Colonial and Orientalist Veils:

Associations of Islamic Female Dress in the French and Moroccan

Press and Politics

Loubna Bijdiguen

Goldmiths College – University of London

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Abstract

The veiled Muslimah or Muslim woman has figured as a threat in media during the past few years, especially with the increasing visibility of religious practices in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts. Islamic dress has further become a means and technique of constructing ideas about the 'other'. My study explores how the veil comes to embody this otherness in the contemporary print media and politics. It is an attempt to question constructions of the veil by showing how they repeat older colonial and Orientalist histories. I compare and contrast representations of the dress in Morocco and France. This research is about how Muslimat, and more particularly their Islamic attire, is portrayed in the contemporary print media and politics. My research aims to explore constructions of the dress in the contemporary Moroccan and French press and politics, and how the veil comes to acquire meanings, or veil associations, over time. I consider the veil in Orientalist, postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminist contexts, and constructions of the veil in Orientalist and Arab Nahda texts. I also examine Islamic dress in contemporary Moroccan and French print media and politics. While I focus on similarities and continuities, I also highlight differences in constructions of the veil. My study establishes the importance of merging and comparing histories, social contexts and geographies, and offers an opportunity to read the veil from a multivocal, multilingual, cross-historical perspective, in order to reconsider discourses of Islamic dress past and present in comparative perspective.

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1. **Introduction**

This thesis is concerned with representations of the veil in France and Morocco. How did I as a *Muslimah muhajjaba* (or Muslim woman with a *hijab*) come to research Islamic dress (referred to as *libas islami'* in Arabic) in France and Morocco whilst studying in England? The veil was not the original point of departure in my research. My original study was concerned with colonial discourse and Orientalism; I wanted to explore the techniques for generating ideas about 'the other.' But it was the figure of the veiled woman in the texts I was reading that captured my interest; I was intrigued by how she kept coming up. The research thus became about how *Muslimat*, and more particularly their Islamic attire, is portrayed in the contemporary print media. My research thus aims to explore constructions of Islamic female dress in the contemporary French and Moroccan press and politics. I became especially interested in how the veil comes to acquire certain meanings over time (what I call 'veil associations').

It is worth noting early on that, when I use the term 'veil', I do not intend to re-iterate the Orientalist view of the veil but rather use the term as inclusive to what is described as 'Islamic dress' in terms of requirements. The 'veil' to which I am referring therefore includes items of Islamic dress such as the *hijab* or headscarf, the *niqab* or the face-veil, the *jilbab* or *abaya* which refers to the long dress worn with either a *hijab* or *niqab*, or the *burqu'* or *burqa* which refers to the full face and body covering which is also called the *soutra* in the Moroccan press. I am aware that the term heavily carries an Orientalist baggage, but I use it as a synonym for items which come under the umbrella of '*libas islami'* (Islamic dress) which conforms to the requirements of women's modesty in Islamic practice.

Why did I choose the veil as an object of study? And why have I compared and contrasted representations of the veil in France and Morocco? There are personal reasons for these choices, which I will detail later in this introduction. My decisions as a researcher have also been shaped by my awareness of how, in an increasingly

globalised world, Muslims have become an important and 'heated' topic of discussion in media and politics. The veiled *Muslimah* or Muslim woman is increasingly figured as a threat. With the growing immigration movements of Muslims during the past few decades, the presence of diasporic communities, and the emerging visibility of religious minorities in Western countries, and the rising religious trends witnessed in Muslim countries, Islam and Islamic practices, such as the veil, have caught the attention of media practitioners and politicians.

This attention is certainly evident in Europe. The most notable example is probably France, which passed a law banning the wearing of 'ostentatious signs' of religious belonging in March 2004, which was recently followed by a law banning the *niqab* in public space in 2010. Islamic dress has been subject to national debates and legislation in other European countries including England, Belgium and Germany. But European countries are not the only ones showing concern about Islamic dress. It has also been subject to debate and bans, in more subtle ways, in Muslim-majority countries such as Morocco. Religious practices such as the veil have become not only a central point of attention, but come up as a site of anxiety and fear in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts.

Unsurprisingly, with its long history, Islamic dress has been a primary method or means of constructing ideas about 'the other.' In this dissertation I explore how the veil comes to *embody* otherness in contemporary media and politics. My work is also an attempt to question contemporary representations of the veil by showing how they repeat much longer colonial and Orientalist histories. We need to consider the veil in relation to these histories, if we are to challenge how the veil becomes such a site of anxiety and fear. My research establishes the need for us to consider Islamic dress across different historical periods and geographical contexts; my analysis thus locates the veil in time as well as space.

My personal trajectory and personal circumstances have played a role in this research journey, and how I have developed my research focus. In my methodology chapter, I use the concept of 'a politics of location' as a way of explaining how I ground my research in life experience but in way that emphasises movement. For me, as a *Muslimah muhajjaba* researching Islamic dress, the politics of location also means recognising how the personal can impact on the academic; how my position as a postcolonial Arab-Amazigh-Moroccan-British *Muslimah muhajjaba*, with the fluidity that such categories imply, has a bearing on my research.

1.1.A Personal Story

Before I analyse Islamic dress in relation to Orientalist, postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminist theories, I begin by explaining how I came to the specific topic of Islamic dress. What has shaped the course of my research? And what difference does it makes to embark on this topic as a *Muslimah*? What does it mean to research Islamic dress as a *Muslimah muhajjaba*? In other words, how do my experiences shape my academic research and in what ways does the personal affect the academic? To start with, the beginning of my research was linked with the broader issue of the representation of 'Arab' women in the media and Orientalism. I need to mention the significant interest and attention Moroccan universities place on Western academic topics and theories within foreign language departments, which include postcolonial and feminist research trends among the other major theories. This is an interest which I have pursued both during my undergraduate studies as well as my postgraduate research in Morocco and England.

As a second-generation postcolonial Moroccan *Muslimah* in a postcolonial country, I was immersed in theories that emerged outside Moroccan academic contexts. This brings me to the question: 'if theory is such a Western phenomenon, what could it offer to intellectuals aspiring to question the influence of the West over their projects?' (Kaplan, 1994, p. 30). The fact that, aside from language skills, knowledge of Western

theories was the main criteria for selecting students for postgraduate studies poses questions about the politics implicit in welcoming 'foreign students' who had been trained and educated within the realms of these theories. Are we simply offering an 'other' perspective of a previously colonised, silenced and marginalised people based on Western theories and within Western academic institutions? How can we question the influence of Western theories while being involved in their dissemination? This partly constitutes the paradox which Ien Ang (2001, p. 167) refers to as the 'complex borderland experience' of living, in my case between Morocco and England, or between the broader categories of North Africa or the Maghreb and the West,[1] an experience 'made up of multiple crossings of peoples, traditions, knowledges, histories' (Ang, 2001, p. 167). This 'borderland experience' is made more complex by the position of French and English as my fourth and fifth languages, which complicates the trilingual character of my research, and the problem of speaking and moving across and between not only different linguistic structures, but also socio-historical, political and cultural frameworks.

Islamic dress has become, during the last few years, increasingly linked with minority rights, racism and Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism. This brings me to the recognition that the research I am undertaking cannot escape 'positionality' which further complicates the problem of communication (Ang, 2001, p. 167). In other terms, Mary E. John (1996, p. 19) talks about feminism as a politics and an epistemology where 'questions of representation must deal with who speaks for whom, along with what is being said.' Working on an object that is close to my body and that I embody as a *Muslimah muhajjaba* opens questions of position, in terms of research, along with the fact of being a postcolonial *Muslimah* speaking primarily to a Western audience in my fifth language, which is English.

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[1] My use of terms such as West, Oriental, Western, Muslim and Other are not meant as homogenising categories that have fixed and unchanging meanings, but rather as constructs and categories that imply positions of power and hegemony.

My own histories of Islamic dress are as diverse and peculiar as the histories of the veil that I will tackle in my study. I was born and brought up in an open and practicing middle-class family. My upbringing can be categorised as 'modernised' in comparison with other families within my circle of family and friends. Islamic dress, to my young eyes, was primarily a traditional practice. It was an element which was part of women's dress, but it was, for the most part, either worn by older women or women who had no education and was therefore not suitable for younger women who would describe themselves as 'modern'. The fact that neither my mother nor my elder sisters adopted Islamic dress made me view unveiling as the norm and veiling as the exception.

My educational background positioned me in an even more complex situation as I came to associate Islamic dress even more with older age, ignorance, illiteracy and being tradition-bound. My French curriculum and mixed French and Moroccan tutors, as well as my close relationships with my French cousins, consolidated my indifferent and negative vision of Islamic dress. My undergraduate studies in English, however, allowed me to build an awareness of the need to be critical, and the possibility of what can be considered 'dislocating the effects of theory' (Kaplan, 1994, p. 30) was opened to me. The school I attended for primary and secondary education also helped position me at the threshold between Moroccan and French cultures and values. At home, we always used and still do use a mixture of *Amazigh* or *Berber* (one of the variations of the dialects of indigenous people), *Darija* (Moroccan Arabic) and French and it was perceived as completely normal to inhabit these different socio-cultural and multilingual spheres. Classical Arabic was limited to a few hours a week in school.

In my primary and secondary education, in addition to speaking French more than *Darija* and *Berber*, which was perceived as the norm in school, I was also accustomed to considering Islamic dress as 'outside the norm' and unveiling as the 'norm'. The fact that no female teachers, whether voluntarily or for reasons outside their control,

wore it contributed to reinforcing this assumption. My subsequent high school years in a public school allowed me to mix with people from various classes and social backgrounds. My experience as a high school student, however, did little to change my views on Islamic dress and categorising it within negative terms. This was probably caused by the quasi-absence of Islamic dress, which still made unveiling the norm. It was not until I reached university three years later in Rabat that I started questioning some of my own assumptions. Yet even then, students within European language departments viewed themselves as more fortunate than those who were majoring in Islamic studies, Arabic, or disciplines such as geography or history or philosophy which were all taught in Arabic. Differences between university departments reflected to a great extent in modes of dress as there was a contrast between the *hijabed* and sometimes *jilbabed* (*hijab*-wearing and *jilbab*-wearing) students mainly coming from Arabic and Islamic studies, and jeans with tops worn by many students including myself who often considered themselves as privileged. Islamic dress was rare within language departments.

My position can be described as that of an intellectual nomad. As an undergraduate student in English (in Rabat) followed by postgraduate translation studies (in Tangiers), I travelled to England to pursue further postgraduate studies. My dress until then was already characterised with long dresses, skirts or pants, medium or long-sleeved tops and jeans. It was not until I came to Britain that I decided to become a *muhajjaba*. After having negative feelings about it, I moved from distance to mixed feelings to finally experiencing a deep spiritual journey and increased sense of piety, which culminated in my adopting the *hijab* in 2002. I had adopted the symbol which symbolised my otherness, and which I perceived in terms of otherness. What I would like to stress through relating my experience is that, even personally, meanings of Islamic dress have been diverse and complicated and there are many challenges to researching Islamic dress as a *Muslimah muhajjaba* who was previously non-*hijab*-ed. As Said (1979, p. 10) puts it, no one has yet formulated a means for isolating the scholar from 'involvement (conscious or unconscious) with a class, a set of beliefs, a social

position, or from the mere activity of being a member of a society'. Personal experiences often have an impact on research inclinations in a way that the private can hardly be put aside from the research project. In John's (1996, p. 6) words, 'one must confront what one is thinking and saying with what one is doing, *with what one is'* while studying theory in the 'first world' (emphasis in the original).

