CASABLANCA 1993: NEGOTIATING GENDER AND NATION IN PERFORMATIVE SPACE

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Abstract

In 1593 a new Moroccan monarch inaugurated a compelling national performance of the Prophet's Birthday that created a distinctive version of person and political community, one that survived not just in the national memory but as a performative repertoire from which Moroccans continually drew. It elaborated particular images of male and female, put forward a compelling poetics and politics of their relationship, and offered a means of their popular integration through the emblematic focus on the white robed king. Popularly renewed—in local and national performances—in the 400 years that followed, the performance succeeded in annually diffusing its images throughout the land through the kinds of localizing processes Foucault has highlighted as crucial for effective political regimes. The performance mobilized sensual persuasion, mimesis, gender polarization, and emblematic configuration to draw the population into it. In 1993, the reigning king, confronted with new economic problems and political assault tried to reconfigure the performance and the nation and to resecure his place in it by altering the performance's color, cloth, and gender arrangements.

On the evening of August 30th, 1993, Hassan II, King of Morocco, gathered representatives of the nation around him and held so spectacular a celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's Birthday in so dazzling a place that one must ask, what is at stake here? What is being negotiated through this elaborate performance in this newly built, billion-dollar mosque in Casablanca?

In what follows, I examine two exemplary moments of the Moroccan nation: a founding performance of the Prophet's Birthday in 1593 when, in the face of internal economic collapse and external political assault, Morocco's political ruler effectively reconfigured Morocco's vision and experience of nation in a form that proved flexible and resilient in the 400 years that followed, a particular version of the Prophet's Birthday. The version proved popularly compelling and was replicated in performances held each year throughout the land, renewing in local lives the image of person and rule that the founding performance had elaborated. I then turn to a reconstitutive moment in 1993 when the national ruler tried to draw upon the potency of the 400 year old celebration both to renew it and to innovate from it, dramatically altering some of its key elements, in trying to

address what he perceived as the greatest threats to the nation and to resecure his place in it.[1]

The 1593 and the 1993 variations of Prophet's Birthday exemplify ways in which performances can serve as occasions for configuring persons as well as nations. As Butler and Foucault, from different yet converging standpoints, have shown, in participating in collective performances, people do not simply "act out" and occupy taken-for-granted representations (e.g. Butler 1990:128-149; Foucault 1980:55-62, 118-133). Rather, in and through their own bodies, people performatively renew those representations, making them their own, revitalizing the collective images and experiences for themselves and for others. In effective popular performance, individual agency and collective archetypes intertwine. Performances can serve as occasions for embodied renewal of systems of domination as well as arenas for the contestation of them from within.

MOROCCO'S EMBLEMATIC CONSTRUCTION OF NATION

Benedict Anderson depicts national unity as a post 1700s Eurocentered phenomenon which he associates with standardized print culture. For Anderson, nationalism emerges "in common reading and speaking in common territories," through which "imagined communities" of "nation" are born, communities that are dispersed, fluid, non-substantive, and yet unequivocally existing (1991).

In post 1500s Morocco, the nation—equally dispersed, fluid, non-substantive, and yet unequivocally existing—has been achieved otherwise. Since the performative innovation of 1593, Morocco's king, its white robed ruler, has been renewed as the emblem of the nation, the icon upon which the population gazes and constructs and experiences its commonality, even when the gazing is made in dissent. This dazzling center has been a formidable nationalist construction, effective in mobilizing the technologies of power that Foucault has emphasized as crucial to effective regimes: those which are able to embed models of authority within the intimate lives of everyday people so that exterior power and interior passion in some arenas converge. Popular performances have been micromechanisms of power that have dispersed the regime's legitimacy within local bodies and local spaces so that many within the population have been actively drawn to the paradigms of power, not singularly nor seamlessly, but evocatively and compellingly. As Foucault explains:

> If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a

productive network which runs through the whole social body (1980:119).

Yet, Foucault like Anderson insists these technologies of power are distinctive to post 1700s European forms of nationalism. He does not allow that they could operate in other places in earlier times. Foucault states that "from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onwards," there was in Europe "a veritable technological take-off in the productivity of power...a new 'economy' of power...new techniques much more efficient and much less wasteful"(1980:119). He remarks, "It's the body of society which becomes the new principle in the nineteenth century," contrasting this with earlier monarchical forms where, he argues, the king's body was singularly fundamental (1980:55).

When we look at the nationalist constructions of post 1593 Morocco, the distinctions are not so clear. Morocco's political order was enormously effective in mobilizing productive technologies of the body. Through performative techniques, including mimesis (imitative modeling), the king's body became "every man's" body, the body of society through which a sense and experience of the imagined nation was born. When compared with the previous century, the 1593 emblematic and performative articulation of Morocco represented, to use Foucault's words, "a veritable technological take-off in the productivity of power," a new form that was "less wasteful," "more efficient"(1980:119). It was not the same as the post 1700s European forms that Foucault and Benedict describe (and there was more variation in Europe than Foucault and Benedict allow).[2] Morocco's nationalist construction is distinctive. It was a product of its own time, culture, and place, but it was not categorically different in the kinds of processes it elaborated nor in the unificatory mechanisms it mobilized.

1593 PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY PERFORMANCE

When the 1500s opened, Morocco had been in crisis for a hundred and fifty years, a result of the primary and secondary repercussions of the bubonic plague that hit Morocco in the 1350s, devastating its highly developed economy built on sugar production for the global economy and international exchange in silver and gold. Effective central government collapsed by the 1370s. Local and regional organizations took over political tasks. The Spanish and Portuguese began attacking and occupying Morocco's ports, threatening Morocco as a distinctive Muslim political entity (Combs-Schilling 1989: 115-127).

In their daily lives, Moroccans continued to uphold many of the cultural foundations that had been built in the previous centuries of strong central rule (1060 to 1350), that is, respect for the Prophet Muhammad, honor for Arabic the language of God, a belief in the power of blood

descent, and the expectation that there should be an overarching ruler of Morocco, a "Prince of the Faithful" who would shepherd the political community of the faithful and insure that they prospered.[3]

In the 1500s a new lineage of holy men/warriors emerged in Morocco's deep south, men who were able to mobilize these cultural foundations by claiming to be the superior blood descendants of Muhammad, men who embodied his stellar characteristics and could lead the Muslim faithful in ousting the intruders and restoring the nation. The new lineage, the Sa`di, was able to barter its popular cultural credit into lines of access to local funds and local militia. Region by region, they reunited the country. In 1550, they entered Fas, the ancient imperial capital, proclaiming a new dynasty and a renewed nation. In 1578 they defeated the Portuguese in a momentous battle, neutralizing the Iberian threat for hundreds of years. Morocco's monarch, the victor of the battle, took his new name from that event and thereafter was called *al-Mansur*, "the Victorious One" (Combs-Schilling 1989:135-156). In celebration, "the Victorious One" inaugurated the building of a monumental palace, *al Badia*, "the Incomparable," and planned a celebration of the Prophet's Birthday to open it.

REPRESENTATIONAL SPACE

In effective popular performances, people create bold experience, persuasive time and place. Popular performances can be crystallized moments of community and self when particular understandings of person and community are individually and collectively renewed by means of people's own bodies and are lent credibility by the physicality of the performative space. As Lefebvre argues, socially constructed space appears to be taken for granted, transparent, simply there (Lefebvre 1991:26-31). Yet it can, like the Prophet's Birthday, be highly orchestrated and intricately designed in order to substantiate certain visions of reality.

> Space appears as luminous, as intelligible, as giving action free rein. What happens in space lends a miraculous quality to thought, which becomes incarnate by means of a *design* (in both senses of the word)....The space thus produced...serves as a tool of thought and of action;...in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence a means of domination, of power; yet...it escapes in part from those who would make use of it. The social and political...forces which engendered this space...seek, but fail, to master it completely. (Lefebvre 1991:26-27).

Performative space is a place negotiation, in this case one where certain images of authority, community, and subjectivity are—in body and space—reconfirmed but also—in body and space—renegotiated. Al-

Mansur's 1593 celebration of the Prophet's Birthday was a dazzling negotiation that established a persuasive performative repertoire of political community that was regenerated by local people for centuries to come. I have described the details of that performance at length elsewhere, much of it drawn from eyewitness accounts (Combs-Schilling 157-174). Here I want simply to note the main icons and action sequences that the 1593 celebration created and the main mechanisms of political differentiation and incorporation that it articulated. The performance dramatized a distinctive understanding and experience of political authority and embedded it within a particular articulation of male and female that provided a means of personal-political integration that was annually renewed until Hassan II's reconstitutive performance of 1993.[4]

AL-MANSUR'S CELEBRATION

When in 1593, the palace was complete, "the Victorious One" sent out a proclamation to all the land inviting local people to come to the palace and join him in celebrating Muhammad's Birthday. From all over Morocco they came gathering in the rose hued adobe city of Marrakish. Al-Mansur began his festival with a great candlelight procession. The candles, cast the size of brides and swathed in colorful bridal brocades, were borne aloft on bridal litters and carried through the crowded streets of Marrakish. The procession wound its way to the king's palace, arousing popular desires for the image of virgins on their way to marriage. Women ululated. Men cheered. When the procession arrived at the palace, it stopped. The king emerged from the palace gates and led the gathered crowd in prayer. The king then bid the men enter into one of the palace's magnificent courtyards for an evening of music, poetry, sweet sounds, fragrant smells, and plays of light. Each was given entry according to his own rank (al-Oufrani 189:237-256).

