The predominance of religious and folkloric motifs in Radu Mihaileanu's film La source des femmes are reflective of a general concern with generic and formal questions, which not only confer upon it a supremely self-referential quality but, more importantly, enables the emergence of highly complex and rebellious female characters within a decidedly hegemonic patriarchal regime. From traditional songs and dance to perennial social customs and religious rituals, these narrative elements are transformed into dynamic symbolic sites through which and against which female acts of self-affirmation and resistance to oppressive patriarchal social structures are realized and inscribed.

This presentation critically examines the various ways in which the characters' feminist interventions represent a creative engagement with Islamic knowledge and cultural patrimony to trouble the foundations of patriarchal power and validate women's empowerment and agency in a traditional Muslim society.