I am providing details of my educational and personal backgrounds not so much to claim representation and speaking for *Muslimat* or *muhajjaba*t, or to authenticate an insider's perspective to the issue of Islamic dress. I do not claim to speak as an authentic *Muslimah muhajjaba*. Rather, I want to highlight that locations, including institutional and disciplinary affiliations, as well as the background practices of everyday life, play a fundamental role in framing our projects and deserve to be mentioned (John, 1996, p. 110). Nonetheless, the significance of location also gives rise to the challenge of questioning one's own assumptions, and putting a distance between oneself and the research undertaken on a topic that is close to one's background. In my case, it is also putting a distance between myself and the *hijab* which is a central part of my study. Researching the veil additionally means understanding why and how it represents a complex and controversial object of investigation, which also lends itself to a cross-cultural and cross-historical study. In addition to this, it also means questioning not only other people's assumptions about it, but also my own.

As I mentioned before, my own history of Islamic dress can be linked with the histories of the veil. As a postcolonial *Muslimah* born a generation after independence from France, I cannot deny the influence of French values and education on my thinking and understanding of the world. The history of colonisation has left lasting impacts on the social, cultural and symbolic worlds of the colonised people, which can never be fully removed by any process of decolonisation (Ang, 2001, p. 70). Therefore, I consider Islamic dress to be of great importance in the movement between colonial and

postcolonial spaces and times, as it has become a way of also assessing and reconsidering the postcolonial *Muslimah* parts of my identity, representing, in many respects, an anti-imperialist move. This can be considered as part of the beginning of what Ang (2001, p. 181) refers to as a more 'modest feminism which is based on the principal limits of the idea of sisterhood'. Departing from this point, in addition to postcolonial theories, Islamic and Muslim feminisms offer the epistemological tools for a study of the veil and its constructions in Moroccan and French media and politics.

My choice of postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminist theoretical frameworks is closely related to my histories as a postcolonial *Muslimah muhajjaba*. Yet, this 'borderland existence', which best qualifies my position, and which includes borderlands of 'critical intellectualism', also involves 'political power and trans-cultural enhancement' (Ang, 2001, p. 166). At the same time, however, it creates its distinctive difficulties, because 'inhabiting the borderlands should not be mythologised as a liberating space for multiple perspectives, partial truths and positioned identities and a happy hetero-glossia of narratives' (Ang, 2001, p. 166). My research constitutes a gesture to question constructions of the veil within different texts, as writing on Islamic dress represents an attempt to understand how and why meanings become attached to it. This gesture acquires a greater importance with the use of texts outside the mainstream Western framework, which constitute a significant part of my research. As comparative cross-historical, cross-geographic and cross-linguistic, my research on Islamic dress emphasises the importance of considering the dress across various junctures and contexts. My use of Arabic and French texts and English sources, as well as my comparative study aim to bring a modest contribution to the already vast existing literature on Islamic dress.

Throughout my research, I take a critical stance regarding the textual manifestations of colonial discourse. After a consideration of the veil in Orientalist, postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminist contexts, my subsequent chapters consider constructions of the

dress first in Orientalist and *Nahda*[2] texts. These will be followed by case studies of France and Morocco, in which I explore contemporary constructions of Islamic dress, focusing on similarities and continuities, but also highlighting differences among them. Although the veil has been a widely debated topic in media and academia, the importance of merging and comparing histories, social contexts and geographies has widely been overlooked. Even more striking is the scarcity of academic studies that have attempted to include Arabic material on various forms of Islamic dress. The comparison between France and Morocco on the one hand, and between Orientalist and *Nahda* texts on the other provides the opportunity to read the veil from a multivocal, multilingual and cross-historical perspective. This allows a multiplicity of texts and voices to be considered together. My study represents an attempt to include marginal voices on the one hand, and re-visit, re-consider discourses of Islamic dress past and present in a comparative perspective, on the other.

Additionally, my study is concerned with exploring how texts and language are used to construct the otherness and difference of Islamic dress through working with texts and applying a close textual analysis. In this case, we can examine how language is used as an effective tool to simultaneously silence, and write the veil within particular meanings. There is a double aspect to producing Islamic dress in the texts in question: the meanings are conversely explicit and implicit. Taking into account the fact that it is situated as other, it is important to consider how the veil is positioned in such a way, and how its difference is re-inscribed in more contemporary media and political texts. Similarly, it is important to consider the broader socio-political forces and historical circumstances that contribute to the construction of Islamic dress in such otherness.

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[2] The *Nahda,* also called the Arab Awakening or Renaissance movement, refers to a cultural and political movement that arose in Arab countries towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, which coincided with colonial movements witnessed in many Arab and Muslim-majority countries. Intellectuals of this period and their writings were characterised by a call for modernisation, reform and promotion of women's rights. I provide more details about the *Nahda* as it relates to the Maghreb and Morocco in a subsequent part of this chapter.

My research therefore aims to analyse how Islamic dress is 'otherised' through text and language. It ultimately questions the inherent and implicit frameworks of domination and hegemony through textual representation.

Starting from this background, my primary research question is: how and why does the veil matter? From this primary question, other questions follow. How is the veil constructed and written through texts across historical and spatial contexts? How has the veil's otherness been expressed through contemporary media and politics in France and Morocco, and through nineteenth and early twentieth century Orientalist and colonial *Nahda* texts? In other words, what meanings does Islamic dress acquire across time and in relation to Orientalist, colonial, *Nahda* histories, and space through France, Morocco and Egypt? Before I consider these questions in subsequent chapters, I first provide a socio-historical background for my cross-historical and cross-spatial study of Islamic dress by first elucidating the links between the Morocco and French colonisation of the Maghreb in the first part, and between the Arab *Nahda* movement which emerged in the late nineteenth century Egypt and Syria, and its repercussions in Morocco during the early twentieth century.

1.2.Socio-Historical Background: France and Maghrebi Colonialism

This section provides the background for my study of the veil in the contemporary Moroccan and French press and politics. Because my study compares representations of Islamic dress in the Moroccan and French press and politics, it is important to clarify the links between the two countries, and the histories of Morocco in relation to French colonialism and the Arab *Nahda*. First, I provide a historical background of the French colonial presence in Morocco, and its impact on the Maghrebi region. This region comprises Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia as well as Mauritania and Libya, which joined

the Union of the Maghreb more recently.[3]Secondly, I discuss the influence of the nineteenth century *Nahda* movement on Morocco, and the links between Moroccan and Arab *Nahda* intellectuals of the early twentieth century. The importance of providing such a socio-historical background stems from the necessity to contextualise my study of Islamic dress, which is concerned with the meanings of the dress through different eras (Orientalist, colonial, postcolonial) and various geographical spaces (France, Morocco, Egypt). As my research crosses historical, social-cultural and spatial contexts, it is important to clarify the threads that tie these different histories and spaces together to understand the importance of considering Islamic dress from a comparative perspective.

An important factor that distinguishes the Maghreb countries in comparison with other Arab countries of the Middle East is the presence of a large number of Berbers, also referred to as Amazigh, who inhabited the Maghreb region before the Arab conquests. Following the Arab conquests, a large portion of the Berber people both converted to Islam and became Arabised well before the advent of European colonisation of the North African region in the nineteenth century (Amin, 1970, p. 15). Today in Morocco, although Berber is the mother tongue of about forty percent of the Moroccan population, the Arabisation trend has reached most of the population. The recent government's attempts to revive Amazigh languages and cultures have been met with enthusiasm, especially with the recent inauguration of an Amazigh television channel, and the official opening of an Institute for Amazigh Research in Rabat. These initiatives can be considered as attempts by the official authorities to promote the preservation of historical and cultural specificities of a large part of the population that has previously been marginalised. It is noteworthy that Arabisation has gained more importance during the nationalist era and after independence, a trend which included

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[3] The word 'Maghreb' is the Arabic word for 'Occident'. It refers to the countries that are to the west of the Nile Valley: Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and the Republic of Mauritania. My study, however, focuses on Morocco.

the Arabisation of education, which has reached Berber populations in rural areas of Morocco.

The Arab conquest of Morocco marked the beginning of a period during which the Arab empire expanded throughout the Maghreb area. Starting from the eleventh century onwards, the Arabised Berbers of North Africa populated ancient cities and founded new ones, although they mainly remained in towns and left the rural areas of northern Morocco, Algerian Tell and Constantine in Tunisia to Berber peasants (Amin, 1970, p. 16). The Arabization of the Maghreb therefore started with the nomadic Berbers, their use of the Arabic language and their adoption of Arab and Islamic customs, in contrast to the Berber farmers, whose conversion to the new religion was somewhat superficial (Amin, 1970, p. 16). Arab populations arrived in North Africa in the mid seventh century and over a period of several hundred years transformed the Amazigh-populated Maghreb into an integral part of the 'Arab-Islamic world' in terms of culture, language, and religion (Entelis, 1980, p. 4). The influence of these elements is evident in today's Morocco whose population, although distinct from Middle Eastern societies in many respects, shares various affinities including linguistic, religious and cultural ones with these different societies.

The Arab conquest of North Africa influenced the region in other ways. Continuing the tradition of the Romans who had preceded them, the Arab populations who came to the Maghreb divided the area into three provinces (Amin, 1970, p. 20). Life in the provinces turned around its ancient capitals, yet while the provinces of the present day Tunisia and Algeria were subject to Ottoman rule up until the colonial periods, Morocco remained an independent Sultanate until the Spanish invasion, which was followed by a French Protectorate in 1912 (Amin, 1970, p. 20). During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Maghrebi countries were subject to a vast movement of European colonisation which affected many countries around the world. While Algeria came under French colonial rule in 1830, Tunisia and Morocco became French

Protectorates in 1881 and 1912 respectively (Kenbib, 1993, p. 35). Morocco also came under Spanish colonisation which preceded France, and which comprised northern Morocco and the Canary Islands. At the economic level, French colonization of North Africa generated an intense transformation and a profound impact on the Maghreb, as did modernization (Amin, 1970, p. 25). With the disappearance of the last autonomous state and the establishment of a French Protectorate in Morocco in 1912, the process of social disintegration of Maghrebi society increased, with the objective of reducing what the Moroccan historian Abdallah Laroui (1977, pp. 327-328) refers to as ' the man of the Maghrib' to his individual dimension.[4] In his study of the history of the Maghreb, Laroui (1977, p. 340) argues that the colonial process in these countries concentrated on destroying the indigenous society, followed by accepting individuals into a new society which was both organised and made for foreigners, with the aim of controlling the Maghrebis and maintaining their status as colonial subjects. Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco had their own differing experiences of colonisation which affected their social, economic, political and cultural lives at different levels. Yet despite the fact that Algeria experienced a longer colonial rule, the fact that the three countries were subject to French colonial rule represents an important factor in their respective histories of colonisation, nationalist movements and later independence experiences. Additionally, with their historical, cultural and religious ties, the Maghrebi countries shared various affinities in a geographical space which is also named the 'Arab Maghreb'.

