incluye calaveras, que si bien significa

“calavera”, también es otro nombre para cuentos o poemas que se burlan de los vivos, llamados “calaveras literarias” (Ward, 2021). Estas calaveras literarias son una forma para que los vivos recuerden a sus difuntos y tomen a la ligera las formas en que nos las arreglamos, incluso haciendo comentarios políticos y sociales sobre lo que los vivos experimentan que los muertos ya no tienen que sufrir (Ward, 2021).

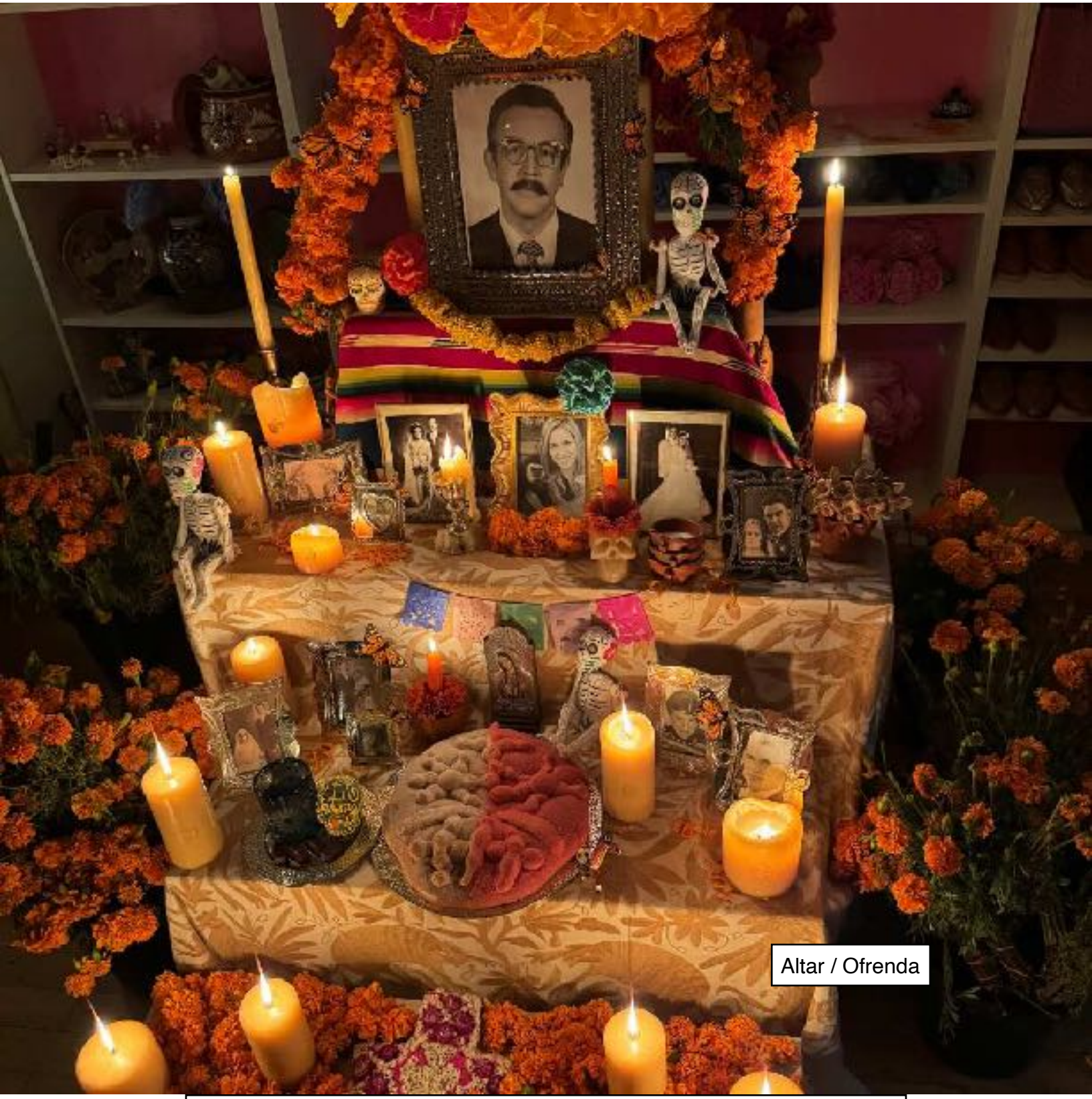
Durante esta fiesta se elabora un pan especial, “pan de muerto”, que comen la familia y los invitados que se acercan, y muchos niños comen calaveritas de caramelo, de colores llamativos y decoradas (López, 2021). El artista Diego Rivera creó un mural de un litógrafo y comentarista social en ese momento, José Guadalupe Posada, con un gran sombrero femenino al que llamó Catrina, llamado “Sueño de una tarde dominical en el Parque Alameda”, que desde entonces se ha convertido en un símbolo importante de la festividad (Ward, 2021). Posada había comentado "todos somos esqueletos", lo que significa que debajo de nuestros adornos hechos por el hombre todos somos iguales, y con este comentario y el mural de Rivera, la Catrina esquelética ahora domina los disfraces durante este festival, con muchos pintando sus caras y vistiendo con los trajes tradicionales. Vestidos mexicanos, con sombrero del mismo estilo (Ward, 2021).

> “Cuatro estrategias permiten a los sobrevivientes conservar un vínculo emocional: reinterpretar lo mundano; redefiniendo lo negativo; actividades continuas de vinculación; y santificando símbolos significativos.” (Unruh, 1983, p.345).

Esta celebración incluye recordar a los muertos en un hermoso altar, festejar con los seres queridos, recordar y celebrar a sus seres queridos fallecidos, y aunque para algunos este ritual tienen un significado más religioso, su esencia sigue siendo la misma. Los mexicanos han utilizado las cuatro estrategias que sugiere Unruh (1983, p. 345) para preservar el apego emocional.

> “El inconsciente del hombre está convencido de su propia inmortalidad, pero al mismo tiempo uno encuentra que una de sus fuerzas motrices es la búsqueda de la muerte misma. La coexistencia de estos dos elementos incompatibles dentro del inconsciente del hombre proporciona una contradicción inherente a la existencia humana” (Fulton, 1964, p. 361).

Fulton explica que la humanidad cree que es inmortal al creer que podemos continuar viviendo en otro reino o que nuestra entidad puede continuar a través de nuestra memoria en un ser querido y, sin embargo, busca activamente la muerte, los enfermos mentales, o enfermos terminales (Fulton, 1964, p.362-363). Unruh (1983, p. 345) describe lo ordinario y mundano como la forma en que un individuo contaba chistes, pedía vino en un restaurante, trataba a los niños o dejaba la ropa tirada en la casa, explicando que, “Reinterpretar lo mundano enfatiza cómo los sobrevivientes examinan la vida del difunto para preservar y crear identidades”. Las “pequeñas cosas” que experimentamos a diario también pueden desencadenar recuerdos del difunto, mientras realizamos una determinada tarea o estamos en un determinado lugar. Estos son



Altar / Ofrenda

Navarro, L. (n.d.). *What is a day of the dead altar (Ofrenda) and how is it prepared?*. Mexico In My Pocket. https://mexicoinmypocket.com/blogs/blog/how-to-build-a-day-of-the-dead-altar

Pan de muertos

Navarro, L. (n.d.). *What is a day of the dead altar (Ofrenda) and how is it prepared?*. Mexico In My Pocket. https://mexicoinmypocket.com/blogs/blog/how-to-build-a-day-of-the-dead-altar

ejemplos de lo que Unruh (1983, p. 346) explica sobre cómo “redefinir lo negativo”, cómo no convertir algo que antes molestaba en positivo, sino apreciar el recuerdo como parte de su identidad y “empatizar su función”. A través de actividades compartidas también podemos crear un sentido de vínculo: al morir, estas actividades pueden estimular recuerdos, pensamientos e imágenes del difunto y las identidades que lo acompañan (Unruh, 1983, p.347). Proporcionar una actividad, evento, proceso o simple acto puede crear esta sensación y conectar con la identidad del difunto a través de esta acción compartida. Estos recorridos, actos o actividades pueden convertirse en acciones que hacen sentir al sobreviviente como si estuviera en comunión con el difunto, pero aún más común es transformar objetos regulares en símbolos significativos del difunto (Unruh, 1983, p.347). “Algunos sobrevivientes imbuyen a una pequeña cantidad de objetos con significados simbólicos de identidades "especiales" o ejemplares de los difuntos", y estos pueden variar desde lugares de nacimiento hasta proyectos bordados, convirtiéndose en encarnaciones de las identidades de los difuntos, mientras que las fotografías "pueden convertirse en objetos de culto” o comunicación sentida con los muertos”, con un pequeño número de objetos siendo santificados de tal manera que serían llorados si se perdieran o fueran destruidos (Unruh, 1983, p.347).

Hay muchas formas en que encontramos y expresamos nuestras identidades en la muerte, y cómo nuestras identidades se perpetúan después de nuestra muerte, de manera positiva o negativa, sin embargo, se puede decir que estas formas son creativas tanto en mente como en ejecución. Expresamos nuestras identidades a lo largo de nuestras vidas, creando una impresión duradera en aquellos con los que a menudo interactuamos y, además, cuando nos acercamos a nuestra muerte o en el momento de nuestra muerte, se nos da la oportunidad de ser recordados por lo que éramos en vida, como nos expresamos, en la forma en que vivimos, lo que hicimos y cómo nos vestimos, y a través de esas mismas cosas dejamos atrás, así como lo que se crea en nuestra memoria.

5.2 Expresiones antiguas de expectativas asociadas a la identidad

Como se discutió en referencia a las tumbas de los antiguos egipcios, las tumbas eran una de las principales formas de expresarse en última instancia y hasta cierto punto de manera auténtica como grandiosa.

5.2.1 Pictórica – La tumba de Niankhkhnum y Khnumhotep

Entre la élite y las clases altas, las tumbas fueron la principal forma de expresarse por toda la eternidad, por lo que era necesario ser preciso y producir belleza. Debido a que las tumbas estaban pintadas o, si había fondos disponibles, grabadas con relieves poco profundos, ofrecían una mirada exquisita a la autoexpresión de estos individuos en la forma en que deseaban ser recordados por toda la eternidad. Se ha demostrado que una tumba de la Quinta Dinastía en Saqqara está en el centro de la controversia: la tumba de dos manicuristas reales, Niankhkhnum y Khnumhotep, una tumba conjunta de estos dos hombres con iconografía y textos cuestionables (Salvo, nd; Atkinson, 2021).

La tumba de Niankhkhnum y Khnumhotep

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (n.d.). *A virtual tour through the tomb of the two brothers*. Discover Egypt's Monuments - Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. https://egymonuments.gov.eg/news/a-virtual-tour-through-the-tomb-of-the-two-brothers/

La tumba de Niankhkhnum y Khnumhotep

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (n.d.). *A virtual tour through the tomb of the two brothers*. Discover Egypt's Monuments - Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. https://egymonuments.gov.eg/news/a-virtual-tour-through-the-tomb-of-the-two-brothers/

La tumba de Niankhkhnum y Khnumhotep

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (n.d.). *A virtual tour through the tomb of the two brothers*. Discover Egypt's Monuments - Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. https://egymonuments.gov.eg/news/a-virtual-tour-through-the-tomb-of-the-two-brothers/

Estos dos hombres eran considerados “confidentes reales”, tal como se describen en los jeroglíficos, y su tumba, de clase alta, representa a los dos hombres abrazándose y tomados de la mano en diversas situaciones a lo largo de la iconografía de la tumba (Salvo, s.f.; Atkinson, 2021). La forma en que se representan generalmente se reserva para los esposos y esposas, ya que es una representación íntima, particularmente una en la que se abrazan y se tocan las narices, "la pose más íntima permitida por el arte egipcio canónico" (Salvo, s.f.). El argumento sobre su representación entra en juego con la evidencia que apoya su pareja como una relación homosexual que tenía esposas e hijos y lo contrario que apoya la probabilidad de que fueran hermanos gemelos que querían estar juntos en la vida y en la muerte (Salvo, s.f.; Atkinson , 2021).

La relación exacta de los dos hombres no es explícita, razón por la cual hay tanto debate en torno a esta tumba, ya que pueden ser la primera pareja del mismo sexo registrada en la historia (Salvo, n.d.). Dado que la evidencia de las representaciones habituales de marido y mujer posando juntos, sugiere que esta relación era más que de parentesco, podemos examinar otros factores que brindan evidencia de apoyo de que son una pareja del mismo sexo: Khnumhotep a menudo se coloca en la posición de mujer en la forma habitual en las representaciones de tumbas, una de ellas está oliendo una flor de loto, y es uno de los tres hombres representados haciéndolo en todas las tumbas descubiertas de la Quinta Dinastía (Atkinson, 2021). Dado que la homosexualidad fue aceptada y practicada durante este período, prácticamente podríamos asumir su identidad sexual como tal, o al menos como bisexual/poliamorosa, especialmente sin textos de apoyo que explicaran la naturaleza de su relación, y considerando las actitudes sociales habrían aceptado este comportamiento (Atkinson, 2021).

Algunas escenas de la tumba representan a los hombres con sus esposas e hijos, lo que habría encajado con la mayoría de las otras tumbas de la época, pero por lo general no en una tumba compartida, como esta (Atkinson, 2021). Teniendo en cuenta que estos hombres ocupaban altos cargos que los ponían en contacto directo con la realeza en ese momento, habrían tenido posiciones respetables que querrían transmitir a sus propios hijos, y la única forma de hacerlo era casándose con una mujer; y como las mujeres muchas veces no trabajaban de la misma manera que hoy, necesitaban un hombre que las mantuviera, por lo que buscaron apoyo económico, que les brindaba seguridad (Robbins, 1993, p. 56). Con mujeres ansiosas de ser esposa de un real (en su harén), de una persona de élite, o escriba, este trabajo también le habría proporcionado a la mujer seguridad de por vida, por lo que no es absurdo pensar que quizás las esposas de Niankhkhnum y Khnumhotep se casaron por estabilidad y seguridad financiera, al tiempo que acordaron permitir que sus esposos mantuvieran su relación entre ellos, aunque bien podría haber sido una relación de subrogación con las esposas (Atkinson, 2021). Estas posibilidades no están necesariamente descartadas considerando el estatus de los hombres y la necesidad de cuidar a las mujeres. Además, a la entrada de la tumba está inscrita la frase: "UNIDOS EN LA VIDA Y UNIDOS EN LA MUERTE", frase que se usaría para las parejas casadas en los tiempos modernos, para expresar su unión, o encontrarse y unirse, en lugar de la narrativa alternativa de nacer juntos (como gemelos) (Salvo, n.d.; Atkinson, 2021).

Los dobles sentidos también podrían explicar algunas de las fallas de comunicación cuando se interpretan textos del pasado al presente como "hermano" que sin duda podría significar primo, amigo cercano o incluso socio, como lo hacen hoy en día en muchos países (HarperCollins Publisher Ltd., n.d.). La expresión de la identidad no era blanco o negro en el Antiguo Egipto, como no lo es hoy, y aunque se pueden hacer generalizaciones para el período, hacer suposiciones heteronormativas socava la rica apertura de la cultura del Antiguo Egipto.

5.2.2 Escultural- Estatuas de la Reina/Rey Hatshepsut

Hatshepsut, la reina y más tarde rey de Egipto, se representó a sí misma en una variedad de formas a través de la escultura y debido a que pasó de los títulos de "reina" a "rey" presentándose a sí misma de forma masculina hasta que finalizó su registro, me referiré a ella usando ellos / elles como pronombres. A lo largo de la regencia y corregencia de la reina Hatshepsut a través de su transición a la realeza y masculinización por su propia voluntad, Hatshepsut fue profundamente religiosa y honesta consigo misma. Fueron claros en documentar su tiempo en el poder a lo largo de las diferentes etapas, teniendo cuidado de mantener el linaje de su padre Thutmose para poder mantener el poder y el control de Egipto (Robins, 1993, p.45). Hatshepsut asumió su papel como un verdadero líder de Egipto al hacer grandes cosas para mantener y construir la riqueza y el poder de Egipto, y a través de esta y otras campañas pudieron generar confianza entre la gente, permitiéndoles ser cada vez más claros y, quizás, honestos sobre su verdadera identidad (Robins, 1993, p.47). Crearon, construyeron y rehabilitaron grandes obras en todo el reino y, con cada realización personal, Hatshepsut lo documentó cambiando estatuas y obeliscos existentes, erigiendo otros nuevos para reemplazarlos. Hatshepsut fue un pensador avanzado y progresista por derecho propio (Robins, 1993, p.47).

A lo largo de su tiempo como regente, mientras criaban a su hijastro, heredero al trono, para eventualmente ser Rey, Hatshepsut sintió que era el heredero legítimo y debería ser el rey, sin embargo, ninguna reina podía ser rey, solo la "esposa del rey" (Robins, 1993, p.45-46). Cuando Thutmosis III creció y alcanzó la mayoría de edad en la que debería recibir el trono, Hatshepsut aún no estaba lista para ceder el poder y decidió nombrarse corregente, convirtiendo a Thutmosis III en el otro corregente, lo que le permitió a Hatshepsut continuar gobernando mientras que proporciona a Thutmosis III más tiempo para aprender los caminos de la realeza (Robins, 1993, p.46). Hatshepsut en ese momento se estaba masculinizando lentamente, primero solo de nombre, cambiando su nombre de Hatshepsut a Maatkare; posteriormente siguieron otros cambios progresivos, como el uso de la corona del Rey de Egipto, aunque aún sin declararse Rey (Robins, 1993, p.23; Cooney, 2015, p.155; Wilson, 2006). Poco después, Hatshepsut comenzó a usar prendas tradicionalmente masculinas, alterando estatuas, obeliscos y relieves para representarse a sí misma como Rey, en lugar de Reina, Esposa del Rey o Esposa de Dios de Amón (Robins, 1993, p.50). A partir de este momento, todas las obras creadas o construidas llevaron el nombre de King Hatshepsut (Rey Maatkare) permitiéndoles vivir su masculinidad de manera más auténtica a través de su iconografía masculina en adelante, pero también a través de la alteración de esculturas realizadas previamente (Robins, 1993, p. 51-52; Wilson, 2006).

Estatua de Hatshepsut y placa identificativa, Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

Estatua de Hatshepsut arrodillada en ofrenda, Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2016, Theresa Wilshusen

“En los escarabajos que se encontraron, había un ejemplo de cada título o nombre que alguna vez tuvo Hatshepsut. Estos tres escarabajos tienen inscrito el nombre de nacimiento de Hatshepsut. Los jeroglíficos en el nombre de nacimiento pueden traducirse como "Unida con Amón, la más importante de las mujeres nobles". El nombre "Hatshepsut" se traduce como "La más importante de las mujeres nobles"; ella agregó "Unida con Amón" a su nombre en un momento posterior. Hatshepsut afirmó que Amón era su padre, y agregar esta parte a su nombre justificaba su derecho a gobernar como faraón. (Lesar, 2024).”

Lesar, N. (2024, July 19). *Scarabs of hatshepsut*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/image/14370/scarabs-of-hatshepsut/

Hatshepsut se aseguró de que su legado duradero lo identificara de una manera que se representaba con precisión (Cooney, 2015, p.155, 165-167). En muchas esculturas y relieves, las representaciones de Hatshepsut fueron estilizadas a las de cualquier otro rey antes que ellos, por lo que no habría dudas sobre su identidad (Ikram, 2015, p. 109; Cooney, 2015, p. 155, 166). Estaban seguras de enmascarar sus cualidades femeninas ya en ese momento, o quizás nunca, se identificaron con ella. Los antiguos egipcios eran bastante abiertos como sociedad, como se mencionó anteriormente, no encontraron problemática la homosexualidad, sino que la adoptaron como parte de la vida normal, pero no habían visto una transición de reina para convertirse en rey (Atkinson, 2021). Si bien esto podría haber sido molesto o confuso para muchos, a partir de los textos que describen este período, no parece haber problemas con la revuelta o la impugnación de este evento, aunque fue progresivo, lo que tal vez permitió que los civiles se adaptaran lentamente al concepto; y dado que Egipto estaba prosperando económicamente, no había habido plagas ni hambrunas, la gente podía creer que estas acciones eran aceptadas por los dioses, porque de no ser así, seguramente habría habido castigos de los dioses en las formas antes mencionadas (Cooney, 2015), p.163).

Hatshepsut tanto como reina como rey, proporciona ejemplos de su grandeza y autenticidad a través de actos valientes, tanto por el poder como por la identidad, incluso si era egoísta, desafía el status quo y lo cambió drásticamente. Hatshepsut demostró ser no solo una reina inteligente, decidida y valiente, sino también un rey igualmente dotado que, al final, cedió el poder al próximo rey legítimo de Egipto y, al hacerlo, cambió la vida de muchos, a través del ejemplo, incluso miles de años después de su muerte.

5.2.3 Relieve – Relieves y estatuas de las estelas de Akhenaton

Akhenaton (Amenhotep IV) era hijo de Amenhotep III, esposo de Nefertiti, y gobernó en un período controvertido, conocido como el Período de Amarna, donde denunció a todos los demás dioses en Egipto, excepto a Atón, el dios del disco solar, creando la primera religión monoteísta documentada (Mark, 2014).

Akhenaton se declaró a sí mismo como un dios real encarnado, cerró todos los demás templos y suprimió las prácticas religiosas; como Barbara Watterson describe el momento como: “un asunto muy serio, porque estas instituciones jugaron un papel importante en la vida económica y social del país. La persecución religiosa era nueva para los egipcios” (Mark, 2014). En última instancia, Akhenaton dejó de cumplir con sus deberes como rey, ya que creía que estaban por debajo de él, mientras que sus "reformas religiosas fueron el descuido de la política exterior" (Mark, 2014).

Como un dios real encarnado, creía que estaba por encima de todo y trasladó la capital de Egipto a tierras vírgenes desde Tebas a una nueva ciudad de su propia creación que llegó a ser conocida como Amarna (Mark, 2014). En esta nueva ciudad, con la nueva religión establecida, Akhenaton y Nefertiti gobernaron como deidades, cruzando la ciudad, como el sol cruzaba el cielo cada día, proyectando su divinidad en todas las cosas con las que se asociaban, incluido su arte. A

diferencia de las dinastías anteriores, con representaciones estilizadas específicas de dioses y reyes, la representación de Akhenaton de él y su familia era distinta (Mark, 2014). Las estelas en relieve alrededor de Amarna no se adhirieron a las representaciones típicas, sino que lo representaron a él y a la familia con cuellos alargados, lo que algunos egiptólogos sugieren que Akhenaton podría haber sufrido el síndrome de Marfan: “Las personas con síndrome de Marfan suelen ser altas y delgadas con brazos inusualmente largos, piernas, dedos de las manos y de los pies” (Mayo Clinic, 2022), ya que se representan no solo con cuellos alargados, sino también con piernas, brazos y dedos largos y delgados (Mark, 2014), pero el egiptólogo Zahi Hawass lo ha descartado afirmando que Akhenaton prefirió la forma androgénica ya que creía que Aten (dios del disco solar) lo creó (Akhenaton) como un reflejo tanto de hombres como de mujeres: 'tú eres el hombre... tú eres la mujer' (Awad, 2010). Era poco común que la realeza se representara de manera realista, ya que estaban destinados a ser dioses encarnados, y Akhenaton se revelaba a sí mismo como un dios real, tal vez creía que sus rasgos distintivos lo diferenciaban de los demás y esto era una prueba más de su divinidad , representando a ambos sexos.

Las representaciones de sí mismo con estas características, incluyen a su familia. Sin embargo, estas representaciones no habrían afectado a la de Nefertiti; esto puede haber sido un intento de deificarla aún más y legitimarla. Otro aspecto distintivo de las facciones de Akhenaton es su figura; como se mencionó, la mayoría de las estatuas y las representaciones en relieve representan al rey de una manera muy masculina y rígida, algo musculoso, con solo quizás una ligera barriga, en posturas poderosas. Akhenaton, por otro lado, a menudo se representaba más voluptuosamente con caderas más anchas, un vientre más pronunciado, un abdomen más bajo y una cintura curva. Esto se combinó con las características antes mencionadas que se asemejan a las del síndrome de Marfan (extremidades alargadas) que lo hacían parecer algo feminizado ya que sus rasgos eran más suaves que los de los reyes antes que él. Rechazó otros estilos que lo representaban a él y a su familia (Mark, 2014).

Además, Akhenaton a menudo se representaba con su familia o esposa en entornos íntimos, como en la Estela de Akhenaton que los muestra disfrutando de la compañía del otro (Mark, 2014). “Las imágenes de los faraones antes y después de este período representan al gobernante como una figura solitaria que participa en la caza o la batalla o se encuentra en compañía de un dios o su reina con dignidad y honor” (Mark, 2014). En el caso de Akhenaton, quería ser representado como “deidad todopoderosa, amorosa, creador supremo y sustentador del universo”, lo que incluía representaciones familiares de él como un padre y esposo cariñoso (Mark, 2014).

Esas son quizás versiones idealizadas de la realidad, representan escenarios más auténticos y retratos de la realeza, deidades encarnadas, cuyas representaciones anteriores habrían ocultado imperfecciones, deformidades o cualidades poco masculinas, donde Akhenaton las abrazó, permitiendo que sus supuestas deformidades lo ubicaran aparte de otros gobernantes, proyectando autenticidad a través de su estatuaria y estelas en relieve.

Estela de Akenatón y estatua colosal de Akenatón, Museo Egipcio del Cairo, 2017, Theresa Wilshusen

5.2.4 Textual – 'Literatura' en papiro y la autobiografía

Algunos de los primeros ejemplos de "literatura" son las Listas de ofertas y las autobiografías, aunque no son ejemplos reales de lo que consideramos literatura hoy en día, eran, de hecho, ejemplos del sistema de escritura en juego (Mark, 2016). Las Listas de ofrendas eran instrucciones inscritas en las paredes de la tumba que proporcionarían una lista detallada de los bienes que necesitaba el difunto, incluidos alimentos, bebidas y otras ofrendas (Mark, 2016). La autobiografía en realidad se escribió post mortem, pero siempre se escribió en primera persona y llegó a conocerse como Catálogo de virtudes; la egiptóloga Miriam Lichtheim explica:

> "El objetivo básico de la autobiografía -el autorretrato en palabras- era el mismo que el del autorretrato en escultura y relieve: resumir los rasgos característicos de la persona individual en términos de su valor positivo y en el rostro de la eternidad" (Mark, 2016).

El propósito general de esta autobiografía era acentuar el bien que la persona había hecho en su vida, demostrando y dando prueba de su valía para ser recordada por la eternidad, no muy diferente de los elogios y obituarios realizados hoy (Mark, 2016). Además, proporcionó evidencia del carácter moral del individuo, reflejando los estándares éticos de la sociedad, demostrando que el difunto se había adherido a esos estándares; algunos eran breves, tal vez con la intención de no perpetuar falsedades sobre los difuntos, especialmente si no eran los ciudadanos más íntegros, mientras que otros eran largas y detalladas inscripciones, como la de la Autobiografía de Weni, que estaba inscrita en una gran losa monolítica, escrita en prosa (Mark, 2016). Estos se transformaron en lo que luego se conoció como los Textos de las Pirámides, que inicialmente estaban reservados para la realeza, y tenían el mismo propósito de describir y acentuar sus virtudes a lo largo de la totalidad de su vida, y muchos incluían su viaje al más allá, así como mitos de la creación. (Marca, 2016).

La literatura avanzó a través de las primeras dinastías y en el Reino Medio los jeroglíficos habían alcanzado su apogeo, conocido como Egipto Medio. Rosalie David, egiptóloga, explica sobre la literatura de este período:

> "La literatura de esta era reflejó la mayor profundidad y madurez que el país… Se desarrollaron nuevos géneros de literatura, incluida la llamada literatura pesimista, que quizás ejemplifica mejor el autoanálisis y las dudas que los egipcios ahora experimentaban" (Mark, 2016).

Si bien las complejidades y profundidades de la literatura habían cambiado con el tiempo, creció de una manera que reflejaba la vida en diferentes niveles de la sociedad, expresando los conflictos de la clase trabajadora, las dudas de los religiosos, cuestionando la dinámica del poder y expresando sátira sobre todos los aspectos y clases. de vida (Mark, 2016).

> "Obras como *Las advertencias de Ipuwer* fueron interpretadas por egiptólogos

> posteriores como relatos precisos del caos y el desorden de la era anterior al Reino Medio, pero en realidad, si no fuera por la libertad de exploración y expresión en las artes, el Primer Período Intermedio alentó, los escribas posteriores nunca podrían haber escrito las obras que produjeron" (Mark, 2016).

La autoexpresión a través del arte a lo largo de la historia egipcia permitió la diversa autoexpresión y crítica social que se produjo en dinastías posteriores; allanó el camino para que la gente común fuera documentada, sus situaciones validadas y sus identidades reconocidas y aceptadas como relevantes en el más allá (Mark, 2016). La literatura del Antiguo Egipto se convirtió en otra herramienta de autoexpresión.

5.3. Contradicciones con las normas sociales y la falta de representación en la egiptología.
Los egiptólogos quieren hacernos creer que todos los descubrimientos que se han encontrado se ajustan a la narrativa estándar aceptada de las normas sociales de la época al suponer que todas las rarezas deben, de hecho, volver a las estructuras heteronormativas, sin dejar espacio para la representación no binaria en el arte funerario, tumbas y obras literarias. Asumen conceptos heteronormativos como la única forma de expresión aceptable en ese momento, basados en poca evidencia, mientras ignoran signos más claros de lo contrario. Es muy presuntuoso y aparentemente poco realista, suponer que toda evidencia especulativa de la homosexualidad debe tener un razonamiento heteronormativo contrario. Dado el régimen actual y las leyes de vigilancia que prohíben la expresión externa de identidades no heterosexuales, no es de extrañar por qué hay rechazo entre los egiptólogos egipcios, y quizás entre los egiptólogos más conocidos, ya que el-Sisi ha demostrado que él y su régimen, harán silenciar a estas personas y para los egiptólogos extranjeros, prohibir la entrada a Egipto por respaldar tales pruebas. Hay que mirar esta situación desde una perspectiva tanto político-académica como social-académica con preocupación por los riesgos que implica. Sin embargo, la falta de diversidad en la egiptología ciertamente ha jugado un papel en no abordar y quizás ignorar la evidencia no heterosexual.

> "La historia del antiguo Egipto a menudo se distorsiona para reflejar la cultura y las costumbres de la sociedad egipcia o árabe contemporánea. En muchos casos, los profesores de historia o arqueología han considerado tales representaciones de la homosexualidad como ofensivas para sus concepciones de la historia, intentando así borrar grandes franjas de la antigüedad" (Fathi, 2017).

Existe contenido homosexual en la mitología del antiguo Egipto, específicamente entre los dioses Horus y Set (historia añadida en el anexo), y la evidencia nos lleva a creer que los antiguos egipcios estaban familiarizados con la práctica de la homosexualidad como norma cultural aceptada (Fathi, 2017). Algunos de los artefactos físicos que respaldan estas afirmaciones son "papiros, estatuas y tumbas sobrevivientes, que datan de las diferentes dinastías egipcias", incluida la homosexualidad tanto femenina como masculina, aunque la evidencia del lesbianismo es escasa (Fathi, 2017). Lo que se advierte y se demoniza un poco es la infidelidad,

independientemente de la preferencia sexual; en un relato se regañaba a una mujer por haber tenido un sueño sobre relaciones sexuales con una mujer casada, donde la infracción no era que el acto soñado fuera con una mujer, sino que fuera con una persona casada (Fathi, 2017).

La homosexualidad no se demonizaba en el Antiguo Egipto, pero tampoco se celebraba, en todo caso era tan mundana como la heterosexualidad, aunque no tenía ningún propósito (Robbins, 1993, p.72), el propósito del matrimonio era la procreación para el hombre y el apoyo y la seguridad para la mujer Los hombres estaban ansiosos por 'casarse' para tener hijos, ya que podrían ser beneficiosos para la familia, y si el individuo era de alto nivel, estatus de élite, o simplemente tenía un trabajo reverenciado o importante, querrían pasar ese puesto a su hijo (Robbins, 1993, p.111-113). Una relación homosexual no producía descendencia y, por lo tanto, la mayoría la consideraba desventajosa por la incapacidad de producir un heredero de una posición o título dentro de la familia (Robbins, 1993, p. 111-113).

La expresión de la identidad sexual de uno no tenía importancia en el esquema más amplio de la vida en el Antiguo Egipto, y el acto de autoexpresión estaba algo limitado con respecto a otros aspectos de la identidad, como la profesión de uno (identidad profesional) que equivalía a estar de pie, pero la sexualidad de uno era una preocupación menor (Robbins, 1993, p.111-113). Los conceptos erróneos sobre cómo se representaba el género o la orientación sexual y luego los egiptólogos los malinterpretaban parecen haber obstaculizado la comprensión de la sociedad avanzada del Antiguo Egipto, y algunos creían que la homosexualidad no existía antes de Sodoma y Gomorra, pero está claro a partir de los artefactos culturales y la literatura que esto no es el caso, por lo que la demonización de este aspecto de la identidad no tiene fundamento: no era ajeno a la cultura ni desviado (Fathi, 2017).

Egipto, como el centro de un gran y poderoso imperio, fue visitado por muchos extranjeros, no todos los cuales quizás aprobaron los comportamientos homosexuales, y con la constante exposición e influencia en la cultura egipcia, el comportamiento homosexual comenzó a adquirir una connotación negativa, aunque solo como un receptor del acto sexual (Fathi, 2017). No fue hasta la creación de las religiones abrahámicas que se prohibieron la homosexualidad y los actos homosexuales (Fathi, 2017). Las influencias mencionadas anteriormente de fuera de Egipto y, en última instancia, el desarrollo de las religiones abrahámicas fueron dos factores principales en la degeneración tanto de la tolerancia como de la aceptación de la expresión de la identidad sexual de uno en el Antiguo Egipto.

> “Sin embargo, a pesar de la evidencia existente, la historia del Antiguo Egipto a menudo se distorsiona para reflejar la cultura y las costumbres de la sociedad árabe o egipcia contemporánea. En muchos casos, los profesores de historia o arqueología han considerado tales representaciones de la homosexualidad como ofensivas para sus concepciones de la historia, intentando así borrar grandes franjas de la antigüedad” (Fathi, 2017).

Conclusión

Through its examination of artistic identity expression across cultures, this chapter positions art as an emancipatory act, especially for those whose identities exist outside normative boundaries. These findings directly inform the material explorations in the next chapter, where I present and reflect on the three original art projects produced as part of this thesis. Together, they function as creative responses to the questions raised throughout the research.

