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**The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences**

**A Pill, a Cup of Tea, and a Cigarette:
Male Body in Egypt at the Age of Viagra**

A Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, and Egyptology

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

In Sociology - Anthropology

By Youssef Ramez Boktor

Under the supervision of Dr. Hanan Sabea

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Abstract

From disciplined self to ‘Viagra-self’ is a transition that men experience in the ‘age of Viagra’. My field work looks at how chemically enhanced sexual performance has been normalized in a specific way that signifies the deliberate control over human’s sexual performance. How the sexual relationship - in a specific socio-cultural context - becomes the most available path to seek happiness ‘*inbesat*’, in low priced form. The ‘Viagra-self’ learns how to invest in parts of the body in order to perform, to experience how the chemically enhanced body can proclaim control and time (sexual) performance. The Viagra-self, in the era of performance, learns that it has to perform although it has an exhausted body that has to work restless in order to live

The age of oral ‘sexual enhancing pills’ is built around a whole pharmaceutical industry that include Viagra; generic Egyptian pills such as Virecta, Eric, Dur Joy, other Chinese pills such as Dragon and Tiger King, in addition to Tramadol - since it is used by Egyptian men as sexual enhancing pill. In that respect, it is becoming increasingly evident how global pharmaceutical industry finds a new site for exercising its power and authority over the human body. The industry of ‘sexual enhancers’ extends the possible spaces of subsumption that it include human sexual experience, at night after the ‘official’ end of the work day, at home, and in the beds. I attempt to show how imaginations, rationalities, dreams, fears, and desires are being shaped and reshaped in the age of Viagra.

Hence, I chose to conduct my research among public servants ‘*muwazzafin*’ in Cairo, irrespective if they are ‘diagnosed’ as patients of ‘sexual dysfunction’ or not, and regardless if they use ‘enhancing pills’ or not. I look at the ways through which ‘enhancing pills’ live with those public servants’ daily experiences at streets, in their children’s songs, their coffee talks, and in transportations.

I also move to assist a pharmacist in a local pharmacy in Imbaba neighbourhood –where one of my interlocutor’s family lives. ‘Sexual enhancers’ are part of a larger market of growing global pharmacological industry that exercises increasing control over human bodies. A local pharmacy is a place in which people negotiate their pain, disappointments, dreams, hopes and above all their coping mechanisms. I also explore how pharmacological companies find their mediators in Imbaba through a local pharmacy

I then move with another interlocutor to his work place in one of Cairo's governmental agencies to study how Viagra and Tramadol are being circulated as gifts and how a whole 'net-work' is being operated by the 'light-gift' of the sexual enhancing pills. I consider this 'sexual gift' net-work a 'desiring-up' site the sense that it constitutes social recognition of a specific sexual performance

Chapter 1: 'A pill, a cup of tea, and a cigarette'

Introduction:

“It seems only a matter of time before most people will have had some experience with sexuality drugs”. (Tiefer, 2006, p. 285). Our surrounding ‘realities’ can be conceptualized as a place of contemporary hospitalization. There are no clear-cut borders in contemporary times, between locations that are specified as hospitalization sites and spaces which are not. Every human being currently is to be considered as a ‘disease survivor’ or/and a patient- in progress (Frank, 1997).

The age of oral ‘sexual enhancing pills’ is built around a whole pharmaceutical industry that include Viagra; generic Egyptian pills such as Virecta, Eric, Dur Joy, other Chinese pills such as Dragon and Tiger King, in addition to Tramadol - since it is used by Egyptian men as sexual enhancing pill. In that respect, it is becoming increasingly evident how global pharmaceutical industry finds a new site for exercising its power and authority over the human body. It is through the control over man’s desires, imaginations and practices that it could enhance the desires of docile productive bodies. As Deleuze - and Spinoza at first- informs, desire is always positive. Desire should not be seen as incompleteness or lack; instead, desire is positive and “associated with transformative production and experimentation” (Potts, 2004, p. 18). Desire, although subjected to control in the age of sexual pills, opens potentialities in the social, its enhancement enables negotiating pain, fears, imaginations and dreams.

Through this research I examine how the male body and its sexuality in the twenty first century Egypt are being continuously shaped and reshaped in the age of Viagra. I give an understanding of what it means for a man to experience his everydayness while being fully immersed in different contexts that persistently promote practices and enforce discourses of ‘chemically enhanced sexuality’. Hence, I chose to conduct my research among public servants ‘*muwazzafin*’ in Cairo and look at the ways through which ‘enhancing pills’ live with those public servants’ daily experiences at streets, in their children’s songs, their coffee talks, and in transportations. I also move to assist a pharmacist in a local pharmacy in Imbaba neighbourhood –where one of my interlocutor’s family lives. My participation in the pharmacy has helped to sketch an understanding of how the enhancing pills among other medicines are being circulated.

I then move with another interlocutor to his work place in one of Cairo's governmental agencies to study how Viagra and Tramadol are being circulated as gifts and how a whole 'net-work' is being operated by the 'light-gift' of the sexual enhancing pills.

Moreover, I am tracing the process of fetishizing the so-called 'sexual enhancing pills' in the Egyptian socio-political context. I am examining how this commodity moved from being banned accessible only to the wealthy an extensively available one at a low price. I also draw on how an enhancing pill 'Tramadol' went in a war with the state.

My field work looks at how chemically enhanced sexual performance has been normalized in a specific way that signifies the deliberate control over human's sexual performance. As normal as it is to have a cup of tea¹ with a painkiller in order to cure a headache, it is becoming equally 'normal' for an Egyptian man to have an enhancing pill with a cup of tea (this habit is specially attached with Tramadol), or a 'sexual enhancing pill' with a cigarette of hash in order to afford chemically timed and controlled enhanced erection and delayed ejaculation.

In order to build an understanding of the ways through which the enhancing pills circulate, it is important to first draw the larger picture of the material conditions of existence of my interlocutors, public servants '*muwazzafin*' from Cairo. One indispensable picture for parallel examination would be that of consumption mediums in pharmacies. Virecta, Eric, Viagra, Golden Pill, Dragon, Tramadol and all the other 'sexual enhancers' are parts of a larger market of growing global pharmacological industry that exercises increasing control over human bodies. At a local pharmacy in Imbaba I contextualize the larger habits of consuming and distributing medicines. A local pharmacy is a place in which people negotiate their pain, disappointments, dreams, hopes and above all their coping mechanisms. They speak it with a local pharmacist, with whom they have very particular relations (that will be thoroughly reflected upon in chapter three). I also trace the enhancing pills life in what is socially framed as a typical 'production place' - exemplified in a governmental agency work site. I provide a reading through how 'enhancing pills' circulate as gifts, and how then they effectively open new potentialities and build social connections.

¹ There is a general believe in Egypt that drinking tea makes some medicines and drugs (especially painkillers) work faster. A cup of tea might also contain needed low priced energy in the form of sugar.

The industry of ‘sexual enhancers’ extends the possible spaces of consumption that it include human sexual experience, at night after the ‘official’ end of the work day, at home, and in the beds.

Background

The global medicine industry is one of the most growing industries in the world with total revenues market of one trillion US dollars per year (Statista, 2015). Almost 50% of this market is dominated by ten big corporations (Statista, 2015). In Egypt pharmaceutical industry total revenues was estimated at 2.48 billion US dollar in the last year 2014. (BMI, 2014). Almost have of the Egypt’s medicine market is dominated by ten companies six of them are multinational corporations (MSD , 2012, p.2).

In 1990 a side effect of a chemical substance called Sildenafil Citrate led to the invention of Viagra, when it was discovered by mere chance that it enhances erections. On March 27th 1998, the American Food and Drug Administration (AFD) approved Viagra as the first oral pill ever to treat ‘erectile dysfunction’. Within two weeks more than 100,000 American men consumed the Blue pill (Wassef and Mansour , 1999). By the end of the first year Pfizer made more than one billion in sales of Viagra (Loe, 2001, p. 120). Viagra became a drug that is covered by health insurance in some of the biggest entities worldwide; in the year 2014, the US Department of Defense (DOD) spent \$41.6 million on Viagra — and \$84.24 million in total on erectile dysfunction prescriptions (Times, 2015).

In Egypt Viagra was not authorized for four years (1998-2002). In June 2002 Pfizer had the exclusive right to produce Viagra in Egypt under the protection of TRIPS (Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement and the new patent Egyptian law (Al-Ali, 2002). In June 2006, local pharmaceutical companies were authorized to produce generic Viagra. Then, a new generation of ‘sexual enhancing oral pills’ appeared in the Egyptian market for an average price of 2 EGPs per pill (0.3\$)² -that included new pills which delay ejaculation. Currently approximately 500 million pills are annually consumed in the local market, with a documented growth rate of 20% (Alborsa News, 2014).

² The average exchange rate for the year 2014 is 7.1 EGPs per US dollar.

Children while playing in streets, sing the local sexual enhancing pills ads songs. In the last few years Viagra was even given as a gift in parliamentary and presidential elections. Tramadol (used as 'sexual enhancers' among men in Egypt) became the object of daily talks between millions of ordinary 'citizens', as well as, personal chats and jokes between Egypt's current president Abdul Fattah al-Sisi and his office manager General Abbas (Middle East Eye, 2015).

I conducted this research among public servants '*muwazzafin*' who belong to -what is socially and academically framed as- middle class in Cairo. Males "stuck-in-the-middle of the post-industrial class structure" compile a large group in the scene of circulating and consuming the enhancing pills. Men stuck-in-the-middle have been socialized to expect that they can gain a respected social position by 'following the rules' of the middle class; receiving a university education, working hard, striving to be the 'best' (Douglas B. Holt and Craig J. Thampson, 2004, p. 231). *Muwazzafin* have to work extra jobs in order to earn a living, and at the same time they are required to position themselves towards the growing discourse of 'normal sexuality' that is chemically enhanced.

Appadurai (1986) argues that 'things have no meanings apart from those that human transactions, attributions, and, motivations endow them with' (p.5). However, he calls researchers to 'follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, and their trajectories' (p.5). Commodities make its manifestation throughout its 'social life' (P. 9). In this research I trace Viagra's social manifestation to reveal how specific objects of knowledge of the male body and its sexuality are being made visible and invisible in the academia as well as in everyday discourses. Viagra becomes one of this thesis 'interlocutress'. It tells its life story to manifest how human and things can shape and reshape each other. While Viagra (Sildenafil Citrate) was authorized as the first oral 'treatment' of 'erectile dysfunction', the neoliberal pharmacological industry widely produced it as 'sexual enhancer'. Viagra and its family members such as Eric, Virecta, Dragon, as well as Tramadol have already been transformed into 'lifestyle' chemical enhancers (Loe, 2001, p. 98). How this transformation took place is the question of this research.

Significance and limitations

Sexual enhancers are one of the ‘pharmaceutical discoveries’ that marked the end of the twentieth century, and the beginnings of the current century which are characterized by supranational capital global trading institutions, and mass consumption. However there are even less studies that explore the effects of the rise and expansion of sexual enhancer pills in the last decade. There are almost no anthropological studies focusing on such question in Egypt. This research thus contributes to an understudied field.

My positionality –in terms of being a male researcher- has worked as a serious obstacle for including women’s experiences and views in regard to their male partners’ sexual performance, and how they interact with it in the age of Viagra. However, the ways in which the male body is being shaped and reshaped in the age of chemically enhanced performance take place within socio-political and cultural context that both women and men live - although with different experiences. However, this research is not to be seen as ‘for men only’, or ‘about men only’. Actually, a research that is ‘for men only’ is not even worth writing, and a research that is ‘about men only’ is simply impossible. The age of Viagra, the age of chemically enhanced body and controlled performance, cannot be imagined as a men only age, this is impossible. The male body is configured and experienced in the social. The social can be imagined as a platform in which all sorts of power relations are interacting and overlapping, as a transfiguration of continuous motion of relations between humans and things in which they constantly create each other. This research then could be considered as a call for many other needed studies to explore what it means for humans to live in the age of Viagra; the Blue bill (for men) and the Pink pill (for women).

Conceptual frame work

I use the framework of Foucault’s notion of discursive practices in which he assumes that genealogies of discipline is stated (even in the form of silences and discontinuity) in power discourses that aim to govern the human body. For Foucault power exercises itself over bodies in order to produce docile productive bodies (Foucault, *The Right of Death and Power over Life*, 1984, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, 1972, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, 1977). Foucault constitutes a grounding for this study also in the sense that it offers a thorough reading of the ways in which punishments are internalized individually and socially and how they are politically made ready to prevent and penalize any

possible transgression or diversion from the dictated roles of the 'society of control'. I use the Foucauldian lens to read through the 'impact' of technology and medical science on the male body.

I draw also on Althusser's notion of "repression machine". I use his concept of ideological state apparatuses that produce, enforce, and sustain ideology. For Althusser ideology "represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser, 1970, p. 23). In my research, individuals need to feel and imagine that they are being recognized by their material conditions of existence, because they can recognize themselves as male-bodies only when they are subjected to the ideological apparatuses that dominate masculinity.

Althusser argues that we are "always already subjects" (even before we are born), and we "practice the rituals of ideological recognition". This practice enables us to recognize ourselves as "concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects" (Althusser, 1970, p. 29). We practice rituals of subjectification such as the hand-shaking or the simple fact "of knowing, even if I do not know what it is, that you 'have' a name of your own, which means that you are recognized as a unique subject" (ibid, p. 9).

I draw also on Butler's 'precarity' as a mode of life under which humans in the intense contemporary moment exercise their existence, a mode in which gender performativity 'has everything to do with who counts as a life' (Butler, 2009).

Haraway argues that the modern medicine is full of coupling between the organism and machine; "we are all chimeras theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics" (Haraway, 1991, P150). I use Haraway's argument to examine how Viagra and Tramadol took part in the wider context of modern medicalization of the body. It normalizes and rationalizes the idea of the 'chemically enhanced body', and then it mechanicalizes imaginations and practices of the male body and its sexual performance.

Comparative ethnographic work

-The disembodiment of men

When I began researching previous studies that deal with my primary issue; ‘how men in Egypt live their male sexuality in the age of the Blue Pill’, I found very little related studies. There is little attention given to the male body and male sexuality. Most of the available studies dealt with ‘masculinity’, and ‘hegemonic masculinity’ (Beasley, 2008). Many usages of the concept ‘hegemonic masculinity’ imply a fixed character type of gender dynamics. They deploy simple and static model of gender hierarchy, lacks a reading of the agency of women and possibilities of movement toward gender democracy (R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, 2005). Although male sexuality is related to masculinity, they should not be equated as one and the same. Men are not born into a “masculine status”, they practice their “rituals of subjectification” in their own everyday life, in diverse ways, under and with their own material conditions of existence.

Farha Ghannam’s 2013 ethnography is built on an extended relationship with Al-Zawiya (a popular neighborhood in Cairo) for more than 20 years. She introduces her research by referring to a part of the problem I faced; there is very limited literature that deals with the male body and male sexuality in Egypt and the Arab region. For her, this lack of literature made it hard for her to think about the male body as a subject of analysis – although she engaged her ‘field work’ for almost 20 years (p.3). Men were treated as if they belong to the realm of mind, culture, market, and the public, not as bodies (p.3). She emphasizes that, in the academic field, there is a ‘disembodiment of men’ (p.4). Through her research Ghannam noticed how boys talk about and take care of their bodies, and how religious audio tapes, in the 1990s, focused on young men’s bodies and their sexual desires that need to be managed and controlled. She introduced the male body as “biological entity that is elaborated by specific economic, social, cultural, political, and religious forces” (p.5). She also emphasized that issues of women were heavily tackled in the last 30 years, while very few studies tackled men. For her, ‘leaving masculinity’ is one of the male body’s fields that are ‘under-studied and under-theorized’ (p.5). Many studies examined how ‘patriarchy’ affects the woman’s body, but very few studies focused on how patriarchy ‘distances men from their bodies’ (p.6). She argues that there is a lack of understanding the male body as ‘... [A]subject of social regulations, meanings, and expectations’ (p.6).

Ghannam in her research draws on what she called the ‘masculine trajectory’. This phrase

-‘masculine trajectory’ - ‘builds on and departs from the common notion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ that is used to refer to practices that allow the continuity of men’s domination over women’ (p. 7). She found that tracing the ‘masculine trajectory’ can help us understand how ‘masculinity is materialized, supported, challenged, and reinforced’ (p.8).

Ghannam did not deal with male sexuality although her focus was to give a reading of how men are “biological entities” as bodies elaborated by specific economic, social, cultural, political, and religious forces. She did not deal with male sexuality for two reasons; first, she distinguished between the body and its sexuality performance. And she chose to give her research attention to the male body and how it inhabits his ‘masculinity’, rather than, how it exercises its sexuality. The second reason that Ghannam gave not to deal with male sexuality in detail is that her gender – to some extent – limited her research. She preferred to ‘adhere to social norms when it comes to male/female interaction’ (p. 24). She was also excluded from male-only spaces such as local cafes and ‘bango-smoking sessions’ (Ghannam, 2013).

Discourses towards the male body are produced, elaborated, materialized, deployed, and re-produced all the time by many kinds of social and political subjects. One of the most significant studies that captures an important historical moment in which the Egyptian state articulated its discourse toward its ‘citizens’ bodies, is Kamran Ali’s *Planning the Family in Egypt* (2002) .

