

**Female Genital Mutilation, Political Corruption, and
Women’s Rights in Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi’s “Against the
Pleasure Principle,” “Government by Magic Spell”, and
“The Barren Stick”**



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Abstract

This paper is a study of Somali fiction writer Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi’s three short stories: “Against The Pleasure Principle” (1990), which is about female genital mutilation; “Government By Magic Spell” (1992), which is a criticism of the political corruption; and “The Barren Stick” (2002), which is the story of the strife of a woman in her two marriages.

Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi’s stories delve into the intricacies of several burning issues. It can be described as a treatise advocating for deserting the old ways as the only way to move forward and bring peace and harmony to both the individual and to the Somali society as a whole. Her short stories have one theme in common: the desire for positive change aimed at transforming Somalia into a country characterized by basic human rights and an emphasize on political institutions based on rule of law.

Keywords: Somali, women issue, political corruption, Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi, female circumcision.

“Suugaanta ama fannaaniintu, waqti kasta oo la joogo, sida jaraa’idka oo kale hadba wixii dalkooda ka dhaca ayay wax ka tiriyaan.”

Abwaan Cabdi Muxumud Amiin 31

I-Introduction

Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi¹ writes fiction imprinted with a commitment to the betterment of her Somali society, especially the condition of women; her stories speak against traditional cultures but also articulate a different better Somalia. The three short stories revolve around women's rights, female genital mutilation and politics of corruption. The common theme of these three stories is the desire for positive change.

The following thematic study examines the inscriptions of these burning issues in the fictional texts at the time of their composition. It is worth mentioning /It has not escaped our notice that Somalia continues to suffer from politics of corruption severely while there are ameliorations in varying degrees in the other issues.

From the confines of traditional homes to the open space of Mogadishu and then to a metropolitan city in the West, the desire for change keeps the characters moving on their separate but interlinked paths towards a world-view that accepts and sustains differences; change is knitted from the private space upwards and outwards to the public space where small individual desires for change meet consolidating each other's yearning for an alternative reality. The women-protagonists of the three stories present the reader with Somalis bringing to the foreground a change that extends beyond the limits of the nuclear family.

Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi, born in Mogadishu in the 1950s, is one of the first Somali woman writers to use English as a medium of creative expression. She holds a B.A. in English literature from King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah and a MA from the American University in Cairo, and taught at King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah. She has two sons and two daughters and lives between the UK, the USA, Kenya, and Somalia (Achebe 198; Langer 320).

Saida Herzi is the author of three short stories: “Against The Pleasure Principle” (1990), which is about female genital mutilation; “Government by Magic Spell” (1992), which is about politics of corruption which exploits the negative primordial cultures or deviances in the society; and “The Barren Stick” (2002), which is the story of the strife of a woman in her two marriages.

II- Female Genital Mutilation in “Against the Pleasure Principle”

“Against the Pleasure Principle”² is described by French scholar Marie-Louise Mallet as a “nouvelle autobiographique [où] Rahma [est] l'alter ego de Hagi-Dirie Herzi” (343), which suggests that Saida Herzi herself might have been influenced by her own life in writing this short story.

“Against The Pleasure Principle” is the story of Rahma, a pregnant Somali newly-wed of twenty-three who is thrilled at the news that “her husband had been awarded a scholarship to one of the Ivy-league universities in the United States” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244); to move from Somalia to the USA carries with it many benefits including better education, better housing, and superior health care to that available in Somalia. Rahma is not only “all excitement” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244) because of her husband’s scholarship but also because “she was going to have her baby—the first—in the US” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244); from this, one gathers that Rahma believes that she and her yet-to-be-born child will

be offered the “best medical care in the world” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244), which, in the case of Rahma, is something worth having—indeed highly required, as will be stressed subsequently.

Nonetheless, Rahma’s mother objects to her daughter’s travelling to the USA; initially, the reader is led to believe that the opposition of Rahma’s mother stems from a fear of losing her companionship (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244). Then the reader is given more speculation about the refusal that include the fear that Rahma will not “come back at all” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244), that she will “throw overboard the ways of [her] people and adopt the ways of the outside world” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244), and that Rahma will act as though she was “superior to all those who stayed behind” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244); thus Rahma’s mother is presented as someone who desires to enshrine the Somali culture and beliefs in her offspring.