Although the crowd which gathered in the courtyard was in many ways diverse—in terms of class, status, languages spoken, specific understandings of Islam and specific conceptions of local political authority—in terms of gender it was unified. Only men were given physical entry to the final part of the festivity. United by the sheer physicality of the all-male presence, the men progressively were led—in action, icon, and poetic words— through three specific foci of desire, gaze, and identification. The 1593 performance first focused those gathered on *the image of multicolored and glittering female, the icon of difference.* Second, the performance focused the gathered men on *the image of Muhammad as blazing white light,* the ideal man who illuminates for others the pathway of faith. Third and finally, the performance brought the gaze of the gathered men to bear on the *image and actual physical presence of the white cloaked*

ruler upon whom passion, honor, and desire converged, the mediator of the whole.

The culminating icon was evocative and persuasive (al-Oufrani 1889:241). There sat the king, honored descendant of Muhammad, on a golden throne, the current embodiment of proper authority. Dressed in immaculate white robes, he was bathed in white light. Torches representing the Prophet's illumination flamed behind him while the life sized candles representing virgins melted away in front of him. The white robed king became the focus and the emblem of the nation. Abstract authority was brought close at hand and communicated through multiple senses, through the poetic recitations that occupied much of the evening's festivities, the plays of darkness and light, the branches of fresh myrtle that were passed through the crowds, the fragrance of orange blossoms and rose petals that filled the air, and the food that on that night was eaten. A Turkish diplomat, a frequent guest at the spectaculars of the Ottoman court, attended al-Mansur's performance and was awed; "Never in all the preceding centuries has one seen such comparable profusion...all could imagine that they were in Paradise" (al-Oufrani 1889:240). The cumulative message of the performance was clear: by focusing themselves upon the reigning king, the political community of the faithful would prosper.

Many Moroccans who experienced the spectacular festivity took parts of it back with them to the places where they lived, initiating celebrations there. From the innovative national performance of 1593, the celebration of Prophet's Birthday quickly spread to the rest of the land. Within a few years of al-Mansur's elaboration, the festival had gone from being practiced in only a few scattered places to being practiced by nearly everyone in the country (Shinar 1977). The performance came to be repeated each year on the evening of the eleventh day of the third Muslim month, *Rabi' al-Awwal*, "the First Spring" when Moroccans gathered at the imperial center and at galactic sites throughout the land and renewed the performative repertoire al-Mansur had initiated, vitalizing it in local lives.[5]

FEMALE DIFFERENCE

Al-Mansur's performance established a compelling popular forum for rebuilding the sense of nation in part by elaborating definitions of male and female and weaving erotic desire and intimate longings through them. It dramatized a particular invention of a male-female binary that became the most basic differentiation upon which Morocco's post 1500s hierarchy of political authority was built. This version of the Prophet's Birthday constructs the female as unequivocally different from the male. Dressed and colored as different, she is heightened, valued, and marginalized by

that difference. The rite presents her as the longed-for complement to the orienting men.

We see here the building of gender subordination first through spatial, poetic, and iconic elevation—the female as the multicolored, glittering icon of sensual pleasure, passionate desire—then spatial, poetic, and iconic marginalization as the performance articulates the proper hierarchies of desire, in which the desire of male for female, the culturally adorized binary is important, and should be satisfied, but is less momentous than the desire for the Prophet, the desire for the faith, and the desire for the upholder of the political community of faithful in the present, the reigning king.

Since the 1500s, Moroccan women have been excluded from the central space of collective politics and from key domains of collective sacred life. She is set apart, differentiated, yet desire for her is used as the archetypal metaphor for how difference can be bridged. The clothed and colored male-female binary—conceived to be mediated by the heterosexual longings and the practices of intercourse and marriage—provides the integrative principle for political and sacred community.[6] Faith and political affiliation here are portrayed as the consummation of the male-female binary rather than the negation of desire.[7]

There is considerable irony and contradiction in the collective elaboration of this idiom. Real women are excluded from the most important part of the festival and from crucial political and sacred domains but the "ideal" of the female is passionately evoked and longing for her is performatively articulated as the metaphor for political and sacred connection, the means of rallying and expressing the "higher desires" of loyalty to Muhammad and to the ruler. Thus women are simultaneously excluded from and made the originary source of the political and sacred community. Female exclusion and male dependence on her are performatively combined. This version of the Prophet's Birthday creates a world in which the white light of the Prophet and the white cloak of the ruler overlays the multicolored glittering female, valuing, superseding, and depending on her at the same time.

MALE HIERARCHIES OF SIMILARITY

Whereas women are brought into the space of the festival and the political community through an emphasis on complementary difference from men, men are incorporated into the political community through a stress on likeness, on similarity among them. The 1593 ritual staging of the Prophet's Birthday and its subsequent repetition through much of the land drew on what Walter Benjamin interprets as the mimetic capacity, the "powerful compulsion...to become and behave like something else" (1978:333), what Taussig describes as the "soulful, willful" desire to imi-

tate the other, "the compulsion to become the Other," especially the desire to imitate those in power (1993:xviii). Taussig further suggests that a part of the desire to imitate power comes from a desire to gain control over power, to protect oneself from it. "The mimetic faculty carries out its honest labor, suturing nature to artifice and bringing sensuousness to sense...granting the copy the character and power of the original, the representations the power of the represented" (1993:xviii).

In the Prophet's Birthday, al-Mansur drew together in mimicry the men of the nation. Through common action, common space and collective performance, a fraternity of men mimetically converged onto the Prophet and king and were distinguished from all women.[8]

Dress is the material carrier of culture that, as Buck-Morss states, "presses closest the skin....Clothing is quite literally at the borderline between subject and object, the individual and the cosmos. Its position surely accounts for its emblematic significance throughout history" (1993:97).[9] As the Prophet's Birthday came to be performed in Morocco, the men of the nation have been mimetically brought together into a fraternity of cloak, performance, and gazing. The same white robes that touch their skin, touch the skin of the king, the descendant of Muhammad. Through words and dress, Muhammad is brought to and embodied in the king. Those gathered are brought to and embodied in the king also, making the white cloaked ruler the point of convergence, the mediating link between past and present, between Muhammad and all men, between the habitat of the living and the domain of God, an empowered in-between place to be. Much of the popular potency of the King of Morocco comes from his role as mediating link, overarching connector.

Since 1593, Morocco's rulers have worn these simple white robes on high religious and political occasions. The robes have a white hood that is drawn up over the head and covers part of the face, blurring distinctions between men so that each man becomes "every man," an "every man" formed through gazing and mimicking the king. The king wears no crown, no jewels, nothing to distinguish him from other men on sacred and national occasions. Of all the garbs the king wears, this performative dress most unites him with other men and unites all men with each other. This common visual and tactile experience of the common white cloaks has made for the kind of homosocial bonding of which Anderson speaks as so important to the construction of nation, an image and experience of "every man" as a part of the whole (1991:9-12).[10] The white hooded robes visually obliterate distinctions between men, thus allowing the suggestion of egalitarianism in the building of Morocco's vertical hierarchy. The image is one of the king as the first among equals, like other men, but chosen by God to uphold the rest. The practice is one of dramatic rank and distinction.

How different have been the robes worn by England's monarchs during the same era (the late 1500s to the present). The ceremonial robes of

England's kings and queens distinguish the monarch from all the rest. Imperial authority in England has been built on elaborate visual and material distinctions *not* on imagined convergences. In England, the monarch was the multicolored shimmering one, cloaked in brightly colored brocades that caught the light and shimmered. In England, brocaded garments differentiated the ruler from others and legitimated the monarch's right to the central throne and to central authority while in Morocco the same textile was used to keep Moroccan women away.[11]

The mimetic process cuts a number of ways. By imitating power, by visually and performatively allying oneself with it, men in Morocco can participate in that power, can gain a degree of felt control over that power. Through that same process, the men also make these constructions of power intrinsic to themselves, obfuscating and complicating the boundaries between self and monarch, individual and ruler, for the two intertwine. The process of mimicry, of mimesis, of repetitive likeness, reduces and sometimes obliterates the "alterity," the "outsideness" of domination. Constructions of power reside within the self, making it much more difficult to move away from them, for one's own definition is in part spun through them. Self-definition is not simply wrapped up in imperial definition; self is fabricated in imperial performance from imperial cloth. Perceptions and experiences of self are in part created through the sacred white robes that the monarch wears and the sensate occasions when he wears them. Thus a dependency is born, a bodily identity between subject and monarch which makes the monarchy extremely difficult to move away from. In Morocco, one's definition as a man is in part configured through active engagement with the corporeality of the king. To undercut the monarchy is in part to undercut the self, making for an enormously complicated personal-political process. There is critique. There is collusion and mimicry as well.