French colonialism also had an impact on religious practice. Regarding the colonial rule and Islam in the Maghreb, Laroui (1977, p. 342) notes that the policy pursued even in Arabic-speaking districts consisted of a slight 'falsification of Islam', and

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[4] Abdallah Laroui (1977, pp. 327-328) notes regarding the 'man of the Maghrib' that he 'had been reduced to the "anthropological" level, that is previous history is denied. All this man's good and bad qualities, his courage, integrity, simplicity, generosity, as well as his duplicity, covetousness, respect for force, and "pillage instinct", are attributed to "human nature".

simultaneously attempts were made to encourage 'particularisms', and give popular religion a 'local, naturalistic and primitive character'. Aside from gradually closing the old Qur'anic schools (*kuttab* and *msid*), the French authorities did their best to discourage the pilgrimage to Mecca and to disrupt the old ties between the rural sections and urban Islam (Laroui, 1977, p. 342). The policy of *cantonnement* (confining tribes to limited areas) made it necessary to deprive Maghrebis of their religion, language and historic heritage, 'producing a man free from culture, who could then be civilized' (impoverished and "decultured" Maghribi) (Laroui, 1977, p. 343). Although Laroui's (1977) history of the Maghreb offers an insightful perspective in relation to the French colonisation of North Africa and its impact on the social, political, economic and cultural aspects of Maghrebi societies, his account nevertheless maintains a very patriarchal tone. Women's histories and voices within his account remain absent.

The nineteenth century Maghreb also experienced a reform movement. North African societies witnessed the coexistence between the *makhzen* (local authority), which was the guardian of a historical tradition in historiography, the urban elite, which produced a reformism that was both 'religious (dogmatic) and political (moderate liberalism)', whereas the rural areas cultivated a local patriotism tied with a religious renewal in the area of rituality (Laroui, 1977, p. 369). The reformism which was apparent throughout the Maghreb, was already powerful in Syria, and later became part of the nationalist call in North Africa, provoking civil unrest in Constantine, Tunis, and Fez in the early twentieth century (Hoisington, 1993, p. 80). Another significant influence came from colonial European society, which generated ideologies that found direct political expression in the Maghreb, such as liberalism, populism and socialism, in addition to organizations (clubs, parties, unions), political opinions and slogans, all of which influenced nationalist ideology (Laroui, 1977, p. 371). Charles-Andre Julien explained in a report on Maghrebi nationalism in 1937 that, in Morocco, 'national sentiment was centred in the young and educated Arab Middle class who were in contact with the modern ideas of the West, and yet, because of the vast movement of the Islamic

renaissance, were also in touch with the East' (Hoisington, 1993, p. 86). The mix had produced a Western-style nationalism with a religious foundation (Hoisington, 1993, p. 86). Maghrebi countries therefore witnessed the influence of both Arab reformism or the *Nahda*, and European ideologies which later came to influence nationalist movements throughout the region.

1.3. Morocco and the *Nahda* or Arab Awakening Movement

So what impact did Arab reformism have on Morocco? What are the links between the *Nahda* and the early twentieth century Moroccan reformist movement? For many intellectuals (Laroui, 1977, p. vii), the *Nahda* represents:

> A vast political and cultural movement that dominated the period of 1850 to 1914. Originating in Syria and flowering in Egypt, the *Nahdah* sought, through translation and vulgarisation, to assimilate the great achievements of modern European civilisation, while reviving the classical Arab culture that antedates the centuries of decadence and foreign domination.

The *Nahda* also had an influence on the Maghreb region. The Arab countries' encounter with modern Europe in the nineteenth century was a time when traditional ideas and ways of life were challenged in the name of modernity (Patel, 2013, pp. 12-13). This time marked the emergence of the *Nahda* movement. After the advent of the twentieth century, the *Salafiyya* movement, which was part of the broader *Nahda* Awakening originating from the Middle East, started to take effect among the Maghrebis during the French colonisation of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, and had a significant impact on Morocco (El Mansour, 1996, p. 60). As Mohamed El Mansour (1996, p. 60) notes, the Moroccan *Salafiyya* was not limited to acting against what it perceived to be 'corrupt Islam' or Islamic practices to be condemned, but was also playing an active role in the resistance against the French coloniser. As a movement

which advocated a return to faith as it was conceived by the *salaf al salih* (pious ancestors), the *Salafiyya* emerged when the Ottoman empire was declining under European imperialism, at a time when new political, social and technological notions started to gradually penetrate the doctrines of the movement (El Mansour, 1996, p. 60). Egyptian and Syrian intellectuals such as Djamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, developed the movement in an initial phase (Halstead, 1967, p. 119). These figures were considered as the pioneers of the *Nahda* which was to influence Muslim countries of the Middle East and the Maghreb. The *Salafiyya* movement was part of the larger *Nahda* movement which sought to revive Arab culture and Islamic practices on the one hand, and organise resistance against colonisation on the other.

There are other aspects to the *Salafiyya* movement. Among these is the movement's conception of religious reform as a means for social renaissance, and its view that once Islam was restored to its 'original purity by the elimination of corrupt medieval accretions', it could subsequently assimilate selected elements of European culture (Halstead, 1967, p. 120). The *Salafiyya* therefore is part of an attempt to reinvigorate religion on the one hand, and revive intellectual and cultural life on the other, which makes it important to consider it as responding to both internal and external factors. So as to tackle the new situation and the changing circumstances, the rulers in the Maghreb resorted to *fatwas* (rulings) issued by *ulamas* (religious scholars) to justify their actions and more particularly the innovations which they envisaged (Chater, 1996, pp. 37-38). As Khalifa Chater (1996, pp. 37-38) notes, the proponents of *Islah* (reform) who dealt in the Maghreb with political, social and juridical applications of the *sharia'*, grounded their reform plans on new examinations of sacred texts and revision of the politico-ethical system during a period which embodied intense *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) activity.[5] The reform which was part of the *Nahda* involved not only advocating a

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[5] At the beginning of the twentieth century Morocco, El Mansour (1996, p. 54) states that the *ulama* no more represented a 'monolithic conservative group acting as guardians of the *shari'a*' and discarding

cultural revival and glorification of the past, but also a borrowing from the West. The colonial situation made this process more complex as the reformers both borrowed from the coloniser and resisted foreign occupation.

The colonization of the Maghrebi countries additionally had an influence on cultural practices. The treatise of Abd al Aziz al-Thaalbi, for instance, which was co-authored by al-Hadi Seba'i and Cesar Benattar (Judeo Muslim alliance) highlighted 'the liberal spirit of the Qur'an' in their work; the conclusions they drew included that women ought to have their face uncovered, should not be locked up at home, or remain from view, and ought to be educated and have a 'decent and honest bearing' (Chater, 1996, p. 46).[6] During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such Maghrebi initiatives advocated the emancipation of women in the context of modernity and a new reading of texts. Having been influenced by the *Nahda* movement which emerged in Egypt, Maghrebi intellectuals sought to adopt modern ideas from their colonisers. These included promoting women's rights in Muslim societies which became a focal point of the reform.

The *Salafiyya* movement also reached the Maghreb region. The movement, which was initiated in the Middle East during the late nineteenth century, however, only started having an impact on Morocco during the early twentieth century when the French Protectorate was establishing itself in Morocco (Halstead, 1967, p. 121). The historical occurrence and emergence of the *Salafiyya* which coincides with the colonial eras in

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non-religious models of government, the best example of this change was illustrated by 'the constitutionalist movement' witnessed by the country during the first decade of the twentieth century which presented a liberal current of thought.

[6] In 1930, this *ijtihad* modernity favouring the emancipation of women was defended by the Zitouna sheikh Tahar Haddad, author of the work *Our Women in the Shari'a and in Society*. This Tunisian thinker, who adopted the same methodology and the same strategy of treatise fatwas as the reformers, shook the Tunisian intelligentsia during the new era of national struggle. (Chater, 1996, p. 46)

both the Middle East and the Maghreb contributes to understanding how the religious revival, which was promoted by the movement, also parallels a call for resisting Western imperialism which then affected many countries in the Middle East and the Maghreb. Paradoxically, the call for religious reform, which represented the main focus of the *Salafiyya*, was also accompanied with advocating the adoption of Western concepts in order to revitalise Muslim countries. Although there were differences of opinion concerning the concepts to be taken from Europe, reformers agreed on the necessity to adopt concepts such as progress, democracy and women's emancipation. In Morocco, reformers believed that religious reform was the appropriate 'locus for political progress', and that nothing was found in Islam that was 'unsuited with Western constitutional and democratic institutions' (Halstead, 1967, p. 120). Reformers also agreed that successful religious reform and all its social outcomes eventually relied on mass education, which would allow modernisation (Halstead, 1967, p. 120). The *Salafiyya* movement, therefore, can be considered as a pan-Arab movement which promoted the adoption of Western ideas, at a time when nationalism was becoming increasingly debated in various colonised countries.

The Arab Muslim intellectuals, who were gradually influenced by the movement which had spread throughout the Middle East and the Maghreb by the beginning of the twentieth century, were therefore proponents of modernisation, which was to be perceived as a means for social and religious reform. This was the case in Algeria where it motivated the nationalist association of *ulama*, and in Morocco where it infused the early nationalists and played a prominent role in the Moroccan nationalist movement, after the turn of the century (Halstead, 1967, p. 122). By the turn of the twentieth century, the Moroccan elite gradually looked more toward the Middle East as a basis for inspiration and support, and ideas of pan-Islamism and pan-Arabism moved from the Middle East through a number of Moroccan *ulama*, such as Abu-Shu'ayb al-Dukkali, Ali Znibar, and Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Kabir al Kattani, and also through the Arabic press (El Mansour, 1996, p. 55). The influence of the *Nahda*

therefore was no longer limited to the Middle East, but started having an impact on Maghrebi countries which were under French colonial rule.

But the *Salafiyya* reformers also promoted other reforms. In addition to advocating religious reform and social progress and the gradual adoption of Western concepts, some proponents promoted a reform of the law. In this regard, figures such as Muhammad Abdu and Rashid Rida advocated a revision of the *shari'a*, especially in matters such as slavery and the treatment of women, to concord with the conditions of modern society (Halstead, 1967, p. 121). Rashid Rida figures among one of the most inspiring intellectuals to have influenced reform in Morocco, and his original understanding that the problems of twentieth-century Islam were moral problems, not to be defeated by institutional reform alone, was to be developed by young Moroccan reformers of the 1920s (Halstead, 1967, p. 121). Some Moroccan intellectuals represented links through whom the reform movement emerged in the Moroccan framework. Shaykh Abu Shuaib al-Dukkali figures as one of the earliest Moroccans who returned to Morocco from studies at al-Azhar University in Egypt after having been immersed in the atmosphere of reform surrounding Rashid Rida and his al-*Manar* group (Halstead, 1967, pp. 122-123). After being admitted to the University of Al Qarawyiin in Fez in 1908, the reformer had followers from the younger generation of Moroccan intellectuals, including Mohammed bel-Arabi al-Alaoui and Abdesselam Serghini, as well as some younger men of the next generation who were to become influential in the Moroccan nationalist movement (Halstead, 1967, p. 123). The *Nahda* influence was therefore expanding through Maghrebi intellectuals during the early twentieth century.