La homogeneización de cualquier grupo, especialmente de toda una cultura, puede resultar problemática de varias maneras, así como peligrosa e incluso mortal. Sin embargo, debido al actual régimen gubernamental de Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, los egipcios corren el riesgo de perder sus identidades contemporáneas e individuales. Su régimen -militar y policial- prohíbe a los individuos expresarse auténticamente. Este no es solo un ataque a las personas de la comunidad LGBTQIA, sino a un grupo considerablemente más grande: cualquiera que parezca "diferente". Si bien la descripción de lo que significa "diferente" o los atributos en los que consiste no están claros, eso no ha impedido que el régimen detenga a personas sin causa, acusándolos de libertinaje. La detención por libertinaje puede incluir a cualquier persona que no se ajuste a la identidad egipcia de el-Sisi, una que él creó en base a las creencias religiosas islámicas y su propia percepción de la moralidad. Se detiene a la gente por vestir 'diferente', tener cabello largo o tener un cabello especial, caminar 'diferente', circular con personas conocidas como “libertinas”, participar en el teatro, el cine o las artes, y lo que el-Sisi considera algunos de los peores infractores: personas de la comunidad LGBTQIA porque cree que existen para corromper a la población con su inmoralidad. Todos estos aspectos son principios infundados para la detención, por lo que las personas detenidas por actos de “libertinaje” a menudo son detenidas sin una fecha límite de liberación o audiencia. Además, las personas son detenidas sin ningún otro cargo y pueden ser golpeadas o violadas mientras están bajo custodia. Algunos lo consideran una táctica de miedo, desalentar a las personas que se asumen el “libertinaje” a cambiar sus formas de vida, por lo que muchas personas vulnerables intentan vivir vidas heteronormativas en la superficie y vidas secretas al margen. Otras personas sospechosas de tal compromiso continúan siendo monitoreadas constantemente.

Esta incapacidad de vivir auténticamente como uno mismo representa una amenaza real para la cultura y las artes egipcias. Aunque el-Sisi proclama que apoya la cultura y las artes, su postura es una norma conservadora que apunta a beneficiarlo a él y a su régimen. No necesariamente tiene en mente el interés del pueblo egipcio. La homogeneización forzada de una identidad con la que la mayoría no se identifica sinceramente puede crear un entorno en el que los artistas no crean auténticamente por temor a represalias, o podría tener otras consecuencias revolucionarias no deseadas en las que los artistas ayuden a difundir mensajes a través de su arte. Sin embargo, ambos significan un gobierno represivo que apunta a controlar y reprimir en lugar de uno que apoya y empodera. La interseccionalidad dentro de una cultura que respeta ideales y religiones opuestos es rica. Suprimir las perspectivas controvertidas no las borra, ya que encontrarán formas en las que se expresan. El régimen egipcio actual parece estar aferrándose al fundamentalismo

religioso y a los aspectos idealizados de su cultura antigua en lugar de analizar detenidamente a las personas y quiénes son, los valores que tienen actualmente y cómo se identifican realmente. La cultura y las personas evolucionan, deben hacerlo desde un punto de vista evolutivo, y también lo hará su expresión identitaria, así como los medios artísticos con los que lo hacen.

Reinterpretar el material del arte cambia su interpretación y, por lo tanto, el espectador lo percibe de manera diferente, según Močnik (s.f., p.9). Močnik (n.d.) también nos ayuda a comprender que la reinterpretación del arte, específicamente de las obras históricas utilizando nuevos medios, puede desafiar la conexión emocional del espectador con la obra y/o los materiales, pero también su propia comprensión de la obra. Con el uso de nuevos medios para recrear o reinterpretar técnicas antiguas y obras de arte, crea una nueva identidad. Esto también puede decirse de la cultura si consideramos la cultura como una obra de arte que está evolucionando. La cultura forma parte de nuestra identidad y, por lo tanto, a través de la reinterpretación de valores, ideas y tradiciones culturales anteriores, las nuevas generaciones tienen percepciones diferentes de su propia cultura. Comprender los orígenes de uno y las tradiciones continuas no equivale a la falta de cambio dentro de uno mismo o de la cultura de uno. Además, las personas que abrazan su herencia y cultura, especialmente si son de comunidades marginadas, crean conciencia sobre su pueblo/cultura/herencia, pero también tienen un papel para romper estereotipos, sacar a la luz la opresión e incluso generar respeto a dicha comunidad, sin embargo, esta recuperación del pasado puede utilizarse también para justificar ciertas acciones completamente contrarias.
Algunos artistas contemporáneos están recuperando el pasado (el archivo es una muestra de esta recuperación); otros lo están haciendo de manera sutil. Impregnan su trabajo con su cultura, valores e identidad, lo que permite al espectador la oportunidad de interpretar y considerar los antecedentes del individuo, así como su mensaje.

En la muerte la humanidad intenta ser recordada o, al menos, crear un legado. A diferencia de los antiguos egipcios, la mayoría de las sociedades e individuos contemporáneos no planifican sus eventos funerarios con gran detalle. Sin embargo, en general, la naturaleza humana desea que seamos entendidos y no olvidados. El arte nos ayuda a ser comprendidos y recordados. En la muerte, se eligen objetos, fotos y otros recuerdos para que se conviertan en artefactos de nuestras vidas, representándonos de alguna manera y creando una salida para que seamos recordados. Para muchos, en la muerte es importante aclarar la propia identidad, solidificándola en el sentido de que será la imagen perdurable de nosotros. Todos los objetos elegidos para identificarnos se pueden reunir y exhibir como una especie de altar, una obra de arte colectiva. A través de una variedad de diferentes medios artísticos, recordamos a los difuntos por quienes estaban utilizando una colección de recuerdos, historias, experiencias, en algunos casos sus propios escritos, y a través de artefactos que ellos mismos consideraron importantes para su identidad. Generalmente, los sobrevivientes redefinen los aspectos negativos del difunto y engrandecen sus aspectos positivos, sin embargo, esta respuesta emocional de duelo es la que nos permite mantenerlos al frente de nuestras mentes. Mantiene los recuerdos de ellos vívidos en nuestra mente.

El arte funerario del Antiguo Egipto reflejaba quién era el individuo y quién aspiraba a ser, pero en realidad era una versión inflada de su realidad. Sin embargo, debido a su preocupación por la vida eterna representada a través de referencias visuales y textuales, era imperativo que sus nombres y semejanzas fueran lo más precisos posible. No solo deseaban ser recordados el mayor tiempo posible, sino que era una necesidad para existir en el más allá. Debido a los fuertes aspectos religiosos de la vida del Antiguo Egipto, sus adornos funerarios eran lo mejor que podían pagar, algunas personas incluso tenían múltiples opciones a medida que mejoraba el título de su trabajo o tenían más para gastar en arte funerario de mayor calidad. Pasaron sus vidas preparándose para el próximo y querían estar seguros de que hacían todo lo posible para ser recordados con una luz positiva, y no solo la familia , sino cualquiera que los conociera, para asegurarse de que estuvieran nutridos en el más allá. Sus cuerpos, ataúdes y tumbas reflejaron lo mejor de ellos, identificándose de manera explícita y auténtica. Era crucial que sus tumbas se llenaran con los mejores artefactos de sus vidas, ya que se creía que estos se llevarían a la próxima vida. Obtenemos una mejor comprensión de sus creencias a través de los artefactos que tenían en sus tumbas, la calidad del trabajo artesanal en sus tumbas y ataúdes, y quién y qué estaba representado en las paredes de las capillas de sus tumbas.

Los relieves, las esculturas y las pinturas de las tumbas nos brindaron una gran referencia de las personas y lo que creían y les importaba. Los textos y las imágenes en sus ataúdes reflejan más profundamente quiénes eran en algunas de las formas más auténticas. Podemos leer sobre el arte funerario de las sociedades contemporáneas y ver eso también. Es posible que veamos grupos de personas que llevan recuerdos o artefactos del difunto: joyas, objetos personales, ropa, etc. Estos artefactos en el antiguo Egipto no habrían sido privados de ser removidos, pero hoy permitimos que las personas tomen pedazos de nosotros. Guardan fotos, hacen camisetas conmemorativas y organizan reuniones para recordar a los difuntos, porque no quieren olvidar, y quizás también quieren ser recordados. Cuando los sobrevivientes visitan las tumbas de los difuntos, llevan adornos para embellecer aún más los terrenos. Crean un memorial artístico una y otra vez, tal vez hablando con ellos, orando por ellos o simplemente pensando en ellos. Todos estos son métodos artísticos de memorialización, un acto consciente llevado a cabo en el recuerdo. Si bien los medios han cambiado, seguimos realizando prácticas artísticas para recordar a los difuntos, lo que nos permite la capacidad de reinterpretar los materiales artísticos, dándoles un nuevo significado.

CAPÍTULO 6

PROYECTOS EN REFERENCIA A LA INVESTIGACIÓN

Capítulo 6 – Proyectos en referencia a la investigación

Introducción

El capítulo seis es un desglose de las metodologías de cada uno de los tres proyectos creados a lo largo de la investigación de esta tesis. Cada proyecto aborda uno de los tres aspectos de la expresión de la identidad en la muerte: el ensamblaje en capas y la preservación de la identidad utilizando artefactos a través de resina; la [de]construcción y reconstrucción de identidades fracturadas en cerámica; y la articulación de una narrativa de identidad mediante el uso de imágenes (fotografía instantánea).

Cada proyecto utiliza materiales que se correlacionan con los que se usaron, para expresar y preservar la identidad, en el Antiguo Egipto; se han actualizado incorporando materiales nuevos para mostrar su uso actual en la preservación y expresión de la identidad en la sociedad contemporánea. Cada tipo de material permite una variedad de expresiones a través de sus características únicas. Un individuo puede elegir uno o varios de los materiales para salvaguardar las expresiones de sus identidades que también, le permitan crecer en sus identidades y transformarse a lo largo de su vida, de la misma forma que en el trabajo funerario de los antiguos egipcios. He elegido utilizar resina, arcilla (cerámica) y fotografía instantánea como medios/ materiales para la preservación de la identidad en las siguientes obras de arte.

Vistas Privadas es una serie de collages en donde se superponen identidades conceptualizadas de individuos reales mediante el uso de una variedad de materiales 2D y 3D. La resina, con la que se recubren los collages, es un material contemporáneo que actúa como la de los antiguos egipcios, atreviéndose a preservar una identidad curada, eligiendo qué artefactos encapsulados representan mejor al individuo, sus creencias y expresan quiénes eran según las especificaciones deseadas del individuo [fallecido] (ver Capítulo 4, apartado: Momificación y conservación de los difuntos).

El Velo de Género es una instalación escultórica de cientos de triángulos cerámicos. Estos triángulos se crean a partir de una variedad de arcillas diferentes, impregnadas de imágenes, colores, texturas y símbolos, destinados a ser interpretados de manera diferente y de forma individual. Cada hilo contiene diferentes tipos de triángulos colgados de la cabeza a los pies, y cada dos triángulos, se cuelgan al revés. La mezcla de arcillas, engobes y esmaltes representa, tanto la variedad de individuos y su camino en la vida, como también las complejidades de las identidades que cada uno de nosotros posee.

Buscando Uno Mismo, es una instalación de fotografía instantánea; permite a los espectadores- cuestionar aspectos de sus vidas que los han moldeado; les permite encontrar puntos en común con otras personas muy diferentes a ellos y fomenta una discusión abierta sobre lo que constituye la identidad de cada uno, todo a través de la lente del “otro”. Cuestiona la identidad sexual, cultural, personal y de género, así como la variedad de factores que conforman cada una dentro

de un contexto multicultural. El proyecto cuestiona, además, la capacidad de expresión de la identidad a través de la fotografía instantánea.

Estos tres proyectos tienen conceptos superpuestos sobre la expresión de la identidad y su importancia en la muerte. Además de ser reinterpretaciones de materiales utilizados en el arte funerario del Antiguo Egipto, sirven como materiales de preservación, cada uno a su manera. Estos materiales son versátiles y pueden manipularse y moldearse de diversas formas para adaptarse a las necesidades de cada individuo. Estos materiales actúan como recipientes en los que se pueden introducir las identidades, creando un diálogo con el arte que crean. El arte, sin embargo, no es necesariamente un diálogo explícito del lenguaje, por lo que proporciona espacio para la interpretación. Esta fluidez dentro de estas formas de arte, permiten una forma práctica de desarrollar un trabajo que evoluciona junto con el individuo a lo largo de su vida. Las obras producidas, sin importar la etapa de producción, representan al individuo en su etapa más reciente. Esto proporciona al espectador una versión precisa y actualizada del individuo de forma póstuma: una retrospectiva con la propia voz.

La preservación de la identidad de un individuo a través de estas palabras artísticas salva su identidad en el tiempo, como un último punto de referencia conocido. Sugiero que esta es una forma más precisa de preservar una identidad, ya que se puede pausar y resumir en cualquier momento a lo largo de la vida del individuo, pero actúan como generadora de puntos de referencia en el desarrollo y cambio de la identidad. Si el individuo muere en algún momento durante el proceso y desarrollo de cualquiera de estos proyectos, se preservará su última identidad conocida, suponiendo que estuviera trabajando activamente en ella. Así, se rinde homenaje a los antiguos egipcios que prepararon sus piezas funerarias a lo largo de todas sus vidas. Algunas obras se completaron antes de su muerte, otras al morir y algunas se detuvieron debido a una muerte prematura. El concepto sigue siendo el mismo en estas obras contemporáneas que el de los antiguos egipcios, sin embargo, el artista no es necesariamente un artesano, sino cualquier individuo dispuesto a crear obras de arte utilizando estos métodos.

Para mayor claridad, es importante señalar que, a lo largo de las descripciones de los proyectos, la perspectiva de la escritura cambiará ocasionalmente de tercera a primera persona. Esto busca aclarar quién realizó el trabajo y facilitar una mejor comprensión de la trayectoria del artista, curador, coleccionista y productor dentro de los proyectos. El objetivo es situar claramente al artista en el contexto de la investigación y la metodología de los proyectos para articular los procesos con mayor precisión.

Este capítulo presenta los proyectos artísticos originales desarrollados a lo largo de esta tesis como respuestas creativas a los hallazgos de la investigación presentados en los capítulos 1 a 5. La práctica artística que aquí se presenta no es aislada, sino que se moldea deliberadamente a partir de las indagaciones fundamentales sobre género, feminismo, tradiciones funerarias egipcias y representación de la identidad en contextos antiguos y contemporáneos. Cada proyecto —*Vistas*

Privadas, El Velo de Género y Buscando Uno Mismo— se desarrolló a través de una reflexión sobre el material académico y los precedentes artísticos previamente analizados.

La teoría feminista transformó mi perspectiva y comprensión del mundo antiguo y contemporáneo, a la vez que me ofreció una perspectiva más clara para examinar mis propios valores y motivaciones. A pesar de haberme criado en un entorno relativamente conservador, me sorprendió mi alineamiento con los principios feministas, una conciencia que surgió a lo largo de mi interacción con textos y teorías feministas. Esto profundizó mi deseo no solo de comprender la teoría feminista con mayor profundidad, sino que también me motivó a explorar cómo podría informar y enriquecer mis prácticas artísticas. Me interesé por cómo integrar los conceptos feministas en mi obra de forma más sutil y mediante narrativas simbólicas que pudieran incitar sutilmente la reflexión o reorientar al espectador. Mi objetivo era fusionar estos valores visualmente en las obras, permitiendo que el pensamiento feminista se experimentara a través de los materiales y la narrativa, en lugar de hacerlo explícitamente a través de mensajes.

Mi investigación de maestría se centró en la representación de la identidad a través del arte del tatuaje y a través de él, comencé mi exploración sobre las prácticas funerarias del Antiguo Egipto, ya que se encontraron tatuajes en individuos preservados en las tumbas egipcias. Esta investigación se basó en cuestiones de autoidentificación y su permanencia, y finalmente me llevó a reconocer profundas conexiones entre las tradiciones funerarias antiguas y contemporáneas. Estas exploraciones coincidieron inesperadamente con la muerte de mi madre; durante la cual, afronté de primera mano, las complejidades emocionales, conceptuales, formales y sociales que acontecen con el fallecimiento de una persona cercana y querida, y la tarea de representar su identidad póstumamente. Esta experiencia intensificó mi compromiso con la comprensión del papel de los artefactos, los rituales y las imágenes en la preservación de la identidad y reveló la importancia de estos aspectos para nuestra humanidad. La convergencia del duelo, la investigación y el examen artístico reforzó la importancia de explorar cómo se recuerda, se comprende y, en última instancia, se honra la memoria de las personas y se representa su identidad.

Mi investigación y mi práctica artística estuvieron profundamente influenciadas por la cultura material táctil del Antiguo Egipto. Visitas directas a museos arqueológicos, tumbas, templos mortuorios y templos por todo Egipto profundizaron mi aprecio por la fisicalidad y el simbolismo de los artefactos funerarios. Esto avivó mi curiosidad e interés por la preservación de los ajuares funerarios, no sólo en términos de su composición material, sino también por su significado sobre la identidad, la memoria y el más allá. A medida que estudiaba las prácticas mortuorias y funerarias del Antiguo Egipto, así como el uso de resina, cerámica y otras herramientas de preservación, me sentí cada vez más atraída por la estética ritualizada de las tradiciones funerarias y su resonancia con las prácticas contemporáneas.

Fue durante este período de compromiso académico que experimenté la inesperada pérdida de

mi madre. Este evento marcó un punto de inflexión en mi investigación, no conceptualmente, sino emocionalmente. Lo que antes había sido una investigación histórica sobre la identidad póstuma, de repente se convirtió en algo inmediato y personal. Mientras trabajaba en *Vistas Privadas*, reflexioné no solo sobre los antiguos rituales funerarios, sino también sobre el complejo proceso de negociación de la identidad tras la muerte. Intentar representar con precisión la identidad de mi madre me evidenció la dificultad de preservar una identidad coherente en ausencia de su propia voz. Me sorprendió la facilidad con la que se acumulaban fragmentos, omisiones y contradicciones, y cómo la identidad podía convertirse en un punto de tensión en lugar de un punto de unión, si no se gestionaba activamente.

Esta experiencia intensificó mi enfoque sobre la necesidad de prácticas conmemorativas autogestionadas. Comencé a experimentar con la fotografía instantánea. Inicialmente, me atrajeron los paralelismos estéticos con las imágenes analógicas de mis propios archivos familiares. Al compartir estas nuevas exploraciones, recibí respuestas de otros que describían las fotografías como profundamente nostálgicas. A pesar de no conocer a los sujetos de las imágenes, expresaban una profunda conexión emocional con el medio en sí. Muchos destacaron la textura y el grosor de su superficie física, su desarrollo impredecible y la calidad inconsistente de sus tonos de color como aspectos que contribuían a una sensación de memoria personal. Estas reacciones destacaron el potencial del material como vehículo para la conexión afectiva y subrayaron su relevancia como herramienta para la expresión de la identidad.

Simultáneamente, mi investigación sobre género y teoría feminista, con especial atención a la supresión de las personas no binarias y no conformes con su género en la cultura visual, me llevó a iniciar *El Velo de Género*. Este proyecto fue diseñado para ofrecer un espacio participativo para expresar la identidad sin la presión de una revelación completa, una lección importante de *Vistas Privadas*. Las personas podían contribuir con fragmentos simbólicos o visuales de sí mismas, seleccionando solo aquellos aspectos en los que se sintieran cómodas compartiendolos. La estructura de la instalación permitió que estas contribuciones existieran de forma independiente, pero también en relación con otras. Esto no sólo proporcionó una sensación de camuflaje entre las demás, sino que también sugirió la naturaleza fluida e interseccional de la identidad en las comunidades. El resultado fue una composición escultórica que reflejaba tanto la individualidad como la resonancia colectiva. Esta decisión se basó en los principios feministas del conocimiento encarnado, el anonimato como protección y la deconstrucción de la categorización fija (Butler, 1990).

A través de estos proyectos, busqué desafiar la expectativa de que la identidad sea coherente, fija o singular. En su lugar, adopté modelos de expresión que permitían la fragmentación, el secretismo, la multiplicidad y la transformación. Estas cualidades reflejan tanto la ambigüedad de la memoria como las realidades vividas de quienes navegan por identidades marginales o fluidas. Al hacerlo, las obras de arte no buscan resolver la identidad, sino proteger su complejidad y crear espacios donde pueda seguir desarrollándose, antes y después de la muerte.

En lugar de ilustrar la investigación, las obras de arte sirven como herramientas paralelas de creación de conocimiento, ampliando y cuestionando los marcos que las inspiraron. Por lo tanto, este capítulo completa el arco de investigación, exponiendo cómo la práctica artística puede ser un método de producción de conocimiento basado en la investigación académica.

Este capítulo final presenta los tres proyectos artísticos —*Vistas Privadas, El Velo de Género y Buscando Uno Mismo*— como resultados y contribuciones al proceso de investigación. En consonancia con la estructura de la investigación a través de la práctica artística, este capítulo adopta una perspectiva reflexiva que combina la narración en primera persona, la documentación del proceso y el marco teórico.

Las obras que se presentan aquí no pretenden ser respuestas concluyentes, sino proposiciones: propuestas artísticas a las cuestiones de identidad, muerte y conmemoración revisadas a lo largo de la tesis. Este capítulo marca una transición completa hacia el ámbito creativo, aunque se mantiene vinculado a los marcos académicos presentados anteriormente, en particular la cultura material, la teoría feminista y el simbolismo funerario.

6.1 *Vistas Privadas*: solidificar la identidad a través de un collage de información y artefactos

6.1.1 Desarrollo de conceptos

Para comenzar esta sección, debo comentar que antes de emprender esta serie, no tenía experiencia previa de trabajar con resina. Como artista de grado, no era un material con el que estuviera familiarizada, pero me interesaba específicamente para este proyecto por su capacidad de conservación. Mi experiencia previa fue el collage autodidacta en papel. Este proyecto, en particular, es apto para cualquier persona, con o sin experiencia con la resina o con el collage. Curé los objetos de cada collage de resina, en los que utilicé mis conocimientos artísticos fundamentales para guiar las composiciones, las cuales dibujé y luego superpuse como práctica antes de verter la resina. Los objetos coleccionados también son personales y, por lo tanto, los obtuve como persona que creó el collage. Este proyecto es fácil de repetir con las mismas técnicas que se describen aquí, con la ayuda de una guía sencilla.

El collage de resina se puede realizar con objetos domésticos comunes y no se limita a artistas profesionales ni a equipos especializados. Los materiales utilizados en estos collages suelen tener un significado personal: objetos encontrados, naturales, sentimentales o incluso heredados. Dado que el collage de artefactos puede ser de colección, no requiere una preparación específica, ya que su valor y utilidad se recuperan como un medio simple, pero significativo, para expresar la identidad de la persona en ese momento de su vida.

Además, este proceso de superposición de resina permite tanto la improvisación como la reflexión. El proceso de superposición para crear un collage de resina puede realizarse en periodos largos o cortos. Un molde para hornear estándar puede servir como base para el collage.

Una vez colocados los objetos, se puede mezclar una capa de resina y verterla sobre ellos para revestir el primer conjunto. Dado que la resina permanece receptiva con el tiempo, se pueden añadir capas adicionales posteriormente, ya sea días, meses o incluso años después. Esta línea de tiempo indefinida refleja cómo se forma la identidad personal: no de golpe, sino gradualmente, a través del tiempo y la experiencia.

Vistas Privadas proporciona una intrincada composición en capas sobre la identidad individual a lo largo del tiempo, preservando detalles de todas las identidades por las que pasamos entre las capas de resina que envejece con el tiempo de manera parecida al ámbar. Esta serie conserva y protege aspectos de la propia identidad de modo que estos aspectos forman parte de un pasado en capas, registrado a través del tiempo que hace que el color de la resina vaya cambiando; así, la obra tendrá capas agregadas con la frecuencia deseada por el creador. *Vistas Privadas* permite una mirada íntima a las vidas de personas que han elegido expresarse a través del collage: la colección y superposición de artefactos significativos en sus vidas. Esto les permite incrustar sus objetos significativos, preciados y mundanos en la resina como un medio para expresarse en ese momento dado, dictando su propia identidad, como un decreto de quiénes son en ese mismo momento, sin objeciones de los demás.

6.1.1.A El uso de objetos comunes para crear identidad

Vistas Privadas se inició a partir del concepto de combinar aspectos de la identidad en una sola pieza única, creando una identidad única con capas de contradicciones, definiciones y diversidad personales. El objetivo era considerar la interseccionalidad de las identidades de los individuos, basando esta colección en personas que había conocido a lo largo del proceso creativo de esta serie, con quienes tuve conversaciones sobre cómo expresaban sus identidades en la vida. El objetivo era interpretar y recrear la iconografía de sus identidades basándose en la recolección de objetos significativos que de alguna forma representaran a ese individuo y su yo a través de una construidos en capas, que luego se concentraría y encapsularían con la resina. Muchos de los materiales utilizados en *Vistas Privadas* fueron objetos encontrados, incluidos objetos hechos a mano u orgánicos, objetos de mi propia infancia o comprados, como papel de revistas, periódicos o libros. A través de este proceso, un individuo podría reseñar cómo se construyó su identidad a lo largo de los años, agregando capa tras capa, para crear un collage de resina de cada etapa de la vida: infancia, niñez, adolescencia, juventud, edad adulta, mediana edad, mayor edad. Las obras de *Vistas Privadas* son biografías de otras personas contadas a través de mi propia creación. Es decir, las personas me han proporcionado sus historias o momentos de vida para crear las obras de arte que las representan utilizando mis propios materiales. Sin embargo, el concepto es que estos son ejemplos de lo que las personas pueden hacer para preservar sus propias identidades, por lo que, si bien he utilizado mis propios objetos personales (encontrados, reunidos, etc.), la mayoría reflejan las identidades de otras personas y sirven como ejemplos de dichas identidades.

Para comprender los materiales que serían necesarios para cada individuo, primero tuve que observar las características de cada individuo, basando mis hallazgos en interacciones o

conocimientos aprendidos de ellos, directamente de ellos o de otros. Al igual que en nuestra experiencia natural, cuando conocemos a las personas, comenzamos a comprenderlas primero a través de la presentación de otros, luego, a través de interacciones más directas, donde obtenemos una comprensión más íntima de quiénes son. Tomé notas de lo que esta persona representaba para mí, cómo me conectaba con ella, anoté dónde no nos conectamos y comencé a descomponer mi comprensión de ella a medida que la experimentaba, y esta percepción sobre el otro, ha cambiado poco a poco a través de una mayor exposición a ellos o la revelación de ellos, como en cualquier otra relación. *Vistas Privadas* es una muestra de algunas de las posibilidades de una variedad de identidades, muchas de las cuales no se representan, ya que serían exclusivas del individuo, utilizando sus propios artefactos personales.

Una vez que se formó y anotó un perfil más complejo de ellos, pude comenzar el proceso de búsqueda de los materiales que mejor se ajusten a mi comprensión de ellos. La iconografía de cada individuo en *Vistas Privadas* dependía de mi percepción del individuo, por lo que encontrar los elementos exactos necesarios requirió investigación e incluso pruebas de una variedad de materiales.En la práctica, el individuo que crea y cura su propia narrativa de identidad para este proyecto no tendría la misma necesidad que yo de buscar y encontrar materiales de la misma manera, ya que estaría creando el trabajo sobre sí mismo, usando sus elementos personales, sus propios objetos encontrados, artefactos privados, etc. Esto también se hizo durante la momificación en el Antiguo Egipto: mientras los individuos eran momificados, se colocaban amuletos que representaban diferentes aspectos de la identidad del difunto dentro de las capas de envoltura, a través de objetos en su mayoría religiosos, pertenecientes o relacionados con dioses específicos, o miniaturas de objetos que los ayudarían en su viaje hacia la otra vida o en ella: servían como piezas del difunto en una forma que podría usarse como pago si fuera necesario (Ikram, 2015, p.95-100).

En algunos casos, que observé a lo largo de mi investigación, el individuo no expresaba profundidad en su identidad, lo que me producía una sensación de algo faltante, por lo que a través de la reflexión, comencé a buscar conceptos formales básicos que se correlacionaran con ellos, como colores, formas o texturas. Estos conceptos básicos, agregaron una imagen general del individuo sobre la cual pude reflexionar más, buscando una mayor comprensión de él. Esto me dio tiempo para experimentar con materiales que también podía asociar mejor con ellos, especialmente cuando comencé a superponer elementos para comparar mi comprensión del individuo con la composición visual que tenía ante mí. Si estas combinaciones funcionaban, entonces probablemente permanecían dentro del trabajo; sin embargo, si se sentían forzadas o inexactas, se eliminaban y se probaban otros objetos. A través de este proceso descubrí que, al hablar de cómo las personas querían ser recordadas, era diferente a cómo se comportaban, ellos mismos, en su vida actual. Algunos escondieron partes de sí mismos en la forma en que querían ser recordados, oscurecieron partes de las que se sentían avergonzados, inseguros o aspectos que eran conflictivos con las creencias familiares, la moral o la religión. Algunas personas tenían miedo de ser recordadas por un aspecto concreto, en lugar de hacerlo con una perspectiva integral. Estas

personas dudaban en relacionar su sexualidad con su identidad y en cómo serían recordadas póstumamente. Aunque estarían muertas, su miedo era que su sexualidad cambiara la forma en que las percibirían sus amigos o familiares que las sobrevivieran. Ocultar estos hechos me dio a entender que preferían suprimir, camuflar o incluso ocultar este aspecto, por lo que algunas obras tienen velos finos y otras censuras que cubren partes de ellas. También utilicé tintes y otras mezclas para nublar la resina y mostrar aún más la intención de esconderse, pareciendo casi ahogarlos en la oscuridad.

Las identidades expresadas en *Vistas Privadas* no son reflejos textuales de un individuo, sino más bien una interpretación, una proyección de mi percepción de ellas. Gran parte de nuestras percepciones sensoriales de los individuos se basan en nuestros sentimientos hacia esa persona después de que nos ha revelado aspectos de su identidad (Burkitt, 2013). La construcción de nuestras percepciones también tiene mucho que ver con nuestras experiencias previas con otros individuos, quienes, tal vez, tenían cualidades similares, lo que puede revelar prejuicios y estereotipos que cada uno de nosotros tiene. Estos sesgos pueden cuestionarse cuando los abordamos o cuando se abordan externamente, lo que puede resultar en un desafío tanto explícito como implícito de estas creencias e ideas. Al utilizar específicamente identidades controvertidas, *Vistas Privadas* llama la atención sobre la naturaleza de esta controversia, como una estrategia específica para crear obras artísticas.

6.1.1.B El uso de resina para fijar y preservar la identidad

La resina contemporánea es un material transparente, aunque se vuelve algo amarillo con el tiempo, a medida que envejece, creando cambios dentro de una apariencia aparentemente fija, y permite la fijación segura de los materiales del collage a través de un proceso de capas. El proceso de creación de *Vistas Privadas* se realizó empapando y recubriendo las piezas que se colocarían en el collage, en resina, para garantizar que estuvieran saturadas. Se vertió una fina capa de resina en los moldes de silicona o hojalata, previamente rociada con una grasa no adhesiva para asegurar el fácil desprendimiento de la placa de resina y las piezas al finalizar el curado. La resina se calentaba para sacar a la superficie bolsas de aire y burbujas no deseadas con cada capa añadida, aunque a veces el aire quedaba inevitablemente atrapado en partículas finas u objetos cavernosos y otras piezas intrincadas. El uso de una pistola de calor ayudó a resolver algunos de los problemas de burbujeo, aunque algunos surgieron durante el proceso de curado. La resina utilizada en *Vistas Privadas* se utiliza normalmente para recubrir la madera y sellarla; a menudo se utiliza en la conservación artesanal, así como para barcos y muebles. Además, las resinas contemporáneas deben curarse por completo antes de poder aplicar una capa adicional, lo que puede tardar desde 24 horas hasta unos pocos días. Descubrí que esto dependía de la humedad y el calor del lugar y del espesor de la resina. Con un espesor uniforme de un centímetro o menos, tendía a secarse en 24 horas cuando se secaba en interiores entre 25 y 28 grados Celsius.

La decisión de utilizar la resina como fijador de la obra, en lugar de la tradicional cola, se basó principalmente en el uso de la resina en el Antiguo Egipto como herramienta de conservación de

momias. Los antiguos egipcios usaban resinas naturales de los árboles para preservar el cadáver en un intento de arreglar la apariencia del individuo para que pudiera mantener su presentación física en la otra vida y poder ser reconocido con mayor precisión, creyendo que el cuerpo sería, más tarde, utilizado en la otra vida (Ikram, 2015, p.55). La resina era un material fundamental utilizado en el proceso de preservación, por lo tanto <,esencial para el reconocimiento del individuo. Su identidad física era un aspecto crucial de su identidad (Ikram, 2015, p.23).

El uso de resina como fijador, en el caso de *Vistas Privadas*, se centró en un propósito similar al de los antiguos egipcios: convirtiéndola en una parte esencial del proceso de creación y preservación de la identidad; se utilizó para fijar la identidad que se expresa en cada obra, junto a otros artefactos existentes mostrados en otros medios dentro del collage. Esto permitió que los objetos quedaran suspendidos dentro, sobre y/o alrededor del individuo representado en la obra. El uso de la resina en esta serie también actuó como una forma de mostrar la transparencia y, como se mencionó anteriormente, la multitud de capas que fijan la identidad.

6.1.2 Expresión de transparencias y opacidades en la identidad del sujeto

Otro factor a la hora de decidir utilizar resina fue la capacidad de alterar la transparencia del material. Dado que la resina es transparente en su forma base, se puede alterar de diversas formas, pero incluye la capacidad de opacificarla. Una intención era crear oscuridades dentro de las capas mediante la manipulación de la resina. Una forma de conseguirlo fue mediante la creación de burbujas en el material, lo que suele ser un efecto indeseable. Dado que la resina se calienta para levantar y eliminar bolsas de aire y burbujas, sin calentarla y con una mezcla intensa, se pueden crear más burbujas de las que normalmente se prefieren. Al agitar intensamente la resina, el aire queda atrapado en el material y crea un efecto de oscurecimiento, que puede intensificarse agitando más, y aún más añadiendo colorantes. Algunas burbujas se liberarán, subirán a la superficie y serán expulsadas, pero cuando las burbujas son numerosas, crean casi una barrera, impidiendo que todas puedan subir a la superficie, lo que crea un color lechoso burbujeante en la resina sin ningún tipo de añadido. color. Esta técnica se puede alterar, como se mencionó anteriormente, a través del calor, permitiendo que las burbujas de la superficie exploten y otras suban a la superficie, reduciendo la opacidad, sin embargo, la intención detrás de crear opacidad o translucidez también era crear profundidad en las capas. como una sensación de ininteligibilidad dentro de las capas, ya que algunos aspectos se revelarían claramente y otros se oscurecerían con, efectivamente, material erróneo. El espectador podría entonces cuestionar la técnica como tal vez un error en algún paso del proceso, o un intento de ocultar o enmascarar ciertos aspectos de la identidad.

El juego entre lo que el espectador interpreta desde los lugares de trabajo es la ambigüedad tanto de la intención del artista como de la obra misma. Si la intención de oscurecer era una parte intencional del plan del artista entonces tal vez funcionó, o falló, como se deseaba, pero el proceso fue un éxito si se logró enmascarar ciertos aspectos, aunque sólo fuera por el bien de la estética. Si el espectador interpreta los “defectos” o las partes borrosas u oscurecidas como la

intención del artista, entonces quizás cuestione el propósito de estas secciones, capas o aspectos, cuando encuentre claridad en otras áreas. El espectador puede creer que el artista no tuvo la intención de ocultar ciertos aspectos, y que quizás fue resultado de que el proceso, material o técnica fuese de mala calidad. En cualquier caso, el espectador tiene razón en esta situación. Se produjeron micro errores en algunas partes del proceso, con el material y con la técnica, sin embargo, a veces esos errores fueron intencionales y otras no. Dado que este material era experimental en este proyecto, no esperaba resultados perfectos, especialmente después de pruebas exhaustivas de todos los materiales y técnicas antes mencionados.