POPULAR CELEBRATIONS 1593—1993

From the spectacular 1593 celebration, the Prophets Birthday radiated out throughout the countryside, not as exact copies, but as replicas in variation that played upon common substances, sequences, and themes that were articulated in locally vital and vibrant ways. There is local diversity in the practices: there is commonality as well. In mountains, desert, and imperial cities, the performances tend to begin with a preliminary celebration in the open air (e.g. dancing, horseback riding, candlelight processions) that includes both men and women and pivots on the collective image of the glittering female, the icon of difference, desire, and possible connection.[12] Then the festival tends to move to an enclosed sacred space (e.g. a mosque or the tombs of a saint) for an all male event that

arouses the representational triad the performance creates: the sensual female, the sacred Muhammad, and the orienting king.

This was an effective and durable vision and version of nation that people reproduced in their own lives. The performances—simultaneously personal, political, and sacred events—placed the monarchy at the center of popular experience and consciousness, renewing the monarchy in popularly valued moments and places. The performances proved to be a resilient foundation for overarching political authority and consciousness; they provided the people of the nation with a renewable mechanism for orienting themselves, for experiencing their political and sacred commonality, even when the political administration fragmented, the economy faltered, and the would-be-colonialists repeatedly attacked. Because of their generalized credibility, the productions of the Prophet's Birthday helped re-embed the monarchy in the population's heartfelt longings, sensual desires, and sacred imaginations. The popular performances validated the monarchy and gave the king a means of access to taxes and conscripts, legal arguments, personal potency, popular images of male and female, and Islamic notions of justice and proper authority.

EMBLEMS

Durkheim argues that "in general a collective sentiment can become conscious of itself only by being fixed upon some material object" (Durkheim 1915: 263). Taussig phrases this as, "the image here is an image of the need for images"(1992:125). Both highlight the ways in which graphic icons can focus sentiment, rally reservoirs of individual and collective meaning, and orient it onto common forms (as does the emblem of the Black Madonna for many Poles and Our Lady of Guadalupe for many indigenous peoples of Mexico). Morocco's monarchical emblem—the white robed king—is a richly laden material object that is brought into play in the lives of everyday Moroccans.[13] Through common cloak and gazing, Moroccans have been able to construct and consolidate overarching collective sentiment in the midst of diversity, fluidity, and contest.

Yet the way the emblem works is by a process very different than the one Durkheim envisioned; the Moroccan rituals and the common icon *do not* produce a singular isomorphic collective consciousness. Quite the contrary, the material signifier brings into sensate contact a multiplicity of peoples whose practices, ideas, and images share only "partial connections."[14] The Moroccan population speaks different languages, dresses, sings, dances, holds land, and constructs houses in very different ways. Moroccans physically vary—within families and within the nation—from light skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes to black skin, black hair, and black eyes. They occupy markedly different economic niches; they hold different economic positions (camel herder, large scale industrialist[15]). Moroccans dif-

fer in their constructions of local political authority. (For centuries some people have elected egalitarian local councils that have decided political matters; others have been ruled by authoritarian strong arm men; others have alternated between these forms or combined them in distinctive ways). Moroccans have varied in their local articulations of means of access to the sacred (e.g. mosque activity, book learning, celebrations at the tombs of saints). Morocco's population is diverse, linguistically, organizationally, and economically, but it is linked through the mediation of the national emblem itself. The content of the emblem—the white robed ruler—varies from person to person, from time to time, but its concrete physicality remains the same—the white robes—allowing for the experience of continuity and commonality in the midst of diversity, contest, and change. In dressing as and gazing at the white cloaked king, the population has been able to experience itself as interwoven into a distinct political-cultural entity, a nation.

As Taussig understands and describes Durkheim's views, the emblem itself, the material center, "is not merely a convenient process for clarifying the sentiment society has of itself; it also serves to create this sentiment; it is one of its constituent elements" (Taussig 1992:128). The representation acquires not just the power of the represented, "but the power over it, as well" (Taussig 1992:125). The material signifier comes in some ways to dominate the signified. There are some limits in the degree to which the material signifier (the white robed ruler) can dominate the signified (the nation), some boundaries which cannot be crossed over without risking the monarchy's role as orienting icon. Still, the limits are broad and in Morocco, when something goes wrong, those surrounding the king are blamed more often than is the white robed monarch himself.

As a national emblem, the white robed monarch is a potent signifier that traverses, mobilizes, and accents the multiple referents that it signifies, drawing power from the diverse significations and having power over them as well. The registers of power to which the king has preferential access are many. They include the state apparatus; the system of gender asymmetry; the military; the economy; sensate profusion (fine fragrances, sumptuous feasts, exquisite textiles, passion, and poetry); the power of mysticism, sufism, divine grace, and blood descent from the Prophet Muhammad; the power of Arabic speech; the importance of genealogy; the potency of Islamic law and its undergirding in justice; the success of achievement, of being the one who wins; the power of links to local groups and families, including links through multiple women.[16]

There remains a prominent notion in scholarship that political dominance rests on direct access to dominant narrations and to dominant administrative, military, and economic structures. Even the emphasis on resistance ("slippages, ruptures, disjunctures") often tends to assume an overarching coherence of dominant forms off of which alternatives and resistances are presumed to derive.[17]

Certainly preferential access to dominant structures including dominant narrations is an important component of political authority and the Moroccan king has access to some of these. But the point I am stressing here is that much of the potency of this national consolidation lies in the monarch's emblematic access to the nation's diversity, to its disjunctures and slippages as well as its commonality. The monarch's role as popularly valued bridging emblem gives him access to the outlying, the marginal, and the aberrant as well as the mainstream. As emblem, he is even the mediating link to intimate parts of the self. As emblem, he can traverse the multiple registers of power and mobilize them for his purposes, playing different subsectors of the population off of each other—sometimes mobilizing the subordinated in order to circumscribe the power of the elite, sometimes mobilizing the elite to circumscribe the power of subordinated. Uniting in icon while subdividing in practice is part of how the Moroccan monarchy rules.

I suggest that in Morocco diversity, ruptures, and multiplicity have been a part of dominance itself.[18] The white robes have given him entry into individuals and the community. In post 1500s Moroccan monarchy, I suggest that dominance has not come from ideological coherency or consistency but rather from effective emblematic constancy in the midst of considerable ideational and organizational flux. The pivotal question of political affiliation here is not "Does this ideology hold?" (The monarchy taps numerous ideologies.) But rather "Does this image fit?" Emblematic constancy allows for diversity to be channeled through and mediated upon the white cloaked king. The emblematic center, the white cloaked monarchy has remained materially constant, while the ideational content with which the monarchy is endowed—at any moment by any given constituency, e.g. military conqueror or persona of justice—has been subject to considerable alteration. The magic of this nation is that the emblematic position of the monarchy, vitally renewed in popular performances, gives the ruler preferential access to multiple peoples and multiple registers of power which he can pragmatically mobilize for his own purposes.

The ability to unify a diverse and sometimes oppositional population on itself as common emblem is part of the reason the Moroccan monarchy survived the centuries that followed. Al-Mansur died in a wave of bubonic plague that struck Marrakish in 1603. The Sa`di dynasty itself did not last nor did al-Mansur's magnificent stage, "the Incomparable Palace." What remained was the highly effective popular emblem and the highly effective popular performances. The Prophet's Birthday continued to be held in varied and converging forms throughout the nation, in the imperial center and the galactic sites throughout the land. The performance recreated, through people's own bodies and in their own valued places, a benevolent experience and image of the white cloaked monarchy. It was not the only image or experience the population had of the king who sometimes came through local regions burning and taking, but it was a vivid

and valued experience that was actively renewed in people's lives. In the Prophet's Birthday performance, people experienced the ruler as not simply exterior, coercive, and restrictive, but interior, intimate, and sustaining as well.[19]

Another dynasty, the `Alawi, with even stronger claims of descent from the Prophet Muhammad, came to the forefront in 1666 and remains in power to this day. The `Alawi continued the national celebrations of the Prophet's Birthday recreating and revitalizing the performative mechanism of renewal that al-Mansur so effectively had built. They added a second great national performative innovation to the repertoire, the Great Sacrifice, that revitalized the white robed emblem as well.

The Moroccan monarchy's emblematic potency and its performative means of renewal helped the monarchy survive and were crucial factors in Morocco's ability to resist western assault. Morocco was the last North African country to be colonized (in 1912, 82 years after Algeria, 31 years after Tunisia) and the first to receive its independence (in 1956). Independence centered on the popular demand for the reappearance and reperformance of the white robed icon/king.

The early post-colonial era was characterized by the complicated interplay of a population pulled apart by practical, ideological, and institutional diversity and a nation held together by the emblematic potency of its white robed king. I set this complicated history aside and jump to the 1993 reperformance of the nation.