Eventually, the reader is confronted with another reason behind Rahma’s mother’s resistance to her daughter’s journey to the USA; in fact, Rahma’s “mother also seemed worried about Rahma having her baby in the US” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244). Here, one is left to wonder why anyone would object to having better medical care, since “problems, if any, would be more likely to arise at home than there [USA]” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244); but subsequently, the reader discovers that “like all women in her native setting, Rahma was circumcised” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 244). Thus, American doctors are perceived in two different manners: by Rahma as a potential help for her in delivering safely and by Rahma’s mother as an impending calamity, since Rahma’s circumcision, which was done at the age of four, will be discovered and might not be properly dealt with by American doctors who are unfamiliar with such condition.

What is interesting in the case of Rahma is that she was the one who ‘wanted’ to be circumcised and who rushed her family into circumcising her due to the “feast of circumcision” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 245). In other

words, when nine-year old Rahma's sister was about to be circumcised, the 'ritual' was surrounded by an appealing aura: "relatives were bringing gifts—sweets, cakes, various kinds of delicious drinks, trinkets; and her sister was the center of attention" (Herzi, "Pleasure" 245). Witnessing the 'feast' and the 'glamour,' Rahma feels "jealous [and] left out" (Herzi, "Pleasure" 245) and urges her mother to circumcise her. This shows how Somali families and culture lure their daughters into perceiving female genital circumcision as a celebratory event; indeed, Fadumo Korn writes in her *Born in the Big Rains* that "the girls can't wait for this day. But they don't know what they're waiting for" (41). Circumcision is given the imprint of a sacred rite of passage from childhood to adulthood, one that girls awaiting to go through it ought to want and to demand.

In fact, the act of self-sacrifice turns into a traumatic event in which the pain inflicted by the women is so immense that Rahma "passed out" (Herzi, "Pleasure" 245). The pain, which Rahma was made to suffer, is emphasized by the presence of "several women [who] were playing tin drums . . . the intent of the drums was to drown the screams that would be coming from her [Rahma's] throat in a moment" (Herzi, "Pleasure" 245); when she wakes up, Rahma realizes that "all the outer parts of her small genitals were cut off, lips, clitoris and all, and [that] the mutilated opening stitched up with a thorn" (Herzi, "Pleasure" 245).

Rahma finds that they left "a passage the size of a grain of sorghum" for passing water (Herzi, "Pleasure" 245). The society had their own standards for the size of the opening, "an opening the size of a grain of rice is considered ideal; one as big as a grain of sorghum is acceptable. However, should it turn out as big as a grain of maize, the poor girl would have to go through the ordeal a second time" (Herzi, "Pleasure" 246). In this respect, Raqiya Haji Dualeh Abdalla indicates that "the main purpose of the operation is to achieve a small opening, just big enough to permit urine and menstrual blood to flow out" (20).

Female genital mutilation is perceived by Somali society as a “measure of hygiene” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 246), but actually female genital mutilation is “if anything, anti-hygienic” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 246) because it does not allow for urine and menstrual blood to pass in a sanitary and effortless manner. Raqiya Haji Dualeh Abdalla writes that such a procedure has short-term and long-term complications including hygiene-related ones such as infection leading to *vaginitis* and retention of urine that can spread more infections throughout the genitalia (21-2). Then, what is the real reason?

The title of the short story unmistakably points to the answer: it is essentially a question of pleasure... Female circumcision is a tool for the control of women's sexuality. Mohamud Siad Togane writes in his poem “Zara,” describing female circumcision: “Murdering the seat of her pleasure// . . . //to insure her virginity, her chastity, her humility//to insure our family honour and dignity” (47).