In this study Ali argues that a specific state discourse was produced that aimed to formulate new bodies and new selves in the wider context of capital expanse. He takes the Egyptian family planning program as a case study to argue that it does not just promote smaller families, but also ‘introduces or fosters notions of individual choice and responsibility, risk aversion, and personal independence” (p.1). Ali goes further considering that the state discourse “helps to construct a new kind of individuality, guided by legal constructs of citizenship rather than by communitarian and familial control” (p.1). The poor with large families were blamed for economic and social crises. At the same time, industrialized countries in Europe and North America introduced the ‘world population problem’ in a way that mainly reflects the rise of emigration of people from the south to the north.

Egypt introduced to its population a pedagogical project towards the ‘modern’. Although

the male body is not excluded, the main target of such a program was the female body. Here, women make the choice (of discipline) on behalf of the nation. Ali examines how – as Trouillot coined - ‘new categories of individuals are produced and strategically deployed’ (p.5). During his 1992 – 1994 fieldwork, Ali found that masculinity was tied with responsibility, being a man, sexual power and fertility (128). He found that men were afraid of using condoms as they felt that they did not receive or give sexual pleasure when using condoms, and that “the sperm traveled back and lodged in the muscles” (p.130). Men –according to Ali’s research – used anti-depression medication, and ‘local’ anesthetic spray that gives men ‘a painful yet prolonged erection’ (p.130). Men accepted this painful erection because they believed that women ‘take longer to reach orgasm’, and they had a fear that ‘unsatisfied woman may seek others to fulfill her needs’ (p.131). Ali concluded that using ‘local anesthetic spray’ and refusing condoms is in relation to the fear of men of not being capable of practicing ‘power and control’. However he did not examine this process in detail as it was not the major issue of his research. He also did not clarify the notion of ‘pain’ and ‘fear’ that men exercise and if women exercise another kind of ‘pain’ and ‘fear’? What is exactly ‘men’s fear’ and how do they resist this socially constructed fear?

Kamran Ali repeatedly emphasized men’s ‘concerns with their spouse’s orgasmic pleasure’ and that ‘indicates a sense of sharing and giving sexual pleasure’ (p. 131). However, he did not provide an explanation of this “sense of sharing and giving sexual pleasure” as it was not the focus of his research. Ali talks about ‘painful erection’ for men who use ‘local anesthetic spray’. From my field research I know that men use ‘anesthetic spray’ or ‘hemorrhoids ointment’ that contain anesthetic components in order to reduce their penis sensitivity, so that they may have a prolonged erection, yet with less sensitivity.

Ali (2002) opens for me a path for some of my main concerns in the research, such as ‘fear’, ‘pain’, ‘pleasure’, state discourse towards contemporary bodies, and using several kinds of drugs as sexual enhancers. He did not tackle, however, any of these issues in detail - except state discourse, as he focused on the female body, and he did his field research (1992 – 1994) before the appearance of ‘Viagra’. Ali was limited in his research in talking with women about the ways in which they interact with men fears, pains, and pleasures.

Seven years later, Wassef and Mansour did their study ‘Investigating Masculinities and

Female Genital Mutilation in Egypt' (1999). This study examines how men imagine female sexuality. It also studies media discourses about masculinity through analyzing a large number of news and journal articles that deal with the debates that unfolded with the controversial issue of legalizing Viagra in Egypt, and the discourses through which the government introduced its refusal to legalize Viagra. The refusal banned the official circulation or production of Viagra in the formal market for years. This study occasioned the first year after authorizing the Blue Pill in the US (1998). It shows how Viagra was not authorized ('banned') in Egypt as it was seen as a danger that threatened 'Egyptian's family morals' and badly affected men's health. However, the researchers did not talk with their interlocutors about the whole issue of Viagra or any other sexual enhancer.

- The Viagra Phenomenon

In the light of the speed and increasing production and consumption of the Blue Pill around the world, the male body and its sexuality got some academic attention. The ways in which the human body (male and female bodies) was deployed in the age of Viagra were the focus of academic studies around the world, especially in US. Although most of these studies come from medical backgrounds, other disciplines contributed to the new rising 'Viagra phenomenon' – that included law, political science, psychology, and anthropology (Tiefer, 2006).

Tiefer conducted many studies that focused on the 'Pink Viagra' (for females). However, her studies extended to engage the Blue Pill (Viagra for males) as a part of a larger domain that examines 'sexupharmaceutical'. She engages also with the larger domain of what so called 'pharmalogicalism'. In this domain, specific medicines are examined as they became 'cultural icons' that includes medicines such as aspirin, penicillin, birth control pills, mood regulators (Valium and Prozac), and, now Viagra (Tiefer, 2006, p. 276). She engage 'pharmalogicalism' from the background of Richard DeGrandpre, he defines 'pharmalogicalism' as:

“The matrix of centralized powers and discursive practices whose social function it is to reinforce an essentialism of drugs, of angels and demons, and in doing so, to obscure the sociocultural, political and economic structures that shape both drug understandings and drug effects” (p.276)

Tiefer focused on Viagra as she found in it a story that occupies an important role in the trajectories of both medicalization and de-medicalization of sexuality. Viagra extended far beyond its impact on human physiology, to shape social norms and practices. She calls our contemporary times; the 'oral pill-taking age'. In the oral pill age (the age of Viagra) sexualities are not medically transformed or enhanced by surgeries and urology only, but through oral treatments. Pills allege greater (and easier) control over human body and its sexuality. For her, "the branding of Viagra has succeeded so thoroughly in rationalizing the idea of sexual correction and enhancement through pills" (Tiefer, 2006, p. 287). She agrees that the thorough success of the Blue Viagra in 'rationalizing' and 'normalizing' the idea of 'sexual enhancing pills' made it "inevitable and only fair that such a product be made available for women' through the 'Pink Viagra' (p.287).

Other articles have discussed how Viagra contributes to "the illusion of hypermasculinity in the porn industry" (Tiefer, 2006, p. 287). Other researchers link the usage of Viagra to a rising 'crisis of masculinity'. The so-called 'crisis of masculinity' is "a unique cultural product of industrialization, bureaucratization of work, increasing competition in the workforce from women, destabilizing of traditional family hierarchies and communal networks", men have increasing dependence on consumerism as a means to cultivate feelings of "self-worth" (Douglas B. Holt and Craig J. Thompson, 2004, p. 315). The crisis of masculinity is 20th century phenomenon that bled into the new millennium, 'the social contract that once promised economic security for men who worked hard and followed the rules' is clearly not working (p. 315).

On the other hand, some studies emphasize that Viagra (and its ads discourse) construct a crisis of masculinity and sells the solution. This manufactured 'crisis' comes in the form of losing power, control and inability to control. The solution, given by the sexual oral pills, is "a larger and more powerful penis that will give men back their sense of manhood". It suggests a new way of constructing masculinity – through consumption (Sarah Jane Brubaker and Jennifer A. Johnson, 2008, p. 132).

Viagra is imagined and utilized as a tool for "'fixing" and producing masculinity" (Loe, 2001, p. 104). Meika Loe interviewed 25 male consumers in California, and found that Viagra can and is being used by consumers and practitioners to "enforce and perpetuate ideal and

corporeal masculinities” (p.108). She emphasizes that most practitioners and consumers agree that “loss of erectile function appears to be synonymous with loss of manhood” (p.108). Sexuality is a proving ground for masculinity.

- Inventing of sexual ‘standard –function’ and ‘dysfunction’

According to Althusser: “The ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the conditions of production. This may be ‘simple’ (reproducing exactly the previous conditions of production) or ‘on an extended scale’ (expanding them)” (Althusser L.,1970. p1). For the new comer to males’ sexual life in the shape of an ‘erection treatment’ to find his career as a ‘sexual enhancer’, spesific ‘conditions of production’ should be established, which includes inventing notions of male sexuality such as ‘standard function’ and ‘dysfunction’. These ‘conditions of production’ are being elaborated through political and social networks and relationships, media appratuses, and through medical discourse (at both levels: the acadmic ‘scientific’ level, and discourse that is produced for popular consumption).

The medical discourse on male sexuality utilizes ‘a reductionist and mechanistic view of sexual and physical performance’ by focusing exclusively on erection(Sarah Jane Brubaker and Jennifer A.Johnson, 2008, p.135). This exaggeration of the physical aspects of males sexuality presents a phallocentric understanding that distincts the physical and emotional aspects of sexuality and distinguish between “the body and self in terms of subjective experience” (ibip. p135).

Medical discourse contributed to establishing the necessary ground for Sildenafil Citrate (of Viagra) to be introduced as a ‘sexual enhancer’ instead of being a treatment for ‘erection dysfunction’. Medical studies had to define what ‘sexual dysfunction’ is. Annie Potts (2003) presents a qualitative study where she sheds light on the fact that in order to define any ‘dysfunction’ such as ‘sexual dysfunction’, medical researchers must introduce a pointed definition of what is ‘function"? They have to define the ‘normal’, ‘healthy’ sexual relationship, and how it should look like.

When she asked men and women about their experiences of sexual difficulties, she found

that ‘sexual experience and pleasure were diverse’. An anthropologist reading this phrase would not find this shocking. For anthropologists, the fact that human experiences such as sexual senses and pleasure are diverse, is not something to be ‘found’ in an in-depth qualitative study, it looks more like a given fact. However, for pharmacological scientists, Potts’s discovery and other similar observations were very controversial – if not wrong – as they threatened a whole field of pharmacology and one of the most powerful drug productions that treats sexual dysfunction in order to enable ‘the patient’ to have ‘sexual function’ (the standardized function) that should be sharply, ‘scientifically’, and ‘objectively’ defined (Rosemary Basson, Sandra Leiblum, Annie Potts, Pauline Lewis, Declan P. Doogan, Alison Tonks and Ray Moynihan, 2003).

Potts gave elaboration to this contradiction when she found ‘a few [of the interviewees] commented that it was drug company advertising that made them feel anxious in the first place about their own sexual performance” (p.658). These ‘few comments’ cannot be very few if we know that a US national survey in the year 1993 found that: 43% of US women suffer from female sexual dysfunction (Edward O. Laumann, Anthony Paik, and Raymond C. Rosen, 1999).

Potts (2003) was among other health researchers who were stunned when they saw fluffy bunnies are used as models for “female sexuality dysfunction”, but how many health researchers would be amazed if they saw laboratory rats used as models for male sexual dysfunction (and then standard function)? I argue that many of scientists would accept and expect that rats are used in laboratory experiments about prolonging erection. Prolonged and stable erection is widely produced as equal to male sexual ‘function’. Indeed, scientists’ observations are sometimes misled by their cultural expectations towards males (Martin, 1992. P.1). Male sexual performance is not about mainly ‘prolonging erection’, but a whole realm of emotional, subjective, and objective senses, feelings, paradigms, experiences and powers. Potts included people who challenged social expectations towards sex and many interviewees told her that they enjoyed sexual relations regardless of the produced category of ‘prolonged stable erection’.

The same discourse that Potts (2003) examines regarding the invention of female sexual standard-function and dysfunction in the US can be seen in a recent study by the African Sildenafil (Viagra) Study Group (2003). This study focused on the efficiency of using Viagra by men in Egypt and South Africa. Men ‘sexual function’ were ranked according to some elements,

including: ability to achieve an erection, ability to maintain an erection, assessing erectile function, orgasmic function, intercourse satisfaction, overall satisfaction and sexual desire. Sixty nine percent of Egyptian men who used Sildenafil (Viagra) found their “attempts at sexual intercourse were successful” (IP Levinson, IM Khalaf , KZM Shaeer, DO Smart, 2003. P. 3).

Unlike Loe, Brubaker, and Johnson, I do not focus on what has been labeled ‘sexual dysfunction’ .I do not conduct my ethnography with people who classify themselves, or are ‘diagnosed’, as patients of ‘erectile dysfunction’. I focus on the various practices and discourses of consuming the ‘sexual pills’ and how they affect male’s sexual performance. I conduct my research not at clinics with patients, but at worksites, coffee shops, and streets. I focus my main attention not on the physiological impact of Viagra, but beyond this to read the extended effect of ‘sexual enhancing oral pills’ that shape and reshape social norms, practices, networks, and open new possibilities for men to negotiate their fears, dreams, desires, happiness, and hope. My focus includes Viagra, and generic Egyptian pills such as Virecta, Eric, Dur Joy and others, Chinese pills such as Dragon and Tiger King, and Tramadol, as long as it is used by Egyptian men as sexual enhancing pill.

Methodology

This research examines how the body of the Egyptian male and its sexuality in contemporary Egypt are subject to consistent forces of controlling, shaping, and reshaping in the current age of Viagra. The research is conducted among public servants ‘*muwazzafin*’ in Cairo, among whom I trace how their everydayness is powerfully shaped by different social contexts in which very particular discourses on the sexual enhancing pills are both explicitly and implicitly promoted. I study what possibilities these enhancing pills offer to those employees after a hectic day or week of meaningless and disappointing work and what are the social and economic conditions through which the enhancing pills are circulated, sold, and purchased in a popular neighborhood in Cairo. In that regard, I move to assist a pharmacist in a local pharmacy in Imbaba neighborhood –where one of my interlocutor’s family lives. Then I move with another interlocutor to his work place in one of Cairo’s governmental agencies to study how Viagra and Tramadol are circulated as gifts and how they create very powerful network hubs within and across different government agencies’ buildings.

As I am myself a middle class ('stuck-in-the-middle') man living in a popular neighborhood in Cairo, I am 'interviewed' by my 'fieldwork' every day. 'Enhancing pills' ads are outdoors in streets. Its usage and discourse are being advocated in media, in coffee and smoking meetings, in pharmacies, in wedding ceremonies, in family gatherings and daily family small talk, at work, in public transportations, in cabs' drivers' talks, in children songs in streets, in political events, in presidential elections, and even in funerals.

'A pill, a cup of tea, and a cigarette - or a cigarette of hash' is not a phrase that a male living in Cairo can even remember when was the first time one heard it as a voluntary 'advise' from a friend or relative. The 'enhancing pill' age in Egypt is not something that might be simply ignored. One has to position his self, or at least imagine that he does, towards the requirements of the new chemically enhanced age.

For the purpose of this research I utilize interpretative ethnographic fieldwork research methods such as open-ended unstructured interviews with interlocutors who work as public servants *muwazzafin* in Cairo. I also was a participant observer for several days over five months (September 2014- February 2015) of assisting a pharmacist in his pharmacy located in Imbaba (a neighborhood of low and low-middle class in Cairo). Through these observations, I aim to draw the larger picture of consuming the enhancing pills and how they are interrelated with several kinds of medical and social discourses and practices. I then have spent days in a governmental work site of one of my interlocutors to draw the rhythms of his morning work rituals in an attempt to trace the networks and social possibilities through which the enhancing pills as 'gifts' create and sustain in the worksite. Through these methods I aim to think with my interlocutors about ways in which 'sexual enhancing pills' are being consumed and circulated, and the ways in which public servants experience their bodies in the current "age of Viagra", not only as consumers but first as productive bodies.

Chapters Outline

In chapter two 'Body as Happiness Machine', I trace the process of fetishizing the so-called 'sexual enhancing pills' in global and Egyptian socio-political context, and how this privileged commodity moved from being a banned and accessible only to the wealthy into a handy and low priced one. How the 'power of naming' succeeded in giving an 'erectile

dysfunction' medicine the privileged name of 'sexual enhancer'. Throughout this chapter I attempt to read how a war was announced by the state on one of the most famous 'enhancers'. I examine how Tramadol was accused of giving people extra energy that enabled them to challenge the depressing regime. I also explore how 'chemically enhanced body' became normalized, his sexual experience timed and mechanized, how men find themselves required to work the new extra job of performing sexually as 'lions'. Finally; how the sexual relationship - in a specific socio-cultural context - becomes the most available path to seek happiness 'inbesat', in low priced form.

In chapter three 'The Social Life of Dragon', I explore the larger context of consuming drugs in one of Cairo's popular neighborhoods 'Imbaba'. I contextualize the habits of consuming and distributing Viagra, Chinese and Egyptian sexual enhancers in a local pharmacy. I study what a local pharmacy means in Imbaba, how it constitutes a place for people to negotiate their dreams, fears, desires, and disabilities. I also explore how pharmacological companies find their mediators in Imbaba through a local pharmacy.

In chapter four 'the 'Sexual Gift'', I attempt to build an understanding of the ways through which the 'sexual enhancing pills' circulate as a 'gift' that enhance social networks in a governmental site in Cairo among public servants *muwazzafin*, between people with different roles and positions, inside and outside the building. The government site which is built to serve bureaucracy is full of emotions, social relations, political and economic interests, networks, and power relations. I consider this 'sexual gift' net-work a 'desiring-up' site the sense that it constitutes social recognition of a specific sexual performance.

In chapter five I conclude the thesis to show how men in the age of Viagra learn to invest in the penis in order to perform with 'chemically enhanced bodies'. I examine how the 'Viagra-self' exercises a transition from discipline to performance.

Chapter Two: Body as Happiness Machine

"Good morning," said the little prince.

"Good morning," said the merchant.

This was a merchant who sold pills that had been invented to quench thirst. You need only swallow one pill a week and you would feel no need of anything to drink.

"Why are you selling those?" asked the little prince.