1993 PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

On the eve of August 30, 1993, Hassan II, the current king of Morocco, held so monumental a performance of the Prophet's Birthday in such a spectacular place that al-Mansur's celebration of 400 years earlier provides a just comparison. Like al-Mansur, Hassan II was trying to performatively restage the nation and thereby to resecure his own place in it. Like al-Mansur, he was also using the occasion to inaugurate a colossal monument that he had built in his own honor. First we will look at that monument, the performative stage, then at the reconfigured performance itself.[20]

HASSAN II MOSQUE

The new mosque can be seen as a monument of honor to the Prophet Muhammad and to Islam built by the people of the Moroccan nation through the demands and the auspices of the reigning king. And to some degree it is that. But the mosque is also a marker of Hassan II. It carries his name, and the king oversaw every detail of its building.[21] The mosque was in part an attempt to spatially affect the king's place in history by

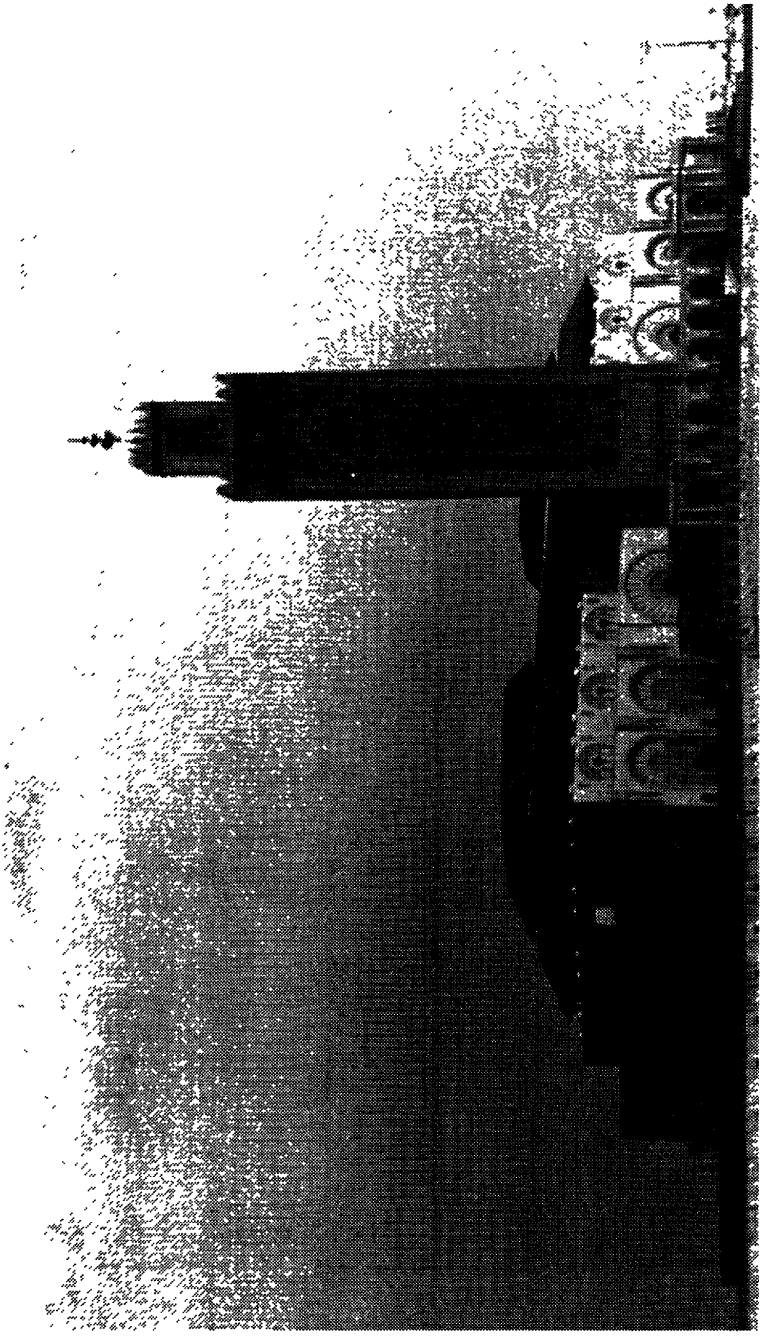

Figure 1. The billion dollar Hassan II Mosque built on a promontory in Cassablanca Bay.

breaking with history. Mosques in Morocco do not as a rule carry an individual king's name.

The mosque was also an attempt to address three points of strain in Morocco: (1) the unemployed, the economically and politically dislocated, especially those in the major cities, the greatest number of whom live in Casablanca, a sprawling commercial and industrial city; (2) the *ikhwan*, the "brothers" as they are typically called in Morocco (or *al-ikhwan al-muslimun*, "the Muslim Brothers"), people who emphasize a "return" to what they regard as Muslim essentials; most *ikhwan* tend to regard dominant forms of faith and politics in Morocco as spurious and seek to change them, especially the monarchical configuration of the nation and the public space that women occupy;[22] (3) women and men in Morocco's cities and rural areas who are pressing for systematic changes in the legal and cultural renderings of the female in Morocco; they specifically call for transformations in the Family Code of Law written in 1957 to bring it more in line with what they understand as the basic guarantee of equality for male and female that they see existing in the 1961 Moroccan Constitution. These three categories of people represent different and diverse constituencies whose support and critique of the political system stretches across different ranges. But in some ways, the king's building of the mosque and performative innovation was designed to address all three.

Soliciting

Hassan II inaugurated the mosque on the 8th of July 1988 calling for a forty day popular subscription drive (which actually lasted for over five years). On national television, the king delivered a poignant speech inviting everyone to participate in the building of a great mosque on a promontory in the waters of Casablanca bay that would be one of the wonders of the world. Such participation, he assured, would allow every Moroccan to fulfill the hadith "For he who builds a mosque where the name of God is called upon, the Most High will build for him a place in paradise." Every contribution would be accepted, the king announced, "even if only a dirham" and would help build for oneself a place in paradise (Televised speech July 8, 1988).

The call was noble, the perspective of "even a dirham" (about 13 cents) was laudable, but the organizational tactics of collection were in some cases severe. During the first forty days subscription, people were often strong-armed into making donations. With obvious pressure from above, people at different levels of the Ministry of Interior sometimes overstepped their bounds in "persuading" people to give "voluntary donations." I was in Morocco during this period and know of a few representatives of foreign corporations who found themselves in jail because their corporations had not yet contributed.[23]

Moroccans too were pushed. This was one "gift" tax from which Morocco's powerful families were not excluded. Quite the contrary, they were expected to contribute a "fair" share. The zeal of collection in some sectors seemed to push the monarchy's credibility to the point of danger. A number of people inside and outside the system expressed the notion that "This time he has gone too far." (Interviews 1988).

But a year later, when I returned to Morocco, some of the resentment had eased; some Moroccans seemed to be taking a more wait and see attitude; others, including a few who had the year earlier described themselves as having been coerced into giving, now began to look on the mosque and their gift with a certain amount of pride. Not everyone participated in the reversal, just as not everyone had participated in the initial critique, but there was a change.

Over the years, the mosque was built in stops and starts. Apparently no one in king's entourage had realized just how very expensive this mosque was going to be and the call for contributions continued for a period of seventy times the initial forty days. Still, the mosque began to go up in the bay of Casablanca. Many thought it was magnificent.

Construction, Economy, and Hoped For Recuperative Space

While the king phrased the choice of Casablanca in terms of the Qur'anic image that the "throne of god is on the water," the choice was economic as well. Casablanca is the industrial, commercial, banking, and transportation center of the nation, where the largest number of employed and unemployed live, a huge teeming city with most of the population under twenty. Except for a few areas of the Rif, Casablanca may well be the place where the king has access to the least intrinsic credit, especially among certain subsectors of youth who in the practice of their everyday lives are confronted with the hardship of unemployment. Major bread riots broke out in Casablanca in the 1980s when the price of bread was increased (Seddon 1984: 23-51). The selection of Casablanca was an attempt to create jobs and bolster the economy as well as an attempt to create an icon and a place of systematic experience that could make for more recuperative connections between the monarch and Casablanca's population.

For five years the mosque provided jobs and income. Approximately thirty-five thousand people were employed in the building (twenty-five thousand laborers and ten thousand artisans). The marble and stonework alone took sixteen million work hours to complete. The mosque required basic unskilled labor—old men pushing wheelbarrows back and forth—as well as finely skilled artisans who carried out the work in zellige, mosaic, and stucco. Many hoped that the international publicity about the mosque (including the opening night gala) would serve as an advertisement for the

skill of Moroccan workers and bring them employment elsewhere in the burgeoning international market in mosque building.[24]

Increased tourist trade, international and national, was another goal of the mosque building. Previously, Casablanca had nothing distinctly its own to captivate tourists. While Fas, Rabat, and Marrakish are ancient cities with a plethora of exquisite sites, Casablanca is a twentieth century colonial creation, an industrial commercial center without distinctive aesthetic markers. Tourists are often disappointed; many have seen the Bogart and Bergman film and expect to find something of that world in Casablanca but do not.[25]

The king hoped that the mosque would provide Casablanca with a monumental place for enchanted gazing and that the people who run hotels, restaurants, and grocery stores in Casablanca would feel its impact. He also hoped to create a benevolent national and sacred space in his name in Casablanca. The king could hardly build another palace; seventeen palaces distributed around the countryside is quite enough, one would suppose, for most any man. And although the king sometimes uses the palaces as national gathering places, the occasions are not many.[26] Morocco's population, especially in Casablanca, is ever younger and has a shorter term memory than of old. The king needed a more regenerative national space to which the people of Casablanca could connect. He hoped the mosque would be that space, that it would become a source of pride, income, and collective identity for Casablancans, as the Eiffel Tower is for Parisians and the Statue of Liberty for New Yorkers. He hoped that people would be drawn to it, that they would come to use it as a place for picnics and prayers, a place in which they saw something of themselves and what they most valued.