La opacidad y la translucidez fueron aspectos importantes de este proyecto ya que agregaron capas a cada pieza de la serie. Estas secciones oscurecidas permitieron ocultar partes del todo, con la intención de que se hicieran preguntas sobre la intencionalidad o no intencionalidad, así como si estaban destinadas a ciertos artefactos y/o aspectos. De hecho, cada capa crea una translucidez con respecto a la capa anterior. No sólo es importante la manipulación del material a través de la técnica para crear translucidez, sino que también lo es agregar una simple capa. El propósito de crear capas, que a su vez crea translucidez u opacidad, es construir la identidad una capa a la vez, como en la vida a través de las experiencias, la cultura y la familia a través del proceso (Wilshusen, 2020).

6.1.2.A Procesos constructivos de la obra de arte

El proceso comienza con la elección del molde necesario para la obra de arte final, donde se rocía con lubricante engrasado para garantizar que la pieza final pueda desmoldarse. Elegí usar moldes de hojalata porque eran fáciles de usar y reemplazar según fuera necesario, pero también permitían un secado más rápido, en comparación con los moldes de silicona.

Una vez que los moldes están preparados, se puede plantar el diseño para la primera capa, esto puede implicar verter primero una fina capa de resina para asegurar que los objetos no se muevan, lo que requiere que la resina de dos partes se mezcle en un pequeño recipiente de 360 ml. taza transparente. Utilicé un palito de madera para mezclar la resina en un vaso transparente para asegurarme de poder ver su translucidez mientras probaba su viscosidad. La resina no se puede mezclar con demasiada fuerza ya que se formarían microburbujas que harían que el material pareciera opaco. La mezcla tenía que ser lenta e intencionada para evitar burbujas no deseadas (como se explicó en la sección anterior). Una vez mezclado lo suficiente, se podía verter para formar la primera capa del molde, que actuaba como la parte posterior de la obra de arte, y cada una de ellas se iba acumulando posteriormente hacia arriba y hacia afuera del molde. Además, si la resina de dos componentes no se mezclaba adecuadamente o no se dosificaba correctamente, no curaría correctamente y permanecería pegajosa al tacto.

Cada obra de arte requirió entre 4 y 8 capas, dependiendo de los materiales y artefactos dentro de la obra de arte. Cuando los objetos dentro de la pieza eran voluminosos, la pieza requería menos capas para generar profundidad. Cada capa necesitaba al menos 24 horas para curarse, y a

menudo necesitaba 48 horas para curarse debido al calor y la humedad.

6.2 *El Velo de Género* –La manipulación del barro como metáfora del proceso de vida y expresión de la identidad.

6.2.1 Desarrollo de conceptos

Para desarrollar *El Velo de Género*, realicé un curso de dos años de decoración cerámica para llevar a cabo este proyecto. Ya tenía conocimientos básicos de cerámica antes de matricularme, ya que cursé dos semestres de cerámica en la universidad como parte del currículo principal. Este curso me proporcionó una comprensión aún más completa de todos los procesos cerámicos, que hasta ese momento no había estudiado. Comencé este proyecto con un interés genuino en la construcción cerámica, aunque el curso me proporcionó una formación cerámica mucho más completa.

El Velo de Género es un reflejo de la existencia de la variedad de géneros y sus intersecciones a través de la abstracción y la reunificación. *El Velo de Género* expresa la normalidad de la fluidez del género y expresa cómo el éste puede construirse, deconstruirse y reconstruirse una y otra vez, mientras se manipula para que se ajuste al contexto del individuo. *El Velo de Género* es la representación de la posibilidad de expresión del individuo que crea algunos aspectos de su propia identidad, con cierta independencia de lo que la sociedad le haya mostrado sobre quién o qué debe ser.

Este proyecto es una instalación escultórica de cerámica que permite al espectador reflexionar sobre el concepto de género y cómo se construye y se adapta, los cambios que atraviesa un individuo durante su vida y su posibilidad de ser manipulado y alterado para adaptarse a las condiciones de vida individuales. Por otro lado, también ejemplifica el conformismo en algunos aspectos, representando cómo la sociedad intenta mantener la forma de identidad a través de cierta homogeneización, sin considerar el recorrido de cada individuo.

6.2.1.A Uso del triángulo como trinidad

El uso del concepto y símbolo de la trinidad puede encontrarse alrededor del mundo en ámbitos de la cultura y la religión con la función de expresar ciertas creencias e identidades. El uso del triángulo en *El Velo de Género* es simbólico y útil para analizar una variedad de trinidades que se muestran en este proyecto:

1. Nacimiento, vida y muerte.
2. Construcción, destrucción y reconstrucción de la identidad
3. Tierra, agua y fuego: en la construcción cerámica

1. Nacimiento, vida y muerte

La trinidad, en muchas religiones, representa una entidad espiritual dividida en tres facetas, como en el cristianismo: “Dios el padre, Jesús el hijo y el Espíritu Santo” (Ferguson, 2023); *El Velo de*

Género se aleja de la religión como creencia y, en cambio, se centra en tres aspectos definitivos: nacimiento, vida y muerte. Hay muchos tipos diferentes de triángulos que podrían representar una variedad de expresiones de nacimiento, vida y muerte, con una variedad de posibilidades intermedias: vidas o muertes largas/cortas, por ejemplo. Este proyecto se centra en un triángulo equilátero que imita la expectativa social estándar para cualquier individuo. El triángulo equilátero no tiene en cuenta los cambios fisiológicos o psicológicos de los individuos, su capacidad o incapacidad para alcanzar sus estándares, ni las circunstancias que les impedirían encajar en la forma predeterminada.

2. Construcción, destrucción y reconstrucción de la identidad

La construcción, destrucción y reconstrucción de la identidad mediante el uso de la trinidad explica, en cierta medida, la antes mencionada trinidad de nacimiento, vida y muerte. La construcción de la identidad, en este caso, comienza en el nacimiento, determinado por nuestra genética, nuestras familias y lo que proyectan sobre nosotros y a lo que nos exponen. En esta fase de nuestras vidas, no podemos cambiar nuestras circunstancias y cambiar la forma en que desarrollamos nuestras identidades, al mismo tiempo que nos vemos obligados a obedecer a nuestros padres, tutores u otros miembros religiosos o familiares. La construcción de nuestras identidades tempranas podría ser el resultado de traumas infantiles que se perciben como rasgos de personalidad o de carácter que nos afectan emocional, psicológicamente y quizás también físicamente, y que nos cambian a largo plazo. La construcción puede ser tanto consciente como inconsciente (así como voluntaria y no voluntaria). Cuando la construcción es voluntaria, entonces la determinamos nosotros, generalmente en respuesta a nuestra construcción inconsciente, como los intereses encontrados dentro de un área en la que nos vimos obligados a involucrarnos, por ejemplo: si uno se ve obligado a participar en el equipo de teatro de la iglesia, podría desarrollar una conexión con la pompa, el travestismo, el maquillaje o incluso actuar como alguien que no es pero preferiría ser (enmascarando partes de sí mismo para apaciguar a los demás) (de Valverde, et al. ., 2017). Como se ha demostrado, estos pueden resultar positivos y negativos para el individuo.

Cuando la construcción es voluntaria, entonces la determinamos nosotros, generalmente en respuesta a nuestra construcción inconsciente; tal vez esto se ejemplifique con los intereses encontrados dentro de un área en la que nos vimos obligados a involucrarnos, por ejemplo; si a uno lo obligan a participar en la iglesia (coerción), el individuo puede unirse al equipo de teatro de la iglesia, donde puede desarrollar una conexión con la pompa, el travestismo, el maquillaje o incluso actuar como alguien que preferiría ser (enmascarando partes de sí mismo para apaciguar a los demás) (de Valverde, et al., 2017). Como se ha demostrado, una situación en la que uno se ve obligado a participar en actos culturales o religiosos que de otra manera no querría hacer, puede resultar tanto positiva como negativa para el individuo. Es decir, rechaza explícitamente el deseo de la participación forzada de un aspecto, pero se beneficia al poder seguir participando en actos que implícitamente forman otra parte de su identidad.

La deconstrucción de la propia identidad podría estar relacionada con la evolución de una nueva identidad, donde una identidad evoluciona, rompiendo lentamente aspectos previamente mantenidos que definían su identidad y que permitían la separación de esos otros aspectos. Esta es una forma de crecimiento en la propia identidad y probablemente sea positiva, aunque también puede ser consistente con el extremismo si el individuo se ve inundado con el mismo mensaje o creencia sin otra perspectiva (de Valverde, et al., 2017). Otro aspecto de la deconstrucción de la identidad podría ser un cambio en las creencias e ideas que alguna vez tuvo un individuo y que han cambiado con el tiempo y, en lugar de crecer verticalmente dentro de la misma mentalidad, cambian de dirección horizontalmente, cambiando las perspectivas. Esto también podría considerarse crecimiento, sin embargo, crecimiento de una creencia a otra, lo que, nuevamente, podría ser positivo o negativo para el individuo. A menudo se ve como un cambio progresivo basado en una trayectoria algo lineal, si lo pensamos en planos (Valverde, et al., 2017). Hay que deconstruir ideas preconcebidas para poder avanzar en la dirección que se desea (conscientemente), esto puede significar dejar de lado creencias sostenidas por la familia, los amigos, la comunidad, la cultura o incluso sobre uno mismo. Este es el momento en el que uno considera que ya no es "X" y comienza a hacer cambios para reflejar eso, cambiando efectivamente la forma en que se identifica con respecto a esos elementos, tal vez identificándose como "Y" o "Z". En última instancia, es la afiliación y la creencia, la identificación con un grupo o una etiqueta que mejor refleja la identidad actual de uno.

3. Tierra, agua y fuego en la construcción cerámica

Tres facetas naturales que también podemos considerar una trinidad son: tierra, agua y fuego. Dentro de la cerámica estos aspectos son importantes ya que son la base del proceso. La tierra es la mezcla de los elementos para crear una variedad de arcillas, permitiendo realizar tanto un proceso físico como uno químico. Las diferentes combinaciones de elementos producen diferentes variedades de arcilla, que tienen diferentes fortalezas, debilidades, texturas y componentes químicos. Las diferencias dentro de estas mezclas de arcilla son las diferentes formaciones estructurales, temperaturas e incluso manipulación, incluida la ornamentación. Diferentes proporciones de ciertos elementos podrían crear arcillas más frágiles y quebradizas, mientras que otros pueden hacerlas más plásticas y flexibles, más fáciles de moldear o resistentes (Breuer, 2012).

La capacidad de dar forma y moldear estas mezclas elementales no sería posible sin agua. El agua permite que los elementos se fusionen temporalmente para adoptar la forma deseada por el artista. El agua actúa como aglutinante dentro de la mezcla y, si bien los elementos realmente se incorporan, se pueden moldear de diferentes maneras. La adición de demasiada agua podría deteriorar la mezcla haciéndola inadecuada para diferentes tipos de manipulación, muy poca agua y la volvería quebradiza y poco maleable. Hay que entender las necesidades del conglomerado: la arcilla. Comprender el tipo de arcilla y sus necesidades, con el diseño final en mente, es importante ya que determinarán el éxito de la primera etapa del proceso: secado (precocción).

La temperatura que puede soportar la arcilla depende del tipo de arcilla preparada. El punto de fusión de los elementos es diferente y por lo tanto, algunas arcillas no pueden soportar temperaturas altas, mientras que otras pueden soportar temperaturas significativamente más altas. Sin embargo, todas las arcillas llegarán a un punto en el que dejarán de ser viables y podrían fundirse o incinerarse debido al exceso de temperaturas ya que no son viables más allá de determinadas temperaturas (Breuer, 2012). El calor del fuego debe formar un arco y crear una especie de ola de calor que sea constante durante un número específico de horas para garantizar que los elementos se hayan fusionado adecuadamente. La combinación del barro y el fuego condiciona el resultado de la pieza final.

La trinidad, en este caso, proporciona nuevamente una especie de ciclo de vida, de identidad.

La cerámica jugó un papel crucial en la vida de los antiguos egipcios. La cerámica es uno de los tipos de artefactos más comunes que se encuentran en excavaciones aún hoy, y sirve para fines domésticos, religiosos y comerciales (Bader, 2017). El uso de la cerámica en las prácticas funerarias era versátil, e incluía vasijas canópicas (de diferentes materiales: madera, piedra o cerámica), *shabtis* (también llamados *shawabti* o *ushebti*) (estatuas de sirvientes), así como contenedores y vasijas para bienes funerarios (Bader, 2017, Ikram, 2015, p.127-128). Estos artefactos cerámicos demostraban la clase social y los medios económicos del individuo, así como la edad. Se utilizaron grandes vasijas de cerámica como reemplazos rentables de los sarcófagos. Los entierros en vasijas a menudo se asociaban con clases bajas y entierros de niños y fueron ampliamente utilizados (Power & Tristant, 2016). Esta distinción de materiales de las clases alta y élite formaba parte de la identidad del individuo enterrado.

Los *shabtis* eran pequeñas figuras que normalmente estaban hechas de madera o arcilla, pero también de vidrio, cera, piedra o bronce. De diferente calidad, se utilizaban en entierros para garantizar que estos sirvientes cuidarían del difunto en el más allá, algunos también identificados como miembros de la familia, lo que garantizaría su presencia en el más allá (Ikram, 2015, p.128-129). Fueron representados en escenas de la vida diaria o en forma momiforme, también de diferentes tamaños. Cada *shabti* tendría grabado el nombre de su propietario, lo que garantizaba la identificación, ya que el reconocimiento en el más allá era primordial. Es importante destacar que el difunto también podría ser un *shabti*, lo que le permitiría desempeñar la función de *ka* (la fuerza vital de uno) (Ikram, 2015, p.24, 129-130). El uso de *shabtis* en el entierro aseguró que la vida futura fuera mejor que la actual, por lo tanto, el número de *shabtis* creció con el tiempo de alrededor de 2 *shabtis* en la época de Amenhotep II a setecientos en el Período Tardío (Ikram, 2015, p. 129). El número de *shabtis* que una persona podía permitirse, junto con la calidad material y artesanal, identificaban en gran medida al individuo fallecido, formando parte de su identidad eterna.

6.2.1.B Intersección de imágenes, símbolos y orientación en la representación

El Velo de Género utiliza una variedad de iconografía recopilada relacionada con la orientación

sexual y la identidad de género, y luego las abstrae. La iconografía también incluye símbolos fuera de contexto o apropiados para significar o representar algo diferente de lo que originalmente se pretendía. Otras imágenes se crean mediante la abstracción de otros objetos, incluidos genitales, formas, líneas, letras del alfabeto/caracteres, la figura humana, animales, etc. Muchos de estos objetos se descomponen y abstraen para representar algo distinto a su significado original, que podría incluir sexualizar o desexualizar, generar y confundir el género, usar el color y la línea para crear significado a través de su uso o su ausencia. Las imágenes se aplican o eliminan de los cientos de mosaicos triangulares que forman *El Velo de Género*. La colección de mosaicos triangulares representa el yo fragmentado: cómo somos un conjunto de identidades unidas a través de nuestras experiencias y conexiones a lo largo de la vida; y aunque estas conexiones pueden no experimentarlas todos, vinculan nuestras identidades entre sí, formando una versión completa de nosotros mismos.

Cada una de estas baldosas triangulares está suspendida de una barra con cuatro largas cuerdas verticales en cada barra. Cada cuerda contiene una variedad de triángulos, cada uno colgado de arriba hacia abajo y de abajo hacia arriba, unidos con una cuerda transparente: la cuerda que los une a todos. La colección de triángulos en cada cuerda es diversa y no hay dos triángulos iguales. Cada uno fue creado y decorado a mano. Algunos están desconchados, mellados, fracturados o reparados y reconstruidos, representando los fragmentos de lo que nos ha ocurrido a lo largo de nuestras vidas, creados exactamente como se pretendía; otros aparecen remendados, remodelados, demasiado delgados o demasiado gruesos, fusionados con otras piezas o diseños. Cada pieza es única, con similitudes entre ellas, pero diferentes incluso cuando parecen iguales. Cada uno de ellos está decorado a mano con diferentes técnicas, métodos, arcillas, engobes y esmaltes para garantizar que reflejen a cada uno de nosotros en nuestra variedad de colores y formas.

La orientación de cada pieza no es necesariamente una preocupación ya que algunas piezas aparecerán boca arriba y otras al revés, lo que juega con el concepto de percepción de identidad. Para algunos, la perspectiva es sesgada, incorrecta o incluso invertida; sin embargo, para otros, puede que sea percibida perfectamente normal y adecuada para ellos. La mezcla de perspectivas en esta obra refleja la percepción que tiene la sociedad de la no normatividad: incorrecta, sobresaliente, al revés, etc. Si bien todas las piezas derivaron de los mismos o similares ingredientes y materiales, algunas tienen más y otras menos de los mismos elementos, y salieron casi igual, pero sus viajes fueron diferentes; algunos superaron un proceso de creación más complicado, otros sobrevivieron más a circunstancias angustiosas, y todos intentan salir por el otro extremo de la misma forma –triangular– y aunque todos fueron cortados del mismo molde, se ven diferentes, ya que algunos también tuvieron períodos más largos de abandono y otros tuvieron atención y cuidado más consistentes. Los procesos de creación y decoración les afectaron de manera diferente y, por tanto, la forma en que los percibimos también se ve alterada, tanto positiva como negativamente según la perspectiva.

6.2.2 (Re)Posición y (Re/Des)construcciones de identidad

A lo largo del proceso de creación de *El Velo de Género* se realizaron muchos experimentos para determinar qué arcillas funcionarían mejor, sin embargo en este viaje se descubrió que no había razón para seleccionar un tipo específico de arcilla. La construcción de los mosaicos fue importante ya que fueron tomados con el mismo molde, lo que permitió una consistencia general; sin embargo, no todos los mosaicos sobrevivieron a los experimentos. Algunos no sobrevivieron a la etapa de manipulación húmeda, donde fueron alterados cuando la arcilla estaba bastante fresca y maleable, ya que se rompieron en el proceso, o tal vez se secaron demasiado y se volvieron quebradizos, incapaces de alterarlos o arreglarlos; algunos se desintegraron cuando intenté recuperarlos. Algunas de las piezas que no sobrevivieron al principio se pudieron reutilizar y los triángulos se pudieron reconstruir para formar nuevos triángulos que se pudieron alterar y rehacer con una atención más centrada. Estas piezas se ven algo diferentes, reposicionadas entre sus contrapartes anteriores, y tal vez parezcan más oscuras, incluso contaminadas, en comparación.

6.2.3 Proceso de construcción de la obra de arte

El tema de la pieza es la expresión del género. Cada pieza (triángulos de 10x10x10cm) está hecha de una variación de tipos de arcillas, desde un rango de temperaturas de fuego bajo a alto. Cada triángulo está coloreado con engobes, vidriados o bajo vidriados, y tiene texturas, patrones, imágenes pintadas, modeladas o imágenes en relieve que divulgan las inmensas diferencias y similitudes entre ellos. Esta representación de la diversidad de la humanidad y de cómo se identifican los individuos expresa las complejidades de los orígenes, la cultura, la raza, el sexo y las experiencias personales que dan forma a la forma en que uno se identifica, ya sea en un nivel superficial o biológico.

Cada triángulo ha pasado por su propio proceso individual de creación, como el de cada individuo. Algunas han sobrevivido hasta el final del proceso, aquellas de las que son expuestas, modeladas, pintadas y coloridas, otras piezas han estado sometidas a otras tensiones a lo largo del proceso que las han dañado, marcado, deformado, deformado, roto y, en algunos casos, los transformó. Con algunas piezas he obtenido resultados sorprendentes, mientras que otras no dieron el resultado esperado; otras se derritieron o destruyeron en el proceso. No importa cómo se identifique u observe cada pieza, el proceso creativo para cada pieza fue casi el mismo, cada una fue creada con los mismos elementos básicos, sólo con diferencias menores, y la presión y el calor de cada pieza a medida que se desarrolló demuestra resultados diferentes.

Todos los triángulos están colgados de cuerdas uno al lado del otro, lo que implica que, sin importar su condición, todos son iguales y tienen las mismas capacidades. La forma que crean al ser colgados como un velo (o cortina) en un patrón en zigzag superpuesto simboliza la fluidez con la que funcionamos juntos como sociedad, todos mezclándonos, interactuando y existiendo juntos, apoyándonos unos a otros a pesar de nuestros quebrantamiento o mal funcionamiento, a pesar de nuestras apariencias o antecedentes.

6.3 *Buscando Uno Mismo*: la relación entre narrativa e imágenes de identidad
Antes de comenzar este proyecto, compré mi cámara Fuji Instax Wide para uso personal como alternativa a mi cámara Polaroid, ya que la película Fuji es más barata. Empecé a documentar mi vida como visitante en Estados Unidos semanas antes de descubrir que mi madre padecía una enfermedad terminal. Tenía poca experiencia con la fotografía como medio artístico, ya que solo había cursado dos semestres de fotografía analógica en la universidad como parte del currículo principal. Sin embargo, tenía un gran interés en documentar la vida de forma artística. Tenía una comprensión básica de los conceptos artísticos, la luz y las composiciones antes de comenzar este proyecto. Mi objetivo con este proyecto, que comenzó después de la muerte de mi madre, era capturar y reflejar la identidad a través de todos los momentos y condiciones de la vida (y la muerte). Tuve en cuenta estos factores al llevar a cabo este proyecto.

Buscando Uno Mismo es una instalación de fotografía instantánea que combina narración e imágenes como medio de autoexpresión y representa las identidades interseccionales que todos poseemos como individuos. Este proyecto utiliza imágenes de una variedad de diferentes tipos de personas, objetos, lugares, etc. para crear momentos que el espectador puede interpretar para formar una identidad a partir de experiencias compartidas y la exposición a desencadenantes de la memoria. Las imágenes y experiencias que recopilamos y almacenamos en nuestros recuerdos pueden ser activadas por las fotografías, asociándolas con sus propias vidas, experiencias e identidades. El formato de la fotografía (película instantánea) evoca una sensación de nostalgia y permite a todos los espectadores conectarse con ella a través de su experiencia.

Esta exploración no solo es externa, sino también profundamente introspectiva. *Buscando Uno Mismo* se ha desarrollado no sólo como un estudio de la identidad colectiva e individual, sino también como un proceso personal, posicionándome a mí misma, como artista y sujeto, en el centro del proyecto. Como fotógrafa, he documentado momentos que resuenan con y reflejan mis propias experiencias vividas, identidades y comprensión cambiante de la individualidad. Estos momentos a menudo revelan puntos de intersección entre mi identidad y las identidades de aquellos que fotografié. A medida que continúo viajando y siendo testigo de las vidas de individuos en diferentes culturas y entornos, mi propia identidad cambia en respuesta, y emergen nuevas interseccionalidades. Por lo tanto, *Buscando Uno Mismo* se convierte tanto en un registro de descubrimiento como en una lente reflexiva a través de la cual considero mi pasado y presente. Las imágenes están moldeadas por mi perspectiva como mujer estadounidense cisgénero, blanca e inmigrante, y se presentan como documentación e interpretación de la interacción dinámica entre el yo y el otro.

El uso de un formato físico y directo de imágenes es el que se utilizaba en el Antiguo Egipto en forma de relieves y frescos para comunicarse de diferentes maneras, a menudo como una forma de registrar eventos, perpetuar creencias (como las de la realeza) o contar escenas religiosas, y este método no es tan diferente de los métodos contemporáneos, ya que continuamos documentando eventos y contando historias mediante la fotografía (Universidad de Memphis,

n.d.). *Buscando Uno Mismo* utiliza las imágenes de la vida cotidiana o las extrañas complejidades de la vida y las reutiliza a partir de fotografías básicas para expresar la identidad a través de la selección de fotografías tomadas en todo el mundo. Esta colección de fotografías brinda al espectador la oportunidad de formar significado y conexión en función de sus propias identidades y experiencias. La importancia de *Buscando Uno Mismo* es que es un reflejo de muchos, en un aspecto u otro. Las fotos capturan las identidades de culturas únicas, así como los atributos mundanos de la vida dentro de ellas. Este proyecto recopila estas diferencias de todo el mundo y une a personas de distintos lugares y culturas a través de experiencias compartidas mediante la exposición mixta. Es decir, las personas pueden conectarse con el tema único y cotidiano de las fotografías, reflexionando sobre sus propias vidas, experiencias e identidades. Este acto puede ampliar la comprensión que uno tiene de los demás y, tal vez, ampliar la empatía o la curiosidad hacia ellos.

> "La representación sirve como término operativo dentro de un proceso político que busca extender visibilidad y legitimidad a [las mujeres] como sujetos políticos; por otro lado, la representación es la función normativa del lenguaje que se dice que revela o distorsiona lo que se supone que es cierto acerca de la categoría de [mujeres]" (Butler, 1990).

Cuando vemos inclusión en la representación a través de la fotografía, también vemos distorsión de nociones preconcebidas, que pueden incluir a todos, no sólo a las mujeres, como señala Butler. Cuando estamos representados, otros nos perciben como un componente vital de la comunidad social más amplia. Esto sugiere que su identidad, o parte de ella, refleja mi identidad, creando conexión y comprensión.

6.3.1 Desarrollo de conceptos

Buscando Uno Mismo intenta evocar emociones románticas de admiración por objetos, lugares y eventos culturales, pero se abstiene de sumergirse profundamente en las emociones ordenadas de la nostalgia, aunque tal vez evoque su esencia. Este proyecto utiliza el anhelo, la tristeza, la felicidad, el orgullo romantizado y la comodidad de lo que uno conoce a través de fotografías y los mezcla con fotografías de otras culturas para incorporar e imponer esos sentimientos entre personas, lugares y objetos extraños que tal vez parezcan familiares y a salvo de lo desconocido del futuro. Le permite al espectador un momento de nostalgia, un paso atrás hacia la seguridad y familiaridad de las identidades pasadas, reconociéndolas y usándolas como referencia de quiénes se han convertido, y reflexionando sobre qué elementos dentro de las fotografías pronto podrían influir en sus identidades futuras.

6.3.1.A Uso de la imaginería como referencia histórica en la vida y la memoria.

Históricamente, las imágenes han demostrado ser una prueba de la existencia de un evento, registrado de alguna manera en el texto, pero que se consideraba una prueba contundente ya que una imagen nos ayuda a comprender nuestro mundo al documentarlo (Cohen, s.f.). A lo largo de

la historia, las imágenes fueron una forma de demostrar la validez de un evento; actuando como prueba de su existencia, como declaración de un acontecimiento, siendo validado al ser pintado o tallado en piedra, en el entendido de que el acontecimiento había ocurrido y que su descripción era una prueba de ello, una tarea costosa y ardua (Cohen, s.f.).

En las sociedades contemporáneas, este método de cubrir edificios enteros con gráficos es común. Eventos históricos importantes se muestran en todas partes, desde murales públicos y paredes de aulas hasta graffitis callejeros o edificios religiosos enteros, como la Sagrada Familia en Barcelona, España. Las sociedades contemporáneas están dispuestas a utilizar imágenes para enfatizar el trabajo de las palabras, lo que deja muchas oportunidades para la interpretación. En algunas situaciones, especialmente las religiosas, esto puede hacerse a propósito. Esto proporciona un margen de error en algunos casos, pero dentro de la religión, proporciona espacio para la interpretación, donde la enseñanza puede adaptarse a la situación. Es decir, si no hay una respuesta clara en el texto, entonces una respuesta general o vaga debería ser suficiente en su lugar. Las imágenes proporcionan ese espacio. Siempre que hacemos conexiones entre imágenes, éstas transmiten un mensaje, a menudo una historia o una advertencia.

6.3.1.B Uso del cine instantáneo como conducto hacia la nostalgia.

Alguna vez la nostalgia fue considerada una enfermedad mortal, observada entre los soldados suizos de la década de 1680 estacionados en el extranjero que se desmayaban, alucinaban: veían fantasmas y/o escuchaban voces, muchos de ellos incapaces de luchar o comer, algunos incapaces de levantarse de la cama; su única cura era regresar a la propia patria (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). Es un sentimiento difícil de describir, ya que es una mezcla de emociones, típicamente contradictorias: feliz y triste al mismo tiempo, un anhelo por la comodidad del momento y al mismo tiempo sentirse incómodo con aspectos del momento. Creó un anhelo por un período aparentemente normal en la vida del pasado (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). Este sentimiento puede ser un sentido distorsionado de la memoria, que selecciona específicamente sus aspectos bellos, mientras desdibuja su realidad. "…nostalgia, de las palabras griegas nostos y algia, que significan regreso a casa y dolor, traducidas aproximadamente" (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). Aunque la nostalgia es imperfecta en su presentación ante nosotros, ciertamente ofrece una sensación de escape a un momento perfecto percibido en nuestra realidad. Confiamos en su certeza sobre nuestra experiencia, aunque la memoria en sí misma sea imperfecta, y buscamos en ella estabilidad y permanencia en nuestra comprensión de nosotros mismos: ¿quiénes y qué moldearon quiénes somos? La nostalgia es un "lugar del antes cálido y confiable" (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). "La gente sentía nostalgia y añoraba una idea de hogar que ya no existe o que nunca existió... saudade, una palabra portuguesa que no tiene una traducción directa al inglés pero que se refiere a un anhelo profundo y melancólico por algo o alguien perdido o fuera. de alcance", es otro ejemplo de este sentimiento, aunque existen muchas variaciones en todo el mundo (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

Cuando los soldados regresaron a casa, sus sentimientos continuaron, ya que sus hogares habían

cambiado y ellos habían cambiado, por lo que la constante que habían anhelado ya no existía: "No se trataba solo de la guerra, y no se trataba solo del hogar. Es casi como si tuviera más que ver con el tiempo que con el lugar. Se trataba de cambio" (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). Este cambio, a lo largo de la historia, hace referencia a un mundo modernizado, donde el cambio era la nueva constante,

> "…hubo una pérdida de control, una pérdida de lo que una vez conociste. Podría ser porque te encontraste en otro país, rodeado de nueva comida, cultura e idioma, o porque, por primera vez, dejas tu tierra y te presentas a un lugar de trabajo" (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

A medida que seguimos analizando la nostalgia a lo largo de la historia, podemos ver que la nostalgia persiste: un anhelo por un período en el que las cosas eran grandiosas, pacíficas o perfectas, pero ese tiempo no existe. Incluso aquellos que no salieron de casa experimentaron este fenómeno a medida que el mundo cambiaba a su alrededor con la introducción de procesos industriales (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

> "Ésta fue una época en la que el tiempo mismo comenzó a verse de manera diferente, con las horas del día diseñadas en torno a la industrialización masiva y al avance de la economía global. Las cosas se sintieron diferentes. Y había un anhelo compartido por cómo eran las cosas, ya sea que la gente se fuera de casa o no. La nostalgia estaba apareciendo en los trabajadores de las fábricas, los estudiantes y los inmigrantes: personas que se adaptaban a un mundo en modernización. Y este auge de la industria vino naturalmente con un movimiento contracultural" (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

El romanticismo fue el movimiento natural que se alejó de un mundo industrializado, donde todo estaba racionalizado y mecanizado, que dejaba a las personas incapaces de escapar de sus rigurosos horarios de trabajo y responsabilidades para con ellos mismos y sus familias, trabajando para sobrevivir.

> "El romanticismo fue un movimiento cultural que reformó el arte, la música, la literatura y la filosofía a lo largo del siglo XIX. Fue, en muchos sentidos, una reacción directa contra la anterior era de la Ilustración, que se centraba en el racionalismo y la razón, así como en la industria, con sus horarios ajustados, movimientos repetitivos y mecanización. El romanticismo era exactamente lo contrario: la imaginación, la subjetividad y las emociones. Y la nostalgia quedó absorbida por el movimiento y se convirtió en una sensibilidad literaria para ayudar a expresar la angustia de la época" (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

La formación de países también requirió una saludable dosis de nostalgia romántica. El pasado o la historia de una nación se convertiría en lo que llamaríamos, tal vez, una herencia o algo similar,

si hubiera un anhelo por algún país perdido hace mucho tiempo (Abdelfatah et al., 2021). Esto también es relevante para lugares dentro de un país, lugares que asumen el papel de artefacto cultural, como Notre Dame, en París.

En ese momento, Notre Dame estaba en pésimas condiciones y era una plaga para el vecindario. Además, Victor Hugo no solo fue un autor francés sino también un partidario de la preservación arquitectónica que, en el siglo XIX, comenzó a presenciar la demolición de estructuras de la época gótica en todo París. Hugo se comprometió a restaurar Notre Dame y en 1831 creó un libro sobre Quasimodo, el campanero y ferviente admirador de la catedral, ambientado en la época gótica del siglo XV. En este caso prevaleció la nostalgia y el proyecto de restauración de Notre Dame se inició en 1844 (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

La ironía es que la restauración en curso de la catedral, que se basa en esta inclinación romántica nostálgica, en realidad aumentó la posibilidad de que sufriera daños por cosas como un incendio. Se cree que el incendio de Notre Dame en 2019 fue causado en realidad por una restauración o renovación excesiva de la catedral (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

> "Y es una especie de lección que podemos aprender sobre cómo intentar restaurar el pasado completa y plenamente y que, en realidad, podría terminar en la destrucción de lo que anhelamos" (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

La era romántica fue solo una fuente de nostalgia que alimentó una expresión artística universal de anhelo, anhelo y ajuste de cuentas con el pasado y el presente. La gente se aferró a lo que quedaba, que eran sus recuerdos de los lugares en los que habían estado, las cosas que tenían y las personas que alguna vez fueron, mientras el mundo cambiaba rápidamente y las viejas formas de vida se les escapaban de las manos. "La nostalgia se convirtió en un nombre para el placer y el dolor en el espacio entre la certeza del pasado y la incertidumbre de lo que estaba por venir" (Abdelfatah et al., 2021).

Con la invención de la película Polaroid, la primera película instantánea en el mercado en 1948 con tonos sepia, las personas pudieron capturar recuerdos en la película casi instantáneamente y pudieron compartirlos (American Chemical Society, s.f.). Todo tiene un carácter fugaz y efímero en nuestro mundo contemporáneo. Hay pocas cosas de las que nos rodeamos que nos hagan sentir una profunda sensación de conexión, que nos haga sentir seguros en algo. Revivir momentos a través de fotografías nos ayuda a preservar fragmentos de nosotros mismos en el tiempo, y con una fotografía física, tangible podemos construir las narrativas de nuestras vidas; Polaroid sugiere: "…nuestras vidas se construyen a partir de momentos: momentos que pueden cambiar tu vida y momentos cotidianos que crean tu vida", y demuestro que esto es cierto a través de *Buscando Uno Mismo* (Polaroid EU, s.f.).

Desde que se introdujo la cámara Instax (película instantánea) de Fujifilm en 1998, la fotografía

El primer lote de fotografías capturadas en *Buscando Uno Mismo* (1), Islandia, 2018, Theresa Wilshusen

El primer lote de fotografías capturadas en *Buscando Uno Mismo* (2), Islandia, 2018, Theresa Wilshusen

El primer lote de fotografías capturadas en *Buscando Uno Mismo* (3), Islandia, 2018, Theresa Wilshusen

instantánea ha ido recuperando popularidad. Esta tendencia alcanzó su punto máximo en 2009, cuando Polaroid anunció que abandonaba el mercado de la fotografía instantánea (Fujifilm, s.f.). La moda por las fotografías físicas ha revivido por su atractivo. Hay una sensación de nostalgia, genuina o implícita, creada por este alejamiento del aspecto digital de las fotografías. “Real” en el sentido de que el individuo ha interactuado previamente con la fotografía instantánea de primera mano de alguna manera y anhela la misma sensación que experimentó anteriormente, además de los vínculos emocionales que pueda tener con ese momento de sus vidas. La mayoría de la gente lo asocia con un período de sus vidas más sencillo y sin preocupaciones. “Implícito” significa que es posible que la persona nunca haya tomado una foto instantánea o haya estado en una, por lo que es posible que no sea consciente de la gratificación instantánea de sostener la representación física del momento que experimentó en su mano en ese momento, y no perderse entre cientos de otras fotografías, como en el caso de la fotografía digital, donde se pueden tomar cientos de fotografías consecutivas para conseguir los mejores resultados en cuestión de segundos.