"Because they save a tremendous amount of time," said the merchant. Computations have been made by experts. With these pills, you save fifty-three minutes in every week."

"And what do I do with those fifty-three minutes?"

"Anything you like . . ."

"As for me," said the little prince to himself, "if I had fifty-three minutes to spend as I liked, I should walk at my leisure toward a spring of fresh water.

“The Little Prince”

Antoine de Saint Exupéry

Empty ‘sexual enhancers’ packets are thrown away in almost every corner of the street, and millions of enhancing pills are circulated and consumed between Egyptian men every year. Economic, medical, political and social networks are built around new forms, imaginations, and concepts of male sexuality, while men confront their sexuality with a new- comer to their sexual life in the shape of “Dragon.”

In this chapter, I trace the story of Viagra in Egypt, from the moment it was approved by Food and Drug Administration (AFD) in the US in March 1998 (Tiefer, 2006). I also trace the discourses that were produced in Egypt around Viagra leading to its banning. I explore also how businessmen, who are at the same time political leaders succeeded in 2006 to legalize the local production of generic Viagra. The story continues to the contemporary moment where hundreds of millions of imported and local pills are being consumed by Egyptian men. I also examine ‘the power of naming’ that gave to an erectile dysfunction treatment the privileged name of ‘sexual enhancer’. I study the class politics surrounding this naming process, how some pills achieved this honor, while others failed to gain that name ‘sexual enhancing pills’. In the third part of this chapter, ‘the extra job of being a lion’, I examine how the male body and its sexuality are being shaped and reshaped in the contemporary moment. What does it mean to be a man in the moment of Viagra, while men are surrounded by the ‘enhancing pills’ everywhere? I contextualize the usage of the ‘enhancing pills’ within my interlocutors’ material conditions of existence.

The Birth of Viagra

The story of Viagra began in 1990 when a chemical substance called Sildenafil citrate was invented and examined as a medicine for some heart diseases. Patients who used Sildenafil citrate during pilot phases and clinical trials reported a side effect of the drug that it affects erections. Pfizer thought that this side effect can be deployed as a ‘second use’ of Sildenafil citrate. Eight years later, in March 1998, the US approved Pfizer Sildenafil Citrate’s pills under the popular name Viagra, as the first oral pill that treats ‘erectile dysfunction’ (Tiefer, 2006).

Viagra was not permitted in Egypt for four years (1998 -2002). The Ministry of Health said that “the country's highly productive male population did not need it [Viagra]” (Fisk, 1998). A spokes person from the Ministry emphasized that the government "had taken account of the fact that the nature of the Egyptian man was different to that of an American” (ibid).

Viagra was considered by media discourse and by the Minister of Health as a danger that threatened Egyptian ‘morals’, ‘familial ties’, and badly affected men’s health (Wassef and Mansour,1999. P.153-165) .Stories of how dangerous the side effects of Viagra are on men’s hearts heavily circulated. Women’s alleged perspectives towards Viagra were heavily deployed (without asking them).Newspapers, almost all were government-owned or partisan at the time said that women were afraid of losing their husbands if they used Viagra because husbands would be able to have sex with many women. At the same time an opposite ‘women’s perspective’ was produced about what women want (of course, again, without asking them).Newspapers said that women hate the Minister of Health because he banned Viagra; he banned what they have been waiting for – to enable their husbands to perform sexually with the help of Viagra (ibid, P.156).

During those years, the illegally imported pills were sold at an average price of 50EGP/ a pill. Hundreds of men and women were accused of smuggling US and Indian Viagra illegally from the Arab Gulf and Saudi Arabia. During these four years many local and international companies such as Pfizer and Eli Lilly submitted their papers at the Ministry of Health asking for permission to produce generic Viagra. However the Egyptian minister of health did not give any one the permission to produce or import Viagra (or any equivalent medicine).

In late December 1999, the Technical Committee for Drug Control at the Ministry of Health approved the registration and circulation of Viagra in Egypt after “research and studies lasted 18 consecutive months” (Megid, 1999). According to the committee, the 18th months’ research and studies outcomes proved the “efficacy and safety of the drug (Viagra)” (ibid). The committee emphasized that Viagra has no harmful side effects if the users follow the instructions and medical caveats due. However the committee emphasized that Viagra can be consumed only under medical prescription in every usage (ibid). The Minister of Health registered Viagra as an accepted drug in Egypt. However, no requests, from companies, to produce Viagra were

accepted until June 2002, when the Minister of Health accepted Pfizer's request to exclusively produce Viagra in Egypt (Allam, 2002).

What is remarkable in the minister's order according to which Pfizer had the exclusive right to produce Viagra in Egypt is not the order itself but the date of this order. This exclusive 'right' was legally impossible before June 2002. Egypt signed TRIPS (Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement in 1995, with an effective date of January 2000, and then issued a new patent law on June 2 2002 to comply with TRIPS (Al-Ali, 2002). The new law was seen by the United States to be "prerequisite for a free-trade agreement" (Allam, 2002). If the Ministry of Health decided to approve Viagra (and equivalent drugs) only one day before June 2 2002, it would not find the needed legal cover to give this exclusive right of production to Pfizer. Before June 2002, the government would have to accept the requests of every single national and international company to produce the drug.

Egypt Pharmacists Syndicate chairman believed that the government intended to delay the order of registering Viagra until the beginning of the year 2000 (exactly the last day of the year 1999) for the sake of medicines 'mafia' (Ali S. , 2000). However, he did not know that it would take another two years for the government to give the affective permission of production exclusively to Pfizer. It took two years to transform the registration order (in the year 2000) to real production permission (in June 2002). The government had to wait until the new local patent law was issued, to grant the protected exclusive right to Pfizer (one of the biggest multinational pharmaceutical corporations in the world).

TRIPS agreement in 1995 was seen as "one of the most important and intense negotiations in the history of the "new world order"" (Al-Ali, 2002 , p. 275). 'Developing countries' were deprived of locally producing needed medicines; they had to obey patent rights. After long negotiations, 'developing countries' governments succeeded in gaining a five year grace period in order to protect domestic pharmaceutical companies.

Some international organizations were very serious in implementing TRIPS. The United Nations "estimated that Egypt would need U.S. \$98,000 to increase patent personnel and add equipment; U.S.\$192,000 to strengthen the judicial framework; and U.S.\$1,000,000 to train and develop custom authorities" (Al-Ali, 2002 , p. 283). In the year 2000, Egyptian government

proposed a new law of patent rights that complies with TRIPS requirements. At the parliament the negotiations of the new law took two years (2000 – 2002). The new patent law included pharmaceutical products under the patent protection - unlike the old Egyptian patent law issued in 1949 (Allam, 2002).

During these two years of negotiations (2000- 2002) the conflict between capital interests was manifested. On the one hand, the powerful multinational pharmaceutical corporations based in US, Europe, and Japan such as Pfizer, Eli Lilly and others, benefited from TRIPS and were very interested that Egypt enforces an effective patent law. On the other hand less powerful multinational pharmaceutical corporations based in Egypt were threaten from losing millions of dollars as a result of patent protection. Most of these 'local' companies depend on producing generic medicines. The new pharmaceutical patent rules which were established by TRIPS and which would be enforced with the new Egyptian law, would lead these companies to stop producing many kinds of medicines.

Some of the powerful members of the Egyptian parliament were, at the same time, owners of some of the biggest pharmaceutical companies in the region, which depend to a large extent on producing generic medicines. It is rare that a pharmaceutical company in Egypt would have the power to establish its own pharmaceutical labs. They cannot invent new medicines, so they produce generic drugs. The proposed new patent law – which fits TRIPS obligations - was really challenging for them, so it took two years for this law to be issued.

It is uncommon in Egypt that a law takes such a long time (two years) to be issued. The Egyptian parliament was at least for two decades under the full control of Hosni Mubarak's National Democratic Party. However, this case was different when it came to patent law that threatened many powerful corporations in Egypt. In support for the new patent law, the Mufti (Egypt's highest official religious authority), issued a religious decree emphasizing that it is un-Islamic to engage in piracy through copying other's work (Allam, 2002).

In the promulgation decree of the new patent law, the president decreed that pharmaceutical products will be excluded from patent protection until January 2005 (Al-Ali, 2002 , p. 287). It is true that, according to TRIPS, developing countries such as Egypt have the right in cases of public health 'extreme emergencies' to exclude some medicines from patent

protection until 2005 (and even until 2010 in specific cases). The presidential decree proclaimed the exclusion of all pharmaceutical products without mentioning the 'extreme emergency' issue. Nevertheless and despite of this presidential decree, the promising new medicine -Viagra - was not excluded from patent protection, owned by Pfizer! It was clear then that the Egyptian pharmacological industry, which is dominated by a few very powerful figures, lost the chance of gaining millions of pounds every year because of the decision to exclude them from producing Viagra in Egypt. However, they had to wait until June 2006, until the enforced patent protection of Pfizer ended.

In 2005, the Muslim Brotherhood gained 21% of the parliament's seats for the first time in their history. The old faces of Mubarak regime did not seem to be happy by the success of MBs, unlike, other powerful businessmen who presented themselves as the new faces of Mubarak regime and supportive of his son's dream of presidency, a dream that MBs announced they would agree to. According to MBs leaders pushing Viagra production by local companies was a great success that they celebrated as one of the most important actions they took in the parliament. Pushing Viagra production by local companies was celebrated in the first page of a book MPs produced to document their achievement in the parliament (Katatni, 2006, p. 1). Some of MBs leaders own pharmacological companies (importing and distributing agencies), as well as other leaders in other oppose political parties. In fact most of pharmacological companies in Egypt are owned by very wealthy and powerful political figures.

It is true that MBs debated in parliamentary health and environment committee regarding producing equivalent drugs for Viagra locally. The chairman of health committee at this time was a senior member of Hosni Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP). However, MBs did not mention in their documentary book the whole case of TRIPS; they said that the government refused to give the permission to local companies for 'political reasons' (Katatni, 2006, p. 1).

In June 2006 the Minister of Health accepted the request of ten local companies to produce generic Viagra (Ahram, 2006). After permitting Egyptian pharmaceutical companies to produce and import generic Viagra, the locally produced pills were sold for an average price of 5 EGP a pill (0.8 \$) compared with 45 pounds (7\$) for the US's or the French pills, or in comparison with the local Pfizer Viagra of 27 pounds per pill.

In light of the great success of Viagra, a whole industry of oral pills emerged (whether they were locally produced or legally imported), and a new generation of pills appeared in the local market for an average price of 1-3EGP/ a pill. The whole industry includes local famous enhancers such as the Golden Pill, Erec, Powerecta, Vairitca, and Chinese imported ones such as Dragon and Power Horse. In 2012 Pfizer informed the Ministry of Health that it wanted to decrease Viagra price from 27 to 10 EGPs (1.5 \$) for the 50mg pills, and 13 pounds for the 100mg pills, the Minister of Health agreed in 18 March 2012 (El-Hadidi D. , 2012). It is not clear why Pfizer did that.

Viagra, stayed for 8 years (1998 – 2006) accessible only for well-off men (whether it was smuggled or produced by Pfizer). Accordingly it achieved the image of a privileged commodity. In late 2006 and with the beginnings of 2007, local generic pills of Viagra became handy, in a low priced form. By that time the ‘sexual enhancing pills’ constituted phenomenon around the world. The ‘sexual enhancing pills’ were seen to be moving “from ‘life-saving’ to ‘lifestyle’ drugs (Tiefer, 2006).

The Power of Naming

For years Egyptian men used many things to delay ejaculation. Karman Ali noticed that local anesthetic spray and hemorrhoids ointments (which contains anesthetic also) were being used for the purpose of delaying ejaculation (Ali, 2002. P.130). Egyptian men used marijuana ‘bango’ and hash ‘*hashish*’ for the same purpose. However, only in 1998 with the birth of Viagra, a huge industry of medical treatment for ‘sexual dysfunction’ was established. These ‘oral treatments’ were produced, not simply in the form of ‘treatment’ for ‘erectile dysfunction’, but more in the form of ‘sexual enhancer’, in the sense of a modern efficient medicine – thus establishing it as a new category of things.

An important aspect to notice is that Viagra, Dragon, Eric, and the Golden Pill, as well as all of the enhancer families are, in fact, not sexual enhancing pills in the full meaning of the word. They only work technically on enhancing erection and less on delaying ejaculation. They enhance what is called ‘erectile dysfunction’ and ‘ejaculation disorder’. The focus on physical aspects of sexuality for men presents “a phallogocentric view of sexuality and creates a distinction

between the physical and emotional dimensions of sexuality and between the body and self in terms of subjective experience” (Sarah Jane Brubaker and Jennifer A. Johnson, 2008, p. 321).

Before 1998 there were pills that affected the chemical components related to sexual desire, such as enhancing the male testosterone hormone but they disappeared³. According to one of interviewed pharmacist, those who used the hormones had embarrassing side effects including involuntary erection. The fact that the treatments of erection or ejaculation, as mechanical components of the sexual intercourse, are being called ‘sexual enhancers’, is an essential starting point for this theses.

This issue of ‘naming’ is important as it raises many issues. First; all my interlocutors, whether they use oral pills or not, do not consider it treatment for erection/ejaculation. They did not link the use of the pills to any form of ‘sexual dysfunction’. They understand them as ‘sexual enhancers’. The same understanding is applied and circulated in the media, advertising, pharmacological, public medical, interior ministry, and academic discourses.

Second, only the products of huge pharmacological factories succeeded in gaining this privileged ‘name’ of “sexual enhancer” in the media, state, and public medical discourses. On the other hand, Chinese ones have been treated as ‘underground treatments’ although it is not so by any means. In fact, some consumers prefer Chinese products as it cause less side effects, such as headaches, than the Egyptian privileged ones. Third, as long as many of the privileged pills – that are named ‘sexual enhancers’ - work technically only on delaying ejaculations, it became harder to exclude pills such as Tramadol from the study category - “sexual enhancers” - when it is used for the same purposes. Most of interlocutors who use Tramadol preferred it because it works as ‘general enhancer’ that gives them energy to act (a feeling of energy), and a calming effect delays ejaculation (That will be detailed later). Fourth, all the erection supplements, as well as all the chemicals that delay ejaculation, do not work as treatments that end a specific ‘dysfunction’ after a specific course of treatment, but as medicines for a ‘chronic dysfunction’. Men have to use it with every sexual intercourse. To elaborate; using ‘sexual enhancing pills’ do not treat men from ‘sexual dysfunction’. Men will not be able to ‘function’ after a course of

³ that would added another issues to be studied

treatment. They will stay in a persisting need to use the pills in every sexual intercourse. This way of functioning

The ‘War on Tramadol’

Tramadol is one of the big stars among the oral pills used as ‘sexual enhancers’ among men in Egypt. Tramadol is a moderate pain medication that enhances the general feeling of well being and enables men to work longer hours without being exhausted. Additionally, it has a chemical component that delays ejaculation.

Tramadol became important for this research not only because it is one of the most important ‘sexual enhancers’ in Egypt, but also for the ways in which it came to the attention of the state during my fieldwork. When I first began my visits to the pharmacy in September 2014 the price for one pill was a bit less than 5 Egyptian Pounds (EP), by the end of February 2015 it had risen to 50-60 EP per pill. The penalties for illegal trading of Tramadol likewise increased over a three year period from a maximum of a five year sentence to death penalty. In other words, during my fieldwork the state declared war on Tramadol. The disappearance of Tramadol has become the topic of newspaper articles, the talk of the streets, and above all the talk in the (Youme7, 2015).

Even more so than Viagra, the state’s attention to the circulation of Tramadol is overtly political. During and after the January 25 popular uprising, the media and pro-Mubarak figures accused the revolutionaries of using Tramadol, as a part of a larger strategy to delegitimize the protesters; the Assistant Minister of Interior of the Central Security Forces, as well as some members of parliament, emphasized that protesters in the Mohamed Mahmud clashes between demonstrators and the central security forces in which more than 40 people were killed between November 19 -24, 2011 were under the “Tramadol effect” (Michel, 2014). It was not clear what the Assistant Minister of Interior meant by “Tramadol effect,” did he mean that the protesters used a large dose of Tramadol that they cannot be aware of the reasons that pushed them to demonstrate against the regime, or that they were benefiting from a side effect of Tramadol that gives a feeling of well-being and helps them to endure the violence unleashed by the Central Security Forces?

Although restrictions on Tramadol began before the January 25, 2011 popular uprising, three months after on April 14, 2011 the Minister of Health issued order number 172 that imposed some restrictions on trading and using Tramadol as he considered it a medicine related to a person's psychological state (Ahram, 2011). According to order 172 pharmacists who sell Tramadol were required to record the names and the national IDs numbers of their customers who buy Tramadol. Neglecting these regulations could cost pharmacists penalties of one to five thousand pounds. Less than a year later in February 2012 the Minister of Health in co-operation with the Ministry of Interior issued order number 125, which treated Tramadol as a first level drug alongside Heroin and Cocaine (Law in Egypt, 2012). The new order raised the sentence of selling Tramadol inside or outside pharmacies to the death penalty – unless the user has a personal permission from a governmental hospital through what is called the 'Red Prescription'⁴. With order number 125 pharmacists stopped selling Tramadol, and the official market immediately decreased by 98%. A governmental pharmacological company announced that, because of this order, its production of Tramadol decreased from 750 thousand packets, to 15 thousand packets per year in 2012 (Alborsa News, 2014). The pharmacists syndicate considered the Ministry of Health order to be “empty talk, which has no factual medical basis” (Salam, 2012). However, the government insisted on its new order, and treated Tramadol as a banned drug.