But of course intimate popular response was precisely the dimension of the Casablanca mosque that the king could least control. He could build the mosque, orchestrate the initial performance in it, bring people to it, and hope that he had constructed performance and place in ways that the population found compelling. But he could not determine the resonance of the space within the interior lives of individuals. That was for them to decide.

Monumental Space

In terms of sheer size, the mosque competes for aggrandized place in the international arena. The main floor covers 20,000 square meters.[27] Combining the main floor with mezzanines and adjoining courtyards, over a hundred thousand people can gather there for prayer.

From the beginning, the mosque was advertised as the biggest mosque outside the Muslim holy places, outside the Hijaz. Casablanca's mosque ranks second in size only to the Great Mosque of Makka, the center of

world-wide prayer and pilgrimage, the center of the Muslim faith. It would have been vastly inappropriate, indeed somewhat blasphemous (as well as incredibly expensive) to even have considered building the Casablanca mosque larger than that of Makka and apparently that possibility was not put forward.

But the Casablanca mosque *is higher* than the Great Mosque of Makka. The Hassan II minaret reaches 190.5 meters into the sky (625 feet), which is twice as high as the minaret of the Great Mosque of Makka (89 meters high, 292 feet). Indeed it is *higher than any other religious edifice in the world* (higher than the Basilica of Rome, Chartres Cathedral, the Taj Mahal). This was no accident. Hassan II intentionally competed for celestial space in order to validate his religious and worldly regime.

In Morocco, the height comparison with the Great Mosque of Makka received little play. It was not much publicized and certainly there was no gloating, none of "we beat Makka by 333 feet (101.5 meters)" which would have been entirely inappropriate for Moroccan Muslims (98% of the population). No, the king didn't much publicize this comparison in Morocco, yet he did choose to make his minaret higher than that of Makka, higher than that of any other religious structure in the world (*Le Monde*, 30 August 1993:1,6).

Aesthetics

The mosque literally rises from Moroccan soil. The king used a build-and-buy-at-home economic policy so that almost all of the materials and the workers came from Morocco (*Le Monde*, 30 August 1993:6). Moroccan marble and granite weighing 25,000 tons covers the floors, wall facings and the mosque's two thousand five hundred columns. (In the search for marble and granite of sufficient quality, 300,000 tons were gathered then discarded in order to glean the 65,000 tons of superior stone from which the 25,000 tons of finished work for the mosque were carved.)

Magnificent arches, adorned with zellige-work, carvings, and silver inlays, grace the interiors. Water abounds. The bay of Casablanca surrounds much of the outside while a hundred and twenty-four fountains are found within. What is more, outside and inside can be brought together. The central part of the main roof of the mosque (a huge area weighing 1100 tons) can be opened in a matter of five minutes in order to let the fresh sea air and bright sunlight envelop 4,200 square meters of the interior, transforming the central part of the mosque into a huge open air courtyard, truly a celestial space.

Light from the outside is echoed by lighting within. Fifty chandeliers of Venetian glass grace the mosque interior (one of the few imported items). The seven largest chandeliers each measure 30 feet in height, 18

feet in width, and weigh over a ton (10 meters by 6 meters weighing 1,200 kilograms each). The mosque glitters with their bright electric light.

The minaret of the Hassan II is built along classical lines. In its overarching shape, it resembles the 800 year old Koutoubia of Marrakish. But beyond that, it vastly differs. The Hassan II Mosque is run from a computer center that is housed inside the minaret. A shiny glass elevator is mounted on the outside of the minaret and speedily skirts up and down. The minaret is topped by the traditional three golden spheres but it also sports a laser beam which sheds different patterns of colored light for different occasions. For the 1993 opening ceremony of the Prophet's Birthday the laser beamed a powerful green ray of light 30 kilometers across Casablanca's night sky in the direction of Makka, the city of the Prophet of God. Green is Muhammad's color.

Invitations and Gathering

Like al-Mansur, Hassan II invited representatives from the whole of the nation to come to the opening of the monumental place he had just built: small-scale farmers, tiny commercialists, and religious teachers from Morocco's outback as well as representatives of top international corporations, members of the cabinet, ambassadors, and prominent religious leaders. Most came.

I was in the home of a religious teacher in the high mountains when the invitation came to him from the king of the nation for him to come and pray with the Prince of the Faithful, the chosen one of God, in the nation's new mosque in Casablanca on the occasion of the Prophet's Birthday 1993. A messenger sent by the local caid knocked on the door (the message had been radioed to the nearest post; the messenger had ridden on mule back from there). He announced to Si Abdalatif, the news.[28] A man of good-hearted faith and few material belongings, Si Abdalatif teaches the Qur'an to the children of this high mountain village. In the dark winter months, candles illuminate the slates on which these *tashilheit*-speaking children (a dialect of Berber) write and recite Arabic verses from the Qur'an in mimicry of Si Abdalatif.[29] There is no electricity anywhere near here.

Si Abdalatif's family and the village were awhirl with the news. His eldest daughter rewashed the white robe that Si Abdalatif wears on all major religious occasions: the Prophet's Birthday, the Great Sacrifice, the Night of Revelation, the small feast that ends the fast of Ramadan. This is the robe of pure white that he wore when he was married and for those moments was "transformed" (figuratively) into the reigning king.[30] The daughter washed the robe in the mountain stream (using extra Clorox to insure its whiteness) and hung it on the bushes nearby to dry. It became a center of conversation about Si Abdalatif's upcoming journey for those

passing to and from their fields. Si Abdalatif's wife baked special sweets and packed them along with almonds, bread, and cans of sardines for him to take on the trip.

The day of his departure, family and neighbors came to wish him well. He bundled his belongings in a folded cloth and set off down the mountains. He trekked four hours down the steep trails until he reached the paved road where he hitched a ride on the back of a truck to the provincial capital. There he found the bus, arranged by the Ministry of Interior, for the local invitees from his area. The bus set out for Casablanca. The men got little sleep for the bus kept stopping at improvised checkpoints. Never had Si Abdalatif seen so many gendarmes, the king's own gray-cloaked guard, who used their sleek black motorcycles as barriers, stopping travelers in order to make sure that those on their way to the king's festival were the ones he wanted to have there.

I heard Si Abdalatif's reactions when he returned to the village. Like many Moroccans, Si Abdalatif is a pragmatist and realist as well as a good-natured man of faith. The bus drive was long, he admitted; many of the evening's events were boring; the mosque was hot, and yet there were moments of splendor when he felt transported to an incomparable place. "I have never seen such beauty, such grandeur, so many people praying together to God. It was an honor to be in that place on the night our Prophet was born and to be praying with Sidna, ['Our Lord,' one of the appellations of the king]."

The old religious teacher and the village talked of the performance for weeks. The event was not monolithically perfect, but it was singular, an event of a lifetime, an occasion of orienting significance. The villagers' talking about it, their praising it and critiquing it, was a way of making it their own. A number of people in the village had seen the ceremony on al-Hajj Umar's battery run television (al-Hajj Umar is the village headman). Many were sure they had spotted Si Abdalatif. I wasn't. Since almost all of the tens of thousands of men gathered on the mosque floor were cloaked in the same white robes with white hoods pulled over their heads, partly covering their faces, I found it hard to distinguish anyone, much less be certain that the tiny figure that people pointed out towards the back left of the screen was Si Abdalatif. But it didn't matter. The point was that Si Abdalatif *was there praying* in the mosque with the whole of the nation in the presence of the king. Many people in the village *saw* him there and *saw* themselves through him there.

PERFORMANCE

Representatives of the nation gathered and through the use of television, the king effectively drew the eyes of the rest of the nation onto the event.[31] Men of the nation sat in the main space, on the mosque floor, wear-

ing the white hooded robes of national integration, looking very much like each other and like the king who sat in front, visually similar and yet spatially separate from all the rest. Moroccan women sat above in a balcony designated for them. Foreign diplomats (mostly non Muslim) sat in a second woman's balcony but there was no screen separating them from a full view of the mosque floor.[32] Some said the screen had been removed; others said it had not yet been built; in any event, the diplomats had an unrestricted view of the evening festivities, the mosque gleaming, the lights glittering, the king in front, the focal point of the national gaze. There was spectacular beauty, but not as in 1593 from multicolored candles. The Casablanca mosque shone with bright electric light.