La fotografía instantánea atrae a un público más amplio porque muchas personas sienten nostalgia en ella. El espectador queda intrigado por este juego de nostalgia, ya que siente curiosidad por el material y espera reconocer algo de su propio pasado en él. La película en sí y el proceso de captura del contenido intrigan a quienes no están familiarizados con la fotografía analógica y la instantánea. A través de esta curiosidad, el espectador desarrolla un vínculo con una escena de la que desearía haber sido parte, especialmente si tiene una fuerte conexión con el tema de la fotografía. De vez en cuando anhelan la sensación de tomar una fotografía rápida y tener ese momento en particular en sus manos. En cualquier caso, la fotografía instantánea es una manera contemporánea y antigua de registrar un momento, así como un sentimiento de pertenencia a algo (un tiempo, lugar, grupo, género), una identidad de algún tipo. Es contemporáneo porque utiliza formatos modernos en la era tecnológica, pero antiguo porque recuerda a la infancia y "tiempos más simples" para muchas personas, esencialmente menos digitales y más manuales. Es un medio que transmite la novedad y también la antigüedad de un momento en el tiempo, un estado de ser, un lugar o un objeto. Llegamos a comprender el valor de estas imágenes y su aplicación a nuestras vidas a través del tiempo.

Podemos ver evidencia de este requisito de registrar eventos importantes y proporcionar instrucciones si pensamos y examinamos el Antiguo Egipto. Como en muchas civilizaciones, las imágenes ayudaban a explicar cómo se representaban ciertos acontecimientos importantes. Los antiguos egipcios no sólo crearon su propio lenguaje pictórico (jeroglíficos), sino que también se aseguraron de crear enormes murales en relieve en sus estructuras (a menudo templos) y frecuentemente pintaban frescos en sus tumbas, en el área de la capilla para los visitantes (Cooney, 2007).

La idea de capturar a una persona, un momento, un estado de ánimo o un lugar ha existido desde el principio de los tiempos, incluso si la fotografía no se estableció hasta 1830 (The British Library

Board, N.D.) y la fotografía instantánea incluso más recientemente, en los años 1930 y Década de 1940 (Sociedad Química Estadounidense, 2018). Ciertas representaciones tempranas se emplearon con frecuencia como manuales o registros históricos de un escenario o una secuencia de eventos, pero son cruciales para comprender por qué necesitamos documentar estas facetas de la existencia a través de un medio visual.

6.3.1.C La coalescencia transcultural de imágenes como interseccionalidad de identidades.
"La interseccionalidad, la noción de que la subjetividad está constituida por vectores de raza, género, clase y sexualidad que se refuerzan mutuamente, ha surgido como la principal herramienta teórica diseñada para combatir la jerarquía, la hegemonía y la exclusividad feministas" (Nash, 2008, p.2).). El término "interseccionalidad" de la jurista Kimberlé Crenshaw enfatiza la "multidimensionalidad" de las experiencias vividas por los individuos marginados (Crenshaw, 1989, p.139).

Para los estudios feministas y antirracistas, la interseccionalidad sirve a varios objetivos teóricos y políticos. En primer lugar, desafía el pensamiento binario raza-género para teorizar la identidad de una manera más matizada. Para permitir evaluaciones exhaustivas de sitios y/o exhibiciones culturales que involucran tanto raza como género, es especialmente crucial socavar las distinciones binarias mencionadas(Nash, 2008, p.2). Esto es importante no sólo dentro del binario raza-género, sino también en otros, como raza-sexualidad, género-sexualidad, raza-etnicidad, etc., ya que estos binarios cruciales se cruzan y pueden no solo cuestionar las normas sociales, sino también las normas culturales. Un objetivo de la terminología "interseccionalidad" es proporcionar a las personas un vocabulario para abordar las críticas a las políticas de identidad. El verdadero problema de las políticas de identidad, según Crenshaw, es que oscurece las distinciones intragrupales, un problema que la interseccionalidad intentó abordar, mientras que las críticas liberales a las políticas de identidad condenan su incapacidad para trascender las diferencias, pero exponen las diferencias dentro de las categorías principales, rompiendo las generalizaciones (Nash, 2008, p.2). Sugiero que al descomponer más específicamente los grupos generalizados u homogeneizados mediante el uso de la fotografía, se pueden reconocer los puntos en común entre culturas, razas, etnias, costumbres y tradiciones.

Este proyecto examina las representaciones del Antiguo Egipto en frescos y relieves en templos y tumbas, así como otro arte funerario, como ataúdes y sarcófagos, y sus propósitos, para comprender la identidad del Antiguo Egipto y su propósito tanto en la vida como en el más allá. Al hacerlo, Buscando Yo hace referencia a esos aspectos de la identidad y los redefine a través de la fotografía. Este proyecto muestra ejemplos de identidades interseccionales y ofrece al espectador la oportunidad de verse a sí mismo y a sus propias identidades interseccionales reflejadas en esta obra. A través de este proyecto propongo que el espectador pueda encontrar otras intersecciones dentro de su propia identidad. Además, tiene el potencial de reflexionar sobre su propia historia de vida, encontrar puntos en común con otras culturas y grupos, lo que probablemente le haga reflexionar sobre las vidas y existencias de los otros individuos detrás de las fotos.

La colección de fotos crea un patrón similar a un mural, algo así como una colección de mosaicos (agregar fotos de la exposición) que representan eventos y verdades que pertenecen a esos individuos, que se muestran al público. Esto actúa como una referencia a los antiguos egipcios en sus propios relieves en las paredes.

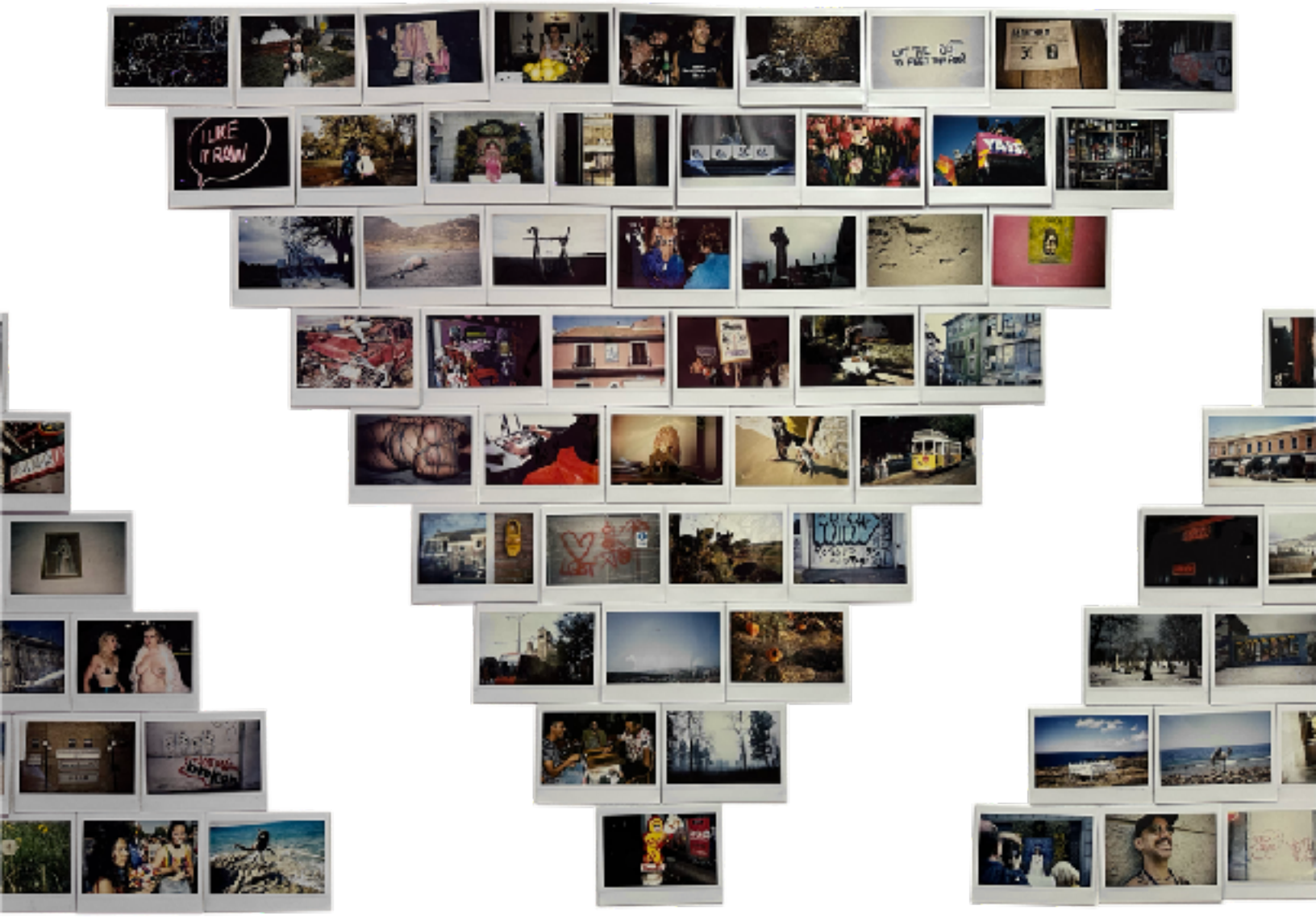
Al igual que las enormes representaciones en relieve junto a los templos del Antiguo Egipto que declaran acontecimientos y "verdades", proyectadas al público y solidifican lo que se ha elegido específicamente para ser representado, y las decoraciones de tumbas y ataúdes que revelan auténticas identidades individuales y familiares, las fotografías de *Buscando Uno Mismo* utilizan objetos. y escenarios, personas y lugares de todo el mundo, incluidos más de 25 países en tres continentes, que tienen distintas religiones, culturas, políticas y de una variedad de clases diferentes. Esta referencia intercultural para los proyectos extiende el alcance y la visibilidad de identidades únicas y entrecruzadas a personas en pequeños pueblos y aldeas que tal vez de otro modo no habrían tenido acceso, además de exhibir a aquellas de comunidades subrepresentadas a un público más amplio. Esto permite al espectador interactuar con la cultura en la que se encuentra, dándole una idea de un mundo que quizás no haya experimentado de primera mano.

Este proyecto no solo permite la exposición intercultural, sino que también puede brindar acceso y visibilidad a grupos vulnerables, oprimidos y/o ignorados, como las personas LGBTQIA+, los pueblos nativos o indígenas y las personas con discapacidades, y además aporta diversidad a espacios homogeneizados. La expresión individual de cada una de estas identidades ofrece otras identidades que se cruzan y que quizás también puedan entrelazarse con otros factores e influir en ellos.

6.3.2 Metodología

Como proyecto de investigación cualitativa, la recopilación de datos se llevó a cabo mediante diversas entrevistas y conversaciones informales. Estas se llevaron a cabo en diversos entornos y contextos sociales, incluyendo conversaciones con amigos, conocidos, transeúntes y participantes en talleres. Estos diálogos tuvieron lugar en varios países, como Estados Unidos, Egipto, España, Serbia, Francia, Irlanda, Islandia y Suecia. Este enfoque más informal permitió que una amplia gama de voces y perspectivas aflorara de forma natural, contribuyendo a una comprensión más amplia de la identidad, influenciada por el lugar, el contexto y la cultura. Estas interacciones no se estructuraron formalmente, sino que adoptaron un tono conversacional, lo que permitió a los participantes expresarse con libertad y sin restricciones. Las reflexiones obtenidas en estas conversaciones, se usaron para la creación de los marcos artísticos conceptuales explorados y el análisis escrito de las mismas.

Para mantener la integridad de estas interacciones diversas e informales, se prestó especial atención a las consideraciones éticas implicadas en la recopilación y representación de las identidades de los participantes. Las consideraciones éticas fueron fundamentales para el desarrollo de esta investigación, en particular en relación con la representación de las identidades


I LIKE IT RAW!

de otros. En todos los casos, se solicitó y obtuvo el consentimiento informado de los participantes que compartieron sus historias, en particular de quienes participaron en el proyecto *Vistas Privadas*. Estas personas revelaron aspectos de su identidad en un entorno seguro y respetuoso, plenamente conscientes de que sus contribuciones se compartirían públicamente. En el caso de quienes aparecían en fotografías, especialmente cuando los sujetos eran visualmente identificables, se otorgó el consentimiento explícito, con el entendimiento de que las imágenes se incluirían en el trabajo final. Para respetar la privacidad de los participantes, todas las entrevistas y narrativas personales se documentaron de forma anónima, de acuerdo con la preferencia mayoritaria. Este marco ético garantizó que las identidades compartidas y exploradas en esta investigación fueran tratadas con sensibilidad, autonomía y cuidado durante todo el proceso.

La importancia de la representación ética se relaciona directamente con la base conceptual de esta investigación, que explora cómo se forma la identidad a través de diversas influencias sociales, familiares y culturales. El proceso mediante el cual uno descubre su identidad es tan significativo como la expresión de la misma. Hay tres influencias principales en nuestras identidades que parecen ser desde las cuales derivamos elementos que determinan quiénes somos y en qué nos convertimos. Estos elementos dan forma individualmente a nuestras identidades y su variedad es lo que nos hace a todos tan únicos. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, las similitudes entre todas ellas, nos permiten descubrir otras identidades "similares", ampliando así la gama de elementos particulares que componen la identidad. Después de todo, nuestro entorno moldea quiénes somos y no es nada improbable que estas influencias moldeen no solo quiénes somos sino también cómo formamos nuestras propias identidades (de Valverde, et al., 2017). Estos factores pueden alterar cómo nos sentimos y cómo expresamos nuestras identidades, dada su influencia sobre nosotros.

Estas influencias no solo se discuten teóricamente, sino que también se integran en la estructura artística de la tesis, especialmente a través del marco tríptico que organiza y refleja los componentes clave de la identidad. La estructura tríptico utilizada a lo largo de la tesis es tanto conceptual como práctica, sirviendo como un elemento unificador que vincula las tres influencias identitarias fundamentales (familia, cultura/comunidad y experiencias personales) con los tres proyectos creativos producidos durante el proceso de investigación. Este marco se refleja aún más en el uso de tres materiales clave, cada uno con relevancia histórica y contemporánea, extraídos de las tradiciones del Antiguo Egipto y reflejados en contextos actuales. Estas capas de "treses" no son casuales, sino que se integran estratégicamente para crear una narrativa multidimensional. El formato hace referencia a trípticos religiosos, en particular los del cristianismo y otros sistemas de creencias mencionados en esta tesis. Estos subrayan la cohesión simbólica y estructural de la obra. De esta manera, el tríptico se convierte en una respuesta visual y conceptual a las preguntas de investigación, ofreciendo un método coherente para explorar y articular las complejas intersecciones de la identidad.

6.3.2.A La familia

Un aspecto de quiénes somos y que nos define es nuestra familia. Este grupo nos anima a convertirnos en adultos capaces desde la infancia. Los prejuicios y las inseguridades dentro de este grupo se transmiten de generación en generación y afectan nuestras identidades en función de lo que nuestras familias consideran aceptable o no. La familia también puede verse como el componente biológico de la "familia", como un componente genético, lo que sugeriría que este aspecto está fuera del control de cada uno. Sin embargo, en situaciones como la adopción, en las que el adoptado puede mantener involuntariamente y contra su voluntad los estándares de identidad familiares, también es necesario tener en cuenta la influencia independiente de la familia. La indicación "familiar" tiene un impacto significativo durante la infancia e incluso durante algunas de las fases más difíciles de la vida de una persona, particularmente la pubertad, cuando una persona se está transformando esencialmente en un ser sexual. Incluso si uno se identifica con un grupo mayoritario o con características distintivas más utilizadas, esto se convierte en una lucha. La familia es una característica identificativa que no podemos controlar; como resultado, los valores y puntos de vista son forzados o apropiados hasta que nos exponemos a diferentes ideales que desafían o contradicen esas ideas.

6.3.2.B Cultura / Comunidad

Otro factor a la hora de definir nuestra identidad es la cultura o la comunidad. Las familias y las culturas son indudablemente similares, pero las culturas sirven como indicadores ya que involucran a un número mucho mayor de personas y tienen ideas, hábitos y/o tradiciones más extendidas. Esto tiene un impacto significativo. No se puede descartar la posibilidad de que un individuo se sienta incapaz de integrarse a una nueva cultura porque con cada cambio de comunidad, la identidad del individuo puede verse muy influenciada. Con períodos de tiempo largos, cambios culturales se pueden asimilar mejor y permiten que las personas se adapten más rápidamente. Sin embargo, también pueden producirse enormes cambios, particularmente en la lingüística, los gestos y la aceptación de más normas o ideas de la sociedad. Deborah Cameron habla de esta idea de interpretar una identidad en su libro *Performing Gender Identity*. No excluye la identidad como una construcción más amplia, aunque habla explícitamente de identidad de género.

6.3.2.C Experiencias/Relaciones

El último identificador es Experiencias/Relaciones (personales). Nuestro yo íntimo está moldeado por estas conexiones. Las experiencias y relaciones personales difieren de la cultura en diversos aspectos, pero especialmente porque con frecuencia buscamos deliberadamente estos identificadores. Éste es el papel que desempeña la autonomía prácticamente total de nuestras identidades. Las experiencias dependen de las situaciones en las que nos ubicamos, lo que nos permite elegir nuestras experiencias (idealmente), pero también pueden tener un impacto negativo debido a eventos fortuitos como resultado de nuestras elecciones. Las relaciones generalmente se describen como parte del identificador de "experiencia" porque respaldan nuestro sentido de autoconciencia y ayudan a definir quiénes consideramos que somos. Ya sean

románticas o platónicas, comenzamos a utilizar las relaciones para llevar a cabo nuestras identidades en crecimiento; estas relaciones se desempeñan de acuerdo con las expectativas de género y se copian entre sí (Cameron, 1997). Aprendemos cómo nos gusta que nos traten a través de las relaciones que tenemos con otras personas y también cambiamos a otras personas a través de nuestras interacciones con ellas. Nos adaptamos al grupo con el que interactuamos (amigos, familiares, compañeros de trabajo, etc.) para mantener estas relaciones, que se basan en convenciones sociales, frecuentemente normas de género (Cameron, 1997). La forma en que hemos sido condicionados para "desempeñar" también se refleja en este desempeño, que depende del entrenamiento de otros factores como la familia o la cultura. Desarrollamos referencias para evaluar relaciones futuras y guiar nuestras acciones y diálogos internos a través de estas interacciones, ya sean románticas o platónicas. ¿Debería considerarse el tiempo que se pasa a solas, aparte de los grupos de amigos o seres queridos de otras personas, como experiencias o relaciones? Sí. Cuando nos relacionamos con nosotros mismos y, a veces, incluso actuamos para nosotros mismos, deben considerarlas experiencias (personales). Pero éstas también son relaciones. Esas experiencias influyen en quiénes nos convertimos. En esta situación, nuestra relación es con nosotros mismos y no con otra persona. Establecemos una relación interna con nosotros mismos durante estas situaciones aparentemente "en solitario", ya que nuestra relación con nosotros mismos está definida por nuestro habla y comunicación internas. En estas circunstancias, tenemos poder sobre nuestras respuestas y nuestro diálogo interno. Podemos alterar la forma en que nos comunicamos con nosotros mismos y las interacciones que tenemos con nosotros mismos incluso cuando ocasionalmente encontramos que es bastante desagradable o cruel. Sin embargo, esta relación interna que fomenta este diálogo nos ayuda a desarrollar una visión diferente de quiénes somos y quiénes queremos ser.

Luego podemos considerar cómo nos identificamos utilizando estas tres características distintivas. Uno puede empezar a comprenderse a sí mismo y a los factores que le llevaron a ser quien es ahora mirándose a sí mismo a través de los lentes de la familia, la cultura y las experiencias (personales). Para ello se utiliza en este proyecto, el tríptico (3). En la estantería se presentan tres fotografías juntas. Hay factores relacionados con la identidad en cada lado del triángulo. A medida que nos desarrollamos y cambiamos, especialmente cuando encontramos una variedad más amplia de culturas, formamos nuevas familias y experimentamos el mundo que nos rodea, así como notamos los cambios internos, estas identidades se mezclan con otras identidades que se han desarrollado a lo largo de nuestras vidas. Los lados de los triángulos más pequeños se mezclan entre sí, tocándose entre sí para crear una identidad más grande. Si bien las identidades interiores representan quiénes fuimos alguna vez, es posible que esta identidad más amplia aún esté inexplorada. También puede ser la identidad que presentamos al mundo exterior. Algunas personas podrían experimentarlo como lo contrario; nuestro yo interior es lo que realmente somos, mientras que nuestro yo exterior es lo que retratamos a los demás. La interpretación que hace el espectador de esta pieza le permite captar fotografías de diversas identidades que han influido en las personas de muy diversas maneras. Esta interpretación por parte del espectador sugiere los elementos que pueden contribuir a la construcción de la propia identidad y explicar

cómo uno ha sido guiado por la vida hasta convertirse en alguien que tal vez no reconozca como él mismo o, por otro lado, uno puede descubrir los elementos que lo han llevado a ser exactamente quién es ahora. Cuando se levantan las restricciones de las normas de género y se "libera" el concepto, se extiende más allá de la identificación como un todo y puede centrarse también en la identidad sexual de cada uno. Según la interpretación de Judith Butler de El segundo sexo de Simone de Beauvoir, que hace uso del consejo de Beauvoir,

> “Elegir un género es interpretar las normas de género recibidas de una manera que las organice de nuevo. Más que un acto radical de creación, el género es un proyecto tácito para renovar la propia historia cultural en sus propios términos. Esta no es una tarea prescriptiva que debamos esforzarnos por realizar, sino una tarea en la que nos hemos estado esforzando todo el tiempo” (p.40).

6.3.3 Proceso de construcción de la obra de arte

Este proyecto utiliza específicamente Fujifilm Instax Wide 300 (formato horizontal rectangular) de película instantánea en lugar de la más conocida Polaroid (formato cuadrado). El uso de la Instax Wide nació de la necesidad de un material más económico, costando menos de la mitad del precio de una película Polaroid por foto, no necesariamente por el formato en sí. Sin embargo, comenzó como un experimento para determinar si podía obtener los mismos resultados deseados usando un formato menos conocido y de calidad similar, lo cual se logró con el uso de la cámara Fujifilm Instax Wide 300.

Las fotografías recolectadas en cada ubicación se montaron en la pared en un formato triangular, en un diseño alterno de cabeza a pie, o, alternativamente, también se montaron intercaladas dentro de paneles de polímero de plexiglás transparente que crearon un triángulo completo con fotografías visibles en los lados interior y exterior; luego se montaron cuatro triángulos de dos lados para formar un triángulo más grande. Estos triángulos se montaron desde el techo, colgando independientemente unos de otros, a diferentes alturas. Cada pieza montada permitía inspeccionar el triángulo manualmente. El primero, el formato 2D, montado en la pared, se convirtió en el formato más utilizado para la exposición, ya que requería menos mantenimiento y era más fácil para el espectador interactuar.

Conclusiones

Los proyectos explorados en este capítulo ilustran cómo las prácticas creativas accesibles y materialmente comprometidas pueden ofrecer marcos significativos y adaptables para expresar la identidad antes de la muerte. Al inspirarse en la estética funeraria del Antiguo Egipto y adaptarla a las condiciones sociales contemporáneas, estas obras demuestran cómo la investigación artística puede recuperar la autonomía, amplificar las voces marginales y preservar la identidad interseccional de maneras nuevas y relevantes. Estas reflexiones finales concluyen la tesis, retomando la cuestión central de cómo el arte puede utilizarse para moldear la identidad.

Crear obras de arte, con la identidad en el centro de nuestra preocupación, permite al individuo ser, en última instancia, el curador de su propia vida y, al hacerlo, tiene el control de la narrativa sobre él. Esto es particularmente importante para las personas vulnerables, pero también deja espacio para todos nosotros que de alguna manera siempre nos estamos descubriendo a sí mismos. El arte como proceso creativo puede aportar muchos aspectos beneficiosos a nuestras vidas, incluido el alivio del estrés.

Al proporcionar tres medios diferentes para trabajar - resina, cerámica y fotografía instantánea, el artista que utiliza cualquiera de estos medios no necesita tener conocimientos avanzados de cómo ejecutar ninguno de estos procesos, más bien, se pueden realizar en talleres o de forma autodidacta. Al eliminar el costoso enfoque artesanal para controlar la propia narrativa, estos enfoques de la autoexpresión en el arte funerario se vuelven más alcanzables. Este enfoque no es sólo práctico, sino racional y simbólico, y se utiliza para expresar y representar mejor la propia narrativa. Al hacer esto, proporciona múltiples capas de autoposesión, [re]clamando la autonomía póstumamente mientras piensa y crea ahora. Esto sucede como resultado de la preparación de la obra de arte que a su vez servirá como su última obra de arte autocreada. Actúa como un último testimonio (no oficial) de su identidad.

Estos medios brindan al artista la capacidad de expresar una identidad alterada, adaptada o cambiada, conservando lo que considera importante y valioso para él sin una gran pérdida económica. En el arte funerario moderno, como las lápidas los cambios pueden resultar costosos o incluso imposibles. Estas formas de arte funerarias poco convencionales brindan una perspectiva única e íntima del individuo que ellos mismos crearon, lo que las hace aún más valiosas y nostálgicas para sus sobrevivientes. Además, la democratización de la expresión artística a través de talleres y exploración autoguiada abre puertas a personas de todos los orígenes y niveles de habilidad. Ya no reservado para una minoría selecta, el arte se convierte en un lenguaje universal, un medio a través del cual personas de todos los ámbitos de la vida pueden conectarse y comunicarse. De esta manera, los límites entre artista y público se difuminan, dando lugar a un tapiz colectivo de experiencia humana que trasciende las divisiones culturales y sociales.

El uso de estos métodos y medios le brinda al individuo tiempo a lo largo de su vida para ser consciente de cómo se expresa su identidad. La autorreflexión y la creación pueden proporcionar a un individuo claridad sobre quién es y cómo quiere ser visto. Un individuo puede sentirse completo cuando se le da la oportunidad de experimentar sin juicios ni ideas preconcebidas. Si bien esto puede resultar abrumador al principio, pero las personas pueden guiarse por sus emociones, experiencias y sentidos. Preservar la propia identidad por etapas podría hacer que sea más fácil reflexionar y expresarse en un caso determinado.

Aprovechar los medios contemporáneos para la expresión artística permite a las personas llegar a las profundidades de su creatividad, trascendiendo los límites de la representación convencional.

Ya sea a través de la recolección meticulosa de artefactos personales, la forma táctil de la arcilla o la intrincada compilación de composiciones fotográficas manuales, estos medios sirven como conductos para la autoexpresión. Cada fotografía, cada forma, cada capa lleva consigo el peso de la historia personal y los matices de la experiencia individual, tejiendo un tapiz de identidad que evoluciona con el paso del tiempo.

La importancia de este esfuerzo creativo se extiende mucho más allá del mero acto de hacer arte; se convierte en un proceso sagrado de autodescubrimiento y autodefinición. Mientras los individuos navegan por el laberinto de la existencia, lidiando con las complejidades de su propia identidad, el arte ofrece un santuario, un reino donde las emociones crudas encuentran consuelo en el lenguaje de la creatividad. A través del poder transformador de la creación artística, los individuos transmutan sus pensamientos y sentimientos más íntimos en artefactos tangibles que dan testimonio de su viaje por la vida.

Estos artefactos, imbuidos de significado personal y resonancia simbólica, encuentran su lugar no sólo en el ámbito de los vivos sino también en los espacios sagrados de recuerdo y conmemoración. En funerales y memoriales, actúan como centinelas silenciosos, hablando mucho sobre las vidas que representan y los legados que dejan atrás. Más allá de la mera conmemoración, estas obras de arte sirven como recipientes de la memoria, preservando fragmentos del pasado e iluminando el yo reflejado del individuo.

Un elemento central de este proceso es la noción de agencia: la capacidad de los individuos para dar forma a su propia narrativa y reclamar la propiedad de su identidad. En un mundo donde las fuerzas externas a menudo buscan definirnos, el arte se convierte en un medio de resistencia: una declaración de autonomía frente a la adversidad. Al utilizar las herramientas artísticas, los individuos afirman su derecho a la autoexpresión, labrándose un espacio en los registros de la historia.

Sin embargo, en medio de las infinitas posibilidades de la expresión creativa, existe un profundo sentido de responsabilidad: el deber de honrar la autenticidad de la propia historia respetando al mismo tiempo las narrativas de los demás. En un mundo que a menudo busca homogeneizar y mercantilizar la identidad, el arte sirve como un faro de individualidad, un recordatorio de que cada vida es una obra maestra por derecho propio, digna de celebración y reverencia.

En última instancia, el viaje de autodescubrimiento artístico es profundamente personal: un viaje a las profundidades desconocidas del individuo. Es un viaje lleno de desafíos y triunfos, reveses y avances. Pero, al final, es un viaje que vale la pena emprender, porque en el acto de la creación no sólo podemos encontrarnos a nosotros mismos, sino también desarrollar un mayor sentido de identidad y empoderamiento.

Cada proyecto representa una intervención sobre la cuestión de la autoría póstuma: ¿quién

define una identidad una vez que el sujeto ha fallecido? *Vistas Privadas* presenta la identidad como un archivo estratificado y especulativo, que incorpora elementos imaginados y anónimos. *El Velo de Género* descentraliza por completo la autoría, ofreciendo una estructura participativa que invita a la fragmentación y al anonimato como protección. *Buscando Uno Mismo* con su formato de fotografía instantánea, difumina la intimidad y el desapego, utilizando la nostalgia para insinuar un archivo de la identidad orientado al futuro. Estos proyectos buscan resolver la identidad y crear un espacio para ella: para que sea revisada por el autor en vida, evitar interpretaciones erróneas de identidades ocultas y exponer el yo auténtico a través de obras artísticas funerarias de autoría propia. Este enfoque desafía la clausura típicamente asociada con el arte funerario —reinventado por los sobrevivientes—, insistiendo en cambio en una identidad que resiste la tergiversación.

CAPÍTULO 7

CONCLUSIONES FINALES

Capítulo 7 – Conclusiones Finales

Introducción

Esta disertación ha proporcionado conexiones interesantes entre el arte funerario del Antiguo Egipto (principalmente el Reino Nuevo) y las sociedades contemporáneas (principalmente los Estados Unidos de América, pero también incluye algunos ejemplos de los pueblos indígenas de América del Norte). También ha abordado las preguntas de investigación en cuestión:

1. ¿Cómo puede un individuo expresar auténticamente su identidad a través del arte funerario para que los sobrevivientes no lo alteren póstumamente, con especial atención a la expresión de género, como el del Antiguo Egipto?

2. ¿Cuáles son algunos de los mejores métodos y medios para hacerlo?

3. ¿Qué efectos positivos o negativos tienen estos métodos: efectos en el individuo y en la sociedad en general?

La sección final de este capítulo proporcionará un resumen de los principales hallazgos de la investigación en relación con los objetivos y las preguntas de la investigación, junto con una exploración de su importancia y contribución. Además, evaluará las limitaciones del estudio y sugerirá posibles vías para futuras investigaciones.

7.1 Hallazgos generales de la investigación y objetivos de la investigación

Comencé mi investigación analizando los efectos del feminismo como concepto contemporáneo sobre el género y la identidad, como constructos cambiantes. Necesitaba observar cómo el feminismo ayuda y obstaculiza la expresión y la identidad de género en un contexto contemporáneo. Me centré principalmente en los Estados Unidos de América, ya que tengo el conocimiento más cercano de esa sociedad como estadounidense. Tomé una perspectiva artística ya que esa visión también se alinea con la mía como artista. A través de esta lente interseccional, examiné el profundo impacto del feminismo en la sociedad, ya que conduce a una mayor visibilidad y apoyo a la igualdad, especialmente a través de las plataformas de redes sociales con respecto a las mujeres y las personas marginadas, aunque no sin las implicaciones negativas que casi cualquier persona con presencia en línea ha experimentado. Esto fomenta un entorno más inclusivo, desafiando conceptos erróneos y promoviendo la tolerancia a mayor escala. Descubrí que el arte, como forma de expresión, refleja este espíritu y ofrece vías para la autoexpresión y la creatividad, particularmente para los grupos marginados. La aceptación de identidades diversas, como personas no binarias o transgénero, se ve reforzada por una mayor visibilidad e influencias periféricas, lo que conduce a cambios sociales en diversos aspectos de la vida. Algunos de estos hallazgos demuestran que el feminismo, entrelazado con el arte, promueve la inclusión y la igualdad, fomentando la aceptación de distinciones entre grupos vulnerables de muchas maneras, incluido el discurso social, la empatía y la alianza.

La creciente aceptación de las identidades LGBTQIA+ en los Estados Unidos se atribuye a una mayor visibilidad, que permite a las personas vivir abiertamente. Países como Canadá han dado ejemplo, mientras que otros, como México, han superado a Estados Unidos en progresismo. Los cambios regionales trascienden las fronteras, influyen en las naciones vecinas y allanan el camino para cambios sociales más amplios.

Los hallazgos de mi investigación demuestran la rica historia de América Latina en la adopción de expresiones de género no binarias a un nivel macro, ejemplificada por los muxes en México y conceptos como el pueblo de los dos espíritus en Canadá. Las prácticas artísticas y artesanales desempeñan un papel fundamental en la incorporación de estos conceptos, particularmente a través de prácticas culturales tradicionales, que trascienden las normas de género. El objetivo de estos hallazgos fue exhibir culturas tradicionales, religiosas y/o aisladas que abrazan la inconformidad de género, aunque simultáneamente expongan los roles aplicados a esos individuos, mostrando la libertad de elección aún dentro de límites. Si bien el feminismo actúa como equilibrio en esos grupos, está limitado por otras normas sociales.

A pesar de las limitaciones patriarcales en algunas regiones como Egipto, las mujeres y los grupos marginados comparten una historia de desafío hacia los roles tradicionales y la utilización del arte como herramienta de resistencia y cambio social. El papel de las mujeres en movimientos como la Revolución Egipcia de 2011 resalta el poder transformador del arte para desafiar las normas culturales y promover la agencia individual, específicamente para las mujeres. Aceptar el empoderamiento de las mujeres fomenta la autenticidad y respalda identidades diversas, creando en última instancia, entornos más seguros y creativos para que la mayoría de las personas prosperen. A través de esta investigación he descubierto que estos espacios, a pesar de que no son categóricamente seguros y no son completamente inclusivos, son significativamente más propicios para el cambio.