Middle Eastern, and more particularly Egyptian schools and universities constituted an important vector and source for the spreading of reformist thought among the North African Maghrebi intellectuals of the early twentieth century. Additionally, disciples like al-Dukkali and Bel-Arabi were considered as the primary agents for reformist

ideology in Morocco. Publications from the Middle East were also helpful in disseminating reform principles. The leading reformist periodicals and weeklies were *al-Manar*, *al-Fath* and *al-Zahra* from Cairo, and *ech-Chihab* from Constantine (Algeria), yet the most widely read of these in Morocco was Rashid Rida's *al-Manar*, a monthly review of philosophy, religion and social affairs which represented the reform movement's ideas (Halstead, 1967, p. 124). Arab Muslim public opinion began with the pan-Islamic press founded by Djamal al-Din, Abduh and Rida (Halstead, 1967, p. 124). In the Moroccan context, the main achievements of the constitutional movement included the publication in 1907 of the first Arabic newspaper in Tangier and the expansion of a project for a constitution (El Mansour, 1996, p. 55). Crucially serving to transmit Middle Eastern constitutional ideas, two papers called *Lisan al Maghrib* and *Al Fajr* which were founded between 1907 and 1909 by Syrian and Lebanese intellectuals. The links between Moroccan and Middle Eastern reformers and their ideas were therefore expanding through the press and the Moroccan reformers themselves.

But the *Salafyyia* reform was later accompanied by the influence of a more secular reform trend. The Moroccan educated elite became acquainted with a number of Egyptian publications, such as *Al-Manar*, *Al Ahram*, *Al Mu'ayyad*, and others, but were not always aware of the liberal secular content of some of them (El Mansour, 1996, p. 55). Mohamed El Mansour (1996, p. 56) notes that the ideas of Moroccan nationalist leader Allal al-Fassi[7] attributed to the *Lisan al Maghrib* group demonstrates a strong secular inclination and a great confluence with the reformist movements in the Middle East and in Turkey in particular. The Arab press of Tangier and the presence of a group of Middle Easterners in Morocco allowed the Moroccan-educated elite to introduce a

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[7] Baulin notes that al-Fassi represented for a long time an efficient link between Moroccan nationalism and the Arabs of the East. He was one of the numerous nationalists of the Maghreb wishing for an independent Morocco enrolled as part of the Great Maghreb and looking towards the East (Baulin, 1962, p. 129)

political language imported from the Middle East, which influenced the political discourse of the Moroccan *ulama* (El Mansour, 1996, p. 56). The more modernist secular trend within the broader *Nahda* movement also had an influence on Moroccan intellectuals and the religious elite.

The presence of a more secular reform from the Middle East which was less inclined to emphasise an Islamic reform was instrumental in the Maghreb in the early twentieth century. In this context, Halstead (1967, p. 127) informs us that it is important to distinguish between two types of secular reformism, 'pan-Arab and parochial', which arose in the Middle East. In the first category, one finds the Arabist philosophies of writers such as al-Kawakibi and al-Manfaluti, as well as Shakib Arsalan, whose pan-Arabism impacted Moroccan nationalist philosophy (Halstead, 1967, p. 127). The Moroccans became familiar with a great deal of the literature of the Arab *Nahda*. Another intellectual of Egyptian reformism who is reported to have had an enduring impression on the Moroccans by virtue of his original concern for the plight of women in the Muslim context is Qasim Amin (Halstead, 1967, p. 131). Having followed in the footsteps of his predecessor Muhammad Abdu who remains one of the leading figures of the *Salafiyya* movement, Qasim Amin's works, which had already provoked an uproar in the Middle East, also stirred up a controversy in Morocco, where the Moroccan nationalists themselves attest to the influence of Amin and his movement. My study of associations of Islamic dress during the *Nahda* period makes use of Qasim Amin's books which remain among the major sources that have stirred controversy and debate among intellectuals of the time in the Maghreb and Mashreq. His works represent an example of how promoting women's rights in a Muslim context was increasingly debated in relation to Islamic dress. The Arab *Nahda* which was also influential in the Maghreb revived a new political and social environment in which women's rights, among other principles, offered a point for debate and intellectual production. And this reform was also part of Arab nationalist efforts to gain independence from colonial rule.

To conclude, both French colonisation and the Arab *Nahda* movement had a lasting impact on the Maghreb region, and on their political, economic, social and cultural lives during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This impact was to last beyond this time to include nationalist movements which led to decolonisation in the Maghreb. Although Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia had their distinctive experiences of French colonial rule, they nonetheless shared affinities by virtue of their historical, geographic and cultural similarities and their attempts to resist a common domination. Likewise, the impact of the Arab *Nahda* was manifested in different ways in the Maghreb countries. Yet as a political and cultural movement that strove to assimilate European ideas while reviving an abstract Arab cultural heritage, the *Nahda* movement, and its *Salafiyya* branch in the Maghreb, also involved resisting foreign domination, as well as exchanging, adopting and negotiating among intellectuals and reformers from Mashreq and Maghreb.

After this introductory chapter, which provides a socio-historical background for my study of the veil, I examine in the next chapter the veil within the histories of Orientalism, postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminist theories, which constitute the theoretical background for my study of Islamic dress. The third chapter elucidates the methodology on which my analysis of the veil is based. The fourth and fifth chapters offer an analysis of the veil meanings through examples of Orientalist and *Nahda* literary texts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The sixth chapter analyses the *hijab* in the French press and politics through the examples of three mainstream French weeklies and political speeches from Jacques Chirac and the Stasi Commission Report which formed the basis for the 2004 *hijab* ban. The seventh and last chapter looks at Islamic dress in the Moroccan press through four weeklies, and in Maghrebi and Arab feminist works. Starting from Orientalist and *Nahda* tropes of the veil, the subsequent chapters build on these meanings in order to track how the dress figures in contemporary times and across various texts and historical eras. My work aims to contribute to comparative postcolonial studies on Islamic dress and the construction of

the *Muslimah*'s body from an Islamic feminist perspective. The comparative focus of the veil and the media analysis are the major concerns of my research.

2. The Veil within Orientalism, Postcolonial, Islamic and Muslim Feminism

Can we write a history of the veil? How does the veil have a history? In this chapter, I explore how histories of the veil are closely intertwined with histories of Orientalism, as well as the implications of this intertwining for Islamic and Muslim feminism. We need to give a background to the veil in order to understand how it becomes a focal point of attention in postcolonial times. My argument will show how the background of the veil in Orientalism and imperialism shapes how the veil matters. We need to understand how the veil became a figure within colonial discourses before considering its discursive manifestations in contemporary media in France and Morocco. Prior to my analysis of the veil in the French and Moroccan print media and a consideration of the meanings of the veil in some Orientalist and *Nahda* texts, this chapter sets the theoretical background for my study, which will be followed by more concrete examples of Orientalist and *Nahda* texts on the veil in the next chapter.[8]

In the present chapter, I thus establish a background for a study of associations of Islamic dress in the Moroccan and French contemporary twenty-first century press and politics. I explore this background through the histories of the veil in the following historical and epistemological frameworks: firstly, Orientalism as a theory of text, representation and discourse; secondly, constructions of Islam in Orientalism and feminism; and thirdly, postcolonial Islamic and Muslim feminism. The questions I address concern how the veil relates to these different theoretical and epistemological paradigms. What links can we draw between Islamic female dress and Orientalism on the one hand, and postcolonial and Islamic and Muslim feminist epistemologies on the other? How does the dress relate to the histories of Orientalism and to the emergence

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[8] As a colonial genre, travel literature which poses the question of gender and representation (Melman, 1995, p. xxv) offers an illustration of different associations of the veil. Similarly, the *Nahda* literature coincided with European colonisation of many Arab countries in which the veil was debated by numerous Arab intellectuals.

of Muslim and Islamic feminism? How can a study of these histories open a space for a comparative analysis of Islamic dress in the Moroccan and French press? Due to this chapter's focus on the theoretical aspects which constitute a background for my study, my analysis of examples of French and *Nahda* literatures on the veil will be the focus of the second chapter, as they include my analysis of concrete texts rather than theoretical debates.

2.1.Orientalism as Discourse

How is Orientalism as a type of discourse relevant to my research on Islamic dress? And why is it important to take it into consideration as a theoretical framework for a study of meanings of the veil? Said (1979, p. 2) describes Orientalism as 'a mode of *discourse* with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles'. Building on Michel Foucault's approach to power as productive, Said (1979, p. 12) shows how Orientalism is about the intimacy of power and knowledge.

I draw on Said's model of Orientalism as a mode of discourse and his exposition of the relationship of power and knowledge in my research. However I also acknowledge and agree with many of the critiques of his work for how it implies Orientalism as having an internal consistency or homogeneity as well as how it overlooks gender relations. For example, Ziauddin Sardar (1999), argues that Said's approach to Orientalism is overly reductionist. Maintaining that the history of Orientalism is the history of the 'Western self, its ideas, doings, concerns and fashions', Sardar (1999, p. 16) argues for an understanding of Orientalism as a sequence of discourses which, although interconnected by a coherent set of common features, adapt to 'changing historic situations, scholarly and literary trends', making possible the existence of 'sites of resistance.' In her comparative study of French and British Orientalism, Lisa Lowe (1994, p. 5) similarly questions whether Said's model of Orientalism is monolithic in how it constructs the Orient as other to the Occident. For Lowe (1994, p. 20),

Orientalism embodies discursive conflicts which produce an 'instability of the Orientalist terrain illustrated in the confluences and deviations of other discourses' such as gender, race and class. Her study opens a space for a conception of Orientalism beyond the binary logic of otherness (Western vs other), to include a consideration of other differences of nation, race, gender and sex. Nashat and Tucker (1999, p. lxi) similarly point out that there are different constructions of gender depending on class, race, ethnicity and religion among other factors, sometimes even within the same space and time, which means we must consider constructions of gender in relation to various elements, namely the mode of production, culture and religion that can sometimes unite women and at other times separate them. These critiques all usefully explore how Orientalism is shaped by other categories of difference.

Said's monolithic notion of Orientalism has also been criticised by Ali Behdad (1994) who claims *Orientalism* reproduces stereotypes of the Orientalist whose power of representation allows an indisputable domination of the victimised Oriental, thus leaving no space for potential differences among the different modes of Orientalist representation (1994, pp. 11-12). Instead, Behdad (1994, p. 135) has emphasised 'belated' Orientalism's ability to incorporate heterogeneity through 'dispersive tactics, discursive heterogeneities, strategic irregularities and historical discontinuities' in the late nineteenth century travellers' accounts, which problematise the monolithic conception of Orientalism as a coherent entity. Taking Western arts as the starting point of his analysis, John MacKenzie (1995) also challenges the notion of a monolithic binary discourse of Orientalism through his study of examples of Orientalism in the arts of empire, concluding that 'arts of imperial culture have witnessed heterogeneity, change and instability through seeking renewal and reinvigoration via contacts with other traditions, thus challenging the Orientalist binary established between an essentialised self and its other ' (1995, pp. 208-209). Among the studies that also challenge Said's monolithic Orientalism is F.Codell and Dianne Sachko Macleod's (1998) which investigates the numerous complexities of colonial discourse. The book examines how colonised people intervene in the hegemonic colonial discourse

'negotiated, revised, subverted and re-invented' for their own purposes on the one hand, and the extent to which British aesthetic notions were changed by the colonial experience, on the other (MacLeod & Codell, 1998, p. 1).