Once the huge crowd had gathered, the performances began. There was collective reading of the poetry in praise of Muhammad, ancient *qasidas*, poignantly chanted and sung. There were speeches, readings and recitations from the Qur'an and the hadith.

Then finally came the selected poets. One after another three men stepped forward who had triumphed in the poetry competition sponsored by his majesty Hassan II. One by one, each chanted evocative poetry that sung of the majesty of the Prophet Muhammad, his bloodline, and his descendant on the throne.

Then the ceremony drew to conclusion. A fourth figure, draped in white, walked to the front of the mosque through the crowd of tens of thousands of men and stood beside the king. There were audible gasps; it was a woman.

A friend of mine, a highly educated Moroccan woman, who was watching the ceremony on television at home, gasped as the woman began to speak. (Women do not speak in front of mosques filled with men in Morocco.) What was the king doing? What would the fundamentalists in Morocco and in Algeria do and say? Would there be a backlash? My friend could not bear the tension as the female poet continued to speak and turned off the television. She went to bed and tried to sleep, deciding to wait until morning to see what the repercussions had been.[33]

A high official in the audience told me that his first reaction was: "His Majesty has lost his senses." But as the exquisite words about the Prophet began to fill the air, he sat back thinking, "His Majesty is very, very smart."

And the white cloaked woman, upon whom the whole of the nation was gazing, recited in strong voice the beautiful words she had written of faith in Muhammad, Islam, and the Prophet's blood descendant ruler who occupied the central throne. When she finished, she knelt down and kissed the sleeve of the king's robe and gave Hassan II a copy of her poem. Then the king took the floor and brought the evening's festivities to an end.

This momentous event, this high occasion of the nation gathered in glittering unity had as its penultimate event a white cloaked woman tak-

ing center stage and focusing national attention on the Prophet through her image and her words. She wore white cloaks, not precisely the robes of the men and the king, but sufficiently close so that the message was clear. She too was a part of faith and citizenry. She too was a part of the white-robed body of nation.

MUSLIM BROTHERS

The king is attempting to reform the national body, to alter what for 400 years has been a basic principle of political differentiation and integration, a male-female binary, and put in its place unifying white commonality. In so doing, he is, I believe, trying to rally popular sentiment for an expansive image of politics and faith in order to counter Islamic "fundamentalists" who claim a single pathway, a cornered truth. The *ikhwan*, "the brothers" are striving to implement their version of nation which puts them at the center. They call for a political configuration of "justice" in which there would be no monarch, no single man who would be superior *a priori* to all others. Rather all men who hold the truth, "the brothers," would be equal and would make decisions in compliance with "the edicts of Islam" (as if there were no ambiguity there). In the "*ikhwan*" national system, all men would be equal, although women would not be. Women in this ideology and practice are highly valued; they have their proper fields of operation, particularly in the birthing of children and the care of the family. But they are to be circumscribed from other domains, especially from the centers of public politics and the collective sacred. Moroccan *ikhwan* seek to occupy nationalist space and in this quest they have two main foci of attack: the space of the monarch and the space of women. A male-female binary is central to their position. In counterpoint, the king is pushing for ever greater inclusiveness in the emblem of national integration, he is orchestrating the white robes to cover all of them, male and female alike.

The *ikhwan* in Morocco do not have the widespread popularity or credibility that they have in some other places in North Africa and the Middle East. Certainly, there are active participants in the movement, people who find within it compelling models of Islam, justice, personal identity, and national participation, especially certain sectors of educated youth. But wide scale popular sentiment is not allied with it. Quite the contrary, in Morocco, those who call themselves the "*ikhwan*" comprise small, relatively dispersed, and for the most part non-coordinated groups.

Part of the explanation for this lack of a reservoir of popular credit comes from the regularity with which the Moroccan monarchy has woven itself into popular expressions of Islam. Here the Prophet's Birthday is key. For four hundred years, it has been an effective means of reweaving

the popular-imperial connection. The performances have brought the image of the monarchy to local bodies, lives, and spaces. They have successfully entangled the image of ruler with the hopes, dreams, and longings of many of the individuals who are ruled.

Morocco's post-independence kings (Muhammad V and Hassan II) have not forgotten nor forsaken this basic connection. They have continued to stage the postcolonial Moroccan nation in Islamic terms with themselves as central to it. The monarchy is pivotal to the 1961 legal constitution. But, more important in framing popular opinion, the white robed ruler has remained central to the popular performances that circulate an image of benevolent monarchy throughout the land, an image that serves as a counterpoint to some of the others that the population experiences in everyday life.

Unlike Egypt, Tunisia, and Iran, the postcolonial Moroccan nation—while absorbing and utilizing all sorts of models and templates from all over the world—did not deny nor forsake the essential framing and centering of its national identity in Islam, nor the essential occasions which bring Islam to the present through the joint celebrations of "the Prince of the Faithful" and the political community of faith.[34]

One can argue that the political elite of Egypt, Iran, and Tunisia were so enchanted with secular "modernist" models that they gave the playing field of populist Islam to others who used it to rally popular opposition against them. But Morocco's monarchy never gave up popular Islamic space. Quite the contrary. For centuries the monarchy has been the central occupant and producer of it. As for the current king, one can argue that he was perhaps less effective in rallying Islamic space in the 1960s and 70s and has been more effective in the 1980s and 90s, but the issue is one of degree.[35]

The *ikhwan* seek to establish their own popular, political, Islamic space, but the problem for them in Morocco is that the monarchy keeps so effectively visiting, occupying, and mobilizing popular Islamic space that *ikhwan* are unable to find a set of discourses and practices *distinctly their own* that unite them with the vast majority of the population and at the same time separate them from the monarchy for the monarchy is embedded within those popular discourses and practices.

The 1993 reperformance of the Prophet's Birthday with its presentation of a female icon of Islamic merit and national significance was another move in the monarch's game of chess with the Islamic opposition and his game of using the threat of Islamic opposition, of "fundamentalist chaos," to check other forms of dissent within the nation, the playing of different subsectors of the population off each other, perhaps to the nation's, but certainly to the monarchy's benefit. Through the 1993 Prophet's Birthday performance, the king attempted to counter the "brothers" by rallying an increasing number of women and men to him, women and men who fear the excesses of Islamic fundamentalism.

In calling for a broadreaching Islam, the king is rallying forms of faith that resonate with many within the population. In placing a woman at the center of the Prophet's Birthday, the king directly drew her into the emblematic white robes and the center of the political community. The king is staking the monarchy's durability in a flexible and inclusive form of Islam. Certainly there is opposition. But the question is, where does majority opinion in Morocco lie? It seems to lie with diversity and flexibility.

The threat of the *ikhwan* can be seen as the impetus that pushed the king towards an alliance with women's rights. For many who know the king personally, this alliance comes as a surprise. He has not—in many parts of his private life—been a great supporter of the elevation of women. But one needs to see the move in terms of strategic power politics. In trying to negotiate their own sacred and political space, the *ikhwan* wish to circumscribe the space of women and the space of the king. The king is in part protecting himself by stressing a form of Islam in which women's rights have a high priority. He is trying to preserve his preeminent place in the integrative white robes of the nation by including women in them.

POET, PARLIAMENT, AND WHITE CLOTHES

1993 was a banner year for this alliance. In early 1993, a popular petition was amassed that is reputed to have had a million signatures on it that called for changes in the Family Code of Law written in 1957 to bring it in line with Morocco's 1961 constitution where women and men are guaranteed equal rights. There is a large professional class of women in Morocco, including lawyers, judges, doctors, teachers, businesswomen, who are pressing for greater rights for women. They are increasingly joined by an ever growing workforce of women. Garment manufacturing is the largest growth industry in Morocco; it employs almost exclusively women, many of whom are demanding increased rights and representation. They in turn are joined by other women and men in Morocco who support women's rights. In some parts of Morocco women have long occupied crucial roles in the economy and in some places they have held important positions in political and sacred life. For some of these women the 1957 codification of the Family Code of Law (a combination of Malekite and Napoleonic codes) took away rights that they had held for centuries.[36]

As of 1993, the national political system is responding in part. In the same year that the popular petition was submitted to the king calling for a change in the Family Code of Law, the first women were elected to Morocco's national parliament. It was the "freest" election to have taken place since independence. In it two women gained seats; they literally came to occupy the national space.

The relationship between national emblem (the white robed monarch), the dress of men on key occasions (the white robes that visually unite them with the king) and the gendered construction of the citizenry was obvious in the post election discourse. Much of that discourse seemed less concerned with the fact that women had been elected and more concerned with what clothes these two women would wear at the opening ceremony. Yet the issues are intimately related. Since parliament's inception, all parliamentarians have been men. At recent opening ceremonies, all the men have worn the sacred white robes that mimetically unite them with each other and the king. What would these women wear as they entered what had for decades been an all male national space? In the end they wore white garments but not quite the men's robes. Where women sit and what they wear has much to do with how people envision and construct the nation.