Mi investigación sugiere que pequeñas influencias pueden tener un impacto significativo en los individuos, las comunidades y la cultura, destacando la supresión de la autoexpresión, particularmente a través del arte, de diversas maneras. Empoderar a las mujeres y a las personas marginadas fomenta el crecimiento social y la innovación frente a la misoginia y la represión, pero siguen siendo barreras a la participación, como en Egipto, que limitan a las poblaciones con un gran deseo de progresar. A pesar de los desafíos, las personas infravaloradas luchan por la justicia y la igualdad, defendiendo sus derechos y contribuyendo a la mejora de la sociedad. Examinar la dinámica social, religiosa y cultural en Egipto subraya la importancia del género y la autoexpresión auténtica para el bienestar social. Si bien el actual gobierno egipcio busca el control a través de la represión, la resiliencia de Egipto demuestra su resistencia a la homogeneización y el extremismo visto a través del arte de resistencia como el graffiti y las pinturas murales, entre otros medios como el cine y la escritura. A pesar de los obstáculos, los egipcios perseveran en pos de una sociedad más equitativa y soportan dificultades para lograr un cambio significativo, evidente en sus continuos esfuerzos por resistir las restricciones gubernamentales.

¿Cómo pueden los egipcios, a quienes se les vigila y se les prohíbe expresarse auténticamente, ser abiertos y explícitos con seguridad sobre sus identidades? El estudio de la expresión artística durante la Revolución de 2011 reveló que el arte era una de las formas más audaces, aunque no necesariamente la más segura debido al seguimiento constante y a los arrestos a menudo sin fundamento. Egipto no es necesariamente considerado un estado seguro en el que la verdadera autoexpresión sea aceptada, ni tolerada por los conservadores nacionalistas, considerando las violaciones que el gobierno y el ejército cometen contra personas marginadas, incluidos artistas, escritores y, más específicamente, mujeres e individuos LGBTQIA+. Sin embargo, a través de la expresión artística, existe un margen de negación para los egipcios si se les confronta, aunque no es una vía segura, algunos eligen seguirla ya que proporciona una salida para la autoexpresión y al mismo tiempo mantiene cierta ambigüedad y anonimato cuando se enfrentan al gobierno y las entidades militares.

No se puede subestimar la importancia de las influencias sutiles, incluso a nivel micro, como se destaca en mi investigación, que ilustra su profundo impacto en los individuos, las comunidades y la cultura. Si bien esta discusión aborda principalmente la supresión de la autoexpresión individual, es imperativo reconocer que esto se extiende a la expresión artística en todas sus formas. A pesar de las restricciones a la expresión auténtica de género y otros modos de autoexpresión, el arte sirve como una vía poderosa para promover el inconformismo y resistir la homogeneización. A través de medios sutiles pero subversivos, el arte puede amplificar voces que de otro modo serían silenciadas, articulando sentimientos más allá de las limitaciones de las palabras.

Explorar las dinámicas sociales, religiosas y culturales que configuran el género y el feminismo en Egipto resalta la importancia crítica de la auténtica autoexpresión, ya que los gobiernos, como el de Egipto, a menudo recurren a tácticas militarizadas y conservadoras para imponer la conformidad, recurriendo a arrestos, abusos y coerción. Sin embargo, tales demostraciones de control pueden expresar la fragilidad subyacente del régimen, como lo demuestra la actual resistencia de Egipto a la homogeneización y el extremismo.

Si bien las influencias del Egipto contemporáneo son importantes, lo que más me intrigó fue el Antiguo Egipto, que despertó mi interés en la autoexpresión a través del arte funerario. Al arrojar luz sobre las vidas menos conocidas de las clases bajas en el Antiguo Egipto y contrastarlas con la élite y la realeza bien documentadas, descubrimos los resultados de los roles de género y una visión retrospectiva de lo que podríamos denominar el feminismo en el Antiguo Egipto, que revela inconsistencias en el trato social a las mujeres , lo cual no fue necesariamente una sorpresa, ya que lo esperaba. Si bien las mujeres reales desempeñaron papeles importantes en el gobierno y la sociedad, su autonomía variaba. A pesar de ser valoradas por su papel como fundadoras de la élite y las clases reales y contribuyentes a la sociedad, las mujeres enfrentaron limitaciones en autonomía y reconocimiento social. Sin embargo, ejercieron una influencia considerable en los asuntos internos y las transacciones económicas.

Los registros narran predominantemente las experiencias de los niveles superiores, dejando un vacío en nuestra comprensión de la vida cotidiana en el Antiguo Egipto. A pesar de esto, los conocimientos sobre la vida de la élite, entrelazados con creencias religiosas, sociales y sobre la vida futura, ofrecen valiosos vislumbres sobre la dinámica de género y las primeras manifestaciones del feminismo en el mundo antiguo. Las identidades y contribuciones de las mujeres fueron cruciales tanto en la vida como en la preparación para el más allá, donde la autenticidad y la representación eran altamente valoradas. También examiné casos de transformación de la identidad de género en la realeza del Antiguo Egipto, destacando la compleja relación entre la expresión de género y las normas sociales. A través de diversas formas de arte, los individuos expresaron sus identidades de manera auténtica, aunque embellecidas hasta cierto punto, dejando impresiones duraderas de su verdadero yo en la historia.

El linaje real en el Antiguo Egipto confería estatus divino a la descendencia, posicionándolos como casi iguales a pesar de los matices jerárquicos dentro de las familias reales. A diferencia de los reinos vecinos donde se comerciaba con mujeres reales, las mujeres reales egipcias tenían una estatura significativa, se las consideraba iguales a los reyes y, por lo tanto, intocables. Si bien su participación en la diplomacia internacional fue limitada, las mujeres de la élite desempeñaron papeles esenciales en diversos aspectos del gobierno y la religión, obteniendo títulos prestigiosos.

Aunque el Antiguo Egipto exhibía ideales feministas inconsistentes, el valor de las mujeres trascendía los meros objetos de supervisión. Fueron honrados por sus contribuciones multifacéticas a la sociedad, reverenciados como protectoras, animadoras y cuidadoras. A pesar de las limitaciones sociales, las mujeres poderosas dejaron marcas indelebles a través de diversas formas de arte, afirmando sus identidades y legados. La autonomía económica de las mujeres era evidente a través de la propiedad y los esfuerzos empresariales, aunque los derechos de herencia eran limitados en comparación con los de los hombres.

La búsqueda de una vida próspera después de la muerte era un principio central de la sociedad del Antiguo Egipto, que daba forma tanto a los esfuerzos terrenales como a las representaciones póstumas. El arte funerario tenía dos propósitos: el primero era una forma de autoevaluar el control de la narrativa por parte del individuo, sabiendo que tenía que ser honesto consigo mismo sobre su carácter e identidad, antes de ser juzgado por el peso del corazón. El segundo era más bien una conversación con uno mismo, que actuaba como un replanteamiento esperanzador de su narrativa, con la capacidad de mejorarla ligeramente. Dando esperanza de que su vida actual dé como resultado la narrativa ligeramente idealizada, que se perpetuaría en la otra vida. Sugiero que los casos de identidad de transformación de género, como el reinado de la reina Hatshepsut, insinúan formas tempranas de identidad transgénero, lo que subraya la complejidad de la expresión de género en el Antiguo Egipto y el arte funerario.

Si bien parece injusto comparar la “misma” sociedad con miles de años de diferencia, es difícil no ver que el tejido social del Antiguo Egipto estaba tejido con diversas expresiones de género e

identidad, a menudo entrelazadas con creencias religiosas y de vida futura, aparentemente aceptadas en la sociedad. Si bien la dinámica de género varió entre clases y períodos de tiempo, las contribuciones de las mujeres fueron indispensables para el funcionamiento de la sociedad, haciéndose eco de nociones de empoderamiento y agencia que continúan resonando hoy.

El deseo de los antiguos egipcios de ser recordados, aún hoy se mantiene en muchas culturas, otro aspecto de su sociedad que resuena en todo el mundo. A través de mi investigación, exploré el deseo humano universal de reconocimiento y recuerdo después de la muerte, evidente en todas las culturas y religiones. Destaco las similitudes entre las prácticas funerarias occidentales, orientales y del antiguo Egipto, enfatizando la importancia de honrar la identidad del difunto y brindar un cierre para los vivos.

La muerte es una experiencia universal, que genera creencias compartidas sobre la importancia del reconocimiento y el recuerdo del verdadero yo de los individuos, tanto en la vida como después de la muerte. Los servicios contemporáneos a menudo incorporan elementos como presentaciones de fotografías y objetos personales para celebrar la vida del individuo, haciéndose eco de las prácticas del Antiguo Egipto y crear tumbas elaboradas, decoraciones de ataúdes y colocación de amuletos para preservar su semejanza e identidad para la eternidad. Los seres humanos inherentemente desean reconocimiento y elevación por sus logros y aspectos definitorios de sus identidades, esforzándose por el reconocimiento eterno. Estas tradiciones compartidas subrayan la importancia de honrar y recordar a los difuntos de acuerdo con su yo auténtico, sirviendo como testimonio de su legado.

El manejo del cuerpo del difunto, las prácticas de embalsamamiento y la presentación para su visualización están influenciados por las preferencias personales, las costumbres religiosas y las circunstancias de la muerte. A pesar de los diversos procedimientos funerarios, los procesos fundamentales siguen siendo consistentes y reflejan las prácticas del antiguo Egipto en su reverencia por los difuntos.

Los servicios o ceremonias a menudo brindan un espacio para que los dolientes se reúnan, compartan recuerdos y celebren la vida del difunto, como las capillas de las tumbas en el Antiguo Egipto. Ya sean planificadas por los fallecidos o por los supervivientes, estas reuniones sirven para construir un retrato multifacético del individuo, a partir de experiencias compartidas y anécdotas personales. Las ayudas visuales, como presentaciones de fotografías o exhibiciones de pertenencias personales, ofrecen vislumbres de la vida del difunto, enriqueciendo la conmemoración con recordatorios tangibles de su identidad.

Las costumbres funerarias del antiguo Egipto, basadas en elaboradas obras de arte e inscripciones, tenían un propósito similar de preservar la identidad del difunto para la eternidad. Las máscaras, las decoraciones de los ataúdes y las pinturas de las tumbas representaban las asociaciones de los individuos con las deidades, enfatizando su piedad y devoción, además de

articular e indicar la identidad del difunto.

La meticulosa atención al detalle en las prácticas funerarias antiguas y contemporáneas llama la atención sobre la importancia de honrar y preservar las identidades individuales. Desde los ataúdes y sarcófagos elaboradamente pintados o tallados del Antiguo Egipto hasta los tributos personalizados de los funerales modernos, el énfasis sigue siendo el recuerdo auténtico, garantizando que el legado del difunto perdure.

La capacidad de un individuo para expresarse en la vida no puede darse por sentada, ya que no es una capacidad asignada a todos. La capacidad de ser recordado póstumamente como uno desea tampoco es algo que se pueda conceder fácilmente según mi investigación. He descubierto que el régimen de Abdel Fattah el-Sisi en Egipto representa una amenaza a la identidad individual y la expresión artística a través de su supresión de diversas identidades y disidencias, arraigadas en creencias islámicas fundamentalistas y sus estándares morales subjetivos. Esta represión se extiende a las personas LGBTQIA+ y cualquier persona considerada "diferente" por el régimen, lo que lleva a detenciones arbitrarias y violaciones de derechos humanos.

A pesar de las afirmaciones de apoyar la cultura y las artes, el régimen de el-Sisi promueve una identidad homogeneizada basada en el conservadurismo religioso, sofocando la expresión auténtica. Sin embargo, los artistas continúan desafiando estas restricciones a través de su trabajo, remodelando narrativas culturales y abogando por el cambio. A diferencia de las prácticas funerarias del Antiguo Egipto, es posible que las sociedades contemporáneas no planifiquen los funerales en detalle, pero aun así buscan ser recordados y comprendidos a través del arte y la conmemoración, incluso el martirio. Al igual que sus homólogos antiguos, los humanos modernos utilizan artefactos y medios artísticos para honrar a los difuntos, perpetuando su memoria y preservando su identidad. Si bien las formas de expresión artística pueden haber evolucionado, mi investigación demuestra que el deseo humano subyacente de reconocimiento y recuerdo permanece sin cambios a lo largo de la historia.

La supresión de la auténtica autoexpresión plantea una amenaza significativa para la cultura y las artes egipcias. Su enfoque refleja una agenda religiosa conservadora que sirve a los intereses de su régimen más que a los de la población egipcia en general. Esta homogeneización forzada corre el riesgo de sofocar la expresión artística por miedo a represalias, socavando la diversidad y la vitalidad de la cultura egipcia. Sin embargo, también puede alimentar respuestas revolucionarias no deseadas, en las que los artistas difunden encubiertamente la disidencia a través de su arte, como durante la Revolución de 2011. En cualquier caso, estos esfuerzos subrayan el intento de un gobierno represivo de controlar y reprimir en lugar de fomentar el empoderamiento y la expresión.

La reinterpretación artística desempeña un papel crucial a la hora de desafiar las narrativas establecidas y fomentar la evolución cultural. Según mi investigación, que reinterpreta obras

históricas a través de nuevos medios, como los del Antiguo Egipto, los individuos pueden remodelar las percepciones colectivas y la comprensión de la identidad cultural. Los artistas contemporáneos, especialmente aquellos de comunidades marginadas, impregnan su trabajo de herencia cultural e identidad personal, ofreciendo a los espectadores la oportunidad de interactuar con diversas perspectivas y narrativas.

A diferencia de los antiguos egipcios, que planificaban meticulosamente los ritos funerarios, las sociedades contemporáneas generalmente abordan la muerte con menos detalles. Sin embargo, persiste el deseo de recuerdo y comprensión, y el arte sirve como conducto para la conmemoración. A través de diversos medios artísticos, los sobrevivientes honran la identidad del difunto, preservando recuerdos y experiencias en formas tangibles. Si bien los rituales de duelo varían, en conjunto contribuyen a mantener la presencia del difunto en la memoria colectiva.

Las prácticas funerarias del antiguo Egipto, caracterizadas por elaboradas obras de arte e inscripciones, tenían como objetivo inmortalizar la identidad del difunto y garantizar una vida próspera en el más allá. De manera similar, las sociedades contemporáneas continúan participando en la memorialización artística, aunque a través de medios y prácticas en evolución. Si bien los artefactos antiguos ofrecieron información sobre las creencias religiosas y los valores sociales, las expresiones artísticas modernas reflejan conexiones e interpretaciones personales, proporcionando un continuo de recuerdo y reinterpretación a través de generaciones.

Así como los amuletos, los *shabtis* y las momias son artefactos de los antiguos egipcios que nos ayudan a comprender sus creencias, sus vidas y sus identidades, mi investigación también ha encontrado vínculos con el uso de artefactos en las prácticas funerarias modernas y contemporáneas en Occidente. He explorado las prácticas funerarias modernas de los Estados Unidos de América y Egipto. Aunque las culturas son bastante diferentes y se distinguen de las prácticas del Antiguo Egipto por miles de años, todavía hay elementos artísticos en común. En el curso de la investigación sobre este fenómeno, profundicé en el razonamiento detrás del uso de artefactos en el mundo antiguo, por supuesto, pero también en las sociedades modernas y contemporáneas y en cómo han cambiado o no. Poco ha cambiado en los medios que abarcan funerales y memoriales, ya que mi investigación muestra tres aspectos principales: formato visual, a menudo mirando hacia atrás en la vida del difunto, una composición narrativa, generalmente a través de personas que discuten sobre el individuo, como en un elogio o incluso visualmente a través del componente visual antes mencionado, y finalmente a través de artefactos –posesiones imbuidas de significado y sentimiento.

Estos artefactos, ricos en significado personal, encuentran resonancia no sólo en la vida cotidiana sino también en momentos de recuerdo y conmemoración. Desde funerales hasta memoriales, actúan como testigos silenciosos, honrando las vidas vividas y los legados dejados atrás. Más que meros símbolos, estas obras de arte sirven como recipientes de la memoria, preservando fragmentos del pasado para las generaciones futuras.

La búsqueda creativa trasciende la mera creación artística; se convierte en un viaje sagrado de autodescubrimiento y autodefinición. En medio de las complejidades de la vida, el arte proporciona un santuario donde las emociones encuentran consuelo en el lenguaje de la arcilla maleable y el collage de resina. A través de la creación artística, las personas transforman sus pensamientos y sentimientos más íntimos en artefactos tangibles, documentando el viaje de su vida.

Mi propia investigación sobre producción artística, como parte de la investigación general, me permitió utilizar prácticas artísticas que antes estaban reservadas únicamente a los artesanos para lograr estar disponibles para la gente común. A través de medios contemporáneos, las personas pueden crear obras de arte personalizadas que sirvan como artefactos de su identidad, permitiéndoles controlar su narrativa incluso después de la muerte. Esta forma de expresión, ya sea utilizada en prácticas funerarias o como artefactos personales para regalar como recuerdos in memoriam, permite a las personas explorar y definir su identidad a lo largo de sus vidas. A diferencia del arte funerario tradicional, que puede ser costoso y estático, estos medios contemporáneos ofrecen flexibilidad y accesibilidad, democratizando el proceso de autoexpresión.

Al participar en la autorreflexión y la creación, las personas pueden navegar por las complejidades de su identidad, encontrando claridad y empoderamiento en el camino. A través del arte, trascienden la representación convencional y tejen un tapiz de historia y experiencia personales. Estas obras de arte, llenas de significado, sirven como recipientes de memoria y conmemoración, preservando la verdadera esencia del individuo para las generaciones venideras. En un mundo que a menudo busca homogeneizar la identidad, el arte se convierte en un medio de resistencia, afirmando la autonomía y autenticidad de cada historia individual. En última instancia, el viaje de autodescubrimiento artístico es profundamente personal y ofrece oportunidades de crecimiento, empoderamiento y celebración de la individualidad.

En el centro de este proceso se encuentra la agencia: el poder de los individuos para dar forma a su propia narrativa y reclamar la propiedad de su identidad. Cuando otros intentan definirnos, el arte se convierte en una forma disponible para muchos a lo largo de sus vidas, y mi investigación muestra que, aunque estos medios puedan parecer poco convencionales, son meras variaciones del status quo.

Existe la responsabilidad de reconocer la verdad de las narrativas que crea el individuo. En un mundo que tiende a homogeneizar la identidad, estos medios artísticos sirven como faros de individualidad, celebrando la singularidad de cada vida y honrando el verdadero yo. En última instancia, el viaje de autodescubrimiento artístico y auténtica autoexpresión es profundamente personal y está lleno de desafíos y triunfos. Pero en el acto de la creación, los individuos no sólo pueden encontrarse a sí mismos sino también cultivar una comprensión más profunda de su propia identidad. Como pretendía mi investigación, pude conectar las prácticas funerarias

artísticas del Antiguo Egipto y, con las alteraciones contemporáneas, adaptarlas para adaptarse a la sociedad contemporánea de una manera que refleje mejor las habilidades y el acceso de una población mucho más grande para estar verdaderamente en control de su identidad y narrativa en la muerte.

7.2 Contribuciones al campo

Esta investigación me ha proporcionado mucha información sobre las prácticas funerarias del pasado, así como una comprensión del género y la identidad en un nivel mucho más profundo. Al hacerlo, he publicado una serie de artículos sobre la identidad en la muerte, así como también he dirigido talleres sobre las aplicaciones prácticas de la expresión de la identidad a través de las prácticas artísticas de mi tesis, que proporcionan ejemplos en el mundo antiguo de cómo las identidades no conformes con el género pudieron expresarse en ese momento y la perspectiva que la sociedad tenía al respecto. Ha sido muy interesante comparar las perspectivas socioculturales de la identidad tanto en el mundo antiguo como en el contemporáneo, incluidas las distinciones entre el Egipto contemporáneo y los Estados Unidos de América contemporáneos.

En el proceso de investigación, tuve la suerte de conocer a muchas personas de diversos orígenes que encontraron un gran interés en el tema. El apoyo del público en general a la claridad de la identidad en la muerte fue alentador. Muchas personas estaban ansiosas por discutir conmigo sus propias identidades mientras investigaban, aunque la mayoría no quería ser grabada. Descubrí que muchas de las personas que encontré en todo el mundo y que participaron conmigo en esta investigación, estaban al principio cansadas de mis motivos, pero luego se abrieron y divulgaron sus esperanzas sobre esta investigación y su futuro y otros proyectos similares. Sin embargo, la renuencia a ser identificados y documentados era algo común y por diversas razones. Muchos participantes en países “seguros”, dudaban en revelar detalles personales reconocibles o me pidieron que no los incluyera, mientras que a muy pocos no les importó.

Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo encontrar soluciones creativas a un problema particular, pero que afecta a muchas personas, y cuyo tema principal es la adecuada expresión de la identidad después de la muerte. Puede considerarse un tema morboso, pero a mí me pareció importante. La muerte repentina de mi propia madre durante mi investigación y las identidades mixtas que se me presentaron sobre quién era ella, me hicieron reflexionar sobre personas que tenían una vida mucho más complicada. Mi madre fue la chispa de inspiración para la investigación más profunda sobre las personas no conformes con su género, mientras me preguntaba: si es difícil expresar con precisión la identidad de mi madre, una mujer blanca cis del Medio Oeste de Estados Unidos, entonces, ¿cómo debe ser para las personas transgénero, personas no-binarias, personas queer y cualquiera que se sienta incómodo al expresarse auténticamente? Creo que mi madre era ella misma, pero me hizo darme cuenta de que tenía una multitud de identidades, como todos nosotros, y que algunas de ellas no las conocía, pero que en la muerte me enteré de ellas. Quería refutar algunas de ellas, de sus identidades, a medida que los conocía, y otras me alegré de conocerlas, pero todo ello fue un tanto confuso. Observé mi

propia investigación y me di cuenta de que estaba trabajando en esto y que podía encontrar medios artísticos que pudieran funcionar para muchos otros, para que pudieran expresarse sin necesidad de dar explicaciones. A través de esta investigación descubrí que estos medios, la fotografía instantánea, el collage de resina y la cerámica, podrían servir como salidas creativas, adaptables y únicas para adaptarse a cualquier persona.

La evolución de mi práctica artística se vio directamente influenciada por temas recurrentes en la investigación histórica y contemporánea. Mis visitas a tumbas, templos mortuorios y museos por todo Egipto revelaron el lenguaje material de las prácticas funerarias del Antiguo Egipto: revestimientos de resina, recipientes de arcilla y narrativas pictóricas, todas centradas en la preservación de la identidad. Esta sensibilidad material influyó en gran medida en mi elección de medios y mis estrategias visuales.

El momento de mayor convergencia entre la investigación y la experiencia personal se produjo con la muerte de mi madre durante el desarrollo de *Vistas Privadas*. Mi confrontación con narrativas contradictorias sobre su identidad —reveladas a través de historias, objetos y fotografías compartidas tras su muerte— reflejó la ambigüedad que había estudiado previamente en las inscripciones de tumbas antiguas y la iconografía visual. Esta experiencia cristalizó mis esfuerzos por inspirar y permitir que otras personas construyeran su propia narrativa antes de morir.

La fotografía instantánea se convirtió en una herramienta para abordar esto: su inmediatez material, sus connotaciones nostálgicas y su asequibilidad la hicieron ideal para *Buscando Uno Mismo*. Durante las sesiones de retroalimentación, las personas a menudo notaron una fuerte respuesta emocional a las cualidades táctiles y temporales de estas imágenes, a pesar de no conocer a las personas que aparecen en ellas. Esto reafirmó mi intención de usar la fotografía como un medio simbólico y emocional para la expresión de una identidad fragmentada pero significativa.

En *El Velo de Género*, la investigación sobre la identidad no binaria y la estética feminista impulsó mi decisión de permitir contribuciones fragmentadas, anónimas y modulares. Las participantes podían compartir tanto o tan poco de su identidad como quisieran, simbolizada a través de piezas de cerámica colgadas, invertidas y entrelazadas con otras. La escultura resultante no ofreció una narrativa única, sino más bien una constelación de identidades parciales y estratificadas. Esta decisión estuvo directamente influenciada por las limitaciones y necesidades expresadas durante las fases previas de participación.

Si bien estoy satisfecha con la investigación que completé, creo que hay lagunas que podrían haberse llenado para completar esta investigación de una manera más activa. En retrospectiva, y con base en la retroalimentación que recibí en las exposiciones y talleres que impartí sobre mi tema de investigación, creo que debería haber impartido talleres que formaran parte de la

de esta disertación y recopilar ese trabajo como recopilación de datos y material, que podría haber proporcionado una mirada aún más profunda a la expresión de la identidad. Entiendo que estos talleres, en cierto sentido, me quitarían mi expresión artística pero en su lugar, se transmitiría a los participantes. Cuestiono la validez de dicho taller como mi propio trabajo o como investigación exclusivamente.

Además, a través de esta investigación descubrí que existen discrepancias en la egiptología con respecto al lenguaje contemporáneo y los conceptos utilizados, o la falta de ellos, cuando se habla de parejas del mismo sexo, así como de cuestiones contemporáneas, como las de la comunidad LGBTQIA+. El lenguaje obsoleto y la revisión en referencia a estos temas fueron desalentadores. Hay algunos grandes egiptólogos que están cuestionando estos temas, pero son pocos y espaciados, lo que en última instancia, limitó mi capacidad para discutir estos temas con el apoyo de los egiptólogos y sin formular demasiadas hipótesis. Desafortunadamente, la historia no es necesariamente un tema que permita la revisión del lenguaje. Encontré obstáculos con el uso de lenguaje obsoleto y la traducción sin interpretación consciente.

7.3 Limitaciones de la investigación

Hubo una variedad de limitaciones para mi investigación, la primera fue la financiación. Como investigador internacional y autofinanciado, mi capacidad de ganar dinero para apoyar mi investigación estaba limitada, y estar fuera de mi país de origen, limitó aún más el acceso a becas y subvenciones para las que habría sido elegible. Sí creo que mi investigación y producción podrían haberse ampliado con más fondos disponibles para realizar visitas. Me hubiera gustado expandirme más profundamente en África, América del Sur y Asia, específicamente en regiones tribales. Con un presupuesto anual limitado y subvenciones disponibles para realizar un proyecto de investigación en artes y humanidades, mi alcance era limitado.

Aunque soy una aliada y defensora de la comunidad LGBTQIA+, creo que mi perspectiva sobre el tema era limitada. Aunque hice una inmensa cantidad de investigaciones y clases sobre estudios de género, siempre me faltará experiencia personal en esta área. Creo que mi investigación ha ayudado a personas de la comunidad y espero que se lleven a cabo más investigaciones como ésta en el futuro, para garantizar que se adopte una perspectiva aún más exhaustiva y se llenen los vacíos en mi perspectiva. Reconozco que mi investigación, como mencioné anteriormente, podría haber sido más profunda con más talleres de recopilación de investigaciones, incluyendo más entrevistas y perspectivas diversas, pero sí creo que esta investigación ha sido lo suficientemente concluyente respecto a este tema específico y considerando que estas sugerencias fueron propuestas en fragmentos después. Así se completó el aspecto de producción.

En general, dados mis recursos y las conexiones establecidas, creo que la investigación realizada ha proporcionado información valiosa para futuros investigadores y ha ampliado el conocimiento de esta área específica.

Si bien las obras desarrolladas en esta tesis no están destinadas a la reproducción comercial, sino a una práctica individual a pequeña escala, apuntan hacia la cultura funeraria como una rutina más personalizada, accesible e identitaria. La accesibilidad de materiales, como la resina, la arcilla y la fotografía instantánea, desafía la exclusividad de los bienes y prácticas funerarias tradicionales. Cuestiona cómo la expresión personal a menudo se filtra a través de obligaciones religiosas, comerciales o institucionales. Si estas prácticas se adoptaran más ampliamente, podrían impulsar cambios culturales más amplios en las prácticas del arte funerario. Esta tesis sugiere que el control creativo sobre la narrativa póstuma no solo es una oportunidad artística, sino que también especula sobre una necesidad sociocultural, en particular para aquellos cuyas identidades a menudo se ven suprimidas o borradas por los marcos conmemorativos dominantes.

7.4 Recomendaciones para futuras investigaciones

Estoy satisfecha con el resultado general de mi investigación, así como con la producción. Creo que se podrían realizar más investigaciones sobre este tema en particular, específicamente los talleres de investigación antes mencionados. Sería beneficioso realizar más entrevistas e incluso, entrevistas de seguimiento para futuras investigaciones sobre este tema. Debido a que este tema de investigación apunta a que el "artista" crea obras que abarcan toda su vida, sería interesante hacerlo, tal vez reuniéndose con los mismos participantes cada década y participando en uno de los talleres de investigación mencionados. Aunque no es aplicable a esta investigación doctoral, dadas las limitaciones de tiempo, creo que daría una mejor idea de las aplicaciones prácticas de la investigación que ya he completado. Sería fascinante ver cómo las identidades de los participantes cambian con el tiempo y cómo sienten que estas obras o medios reflejan realmente la autoexpresión de su identidad. Otro aspecto interesante sería ver los efectos que la edad, la capacidad/discapacidad, la enfermedad y la memoria tienen en la investigación y la producción artística en sí. Finalmente, en el mismo estudio, documentaría cómo cambian los materiales a lo largo de los años, incluido cómo los cambios de políticas que afectan a los materiales disponibles o si mejoran con el tiempo.

Estas reflexiones sobre la longevidad y la accesibilidad ofrecen un punto de partida natural para profundizar en la innovación material y la aplicabilidad global de estos métodos. Los proyectos experimentales realizados a lo largo de esta investigación demuestran cómo las prácticas artísticas basadas en materiales pueden servir como herramientas accesibles y equitativas para la expresión de la identidad.

Los tres métodos creativos explorados ofrecen opciones flexibles que se adaptan a diversas necesidades, incluyendo las de personas con discapacidad, con distintos niveles de experiencia artística y con diferentes orígenes socioeconómicos. Cada método invita a la participación activa y significativa, y permite la creación de expresiones de identidad profundas y honestas. Es importante destacar que estos enfoques apoyan la identidad como una práctica en evolución, algo que puede desarrollarse y revisarse con el tiempo. Como se argumenta a lo largo de esta tesis, estas formas de participación creativa empoderan a las personas para que se apropien de

sus narrativas identitarias, moldeándolas y reformulándolas intencionalmente en respuesta a sus experiencias vividas. Estos proyectos sirven como propuestas personales y aunque no están respaldados por evidencia sociodemográfica, son una invitación basada en la experiencia de vida personal.

Al examinar de cerca tres medios importantes del Antiguo Egipto y adaptar sus homólogos contemporáneos, logré tres objetivos principales a lo largo de esta investigación. Primero, al analizar la identidad a través de la lente como artista, descubrí que muchas personas dentro de la investigación querían expresar sus identidades auténticas y al usar la resina como medio adaptable, pude crear una identidad en capas a través del collage y la reunión de artefactos, todo lo cual exhibió el yo pasado y el yo presente de una manera que se puede superponer continuamente, dando flexibilidad al 'artista' para discernir cuánto de su pasado estaría dispuesto a exponer, con una variedad de métodos para oscurecerlo, si así lo desea.

Los proyectos llevados a cabo durante este período de investigación han puesto de relieve la importancia de tres materiales utilizados históricamente en el Antiguo Egipto como medios eficaces para transmitir y preservar la identidad individual. De cara al futuro, existe potencial para el desarrollo de nuevos materiales más asequibles y más eficaces para encapsular la identidad. Estos materiales también podrían propiciar prácticas ambientalmente más sostenibles, lo que los hace aptos para un uso más amplio sin requerir una inversión financiera sustancial. Los métodos explorados en esta investigación no se limitan a un único contexto cultural o socioeconómico, lo que favorece su aplicación en diversas comunidades. Esta adaptabilidad permite a las personas seleccionar materiales y procesos que se ajusten a sus propios medios y valores, ofreciendo formas accesibles y significativas de participar en la expresión de la identidad a lo largo del tiempo.

La incorporación de prácticas artísticas en las industrias funerarias contemporáneas puede generar cambios en la forma en que las sociedades conmemoran la muerte y construyen la identidad póstuma. Estas prácticas artísticas tienen el potencial de permitir que individuos y familias reclamen la autoría de los rituales funerarios (Cann, 2014). Esta personalización de la identidad no solo desafía la homogeneización de los funerales y las prácticas funerarias convencionales, sino que también introduce nuevos medios de expresión cultural. Esto podría fomentar un panorama de duelo más inclusivo y diverso (Walter, 1996). Estos cambios podrían influir en las actitudes sociales hacia la muerte a lo largo del tiempo y fomentar un alejamiento de la distancia social hacia la muerte. Esto podría impulsar a la sociedad hacia compromisos más reflexivos, creativos y participativos con el duelo y la memoria.

En el curso de mi investigación, descubrí una respuesta muy positiva al uso de mis fotografías Fuji Instax y comencé a hacer conexiones con la investigación del Antiguo Egipto que ya tenía en marcha. Al comprender los métodos del Antiguo Egipto para describir la vida a través de relieves y frescos en la capilla de una tumba, mostrados en motivos pintorescos, como instantáneas,

encontré un medio que podría funcionar para un mayor número de personas, uno que es accesible y fácil de usar, ¡y funcionó como un medio íntimo de expresión! Estas fotografías generan nostalgia, permiten a las personas fotografiar aspectos específicos de sus vidas, agruparlas y mostrarlas de una manera específica, y que exprese su auténtica identidad. Al hacer esto inicialmente, proporcionando ejemplos de identidad intercultural a través de este medio, con imágenes íntimas y mundanas, pude demostrar la facilidad para encontrar aspectos y momentos que podrían considerarse influyentes o expresivos de uno mismo.

A través de la colección de artefactos en la primera parte de mi investigación que produjo *Vistas Privadas*, la serie de collages de resina, profundicé en los artefactos y su importancia tanto para los fallecidos como para sus sobrevivientes. Hice la misma correlación con los antiguos egipcios, que a menudo estaban hechos de piedra, cerámica o madera, entre otros materiales. Descubrí que muchas piezas hechas para las clases bajas estaban hechas de arcilla, escasamente decoradas o vidriadas, pero ofrecían este aspecto crucial a una variedad de consumidores en ese momento. A través de esto se desarrolló *El Velo de Género.* Este proyecto permite al artista diseñar, crear y manipular sus artefactos de la manera exacta que desee, con tanto detalle como desee. Como otro proyecto que también puede abarcar toda la vida, esto permitiría al individuo cambiar aspectos de su identidad observable de manera simple y conveniente, al mismo tiempo que proporcionaría artefactos que podrían distribuirse póstumamente.

Estos tres proyectos, construidos a lo largo de la investigación, brindan métodos artísticos alternativos de expresión de identidad auténtica, una salida creativa para la autoexpresión, así como artefactos personales y hechos a mano distribuibles póstumamente, al mismo tiempo que brindan acceso a una variedad de personas diferentes que proporcionan medios adaptables para presupuestos, estilos de vida y habilidades.

REFERENCES

REFERENCIAS

References / Referencias

Abdelfatah, R., Arablouei, R., Caine, J., Kaplan-Levenson, L., Wu, L., Yvellez, V., Tapia, A., Mazariegos, M., & Steinberg, A. (2021, October 14). *The Nostalgia Bone*. NPR. https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1045812865

Abdelsalam, H. M., Reddick, C. G., Gamal, S., & Al-shaar, A. (2013). Social Media in Egyptian government websites: Presence, usage, and effectiveness. *Government Information Quarterly*, *30*(4), 406–416. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2013.05.020

Abouelnaga, S. (2016). *Women in revolutionary egypt: Gender and the new geographics of identity*. The American University in Cairo Press.