Feminist work has explored how gender and sexuality matter. For example, Billie Melman's (1995) analysis of women's travel writing to the Middle East during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shows how women's texts of the period offer an alternative view of the Orient. In relation to the veil, an example of this alternative vision of the Orient is a perception of Ottoman and Arab women as women enjoying freedom of movement guaranteed by the veil, a symbol of licence in the eighteenth century transformed into a trope for female virtue and respectability (Melman, 1995, p. 111). Looking at different accounts of women travellers, missionaries and writers reveals a perception of the Oriental woman as the West's 'recognisable image in the mirror' rather than the 'absolute and ultimate Other' (Melman, 1995, p. 316). Reina Lewis (1996) also focuses on the production and dissemination of Orientalist images by women. She shows how Orientalism is not fixed, but rather continuously answering challenges (Lewis, 1996, p. 236). Lewis (1996, p. 4) argues persuasively that women's access to the imperial discourse 'produced a gaze on the Orient and its other marked by difference' that was less absolute and derogatory than Said's formulation. Her study of the production and reception of representations by women within colonial discourse deconstructs the homogeneous notion of Orientalism. Furthermore, in her book *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Ottoman Harem*, Lewis (2004) focuses on a group of publications about segregated life by Ottoman women from the beginning of the twentieth century, tracing how these women not only engaged with, but also fought against the Orientalist discourse and occidental stereotypes. Lewis (2004, p. 2) argues that the Orientalist subjects' re-writing of Western *harem* literature (and use of particular Orientalist styles, forms and techniques) 'dissolves frozen categories of Orientalism and disrupts assumptions of both coloniser and colonised'. The engagement of these women enabled the production of alternative voices which challenge 'masculinist histories of Orientalism' (Lewis, 2004, p. 8). My own concern

with how the veil operates within Orientalism is indebted to these important feminist critiques.

How then does the concept of Orientalism contribute to my project? Orientalism as a model of colonial discourse represents an important point of departure for this study of the veil in nineteenth century Orientalist and *Nahda* texts, as well as in the press and politics in Morocco and France. A consideration of the veil figures within Orientalism will allow me to show how the veil comes to acquire a set of associations that are preserved in time. A history of the veil is a history of these associations. This movement back in history will be done through an analysis of French travel and Arab *Nahda* literatures in the second chapter of my thesis. This analysis will be followed in the third and fourth chapters with a study of the veil in the postcolonial Moroccan and French press and politics.

So how did Orientalism construct the veil and the *Muslimah* or Muslim woman? Does the veil allow for what Sardar (1999) calls 'sites of resistance' to dominant Orientalist representations? As I conducted my research, what became striking were the continuities and discursive repetitions in how the veil came up. I did not begin by assuming Orientalist discourse as stable or coherent, but by following the veil across different sites, I began to realise that even if the veil has different associations, these different associations work to create an impression of coherence. Within the framework of Orientalist, *Nahda*, media and political texts of Islamic dress, my work thus explores how different associations generate continuities rather than, to borrow Behdad's (1994) terms cited earlier, 'discursive heterogeneities' and 'historical discontinuities'. My study can thus be framed within an attempt to, in the words of Muslim feminist Haideh Moghissi (1999, p. 47), confront 'essentialised images of Muslims' and to 'interrogate the colonial reduction of women's identity to its Islamic 'essence''. The veil becomes 'an essentialised image' even though there are many differences at stake in how veils matter. As postcolonial Muslim feminist Sherene

Razack (2008, p. 86) notes, 'old colonial technologies' are enjoying 'renewed vigor'. When the veil becomes an essentialised image, it can also be understood as an old colonial technology. We need to understand how the veil has been represented over time to make sense of the 'renewed vigor' in how the veil comes up in contemporary media and politics.

2.2. Orientalism as a System of Representation

Said (1979, pp. 202-203) refers to Orientalism as a 'system of representations framed by a whole set of forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western empire'. Yet Orientalism was not only concerned with representations, but also with how they are tied with domination and power (Abu-Lughod, 2001, p. 101) As a Western discourse on the other, Orientalism creates the need for counter representations (Behdad, 1994, p. viii). Postcolonial anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (2001, p. 101)refers to the 'combating-stereotype work' in her writings on Middle-Eastern women. This argument could be read as implying a distinction between representations that are 'true' or 'real' and those that are false. However I would argue rather than finding a truth, we can instead analyse the 'implicit and explicit knowledges employed in the reading,' since texts are polysemic; and thus subject to different readings (Lewis, 2004, p. 180). Combating stereotypes does not mean we find more authentic representations. Rather than considering my project through the lens of combating stereotypes, my aim is to analyse how the veil acquires meanings; that render the veil historically dynamic.

In her postcolonial feminist study of the veil, Meyda Yegenoglu (2003) also evokes the importance of texts, yet distinguishes between 'discursive' and 'textual' processes that construct the veil politically on the one hand, and culturally on the other. She notes that 'while the political project has been a precise strategy of unveiling, the inscription of the veil in the European text is witness to a constitution of subjectivity, an imaginary unity and command of experience in the encounter with the other' (Yegenoglu, 2003,

p. 554)The distinction between discursive and textual processes that construct the veil both politically and culturally is in my view open to question. It can be argued that what is textual is also political, and that writing about the veil within the Orientalist framework can also manifest itself as an attempt to frame it within a specific discursive field of political power. As we will see in the second chapter, the meanings of the veil within Orientalist and *Nahda* texts can be read as part of a instances which define the veil within a range of historical meanings, which, when compared with the contemporary veil associations in the French and Moroccan press and politics, reveal a politicised undercurrent. It is also important to note that texts on the veil exercise a form of political power through assigning particular meanings to the garment. Despite this, Yegenoglu's (2003) psychoanalytically oriented work presents a more gender-sensitive approach than Said's vision of Orientalism, thereby adding a necessary dimension to my analysis.[9]Her feminist analysis, which represents a way of looking at the veil from a more psychological perspective taken together with a postcolonial and an Islamic feminist perspective, represents a starting point for my study of the veil. I propose to do this through a cross-cultural, cross-linguistic and cross-historical study of the veil, with a special focus on how the veil becomes an 'essentialised image' and how this relates to politics, sexuality and ethics.

According to Said (1979, pp. 272-273), representations are first 'embedded in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer', and they are also linked with other things besides the 'truth' which is itself a representation 'inhabiting a common field of play defined … by some common history, tradition, universe of discourse'. Similarly to Yegenoglu, Ali Behdad (1994, p. 26) notes the importance of textual signifiers, and particularly in the colonial and Orientalist subject's desire for the Orient, which is defined by the Orientalist 'intertext'; emphasising that the intertext always involves the travellers in the realm of Orientalist power relations. While these

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[9] Note the works Reina Lewis, Billie Melman and Lisa Lowe among others offer a more gender-sensitive approach than Said's Orientalism.

ideas link discourse to text and representation, Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003, p. 49) discusses the 'discursive and political suppression of the heterogeneity of the subject' in her analysis of writings on women of the third-world. Invoking a predominantly 'discursive' definition of colonisation, which focuses on a 'mode of appropriation and codification of scholarship and knowledge' about women in the third-world, Mohanty (2003, p. 49) notes that '[i]t is in the production of this third-world difference' that Western feminisms appropriate and colonize the constitutive complexities which characterize the lives of women in these countries. Mohanty's (2003, p. 51) concept of 'third-world difference' used by Western feminists involves a process of 'homogenisation and systematisation of oppression through which power is exercised in Western feminist writing'. She notes (Mohanty, 2003, p. 49) that colonization almost consistently implies a relation of 'structural domination and a discursive or political suppression of the heterogeneity of the subject(s)'. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (2003, p. 9) also note that feminist postcolonial theory demonstrates that Western feminist theory has often made generalisations about the 'third-world' women, thus unjustifiably homogenising a very diverse groups of women. These important works all address how colonial discourses (including within feminism) operate as a technique of *generalising* about others.

My own analysis of how the veil becomes 'an essentalised image,' through a series of associations that have become natural over time, is indebted to this work. In other words, the veil becomes a means by which general statements about others are being made. In the wake of what we can call 'veil controversies' in France and Morocco, the veil operates not only through a humanist discourse to which Mohanty (2003) refers, but also Orientalist and colonial discourses which give Islamic dress an appearance of generality and consistency (in political, ethical and sexual terms). The texts I examine throughout my dissertation operate through a similar 'discursive colonisation' of the veil's complexity and a suppression of other potential meanings for the veil. While Mohanty and other postcolonial feminists emphasise the specific construction of the

third-world woman, my study examines, by taking up the veil, the construction of Muslim woman in the contemporary print media in Morocco and France.

In my research, I am also interested in the systems of representation that have framed the veil and defined it within particular parameters. As far as the Orientalist and colonial eras are concerned, how is this otherness reproduced through text and language? Does the veil within Orientalist and *Nahda* periods manifest a coherent set of meanings, or are there differences within these modes of representation? Most importantly, how do representations of Islamic dress through associations in Orientalist and *Nahda* texts compare with the postcolonial texts in the Moroccan and French press and politics? If we start from the idea that texts are polysemic and open a variety of readings and meanings, how can we compare texts on the veil that are located at different historical and socio-political junctures? Before considering these questions in the next chapter, it is important to situate the veil within the broader Orientalist discourse.

2.3. Constructions of Islam and the Veil

As a field defined by travellers, governments, military expeditions and readers of novels and accounts of exotic adventure among others (Said, 1979, p. 203), Orientalism is a form of discourse and a body of theory and practice in which a considerable amount of investment has been made over the centuries, and a 'system of knowledge about the Orient' (Said, 1979, p. 6). Before the seventeenth century, Western ideas about Islam were obtained from tales of travellers, crusaders and the inferences of clerics from their readings of poorly understood Arabic texts (Ahmed, 1992, p. 149). Through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, readings of the Arabic texts became less vague, but the travellers' interpretations of what they observed were still close to meanings that male points of view gave to the customs (Ahmed, 1992, p. 149), and hostility to Islam and Muslims was an integral part of most of the travellers' 'mental makeup' (Kabbani, 1986, pp. 11-12). As the literary production of the Orient became more

important, for Western readers, the East could be summed up as a 'sexual' and 'despotic' place, and Orientals as 'caught in timeless self-indulgence' (Kabbani, 1986, p. 19). Although women and Islam constituted a part of the European narrative of Islam early on, they only appeared at the centre of this narrative during the late nineteenth century's colonial rule in Muslim countries (Kabbani, 1986, p. 150). Europe's feelings about Oriental women, however, were always ambivalent, fluctuating between 'desire, pity, contempt and outrage' (Kabbani, 1986, p. 26).

Travel writing during the Orientalist era constitutes a valuable background for the comparative study of the veil, as the analysis of examples from French Orientalist travel literature will reveal in the next chapter. More importantly, French Orientalism provides meanings and tropes of the veil that are worth considering if we are to explore the more contemporary associations of the *hijab* in France. Similarly, Arab *Nahda* texts offer a background for the study of the more recent associations of Islamic dress in Morocco. In comparison with other bodies of literature, French Orientalist and Arab *Nahda* texts will help us better understand how the veil is written through various texts that are historically linked with two different socio-historical and political contexts. Due to the links between Orientalism and imperialism, France's past as a colonial power and Morocco's histories of French colonialism and *Nahda*, Orientalist texts present a crucial historical background through which to study contemporary associations of the veil. The Arab *Nahda* texts on the veil likewise offer an important setting for the comparative dimension to my study, and a suitable background for the discussion of more contemporary associations of the veil in the Moroccan press.