In the case of Rahma's mother, one is confronted by two opposing views: first, she supports female genital mutilation and, second, she is afraid for the life of her daughter's unborn child if she chooses to deliver the baby outside of Somalia; “Rahma's mother . . . did not think a US doctor could be trusted to make the right cut . . . He might cut upward *and* downward [which] could mean trouble for all future deliveries” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 246). The question here is: Why then would a mother, who knows the possible side effects of such an act, still support it? In fact, Rahma's mother believes in female circumcision because it is part of the culture, and the mother, been circumcised herself, would want her daughter to be like her (Herzi, “Pleasure” 248-9); she even invited two circumcised Somali mothers, who lived in the USA, to warn Rahma of how they were humiliated “feeling like [like they were] freak[s]” (Herzi, “Pleasure” 248) in the land where female circumcision is not practiced.

Nevertheless, none of the advice of her mother or the women change Rahma's thinking on female circumcision: "How much longer, she [Rahma] wondered, would the women of her culture have to endure such senseless mutilation?" (Herzi, "Pleasure"249); Rahma reasons that "though her people made believe circumcision was a religious obligation, it was really just an ugly custom that had been borrowed from ancient Egyptians" (Herzi, "Pleasure"249).

As the story reaches the end, one learns that Rahma has made up her mind that "no daughter of hers would be ever circumcised" (Herzi, "Pleasure"249); Rahma has witnessed both the pain of undergoing '*female genital mutilation*' and its effects on her life. In brief, given that this short story is written by a woman, who herself most probably underwent female circumcision; the story clearly warns against such a practice and argues for its end. Herzi's story is stitched together as a manifesto against stitching and mutilating female genitalia.

III- Politics of Corruption in "Government by Magic Spell"

Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi's second short story "Government by Magic Spell"³ which is an exploration of Political Corruption which intertwines superstitions with clannish politics in Somalia, revolves around the figure of Halima, a Somali woman who is "possessed by a jinni" (Herzi, "Spell"94). A jinni is Arabic for a spirit, who is capable of taking over the body, mind, and at times the voice of humans; as it is the case of Halima, "possessed by the spirit of an infant, which she had stepped on by accident, one night in front of the bathroom" (Herzi, "Spell"94).

In Arabic mythology, jinnis can have some magical powers such as granting people their desires; a good example of this is the story of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp in *The Arabian Nights* where Aladin uses the jinni to acquire wealth and marry Princess Badroulbador (116).⁴

Indeed, Saida Herzi's story follows the same trajectory where Halima's relatives use the jinni to gain power in Mogadishu; the wadaad, Somali for a religious healer, says that "the spirit was of the benevolent sort, one that was more likely to help" (Herzi, "Spell"94). In the case of Halima, her jinni is her "servant" (Herzi, "Spell" 95), who made her "experience a feeling of power, as though she could do things beyond the reach of ordinary human beings" (Herzi, "Spell" 96). Halima's jinni "came to be regarded as a blessing for her family, an asset to the whole clan" (Herzi, "Spell" 96), in which the clan manages to keep power through the jinni; another example of the use of jinni to acquire things or privileges can be found in Somali writer Yousuf Duhul's short story "The Last Morning of Buttonnose" where the protagonist Ahmed "wished he had the lamp [Aladin's lamp]. The first order he would give to the jinnee would be to teach him to read" (18).

British scholar Catherine Lynette Innes describes Herzi's story as an example of narratives which are "thinly veiled allegories or documentaries" (6); in fact, one can argue that Saida Herzi's story is a criticism of dictatorship. In her story, Saida Herzi points to the fact that ruling politicians resorted to anything to keep power by any means; Halima's jinni was to be used to "protect the clan and to ensure its continued domination" (Herzi, "Spell" 97). This was done in two forms: "tahleel" and "annual sacrifices" (Herzi, "Spell" 97).

On the one hand, tahleel consists of "a special type of water, over which certain rituals were performed" (Herzi, "Spell" 97).⁵ In the case of Halima's tahleel, its function is "to cure people of curiosity" (Herzi, "Spell" 98); upon drinking it, people "stopped wondering about the actions of the clan's leading men. They became model subjects doing without questions . . . what they were told" (Herzi, "Spell" 98). Thus, Halima's tahleel made people "docile" (136), using Michel Foucault's

notion; they were “subjected, used, transformed and improved” (136) in accordance with the interest of the ruling politicians.

Eventually, thanks to Halima’s tahleel and sacrifices, “the men of the clan continue to govern with the help of Halima’s magic spell” (Herzi, “Spell”99); were one to summarize Herzi’s story, it can be described as a call for Somali society to free itself of superstitions and to reshape Somali politics outside of corruption and tribal paradigm.