Al-Monitor. (2021, June 20). *Egyptian police search citizens in Cairo ahead of June 30 anniversary*. Al-Monitor. https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2021/06/egyptian-police-search-citizens-cairo-ahead-june-30-anniversary

Alexander, C. K., (2016) "The Motivations Behind Westerners' Obsession with the Islamic Veil". What All Americans Should Know About Women in the Muslim World. 1. https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/islamandwomen/1

Alvarez, P. (2021, February 3). *Spain's Equality Ministry drafts law that would let citizens change official gender without medical checks*. EL PAÍS English Edition. https://english.elpais.com/society/2021-02-03/spains-equality-ministry-drafts-law-that-would-let-citizens-change-official-gender-without-medical-checks.html

Amaria, K. (2011a, December 22). *The "girl in the Blue Bra."* NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2011/12/21/144098384/the-girl-in-the-blue-bra

Amaria, K. (2011b, December 22). *The "Girl In The Blue Bra."* NPR. https://www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2011/12/21/144098384/the-girl-in-the-blue-bra?t=1626637788132

Ameling, R. (2022). Constructing the national body through Public Homophobia: A discourse analysis of Egyptian media coverage of the 'Rainbow Flag Case' in 2017. *Rowaq Arabi* - 38–23 ,(1)*27* ,رواق عربي. https://doi.org/10.53833/pxdi8870

American Chemical Society. (n.d.). *Edwin Land and Instant Photography*. American Chemical Society. https://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/education/whatischemistry/landmarks/land-instant-photography.html

Amnesty International. (2021). *Egypt Archives*. Amnesty International. https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/egypt/report-egypt/

The Art Story Foundation. (n.d.). *Identity Art & Identity Politics Movement Overview*. The Art Story. https://www.theartstory.org/movement/identity-art/

Artisans of ancient Egypt. The Australian Museum. (2018, November 21). https://australian.museum/learn/cultures/international-collection/ancient-egyptian/artisans-of-ancient-egypt/

Atkinson, T. (2021, February 12). *Sexuality in the past: Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep*. Discussions of Sexuality in the Past: Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep- Department of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology - University of Liverpool. https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/archaeology-classics-and-egyptology/blog/2021/sexuality-in-the-past/

Awad, M. (2010, February 17). *Egypt's king tut born of incestuous marriage: Tests*. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-antiquities-idUSTRE61G42720100217

Awad, S. H. (2017). Documenting a contested memory: Symbols in the changing city space of Cairo. *Culture & Psychology*, *23*(2), 234–254. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067x17695760

Awad, S. H., Wagoner, B., & Glaveanu, V. (2017). The Street Art of Resistance. *Resistance in Everyday Life*, 161–180. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-3581-4_13

Bader, B. (2017). Ancient Egyptian Pottery. *The Oxford Handbook of Egyptology*, 311–332. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199271870.013.17

Baines, J. (1987). Practical religion and piety. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, *73*, 79–98. https://doi.org/10.2307/3821523

Baines, J., & Lacovara, P. (2002). Burial and the dead in ancient Egyptian society. *Journal of Social Archaeology*, *2*(1), 5–36. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469605302002001595

Barrett, C. (2020, June 3). *Four tasks between death and burial*. Carolina Memorial Sanctuary. https://carolinamemorialsanctuary.org/resources/four-tasks-death-burial/

Barroso, A. (2021, January 25). *For American couples, gender gaps in sharing household responsibilities persist amid pandemic*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2021/01/25/for-american-couples-gender-gaps-in-sharing-household-responsibilities-persist-amid-pandemic/

Barsade, S. G. (2002). The ripple effect: Emotional contagion and its influence on group behavior. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *47*(4), 644–675. https://doi.org/10.2307/3094912

Bernstein, A. (2017, December 28). *2017 was a bad year for Egypt's LGBT community. 2018 could be even worse.* Foreign Policy. https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/12/28/2017-was-a-bad-year-for-egypts-lgbt-community-2018-could-be-even-worse/

Bivens, R., & Haimson, O. L. (2016). Baking gender into social media design: How platforms shape categories for users and advertisers. *Social Media + Society*, *2*(4), 205630511667248. https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116672486

Bluegrass Airbrush. (n.d.). *Rest in peace memorial airbrush shirt*. Bluegrass Airbrush. https://bluegrassairbrush.com/products/rest-in-peace-memorial-airbrush-shirt

Bolding, P. (2020, October 22). *Intersectionality vs. intersecting identities*. Oregon.gov. https://www.oregon.gov/deiconference/Documents/Pharoah%20Bolding%20-%20Intersectionality%20vs.%20Intersecting%20Identities.pdf

Booth, W. (1998, February 22). *The Myth of the Melting Pot*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/meltingpot/melt0222.htm

Borgo, M., Licata, M., & Iorio, S. (2016). Post-mortem photography: The edge where life meets death? *Human and Social Studies*, *5*(2), 103–115. https://doi.org/10.1515/hssr-2016-0016

Breuer, S. (2012, July 1). *The chemistry of pottery*. Royal Society of Education. https://edu.rsc.org/feature/the-chemistry-of-pottery/2020245.article

Burkitt, I. (2013). Self and others in the field of perception: The role of micro-dialogue, feeling, and emotion in perception. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, *33*(4), 267–279. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030255

Butler, J. P. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge.

Cambridge Dictionary. (n.d.). *Art | english meaning - cambridge dictionary*. Cambridge Dictionary. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/art

Cameron, D. (1997). Performing Gender Identity. In *Language and Society* (pp. 328–335). essay. Retrieved from https://dl1.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/599428/mod_resource/content/1/CAmeron%2C%20Performing%20gender%20identity%20young%20mens%20talk.pdf.

Canellos, P. S., & Gerstein, J. (2022, July 8). *"Operation Higher Court": Inside the religious right's efforts to wine and Dine Supreme Court justices*. POLITICO. https://www.politico.com/news/2022/07/08/religious-right-supreme-court-00044739

Cann, C. K. (2014). *Virtual Afterlives: Grieving the Dead in the Twenty-First Century*. University Press of Kentucky.

Capurri, V. (2006). Women as individuals and members of minority groups: How to reconcile human rights and the values of cultural pluralism. *GeoJournal*, *65*(4), 329–337. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-006-0023-z

Carvalho, J.-P. (2009). (working paper). *A THEORY OF THE ISLAMIC REVIVAL*. Semantic Scholar. Retrieved June 8, 2022, from https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.596.250&rep=rep1&type=pdf.

Changing laws and breaking barriers for women´s economic empowerment in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. (2020). . OECD.

Clegg, D. (2019, October 25). HOMOSEXUALITY IN EGYPT: A NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT? *Foreign Affairs Review*. Retrieved July 23, 2022, from https://www.foreignaffairsreview.com/home/homosexuality-in-egypt-a-national-security-threat.

CNEWA a papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support. (2022, February). *CNEWA.Org*. Retrieved June 7, 2022, from https://cnewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CNEWA-White-Papers-Egypt-2022-FEB.pdf.

Cohen, J. (n.d.). Photographs as Evidence. https://aardvark.ucsd.edu/perception/agnosticism.pdf

Cooney, Kara. (2015). *The woman who would be king: Hatshepsut's rise to power in Ancient Egypt*. Oneworld.

Cooney, Kathlyn, & Fitzenreiter, M. (2007). The functional materialism of death in ancient Egypt: a case study of funerary materials from the Ramesside Period. In *Das Heilige und die Ware: Eigentum, Austausch und Kapitalisierung im Spannungsfeld von Ökonomie und Religion* (Vol. VII, pp. 273–300). essay, London: Golden House.

Coriell, E. (2022, May 15). *Greek Orthodox funerals: Traditions, etiquette & what to expect*. Cake. https://www.joincake.com/blog/greek-orthodox-funeral/

Council of Europe. (n.d.). *LGBT sections*. Gender Matters Gender-in-a-box. https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/gender-in-a-box/-/asset_publisher/NdY4IoH5tuPn/content/lgbt-sections?_101_INSTANCE_NdY4IoH5tuPn_viewMode=view%2F

Council of Ministers. (2021, June 29). *La Moncloa. 29/06/2021. The Government of Spain presents the law for the full and effective equality of transgender people and for the guarantee of LGBTI rights [government/activity of the Council of Ministers]*. La Moncloa. 29/06/2021. The Government of Spain presents the law for the full and effective equality of transgender people and for the guarantee of LGBTI rights [Government/Activity of the Council of Ministers]. https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/lang/en/gobierno/councilministers/Paginas/2021/20210629_council.aspx

Cowley, M. C., Gallop, J., & Feinberg, A. H. (2016). (thesis). *Exploring Sexuality Through Art Making*. Loyola Marymount University. Retrieved August 9, 2022, from https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1286&context=etd.

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics [1989]. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*, *1989*(1), 139–167. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429500480-5

Cusick, J., Hananel, S., Seeberger, C., Woodcome, T., Gordon Director, P., Parshall, J., Shepherd Director, M., Rodriguez, L., Cherry, S., Medina, C., Santos, T., Gruberg, S., McGovern, A., Buchanan, M. J., Eisenberg, R., Martinez, J., & Falgout, M. (2017, August 25). *Advancing LGBTQ equality through local executive action*. Center for American Progress. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/advancing-lgbtq-equality-local-executive-action/

Céspedes Vargas, P. (2015, December). *Muxes at work: between community belonging and heteronormativity in the workplace. Gender expressions in the context of a local and globalized economy in Juchitán de Zaragoza, México.* (thesis). *Muxes at work: between community belonging and heteronormativity in the workplace Gender expressions in the context of a local and globalized economy in Juchitán de Zaragoza, México*. International Institute of Social Studies. Retrieved May 1, 2022, from thesis.eur.nl.

Davaki, K. (2012, March). Directorate General for Internal Policies - European Parliament. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2012/462439/IPOL-FEMM_NT(2012)462439_EN.pdf

Davies, B. (1991). The Concept of Agency: A Feminist Poststructuralist Analysis. *The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practices*, *30*.

de Beauvoir, S. (2015). *The Second Sex*. Vintage Classics.

de Valverde, J., Sovet, L., & Lubart, T. (2017). Self-construction and creative "Life design." *The Creative Self*, 99–115. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-809790-8.00006-6

Depthandtime. (2012, February 21). *Mickie O'Hoolihan's wake, 1897.* Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/depthandtime/6913629031/

Dickey, L. M., Hendricks, M. L., & Bockting, W. O. (2016). Innovations in research with transgender and gender nonconforming people and their communities. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity*, *3*(2), 187–194. https://doi.org/10.1037/sgd0000158

Dolan, E. W. (2020, March 1). *Religious people internalize stereotypes about moral superiority and are more responsive to identity threats*. PsyPost. https://www.psypost.org/2019/05/religious-people-internalize-stereotypes-about-moral-superiority-and-are-more-responsive-to-identity-threats-53708

Dominguez, A. (2008, May 2). *Why male pharaoh had feminine physique*. NBCNews.com. https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna24426101

Dysphoria. GoodTherapy.org Therapy Blog. (n.d.). https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/dysphoria

The Economist Newspaper. (2022, March 12). *A new group of left-wing presidents takes over in Latin America*. The Economist. https://www.economist.com/the-americas/2022/03/12/a-new-group-of-left-wing-presidents-takes-over-in-latin-america

Egypt Independent. (2021, February 17). *Egypt's Sisi weighs in on freedom of speech: "before you speak, look and listen."* https://egyptindependent.com/egypts-sisi-weighs-in-on-freedom-of-speech-before-you-speak-look-and-listen/

Egyptomania: The Western Fascination with Egypt. (2018, November 1). *Pequot Library*. Retrieved July 4, 2022, from https://www.pequotlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Egyptomania_Exhibition-Guide-compressed.pdf.

Eidhamar, L. G. (2014). Is gayness a test from allah? Typologies in Muslim stances on homosexuality. *Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations*, *25*(2), 245–266. https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410.2013.869882

El-Behary, H. (2017, May 9). *87% of Egyptian men believe women's basic role is to be housewives: Study*. Egypt Independent. https://egyptindependent.com/87-egyptian-men-believe-women-s-basic-role-be-housewives-study/

El-Din Shahin, E. (2007). (working paper). *Political Islam in Egypt*. Center for European Policy Studies. Retrieved June 9, 2022, from http://aei.pitt.edu/11728/1/1495.pdf.

Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (2011, February 11). *Egypt Uprising of 2011*. Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/event/Egypt-Uprising-of-2011

Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.-a). *Mortuary temple*. Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/topic/mortuary-temple

Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.-b). *Natron mineral*. Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/science/natron

Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.-c). *Temple architecture*. Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/art/Egyptian-art/Temple-architecture#ref267146

Farrar, L. (2019, August 5). *Is the internet making you meaner?: KQED Education*. KQED. https://www.kqed.org/education/532334/is-the-internet-making-you-meaner

Fathi, W. (2017, April 18). *The many faces of homosexuality in Ancient Egypt*. 22 رصيف. https://raseef22.net/article/1069485-many-faces-homosexuality-ancient-egypt

Feki, S. E., Heilman, B., & Barker, G. (2017). *Understanding masculinities: Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (Images) - Middle East and North Africa*. UN Women.

Ferguson, A. (2023, November 21). *Holy Trinity | Meaning & Explanation*. Study.com. https://study-com.translate.goog/learn/lesson/what-is-the-holy-trinity.html?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=id&_x_tr_hl=id&_x_tr_pto=tc

Filice, M. (2015, October 29). *Two-spirit*. The Canadian Encyclopedia. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/two-spirit

Fujifilm. (n.d.). *Fujifilm About Us*. Fujifilm [Japan]. https://www.fujifilm.com/jp/en/about

Fulton, R. (1964). Death and the Self. *Journal of Religion and Health*, *3*(4), 359–368. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27504663?origin=JSTOR-pdf

Funeral Basics. (2020, May 26). *8 intriguing funeral customs from the victorian era*. Funeral Basics. https://www.funeralbasics.org/8-intriguing-funeral-customs-victorian-era/

Funeral Guide. (2019, July 17). *Eastern Orthodox funerals: Orthodox funeral traditions*. Eastern Orthodox Funerals | Orthodox Funeral Traditions - Funeral Guide. https://www.funeralguide.co.uk/help-resources/arranging-a-funeral/religious-funerals/orthodox-funerals

Fung, K. (2021, October 27). *Which countries recognize third gender option on passports?*. Newsweek. https://www.newsweek.com/which-countries-recognize-third-gender-option-passports-1643167

Galindo, G. (2020, November 9). *Belgium to introduce 'x' as third, non-binary gender*. Belgium to introduce 'X' as third, non-binary gender. https://www.brusselstimes.com/belgium/139909/belgium-to-introduce-x-as-third-non-binary-gender-genderfluid-genderqueer-belgian-laws-transgender-justice-minister-vincent-van-quickenborne-minister-petra-de-sutter/

Gehl, N. (2021, February 2). *Why transgender representation in the Art Room Matters: Interview with Rae Senarighi*. The Art of Education University. https://theartofeducation.edu/2020/09/16/why-transgender-representation-in-the-art-room-matters-interview-with-rae-senarighi/

Geology Science. (2019, May 29). *Sandstone: Composition, properties, formation, uses "Geology science*. Geology Science. https://geologyscience.com/rocks/sandstone/

Geology Science. (2021, August 16). *Granite: Properties, formation, composition, uses*. Geology Science. https://geologyscience.com/rocks/granite/

Gersen, J. S. (2022, July 1). *The Supreme Court's Conservatives have asserted their power*. The New Yorker. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/07/11/the-supreme-courts-conservatives-have-asserted-their-power

Global Foundation for Democracy and Development. (2022, January 17). *"Latin America: A return to the Progressive Movement", an article by dr. Leonel Fernández*. Global Foundation for Democracy and Development. https://www.globalfoundationdd.org/latin-america-a-return-to-the-progressive-movement-an-article-by-dr-leonel-fernandez/

Goles, K. (2022, September 28). *Evolution of American funerary customs and laws: In Custodia legis*. The Library of Congress. https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2022/09/evolution-of-american-funerary-customs-and-laws/

González Cabrera, C. (2021, July 22). *Argentina recognizes non-binary identities*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/07/22/argentina-recognizes-non-binary-identities

González Cabrera, C. (2022, March 8). *Colombia's Constitutional Court advances gender diversity*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/03/08/colombias-constitutional-court-advances-gender-diversity

González Cabrera, C., & Galvis Caballero, M. C. (2022, February 24). *Guanajuato, Mexico recognizes non-binary person's identity*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/02/24/guanajuato-mexico-recognizes-non-binary-persons-identity

Goodwin, J. (2020, January 25). *More Americans are choosing cremation over traditional burials, survey finds*. USA Today. https://eu.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/01/21/more-americans-choose-cremation-over-traditional-burials-survey-finds/4530268002/

The Great Cultures. (n.d.). *The contendings of horus and seth - The Great Cultures*. The Great Cultures. https://thegreatcultures.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/The-Contendings-of-Horus-and-Seth.pdf

Haag, K. L. (n.d.). *Egyptian Feminism (1800 - 1980)*. Encyclopedia.com. https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/egyptian-feminism-1800-1980

Haikal The American University in Cairo, F. (n.d.). *Ra, the Creator God of Ancient Egypt*. ARCE. https://www.arce.org/resource/ra-creator-god-ancient-egypt

Halim, W. (2015). Islam and its impact on women's status and role in Egypt. *JICSA (Journal of Islamic Civilization in Southeast Asia)*, *4*(2). https://doi.org/10.24252/jicsa.v4i2a1

HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. (n.d.). *Brother definition and meaning: Collins english dictionary*. Brother definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/brother

Hartwig, M. (2004). *Tomb painting and identity in Ancient Thebes, 1419-1372 BCE* (2nd ed., Ser. IMAGO). Fondation Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth. June 27, 2022, https://www.academia.edu/41908796/TOMB_PAINTING_AND_IDENTITY_IN_ANCIENT_THEBES_1419_1372_BCE

Hay, B. (2020). A good going: The importance of the funeral meal at traditional Western Christian funerals in the United Kingdom. *Hospitality & Society*, *10*(1), 43–61. https://doi.org/10.1386/hosp_00014_1

Heininger, B., & Cooney, K. (2009). Where does the Masculine Begin and the Feminine End? The Merging of the Two Genders in Egyptian Coffins during the Ramesside Period. In *Ehrenmord und emanzipation: Die geschlechterfrage in Ritualen von Parallelgesellschaften* (pp. 99–124). essay, LIT Verlag.

Henry Sheldon Museum. (2020). *The Material World of Victorian Mourning*. Addison Independent. Retrieved July 8, 2022, from https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e7a0da508e4e2019ee23004/t/5fd2916710bb3b6da58504ff/1607635305883/Mourning+Article+by+Taylor+Rossini.pdf.

Henry, H. M., & Elwy, M. (2020). Egyptian rearing practices: Takafol and observance of Family rituals. *Parents and Caregivers Across Cultures*, 247–257. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-35590-6_17

hooks, bell. (2014). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Routledge.

HRC Foundation. (n.d.). *Talking to grandparents and other adult family members*. Human Rights Campaign - Talking to grandparents and other adult family members. https://www.hrc.org/resources/transgender-children-and-youth-talking-to-grandparents-and-other-adult-fami

HRC Staff. (2020, November 23). *Two Spirit and LGBTQ Identitites: Today and Centuries Ago*. Human Rights Campaign. https://www.hrc.org/news/two-spirit-and-lgbtq-idenitites-today-and-centuries-ago

Human Rights Watch. (2004, February 29). *In a time of torture*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/02/29/time-torture/assault-justice-egypts-crackdown-homosexual-conduct

Human Rights Watch. (2007, November 11). *Egypt: Allow citizens to list actual religion on ID cards*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2007/11/11/egypt-allow-citizens-list-actual-religion-id-cards

Human Rights Watch. (2015, May 12). *In a time of torture*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/02/29/time-torture/assault-justice-egypts-crackdown-homosexual-conduct

Human Rights Watch. (2017, September 30). *Egypt: Stop anti-LGBT crackdown, intimidation*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/09/30/egypt-stop-anti-lgbt-crackdown-intimidation

Human Rights Watch. (2018, January 22). *More arrests in Egypt's LGBT crackdown, but no international outcry*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/22/more-arrests-egypts-lgbt-crackdown-no-international-outcry

Human Rights Watch. (2020, October 1). *Egypt: Security Forces Abuse, torture LGBT people*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/01/egypt-security-forces-abuse-torture-lgbt-people

Human Rights Watch. (2021, March 12). *Condemnation of Egypt's abuses at UN rights body*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/03/12/condemnation-egypts-abuses-un-rights-body

Human Rights Watch. (2022a, January 13). *Latin America: Alarming reversal of basic freedoms*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/01/13/latin-america-alarming-reversal-basic-freedoms

Human Rights Watch. (2022b, January 13). *World Report 2022: Rights trends in United States*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/united-states

Human Rights Watch. (2022c, April 27). *Egypt: Two singers convicted on "morality" charges*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/27/egypt-two-singers-convicted-morality-charges

Human Rights Watch. (2022d, May 4). *Concerns remain as Egypt frees activists and critics*. Human Rights Watch. https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/04/concerns-remain-egypt-frees-activists-and-critics

Ikram, S. (2015). *Death and burial in ancient Egypt*. The American University in Cairo Press.

James, T. G. H., & Dorman, P. F. (2021). *Egyptian art and architecture - Sculpture*. Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/art/Egyptian-art/Sculpture

Jarus, O. (2019, January 16). *Damage to ancient carving of Egyptian couple was meant to hurt them in the afterlife*. LiveScience. https://www.livescience.com/64514-ancient-egyptian-carving-afterlife.html

Johnson, C. N., & Nyhof, M. (2006). Transcendental self-organization. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *29*(5), 478–478. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0140525x06399104

Jones, J. M. (2022, April 19). *How religious are Americans?*. Gallup.com. https://news.gallup.com/poll/358364/religious-americans.aspx

Jones, S. (2021, June 29). *Spain backs bill allowing teenagers to change official gender without medical checks*. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jun/29/spain-bill-change-official-gender-without-medical-checks

Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology & the Ancient World. (n.d.). *History of Egypt I - 18th Dynasty*. Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology & the Ancient World. https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/historyofegyptone10/10228.html

Kamal, H. (2015). Inserting women's rights in the Egyptian Constitution: Personal Reflections. *Journal for Cultural Research*, *19*(2), 150–161. https://doi.org/10.1080/14797585.2014.982919

Kamel, M. R. (2020, December 18). *Egypt: 100 years of emancipation, women still fighting for change*. The Africa Report.com. https://www.theafricareport.com/52720/egypt-100-years-of-emancipation-women-still-fighting-for-change/

Kandiyoti, D. (2015). *Women, Islam, and the State*. W. Ross MacDonald School Resource Services Library.

Kannadan, A. (2018). History of the Miasma Theory of Disease. *ESSAI*, *16*(18), 41–43. www.cod.edu

Kaplan, S. C., Butler, R. M., Devlin, E. A., Testa, R. J., Horenstein, A., Swee, M. B., & Heimberg, R. G. (2019). Rural Living Environment predicts social anxiety in transgender and gender nonconforming individuals across Canada and the United States. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, *66*, 102–116. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2019.102116

Khalil, N. (2014, September 3). *Blue Bra graffiti (Bahia Shehab)*. Design and Violence. https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2013/designandviolence/blue-bra-graffiti-bahia-shehab/

Khalil, R., Moustafa, A. A., Moftah, M. Z., & Karim, A. A. (2015, January 5). *How knowledge of Ancient Egyptian women can influence today's gender role: Does history matter in gender psychology?* Frontiers in Psychology. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.02053/full

Khorshid, S. (2021, January 27). *The Unlikely Success of Egypt's 2011 Revolution: A Revived Women's Movement*. Atlantic Council. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/the-unlikely-success-of-egypts-2011-revolution-a-revived-womens-movement/

Landis, S. (2021, October). *Creating the change they wish to see: LGBTQ artists & their activism*. National Center for Civil and Human Rights. https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/creating-the-change-they-wish-to-see-lgbtq-artists-their-activism/

Lappegård Lahn, Å. (2015, October 15). *Gender equality gives men better lives*. Kilden. https://kjonnsforskning.no/en/2015/10/gender-equality-gives-men-better-lives

Large kneeling statue of Hatshepsut: New Kingdom. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-a). https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544449

Lasting Post. (2022). *Orthodox funeral*. Lasting Post. https://www.lastingpost.com/orthodox-funeral-etiquette/

Lavers, M. K. (2015, June 10). *Colombia to allow gender change without surgery*. Washington Blade: LGBTQ News, Politics, LGBTQ Rights, Gay News. https://www.washingtonblade.com/2015/06/08/colombia-to-allow-gender-change-without-surgery/

Leppert, R., & Fahmy, D. (2022, July 5). *10 facts about religion and government in the United States*. Pew Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/07/05/10-facts-about-religion-and-government-in-the-united-states/

Lesar, N. (2024, July 19). *Scarabs of hatshepsut*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/image/14370/scarabs-of-hatshepsut/

Lesko, B. S. (2019). *Women and religion in ancient egypt*. Diotma. https://diotima-doctafemina.org/essays/women-and-religion-in-ancient-egypt/

Lewis, R., & Micklewright, N. (Eds.). (2006). *Gender, Modernity & Liberty: Middle Eastern and Western Women's Writings: A Critical Sourcebook*. I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

Lexico Dictionaries. (n.d.). *DYSPHORIA English Definition and Meaning*. Lexico Dictionaries | English. https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/dysphoria

Lind, A. C. (2013). Heteronormativity and Sexuality. *Oxford Handbooks Online*. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0007

Liszewski, W., Peebles, J. K., Yeung, H., & Arron, S. (2018). Persons of Nonbinary Gender — Awareness, Visibility, and Health Disparities. *New England Journal of Medicine*, *379*(25), 2391–2393. https://doi.org/10.1056/nejmp1812005

Lopez, O. (2021, October 29). *What is day of the dead, the Mexican holiday?*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/article/day-of-the-dead-mexico.html

Lumen Candela. (n.d.). *World Civilization - Ancient Egypt - Hatshepsut*. Hatshepsut | World Civilization. https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldcivilization/chapter/hatshepsut/

López Torres, N. (2021, September 27). *Intimate portraits of Mexico's Third-Gender Muxes*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/27/travel/mexico-muxes-third-gender.html

Main, K. L. (2015). Bombing the Tomb: Memorial Portraiture and Street Art in Revolutionary Cairo. *Berkeley Undergraduate Journal*, *28*(1). https://doi.org/10.5070/b3281025789

Mangan, D. (2022, June 27). *Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas says gay rights, contraception rulings should be reconsidered after roe is overturned*. CNBC. https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/24/roe-v-wade-supreme-court-justice-thomas-says-gay-rights-rulings-open-to-be-tossed.html

Mark, J. J. (2013, January 17). *Ancient Egyptian mythology*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/Egyptian_Mythology/

Mark, J. J. (2014, April 17). *Akhenaten*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/Akhenaten/

Mark, J. J. (2016, November 14). *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/Egyptian_Literature/

Mark, J. J. (2017a, April 27). *The negative confession*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/The_Negative_Confession/

Mark, J. J. (2017b, May 24). *Jobs in Ancient Egypt*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1073/jobs-in-ancient-egypt/

Mark, J. J. (2021, July 14). *Clergy, Priests & Priestesses in Ancient Egypt*. World History Encyclopedia. https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1026/clergy-priests--priestesses-in-ancient-egypt/

Matthiesen, Wickert, & Lehrer, S.C. (2022, January 13). *FUNERAL PROCESSION TRAFFIC LAWS IN ALL 50 STATES*. Matthiesen, Wickert, & Lehrer Attorneys at Law. https://www.mwl-law.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/SLOWER-TRAFFIC-KEEP-RIGHT.pdf

Maxwell Museum of Anthropology. (2022, June 13). *Celebrating pride month at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology: 2. ethnographic photograph collections and other gendered stories*. Celebrating Pride Month at the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology: 2. Ethnographic Photograph Collections and Other Gendered Stories | Maxwell Museum. https://maxwellmuseum.unm.edu/news-events/blog/celebrating-pride-month-maxwell-museum-anthropology-2-ethnographic-photograph

May, M. (2012, January 23). *R.I.P. shirts become an urban tradition / mementos honoring the dead now a religious ritual, complete with their own rules of observance*. SFGATE. https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/R-I-P-shirts-become-an-urban-tradition-2679156.php#photo-2151670

Mayo Clinic. (2022, May 5). *Marfan syndrome*. Mayo Clinic - Marfan Syndrome. https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/marfan-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20350782

McCauley, K. (2021, October 26). *Creating the change they wish to see: LGBTQ artists & their activism*. National Center for Civil and Human Rights. https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/creating-the-change-they-wish-to-see-lgbtq-artists-their-activism/

Memorial Planning. (2022). *Islamic funeral guide: Etiquette, rites, & traditions*. Memorial Planning. https://www.memorialplanning.com/resources/religious-funerals-guide/islamic-funeral-guide

Memorial Planning. (n.d.). *Non-religious funeral service guide: Readings & info*. Memorial Planning. https://www.memorialplanning.com/resources/religious-funerals-guide/non-religious-funerals-guide

Memorial Properties. (2018, December 26). *Coptic funerals near me & their significance*. Memorial Properties. https://www.memorialproperties.com/funeral-planning/coptic-funerals-near-significance/

Mendoza, J. E., Tolba, M., & Saleh, Y. (2019). Strengthening marriages in Egypt: Impact of divorce on women. *Behavioral Sciences*, *10*(1). https://doi.org/10.3390/bs10010014

Mendoza, M. A. (2018, December 8). *Death and mourning practices in the victorian age*. Psychology Today. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/understanding-grief/201812/death-and-mourning-practices-in-the-victorian-age

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.-a). *Feminism definition & meaning*. Merriam-Webster. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feminism#learn-more

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.-b). *Intersectionality definition & meaning*. Merriam-Webster. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-d). *Finger stall: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/576567

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-e). *Sandals: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/547765

The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-f). *Vulture pectoral: New Kingdom*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548450

MFA Boston. (n.d.). *Statue fragment of Hatshepsut*. Statue fragment of Hatshepsut – Works – Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. https://collections.mfa.org/objects/148431

Miatello, L. (2018). Examining Texts and Decoration of Peftjauauiaset's Coffins in Milan. *ENiM*, *11*, 41–133. http://www.enim-egyptologie.fr

Miller, C. C. (2018, May 16). *How same-sex couples divide chores, and what it reveals about modern parenting*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/16/upshot/same-sex-couples-divide-chores-much-more-evenly-until-they-become-parents.html

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (n.d.). *A virtual tour through the tomb of the two brothers*. Discover Egypt's Monuments - Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. https://egymonuments.gov.eg/news/a-virtual-tour-through-the-tomb-of-the-two-brothers/

Minority Rights Group. (2013, August 23). *Egypt: Challenging discrimination against religious minorities*. Minority Rights Group. https://minorityrights.org/what-we-do/egypt-challenging-discrimination-religious-minorities-8958/

Moaddel, M., & Karabenick, S. A. (2008). Religious fundamentalism among young Muslims in Egypt and Saudi Arabia. *Social Forces*, *86*(4), 1675–1710. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0059

Močnik, R. (n.d.). *Identity and the Arts - Museum of Modern Art*. MoMA. https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/sanjaivekovic/essays/RM%20Identity%20and%20the%20Arts.pdf

Musei Vaticani. (n.d.). *Stele of hatshepsut and thutmose III*. Stele of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III. https://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/museo-gregoriano-egizio/sala-i--reperti-epigrafici/stele-di-hatshepsut-e-thutmosi-iii.html

Myers, S. M. (1996). An interactive model of religiosity inheritance: The importance of family context. *American Sociological Review*, *61*(5), 858–866. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096457

Nash, J. C. (2008). re-thinking intersectionality. *Feminist Review*, (89), 1–15. https://doi.org/doi:10.2307/40663957

Navarro, L. (n.d.). *What is a day of the dead altar (Ofrenda) and how is it prepared?*. Mexico In My Pocket. https://mexicoinmypocket.com/blogs/blog/how-to-build-a-day-of-the-dead-altar

The New Arab. (2019, September 25). *Egypt authorities accused of illegal random searches on phones*. The New Arab. https://english.alaraby.co.uk/news/egypt-authorities-accused-illegal-random-searches-phones

Nguyen, T. (2019, October 16). *The art of doing makeup on a dead body*. Vox. https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2019/10/16/20902833/mortuary-makeup-dead-body

NPR. (2019, April 17). *Hidden brain: America's changing attitudes toward gay people*. NPR. https://www.npr.org/2019/04/17/714212984/hidden-brain-americas-changing-attitudes-toward-gay-people?t=1656965919492

Numinous, T. (2019, March 11). *5 genders: The story of the Native American two-spirits*. the Numinous. https://www.the-numinous.com/2016/07/06/native-american-two-spirits/

Office of International Religious Freedom, & U.S. Mission Egypt, U.S. Embassy in Egypt (2022). Retrieved June 7, 2022, from https://eg.usembassy.gov/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/.

Onstine, S. (2010). Gender and the religion of Ancient Egypt. *Religion Compass*, *4*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2009.00178.x

Oppenheim, A. (2004, October). *The Pyramid Complex of Senwosret III, Dahshur: Temples*. metmuseum.org. https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/dats/hd_dats.htm

Orascom Housing Communities. (n.d.). *Orascom Housing Communities*. Orascom Housing Communities – Equity International. https://www.equityinternational.com/companies/orascom-housing-communities/

Oshawa Community Museum. (2015). *MOURNING AFTER The Victorian Celebration of Death* . Oshawa; Oshawa Museum. Retrieved July 7, 2022, from http://www.oshawamuseum.org/pdf/Mourning_After_The_Victorian_Celebration_of_Death.pdf.

Outreach Program Center for Middle Eastern Studies The University of Texas at Austin. (2000). *The Story of Osiris, Isis and Horus: The Egyptian Myth of Creation*. Cairo: Living Past, Living Future. https://www.laits.utexas.edu/cairo/teachers/teachers.html

Pathak, R. (2019, December). *Developing a training program for the B.Ed students to teach the subject Science using Models of Teaching and Finding out its Effectiveness*. The role and functions of social media in socialization. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337707053_The_role_and_functions_of_social_media_in_socialization

Persse, J. (2012). *Sanja Iveković sweet violence*. MoMA. https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/sanjaivekovic/

Pew Research Center. (2022, June 13). *Religious landscape study*. Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project. https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/religious-landscape-study/

Polaroid EU. (n.d.). *Polaroid - Our Story*. Polaroid EU. https://eu.polaroid.com/pages/about-us

Power, R. K., & Tristant, Y. (2016). From refuse to rebirth: Repositioning the pot burial in the Egyptian archaeological record. *Antiquity*, *90*(354), 1474–1488. https://doi.org/10.15184/aqy.2016.176

Pretorius, S. (2004). Mind control: The secret weapon utilised by religious cults to control their followers. *Koers - Bulletin for Christian Scholarship*, *69*(4), 607–622. https://doi.org/10.4102/koers.v69i4.319

Promotion of Women's Rights Project in Egypt. (n.d.). Promotion of Women's Rights (Egypt) . https://horizon.documentation.ird.fr/exl-doc/pleins_textes/divers17-07/010048687.pdf

Promundo UN Women. (2017, May 8). *Men and gender equality in the Middle East and North Africa*. Understanding Masculinities Egypt. https://imagesmena.org/en/egypt/

Pullen Sansfaçon, A., Medico, D., Gelly, M., Kirichenko, V., & Suerich-Gulick, F. (2021). Blossoming child, Mourning Parent: A qualitative study of trans children and their parents navigating transition. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-021-02178-w

Ratini, M. (2021, September 8). *What are the advantages of a single-parent family?*. MedicineNet. https://www.medicinenet.com/what_are_the_advantages_of_a_single-parent_family/article.htm

Reimers, E. (1999). Death and identity: Graves and funerals as cultural communication. *Mortality*, *4*(2), 147–166. https://doi.org/10.1080/713685976

Robins, G. (1993). *Women in Ancient Egypt*. Harvard University Press.