As I have noted, Orientalism is 'essentialising other cultures, people and geographical regions' (Said, 1979, pp. 108-109). Orientalism as a mode of discourse thus creates an 'essential difference' in which the veiled woman remains different from others (Yegenoglu, 2003, p. 555). The strategy of constructing the veil in essentialist terms involves attaching meanings that fix it within particular parameters. However, my

study will not be limited to texts that have been produced within a Western context (Orientalist and French press and politics), but will also investigate how Orientalist discourse impacted on countries subject to colonial domination, as will be demonstrated in the Arab *Nahda* and the Moroccan press. My research will additionally make use of Muslim, Islamic as well as Arab and Maghrebi feminist texts which have been produced in Egypt and the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia). Through the process of doing the research I began to realise how essentialisation can operate across space and time. Starting from Orientalist and *Nahda* textual sources and finishing with the Moroccan and French press and politics of the last decade, I consider how the veil has become not only an essentialised image but an image of essential difference.

For many centuries, Europe has manifested both a fascination and repulsion towards the veil, producing 'frustration and aggressive behaviour', while conversely creating a feeling of a fantasy or the 'promise of the exotic and erotic experiences' (Mabro, 1991, p. 2). The veil can be simultaneously a symbol of inferiority, backwardness and oppression and of sexuality and exoticism as I show in my analysis of Orientalist and *Nahda* texts. The veil is thus an ambivalent; it retains negative and positive associations that are both essential to how the veil becomes essential. Today in the Western context, 'culture clash' is used as expression to imply or to express European superiority in relation to the 'Muslim other', whose presence on European and North American soil has been increasing (Razack, 2008, p. 89). The veil becomes crucial to how that clash is imagined within Europe. Yet rather than focusing my study on the European framework, I examine texts from the archive across various temporal and spatial dimensions to offer a more comparative study of Islamic dress.

2.4. The Veil and Feminism

In what follows, I discuss some feminist works that have focused on the veil as a symbol of oppression, backwardness, oriental sexuality and exoticism which figure among some the most predominant meanings attached to the veil since the Orientalist

era. I consider it necessary to provide an overview of some of the works that have tackled these meanings within their respective studies. First, I discuss some of the debates about oppression in relation to women and Islam, as it is important to trace the various historical factors that contribute to the production and propagation of such veil associations.

The origins of perceptions of the Muslim woman as oppressed and male-dominated can be traced back to the thirteenth century, and more particularly to the time of the Crusades (Alvi, et al., 2003). The image of the veiled docile Muslim woman has been omnipresent in the Western imagination, and the veil has been considered as a symbol of that oppression (Hessini, 1996, p. 91). Gender oppression of the non-West as well as other forms of violence have been 'generalized as inextricable aspects of non Western cultures', and European powers have historically used patriarchal practices to justify conquest and colonisation (Thobani, 2007, p. 228). Subsequently, the imperialist powers which dominated the Muslim societies in the nineteenth century attempted to account for their power by declaring that 'Islam was a crude and dying religion, stressing alleged mistreatment of women as part of their anti-Muslim rhetoric' (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 163). The imagery of demonisation of Islam as a peculiar religion that is predisposed to mistreat women seems to have a long history (Moghissi, 1999, p. 13). Yet it is particularly after the colonial encounter that one can notice the Western 'inferiorising gaze' in European literary and scholarly works, with a focus on cultural practices that are perceived to be hostile to women, and a consideration of how and when Muslim women can be liberated from Muslim men (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 13). In the more contemporary context, Western superiority is symbolised most clearly by the body of the unveiled woman, who is considered as partake of the freedoms said to be present in Western societies (Thobani, 2007, p. 218). To link these ideas with my project, a contemporary study of the veil needs to move back into history in order to consider how the garment has been crucial since the encounter of the West with the non-West. Having carried meanings of oppression and subjugation since the Orientalist and pre-colonial eras, the veil has additionally been used as a justification for

'civilising mission' brought by the colonial powers to the colonised populations. A civilising mission as often expressed as an unveiling mission.

Imperial domination was thus accompanied, in many Muslim-majority countries, with a discourse of the veil that defined it within gender oppression, inequality and backwardness. The persistence of meanings of oppression in relation to the veil is manifested in the modern context through the increased media attention on the dress. Moreover, in the European media as Nilüfer Göle (2011, p. 14) argues, there is a continual 'semantic shift' in the use of the terms used to designate Islamic covering: *headscarf, hijab, nikap*, and now *burqa*. Although the burqa (or the *niqab*) is worn by very few women in France, it has become a legal issue and provoked a general debate on French national identity, as women wearing it and retreating from the public sphere have become a 'subject of fear for European democracies that cherish visibility and transparence' (Göle, 2011, p. 95). In the context of the US war in Afghanistan, it was the *burqa* dressed body of the Afghan woman and the visual image of the *burqa* rather than the destruction brought by twenty years of a war funded by the US that served as the principal referent in the Feminist Majority's immense mobilisation against the Taliban regime (Mahmood, 2004, p. 197). It follows, therefore, that both the French fear of the *burqa* and the use of the image of the *burqa* during the war in Afghanistan demonstrate that the Orientalist and colonial meanings of the veil are still relevant in the contemporary times.

As we will see in later chapters, French travel literature and *Nahda* writings present examples that are worth considering in relation to the *Muslimah* and the veil as both were historically linked to and coincided with the colonial period when Orientalist discourse was predominant. In my research, I look at what the veil gets associated with in various geographic, socio-political and historical frameworks, and how the language used in relation to it creates what Yegenoglu calls an 'essential difference'. It is important to consider this perspective because, as Razack (2008, p. 84) has pointed

out, in the contemporary times, expelling groups of individuals from the political community such as is the case with post 9/11 detentions, starts with their 'difference' 'coded as an incomplete modernity' which presents a 'threat to the nation'. The stigmatization of the foreigner thus carries more than even with it 'the likelihood that the stigmatized group will be literally expelled (deported), marked permanently as undeserving of the full benefits of citizenship, or abandoned' (Razack, 2008, p. 84). My analysis will indeed explore how the veil becomes a sign of stigma and how the stigmatisation of the veil relates to the stigmatisation of Muslim women.

Can we speak about diverging discourses on the veil which re-inscribe its essential difference? How do we define this difference across the various historical eras and socio-political and spatial frameworks? Any study of the veil needs to take into account its complexity as an object of various histories. Indeed, because of its long history, the veil has constituted a focal point of interest even before the colonial era. Likewise, the meanings of the veil have been similarly tied to the image of Islam throughout the centuries. Some of these meanings were in fact re-enforced and re-inscribed during the colonial era. Arab women, their status, and their image have been systematically used by occupying forces to support their views regarding Islam's conservatism, the inferiority of 'Arabs', and refusal of 'progress' (Bessis, 2007, p. 34).

In the case of North African countries (commonly referred to as the *Maghreb (Western part)*, as opposed to the *Mashreq (*Eastern part*)* of the Middle East), woman represents a point of dispute between coloniser and colonised. The coloniser used her status as a proof for the backwardness of oppressed members of the society, while the colonised considered it as the safest defence against acculturation or adopting another culture

(Bessis, 2007, p. 35).[10] This dichotomy is not universal, however, as some Arab intellectuals who, although fighting against the colonial power, adopted a discourse on women and Islam which bore similarities with the colonial discourse as I demonstrate in later chapters. At the same time, feminism is seen in some quarters of the Arab world as yet another attempt at colonisation. In the framework of the emergence of Islamic feminism during the last decades, Margot Badran (2009, p. 221) notes that feminisms in the postcolonial contexts have been discredited as Western and as being part of a 'project of cultural colonialism', hence they have been stigmatised as antithetical to Islam. Azza Karam (1998, p. 6) similarly points out that, in postcolonial Arab societies, the term 'feminism' is tainted with stereotypes, and some religious personalities associate the notion with colonialist strategies to undermine indigenous social and religious culture, using the 'woman question' as a tool to attack Islam and depict it as oppressive and backward.

The discourse of oppression has been employed during colonial struggles between coloniser and colonised, but it is also a contentious topic within each camp. In the contemporary context, as Thobani (2007, p. 229) notes, the veil and *burqa* have come to signify not only patriarchal oppression of women, but also the 'justice implicit in the war and the 'feminist' sensibility of the nationals who waged and supported the 'war on terror.' Described as oppressed in travel books, literature and art over a long period of time, the Muslim woman's oppression is taken as an unquestionable fact most exemplified by the veil and the institution of the *harem* (Mabro, 1991, p. 1). Similarly, after 9/11, the issue of women in Islam, and more particularly women's oppression and the apparent symbols of that oppression, such as the veil and the *burqa*, once again become recurring themes in public debate in the West, a topic repeatedly invoked by media and politicians (Ahmed, 2012, pp. 194-195). The idea of the oppressed Muslim

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[10] This view will however be challenged by many Arab intellectuals who, although fighting against the colonial power, adopted a discourse on women and Islam which bore similarities with the colonial discourse.

woman, often characterised as the norm by Western media, is also seen by some Islamic feminists, such as Amina Wadud (2006, p. 41), as the principal motivation for Muslim women struggling in the 'gender jihad'. In addition to Muslim and Islamic feminists' questioning the historical equation of the veil with oppression, numerous non-Muslim feminists have challenged the idea of the veil as denoting automatic oppression. The automatic link established between the veil and gender oppression points to the persistence of an essentialisation. This space has defined Islamic dress since Orientalist times through the metaphor of the harem which I explore in the next section.

2.5.Harem Veils

The trope of the harem occupies a major space in the Orientalist discourse. Reina Lewis argues that the 'cult of the harem' was central to Orientalist discourse, noting that it was viewed as a segregated and polygamous sphere from which all men were excluded, apart from the husband and eunuchs (Lewis, 1996, p. 111). Billie Melman (1995, p. 61) similarly notes that, conjuring up a collection of 'potent images in the West', polygyny and seclusion came to be identified with the Muslim Eastern Mediterranean. The concept of the harem itself has an 'iconic status' in the West and was crucial to the fantasies that build the Orientalist discourse (Lewis, 1996, p. 128), viewed as a location of 'social and sexual practice not structured around a central male authority' (Lowe, 1994, p. 48). In my study, I focus on some of the powerful images attached to the veil in Orientalist writings of the nineteenth century. Not only have *harem* veils and walls stood for a male desire to look at the forbidden female beauty, but also as an obstacle to the mystery of the Orient (Lewis & Mills, 2003, pp. 14-15). As a 'locus of exotic and abnormal sexuality' and an alternative to the Western model of sexuality, the harem was viewed as a 'microcosmic Middle East' representing sensuality and violence, being at once appealing and threatening (attraction vs repulsion) (Melman, 1995, p. 60). The East is thus narrated as a place of lascivious sensuality, and a realm of inherent violence especially in the nineteenth century period of imperialist confrontation (Kabbani, 1986, p. 6). The Orientalist texts which I analyse are part of

the literature which takes the harem and the veil as its objects of writing. It is important to consider these texts within the context of a broader discourse on the harem, which Sarah Graham Brown (2003, p. 502) describes:

> Fantasies about harem life pervaded the Orientalist imagination and did much to cloud understanding of the social, domestic and sexual lives of women in the Middle East. The power of the harem image lay in the notion of a forbidden world of women, of sexuality caged and inaccessible, at least to Western men, except by a leap of imagination. It was this leap of imagination which shaped literature, paintings, engravings, and photographs which purported to reveal the life of women behind walls and barred windows of the harem. Women appeared first and foremost as possessions, as playthings of men in the harem, or as objects of commerce in slave markets which figure in numerous Orientalist paintings.