In the same year, a woman was chosen to speak publicly, sacredly, and centrally to the nation from the front of a mosque filled mostly with men on a great national celebration. While these innovations probably were not entirely controlled by the center, Morocco is a highly centralized and orchestrated system and when changes of this proportion occur, one can be certain that they have at least been scrutinized by the monarch and most likely were set in motion by him.

The women who were elected to parliament and the woman who spoke in the mosque are exceedingly meritorious. Public discourse stresses "merit" as the reason for their achievement (merit being the mode of access to sacred and political power that is least likely to offend those who have marked themselves off in the present as the "upholders of the tradition").[37] The two parliamentarians are highly educated women with years of experience in politics. The poet is wonderfully gifted.

Certainly these women are meritorious, but the problem with "merit" as an explanation for their 1993 achievements is that there have been highly skilled political women in Morocco since the inception of parliament and meritorious woman poets could for centuries have sung the Prophet's praises in central mosques on the Prophet's Birthday. The issue is not that these women had the merit necessary to occupy the positions they came to fill. The issue is why in the 1993 staging of nation these women of merit were allowed to hold places that they already deserved. It is the timing of the performance that is interesting and that I suggest is related to the influence of the *ikhwan* in Morocco, the Islamic Front's potency in Algeria, and the monarch's current understandings of where his base of cultural credit is most likely in the near future to lie.

CONCLUSIONS

In 1993, we saw an attempted reconfiguration of the nation with the expansion of the performative center and the emblematic white robes to directly include women. The innovation in the Prophet's Birthday occupied only a few moments of the national festival. Yet, potentially, it reflects a profound transformation in Morocco's overarching national symbol (the white robes of male mimesis) and a prominent mode of political integration (a male-female binary of differentiation). Now an altered image and means of integration have been put forward that stress the likeness of all the political constituency, male and female. All the nation's citizens are now potentially covered in the unifying white cloth.

Whether these transformations will work depends on coming events, staged and de facto. Change, like stasis, is always a gamble. I venture a few comments.

The opening of the Casablanca mosque and the restaging of the Prophet's Birthday with a woman as central was yet another strategic move by a politically adept and culturally empowered monarch. As far as the performative innovation itself is concerned, that is, the direct inclusion of women into the white robes of community and faith, I suspect that it was a wise move in the current situation that potentially allies increasing numbers of people with the king, *an act of mimesis writ larger.* In some ways the innovation simply reconfirms—on the level of national high garb and national high drama—realities that are already in place. Women are crucial citizens of the Moroccan nation, its doctors, lawyers, mothers, line workers, accountants, scholars, air force pilots, agricultural workers, bankers, cooks, poets, parliamentarians, and maids. The performative innovation simply extends the unifying white cloaks to cover an ever larger number of people who already occupy the nation. The change in the performance was new, but in many ways the change had already taken place in daily life.

The forum which the king chose to manifest the change, the Prophet's Birthday, for centuries has been one of the most important mechanisms of popular connection. The yearly performance—central and dispersed—has reproduced the dynasty's credit and the nation's consciousness in individual bodies, minds, and lives. Like reading a favorite novel, performing a valued national rite simultaneously disperses and unifies the Moroccan nation. The credit it produces is popular, transportable, and centralizing. Almost everyone in the nation participates in the Prophet's Birthday. It is performed nearly everywhere in the land. Common threads run through the performance that reweave the nation, a nation that exists as Anderson has wisely observed nowhere and everywhere at once. In widening the spread of the national cloth, Hassan II has strengthened the nation.

But what of the mosque itself? Here I am less certain. With the mosque, Hassan II has established a new national icon. Seven years of me-

dia attention and a billion dollar expenditure have made it that.[38] Whether it will be a unificatory mechanism like the Prophet's Birthday and the emblematic white robes is less clear for the mosque draws upon different kinds of credit than those that have sustained Morocco's monarchy and its nation in the past—replicable performances and common cloth.

The Hassan II Mosque establishes a national space of separation and differentiation of the ruler. Instead of performatively merging the king into the image of every man, the mosque sets off the king as monumentally different. The mosque is singular, unparalleled, the highest. It is individually named, occupies a single stretch of ground, and cannot be transported to local peoples; local peoples have to come to it. The mosque relies on heightened "differences" rather than obscuring "likenesses" to draw people to it.

The mosque is an attempt to create a new kind of regenerative credit, a stable monumental marker in the name of an individual king. Foucauldian analysis would lead one to suspect that this kind of credit—non-transportable, stable, specialized, differentiated—would be less likely to produce popular connection, would be less likely to disperse, diffuse, and circulate a productive image of the monarchy throughout the land.

Still, new kinds of credit are always possible. They depend on popular reception. If the Moroccan population comes to frequent the mosque with enthusiasm and pleasure, if the mosque becomes effectively intertwined with their most valued occasions, if Moroccans come there to pray, picnic and celebrate, then the national innovation of a monumental mosque in the ruler's name has the potential to become yet another element in the monarchy's rich "arsenal of legitimacy."

If however the affective connection between the Hassan II Mosque and the lives of individual Moroccans is not made, if the mosque stands frequently empty, if the population rarely and without much enthusiasm attends, if the population tends to evaluate the amount of money spent on the mosque over against the amount of money needed to give jobs to the legions of Casablanca's unemployed youth, then a very different kind of popular evaluation could take place. The individually named mosque—so clearly differentiated from the everyday population—could become a ledger of accountability for the individual king, a place where critique could stick, not, like the Prophet's Birthday, a mechanism for publicly diffusing a common image of "rulership" into people's everyday lives.

The Hassan II Mosque is a different kind of national signifier that reflects a different kind of national imagination than the simple white robes of national integration, robes that, to some degree on some occasions, have united everyday men of faith with the king and the nation, robes that through the king's own doing increasingly serve to unite women with him and the nation also. Whether the mosque, pouring its towering name over Casablanca, can become—like the white robes of faith—a fount of

popular credit, or whether it will deepen into a whirlpool of popular critique, only the future and the Moroccan population can divine.

NOTES

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[2] As scholars like Koester (1995) have shown, there was considerable variation in the timing and modes of construction of nationalism within Europe itself.

[3] Kably (1994) examines the political processes that were used to consolidate the Moroccan nation from the 1000s to the 1500s. He argues that from 1069 to 1269 ideologically rigid, strong arm regimes reigned, but after 1269, relationships between monarch and population became more productive and mutually sustaining because of the ground of common cultural credit that had been built through the centuries of rule. He states that by then "an arsenal of legitimacy...of embarrassing richness" had been built that came to be popularly renewed in the centuries that followed (1994: 5).

[4] There is resistance in Morocco, some of it performative and persuasive. But in Morocco's highly effective and long enduring political system, resistance sometimes sustains as well as confronts the central authority. See Combs-Schilling, *Death and the Female Saint*, forthcoming.

[5] I borrow the term "galactic" from Tambiah's analysis of the role of ritual in Imperial Thailand. Tambiah analyzes performances that are produced at the imperial center and replicated throughout the land, noting that "although the constituent units differ in size, nevertheless each lesser unit is a reproduction and imitation of the larger" (1976:115).

[6] This sensual logic of the festival is reconfirmed in other local practices. In some parts of the countryside, the Prophet's Birthday is a festive occasion when marriage markets are held. Available men (typically dressed in white) and women (typically dressed in multicolored garb) meander through the crowded marketplace where goods are being sold, looking for potential marriage partners. Religious clerks in tent-stalls are ready, for a small price, to consolidate marriage contracts for any who wish to make them. In many parts of Morocco, women sing songs of longing for their "loved one/ruler" on the Prophet Birthday's birthday as if it

were their day of marriage, e.g. "This is the day of my wedding, oh happy am I, going to meet My Sire the Powerful One" ("My Sire the Powerful One" is a common appellation for the king). In many parts of the Moroccan countryside, young men are "transformed" into the "king" in order to be married. They are dressed in the sacred white robes and paraded through the streets, like the real king, and called by the king's honorific title, "Our Sire the Powerful One." The bridegroom remains the "white cloaked ruler" until he penetrates the bride who is often dressed in multicolored glittering garments. The physical penetration of the local girl by the metaphorical ruler mediates the bipolar division and establishes the community of the family.

[7] Individual desires and practices do not simplistically conform to overarching cultural representations. Rather when collective culture is effective, individual desires and practices are interwoven through them in distinctive and somewhat varied ways, conforming to certain cultural norms, varying from others. The cultural cloaking of difference and desire in the image of the colorfully garbed, glittering female holds broad sway in Morocco, even in some homosexual relations which in terms of overarching definitions fall outside the "accepted" cultural norms. The "male" to be penetrated often dresses in brocaded garments like virginal girls.

[8] On the importance of the bipolar division in Islam, see Bouhdiba (1985: 30-43). In the practice of daily life there are people who cross over the bipolar division and somewhat mute it, e.g. women who have made the pilgrimage to Makka and upon their return dress in white garments of faith and are treated more like "men;" boys who dress in multicolored garments and dance like "girls" before men. (It is common in many parts of the Islamic world for boys to be associated with the feminine.) Here, as in most places, prominent categories, e.g. male and female, are clearest in terms of their idealized archetypes and more ambiguous in terms of their actual occupants. The categories are especially porous on the edges.