Robinson, M. (2019). Two-spirit identity in a time of gender fluidity. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *67*(12), 1675–1690. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1613853

Robinson-Brown, J. A. (2020). *A Brief Introduction to Coptic Christianity*. Academia.edu. https://www.academia.edu/42147866/A_Brief_Introduction_to_Coptic_Christianity

Roehrig, C. H., Dreyfus, R., & Keller, C. A. (2005). *Hatshepsut, From Queen to Pharaoh*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art ; Yale University Press.

Roushdy, R., Kraft, C., Harbour, C., Barsoum, G., & El-Kogali, S. (2011). *Survey of young people in Egypt: Final report - popcouncil.org*. https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2010PGY_SYPEFinalReport_6.pdf. https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2010PGY_SYPEFinalReport.pdf

Rubin, B. (1990). Contemporary history of fundamentalism in Egypt. *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, 10–27. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-06931-3_3

Saad, L. (2021, January 11). *Americans' political ideology held steady in 2020*. Gallup.com. https://news.gallup.com/poll/328367/americans-political-ideology-held-steady-2020.aspx

Salvo, V. (n.d.). *Khnumhotep and Niankhkhnum aka overseers of the Manicurists*. Legacy Project Chicago. https://legacyprojectchicago.org/person/khnumhotep-and-niankhkhnum-aka-overseers-manicurists

Samari, G. (2020). Education and fertility in Egypt: Mediation by women's empowerment. *SSM - Population Health*, *12*, 100713. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2019.100488

Sanders, J. (2017, November 14). *Memorial T-shirts create a little justice, a tiny peace*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/14/style/memorial-t-shirts.html

Schlageter Schmitt, E. (2019). *Home funeral history*. National Home Funeral Alliance. https://www.homefuneralalliance.org/home-funeral-history.html

Schultz, H. (n.d.). Heidi Bobbette Schultz. http://heidi-schultz.squarespace.com/#/buddhabuddies2/

Seated statue of hatshepsut: New Kingdom. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-b). https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544450

Shehab, N. (2017). Xkr (Kheker) frieze in ancient Egypt. *Journal of the General Union of Arab Archaeologists*, *2*(2), 85–111. https://doi.org/10.21608/jguaa2.2017.4767

Smith, S. K. (n.d.). *Is it necessary to embalm a body?*. Kuhn Funeral Home & Crematory. https://www.kuhnfuneralhomes.com/is-it-necessary-to-embalm-a-body

State Information Service. (n.d.). *Egyptian Traditions*. State Information Service. https://sis.gov.eg/section/722/4437?lang=en-us

Statista. (2022, March 21). *Daily Social Media Usage Worldwide*. Statista. https://www.statista.com/statistics/433871/daily-social-media-usage-worldwide/

Statuette of the goddess taweret: Ptolemaic period. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. (n.d.-c). https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544864

Stünkel, I. (n.d.). *The Temple's Cult and Decoration*. metmuseum.org. https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/curatorial-departments/egyptian-art/temple-of-dendur-50/cult-and-decoration

Synowiec, O. (2018a, November 27). *The third gender of southern Mexico*. BBC Travel. https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20181125-the-third-gender-of-southern-mexico

Synowiec, O. (2018b, November 28). *Quiénes son los muxes, El Tercer Género que existe en el sur de méxico: "hay hombres y mujeres, y hay algo en medio."* BBC News Mundo. https://www.bbc.com/mundo/vert-tra-46374110

Teruel, M., & Segarra-Blasco, A. (n.d.). The Link between Gender Diversity and Innovation: What is the Role of Firm Size? Reus. Retrieved July 5, 2022,.

Tryhorn, C. (2010, February 2). *The Sawiris family: From entrepreneurs to media owners*. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2010/feb/02/sawiris-independent

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020, August 20). *What to do after someone dies*. National Institute on Aging. https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-do-after-someone-dies

U.S. Department of State. (2020, December 1). *Egypt - United States Department of State*. U.S. Department of State. https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-report-on-international-religious-freedom/egypt/

U.S. General Service Administration. (2019, July 30). *Limestone: Characteristics, Uses And Problem*. GSA U.S. General Service Administration. https://www.gsa.gov/node/88304?Form_Load=88341

The University of British Columbia. (2021, March 8). *Intersectionality: What is it and why it matters*. The University of British Columbia - NTERSECTIONALITY: WHAT IS IT AND WHY IT MATTERS. https://vpfo.ubc.ca/2021/03/intersectionality-what-is-it-and-why-it-matters/

The University of Memphis. (n.d.). *About reliefs and inscriptions - The Karnak Great Hypostyle Hall Project*. About Reliefs and Inscriptions. https://www.memphis.edu/hypostyle/reliefs_inscriptions/westwallnorthhalf.php

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee . (n.d.). *Egypt, burial mask of unidentified mummy at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo*. University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee . https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/agsafrica/id/4057/

Unruh, D. R. (1983). Death and personal history: Strategies of Identity Preservation. *Social Problems*, *30*(3), 340–351. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.1983.30.3.03a00090

van Nieuwkerk, K. (2019). *Understanding Unbelief in Egypt Report on preliminary findings*. University of Kent. Retrieved June 7, 2022, from https://research.kent.ac.uk/understandingunbelief/publications-2/understanding-unbelief-in-egypt/.

VanSteenhuyse, E. (2012). Islamic Death: An Exploration into the Traditions and Rituals Associated with an Islamic Death. Retrieved July 8, 2022,.

Villarreal, D. (2020, October 26). *Egyptian officials systemically abuse, torture gays, rights group says*. NBCNews.com. https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/egyptian-officials-systemically-abuse-torture-gays-rights-group-says-n1244755

Wallenfeldt, J. (n.d.). *Justin Trudeau*. Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Justin-Trudeau

Walter, T. (1996). A new model of grief: Bereavement and biography. *Mortality*, *1*(1), 7–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/713685822

Ward, L. (2021, May 3). *Top 10 things to know about the day of the dead*. National Geographic Travel. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/top-ten-day-of-dead-mexico

WebMD Editorial Contributors. (2020, December 3). *Catfishing: Signs your online friend is not for real*. WebMD. https://www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/signs-catfishing

Weiss, L. (2009). Personal religious practice: House altars at Deir el-Medina[*]. *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, *95*(1), 193–208. https://doi.org/10.1177/030751330909500111

Welle, D. (2020, December 18). *LGBT conversion therapy: Religious leaders call for ban to "abhorrent" practice*. Egypt Independent. https://egyptindependent.com/lgbt-conversion-therapy-religious-leaders-call-for-ban-to-abhorrent-practice/

Whitehead, A. (2021, May 27). *The Growing Anti-Democratic Threat of Christian Nationalism in the U.S.* Time. https://time.com/6052051/anti-democratic-threat-christian-nationalism/

Wilshusen, T. E. (2018). The Gender Veil from Egyptian Identity: The Findings of an Artist. *Proceedings of 108th The IRES International Conference*, (108), 10–13. https://worldresearchlibrary.org/proceeding.php?pid=1457

Wilson, E. B. (2006, September). *The queen who would be king*. Smithsonian.com. https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-queen-who-would-be-king-130328511/

Winter, O., & Shiloah, A. (2019). Egypt's Identity during the el-Sisi Era: Profile of the "New Egyptian." *Strategic Assessment - A Multidisciplinary Journal on National Security*, *21*(4), 65–78. https://strategicassessment.inss.org.il/wp-content/uploads/antq/fe-2599166883.pdf

Wortham, J. (2018, November 16). *On Instagram, seeing between the (gender) lines*. The New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/16/magazine/tech-design-instagram-gender.html

Yılmaz, A. (2010). Memorialization as the Art of Memory: A Method to Analyse Memorials. *METU Journal of Faculty of Architecture*, *27*(1), 267–280. https://doi.org/10.4305/metu.jfa.2010.1.14

Yuko, E. (2021, October 27). *Not all women want to be mothers. finally, our culture is recognizing that.* The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/soloish/wp/2016/06/20/not-all-women-want-to-be-mothers-finally-our-culture-is-recognizing-that/

Zeitoun, N. A. M. S. (2018). Women Economic Empowerment Study. *The Wold Bank*. https://doi.org/10.1596/31351

Zheng, L. (2020, November 20). *Transgender, gender-fluid, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming employees deserve better policies*. Harvard Business Review. https://hbr.org/2020/11/transgender-gender-fluid-nonbinary-and-gender-nonconforming-employees-deserve-better-policies

Zinn, K. (2012). Literacy, pharaonic egypt. *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah15244

APPENDIX A

APÉNDICE A

“

The Story of Osiris, Isis and Horus: The Egyptian Myth of Creation

From Geb, the earth god, and Nut, the sky goddess came four children: Osiris, Isis, Set and Nepthys. Osiris was the oldest and so became king of Egypt, and he married his sister Isis. Osiris was a good king and commanded the respect of all who lived on the earth and the gods who dwelled in the netherworld.

However, Set was always jealous of Osiris, because he did not command the respect of those on earth or those in the netherworld. One day, Set transformed himself into a vicious monster and attacked Osiris, killing him. Set then cut Osiris into pieces and distributed them throughout the length and breadth of Egypt.

With Osiris dead, Set became king of Egypt, with his sister Nepthys as his wife. Nepthys, however, felt sorry for her sister Isis, who wept endlessly over her lost husband. Isis, who had great magical powers, decided to find her husband and bring him back to life long enough so that they could have a child. Together with Nepthys, Isis roamed the country, collecting the pieces of her husband's body and reassembling them. Once she completed this task, she breathed the breath of life into his body and resurrected him. They were together again, and Isis became pregnant soon after. Osiris was able to descend into the underworld, where he became the lord of that domain.

The child born to Isis was named Horus, the hawk-god. When he became an adult, Horus decided to make a case before the court of gods that he, not Set, was the rightful king of Egypt. A long period of argument followed, and Set challenged Horus to a contest. The winner would become king.

Set, however, did not play fair. After several matches in which Set cheated and was the victor, Horus' mother, Isis, decided to help her son and set a trap for Set. She snared him, but Set begged for his life, and Isis let him go. When he found out that she had let his enemy live, Horus became angry with his mother, and rages against her, earning him the contempt of the other gods. They decided that there would be one more match, and Set would get to choose what it would be.

Set decided that the final round of the contest would be a boat race. However, in order to make the contest a challenge, Set decided that he and Horus should race boats made of stone. Horus was tricky and built a boat made of wood, covered with limestone plaster, which looked like stone. As the gods assembled for the race, Set cut the top off of a mountain to serve as his boat and set it in the water. His boat sank right away, and all the other gods laughed at him. Angry, Set transformed himself into a hippopotamus and attacked Horus' boat. Horus fought off Set, but the other gods stopped him before he could kill Set. The other gods decided that the match was a tie. Many of the gods were sympathetic to Horus, but remembered his anger toward his mother for being lenient to Set, and were unwilling to support him completely.

The gods who formed the court decided to write a letter to Osiris and ask for his advice. Osiris responded with a definite answer: his son is the rightful king, and should be placed upon the throne. No one, said Osiris, should take the throne of Egypt through an act of murder, as Set had done. Set had killed Osiris, but Horus did not killed anyone, and was the better candidate. The sun and the stars, who were Osiris' allies, descended into the underworld, leaving the world in darkness. Finally, the gods agreed that Horus should claim his birthright as king of Egypt.

(Outreach Program Center for Middle Eastern Studies The University of Texas at Austin, 2000)

”

This version of the Myth of Osiris was provided as a resource document for the class. It is quoted exactly as presented.

APPENDIX B

APÉNDICE B

“

The Contendings of Horus and Seth

This text is reproduced from:

The Great Cultures. (n.d.). *The contendings of Horus and Seth - The Great Cultures*. The Great Cultures. https://thegreatcultures.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/The-Contendings-of-Horus-and-Seth.pdf

[There came to pass] the adjudication of Horus and Seth, mysterious in (their) forms and mightiest of the princes and magnates who (ever) came into existence. Now it was a young [god] that was seated in the presence of the Universal Lord, claiming the office of his father Osiris, beautiful in (his) appearances, the [son of Ptah, who illumines [the west with] his [complex]ion, while Thoth was presenting the uninjured Eye to the great prince who is in Heliopolis. Then said Shu, the son of Re, in the presence of [A tum], the great [prince] who is in Heliopolis: Justice is a possessor of power. {administer] it by saying, "Award the office to [Horus]."/ Said Thoth to the [Ennead: It is correct a million times. Thereupon Isis let out a loud [shri]ek rejoicing exceedingly, and she came to before the Universal [Lord] and said: North wind, (go) to the west. Impart the good news to Onnophris, I.p.h. Then said Shu, the son [of Re]: [The] one who presents the uninjured Eye is loyal to the Ennead.

Statement by the universal Lord: Indeed, what is the meaning of your exercising authority alone by yourselves? [Onuris] said: he shall [assum]e the cartouche of Horus, and the White Crown shall be [placed] upon his head. The Universal Lord was silent a long [whi]le, [being] furious [at] this Ennead. Then Seth, the son of Nut, said: Have him dismissed outside/ with me that I may let you see my hand(s) prevail <over> his hand(s) [in the presence of the Ennead, since there is not known [any] (other methods [ofJ dispossessing him. Said Thoth to him: Shouldn't we ascertain (who is) the imposter? It is while Osiris's son Horus is still living that his office is to be awarded to Seth.

Pre-Harakhti became exceedingly furious, for Pre's wish was/ to give the office to Seth, great in virility, the son of Nut. Onuris let out a loud shriek before the face of the Ennead, saying: What shall we do? Then Atum, the great prince who is in Heliopolis, said: have Banebdjede, the great living god, [summon]ed that he may judge between the youths. Banebdjede, the great god who resides in Sehel, and Ptah-Tatenen were brought before Atum, and he told them: Judge between the two youths and stop them from being engaged so in quarreling every day. Thereupon/ Banebdjede, the great living god, answered what he had said: Do not have us exercise (our) authority ignorantly. Let a letter be sent to Neith the Great, the God's Mother. As for what she will say, we shall do it.

The Ennead said to Banebdjede, the great living god: It is (already) a first time that they have been adjudged in the "One are the Truths" court. Then the Ennead said to Thoth in the presence of the Universal Lord: Please compose a letter to Neith the Great, the God's Mother, in the name of the Universal Lord, the Bull who resides in Heliopolis. Thoth said: I'll do so, surely; I'll do so, I'll do so. Then he sat down to compose the letter and wrote: The King of Upper and Lower Egypt,/ Re-Atum, beloved of Thoth, the Lord of the Two Lands, the Heliopolitan, the solar disk that illumines the Two Lands with its hue, the Nile mighty in flooding, Re-Harakhti (while Neith the Great, the God's Mother, who illumined the first fee, is alive, in health, and rejuvenated), the living manifestation of the Universal Lord, the Bull in Heliopolis, being the good King of Egypt.

”

“

To wit: (i), your humble servant, spend all night on Osiris's behalf consulting the Two Lands every day while Sobek endures forever. What shall we do for these two individuals who have been in the tribunal for eighty years now, but/ neither of whom can be judged? Please write us what we should do.

Then Neith the Great, the God's Mother, sent a letter to the Ennead, saying: Award the office of Osiris to his son Horus. Don't commit such blatant acts of inequity, which are illegal, or I shall become so furious that the sky will touch the ground. The Universal Lord, the Bull who resides in Heliopolis, ought to be told that Enrich Seth is in his possessions. Give him Anath and Astarte, your two daughters, and/or install Horus in the position of his father, Osiris.

And so, the letter of Neith the Great, the God's mother, reached this Ennead as they were sitting in the "Horus with the projecting Horns" court, and the letter was delivered into Thoth's hand. Thereupon, Thoth read it out in the presence of the Universal Lord and the entire Ennead, and they declared unanimously: This goddess is correct. Then the Universal Lord became furious at Horus and told him: You are despicable in your person, and this office is too much for you, you lad, the flavor of whose mouth is (still) bad.

Onuris became furious to the nth degree, and so did the entire Ennead constituting the Council of the Thirty, I.p.h. Bebon, the god, got right up and/or told Pre-Harakhty: Your shrine is vacant. Pre-Harakhti took offense at the insult that was said to him and lay down on his back, very much saddened. And so, the Ennead went outside and let out a loud cry before the face of Becton, the god. They told him: Get out; this offense that you have committed is exceedingly great. And they departed to their huts. And so, the great god spent a day/ lying on his back in his pavilion, very much saddened and alone by himself.

After a considerable while, Hathor, Lady of the Southern Sycamore, came and stood before her father, the Universal Lord, and she exposed her vagina before his very eyes. Thereupon, the great god laughed at her. Then he got right up and sat down with the Great Ennead. He said to Horus and Seth: Speak concerning yourselves. Seth, great in virility, the son of Nut, said: As for me, I am Seth, greatest in virility among <the> Ennead, for I slay the/ opponent of Pre daily while I am at the prow of the Bark of the Millions, whereas not any (other) god is able to do it. I should receive the office of Osiris. Then they said: Seth, the son of Nut, is correct. Onuris and Thoth let out a loud cry, saying: Is it while a bodily son is still living that the office is to be awarded to a maternal uncle? Then said Banebdjede, the living great god: Is it while Seth, his elder brother, is still living that the office is to be awarded to the (mere) lad?

The Ennead let out a loud cry before the face of the Universal Lord and said to him: What is the meaning of the words that you have said which are unCit to be heard? Said Horus, son of isis: It is no good. This is cheating me in the presence of/ the Ennead and depriving me of the office of my father, Osiris. Thereupon Isis became furious at the Ennead and took an oath by (the) god in the presence of the Ennead as follows: By my mother Neith, the goddess, and by Ptah-Tatenen, with lofty plumes, who curbs the horns of gods, these matters should be submitted before Atum, the great prince who is in Heliopolis, and also (before) Khepri, who resides in his bark. And the Ennead said to her: Don't become angry. The rights will be given to the one who is in the right. All that you have said will be done.

Seth, the son / of Nut, became furious at the Ennead when they had said these words to Isis the Great, the God's Mother, So Seth said to them: I shall take my scepter of 4,500 nemset- weight and kill one of

”

“

you a day. And then Seth took an oath by the Universal Lord, saying: I shall not go to law in the tribunal while Isis is (still) in it. Said Pre-Harakhty to them: You shall ferry across to the Island in the Middle and decide between them there and tell Nemty, the ferryman, not to ferry / any woman across resembling Isis. And so the Ennead ferried across to the Island in the Middle and sat down and ate bread.

Then Isis came and approached Nemty, the ferryman, as he was sitting near his boat, after she had transformed herself into an old woman who walked with a hobble and (wore) a small golden signet ring on her hand. She said to him: lt is in order that you might ferry <me> across to the Island in the Middle that I come to you, because it is for the young lad that I have come carrying this bowlful of porridge, I since he has been tending some cattle on the Island in the Middle for five days now and is hungry. He said to her: I have been told not to ferry any woman across. But she said to him: It is with reference to Isis that you have been told this which you have (just) mentioned. He said to her: What will you give me in order that you may be ferried across to the Island in the Middle? Said Isis to him: I will give you this cake. He said to her: What good is it to me, your cake? Is it in exchange for your cake that I shout ferry you across to the Island in the Middle when I have been told not to ferry any woman across?/ Then she said to him: I will give you the golden signet-ring which is on <my> hand. And he said to her: Hand over the golden signet-ring. And she gave it to him. Then he ferried her across to the Island in the Middle.

Now, as she was walking under the trees, she looked at the Ennead, sitting and eating bread in the presence of the Universal Lord in his pavilion. Seth looked and saw her when she had come closer from afar. Then she conjured by means of her magic, transforming herself/ into a maiden whose body was beautiful and whose like did not exist in the entire land. Thereupon, he desired her most lecherously. Seth got right up from sitting and eating bread with the Great Ennead and proceeded to overtake her, no one having seen her except himself. Then he stood behind a sycamore tree and called to her. He said to her: I am here with you, beautiful maiden.

And she said to him: Reflect, my great lord. As for me, I was a wife (ling) with a cattleman to whom I bore an on. My husband died, and the lad started tending his father's cattle. But then a stranger came and settled in my stable. He said thus in speaking to my son, "I shall beat you and confiscate your father's cattle and evict you,' said he in speaking to him. Now, it is my desire to have you afford him protection. Thereupon Seth said to her: ls is while the son of the male is still living that the cattle are to be given to the stranger?

And so, Isis transformed herself into a kite and Clew up and perched on top of an acacia tree. She called to Seth and said to him: Be ashamed of yourself. It is your own mouth that has said it. It is your own cleverness/ that has judged you. What comeback do you have now? And so he became ashamed and went to where Pre-Harakhti was, (still) ashamed. Then Pre-Harakhti said to him: What’s bothering you still? Said Seth to him: That wicked woman has come to me again. She has tricked me again, having transformed herself into a beautiful maiden before my eyes. She said to me, "As for me, (was a wife (living) with a cattleman. He died, and I bore him a son who is tending to some of his father/s cattle. A stranger took lodging in my stable with my son, and I had his meals. Now, after many days following this, the visitor then said to my son, 'l shall beat you and confiscate your father's cattle, and they will become mine,' he said in speaking to my son." So, she said to me.

Then Pre-Harakhti said to him: And what did you say to her? And Seth told him: I said to her, "it is while

”

“

the son of the male is still living that the cattle are to be given to the stranger? Sol said/ to her. "This visitor's face should be smitten with a rod, and he should be evicted, and your son put in his father's position." So I said to her. Thereupon Pre-Harakhti said to him: Now look here, it is you yourself that has judged your own self. What comeback do you have now? So Seth said to him: Have Nemty, the ferryman, brought and severe punishment inflicted upon him, saying, "Why did you let her be ferried across?" So it shall be said to him. Then Nemty, the ferryman, was brought before the Ennead, and the forepart of his feet removed. So / Nemty abjured gold even to this day in the presence of the Great Ennead, saying: Gold shall be because of me an abomination unto my city. Then, the Ennead ferried across to the western tract and sat down on the mountain.

Now <afterward> at evening time Pre-Harakhti and Atum, Lord of the Two Lands, the Heliopolian wrote to the Ennead, saying What are you doing still sitting here? As for the two youths, you will be having them finish our their lifetime in the tribunal! When my letter reaches you, you shall place the White Crown upon the head of Horus, son of Isis, and appoint him to the position of his father I Osiris.

Thereupon Seth became terribly furious. And so the Ennead said to Seth: Why have you become so furious? Isn't it in accordance with what A tum, Lord of the Two Lands, the Heliopolitan, and Pre-Harakhti have said that (things) should be carried out?
Then the White Crown was set upon the head of Horus, so of Isis. Seth, being very angry, let out a loud shriek before the face of this Ennead, saying: Is it while I am still living as his elder brother that the office is to be awarded to my younger brother? Then he took an oath as follows" The White Crown shall be removed from the head of Horus, son of Isis, and he shall be thrown into the water in order that I may contend with him or the office of Ruler. Pre- Harakhti acquiesced.

Thereupon Seth said to Horus: Come, let's both transform <ourselves> into hippopotamuses and submerge in/ the deep waters in the midst of the sea. Now as for the one who shall emerge within the span of three whole months, the office should not be awarded him. Then they both submerged. And so Isis sat down and wept, saying: Seth has killed Horus, my son. Then she fetched a skein of yarn. She fashioned a line, fetched a deben-weight's (worth) of copper, cast it in (the form of) a harpoon, tied the line to it, and hurled it into the water at the spot where Horus and Seth had submerged./ But then the copper (barb) bit into the person of her son Horus. So Horus let out a loud shriek, saying: Help me, mother Isis, my mother. Appeal to your copper

(barb) to let go of me. I am Horus, son of Isis. thereupon Isis let out a loud shriek and told <her> copper (barb): Let go of him. See, it is my son Horus. He is my child. So her copper (barb) let go of him.
Then she again hurled it back into the water, and it bit into the person of Seth. So Seth let out a loud shriek, saying: What have I done against you, my sister Isis? / Appeal to your copper (barb) to let go of me. I am your maternal bother, Isis. Then she felt exceedingly compassionate toward him. Thereupon Seth called to her, saying: Do you prefer the stranger to <your> maternal brother Seth? So Isis appealed to her copper (barb), saying: Let go fo him. See, it is Isis's maternal brother whom you have bitten into. Then the copper (barb) let go of him.

Horus, son of Isis, became furious at his mother Isis and went out with his face as fierce as an Upper Egyptian panther's, having his cleaver of 16 deben-weight in his hand. he removed the head of his mother Isis, put it in his arms, and ascended the mountain. Then Isis/ transformed herself into a statue of Clint

”

“

which had no head. Said Pre-Harakhti to Thoth: What is that which has arrived having no head? So Thoth told Pre-Harakhti: My good lord, that is Isis the Great, the God's Mother, after Horus, her son, removed her head. Thereupon / Pre-Harakhti let out a loud cry and said to the Ennead: Let us go and inflict severe punishment upon him. Then the Ennead ascended those mountains in order to search for Horus, son of lsis.

Now, as for Horus, he was lying under a shenusha tree in the land of the oasis. Seth found him, seized hold of him, threw him down upon his back on the mountain, removed his two eyes from their sockets, and buried them on the mountain so as to illumine the earth. The two balls of his

eyes became two bulbs, which grew into lotuses. Seth came away and told Pre-Harakhti falsely: I did not find Horus—although he had found him.

Then Hathor, Mistress of the Southern Sycamore, set out, and she found Horus lying weeping in the desert. She captured a gazelle and milked it. She said to Horus: Open your eye(s) so that I may put this milk in them. Then he opened his eye(s), and she put the milk in them, putting some in the right and some in the left. She told him: Open your eye(s). And he opened his eye(s). <She> looked at them and found that they were healed.

She/ set out to tell Per-Harakhti: (I) found Horus after Seth had deprived him of his eye(s), but I have restored him back (to health). See, he has returned. Said to the Ennead: Let Horus and Seth be summoned in order that they may be judged. Then, they were brought before the Ennead. Said the Universal Lord before the Great Ennead to Horus and Seth: Go and obey what I tell you. You should eat and/ drink so that we may have (some) peace. Stop quarreling so every day on end.

Then Seth told Horus, Come, let's have a holiday in my house. Horus told him: "I'll do so, surely, I'll do so, I'll do so.

Now afterward, (at) evening time, bed was prepared for them, and they both lay down. But during the night, Seth caused his phallus to become stiff and inserted it between Horus's thighs. Then Horus placed his hands between his thighs and received Seth's semen. Horus/ went to tell his mother, Isis: help me, Isis, my mother, come and see what Seth has done to me. And he opened his hand(s) and let her see Seth's semen. She let out a loud shriek, seized the copper (knife), and cut off his hand(s) that were equivalent. Then she fetched some fragrant ointment and applied it to Horus's phallus. She caused it to become stiff and inserted it into a por, and he caused his semen to flow down into it.

Isis at morning time went carrying the semen of Horus to the garden of Seth and said to Seth's gardener: What sort of vegetable/ is it that Seth eats here in your company? So the gardener told her: he doesn't eat any vegetables here in my company except lettuce. And Isis added the semen of Horus onto it. Seth returned according to his daily habit and ate the lettuce, which he regularly ate. Thereupon, he became pregnant with the semen of Horus. So Seth went to tell Horus: Come, let's go and I may contend with you in the tribunal. Horus told him: I'll do so, surely, I'll do so, I'll do so.

They both went to the tribunal and stood in the presence of the Great Ennead. They were told: Speak concerning yourselves. Said Seth: let me be awarded the office of Ruler, l.p.h., for as to Horus, the one

”

“

who is standing (trial), I have performed the labor of a male against him. The Ennead let out a loud cry. They spewed and spat at Horus's face. Horus laughed at them. Horus then took/ an oath by god as follows: All that Seth has said is false. Let Seth's semen be summoned so that we may see from where it answers, and my own be summoned so that we may see from where it answers.

Then Thoth, lord of script and scribe of truth for the Ennead, put his hand on Horus's shoulder and said: Come out, your semen of Seth. And it answered him from the water in the interior of the marsh. Thoth put his hand on Seth's shoulder and said: Come out, your semen of Horus. Then it said to him: Where shall I come from? Thoth said to it: Come/ out from his ear. Thereupon, it said to him: is it from his ear that I should issue forth, seeing that I am divine seed? Then Thoth said to it: Come out from the top of his head. And it emerged as a golden solar disk upon Seth's head. Seth became exceedingly furious and extended his hand(s) to seize the golden solar disk. Thoth took it away/ from him and placed it as a crown upon his (own) head. Then the Ennead said: Horus is right, and Seth is wrong.

Seth became exceedingly furious and let out a loud shriek when they said: Horus is right, and Seth is wrong. And so, Seth took a great oath by (the) god as follows: he shall not be awarded the office until he has been dismissed outside with me, and we build for ourselves some stone ships and race each other. Now, as for the one who shall prevail over his rival, / he is to be awarded the office of Ruler, I.p.h. Then Horus built for himself a boat of pine plastered it over with gypsum, and launched it into the water at evening time without anybody who was in the entire land having observed it. Seth saw Horus's boat and thought it was of stone. And he went to the mountain, cut off a mountain top, and built for himself a boat of stone of 138 cubits. They embarked upon their ships in the presence of the Ennead. Then Seth's boat sank in the water. So Seth transformed himself into a hippopotamus/ and scuttled Horus's boat. Horus took his copper (harpoon) and hurled it at the person of Seth. Then the Ennead told him: Don't hurl it at him.

He gathered the harpoons, put them in his boat, and sailed downstream to Sais in order to tell Neith the Great, the God's Mother: Let judgement be passed on me and Seth, seeing that it is eighty years now that we have been in the tribunal and they have been unable to pass judgement on us, nor has he yet been vindicated against me, but it is a thousand times now that 1 have been in the right against him every day although he doesn't regard anything that the Ennead has said. 1 have contended with him in the "The Path of the Truths" court, and I have been vindicated against him. I have contended with him in the "Horus with the Projecting Horns" court, and (l) have been vindicated against him. I have contended with him in the "Field of Rushes" court, and I have been vindicated against him. I have contended with him in the "Pool of the Field" court, and I have been vindicated against him. And the Ennead said to Shu, son of Re: Horus, son of Isis, is correct in all that he has said./ Statement which Thoth made to the Universal Lord: Have a letter sent to Osiris so that he may judge between the two youths. Then said Shu, son of Re: What Thoth has told the Ennead is correct a million times. Said the Universal Lord to Thoth: Sit down and compose a letter to Osiris that we may learn what he has to say.

Thoth sat down to Cill out a letter to Osiris with the words: Bull, the lion who hunts for himself; the Two Ladies, protecting the gods and subduing the Two Lands; Horus of God, who invented mankind in the primeval time, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Bull in the midst of Heliopolis, 1.p.h.; son of Ptah, (most) glorious one of the Two Banks, appearing as father of the Ennead while he eats of gold and glaze, the possessor of sanctity, l.p.h. Please write us what we should do for Horus and Seth so that we do not

”

“

exercise (our) authority ignorantly.

Now afterward, following this, the/ letter reached the King, son of Re, Great in Bounty and Master of Sustenance. he let out a loud cry after the letter had <been> read out in his presence. Then he answered it very quickly (writing) to the place where the Universal Lord was together with the Ennead, saying: Why should my son Horus be cheated when it was I that made you mighty? It was I (alone) who could create barley and emmer in order to sustain the gods as well as the cattle following the gods, whereas not any god or any goddess found himself (competent enough) to do it? So/ Osiris's letter reached the place where Pre-Harakhti was, sitting together with the Ennead on the White Mound in Xois. it was read out in his and the Ennead's presence, and Pre-Harakhti said: Please answer for me the letter very quickly to Osiris and tell him in the letter, "If you had not come into being and if you had not been born, barley and emmer would exist anyway.

"The letter of the Universal Lord reached Osiris, and it was read out in his presence. Then he again wrote to Pre-Harakhti as follows: It is exceedingly good, all that which you have done, O you who invented the Ennead as an accomplishment, although justice was allowed to sink down within the netherworld. please look at the situation also on your part. As for/ the land in which I am, it is filled with savage-faced messengers who do not fear any god or <any> goddess. I have but to let them go forth, and they will fetch the heart of whoever commits misdeeds and they will be here with me. Indeed, what is the meaning of my happening to be here resting in the west

while you are all outside? Who among you is there that is mightier than I? But see, you have invented injustice as an accomplishment. When Ptah the Great, South of his Wall, Lord of Ankh-tawi, created the sky, isn't it so that he told the stars that are in it, "It is in the west where King Osiris is that you shall set every night"? (And he told me), "Now after (the manner of) gods, so patricians and commoners also shall go to rest in the place where you are." So he said to me.

Now afterward, following this, Osiris's letter reached the place where the Universal Lord was together with the Ennead. Thoth received the letter and read it out in the presence of Pre-Harakhti / and the Ennead. They said: The Great in Bounty and Master of Sustenance, 1.p.h., is doubly correct in all that he has said. Then Seth said: let us be taken to the Island in the

Middle so that (I)may contend with him. he went to the Island in the Middle, and Horus was vindicated against him. Then Atum, Lord of the Two Lands, the Heliopolitan, sent to Isis, saying: Bring Seth restrained with manacles. Isis brought Seth restrained with manacles, as a prisoner. Said Atum to him: Why do you not allow yourselves to be judged but (instead) usurp for yourself the office of Horus? Said Seth to him: On the contrary, my good lord. let Horus, son of Isis, be summoned and be awarded the office of/ his father Osiris.

Horus, son of]sis, was brought, and the White Crown was set upon his head, and he was installed in the position of his father Osiris. he was told: you are a good King of Egypt. You are the good lord, I.p.h., of every land unto all eternity. Thereupon, Isis let out a loud shriek on behalf of her son Horus, saying: You are the good king. My heart is in joy. You have illumined Earth with your complexion.

Then Ptah the Great, South of his Wall, Lord of Ankh-tawi, said: What shall be done for Seth? For see,

”

“

Horus was installed in the position of his father, Osiris. Said Pre-Harakhti: Let Seth, son of Nut, be delivered to me so that he may dwell with me, being in my company as a son, and he shall thunder in the sky and be feared.

Someone/ went to tell Pre-Harakhti: Horus, son of Isis, has arisen as Ruler, l.p.h. Thereupon Pre-Harakhti rejoiced exceedingly and said to the Ennead: You shall jubilate from one land to the next for Horus, son of Isis! Said Isis: Horus has arisen as Ruler, l.p.h. The Ennead is in festivity, and heaven is in joy. They donned wreaths when they saw Horus, son of lsis, arisen as great Ruler, I.p.h. of Egypt. As for the Ennead, their hearts were satisfied, and the entire land was in exultation when they saw Horus, son of Isis, assigned the office of his father Osiris, lord of Busiris. Thus, it concludes successfully in Thebes, the place of Truth.

