

# **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

**Ethics, Politics, & Law**  
**Spring Quarter 2006**  
**Dr. Jeff Johnson**  
**Lecture Two**



# WHAT IT IS

- **Type II – Excision – 80%**
- **Type III – Infibulation – 15%**
- **Health risks**
  - **Short term**
    - **Pain**
    - **Shock**
    - **Hemorrhage**
    - **Infection**
  - **Long term**
    - **Cysts and abscesses**
    - **Incontinence**
    - **Sexual dysfunction**

# **Yael Tamir's Argument**

- **Yael Tamir**
- **Her thesis**
- **Her argument**
  - **It's not about pain**
  - **It's not about mutilation**
  - **It is about sex**
- **Men's conception of beauty**
- **Men's conception of sexual intimidation**
- **Thought-experiment of "Libidia"**
- **Not defending clitoridectomy**
- **"We" have no right to condemn**

# **MARTHA NUSSBAUM'S CRITIQUE**

- **Martha Nussbaum**
- **Tarmir's commitment to three theses**
  - **Criticizing others, but not ourselves**
  - **Cleaning our own house first**
  - **FGM is on par with dieting and body-shaping**
- **Concedes the first thesis**
- **Absolutely rejects the second thesis**
- **Rejects the third thesis**
- **Tamir's assault on value of sex**
- **The illegality of FGM**
- **Moral necessity of eliminating FGM**

# **FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

- **Is female genital mutilation objectively wrong?**
- **The relativist's answer**
- **A realist answer?**
- **Basic human nature**
  - **Intelligence**
  - **Biological predisposition to cooperate**
  - **Shared "basic" values: health, happiness, and life.**
- **Correcting religious misconceptions**
- **Correcting biological misconceptions**
- **What is the relevant culture?**
- **Changing nature of culture in the age of globalization**
- **Consensus in the "world community"**