The vision of the harem as an oppressive institution has been challenged by Muslim feminist Leila Ahmed (1992, p. 84) who notes that, while women did not have much power over their sexual, psychological and emotional lives, some elite women commanded fortunes and consequently had power over the lives of some men and women.[11] While residence in a harem and seclusion put restraints on upper-class women's ability to engage in public-arena economic activity, many of these women used intermediaries in order to conduct their businesses (Nashat & Tucker, 1999, p. xlvii). Women sometimes held considerable wealth and became significant economic actors in many parts of the nineteenth century Middle East, employing agents to conduct their business transactions in the public arena, they also invested capital and

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[11] The construction of the harem as a systematically oppressive institution can also be set against accounts of Arab and Muslim feminists such as Huda al-Sha'arawi whose memoirs open a space for a more complex vision of the harem.

loaned money to men (Nashat & Tucker, 1999, p. xlvii). Thus the actuality of harem was, in fact, rather more complex because, as Badran (2009, p. 54) points out, the harem was both 'enabling and restricting'. Such alternative readings of the harem by Muslim feminists provide us with challenges to the Orientalist tradition's reductive and often homogenising depictions of this space, which has often been restricted to the Middle East and Muslims.

Some women Orientalists also questioned some of the dominant Orientalist notions of the harem. In contrast to the claim that women were forced to articulate patriarchal values as 'token travellers' (Kabbani, 1986, pp. 11-12), women's access to imperial discourse produced a discourse on the Orient and the Orientalised Other that disclosed difference less absolutely than Said's formulation (Lewis, 1996, p. 4), thus deconstructing a monolithic vision of the notion of Orientalism. Harem literature in the British framework, for instance, presented a challenge to both traditional notions of the Orient and to middle-class gender ideology in the West during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Melman, 1995, p. 62). Women travellers, missionaries and writers did not perceive the oriental woman as the completely 'alien Other', but rather as the feminine West's 'recognisable image in the mirror' (Melman, 1995, p. 62). In the case of the declining Ottoman empire, women travellers refuted the stereotypical image of the Turkish woman as 'odalisque, love object and slave', writing authentically detailed accounts which contradicted male fantasies of harem life (MacLeod & Codell, 1998, p. 64). The veil as a symbol of licence in the eighteenth century was, however, transformed into a trope for female virtue and respectability by many English women writers (Melman, 1995, p. 111) and the *yashmak* (face-veil*)* and *ferace* (long loose coat) were elevated to metaphors for the changing notion of personal liberty (as opposed to metaphors for licence and artful seductiveness) (Melman, 1995, p. 120) Many women travellers adopted the Turkish female style of dress while they were abroad and continued to wear it on their return to England as a gesture of independence; cross-cultural cross-dressing allowed them to stretch the boundaries of their gender and distance themselves from the constricting norms of Victorian and Edwardian sexual

stereotypes (MacLeod & Codell, 1998, p. 64). As Melman (1995, p. 144) states, the domestic a-political interpretation of the harem made Victorians and Edwardians perceive it as a 'society within a society, a female community, an autonomous sorority, and self-sufficient, self-ruling and self-justified community'. These studies demonstrate why it is important to consider Orientalism as a heterogeneous phenomenon which includes differences and splits, rather than a homogenous entity which presents the Orient within clearly defined categories.

Polygamy and seclusion figure among the most significant Orientalist themes linked to the harem. Although these, along with concubinage, have been practiced in Mediterranean societies before the Arab conquest and have also been historically practiced by Jews and Christians (Ahmed, 1992, pp. 18,55), they came to be identified almost entirely with Islam in the minds of the West, conjuring up a number of powerful images (Lewis, 2004, p. 98). Graham-Brown (2003, p. 505) notes that, in the popular Western fantasy of seclusion, women had no major relationship excluding with their male sexual partners and/or oppressors, and paintings, photographs and literature usually stressed 'passivity and stillness of women'. Patterns of sexual segregation, however, varied greatly, and seclusion which was impossible in towns and cities where women participated in labour force, could be practiced only in richer families where women's work was not needed (Graham-Brown, 2003, p. 505). Graham-Brown (2003, p. 505) also points out that most photographs of the time depicting harem scenes were in fact studio reconstructions composed by the photographer, like the painting or engraving, the photograph was, in fact, a 'figment of imagination'. Although we can acknowledge the importance of visual imagery in constructing such concepts as the harem and the veil, my study focuses on written images of the veil, and how the words and language are effectively used to construct the dress.

Polygamy, which was also central to the Orientalist discourse, provided both a male fantasy (Graham-Brown, 2003, p. 502) of 'ownership and control of multiple women'

and a reason to condemn Islam as 'heathen and barbaric' (Lewis, 1996, p. 155). Segregated polygamous life was central to both dominant Western Orientalist imaginary, and was challenged by Ottoman women (Lewis, 2004, p. 98). In addition to generalisations about polygamy in writings of casual harem visitors–polygamous elite vs monogamous majority (Melman, 1995, p. 143) in the dominant Orientalist discourse –the harem was represented as a polygamous space characterised by 'tyranny, excess and perversion' (Lewis, 2004, pp. 182-183).[12] Since the harem, seclusion and polygamy have been almost exclusively associated with Muslims, it follows that the images attached to these notions have also been linked with constructions of Muslims, and more particularly the Muslim woman.

2.6. Islamic, Muslim Feminism and the Veil

If Muslim women were seen as oppressed by the veil, how does this relate to the emergence of Islamic feminism? Historically, feminist discourse first emerged in the writings of women at different moments in the Middle Eastern countries. Margot Badran (2009, p. 20) notes that feminist ideas surfaced in the writings of educated middle and upper-class Arab women who lived in the secluded realm of the urban harem, and who, through education and expanding contacts within the female world, gained deeper knowledge of their religion as some started to contest the Islamic justification for seclusion (hijab which then meant covering both face and body) and other controls over their lives. The emergence of Islamic feminism has much to teach us about the veil and its histories.

Viewed as a Western attack on Islamic culture and blasphemy within Muslim countries, feminism has for a long time been presumed absent by most in the West who

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[12] In relation to Europe's feelings about Oriental women, Melman (1995, p. 61) similarly notes that the harem was both appealing and threatening, causing a mixture of attraction and repulsion and Kabbani (1986, p. 26) states that these feelings fluctuated between 'desire, pity, contempt and outrage'.

have insisted that 'feminism and Islam is an oxymoron', arguing that Muslims are unable to produce feminism and 'Islam' would not allow it (Badran, 2009, p. 1).[13] The forces critical of and the ones hostile to Muslim women feminists have stubbornly persisted from the early twentieth into the twenty-first century (Badran, 2009, p. 2). Yet, as Nashat and Tucker (1999, p. xxxiii) note, feminism challenges both European colonial and indigenous patriarchal ideologies, and the relationship between Western and non-Western feminism has often been adversarial, partly due to the tension between both groups in relation to the explanation provided for women's oppression. Even non-Western women who identify themselves as feminists 'object to Western feminist theories that posit men as the primary source of oppression', resulting in a debate generating theories that focus on the 'interrelationships of multiple forms of oppression, such as race, class, imperialism, and gender' (Nashat & Tucker, 1999, p. xxxiii). Razack (2008, p. 148) argues that, in the current historical times, feminism can easily be 'annexed to the project of empire' through the language of human rights and gender equality, for instance, in which the West is perceived as committed to Enlightenment values whereas the non-West remains either incompletely modern or hostile to modernity.

In contrast to feminisms in the West, which have been largely secular and articulated outside religious frameworks or as a critique of religious frameworks, the feminisms created by Muslim women were not a 'western' derivative; and whether they have been called secular feminism or Islamic feminism, religion has been a fundamental part of the Muslim women's feminisms (Badran, 2009, p. 2). Another aspect of feminisms in the context of Islam is that from the colonial period to the present, women have continued to ground their feminism in Islam and nationality as they have persisted in challenging patriarchy, transcending political and class formations (Badran, 2009, p. 116). Starting from Badran's (2009) statement that feminism in the Islamic framework

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[13] See also Leila Ahmed (1992)

has not been derived from the West, I examine the discourse of the veil within the *Nahda* era in the chapter following this one. As I mentioned earlier, the *Nahda* period coincided with the colonisation of many Arab countries in which the woman, her status and rights, constituted a focal point of attention and debate. The *Nahda* texts represent an example of this debate. More specifically, Muslim woman's dress and *hijab* (in the sense of covering both body and face) gave rise to a discourse on the veil among intellectuals of the time, during the emergence of *al-Nahda al nisa'iya* (Women's Awakening which was part of the Arab *Nahda*). The meanings attached to the veil during this period will be compared with examples from Orientalist associations which were prevalent during the nineteenth-century French travel writing. Do the *Nahda* writings represent a discourse on the veil different from the Orientalist one in relation to Islamic dress? Can we consider this discourse as part of an emerging Islamic feminist one? And if so, does it include elements of a secular or Islamic feminism derived by Muslim intellectuals of the time?

Muslims' secular feminism emerged in nascent nation-states in Africa and Asia in the late nineteenth century through to the first half of the twentieth century during modernisation, nationalist anti-colonial struggle, dynastic decline and independent state-building amidst a composite of intersecting secular nationalist and Islamic modernist and humanitarian discourses (Badran, 2009, p. 116). Similarly, Amina Wadud (2006, p. 111) argues that the colonialist period introduced individuals outside the faith into the gender discourse, and whereas many Muslims then have subscribed to a secular approach, the methods of such an approach were not investigated for either the 'secular, Orientalist, pro-Western, or even anti-Islamic bias'. The nineteenth century also marked the beginning of the 'Islamic reform movement', led by Islamic modernists such as Muhammad Abduh in Egypt. This movement was influential throughout Muslim-majority and Arab countries including Morocco as I mentioned in my introduction. The Arab *Nahda* movement likewise generated a broad movement of Arab intellectual and cultural revival.

Islamic feminism, on the other hand, emerged in the global *Ummah* (global Muslim community) simultaneously in the East and West in the late twentieth century, during the late postcolonial moment at a time of accelerating Islamist movement of political Islam and during widespread Islamic religious cultural revival in many Muslim-majority secular states and minority societies (Badran, 2009, p. 23). The earliest articulation of women's feminist consciousness (not yet called feminism) was first discernible in occasional published writings by the 1860s and 1870s, preceding colonial occupation and the rise of nationalism, and was more widely expressed from the 1890s with the rise of women's journalism and salon debates (Badran, 2009, p. 18).[14] The *Nahda* writings exemplify this discourse on the veil. The feminist project was caught up in a contradiction, seen both as a 'source of indigenous liberation and a means of colonial subversion of local culture and society' (Badran, 2009, p. 67) both at the time of its emergence and in the postcolonial period (Badran, 2009).[15]The feminists, who started to view patriarchy, rather than Islam, as a source of oppression of women, sought to make a distinction between patriarchy and Islam in arguing their case throughout the century, and have rejected attempts of opponents to impose restrictions on women in the name of Islam, their aim being to end patriarchy and tyranny in the private sphere and legitimise entry into the public sphere (Badran, 2009, p. 134).[16]

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, colonial narratives of racial, religious and civilizational inferiority came to specifically focus on the issue of women and the ways

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[14]See also Beth Baron (1997) on Arab press of the period.