To vindicate this order according to which a moderate pain medication- Tramadol - was considered to be a first level drug, the Ministry of Interior announced that it confiscated 24 million, and 876303 pills of smuggled Tramadol between January and August 2011 (El-Hadidi D. , 2011). It is very rare that the Egyptian Ministry of Interior announces such detailed information (to the extent that it counted the number of every single pill it caught). The Ministry of Interior usually insists on not announcing any information considering its state security. However, the pharmacists syndicate insisted in its opinion that this order is a “disaster” (Sa`ed, 2014)

The police have previous experiences with Tramadol. The working poor were not only habitual users of Tramadol to manage exhaustion and overwork, but also used high doses (4-10

⁴ The 'Red Prescription' is a red paper with serial numbers given by the Ministry of Health. Hospitals use this 'Red Prescription' to prescribe drugs listed in the first level of drug index, a copy of this prescription must be sent to the Ministry of Health including the patient ID number and his home address.

pills) in case of arrest to be able to endure mistreatment from police officers. The Ministry of Interior accused Tramadol of many 'crimes'. Tramadol was accused of highway car crashes, as well as revolutionists' clashes with police and army forces. Tramadol was accused of giving people hyper energy that enabled them to spend weeks in the streets protesting against the regime.

In the beginning of 2015, the 'war on Tramadol' reached its peak; the Egyptian Supreme Electoral Commission (SEC), confirmed by the State Council, ordered that all the candidates of parliament must pass a drug test before they can be allowed to participate in the elections. This drug-test is a part of a set of medical examinations that the prospective candidates must pass to ensure that they are "physically and mentally" fit (El-Fekki, 2015). Seventy five percent of the excluded candidates from the parliamentary elections that could not pass the medical examinations failed the drug-test and were 'diagnosed' as Tramadol users (Abdel-Salam, 2015).

During February and March 2015 Tramadol almost disappeared from the market even though it was illegally sold everywhere just months ago for 5 pounds a pill. The reason of this disappearance is not clear. Some Tramadol dealers argue that the state's 'war on Tramadol' achieved some of its goals as it coincided with the so called 'war on terrorism' in Libya and Sinai. According to this line of reasoning, the so-called 'the hot line' of Tramadol was closed as a side effect of the army's intensive intervention in Egypt's border zones. I am not convinced of this argument as the state has tried without avail to control Tramadol during the last four years. And regardless of the 'war on Tramadol' that the state announced, hundreds of millions of Tramadol pills were reported to be smuggled into Egypt.

Tramadol helped men to perform the 'enhanced sexuality' at the end of a hectic week or day of work, enabling them to work extra needed hours in order to earn a living, and ultimately enabling them to go back to work the next day. And accordingly Tramadol played its role in reproducing the necessary tools of production; it enabled laboring bodies to exist in the production sites day after day for 12 and 14 hours a day. However, a side effect of extra energy that enables the chemically enhanced body to work akin to a machine, threatened the reproduction of the necessary condition of production. It was seen by the state apparatus and state ideological apparatuses as harmful extra energy that enabled protesters to challenge the regime.

The Extra Job of being a Lion, or Body as Machine

“And this story of “sex pills” *‘hobob el gens’*, they make one feel as if one does not exist”

Yasin⁵, 27 years old, public servant, just uttered those words even though I did not ask him what he thought. He simply overheard me talking to a friend about my thesis topic and decided to share with me his thoughts. Yasin finds it annoying to be surrounded by a society where everyone advocates ‘being a lion’ as the normal way of performing male sexuality. “Being a lion” for Yasin is metaphor from an ad of one of the most famous local sexual enhancing pills the ‘Golden Pill’ in which a man metaphorically transfigured into a lion when he gains the ‘sexual power’ of a lion-as a result of consuming the Golden Pill. Yasin, does not use enhancing pills, yet he find himself forced to define his own position from the widely requested job of being a lion (or not) in the age of Viagra and its family. The metaphor of a lion refers to a specific imagination of masculinity; a ‘lion man’ is generally understood as a brave, strong and controlling man. In the case of being sexually a lion, the metaphor refers more to being ‘very strong’ *‘gamed’* in sexual performance.

The most well-known ad, the one that children sing in the streets, is that of Al-Haba Al-Zahbiya (the Golden Pill) with the lion. This ad is a song by the most famed popular singers now in Egypt; Okka and Ortiga. In the song a man is being mistreated because his wife considered him a cat and a sheep, but he emphasized that he is ‘the beast of the home’. One of his friends gave him the Golden Pill and he became ‘a lion in the place’. It is clear from the whole ad that becoming a lion should be perceived as a positive mythical metamorphosis!⁶ The lion (of the Golden Pill) also gets a part in another ad, which reached such popular T.V. channels such as ON T.V. and Al-Hayat. In this famous ad a woman reprimands her husband, alluding to his “weakness,” who has a head of a duck inside a ‘tok-tok’⁷, because ‘he can only offensively talk (and he cannot make sex)’ (*howa da tamamak*), she spends the whole day at her mother’s place

⁵All names in this research are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of the interlocutors.

⁶<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8zGHZN9s17Y&list=RD8zGHZN9s17Y#t=0>

⁷ “TokTok” (TukTuk) is a small vehicle for public transportation with 3 wheels.

(because the husband cannot perform sexually), but when he uses the Golden Pill he becomes a 'lion'.

The song by children in the streets, and the ad(s) portray the same meanings. They introduce a specific understanding of 'normal' male sexual performance - that of a 'lion'- powerful and controlling. At the same time they speak to men's fear of being seen as weak beings that may produce a lot of noise but with no action (the same as ducks, cats, and sheep). Kamran Ali (2002) in his study noticed that men have a fear of not being able to 'satisfy' their spouses. The fear of being like a duck (or not being a lion) is not exactly Kamran Ali described fear. I understand this fear more in the light of Butler's 'precarity' as a mode of life under which humans in contemporary reality experience their existence, a mode in which gender performativity has everything to do with who counts as a life and/or as a death (Butler, 2009). It was clear from what Yasin said about what is at stake is who counts as a life "they make one feel as if one does not exist". Another important issue to be noticed in the song and the ad is that they both allege that what women need in order to respect their husbands is that their husbands become sexually 'powerful' (lions).

There are many other ads that work simultaneously in promoting the fear of being like a duck or a sheep, and the importance of being 'efficiently ready' for sex 24 hours a day. In addition to all of the above, this particular production further enables the discourse of Viagra regarding erections but in a more powerful and manifested way. Another ad of Power Horse – a distinguished member in the Dragon family – emphasizes that this sexual enhancer increases the penis in the length and width by 40% and it makes men ready for intercourse for over 96 hours⁸. Discourses of continuous productivity are part of mechanizing the human body's processes. According to Haraway, the modern medicine is full of coupling between the organism and machine. In our contemporary reality "we are all chimeras theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics"(Haraway, 1991. P150).

Nadi, 28 years old, advertising designer, told me how he was rewarded in his work when he designed a poster for a sexual enhancer which depicted a dragon scaring a giraffe—the same

⁸http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=He_9jOc2A5o

giraffe that is drawn on the poster of Viagra. His poster was widely distributed on the backs of 'Tok -Toks' in many of Cairo's popular neighborhoods. Nadi is graduated from the faculty of fine arts. In add to his job, he is a volunteer in a NGO teaches adult and children how to freely express their selves through independent animation short movies. He believes that drawing and producing visual arts is the most important thing that human can produce.

Nadi is newly married, he does not use any kind of 'enhancing pills'. He even finds that all those 'wild animals' in the ads are 'scary'. However, he knows that pill companies prefer the ads which employ wild animals. He thinks that pharmaceutical companies have their own advocacy plans through which they decide the general needed impression that the proposed ads should give. He succeeded in creating many 'good' posters and ads.

A specific configuration of 'sexual performance' is shaping and re-shaping male sexualities in the age of Dragon and its family, a configuration that alleges that the majority of men need pills in order to perform sexually 'normal'. This 'normal performance' of 'full manhood' and 'normal persona' is being advocated through social, political, and medical discursive practices. For Yasin this requested 'normal persona' of the 'lion' is putting pressures on men to the extent that it questioning their feelings of existence as men.

But body is not simply machine

Men may chose not to follow the growing discourses about their 'normal persona', such as what Hisham does (26 years old, newly married public servant) when he says 'I will not use pills, I would even prefer to be a duck'. However, when just being asked about the sexual enhancers, he positioned himself towards the same issue of 'lion and duck', without me asking him about the ad or the song. Hisham has to buy the pills from his director in his governmental work site, as he cannot refuse buying them, because it is not easy to refuse his director's 'gift'. Although he does not use it (Viagra as gifts is detailed in chapter 4). Instead he gives it to his friends. He prefers to use *hashish* instead of oral pills to delay ejaculation. He thinks that using hash is normal--'a`dy'--because it is nothing--'wala haga'.

Fahim, 45 years old, was an employee and took early retirement to work in a pharmacy in a famous popular neighborhood in Cairo. He prefers to use oral pills. He has been using Virecta, Tramadol, and sometimes Dragon for more than 5 years. Fahim explained to me that by being a

lion, a man should be able to make his wife “scream” during sexual intercourse. He thinks that ‘one needs to feel his strength ‘gamed’ after a hectic week or day of work’.

Fahim used Viagra for the first time five to six years ago, he remember this day. One of his friends from the same neighborhood advised him to explore a pill of US Viagra. He took the pill on a Friday around four o’clock. Thirty minutes later he felt ‘strange’. He felt that the blood was flooding everywhere in his body. He was afraid to die. He decided to tell his wife that he is exhausted and might be going through flu. He stayed awoken in bed for two hours. After two to three hours he felt better, and his fear of death subsided. However he decided to sleep alone this night. Weeks later he tried Viagra again and he liked it.

Fahim, has a kind smile, is an overweight man who loves to tell jokes. To meet Fahim means that one will have a session of laughs. Fahim suffers from roughness of the knee and lives on the 7th floor in a building without elevator that makes going back home at the end of the day a daily time for suffering. His wife was a public employee she also took early retirement to work in a low position in an international company. She begins her day at 4am.because she has to meet the bus at 6am. Fahim’s work begins at 6pm. and his work shift extends until 3 or 4am. Fahim and his wife hardly meet. Fahim faced many problems with the police, as he illegally sells Tramadol. Although he does this under the supervision of some local policemen, he faced many problems with them.

Fahim tried once to use hemorrhoids ointments (as an anesthetic that reduces penis’ sensitivity, then delay ejaculation). However, he forgot to wash it before intercourse. He went into laugh while telling this story. He as an assistant pharmacist finds that all men aged from 20 to 70 years old use one kind or another of ‘sexual enhancers’. So he uses and encourages his clients in the pharmacy to use enhancing pills, he finds it ‘effective’ and ‘practical’. He advises his clients not to use hemorrhoids ointments because if they forget to wash it before intercourse their wives sexual organs might anesthetize.

Ahmed is overweight although he is in his mid-thirties. I met him by chance as he was driving a cab that I took. That day, I got out of my apartment located in Downtown around 2:30 pm. The streets were crowded as usual at this time in Cairo, and I was heading off to visit a friend journalist who was undergoing a cardiac catheterization at the Italian hospital near Midan

Al-Gesh which is less than three kilometers away from Downtown. I walked up to the beginning of Mohamed Mahmoud Street beside the Ministry of Interior (where dozens of youth were killed in clashes with the police two years ago), where finally a taxi driver accepted to go on an adventure with me to Ahmed Said Street, where the hospital is located.

Ahmed, the taxi driver, begins the journey running the Taximeter without consulting me, and then puts on his safety belt as soon as he passed Tahrir Square. I was sitting there in silence thinking about my friend the journalist and how our group of friends would find ways to cover the costs of the cardiac catheterization. I felt too tired to engaged in a conversation with Ahmed although I was quiet amazed that he decided to run the taximeter. I was amazed because most of the Hyundai colored white cabs stopped using their taximeters almost two months ago, from the day the army promised them to pay the bank premiums instead of them, after their strike (I met him first in the mid of October 2014). From that day, the police stopped harassing them, as if they become backed by the army, and thus the taximeter doesn't work most of the time because it has not been reset for the new rates since the rising of the price of gasoline a few months ago as part of president's plan to cancel fuel subsidies gradually.

He: The Traffic Police men have no compassion!

Me—thinking of calling the journal's editor in chief to ask him if he is ready to help us with some money – I responded with a simple, “Mmmm.”

He: They wouldn't harm me, but I don't want anyone to do me a favor, then I have to call this and that man “*ya basha*” and “*ya mish basha*”.

Silence....

He: Days ago I checked my pockets; I discovered that I don't have my driver's license. I'm sure I did not lose it, as I used to ask the tailor to make my pockets longer to secure my billfold.

I didn't find his habit of making his pants pockets longer to be a usual habit for a taxi driver; it is so common for public servants. Old public servants used to make their pants pockets longer because of their fear of losing their monthly salary in the crowded public means of transportations. That habit was very common specifically before the government transferred

public servants' salaries to the ATM's of Bank Masr and the National bank (*Al-Ahly*) in the last three years. For a taxi driver, the driving license's natural place is right above the driver's seat in a place commonly called '*shamasat*.'

I asked him, if he has another job, and he answered: yes, I am working for the government's Water Company.

- He: why you are asking?

- Me: nothing...nothing. (We were still at Tahrir square although more than 10 minutes had passed).

- He decided to carry on and continue sharing with me his narrative about his driver's license.

Ahmed continued, "On this day I was driving a client on the Ring Road, I asked his permission to park on the Ring Road to ask a boy to throw down my billfold from my home to the Ring Road. It took only five minutes".

Although many of the drivers' tales are fabricated, but it felt like Ahmed's tales were real and consistent with what I know about public servants staff. Ahmed, like many others working in the government, seeks the security of pension and health insurance and earns a real living from other jobs. He lives in Al-Munib, one of the emerging 'informal' neighborhoods on the banks of the Ring Road. Buildings in his neighborhood and the like are an average of 15 floors high, built with cement and red brick without external coating, overlooking the Ring Road, in a way that could enables Ahmed to receive his wallet from the balcony overlooking the road.

While we were talking about his work as a taxi driver, a microbus driver cut off Ahmed and almost cornered the taxi against the October Bridge wall.

Ahmed yelled: "The drug pills '*bwrsham*' made every one crazy"!

Me: Do you mean "tamo" (one of the famous nicknames of Tramadol)?

Ahmed: "Yes, it is that shit, everyone is under this drug effect '*mebarshem*', since they brought it here to us."

I said: "It's true." And I then kept silent.

Ahmed: "and the "sex pills" *'hebob el gens'* ...What do you think about it, do you think one should take it and deal *'yeta`mel'*?"

Me: "What do you think?"

Ahmed: "They say it harms the heart."

Ahmed repeated the common discourse about the risk of sexual enhancers on the heart, a sentiment heavily echoed by the state before it agreed to the production of Viagra in Egypt. Ahmed then looked to me as if waiting for a definitive answer, perhaps to deny the issue of risk to the heart or confirm it.

Me: "Everything harms."

Ahmed: "Women get used to what you get them accustomed to, I mean, if you get used to opium, she gets used to it, if you get used to pills, she gets used to it"

He meant that the man who uses opium as a sexual enhancer that delays ejaculation results in his partner becoming accustomed to a specific type of sexual experience. Using opium is rare in Egypt compared to using hash and enhancing pills. Ahmed himself doesn't use opium, however he repeated tells about using opium. No one of my interlocutors uses opium but many of them repeated the same. Opium is expensive for a public servant or any man from a similar economic class.

Ahmed bypassed the issue of "sex pills' risk to the heart" once I told him that "all things harm," a phrase that has no meaning at all, but it convinced him in one way or another, and made him continue the conversation and talk about what he thinks the way in which women 'get used' to a specific form of sexual performance

I said: "Ok, all this talk about how women are being sexually pleased, but what makes you pleased (*tenbeset*)?"

Ahmed: "No ..., I do not know..."

(I saw on his face a very surprised expression; probably due to the fact that this may have been the first time he has been asked this question. He was surprised by his answer also: "I do not know".).

I preferred to keep silent, to give him a chance to respond, but he stayed silent longer.

Ahmed, after a few moments of silence: "Men end everything '*kolhagtoh*' with ejaculation, but women differentiate some of them are "like men" and others "delay", because of that you can see divorce everywhere.

Ahmed, like many others, has many ideas and talks about what he thinks that 'satisfies women', but very little about his *inbesat* (enjoyment/pleasure). It is common among my interlocutors that they are ready with answers about women's bodies but not their own bodies, they all have to think first, then answers come. Ejaculation and other intimate acts in the sexual intercourse would come after a while of thinking and reflecting on what makes them happy in sexual relations. The most important part of Ahmed's discussion, for me, is that he answered the question about the reasons for his '*inbesat*' very clearly: "I don't know", while others keep silent first.