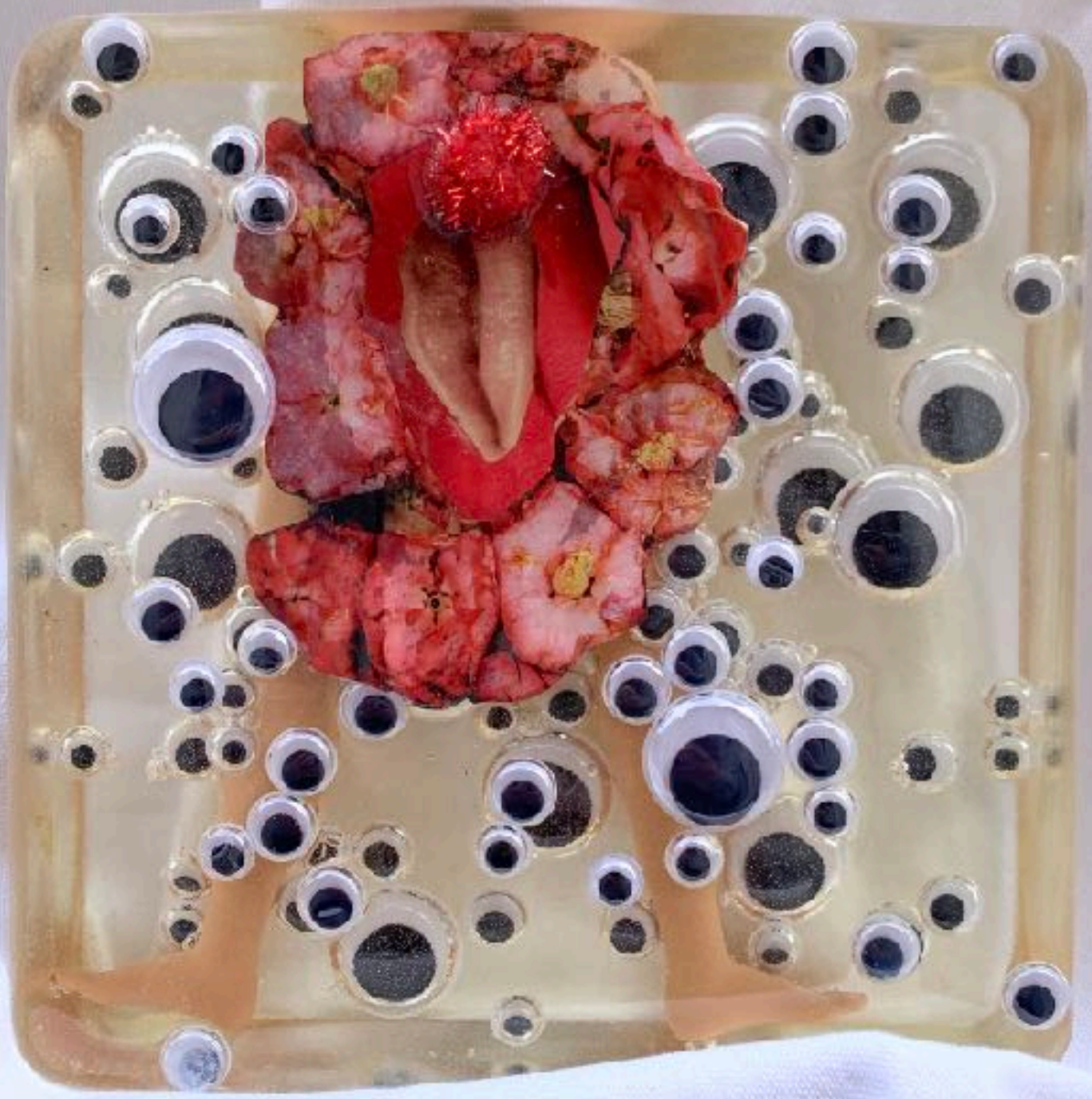
”

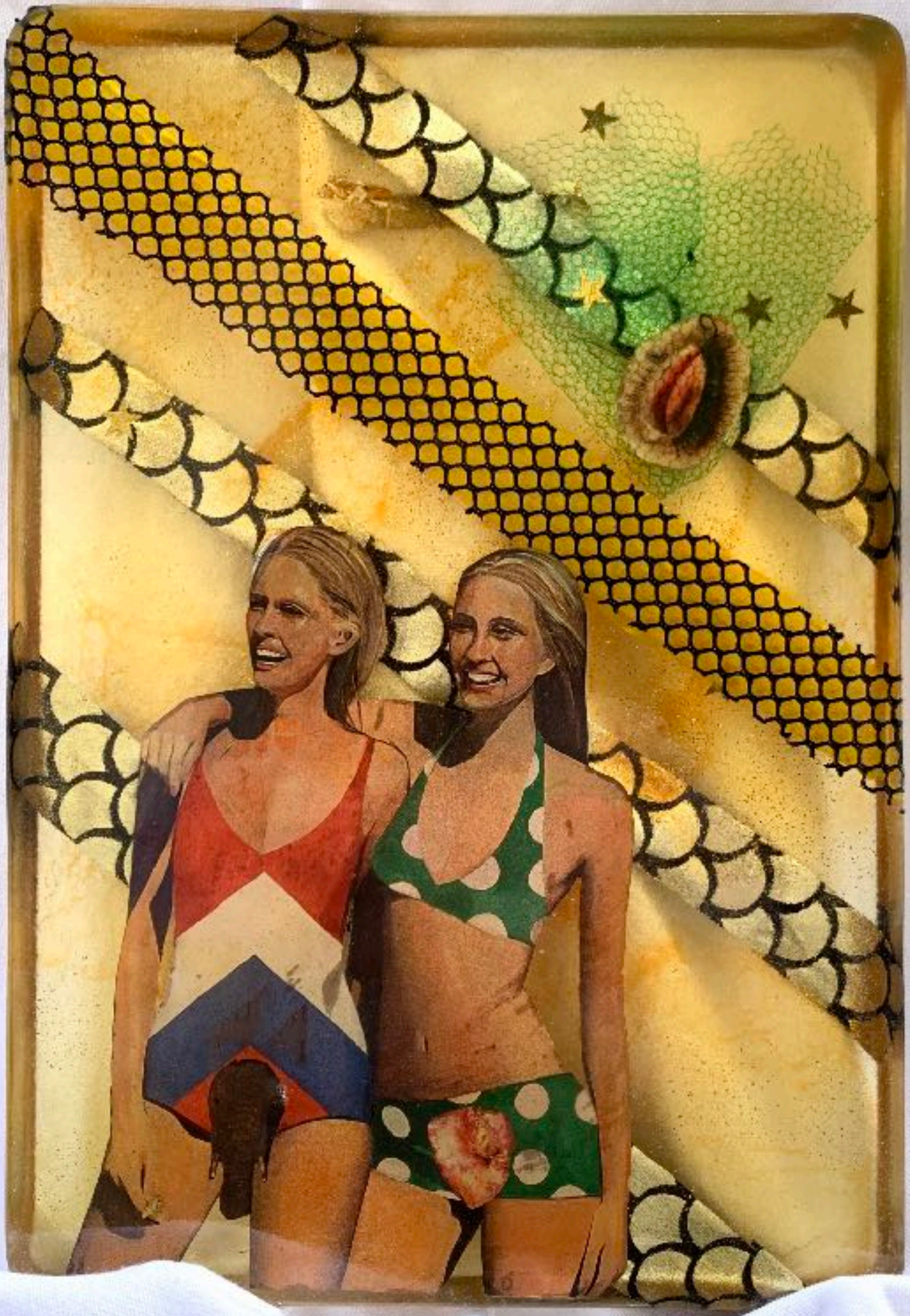
APPENDIX C

APÉNDICE C

PRIVATE VIEWS

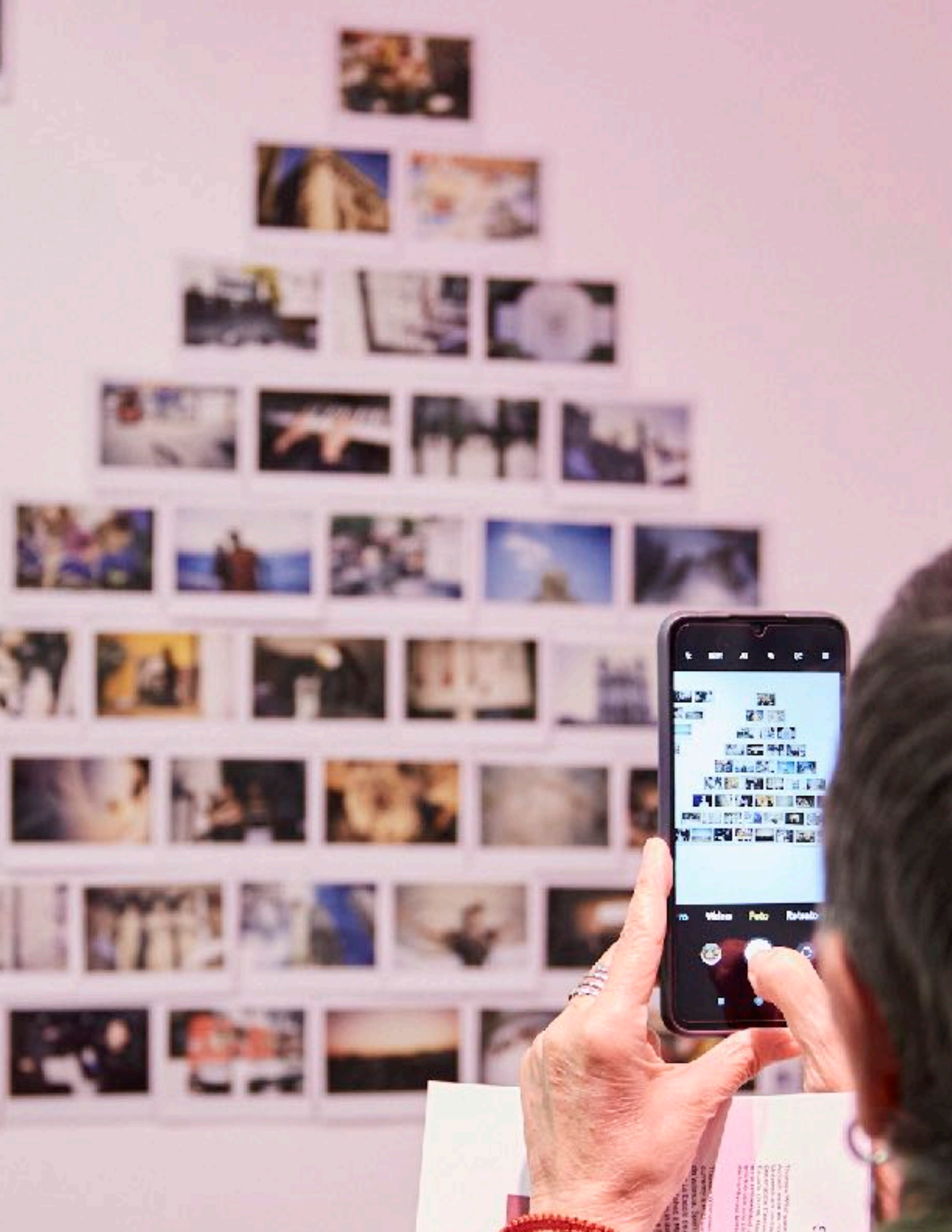
VISTAS PRIVADAS





SEEKING SELF

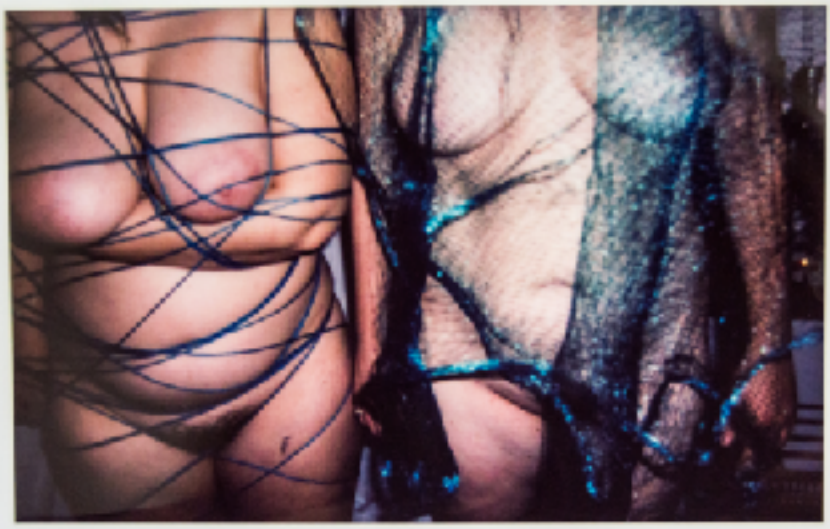
BUSCANDO UNO MISMO



#BornUnderTheBombs

قف
STOP

UN INVOLVED in PEACE
WAITS



RESTAURANT
港式點心

SMART FAGS

HA LLEGADO
EL FIN DEL
PATRIARCADO

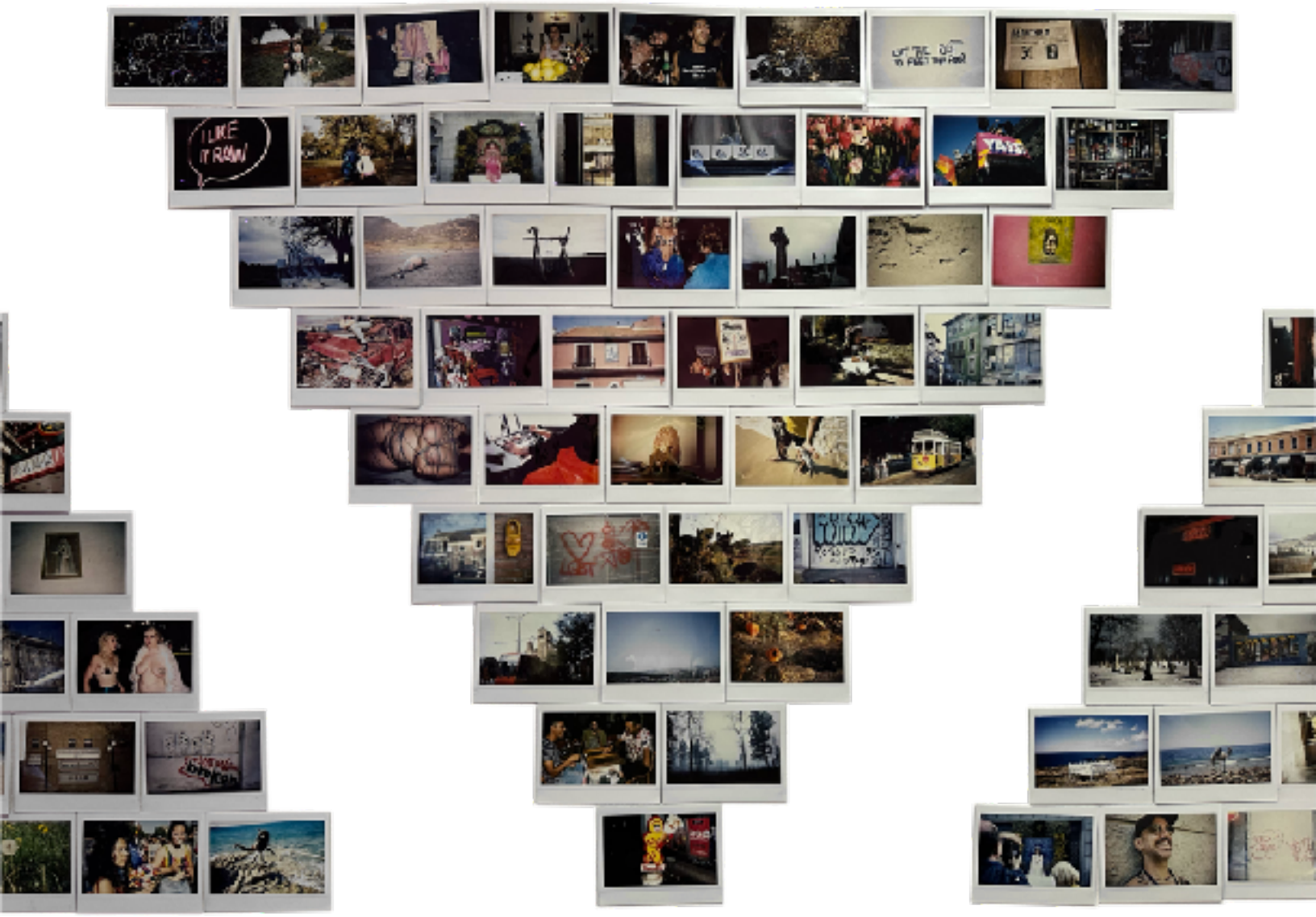
Cult Movie Quote Book
The Anti-Federalist Papers

TRUMP

LOVE
M E

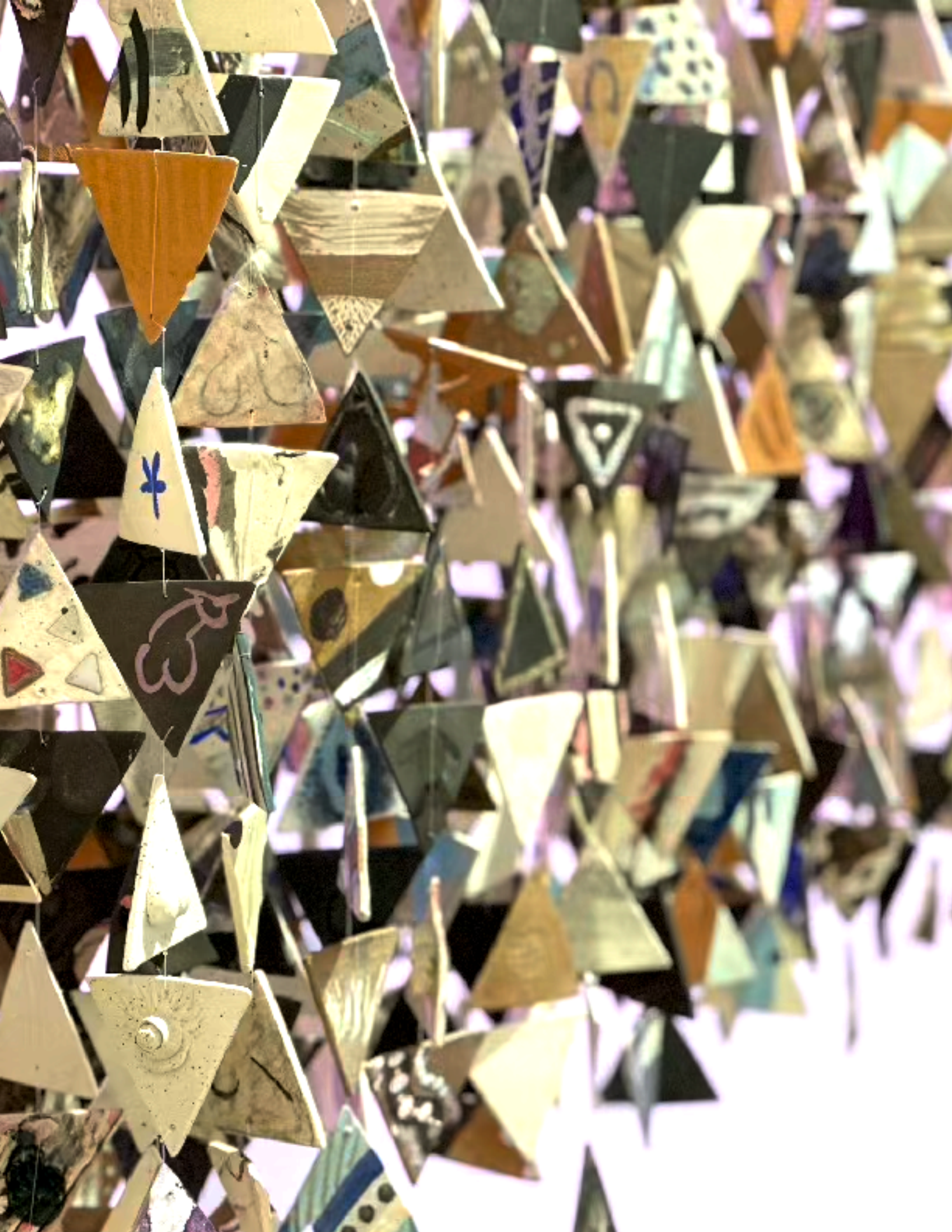
STOP

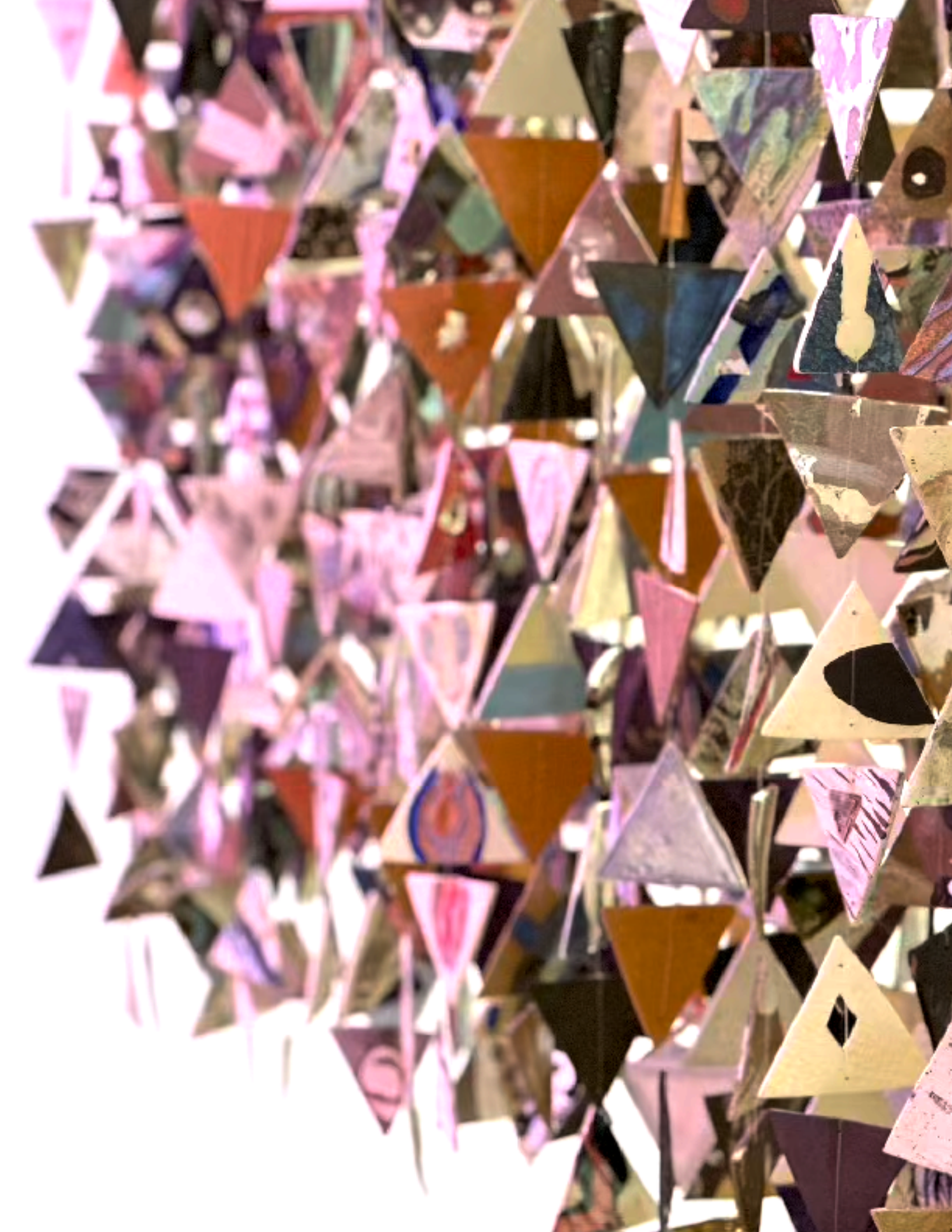
XXX
LIQUOR

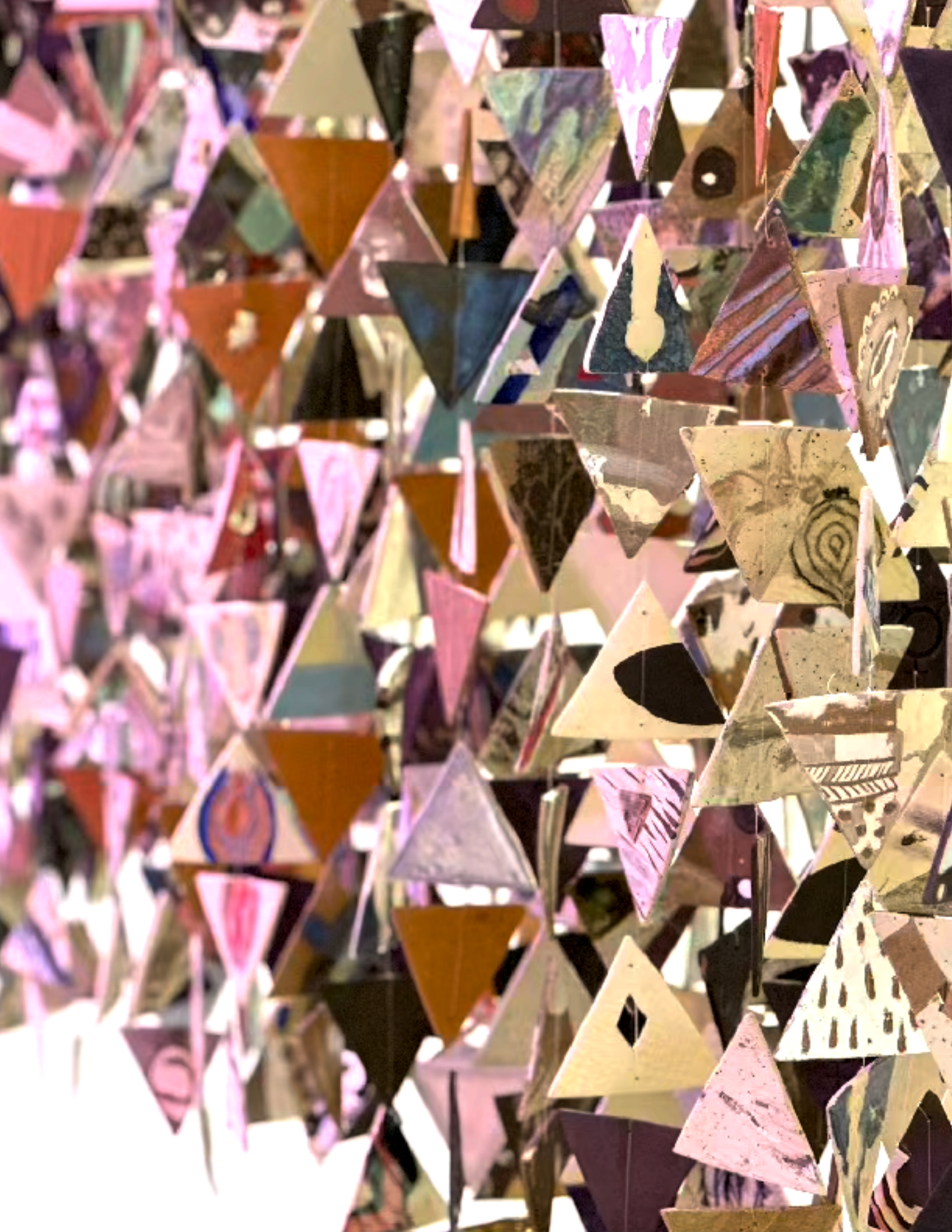

I LIKE IT RAW!

THE GENDER VEIL

EL VELO DE GÉNERO







AL GHORFA

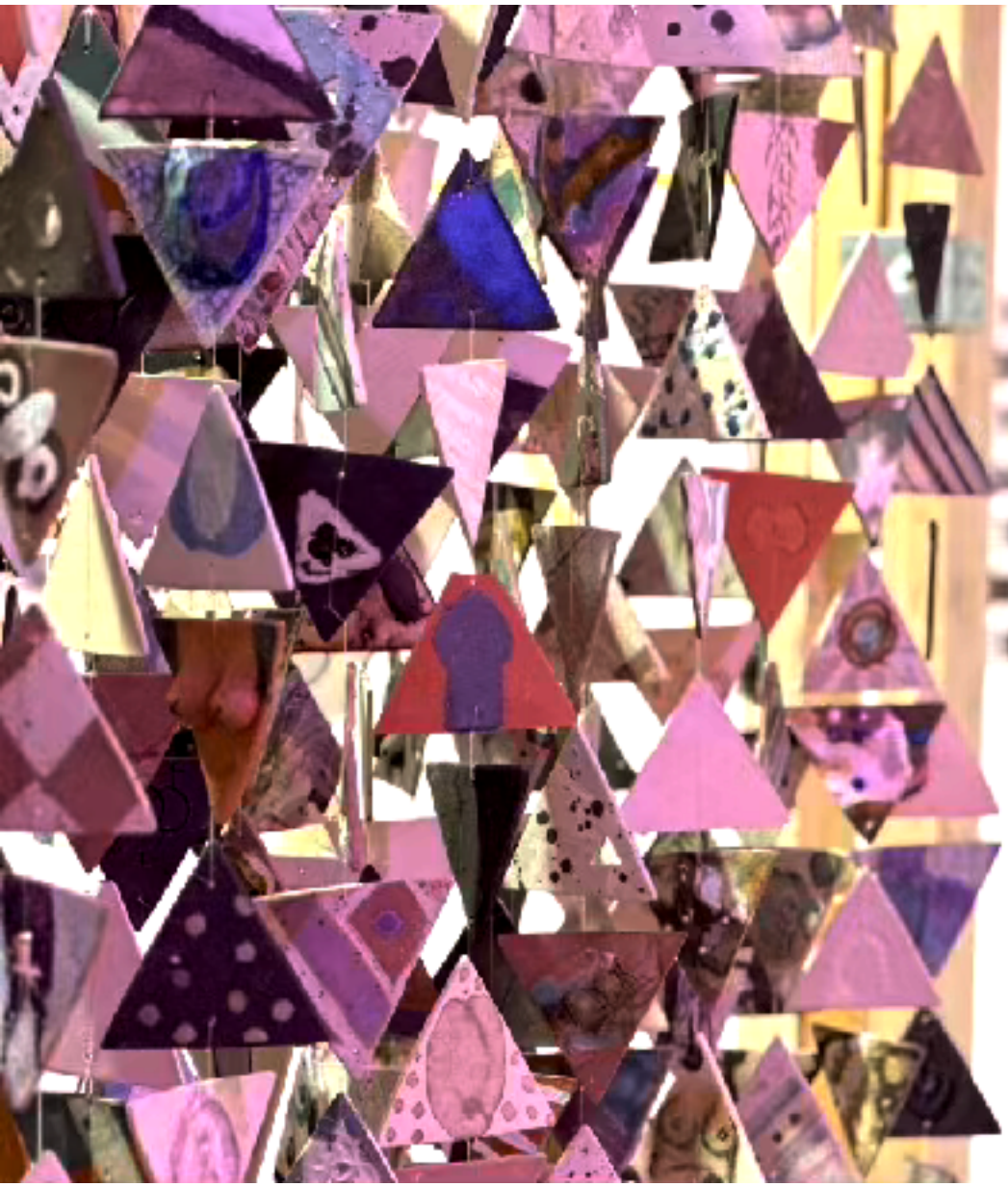
THE CHAMBER

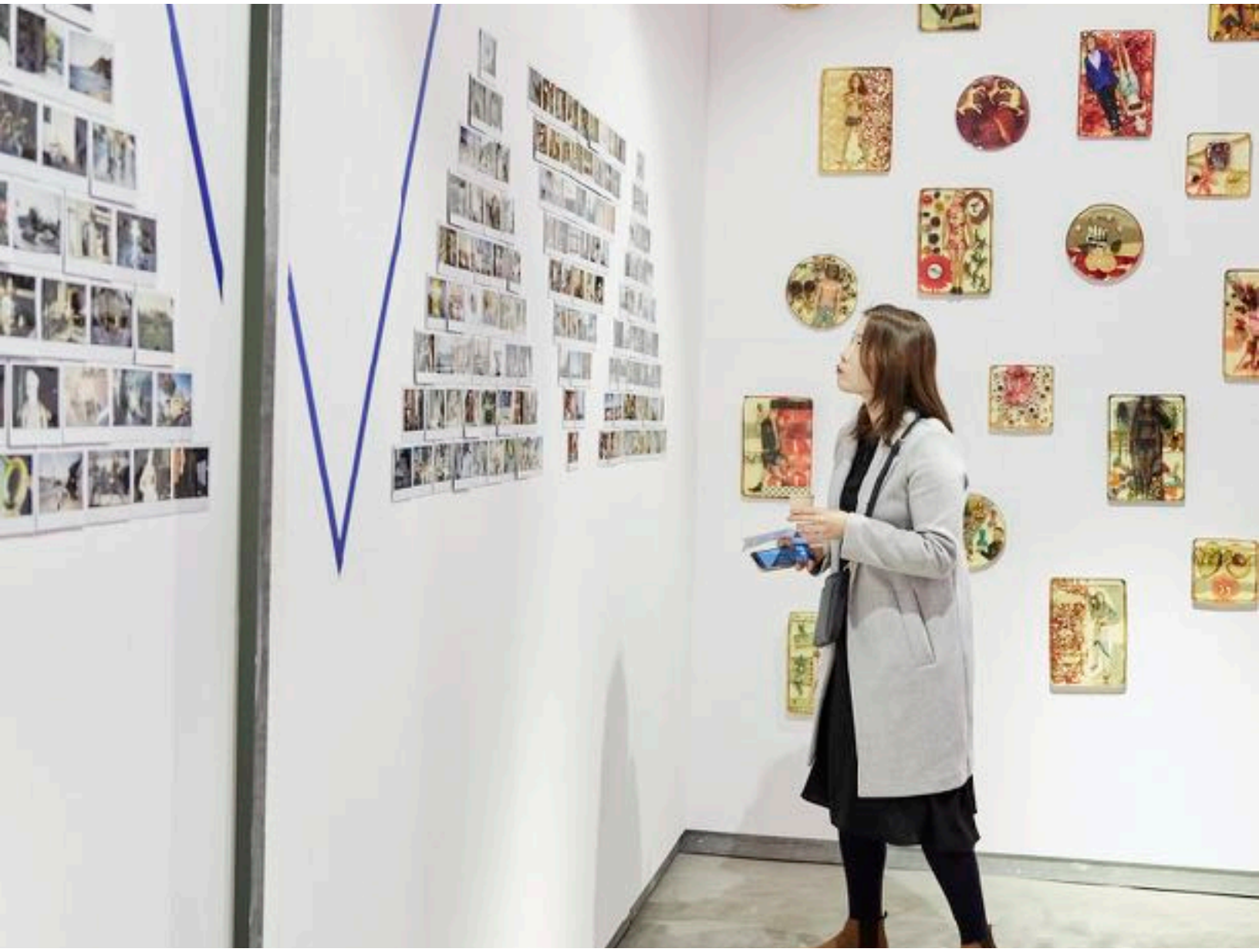
you, me, and everything in between

EL VELO DE GÉNERO

LA CÁMARA

tú, yo y todo lo demás





CONTACT

CONTACTO

Theresa Wilshusen

twilshusen90@gmail.com