IV- Women’s Mistreatment in “The Barren Stick”

“The Barren Stick,”⁶ a first person narrative, is Herzi’s latest short story to be published; it chronicles the life of Sharifa, her two marriages, and her struggle to bear a child. The story foregrounds the issues of women’s rights and subjection in a patriarchal environment. The story starts with Sharifa’s declaration that “... one is lucky to be born male. Girls are thought of as lost labour” (Herzi, “Barren” 217).

This subjection of Somali girls and women takes on an economic aspect, one that perceives sin women a lost economic potential. Traditional Somali families perceive girls as being only “expensive to raise” (Herzi, “Barren” 217) without a possible repayment.

Moreover, the mistreatment against Somali girls is also based on a fear of premarital sex: “They [girls] are trouble because they may bring shame to their family, if God forbid they may bring an illegitimate child into the house” (Herzi, “Barren” 217).

In a traditional society where “women’s rights under [the patriarchal] customary law are limited” (Musse Ahmed 57), a woman does not choose her partner; this environment is what Ladan Affi calls “the master gender narrative” (92). It is no surprise then that Sharifa states that “the value of

a girl, like that of a cow, is based on her ability to work and to produce offspring. Preferably male offspring" (Herzi, "Barren" 218).

In her family, Sharifa is mistreated, in which her family "was determined to get as much as possible out of [her]" in terms of work (Herzi, "Barren" 217). "Long before [her] bones had grown strong, [she] was made to carry water over long distances, bring firewood and pound grain" (Herzi, "Barren" 217). At this younger age and given that her body is not fully grown, the other activities assigned to Sharifa, which also include "planting," "harvesting," and "work[ing] in the fields from dawn to dusk" (Herzi, "Barren" 217).

For Sharifa, the only escape from the tyranny of the family is to enter the institution of marriage, because she is well aware that her current situation within the family house is not going to change for the better. This quasi-escape can only be sanctioned by Sharifa's male relatives who:

Often [were] talking about what they would get as my dowry. Father would say, "If we are lucky we will get ten cows," and one of my brothers would interrupt, "No way, this can't be, we only have one and we should try to get as many as twenty." (Herzi, "Barren" 218)

It is significant here that Sharifa has no say in the decision making about her marriage. Not only is she written out of the history of her society, as Affi describes the situation of Somali women in traditional settings (91), but Sharifa is also written out of the construction of her own future and is denied the right to decide on any of the decisions related to her marriage. The issue of dowry is essentially about Sharifa's family acquiring as much wealth as they can to compensate for Sharifa as "lost labor" (Herzi, "Barren" 217). It is, indeed, because of the bride-price that Sharifa's family do not mind marrying her at the age of thirteen to "a widower [her]

father's age [who] had just lost his wife and needed someone to take care of him and his children" (Herzi, "Barren" 218). The "greed" of Sharifa's family (Herzi, "Barren" 218) makes of her as a maid in her husband's house not his partner.

During her preparations for her marriage, Sharifa is asked "to gather the sticks with which [her] husband would beat" her (Herzi, "Barren" 218); Sharifa explains that since most girls "marry young, [they] have to be beaten to become good and obedient" (Herzi, "Barren" 218), making her an accomplice in the very violence she will have to endure. As a matter of fact, in a Somali buraanbur, a mother tells her daughter of the same practice that Sharifa describes:

hangool ku yadhiyoo hawsha kugu dilaa

misana adigoon wax dhimin, aabi kugu dilaa

A hooked stick he may ask you to fetch

To beat you with for mistakes minor you make or for no cause at all. (qtd. in Hanghe 34)⁷

Since "women [like Sharifa] wish to free themselves from the burden of such degrading work [in their families' households] by making a good marriage" (Dualeh Abdalla 58), they also have to accept to be physically mistreated by their husbands; it is a matter of exchanging authorities, replacing the father and other male relatives by the husband. The mother in the buraanbur attempts at "preparing [her daughter] for the severity of life" as a wife (Affi 95).