This silence happens at the same time that talk about the 'sex pills' is almost everywhere, men would talk about it without even asking them. However, they keep silent (at first) when they are being asked about their bodies. Ads and songs annoy men, as they keep asking them to perform in a specific way – that of a lion. Pills' packets are thrown in the streets because men cannot take them home, they don't want to let their wives know about it. Some pharmacists sell the pills without its carton packets, they know that men would throw it in front of the door of the pharmacy immediately after they go out of the pharmacy (that will be detailed in the next chapter). Male bodies' experience of the very intimacy experience of sex is surrounded by many social, economic, and political pressures and at the time surrounded by specific kinds of fear and silence.

Humans are assigned to happiness

Although I planned to ask interlocutors about the ways in which they find their 'sexual pleasure' through using the 'sexual enhancers', I noticed that this concept of 'pleasure' (*muta`a*,

estemta` , or lazzah) is not used in thinking about sexual acts. Egyptians use the word “*inbesat*” to express a mix of ‘happiness’ and ‘content’ as what they seek from a sexual act.

Agamben (1996) stated that human beings are “the only beings whose lives are irremediably and painfully assigned to happiness” (Agamben, *Form Of Life* , 1996, p. 2). The ‘small victories’ that of the extra job of being a lion at the end of a hectic day or week of work, are the only possible sites for most of my interlocutors to seek a form of *inbesat*. However, this happiness is not without pain and fear, and above all a kind of happiness that occurs in the form of production.

Happiness – *inbesat* - is tightened with silence and fear in many ways. All the interlocutors have fear at least of the first times of using enhancing pills that contains Sildenafil Citrate (such as Viagra, Dragon, Golden Pill, and Eric). Sildenafil Citrate can cause heart attacks for men who use it, as it might dramatically enhance blood flow. However, they explain why they use it although they had such a fear by saying *rabnayoster* (we depend on God).

A pharmaceutical company would call this fear of death by a heart attack, a ‘side effect’. For men who live with such a fear it becomes a real fear, a fear that should be counted, especially when it is a fear of sudden death that run across an intimate sexual experience that seeks happiness. Men accept that they experience such a fear – a fear of death – because they seek needed small victories of happiness, and at the same time they are affected by other kinds of social fear. This social fear includes Yasin’s anxiety of not feeling that he exists, as well as, Ahmed’s and Fahim’s extra jobs of being lions - their fear of not counting as men.

Men accept the fear of death while seeking happiness, as they are human beings who are assigned to happiness. Seeking happiness in sexual intercourse becomes of a greater importance, when other forms of happiness are very rare, and mostly out of hand for men who have to work 12 -14 hours every day in order to keep their bodies a life, adding to this, this happiness - empowered by enhancing pills - is accessible at low price. And that it can assume greater control over one’s body as it offers a short way to a handy form of happiness- that saves tremendous amount of time.

A specific ideology of happiness is in-act, that men become disciplined to practice its rituals of producing happiness as an ordered act of production and at the same time as

reproduction of conditions of production in the neoliberal realm. Although happiness here is dominated by dozens of discursive practices of capital and state, men seek the enhanced job of being a lion in order to have a breathing space that helps them to go back to work the next day.

As stated by Althusser “as Marx said, every child knows that a social formation which did not reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produced would not last a year.” (Althusser, 1970. P1). The enhanced job of being an efficient lion is what men have to seek in order to go back to work the next day, after a hectic 14 hours of work. That happens in the same time when no one talks any more about fertility (the primary condition of reproducing laborers themselves). Kamaran Ali noticed 17 years ago that discourses towards fertility were repeatedly deployed. However, what are repeatedly deployed now are discourses of enhanced sexuality (that would be detailed in the coming chapters).

Conclusion:

In this chapter I attempted to draw on the story of Viagra in Egypt, how it was banned in the beginning then smuggled to Egypt. How and why TRIPS agreement and a new patent law took place in this story. Viagra in Egypt stayed seven years accessible only for privileged men. With 2006-2007 the privileged commodity, backed with powerful politicians and businessmen, became accessible in low prices with the birth of a new whole industry of producing local pills and imported Indian and Chinese pills.

“Sexual enhancer” pills are treatments of what has been called ‘erectile dysfunction’. They are not ‘sexual enhancers’, although the power of naming enabled it to be consumed and studied as such. Interlocutors do not link the use of the pills to any form of ‘sexual dysfunction’. They understand it as ‘sexual enhancers’. The whole sexual intercourse is being reduced to some of its components that of erection and ejaculation. And the new industry of the pills propagates its ability to greater control over one’s body and sexuality.

Chemically enhanced sexual performance has been normalized. ‘Enhanced’ forms of sexual performance became the point of reference against which men have to measure identify their position. The normalized performance is produced in the form of a continuous productivity that is chemically enhanced (and empowered) in a specific way that enables the production of a controlled sexual performance and timing them. Men found themselves standing on the same

production line, being asked to find their own way - to or a way of - 'one sexual intercourse' that is worth 'one hundred', the extra job of being a lion, a productive efficient machine.

Seeking happiness in sexual intercourse become of greater importance, when other forms of happiness are very rare. My interlocutors seek *inbisat* through practicing the rituals of the enhanced extra job of being a lion. They see it as a handy site of breathing that enables them to forget some of their work pressures, gain a small night victory, in order to be able to go back to work, and through this they reproduce the necessary conditions of production. They have no options but to experience the extra job of being a lion.



1: personally captured photo of a pharmacy at downtown Cairo. It portrays a bull used as the main character in advertisement for local sexual enhancing pills.

Chapter 3: the Social life of Dragon

In the crowded 'Luxor street', hundreds of people microbuses, cars, motorcycles, and Tok-Tok(s) fighting to pass, although it was 10 pm. Hundreds of street vendors sell different kinds of clothes and food along the long street that ends by Mafareq Basrawy's (Basrawy crossroads) central popular market, in Imbaba, southwest Cairo. Thousands of women, men, youth, and children fill the street until very late time of the day, most of them (except some children) look busy and in a hurry, folks ride microbuses and Tok-Tok(s) while it is moving, sounds are heavily overlapped and nested to the extent that it constitutes one high disrupting background sound of the street.

On the street bank a coffee shop uses transparent plastic walls in order to isolate its men clients from the crowd of the street and its sounds. From outside the plastic walls, one can see men talking, laughing, and watching the Arabic version of WWE's free wrestling TV Chanel. However, through the plastic walls men's talk cannot be heard, their laughs do not reflect the happiness on the street, only some of wrestling movements can be useful in passing through the street.

In this chapter I explore the process of consuming medicines in one of Cairo biggest neighborhoods. I study what a local pharmacy means in Imbaba, how the local medical authority is being manifested in the everyday life. A local pharmacy in Imbaba upholds the status of authority manifested through the interface of medicine with everyday life. Given this status of medical authority, I question the relations and conditions that contribute to the status of a local pharmacy in Imbaba, how pharmaceutical companies find their mediators in Imbaba.

The formal market of the locally produced 'sexual enhancers' grew from 466 million in 2012 to 600 million in 2013, with 20% growth rate. In 2014 experts said that the local enhancers market reached 700 million EGP with 20% growth rate also. There are three big leading brands that constitute 73% of the total market (Eric, Virecta – the Golden Pill, and Viagra). According to the sales sector chief of the company that produces Eric, the total volume of the 'sexual enhancers' market in Egypt exceeded one billion pounds for the last year 2014 including the Chinese and Indian products (which are officially imported) (Fahmi, 2014). The available

statistics do not include the illegally smuggled enhancers (including Tramadol). Whoever, the average price of an enhancing pill by the end of 2014 and until March 2015 was 2pounds a pill. Accordingly we can expect that Egyptian men consumed at least 500 million pills in the last year - without counting the whole informal market of smuggled Chinese enhancers and Tramadol. According to CAPMAS, by the end of June 2014, there were 31 million Egyptian men above 14 years old (El-Moafi, 2014). According to pharmacists and interlocutors the average use of the ‘enhancing’ pills is one pill every week, 48 pills a year. By simple calculation, we can deduce that the 500 million pill in 2014 reached 10.4 million Egyptian men’s sexual lives (one out of every three men). In 2015 and with market growth rate of 20%, two other million male bodies would be consuming the enhancers. In this Chapter I study one part of the life of some of those 500 millions pills.

The Republic of Imbaba

I conducted most of my field work, visiting a pharmacy in Imbaba neighborhood, in a district called ‘Mafareq Basrawy’. Imbaba is one of Cairo’s biggest and most crowded popular neighborhoods in which hundreds of thousands of public employees live. Imbaba is not a new neighborhood, For centuries it was considered as one of the most important trade points that connects Cairo’s market with African and Arabian trade lines, the ‘camel market’ in Imbaba was the first market for exchanging camels in Egypt until the last few decades. The first state-subsidized public housing project in Egypt was the ‘Masakin al-Ummal’ project in Imbaba in 1948 (Sims, 2012, p. 75). However, Imbaba’s ‘big bang’ began as a part of ex-president Gamal Abdel Nasser’s project of placing new groups of factory workers around and inside Cairo in the fifties and sixties (p.75). From this time, thousands of families from Upper Egypt and workers, most of whom are from Sohag and Asyut governorates, migrated to Imbaba. Five decades later, in the beginning of 1990s Reuters reported that ‘radical Islamists’ announced a part of the neighborhood as the Islamic Republic of Imbaba, under the command of Sheikh Gaber. He and his several followers began to “weed out the vice lords, impose order, veil women, arrange marriages, and collect “‘taxes.’” (Ibrahim, 1998, p. 222). The Islamic Republic of Imbaba lived only for months, as Hosni Mubarak regime did one of its biggest security crackdowns ever inside Cairo; some 12,000 armed security forces stormed the neighborhood. The whole operation took

three weeks. “Sheikh Gaber and 600 of his followers were killed wounded, or arrested” (ibid p.222).

Nevertheless, it became popular to call the neighborhood, which gathers more than one million residents, the ‘Republic of Imbaba’. Now when Imbaba’s people call it the ‘Republic of Imbaba’ they do not refer to the historical moment of this name, but to the contemporary moment in which one can think of Imbaba as a whole country. Residences of Imbaba belong to a range of economic classes that combine low class, low-middle, and middle-middle classes. Imbaba gathers a range of people including illiterates, university professors, public employees, businessmen, daily workers, and political activists; leftists, , Muslims, Copts, radical Islamists and Sufis. On the opposite bank of the Nile, in front of Imbaba, a line of hypermodern towers that present some of the most powerful national and international economic and political entities such as the offices of World Bank, Bank Misr, and some of the United Nation development agencies. These towers are meters from Sawiris’ towers, one of Egypt richest men.

‘Basrawy’ is a name of a street and a district near the end of Luxor Street which is one of Imbaba’s longest and most central streets. On the banks of Basrawy’s streets, hundreds of prototyped four floors buildings built by the government (within a project to build low-budget buildings for the workers established by Gamal Abdel Naser) stand alongside hundreds of 4 to 12 floors buildings built by the residents of Basrawy. In the middle of the street there is a crossroad called Mafareq Basrawy, where the popular market is located.

In the popular market of Mafareq Basrawy, a weasel is being ‘scarified’ on the sill of a new shop to bring good luck. And on the Archangel Michael Church’s walls, fifty meters from “Mafareq Basrawy”, is written “revenge is coming” a phrase that is known, in Imbaba as well as in many other places all over Egypt, as a part of radical Islamists threats to Copts after their participation in the demonstrations against ex-president Mohamed Morsi who belongs to Muslim brotherhoods in June 2014. At the market place, meters away from the Islamist threatening phrase, are Sufis songs for the famous singer Yasien Al-Tohami being played loudly, although it is established and understood that Sufis influences in that area would not be welcomed by radical Islamists.

Although I am a resident of Cairo, I went to Basrawy (and Imbaba) for the first time four years ago (Jan, 2010). As a journalist, I went there to cover how thousands of Imbaba's Muslims and Copts spent nights and days in the streets waiting to see Virgin Mary; they believed that she was visiting Basrawy's sky. For most of Cairo's inhabitants there is no reason they may choose to visit Imbaba except if they have families there. For a journalist there is no reason to learn about Imbaba's news except on election days (which come in the form of 'sales day'). Basrawy is, then, a district of some hundreds of thousands of folks who live in a 'shadowed' part of a City of a population of 20 million, no one would mention what they have, but what they miss (Ferguson, 2006). Months after the 25th of Jan revolution, I went to Basrawy (May, 2011) for the second time in my life, again as a journalist, to cover how thousands of folks burned the second Church of Virgin Mary in the same district of Basrawy. From this time until now, the most famous event in which Imbaba was mentioned in public debates was through videos of women dancing in front of elections booths in Imbaba, months after the end of Muslim Brotherhood regime. I went again to Basrawy to meet one of the interlocutors who was visiting his sister (a public employee also) and her husband (a teacher). People of Basrawy would only be mentioned if they were found marching the streets in thousands to see the Virgin Mary or if they take part in a revolution.

At the Pharmacy

"We take care of you" is the slogan Ahmed the pharmacist selected to be printed on the front door of his pharmacy. "Dr. Ahmed's Pharmacy", is two stairs below the level of the street. It is 10 meters in length and 5 meters in width with two columns in the middle. The pharmacy walls are painted in the classical pharmacy image, in white and blue colors. Inside the pharmacy are shelves of thousands kinds of medicines and low priced cosmetics, a counter and a desk with a computer where Ahmed usually sits. At the left end of the pharmacy there is a small bathroom that has a sink and a toilet. Beneath the sink are stacks of full bottles of water prepared for emergency water cuts. Annexed to the pharmacy is a small room (1x1) only for injections.

Although Ahmed is still 35 years old, he succeeded in establishing his own small pharmacy. Most young pharmacists cannot establish their own pharmacies and most of them spend their careers working as assistants for other older pharmacists, while others work for one of the big pharmaceutical companies as salesmen who pass by dozens of pharmacies everyday

trying to convince them to buy the drugs produced by their companies, and others work as sellers at one of the big chain of pharmacies which are owned by a small number of wealthy business men (only in these rich pharmacies elites can find imported branded cosmetics, and European and US drugs).

After graduation, Ahmed decided not to work as a pharmacist, and chose to work as a journalist. He also wrote novels and short stories. However, shortly, he left journalism because he found it dominated by the business men interests, as well as by networks of gated groups of journalists. He returned to pharmacology and worked as an assistant pharmacist for four years in Basrawy. At the early stages of the January 25th revolution, Ahmed left his work as a pharmacist again to get involved in political movements and events, however, he decided to return to his career as a pharmacist once more because he found the revolution “disappointing.” He established his own small pharmacy. The day Ahmed signed his three year renting contract of his new pharmacy, an unknown man tried to kill him and he was injured. Ahmed explained this incident as a form of revenge instigated by one of the competitor-pharmacists at the end of the district.

Working with Ahmed in the pharmacy; "*ostaza* Mona," a young monakaba women, and Mrs. Amal '*madame Amal*' a fifty-year-old unveiled woman with a motherly smile. Madame Amal is the one who gives injections only to women, while Ahmed gives injections only to men. Mona and Madame Amal work from 2 pm to 10 pm, while Dr. Ahmed works everyday till 2 am without taking a break.

Working as a pharmacist in such a neighborhood, requires trust, hence there is a very complicated relation of power between the pharmacist and the residents of the district. Without a relationship that cleverly negotiates the borders of medical authority, trust, and business, Ahmed cannot stay a minute. In order to manage his work, Ahmed studies and memorize the medical histories of his neighbors/clients and their families as well as their consumption limits and how much they can afford for different drugs (accordingly he chooses the brand of the drug he prescribes for them). Ahmed knows every detail of the lives of people in his district. He knows who is married to whom, how and when did they have children, their ages, their jobs and of course what drugs they use, he remembers the colors of drugs' packets and their prices. It is very hard for the majority of people who did not study medicine to remember the names of the drugs

they have used, most of them have very complicated names, so it is important for Ahmed, when he wants to make sure that he correctly remembers the kinds of drugs his clients had used, he asks his clients by memorizing the colors of the drugs packets, and through combining colors with its prices he can be sure that he remembers the drug correctly.

In Egypt most of the drugs are described by the pharmacist not by a certified medical doctor. People call the pharmacist 'doctor' and most of them prefer to consult a pharmacist if he prefers to prescribe a drug or to refer them to a medical doctor instead. The pharmacist's drug prescription costs only the cost of the drug, while a doctor consultation costs fees plus the drug cost.

A local pharmacist, such as Ahmed, has to know everything about the families in his neighborhood, their 'medical history', and above all the economic ability of his clients. Medical doctors in Basrawy usually spend only some months in the neighborhood working for one or another clinic that is established by religious associations, or small businessmen. Medical doctors working in the governmental hospitals work only in mornings, they spend some years in this hospital and move to another and so on. Except doctors who established private clinics in the neighborhood, most of medical doctors in Imbaba do their jobs for a while they leave it to other places to work for other shifts in other neighborhoods with different people. They do not have interest in knowing a lot about their clients who they might never meet again. They might do not prescribe the right drug with no worries of losing their jobs. Ahmed cannot, if he mis-prescribed drugs no one in the neighborhood would trust him, and if this happened he would lose his work quickly. In one of my visits, I witnessed Ahmed as he insisted to call a doctor who mis-prescribed a fatal drug to a child. Outraged by the ignorance, he wanted to let the doctor know that this drug might kill the child. There are moments where Ahmed receives prescriptions with very rare drugs that could be replaced with other alternatives to the same effect but he would consult his customers first and he would offer them his recommendations. His neighborhood customers more often than not, accept and embrace his recommendations.

