



The Decline

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Clothes are a necessity. For many, they are a fashion statement, an expression of identity or simple social obligation. For some, they are lacking. We live in Lebanon and we spend most of our time at the American University of Beirut. Some people seem to think that such facts justify the lack of clothes, they do not.

Without the details, foreigners have come to Lebanon and expressed their surprise as to the number of prostitutes present in the country and how such commerce is so widely and openly exercised. Naturally, it is not so but these foreigners seem to believe that what our fellow citizens wore befitted prostitutes.

Why would people not wear clothes? Attention seems to be the most obvious of answers but the degree to which people have went to please others is disturbing. The human being is a free being and enslaving one's self to society is, simply put, an injustice. People may look at those that do not have much clothes on but they do not look in respect. The looks and their intentions vary, but they are never of respect.

This does not only apply to the female gender although it is more of a pressing issue there. It also applies to males.

The other day, I was entering Jafet and there was a class of high school students getting a tour of the library. A certain AUB 'jock' entered the library and the high school students diverted their attention from the librarian to the guy's shorts saying things like 'look at the shorts, look at the shorts!'

On the female side, the situation is more drastic. As part of the materialistic worldview that dominates the minds of some, females have been turned from the human intellect and soul they were meant to be into artifacts of desire. Now, the attention a female gets is inversely proportional to the size of her shorts. Sadly, many females no longer find this a disturbing fact and they consider it as '3ade'. Truly, it is anything but '3ade'. Loosing (sic) one's honor is not 3ade, loosing (sic) respect is not '3ade' and loosing (sic) poise is not 3ade.

It gets worse. Assuming that the students of this university, in particular, have decided that clothes are a social forced artifact and that they would not like to ascribe to such social norms they have the right to do so. Nevertheless, they will be held responsible, in both lives. The right they do not have is that of hurting other and that is exactly what they are doing. A certain number of students at this university ascribe themselves to certain religious norms and values that prevent them from materialism, this objectification of the female gender and this loss of

self-respect. These people, upon seeing the show of materialism on display will get uncomfortable; their rights are transgressed upon. Upon seeing the saddening figures around our lovely campus they are led to places they do not wish to seek. Upon seeing the horrors on our campus, they are saddened, disrespected even.

Respect is a major human worth, beyond religion and society. Humility, honor and human value are as well. People seem to forget that and they have come to put aside all to please others. Even worse, what others? Others that are fleeting and transient, others that are weak and in need, others that will only befriend so long as they benefit.

Society has drawn low, very low. Lebanon, in fear of being called 'backward', has drawn low. I do not fear being called 'backward' because what I ask for is the very opposite of backwardness. I now it is the proper thing, the civil thing. Whether others do is their own matter. If the lack of clothes is a sign of modernity than (sic) pigs have outdone man for centuries.

A last plea: If you refuse to respect yourself, with all due respect, respect others. Do not make them see such disturbing scenes. Do not make them feel like the world is not worth living in. May things that have 'private' in their definition are to be kept private.