[9] See also Terry Turner (1993: 15-39).

[10] The white robes accomplish something of the same process that Anderson highlights in his discussion of the "Tomb of Unknown Soldier" (1991: 9-12). The whole point of the tomb is that the individual identity of the man who lies buried therein is unmarked so that he can be "every man." The donning of common white robes in Morocco also blurs individual characteristics and helps consolidate the experience of the collective nation.

[11] See Garber's work (1991) on the ways in which rigid sumptuary laws elaborated class distinctions among the population through the medium of dress in England in this era (1991).

[12] In some places the initial festivities begin with line dancing where virginal females dressed in the multicolored glittering gowns sing back and forth evocative songs with white cloaked men, songs of love, longing, and separation (e.g. in Seksawa, a region of the High Atlas,

Combs-Schilling field notes 1977-78). In some places, local celebrations of the Prophet's Birthday begin with a candlelight procession like that held by al-Mansur, where life sized candles swathed in the brocades of brides are carried through the streets on bridal litters while drums play, men applaud, and women ululate at the sight of them (See Brown 1972). In some places, the celebrations begin with horseplay. The horses are decked out in glittering brocades reminiscent of the festive garb of virginal women and are ridden by white cloaked men at top speed until the men—at the end of the playing field—jerk the horses to halt while firing their long cylindrical rifles spewing clouds of white smoke into the air (Combs-Schilling 1989:202-205).

13 Until French colonialism, the public image of the monarch was not individuated; his face was not represented on coins, paintings, or distinctive coats of arms. The image of the monarch was collective and portable, a white cloaked ruler who represented the monarchy, the nation, and every man in it.

14 The phrase "partial connections" comes from Marilyn Strathern's book by that title which addresses the organizational importance of partial links (1991).

15 Sugar production of large sugar cones for an international market was the key industry of the 1500s.

16 In post 1500s Morocco, no particular male child of the king has had preferential access to the throne. There has been no rule of primogeniture or ultimogeniture; the one who occupied the throne tended to be the one who won it, often in fierce battles with his brothers. The maleness of the monarchy has been absolute. The bipolar elaboration included no room for maneuver here. No daughter has ever held the throne. There are no queens in Morocco, only kings linked to numerous women.

17 James Scott 's work (1990) illustrates this position.

18 Stephen Greenblatt makes a similar suggestion for early modern England (1988:21-65).

19 The juxtaposition is drawn from Foucault (1980: 119).

20 I visited the mosque as it was going up, talked with workers and designers, gathered written materials from local, national, and international sources, videotaped the king's speeches on television, and conducted interviews with sixty people in different parts of the country (Casablanca and Rabat and two rural areas). I repeated most of the interviews in different years to get some sense of people's changing reactions to the mosque as it was being built.

21 In life cycle terms, it is no surprise that the king is drawn to this kind of staging at this point in his life. He is nearly 70 and was quite ill several years ago. In building the mosque, Hassan II is trying to establish a durable monument that will renew his worth and bolster his memory after he is gone.

[22] Outsiders often call these people "fundamentalists" or "scripturalists." Like any group that consolidates interpretations of a broad reaching faith, the "fundamentalists" select certain dimensions of Islamic practice and faith that they emphasize and systematically disregard others. See Ahmed 1992, Hatem 1995, Kepel 1993, Mernissi 1987, Munson 1989, and Tozy 1984.

[23] Ambassadors phoned, compromises were made, and donations were given. The men were quickly released. I happened to be in the office of the American Ambassador during one such call.

[24] Many newspapers and magazines around the world carried glowing reports of the mosque opening and the Prophet's Birthday celebration in the days that followed, e.g. the Tunisian weekly *L'Observateur;*" the Spanish magazine *Hola;* the Mexican daily *Excelsior;* Qatar's daily *Ar-Raya;* the Yemini newspaper, *Al-Thaoura;* the Egyptian magazine *al-Mosawar.* For detailed coverage of the mosque itself, see *Le Monde,* 30 August 1993:1,6.

[25] The movie was an entirely American production. Conceived and produced in Hollywood, it holds no relationship to the Moroccan city.

[26] The royal marriages of the king's daughters have been occasions when the king has invited representatives of the nation, young couples from every province, to be married alongside his own offspring in one of the royal palaces (e.g. 250 such couples were married along with his daughter Asma in Marrakish). The king provided the representative couples with garments, had pictures made with them, and gave them money for their honeymoons. The performances were widely televised. In these ceremonies, the king occupied the role of "father of the nation" concerned about every one of "his" children. Many of those who were married, as well as those who came with them, were dazzled by the king's beneficence.

[27] There is an underground parking garage for a thousand cars, thirty-four buses, and an underground motor route leading to it.

[28] "Si" is an honorific title, a shortened form of "Sidi," meaning, "Master, Mister, My Lord."

[29] Tashilheit is the local Berber dialect spoken here. There are three mutually unintelligible dialects of Berber spoken in Morocco. "Berber" speech in Morocco is not a foundation for a separatist ethnic identity (Burke 1974)

[30] See Combs-Schilling 1989:88-220 on Moroccan marriage ceremonies.

[31] Here as Rosalind Morris argues concerning the use of mass media in Thailand, while in some ways mass media diffuses power, it centers it as well (1994:17).

[32] Many Moroccans hold to the view, articulated in formal Islam, that it is better for women to pray in the privacy of the home. If women attend mosques (a small but growing phenomenon in Morocco), they sit sep-

arated from the men, either behind the men or in balconies above them. Ideally, the women's section should be separated by a curtain or a screen. Unlike men, women are not to voice out loud their prayers. The justification given for this separation of the female and the public silencing of her is framed from a male perspective. It is commonly said (by men and women) that if men saw women or heard their voices in the mosque, they would be distracted from a focus on God, a bipolar image of the sexes that the popular renewal of al-Mansur's 1593 elaboration of the Prophet's Birthday helps recreate.

33 For many Moroccan women, many of whom are profound and flexible Muslims, extremist attacks on women in Algeria are seen as a threat, a near nightmare that haunts them with increasing frequency. But Morocco is not Algeria. In the days that followed the woman's front stage appearance in the new mosque, much of the reaction in Morocco was positive. The people with whom I spoke tended to talk about the beauty of the poem, the wisdom and knowledge of the Qur'an that it showed, and the understanding of the life of Muhammad that it exemplified. There were negative reactions, some of them vociferous. Some said that having a woman speak in the mosque was blasphemous, had polluted the place, and they would no longer pray there, but those voices appeared to be few by comparison.

34 "The Prince of the Faithful" is the official title of the reigning king.

35 Since the Iranian Revolution, the king has been ever more adept at mobilizing popular Islam. He appears considerably less in military garb, a favorite performative dress during the 1960s and 1970s (which the king sported along with dark sun glasses). The king now visually underplays his base in the strong arm of power even though he actually has increased the size of the military apparatus during this same era (1979 to the present). The king nowadays appears less often in French suits and much more regularly appears in the unifying white robes.

36 For example, see Combs-Schilling, *Death and the Female Saint*, forthcoming on the women of Seksawa who with the institution of the 1957 Family Code of Law lost many of their rights they had held for centuries, e.g. a right to press for divorce that equaled that of men and a right, upon divorce, to half of all the goods acquired since marriage. For centuries, the women of Seksawa have been considered as equal economic contributors to the conjugal household, hence their right to half the goods of marriage. The people of Seksawa have been Muslim for a millenium. They consider themselves "the pure of faith" and consider their articulations of women's rights as proper local innovations off of formal Islamic law. Post-colonial legal innovations eliminated these rights. When the Family Code of Law was first passed, the men of Seksawa tried to protect the rights of Seksawa women by passing ordinances in local councils that would have continued to guarantee them. But the legal representatives of

the nation ruled these ordinances "illegal" because the Family Code of Law was "universal" and had to apply to all. The 1957 Family Code of Law guarantees men, but not women, expansive rights to divorce (under the law women have the right to press for divorce only in exceptional circumstances) and gives divorced women no right to the joint property acquired since marriage. After divorce, the code assures women only 100 days of support from their former husbands.

[37] Morocco's Islamic foundations over the last seven centuries have been flexible, diverse, and changing. Those who claim a "unified, singular, and unvarying" Islamic tradition are a product of the present, not the past. They represent a "new" phenomenon on the scene as Mervat Hatem's argues when analyzing Islamic "fundamentalism" in Egypt in "Thinking the Unthinkable: The Egyptian Islamist Discourse as a Stepchild of Modernity and the Nation State" (1995).

[38] The billion dollar estimated cost for the mosque comes from *The New York Times International* of October 5, 1993 in the article entitled "Casablanca Journal, World's Tallest Minaret." *Le Monde* of August 30, 1993 estimates the cost at approximately 750—800 million dollars. No official calculation of the cost of the mosque has ever been released.

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