Going to a doctor (a medical one, or a pharmacist) for most of Egyptians is about prescribing drugs, people when they ask for doctors advise, they do this because they are expecting a prescription of a drug. In Mafareq Basrawy people ask for the strongest drug (within low price limits), the most effective and the faster. I conducted most of the pharmacy field work

in winter, I witnessed dozens of people come to Ahmed around the clock asking for treatments for flu, almost nine of every ten ask for antibiotic injection. Ahmed thinks that people don't have time to wait for two or three days to get out from flu using oral pills medication; they need a strong and low-priced treatment that end the flue on the same day. He asks them one question before giving them the antibiotic injection; did you eat? Without local pharmacists, pharmacological companies cannot gain billions of dollars in Egypt.

- State and Medical Authorities

Ahmed, as a part of his job of gaining trust, knows how to keep secrets, not only personal secrets, but sometimes secrets that the state should never know about. Ahmed has to deal with injuries caused by fights in the streets without letting any policeman know about the fighting. In cases of street fighting people cannot go to a governmental hospital because doctors in such a case have to tell the police office about the case. Injured persons go first to local pharmacists such as Ahmed, then the pharmacist decides whether he can deal with the injury or not. If Ahmed thinks the injuries are too critical to be dealt with in the pharmacy he links the injured persons to doctors in the church hospital or in the mosque hospital. Medical doctors at the hospitals of the church and the mosque know also how it is important to keep such local accidents away from police eyes, because if they did not play this role injured persons may die bleeding in the streets. Ahmed knows also about jobs that should be kept away from police eyes.

It was around 11pm, when an elderly woman came to the pharmacy in a very nervous state, asking Ahmed's help, because she cannot keep her body under control, she cannot feel her legs and she cannot keep standing. From her traditional clothes and her accent, it was clear that she is a poor upper-Egyptian woman. Her daughter is mostly in her mid-twenties, she stands beside her mother in silece. Ahmed asked the women "what happened?", and the elderly woman told him: my sons fight each other. Ahmed asked her to keep clam, and gave her a sedative drug. After the two women left the pharmacy, Ahmed spoke to me in English, to make sure that his assistants would not understand what he is about to tell me (they know only Arabic). He said that he sold the women's sons condoms some hours ago, he knows that the young woman's brothers make her work as a sex worker under their supervision to gain money for their living, and that they fight each other many times. For me the surprising issue was not that he knows such secrets about the families of the district, but what surprised me more was that sedative drugs were very

famous and commonly used by his clients. After a while I discovered that sedative drugs are among the most consumed drugs in the area.

At this moment I understood that Ahmed is not just a silent eyewitness of the everyday pain of Basrawy's people. But an active subject that acts and is being acted upon, an active part of a whole social, political, and economic, network. Ahmed's pharmacy is a site to share Basrawy's people pain, disabilities, disappointments, dreams, hopes, and above all their coping mechanisms.

- The Men-Only code

A man comes to the pharmacy standing in silence in front of the counter, Mona (Ahmed's assistant) asks him what he wants, he: "Dr. Ahmed", Ahmed notices him, opens his desk shelves to get one packet of the 'enhancing pills', without saying a single word, he gave it to the man, and that is all. All men ask for buying the 'enhancing pills' in the same way of silence. They stand in silence, as long as there are women in the pharmacy. Ahmed the pharmacist himself do the same thing, he sells the 'enhancing medicine' in silence. A full operation of selling and buying, exchanging a commodity with money in a face to face relationship, goes every couple of minutes without a single word. A specific code is being built and articulated not in words, but through symbols of silence. The men only code is developed enough that it can accomplish the whole process of selling and buying the enhancing pills.

Every detail in the whole process of this exchange is well established to enable the male-only commodity to be circulated in such a way. The enhancers are placed in Ahmed's closed desk shelves, not on the ordinary medicines' shelves which are opened that everyone can see what is on it. Ahmed sells the pills without its external packet on which the name and the usage of the medicine are elaborated. He keeps a waste basket below his desk in order to drop the empty packets of the enhancers. At the end of the day – around 1 am – one can see the waste basket full of colored small packets behind Ahmed's desk. Pharmacological companies which produce the 'enhancers' designed the packets in a way that enable the silent usage. The user information is detailed in Arabic only in the index and on the external packet. On the internal medicine tab nothing is written but the name of the bills in English. The most important issue in the politics of packing the 'enhancers', is that most of the enhancers pills are packed in small

units that contain one or two pills only. This way of packing enables the user to put the whole packet, (which is 5*5 cm), or to put the internal tab in his trouser pockets to keep the ‘enhancer’ away from his wives and children’s eyes, add to that such a way of packing enables men to use the whole packet in one week so they don’t have to keep it at home for a long time, and above all that the whole packet costs 5 to 10 pounds (whether it contains one pill such in the case of the Egyptian Viagra, or two pills in the case of Virecta), so it becomes more accessible for men in low-priced form.

In fact, Mona and Amal understand this silent code. Most of the times, Mona and Amal do not ask men who stand at the left side of the counter – directly in the front of the pharmacy door - about what they want. It happened sometimes that madam Amal looked to Ahmed in order to draw his attention that a man is standing in silence in front of the counter. When Ahmed is talking to me or managing his face-book page, he might not be able to offer his full attention to the silent language. Women understand the men only code, not only in the pharmacy but also in work sites and at home. The men I met believe that their wives know about the enhancing pills, although they do not talk about it. At work sites women may announce loudly what they think about their husbands’ usage of the enhancing pills (that would be detailed in chapter 4).

All this ‘men-only’ issue can be seen among middle and low-middle classes. In low economic class, according to Ahmed and another pharmacist who Worked in El-Moneeb (a popular neighborhood in Giza), women may use the pills themselves as a general enhancer to enhance the general energy of the body as it improves the blood flow. Women may also buy the pills instead of their husbands according to the pharmacists. However, throughout my fieldwork I didn’t meet women who buy the pills for themselves or for their husbands.

Ahmed knows his clients very well and he doesn’t need to ask them what they want, so he can sell them the enhancers without talking to them. Ahmed might give his clients the enhancing pills and an analgesic pill (without being asked but through the men-only language), he already knows that the enhancing pills cause headache most of the times. Only in the case of a man who consumes the pills for the first time, Ahmed would open a discussion. Such a discussion would include only some advises from Ahmed to his client about the suitable dosage of the ‘enhancer’ to start with, he prefers that men begin with 50mg medicine or less, in order to make sure that ‘side effects’ would be under control as much as possible. However, such an

advice is very rare as most of the men come to the pharmacy while they already had decided what they want. A pharmacy is a place of advocating 'sexual enhancing pills' in the form of efficient modern medicine, and a place to get cuts of the medicine price, a place that through its medical authority shapes the erectile medicine in the form of 'enhancing pills'. However the job of advocating the usage of the enhancing pills happens, not only in the pharmacy, but through a whole set of social, political, and economic networks and relations.

After 10pm, when 'madam Amal' and 'ostaza Mona' leave the pharmacy, men would behave in another way, they begin to greet Ahmed, and loudly ask Ahmed for the pills, using phrases such as 'el haga beta`ti' (my stuff). They would ask Ahmed advice about raising the medicine dosage from 50mg to 100, or 125mg. They might open discussions about their preference for the Chinese pills. Many men of Ahmed's clients prefer the Chinese pills because it causes headache less than the Egyptian pills.

The Chinese pills have another advantage that most of its ads are played on wrestling channels which are, to a large extent, men-only T.V. channels. Ahmed's pharmacy sometimes ran out of Chinese pills, in such a case, men would accept the Egyptian pills and they might ask for a stronger analgesic with the enhancer. The Chinese pills' users used to their shortage, over the last few months, and they get used to the Egyptian ones.

Only Moris, a man who I met and talked to him in the pharmacy, was very angry of Ahmed because Ahmed could not fulfill his promise to him to find the Chinese pills. On this day Moris, 50 years old man, was angry – not only of Ahmed but of everything in his life. It was around 9 pm, and he has just ended his working day at a printing house which is one of the biggest printing houses in Egypt, that it prints millions of books every year, for the Ministry of Education and for religious institutions. The owner of the printing house, took off half of Moris' monthly salary, because he didn't inform him of an error that his direct chief did in a printing operation. Moris did not think that he is responsible of his chief's errors, and he already said to his chief that he arranged the printing job in a wrong way. This night Moris was very angry that Ahmed does not have in the pharmacy his favorite Chinese pills. However, he accepted an Egyptian pill and said 'I have enough problems'. Although Amal was still working in the pharmacy this day, Moris found himself forced not to speak the men-only language.

- Politics of Quality

- Egyptians have a general image of the Chinese products that are products of low quality in comparison with other imported products (from Europe, US, Turkey, Brazil, Thailand, India, or other countries). All the products imported from these very different countries would be called '*mustawrad*' (imported) this word gives the impression that this '*mustawrad*' product has a better quality than the Egyptian product. Although the products of European countries and US are understood to be with a higher quality than the products that are made in other countries such as Thailand and India, they all would be called *mustawrad* . However the Chinese product is called '*sini*' (Chinese) and not *mustawrad*, a *sini* product is generally considered a product of a less quality than any product else, including the Egyptian one. Lately Egyptians are getting used to know that there are '*sini*' products with a good quality, although they rarely exist in Egypt. The same image of '*sini*' is heavily repeated in media discourse towards Chinese pills, it has been always treated as untrusted underground products. However, many men prefer the Chinese pills as they cause fewer headaches than the Egyptian ones. The Chinese pills are at a lesser price compared to the Egyptian ones. The US or French Viagra costs a lot and pharmacies in popular neighborhoods such as Imbaba do not sell it as it have no consumers there.

It happens from time to time that the Chinese pills disappear from the market, it is not clear why this happens. When I begin my visits to Ahmed's pharmacy the Chinese pills were in the beginning of a new period of disappearing. Ahmed answered his client that he had it until few days ago. However, the Chinese pills did not appear again in this pharmacy or in another pharmacy I visited several times in 'Feisal' (a popular neighborhood in Giza) for three months. It happens also that the Chinese pills change their names from time to time. According to pharmacists the companies that produce the Chinese pills do this to avoid fabricating its products. Some local small factories produce false pills in the same names of the Chinese ones. It is easier to fabricate the Chinese pills than fabricating the Egyptian ones. The Chinese pills do not reach the pharmacies in the same way all the times. Pharmacists might buy it directly from importers and other traders who may themselves be a part of the fabrication process. Only few Chinese brands were able to keep their names for some years. Dragon, Power Horse and Tiger King are among these Chinese products that kept their existence in the market with the same names for more than 4 years till the present.

In September 2014, in the first visit for Ahmed's pharmacy, Ahmed decided to explain for me why he himself 'respects' the Chinese pills. Ahmed opened a huge Arabic book on the surface of his desk, '*Atlas of Medicines*', and began to explain why the Egyptian drugs cause headache. According to this 'atlas' most of the Egyptian drug companies use a very cheap and low-standard 'active substance', while the Chinese companies use middle-standard substances. Ahmed believes his atlas because Egyptian companies make unbelievable discounts and offers. He says "one time they gave me a LCD TV widescreen, (that cost something around three thousand pounds (500\$)), as a gift because I sell their products". He continued; that was before the revolution (25th of Jan 2011), however I can get very good Chinese pills with a discounted price that no other pharmacy in the neighborhood can offer.

After months of Chinese pills shortage, I asked Ahmed about the Chinese pills, in fact I wanted to know if he can explain why he could not get it for all these months. Ahmed answered me in a totally unexpected way. He said that he does not recommend using them, because the Chinese stuff contains many medicinal herbs that are not effective!

At this moment I decided to notice when a medicine becomes an effective one with 'high standard substance' and when another loses this quality. I found that most of the medicines, that treat any illness, gain this 'quality recommendation' as long as it is affordable and the companies that produce or distribute it can offer it at a good price. This happens unless a specific drug is the only one of its kind and there are no other brands that can replace it. It is clear that businessmen who import the Chinese pills cannot sustain their work for a reason or another, and above all they cannot build a strong relation with the pharmacists, that was an enough reason to make pharmacists angry of their products although consumers would prefer it. If the Chinese pills return to be offered in the pharmacological market again, it would return to be considered by pharmacists the pills of better standard substance.

The 'politics of quality' become clearer when we know that the Arabic 'atlas of medicines' doesn't contain a rating for the standard of the 'active substances chemicals', it tells only information about the compositions of substances, the doses in each kind of pills, and the companies that produce or distribute it. This information is detailed in the atlas' especial chapter of 'Sexual Tonics and Related Preparations'.

– The popular sport

While talking about the shortage of Chinese pills with their low price and the new high price of Tramadol, Ahmed said “as Mohamed Saad (a well-known actor) said in his movie: *el regular ba`et be gineh* (Manhood became equals one pound).” Mohamed Saad was referring to the fact that the pills which are advocated as ‘sexual enhancers’ are not expensive and handy at a low price.

Ahmed thinks that sex is a popular sport. Sex as a popular sport becomes a more important issue when men do not have time, place, money, or energy to visit their bodies. They would visit their bodies only at the end of a long day of work, at home, with a very limited budget, and with the help of the enhancers. In a crowded city like Cairo the most popular sport is watching a football match, not playing football, only in Ramadan men can find time and empty streets to play, sport clubs are closed for high class people. Another popular sport in Egypt is watching wrestling, the WWE Arabic T.V. channels. The stories of wrestling series, who married who, and males and females fighters who loved each other, are one of the most repeated talks in the work sites. Weeks after this talk with Ahmed, a pharmaceutical company published an ad, in the form of outdoor poster, in which a wife holds a football court’s monitor screen announcing that the duration of the match was extended six more times (personally captured photo of the ad poster is attached at the end of this chapter) . The bed in the ad is designed in the shape of a football court. Humans are, before everything bodies and they need to visit their bodies in one way or another. Regardless of all the alienating practices which alienate humans from their bodies in every possible production line, humans’ existence is their bodies’ existence. Humans’ bodies are their material being, they need to ‘freely’ visit and experience it.

Conclusion:

In order to build an understanding of the rituals through which the enhancing pills being circulate, it is important to draw the larger picture of the material conditions of existence of the people who consume it. It is important also to understand the larger picture of consuming medicines in pharmacies. Dragon, Viagra, Eric, Golden Pill, Tramadol and all the other ‘sexual enhancers’ are parts of a larger market of a growing pharmacological industry that propose increasing control over human bodies.

In Egypt most of medicines are being prescribed through pharmacists not through medical doctors. A local pharmacist, then, is not just a silent eyewitness of people everyday live, but a significant active subject that takes part in a larger scene in which body is being deployed in all kinds of production lines. A local pharmacist is an eyewitness and an active subject of how bodies are being subjected to increasing desires of control and mechanizing in the contemporary times.

Big chains of pharmacies are trying to replace small and middle local pharmacies. However, it is hard to imagine how this might take place. A local pharmacy is a place in which people negotiate their pain, disappointments, dreams, hopes and above all their coping mechanisms. They negotiate it with a local pharmacist who knows them very well. A local pharmacist understands how to finely draw the lines between his role as a mediator for a larger industry, and the material life conditions of his clients.

In Ahmed's pharmacy men developed their own language of silence. The men-only code of silence can manage a whole relation of exchanging commodities, without using a word.

Chapter Four: the Enhancing Gift

Through this chapter I will draw on another face of the enhancing pills' social life. I study how the enhancing pills enter a phase of being a 'gift'. I show how the circulation of the 'light gift' of 'sexual enhancers' can be seen as a 'desiring up' process. It normalizes the idea of 'enhanced sexuality'. It ensures the belonging of the male body to the public, through rationalizing the idea of circulating a 'sexual enhancer' in government sites. It promotes how it is 'normal' that men invest in their penis to seek '*inbesat*' through a sexual intercourse. And above all it obliges men to position themselves clearly from the socially promoted 'enhanced sexual performance', they have to accept or refuse the pills, and they have to decide whether they will use the gift or not.

In their journey towards their career as 'sexual enhancers' Viagra and Tramadol live a temporal state of gifting. Gift exchange is a very unique mode of commodity circulation practices, in which money is not utilized - at least in an explicit way. A Gift exchange mode builds many kinds of social relations. It gives the circulated commodity another extra layer of social recognition. Indeed, Viagra, Dragon, and Tramadol circulate as gifts in many occasions and places; in presidential and parliament's elections, as well as in ordinary everyday of relationships. Yet, gifting the enhancing pills in case of a dense network between employees in a government work site has specific character. Circulating the enhancing pills in this case happens within a friendly environment and among extended friendships - 30 years relationships in some cases. Viagra and Tramadol are very intimate kind of gifts in the everyday morning working hours of some of my public servants interlocutors that shape and reshape imaginations, desires, and body sexual performance.

I study how gifting relationships play a vital role across the whole work site. There are no clear cut boundaries between spaces that are sites of work and spaces which are not. In our contemporary times every possible space is being deployed as a place of possible production. Even when we are asleep, there are many kinds of labor that are at play. The whole industry of 'sexual enhancers' extends the possible spaces of production to include human sexual experience, at night after the 'official' end of the work day, at home, and in the beds. Accordingly, I do not think of the 'production site' as a place in which humans work more than

they do outside of it. I don't see it even as a place of more intense exploitation of labor than spaces outside it. In our contemporary times, there is no outside of the 'production site'!