Sharifa's situation in her husband's home is not much different from that in her family's home: "Nothing ever pleased my husband" (Herzi, "Barren" 218). Her husband's attitudes towards her are driven by his "fond[ness] of saying: 'Women were created from the crooked rib of Adam, and they should be straightened out'" (Herzi, "Barren" 218-9). By

insisting on Sharifa being “trained another way by [her] husband,” as different to her training by her family (Herzi, “Barren” 219), Sharifa’s husband is, in fact, going against the wisdom of the Somali proverb which indicate that “anyone who tries to straighten it, breaks it” (qtd. in Farah, *Crooked Rib* 1; qtd. in AlSayed 120). His desire to shape Sharifa into what he perceives to be the perfect image of being a woman is solely his to govern and construct.

In the midst of this repressive environment, the sticks, which Sharifa has collected prior to her marriage, are used by her husband to inflict pain on her: “Beating me seemed the only thing that gave him any pleasure . . . scars on my face and the limp on my hip” (Herzi, “Barren” 219); whatever Sharifa does or does not, she gets beaten, attesting to the observation by the narrator in Yasmeeen Maxamuud’s *Nomad Diaries* (2009): “Any abuse from husband to wife was abuse the wife invited in some way or another” (27). Sharifa’s marriage, marred by physical violence, is to Sharifa’s shock perceived by other Somali women as the sign of a man’s love: “They [other Somali women] believe that the more you are loved, the more you are beaten [. . .] refer[ring] to it with pride” (Herzi, “Barren” 219). Sharifa’s rejection of such perception of physical violence makes her an oddity within her community; she would ask other women: “Do you call these scars signs of love? Any more signs like these and we will all be dead” (Herzi, “Barren” 219). In the case of Sharifa, domestic violence is socially sanctioned since she was in advance asked to collect sticks, the very tool used in inflicting violence.

Sharifa’s situation worsens when, as she describes it, “I could not bear children. That made my husband hates me. He felt cheated. There was no return for all that he invested in me” (Herzi, “Barren” 219). Since Sharifa is located in a traditionalist environment where the “position of the woman is entirely dependent [on the man]” (Dualeh Abdalla 58), her position within her husband’s house witnesses a shift that is centered on

her inability to procreate, resulting in her husband marrying again. The power dialectics in this relationship favor Sharifa's husband who eventually marries two other women and begets children; once he has definitely established that it is Sharifa who cannot bear children, he divorces her by saying "You are divorced [. . .] three times" (Herzi, "Barren" 219-20).

After divorce, Sharifa was forced to return to her family's house where her "brothers did not want" her and where her "parents had died" (Herzi, "Barren" 220). Upon her divorce, Sharifa thought that she "would be glad to be free, but being home with [her] family was hardly any better" (Herzi, "Barren" 220). At the center of her brothers' discontent with her is that "they had to give back half of the dowry [. . .] and were afraid that Sharifa "might claim [her] share of what they had inherited of livestock and land" (Herzi, "Barren" 220); her brothers are clearly motivated by financial considerations in their unhappiness with Sharifa's return to the family. Sharifa's return is considered a financial burden to her brothers because it means that there is one more person to support and also due to the dowry reimbursement. Sharifa's brothers unanimously perceive Sharifa as a loss on all levels: "The waste of it! Anything given to a woman would be wasted, just as she herself is a waste," Sharifa's brothers used to tell her (Herzi, "Barren" 220).

Sharifa's brothers married her to "the first man that passed through [the] village" (Herzi, "Barren" 220), ending the two-month period of squandering their savings on Sharifa. Within this new marriage, Sharifa states that "the routine of work [in her second husband's house] from dawn to dusk [was] punctuated by the occasional beating. This man was gentler" (Herzi, "Barren" 220). Odd as it may be, Sharifa sets a comparison between the beating from her former and her current husband; being a woman in traditional society explains such peculiar

comment by Sharifa in that she knows that the beating is inevitable, thus she might as well appreciate the gentler beating.

