

Ill-behaved women

By [Amy Laura Hall](#)

February 2, 2011

Every significant act of protest has its iconic image: the barricades in Paris in the 1960s, the Berlin Wall in the '80s, the roadside war-protest camps leading to George W. Bush's Texas home in recent years. Today, two images from Egypt linger in my mind.

One is a woman my mother's age [placing a very determined kiss](#) on a young soldier's cheek. (My teenage daughter noted that he doesn't look thrilled.)

The other is an eight-year-old girl named Juju. Asked, presumably by her father, to give some advice to Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak, Juju speaks about counting the cost of his reign. Then she hops off the couch to approach the camera, her eyes lit with mischief and her hand held to her mouth, telling a secret: "And by the way, some of your police officers are removing their jackets, and they're joining the people." Here's the video:

Staid historian [Laurel Thatcher Ulrich](#) coined a phrase that also went viral: "Well-behaved women seldom make history." Ulrich was writing about Puritan women, but her words rang through my head this weekend. My daughters have read [Kay Thompson's Eloise books](#), but I shush them if they say, "Oh my Lord." I tell them to keep their shirts tucked in and not to run in church. I am rethinking these things.

Mubarak has been an expensive American ally. One-third of all U.S. foreign aid is allotted to Israel and Egypt--and more than half of this aid is military. This may be about to change. Friends have been posting [Al-Jazeera](#)

and *Guardian* news

clips on Facebook pages, along with brave tweets (what strange phrases we now use) from inside as thousands reject this "aid."

Stanley

Hauerwas put it this way: up to this point, the classic image of Egypt has been a road with a man and donkey on one side and a giant military complex with American-bought fighter jets on the other. Relative poverty is juxtaposed with the threat of extravagant violence.

However, the undemocratic subjugation this "aid" enables is also under attack, and with it the classic image of Egyptian women. Garance Franke-Ruta [points out](#) that we ought to see the "powerful Twitter images and Facebook albums of women on the frontlines of the Egyptian uprising . . . for the truly exceptional instances they are."

That

grandmother's kiss is nonsensical. Juju's dad was, by local standards, asking his daughter a crazy question--advice from a girl-child to a president? One sure way to control a population is to control the women. After all, [if even the girls hit the streets](#), there

could be total chaos--the powers and principalities might topple! To paraphrase the Kinks, if girls will be boys and boys will be girls, we'll have a mixed-up, muddled-up, shook-up world.

I propose

that we Christians teach our daughters some holy mischief. Let's look at the pictures, watch Juju and teach our girls how to be brave.