However, public employees – as well as many other workers – have to spend eight hours every day for thirty six years of their lives in the same building with the same people and sometimes sitting on the same desk doing the same role on the production line. Such a site should be of a great importance in their lives. After some years of working in the same place, they introduce themselves by their official job before anything else, although they have never thought that they chose to do such jobs. Many of their tales, relations, ideologies, economic positions, and fears relate to their official 'site of production'.

As mentioned in chapter 1, I chose to conduct my study among public employees for many reasons. Although in Egypt there are 5.5 million public employees, there are few ethnographies focused on them. Most of the studies which relate to public employees come from economic and administrative backgrounds. Thus they studied the economic and administrative aspects of public employees and always concluding by stressing the importance of re-structuring the whole public sector in Egypt (UNDP, 2011, p. 3).

Egypt has just finished a three year project of 5.9 million USD under the supervision of UNDP to "enhance efficiency and accountability of the public sector in Egypt through information and communication technologies" (UNDP, 2011, p. 5). According to the project's concept paper '... A massive modernization process of government to citizen (G2C) services and Government to Government coordination (G2G) is currently taking place [in Egypt], under the aegis of the Ministry of State for Administrative Development" (UNDP, 2011, p. 5). The project aimed also to save up to 900,000 working hours a year through 'enhancing' the governmental sector's 'efficiency'.

Most of the public sector branches in Egypt have a number of employees that exceed their needs and logistic capacity. Most of the governmental sites are crowded. Many of the employees don't have tasks to do, they exist in the work site without a clear work that they are assigned to do. In some governmental places – as well as in many public sector sites – employees might not have a chair and a desk to use in their offices, they even might not have a real office at all, as they may be assigned to an office that has not been built yet. "Public

employment is often used for reasons having little to do with efficient provision of public goods and services” (El-Wassal, 2013. P1). According to El-Wassal “Egypt’s government –like many others – has used public employment as a way to reduce unemployment and to counteract the scarcity of jobs in the private sector and/or for patronage” (P1).

The public sector in Egypt witnessed great expansion with Gamal Abdel Nasser core mission of widening state investments (Elyachar, 2012). “The Nasser regime proclaimed that it would achieve “popular control of economic institutions” by way of public sector control” (P.82). Almost every fresh graduate, from the expanding governmental educational system, was automatically ensured a job opportunity in the public sector. Working as a public employee was the most affordable way for millions of lower classes to move their status to middle class. In the late 1970s, and as a result of the ‘liberal economic policies’ ‘*Infitah*’, the economic and social position of highly educated white collars of public employees decreased. They became more and more unable to afford enough money to meet their needs. The social status of public employees was harmfully influenced. “In the late 1980s, the government ended the guaranteed employment policy” (El-Wassal, 2013. P. 4). However, public employment continued to play an important role in reducing unemployment.

In 2014 a minimum wage rate was passed for most of public employees in government administration entities. However, this ‘minimum wage’ didn’t actually help the employees, as the accompanying high inflation rates eat into its real value (El-Wassal, 2013). Political activists have been demanding for minimum wages for more than a decade. It was after January 25th it became very hard for the regime to ignore these demands. It took many years for the state to implement the new minimum wage rate. Government’s economic consultants found the implementation of the ‘minimum wage’ an impossible task with a “budget deficit exceeding LE 134 billion in 2010/2011, which amounts to 10% of Egypt’s GDP.” (ibid p.2). However, the government is still unable to enforce the new rule of the maximum wages of public employees in high positions. Many public and government institutions refused to obey the new rule of maximum wage rate. Achieving wage justice in the public sector is the ‘impossible’ task. On March 12th 2015 the President ‘Sisi’ issued new changes in the law of ‘civil servants’. The new version of the law encourages early retirement. That was seen (or perceived) as a sign from the government to public employees to apply retirement with a promise of full pension (Gad, 2015).

The second reason behind being motivated to conduct my research among public employees is that they constitute a large group of enhancing pills' users. Most of public employees in Egypt work other extra jobs after their eight working hours in the public sector. Public employees receive low wages, and they have to offer other four to six hours of work every day.

The term 'public employees', officially, include several jobs in civil institutions run with government capital. It includes teachers as well as police officers. In this research, I focus on one sector of public employees that Egyptians call: '*muwazzafin*'. A *muwazzaf* usually works in one of the governmental administrative sites such as all the Ministries buildings and all its local extensions. A *muwazzaf* might be working in public companies and factories especially if he is doing administrative and accounting work. The word '*muwazzaf*' clearly excludes teachers and police officers. Public schools' teachers face economic problems that are very similar to *muwazzafin*, however, they have very different work practices that drift away from the main concern of my study.

At the Work Site

It was January 2013, when Hisham received his acceptance letter to work in a government institution, gaining his job under the category of 'revolution's injuries'. Hisham was injured during clashes with police in one of the demonstrations after January 25th. He spent six months in a hospital because he had two shrapnel shots in his head. During his stay at the hospital his father went through the necessary steps in order to find him a job in the public sector according to the law as compensation for his injury in the revolution.

It is rare that a newly graduated youth finds a job in the public sector. One has to have connections, '*wasta*', with powerful persons in the government to get a job in the public sector. The other way to get such a job is to have parents working in the same government institution; sons of *muwazzafin* have a priority in getting jobs with their parents. Although *muwazzafin* salaries are very low, many people still prefer to work in the government, as this would secure them a minimum stable wage, minimum health insurance, and retirement plan.

In his first day at work, Hisham went to meet the general director of the place. As Hisham told me, the general director asked him the expected questions: 'who is your *wasta*?'

Hisham replied: “I do not have a *wasta*”. He asked him: then, your father is working with us? Hisham said: no, my father does not work here, in fact I am one of the ‘revolution’s injuries’, so I get this job. The general director said: Damn the revolution. He continued ‘sorry, I did not mean you, but my brother’s car was stolen during the revolution’.

Hisham learned from day one that his interests are very different from his managers and most of his colleagues. However, he gained their trust and became close to the main affective ‘network’ in the work place through many other common interests.

The everyday rituals of Hisham’s work are very similar to how it goes in many other governmental places. The lives of *muwazzafin* at work seem to be very similar everywhere in Egypt. There are five big ‘events’ in the day; signing attendance, breakfast, talks and paper work, Noon Prayer ‘*eldohr*’, and signing departure ‘*insraf*’. However, *muwazzafin* work site is not that cold place of blind routine. The five big repeated events of the work day are full of emotions, social relations, political and economic interests, networks, and power. They constitute a platform for every possible human interaction.

In Hisham’s office there are fifteen other *muwazzaf*. His office is a big room, however, no one calls this space a room; it is ‘the office’. Fortunately, all the sixteen employees in the office have their own desks and chairs. At breakfast, the sixteen *muwazzaf* separate into three groups. The first group includes those who prefer to eat at home before coming to work, they are the most ‘serious’ group. They sign attendance almost on time at 8:15am. They do not need to negotiate the time of attendance with the responsible employee. They have to wake up 6 a.m. in order to find time to eat and arrive at work on time. Hisham place is less than two km far from his work. However, it takes at least one hour in the morning for him to reach his work.

Hisham is a member of the second group, they move, directly after signing attendance, to the beans cart, then to the coffee. The beans cart is the meeting point where most of *muwazzafin* meet each other from the different offices, different floor, and jobs. It is also the meeting point where *muwazzafin* meet the workers and others of lower positions from lower jobs. At the coffee Hisham has to pay for his director. He negotiates his attendance time with the responsible employee. His kindness at the coffee and other places helps him to win the negotiations.

However, the negotiations work only within a range of 30 minutes late and not more than 45 minutes. Hisham has to arrive at his work before 9am.

The third breakfast group includes five women who prefer to call for beans' delivery. The security guards of the building do not allow the deliveryman to enter, so Hisham or other colleagues get the food for them from the deliveryman, because they are 'youth'.

Now it is time for work and talks. Some of the employees put a poster for the current president Sisi on the wall behind their offices. They are the most willing to talk. It is really free for them to talk. Most of them use cups printed on them a photo of the president. One of the general managers brought these cups and gave it to his friends as gifts. The majority of the people in Hisham's office are supporters of Sisi. Only in the last few weeks, some of them began to question the president policies. After the shortage of Tramadol many of them announced their anger. *Muwazzafin* salaries, although still very low, have increased during the last year of the current president Sisi to meet the 'minimum wage rate'.

During May and Jun 2013, Hisham was the 'star' among his colleagues. As he is one of the 'youth of the revolution' he was asked to get them the 'Rebellion forms', '*Tamarod*', which they signed against the Muslim Brotherhood ex-president Morsi. In the work and talk time, employees who belong to Muslim Brotherhoods are almost prohibited from talking. The other employees call them '*dawa`ish*' ISIS (the plural of *Da`esh*). Hisham had been 'accused' of belonging to the 'Revolutionary Socialists' movement. 'a`m Rageh', the man who thought that Hisham belongs to the political movement, heard about the revolutionary movement for the first time weeks ago. He heard in a talk show introduced by one of the president supporters that this movement is 'anarchistic' (that almost means for him every possible immoral and destructive act). However, both the 'ISIS' people and Hisham the revolutionist are gathered in the 'enhancing pills' network'. One of the most effective networks of employees that act in the whole building, under the supervision of 'a`m Rageh'.

Most of the talks in Hisham's office are repeated. One might tell the same talk twice or even three times in the same day. They are almost political talks. Tales of bombs that were found by police are heavily repeated. In the first ten days of every month employees in the office used to have serious tasks to achieve, so the time of talks, between breakfast and Noon prayer,

decrease. However, from the 11th day of every month time of tales and talks increases to the extent that it occupies most of the time between breakfast and prayers time.

Now it is time for Noon prayer '*eldohr*'. Although most of the employees do not pray *eldohr*, the whole building stops working during the time of prayers. Every floor of the building prays separately. The office boy announces the time of the prayers by 'el azan'. One of the directors or general directors should lead the prayers as 'imam'. Although the employees do not think that there are religious rules that assign the position of 'imam' to directors and general directors, no one of them would think of leading the prayer while there is a director joining it.

Women in the building have an assigned place to pray on the 5th floor. However, in Hisham's office at the third floor, as well as many other offices, women close the door of the office and begin talks and prayers, while men wait for them out the office. Hisham and many others find this time to be a one hour break to smoke and talk in the corridor. It is also a chance for Hisham to meet his story writer Coptic friend from the second floor. Around 1pm after the prayers break, some of the employees return back to their offices while others depart, that depends on their kind of work, and to negotiations and networks. In Hisham's office they return to work and stay till 2:45 p.m. most of the times.

At the governmental site, the men-only language appears. The men-only language here is less silent than in the pharmacy. Men begin to ask each other about the shortage of Tramadol and the efficiency of the different enhancers, they use codes such as '*el hagat*' (things) or '*maslha*' (benefit) to refer to the enhancers, especially when women are around. Women also talk to each other about the enhancers' issues, however I did not have the chance to hear them closely as it needs a long time to gain their trust.

In another government small site that I visited once, a woman asked the office boy not give her husband more pills. Her husband works at the same place. In this building the office boy is the responsible man for getting pills into the place. She used symbols while speaking to the office boy she said: leave the man alone. The office boy got the message and smiled. This work site is very small; it is constituted of one villa with four offices only. Employees there are closer in direct relationships. However, In Hisham's office, in a very big building which has hundreds

of offices inside it, women are more attached. It was harder for me to hear them loudly mentioning the enhancing pills.

Almost nothing goes in the governmental site without a relationship or a network of one kind or another. Hisham was a new employee, one and a half years ago, when reported that a director in another sector did mistakes at work. The director used to conduct two missions one of them related to his managerial level which is monitoring which is basically an in-office mission and the other belongs to lower level which is collecting electricity monthly bills from consumer houses and shops. This practice of doing more than one job at the same time in asking for extra salary is official. He, as a director, assigns himself the wealthiest neighborhoods that pay the bills with no delays, which secures him extra money. He might also bank the money he collected for some months before he gets them back to the government in order to benefit from the interest rate. Hisham reported the delay of the money. That was a big issue.

While the internal networks are still working to internally solve this problem of Hisham report, external editors came to the government site. The director was charged of corruption. He was moved from his position to a lower one in another area of Giza. That was a big penalty. Eight months later he returned to occupy a higher position of a general manger at his old place, in the next office to Hisham. Hisham the new employee learned very early to respect internal and external employees' networks. He would not be able to achieve any task of his jobs without understanding and negotiating the established running emotional, economic, social, and political relations and networks.

Hisham now is a new member of the biggest network in the building. This network has the power even to connect effectively with other networks in other buildings and even other ministries. He is a member in the network of 'a`m Rageh' which deploys the enhancing pills as 'gifts'.

Tramadol and Dragon as gift:

A gift relationship is always produced as a profitless relationship, a relationship of generosity without any past or future, without time or calculation (Appadurai, 1986.p12). Gifts - in theory - are voluntary (Mauss, 2002, p. 3). A gift situation, understood in such a way, challenges Marx's notion of commodity. But, is there a sharp contrast between a gift relationship

and the self and the profit-oriented notion of a 'commodity' relationship. Mauss argues the contrary. For him, "exchanges and contracts take place in the form of presents; in theory these are voluntary, in reality they are given and reciprocated obligatorily" (p. 3). He adds: "one hardly ever finds a simple exchange of goods, wealth, and products in transactions concluded by individuals" (p. 6). He emphasizes that: "It is not individuals but collectivities that impose obligations of exchange and contract upon each other" (p. 6).

Appadurai calls us to search "the commodity potential of all things rather than searching fruitlessly for the magic distinction between commodities and other sorts of things" (p.13). The notion of gift generosity is mostly about a specific situation and context of 'exchangeability', the notion of timeless (without calculation) is mostly about a form of time, a form of extended time. Gift exchange then, is the excellent mode of commodity circulation practices, as it reflects a notion of 'economy in-itself' more than 'economy for-itself' (Appadurai, 1986, p. 14).

Enhancing pills as 'gift' go into a variety of contexts, in which they live their social life to meet their career as commodities. Enhancing pills in their journey towards their career might pass through many temporal and symbolic states in which they are being circulated as gift. From Mauss and Appadurai we can conclude that the most significant character of these temporal and symbolic states (of gift) is the social intensity and density, the collective obligatory notion of exchange, the generosity context of the giver(s), and the extended form of time.

Enhancing pills arrive at the government building, where Hisham works, through 'a`m Ashraf', an accountant in his mid-fifties. He sells some of the employees several kinds of enhancing pills such as Tramadol, Chinese pills, and Viagra. He gets paid at the end of the month; he cuts its costs directly from the employees' salaries. He also may get paid at the 10th day of the month as he cuts the prices from the incentives. Hisham thinks that a`m Ashraf began this trade by accumulating piasters from employees' salaries. Every salary contains like 10 to 20 piaster. a`m Ashraf keeps these piasters for himself. Hisham believes that a`m Ashraf accumulated these very little amounts of money, and through this money he established his trade of pills.

However, a`m Rageh, the director, is the ‘god father’ of the enhancing pills’ network. Only with a`m Rageh ‘generosity’ the enhancers become gifts that build a dense social network of employees which functions across the whole building and even outside it. a`m Ashraf’s position (accountant) do not offer him the enough needed power to establish an effective network. a`m Rageh the director can.

Through a`m Rageh network of enhancing gifts, collective obligation is created; his gifts are accepted across a network that is capable of gathering Muslim brotherhoods, Sisi and Mubarak supporters, revolutionists, and Copts, all at the same time. His network also gathers workers, *muwazzafin*, managers, general managers, and ‘above all’ sector directors.

Every governmental place has own ‘a`m Rageh’. He is ‘the symbol of the Idea’ according to Hisham. For him as a new comer to the governmental work site, a`m Rageh’s network of relations is a spine of the whole building. To be a member in a`m Rageh’s network means that one is being connected with dozens of others, and above all connected to one of the most efficient networks that acts all through the whole building.

A`m Rageh gives the enhancing pills as gifts; he does not wait to be paid back. If an employee – who is a member of the network - needs to get any job done easily he can go to a`m Rageh and ask his advice. a`m Rageh just gives him a pill and asks him to present it as a gift to the responsible employee (who can achieve the job) accompanied by the catchword: am’ Rageh is greeting you. This gift relationship can help in attendance and departure daily negotiations, in getting higher salaries (through increasing incentives), achieving a lot of paper work in less time, and even in changing one’s own position and job description. a`m Rageh, according to Hisham and his friends, receives a salary that is higher than the sector director salary. a`m Rageh is two levels below the position of sector director in hierarchy. His ‘generosity’ in gifting Viagra and Tramadol enabled him to raise his received total salary (through raising his incentives to the extent that it exceeded his supervisors’ salaries.

To become a member in a`m Rageh network, one has only to announce his loyalty to a`m Rageh, to be his man, that of course implies that one will not refuse doing him (or any of his friends in the network) favors, in return a`m Rageh can help through his network in getting many jobs done achieving many jobs.