When her new husband, the witch-doctor of the village, discovers that she cannot bear him children, he makes her “drink countless cups of ostrich oil [,] vile-tasting concoctions made of herbs, roots and all sorts of other things I could not name” (Herzi, “Barren” 220-1). Eventually, Sharifa becomes pregnant and her husband “prophesie[s] that [she] would give birth to a boy who would inherit his profession” (Herzi, “Barren” 221). Unfortunately, the prophesy turns to be erroneous as Sharifa gives birth to a stillborn baby who was immediately buried indicating the end of any hope for Sharifa ever being a mother (Herzi, “Barren” 221). The reader is left to speculate on Sharifa’s fate: Will she be divorced? Indeed, given that Sharifa indicates earlier in the story that has she not got pregnant, “people would lose faith in his [her husband] curing skills, and his credibility as well as his income would suffer” (Herzi, “Barren” 220), it is most likely that she would be divorced as the death of her baby equals the failure of her husband, the witch-doctor.

V-Conclusion

Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi’s three stories delve into the intricacies of three burning issues affecting either one segment of the population or the whole population; deserting the old ways of denying women their rights, of female genital mutilation, and of superstitions and clannish politics is the only way to move forward and bring peace and harmony to both the individual and to the Somali society as a whole. Herzi’s commitment is evident in her call to address, criticize, and move beyond the plagues annoying Somali society.

Notes.

- ¹ Through a careful evaluation of limited biographical material, the author of this article believes that Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi is the daughter of Hagi Dirie Hirsi (1905-1976), a prominent Somali businessman, nationalist and member of the Somali Youth League (SYL) (1943-1969). In 1935, Hagi Dirie Hirsi married Hawa Hirsi Nur who gave birth to Saida, Ahmed, Shamsa, Asha, Habib, Amina, Kamar and Abdisalam. Hirsi's daughter, Saida, went to Cairo and Jeddah to study English literature, which corresponds to Saida Hagi-Dirie Herzi's own life (Lange n.p.). Herzi and Hirsi are two spellings of the same name. Saida Hagi Dirie Herzi born in Mogadishu in the 1950s.
- ² "Against the Pleasure Principle" was first published in *Index on Censorship* in October 1990. The story was subsequently republished in 'Daughters of Africa: An International Anthology of Words and Writings by Women of African Descent from the Ancient Egyptian to the Present' (1992, pages 777-81); 'A Map of Hope: Women's Writing on Human Rights: An International Literary Anthology' (1999, pages 244-9); 'Crossing the Border: Voices of Refugee and Exiled Women' (2002, pages 162-9); and 'Half a Day and Other Stories: An Anthology of Short Stories from North Eastern and Eastern Africa' (2004, pages 70-7). All editions of the story are the same. This essay uses the one in 'A Map of Hope: Women's Writing on Human Rights: An International Literary Anthology'.
- ³ "Government by Magic Spell" was first published in *The Heinemann Book of Contemporary African Short Stories* (1992, pages 94-9). The story was subsequently republished in *The Torn Veil: And Other Womens' Short Stories from the Continent of Africa* (1998, pages 52-6); and *Half a Day and Other Stories: An Anthology of Short Stories from North Eastern and Eastern Africa* (2004, pages 78-84). All editions of the story are the same. This essay uses the one in *The Heinemann Book of Contemporary African Short Stories*.
- ⁴ As told in Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger's *Aladdin, or, the Wonderful Lamp: A Dramatic Poem in Two Parts* (1863).
- ⁵ For other depictions of tahleel in Somali fiction, please refer first to Abdi-Noor Haji Mohamed's *A Cargo of Guilt*, in which Hooyo Magaado brings back a tahlilil (100) in order to save her daughter Safi from a mysterious sickness (the

tahleel, its rationale and its effects are closely described from page 100 to page 104. Tahleel and tahlil are two different spellings of the same procedure).

⁶ “The Barren Stick” was first and only published in ‘Crossing the Border: Voices of Refugee and Exiled Women’ (2002, pages 217-21).

⁷ The song is entitled “The duties of a young wife”, it is song #23 of Folk Songs from Somalia). In the introduction of this song, Xaange said “In this buraanbur work song the mother is describing the difficult domestic work which her daughter has to carry out in her own household when she is married, emphasizing that the young wife would have to stand on her own in the management of her domestic affairs without relying on other women, not even on her own mother” (Hanghe 34).

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