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years ago, most of us would properly find, respectively, Had we been born among Arabs in Niger or in Hawaii 200 to find that little bodies are beautiful. Most of us just do, don't freely choose, in this day and age in North America, us: most of these are the product of our upbringing. We from a metaposition the virtues and values that appear to We are not overwhelmingly clairvoyant subjects, choosing of the notion of freedom behind this question, as am I, has to be a case of brainwashing. Ahmadu is suspicious of any notion of her genital flesh, and so insists that this is not hers. Some cannot imagine a woman freely giving

Other questions concerning freedom inevitably come that it is done for the child's benefit. feel it is a healthy practice that enhances aesthetics, and to straighten their teeth? In both cases, parents and experts undergo the inconvenience and pain of putting braces on circumcised, is it so different from us forcing a child to As for adults making the decision to have their daughters regarding experience, and they engage animatedly with it, pain and fear — the event as a whole is a very positive and ciating. However, for most of them — even when there is that it's 'down there,' and that for some it will be excruciatingly well that in doing they will undergo a surgical procedure, make. One was that Kono girls in this day and age know tions about their bodies? Ahmadu had several points to be ethical to allow little girls to make such 'radical' decisions, were they truly 'free' to decide? Would it even and rejected as potential spouses if they did not submit to

social theories and some of the less felicitous entailments causes. Many anthropologists, reacting against collectivist larly well suited to make edifying contributions to liberal of understandings and practices of excision — are particular aspects of social life — like Fumpei Ahmadu's studies research on the witty-gritty of everyday talk and other

Anthropological and other social scientific empirical blame sexual troubles on their modifications. cision rituals as necessarily traumatizing violations, and to come to think of themselves as mutilated and their circum- not surprising that many circumcised women in diaspora function as persuasive, self-fulfilling prophecies, and it is and do not in fact achieve orgasm. Such discourses can and report great satisfaction with it) that they are mutilated (women who in no uncertain terms express a delight in sex of discourses that suggest to puberty, sexy Kono women circumcised and uncircumcised women, was the indubitable public aspects of their own ceremony and interviews with Ahmadu and watching her sister's video with footage of

However, what most took me aback after hearing (see Hemling and Zrell-Duncan 2003). from the occasional medical woes stemming from cutting nology would, however, go far towards protecting women legitimize the practice in any way. Access to medical retraining of physicians and nurses to practice cutting — lest it drugs, spaces and training to circumcisers, or any sanctioned practice — that is, any provision of biomedical equipment, FGM activism has also rejected any medicalization of the