For network members, accepting the gift is obligatory. Hisham himself do not use pills, he prefers to use hash because it is 'a`dy' (normal). However, he accepts a`m Rageh gift and asks his help many times, and delivers the gift to other members in the network in a`m Rageh's name. a`m Rageh does not give the gifts or make someone a favor while he is waiting for immediate return, an extended form of time is being deployed. He might ask for a favor in return, for himself or for one of his friends (members in the network) after months of giving the gift.

Hisham has just finished adjusting his 'position code' with the help of a`m Rageh. This job of adjusting position code can be only achieved in another ministry. a`m Rageh collected similar cases from the network members and went by himself to one of his friends in the other ministry and he achieved the task. a`m Rageh did not ask Hisham to pay for the costs of the pills that he gave to the other employees in the other ministry. He told Hisham that he gave them gift of Tramadol. Hisham does not have to pay in return for a`m Rageh gift or favor, he just has to keep his loyalty to the network.

In the government building in which Hisham works, gifts differ from money. The value of the gift is not determined by its cost. A 'favor' that one might need to pay one hundred pounds for it (employees call this money *ikramia*) can be achieved with a gift of Tramadol or Viagra pill that might cost less than 50 pounds. However, the enhancing gifts, in Hisham's place, are closed for the network that is being run by a`m Rageh. The network of enhancing pills is closed for men, however his network crosscuts with other networks gather men and women.

This research focuses on the enhancing pills as gift, used in dense social relations. However, in the government building there are many kinds of gifts that are circulate. Some of which are very political, such as the Sisi's mugs. This gift of mugs symbolizes a collective representation for a group of people.

Indeed, the enhancing pills as gift play also political roles. One of the most repeated favors that the enhancing gifts reflect dissimilarity between the state and *muwazzafin's* interests. The state is working on a plan to change electricity and water's meters, which includes replacing the current meters with pre-paid ones. The current meters allow the consumers to pay for the electricity supplies after months of consumption. People pay when they can afford paying the bills. That might happen once every several months or even years, or to reschedule the payment

in installments. The new pre-paid meters enable people to consume electricity or water only after payment, through electronic pre-charged cards. For the state, this replacement plan is the most effective solution for controlling the estimated revenues of water and electricity. For the employees this new pre-paid meter is harmful for people, as it does not give them the chance to delay or pay the bills in installments. It happens many times that employees ask a`m Rageh's help to connect them with the responsible *muwazzaf* in order to get their neighbors and friends 'old- meters' instead of the new pre-paid one. Tramadol, Chinese pills and Viagra can manage this task within the dense network.

Conclusion:

Enhancing pills when circulating as gift enhance a dense network among employees. There are many networks that enable the necessary social and emotional relations among employees. The network of low-priced pills plays an important role in building relations between people with different roles and positions. It does that across the whole government site and also outside it in other government sites.

A`m Rageh's network that functions through the pills is useful in many kinds of small favors. This network can help in negotiating attendance and departure times, and it can enhance incentives. It establishes a friendly environment among people in different hierarchical positions, without which tasks can take very long time to be coordinated among them. Paperwork can easily complicate any small detail that freezes the whole job. Through the low-priced 'light gift' of pills, employees coordinate to find more flexible ways for the paperwork. Members of a`m Rageh network can afford flexibility in dates of monitoring and dates of delivering official papers. However, there are other networks that might accomplish the big tasks, such as the network of the director reported by Hisham. Powerful networks can get penalized employee back to his previous position, while a`m Rageh's network cannot. a`m Rageh network of light gifts works only in small favors across the whole building.

The government work site that is built to serve bureaucracy is full of emotions, social relations, political and economic interests, networks, and power relations. Every event of the daily repeated rhythm of the bureaucracy site is full of elaborate relations of power. The five big repeated events of the day; signing attendance, breakfast, talks and paper work, noon Prayer

‘eldohr’, and signing departure ‘*insraf*’, constitute a platform for every possible human interaction.

Through such density of power relations, the enhancing pills go through temporal phases in which it lives its social life as gift. It is a specific kind of gift, a ‘sexual enhancing gift’, a very intimate kind of gifts. Circulating this gift normalizes the idea of ‘enhanced sexuality’ along with gaining social recognition. Circulating the enhancing pills, with all its discursive practices, shape and reshape imaginations, desires and above all body sexual performance. A ‘sexual gift’ mode of exchange is a perfect ‘desiring up’ process.

Chapter Five: The Viagra-self... notes towards a conclusion

Invest in the penis:

Buy the pill, manage your sexual performance.

Celebrate your achievement ... feel happy.

Are you happy now!

Go back to work.

Thanks for your performance with us.

Habaiet Elmakana: faht hata el sabah

The Machine pill; tireless performance, drilling till the morning

This is an imagined advertisement; it does not exist in reality. I imagine it being played on George Orwell's telescreen as depicted in his novel *1984*. I imagine this telescreen in Egypt in 2015. In Orwell's novel every place has a telescreen. The telescreens are operated directly by the 'Ministry of Truth,' the Ministry responsible for culture and propaganda of the nation 'Oceania'. The Ministry of Truth's telescreens broadcast pedagogical messages for the country's 'citizens' 24 hours a day. Orwell's telescreens can be dimmed, however, there is no way of shutting them off completely. Ads and news played on the telescreens are very direct to the extent that they might be seen as 'vulgar' propaganda. Yet, these ads and news tell the 'truth' without equivocation, without any attempts at concealment.

I image such telescreens in Egypt in 2015, although not operated by the 'Ministry of Truth,' but by a pharmaceutical company broadcasting its sexual enhancing pills named '*Elmakana*' (the machine). The ad I imagine for this pill is produced in a 'vulgar' direct shape. This ad calls bodies to invest in the penis by buying the pill in order to perform powerfully and tirelessly, to celebrate the happiness achieved by this performance. *Elmakana* guarantees its clients tireless performance, drilling until the morning.

Invest in the penis:

Buy the pill, manage your sexual performance.

From disciplined self to ‘Viagra-self’ is a transition that marks the end of the twentieth century and the beginnings of the twenty first century. The ‘Viagra-self’ learns how to invest in the penis, to experience how the chemically enhanced body can proclaim control and time of (sexual) performance. The Viagra-self, in the era of performance, learns that it has to perform sexually in a specific ‘standard sexual function’, although it has an exhausted body that has to work restless in order to live. The ‘Viagra-self’ learns how it has to invest in the penis, through which it might gain a small nightly victory, to seek happiness in an efficient way during limited time. The Viagra self learns how it is important to perform. It invests in the penis in order to perform. As McKenzie (2002, p. 18) argues, “Performance will be to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries what discipline was to the eighteenth and nineteenth, that is, an onto-historical formation of power and knowledge.”

In contemporary Egypt men experience this transformation from an era of discipline to performance. During his fieldwork (1992 – 1994), Kamran Ali found a specific state discourse produced to formulate new bodies and new selves in the wider context of capital expansion. He took the governmental Egyptian family planning program as a case study to argue that it does not just promote smaller families but also “introduces or fosters notions of individual choice and responsibility, risk aversion, and personal independence.” Men and women had to take the choice – of discipline – on behalf of the nation (Ali, 2002, p. 5) . He found that this discourse tied masculinity to responsibility, being a man, sexual power and fertility (p.128). In the age of Viagra, and its derivatives, dominant discourses link being a man with performance, with being efficiently ready to perform. Viagra-self learns not only to perform, but to be ready to timed performance, and above all, to invest in parts of the body (the penis) in order to perform. Through my field work, I noticed the dominant discourse is that of performance understood in specific ways that promises greater chemical control over the human body, timing the performance of the body, and normalize investing in parts of the body, the penis, as a tool to seek ‘*inbisat*’.

“Performativity,” Butler (2009, p. 13) reminds us, “has everything to do with “who” can become produced as a recognizable subject, a subject who is living, whose life is worth sheltering and whose life, when lost, would be worthy of mourning.” Yasin, one of my interlocutors, aptly reflects “and this story of sex pills (*hobob el gens*) they make one feel as if one does not exist”. Yasin experiences the anxiety of living as a man in a context where discourses of performance surround him everywhere. Yasin does not place himself in the age of Viagra, or so he thinks. He is still at a stage in which he feels that he does not want to use enhancing pills, however, this cannot go without questioning his existence as a performing man, as a Viagra-self in progress. I conducted my fieldwork among public employees ‘*muwazzafin*’ in Cairo irrespective if they were ‘diagnosed’ as patients of ‘sexual dysfunction’ or not, and regardless if they used ‘enhancing pills’ or not. The ‘Viagra effect’ in Egypt does not only affect men who use it, but it affects every ‘body, ‘male and female, in the age of ‘controlled performance,’ everyone is a Viagra-self in progress. Every human being currently is considered a ‘disease survivor’ or/and a patient - in progress (Frank, 1997). As Frank (ibid), observes, all our surrounding ‘reality’ can be conceptualized as place of contemporary hospitalization.

Does the Viagra-self imagine itself as a patient in progress? The answer is clearly no. The Viagra-self does not understand itself as a patient, but as a performer who desires performance. In his book *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* John McKenzie (2002) emphasizes that we can build a better understanding of the transformation from discipline to performance if “we realize that the mechanisms of performative power are nomadic and flexible more than sedentary and rigid, that its spaces are networked ... that its temporalities are polyrhythmic and non-linear” (Mckenzie, 2002, p. 19). The power of discourse to produce the performer who desires, acts in flexible manners, through every material and virtual space: in the streets. in the media, in coffee-shops and smoking sessions, in pharmacies, in weddings ceremonies, in family gatherings and daily family small talk, at work, in public transportations, in cap drivers’ talks, in children songs performed in the streets, in political events, in presidential elections, and even in funerals, as well as on the internet and among Facebook ‘groups’. The power of discourse is embodied in work and social networks. It rationalizes the idea of the chemically enhanced body of the performer, it normalizes the idea. A pill that is 10 years old has been transformed into a so-called life style drug. The idea of chemically enhanced sexual

performance has become normal *a`dy*. The new pill has turned into rituals of performance.’ A pill a cup of tea, and a cigarette’, is a mixture that is being performed, as a habit, before sexual intercourse

Feel Happy. Are you happy now!

Celebrate your achievement

“The desire produced by performative power and knowledge is not modeled on repression. Performative desire is not molded by distinct disciplinary mechanisms. It is not a repressive desire; it is instead “excessive” (Mckenzie, 2002, p. 19). My interlocutors’ desire is *inbesat* (happiness). They invest in the penis for many reasons, one of them is that they seek happiness. Desire is driving them towards happiness. Spinoza argues that desire is a movement of conscious instinct, a reasoned motion of instinct (Spinoza, 2002, p. 284). But, can ‘performative power’ as well as pharmaceutical discourse affect desire? Stiegler (2013, p. 54)) argues that Pharmacology has a role “in the formation of desire in general, and in the formation of reason in particular – in the formation of consciousness as attention, in the sense both of psychic attention and social attention, that is, moral consciousness.” Stiegler, in a Spinozian manner, understands reason, above all as “motive, as the most elevated modality of desire (that is, of movement, of *e-motion*) [italics is mine]” (ibid p.54). Although performative power and pharmaceutical discourse can affect desire and *emotion(s)*, they cannot control *motion*, motion is live. I will elaborate on this towards the conclusion of the chapter.

In the age of Viagra, desire is being constructed around specific types of performativity, that of the enhanced body. The chemically enhanced body should be able to produce tirelessly in its quest for happiness. Happiness here is understood in controlled and timed figurations. When asked about *inbesat* most of my interlocutors kept silent, Ahmed the *muwazzaf* and taxi driver, responded that it is the first time, for him, to think about what is *inbesat* in a sexual relationship. “Performativity is a process that implies being acted on in ways we do not always fully understand...” (Butler, 2009, p. 12).

When one desires ‘good intercourse’ (*ye`mel wahed helow*), my interlocutors inform me, one has to take a pill, drink a cup of tea, wait for thirteen minutes, and begin the performance. Men feel that they are responsible for the ‘sucess’ of sexual intercourse. With the Viagra

'responsibility,' the partner's 'satisfaction' is being emphasized and at the same time displaced. Viagra responsibility does not recognize the 'partner' role in the relation. Women, although they are partners in heterosexual relations, are seen by men as passive receivers of men's 'enhanced erection and delayed ejaculation'. What women need, it is being alleged by men such as my interlocutors, is predetermined in the form of a man that has enhanced erection and delayed ejaculation. Viagra-self performs a kind of self centered happiness, happiness of the performance for itself. While it alleges care of 'satisfying' the 'partner', it displaces the very fact of recognizing the 'partner's' role in a 'relation' which seeks happiness.

Go back to work

Herbert Marcuse cited by Mckenzie, tells that under the "the performance principle ... society is stratified according to the competitive economic performances of its members... men do not live their own lives but perform pre-established functions. While they work, they do not fulfill their own needs and faculties but work in alienation." (Mckenzie, 2002, p. 16). Enhancing pills enable bodies to 'go back to work' in two basic ways. First, the pills that contain 'Sildenafil Citrate' such as the Blue Pill (Viagra), Virecta, Golden Pill, and Dragon used by men (and sometimes also by women) to enhance their sexual performance, gives men what I read as needed 'psychological' energy, that enables them to go back to work. Second, the way in which the enhancing pills help bodies go back to work is that Tradamdol, Viagra and their derivatives work as enhancers that gives bodies the 'physical' extra needed, in other words, low-priced energy that enables bodies (men and women) to work long days.

As if they could guarantee their survival in the age of global capital, the subaltern if s/he cannot speak, can still work and consume. "They have no choice but to produce and consume as if they were driven to do so, as if production and consumption were the two necessary sides of their fate, as if these dual imperatives could guarantee their survival in the age of global capital" (Ngai, 2003, p. 469). People at the pharmacy consume in order to be able to produce. They ask for medicines that have – with accessible low prices - the most efficient and fastest effects possible. They have no choice but to consume in order to be able to perform all kinds of body works. They ask for the stronger and faster drug because they do not have time, they have to go back to work with chemically treated bodies. Men consume the sexual enhancing pills seeking a space to breath, to experience their bodies in bed as long as this is mostly the only available

place to experience it. ‘Sex is a popular sport’ as Ahmed the pharmacist puts it. Men, through the happiness of gaining small night time victories, can find the needed ‘free’ experience of their’ body. Such ‘free’ use of one’s body, is almost absent at the long workday. Men are driven to consume and produce. The desire of happiness for the Viagra-self can be read in an overlapping relation with the ultimate desire – which desires life itself.

But desire is always positive

Although imaginations, rationalities, consciousness, desire, and emotions can be colonized by the Viagra discourse of performance, however, motion cannot be stopped and desire is always positive. As Deleuze- and Spinoza at first – argue. Desire should not be seen as incompleteness or lack; instead, desire is positive and “associated with transformative production and experimentation” (Potts, 2004, p. 18). Desire, although subjected to control in the age of sexual pills, opens potentialities in the social, it enhances sites to negotiate pain, fears, imaginations and dreams, it enhances networks among people, and it speaks to the ultimate goal of their life, which is the continuation of the existence of the human body itself. At the governmental site, the work site of Hisham, enhancing pills are circulated as a ‘gift’. The ‘sexual gift’, in addition to its role in advocating the Viagra-self, builds a network in the world of work, a work-network.

It is rare that we think of work as network, work is always seen as an individual act of the body. The most available imagination of ‘work-network’ is networks that are ‘ordered’, such as networks that drawn in ‘organization charts’, syndicates, and official and informal labor movements. It is rare that we imagine a social work-network out of any ‘formal order’ or recognized and named ‘political resistance’. The ‘sexual gift’ network is in fact a work-network that operates out of any ‘formal order’, and although it functions as a platform of political acts, it does not name these acts ‘political’. Political acts can be seen in the ‘sexual gift’ network. This network can enhance incentives (the total wage). It establishes friendly environments between people in different position, across entire governmental sites of laboring. Without these environment tasks can take a long time to be coordinated among different bodies and sites. Through the low-priced ‘light gift’ of pills, employees coordinate to find more flexible ways for the paperwork to move. Members of this network act to resist the new policies of pre-paid electricity, or electricity only for who can afford it. This is a political act although not “named”.

‘Sexual enhancing pills’ are celebrated and promoted in the governmental work site. This can be seen as an act of ‘performance discourse,’ of advocating, normalizing, rationalizing the idea (and the use) of enhancing pills, of colonizing imaginations, emotions, and desires. However, motion cannot be stopped, motion is life; the sexual gift of enhancing pills opens up new possibilities of social work-network in which work cannot be seen as individual acts of the body, but as collective acts. These new possibilities of the enhancing pills resist the new polices of pre-paid life.

On my imagined Egyptian telescreen although not operated by the ‘Ministry of Truth’, ‘performative discours’ is uncovered, revealed, direct, it calls on people to invest in the penis in order to be able to go back to work, with a new ‘happy’ Viagra-self. Is this telescreen really imagined? Yet, In *1984* Orwell looks closely at his reality to produce an ‘anti-Utopia’ narrative of reality, to show how it was not really a good place to live in (Woodcock, 1956, p. 85). Additionally, and more importantly, Orwell shows how his protagonist experiences the act of writing, writing his dairies, as an act of resistance in a disciplined place (Tyner, 2004). He opens possibilities for resistance even inside a closed room through the act of writing. Writing (even of simple dairies) is an act that contains the potential of forging “spaces of resistance”.

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