[15]Badran (2009, p. 221) states that the notion of Islamic feminism is fraught with issues of power, authority and legitimacy, and that feminisms in postcolonial contexts are discredited as Western, and a project of cultural colonialism in addition to being stigmatised as antithetical to Islam (Badran Feminism in Islam: 221).

[16] According to Amina Wadud (2006, p. 22), patriarchal norms of the 7th century Arabia left a mark on the nature of the Qur'anic articulation and continued to do so for centuries with' interpretation and implementation'. 'Qur'anic values and virtues inspire persistence in the struggle and resistance to the limitations put on women's dignity. Too many claim authority and legitimacy on the basis of literal, narrow, reductionist and static interpretations of Islam, Islamic sources and gender' (Wadud, 2006, p. 15).

men of other societies oppressed and degraded them (Ahmed, 2012, p. 23). This narrative was useful in this era of European imperialism because it cast European man in the role not only of bringing civilisation to backward peoples, but also saving local women from native men (Ahmed, 2012, p. 23). Dress, as both Göle (2011, p. 1) and Ahmed (2012, p. 23) note, came to epitomise to Europeans the otherness and inferiority of colonised societies. The veil thus became a symbol of Islam's degradation of women and religion's fundamental inferiority (Ahmed, 2012, p. 24). With the rise of the West to global dominance, the Western meaning of the veil (as a sign of inferiority of Islam) came to overlay its prior indigenous meanings, leading to propagation of unveiling movements (Ahmed, 2012, pp. 44-45). Simultaneously, state and religious forces in Middle Eastern countries have retained patriarchal forms of control over women during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which feminists have identified and confronted (Badran, 2009, p. 18). The 'woman question' (*qadi'yat al mar'a*), around which competing discourses have flourished, had been about broader issues of power, and a means through which the state, religious establishment and Islamic movements have projected other designs (Badran, 2009, p. 46). Writing in the tradition of nineteenth and twentieth century intellectuals responding to challenges of the West, female intellectuals were affected by two important changes in the debate on women's role in the twentieth century: the introduction of Western ideas and references, and the participation of women for the first time in the literary debate through writings in women's press (Badran, 2009, p. 103). The 'woman question' thus became entangled in religious and political issue, and was also fuelled by socio-economic change in Egypt (Baron, 1997, p. 104). *Al Nahda al-nisa'iyya* (women's awakening) thus expanded opportunities for women and set the precedents and foundations for later female activism not only in Egypt, but throughout the Arab world (Baron, 1997, p. 188).

In the 1990s, the notion of Islamic feminism and the term itself has been surfacing in parts of the Middle East. The term, however, is controversial, and there is no consensus about its meaning on the part of either advocates or adversaries as it is both contested

and embraced (Badran, 2009, p. 221). Badran (2009, p. 242) defines Islamic feminism as:

> a feminist discourse and practice articulated within an Islamic paradigm. Islamic feminism, which derives its understanding and mandate from the Qur'an, seeks rights and justice for women, and for men, in the totality of their existence. Islamic feminism is both highly contested and firmly embraced. There has been much misunderstanding, misrepresentation, and mischief concerning Islamic feminism. This new feminism has given rise simultaneously to hopes and to fears.[17]

Islamic feminism is a global phenomenon—neither a product of the East nor the West—is being produced by Muslim women from both majority and minority communities in Africa and Asia, and immigrant and convert communities in the West (Badran, 2009, p. 245).

In what follows, I provide some of the concepts tackled by scholars whose works fall within the category of Islamic feminism, or within theories promoting concepts such as social and gender justice within the framework of Islam. Noting the scarcity of works which challenge the absence of gender within Islam, Amina Wadud (2006, pp. 79-80) argues that, relegated to the role of subjects without agency, women have been almost completely excluded from the foundational discourse of what it means to be Muslim, being reduced 'from full humanity and moral agency, or khilafah, to subjects' (1999, p. xi). Similarly, Asma Barlas (2002, p. 14) states that:

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[17] It is noteworthy that Azza Karam (1998, pp. 9-14) distinguishes three types of feminism in the Egyptian context which are: secular feminism, Islamic feminism and Islamist feminism.

It may be argued that by teaching the precept of the inherent inferiority of women, which breeds misogyny, and by justifying women's subordination to men, patriarchies violate women's rights by denying them agency and dignity, principles that the Qur'an says are intrinsic to human nature itself.

Focusing on hermeneutics, language and text in her close study of the Qur'an, Wadud advocates a gender inclusive reading (2006, pp. 15-16)[18] of the sacred text for a continual development towards a just social order, emphasising not only a just treatment of women, but also including them as agents, noting that, although the Qur'an highlights the importance of women, gender reform in Muslim societies has been 'most stubbornly resisted' (Wadud, 1999, p. xiii). Wadud (1999, p. xvii) critiques this tendency of the Islamic intellectual legacy to marginalise women's perspectives and render them 'subjects of male construction', considering that *tafsir,* or Qur'anic exegesis, which is one of the most foundational disciplines in Islamic thought, a human and therefore limited endeavour. Such a critique of 'male construction' constitutes one of the main concerns of my study since I focus on how the veil, as a gendered object, gets constructed through texts. Rather than Islamic *tafsir*, however, my analysis looks at constructions of Islamic dress in Orientalism, the *Nahda* and the Moroccan and French press and politics.

In order to challenge gender biases contained in these endeavours, traditional *tafsir* (Barlas, 2002, p. 2) which was exclusively written by males, needs to be challenged (Barlas, 2002, p. 3), where women's voicelessness, mistakenly equated with that of the text itself, resulted in their experiences being either excluded or interpreted through

[18]Asma Barlas (2002, p. 4) equally mentions the importance of generating a 'theory of equality' from the Qur'an, which is why critiquing the methods by which Muslims produce religious meaning and rereading the Qur'an for liberation are crucial for ensuring sexual equality.

male vision, perspective, desire or needs of woman (Wadud, 1999, p. 2). Women's status and roles in Muslim societies and patriarchal structures of gender relationships are a function of multiple factors, most of which have nothing to do with religion. As Asma Barlas (2002, p. 2) argues, there is nothing innately Islamic about misogyny, inequality and patriarchy, yet all three are often justified by Muslim states and clerics in the name of Islam. Attitudes towards women at the time and place of revelation helped shape particular expressions in the Qur'an, and the concerns it addressed were particular to that circumstance (Barlas, 2002, p. 101). My study also represents an attempt to also counter this 'voicelessness' of the female voice which Wadud (1999) evokes. I do this through including female voices which have been marginalised and silenced.

Regarding the association between scripture/ sacred and sexual oppression, Barlas (2002, p. 3) states that it has served as the strongest argument for inequality and discrimination which derive not from the teachings of the Qur'an, but from the secondary religious texts, the *tafsir* (Qur'anic exegesis) and the Ahadith (narratives purportedly detailing the life and praxis of the Prophet Muhammad. Barlas (2002, pp. 4-5) argues that all texts, including the Qur'an, can be read in 'multiple modes' including the egalitarian one. In the same framework, Omid Safi (2003, p. 4) reiterates the importance of repeatedly challenging, resisting and seeking to overthrow the structures of injustice built into Islamic thought, which is equally applicable to Muslims living in Muslim societies to the ones in Europe and the States. These studies by Islamic feminists highlight the significance of reconsidering texts which have constructed woman within patriarchal perspectives, and the need to intervene and challenge such constructions. I find Asma Barlas's concept of textual/sexual oppression quite useful in thinking about how textual constructions of the veil become a technique for sexual oppression. My study represents an attempt to consider how textual constructions contribute to sexual oppression, and how the veil is often used as an effective tool for such an endeavour.

In this conclusion, I would like to come back to my introductory question: what links can we draw between the veil and Orientalism on the one hand, and postcolonial and Islamic and Muslim feminism on the other? As this review of the veil within Orientalism, postcolonial, Islamic and Muslim feminism has shown, many threads link the veil to these different theories and their respective histories. For my particular study of the veil in the contemporary French and Moroccan press and politics, postcolonial, Islamic and Muslim feminism present valuable epistemological tools for critically reflecting on constructions of Islamic dress in texts. As my analysis elucidates, Islamic/Muslim feminisms offer even more valuable grounds for contesting and challenging histories of the veil, a gendered practice which has largely been fixed to Muslims. If the history of Orientalism is also a history of colonial discourse, my study presents an attempt to challenge such a discourse not from an outsider's perspective, but instead from an insider's position of a *Muslimah*. What Islamic/Muslim feminism means to a *Muslimah* like me is a potential framework to consider the veil across different contexts and histories, and an attempt to offer a reading of texts from an Islamic/feminist/postcolonial perspective. For my own experience as a *Muslimah* researching the veil, it is primordial to recognise these histories in order to forge a space for the intervention of Muslim women themselves.

3. **Approaching the Veil: a Veil Methodology**

How did I come to study the veil in terms of its associations? As I noted in my introduction the original focus of my research was Orientalism. When reading about Orientalism, however, it was the veil that caught my attention. I became intrigued by how and where the veil came up. In this chapter I offer an account of the research process and describe some of the methodological difficulties and challenges I faced in researching the veil in this way. Firstly, I will discuss the epistemology that shapes this project in terms of the politics of location. Secondly, I will explain how I approach the veil as an archive. Thirdly, I discuss my methods of approaching texts that form part of the archive. And finally I will discuss the implications of how translation as a practice was necessary to assemble my 'veil archive' for the research process.

3.1. The Politics of Location

As I have noted, the veil caught my attention as I began to read Orientalist travel writing from the nineteenth century. It caught my attention as a reader who was also a *Muslimah muhajjaba*. I began the research into veils because of my own embodied and historical situation. I am thus involved in the research at multiple levels. I write from and through my own involvement. Writing from involvement is also writing through an explicit acknowledgement of positionality. As Ien Ang (2001, p. 167) argues 'admission of positionality and (self) reflection upon it have become a recognized analytical strategy in critical studies, creating an awareness of the inevitable situatedness of discursive knowledge'. To admit to positionality is also to reflect on one's own starting points as well as to acknowledge the partiality of the claims we make (Mohanty, 2003). I would suggest a politics of location has specific meanings for Islamic feminism. As Ziba Mir Hosseini (2000, pp. 3-4) states:

Those of us who research, think, write, and talk about gender in Islam must also be clear, both to ourselves and to our audiences, where we stand personally on issues that touch our innermost feelings of self. I suggest that unless we are honest about our own personal, individual motives in participating, there will be no movement in the debate. I am not suggesting an individual or collective psychoanalysis, but an admission that each of us has a position...I also know how difficult it is to recognise and talk about one's often very complex and contradictory identities and positions.

Ziba Mir-Hosseini is suggesting here that as Islamic feminists engaged in researching Islam and gender, we need to think about the personal nature of this research both for ourselves and for our audiences. What Hosseini refers to as the 'admission that each of us has a position' constitutes a necessary step in my research as a *Muslimah muhajjaba* researching and writing about Islamic dress, since the veil is a predominantly gendered practice in Islam. This position, however, is far from being simple or even stable. As I pointed out in my introduction, my position as a *Muslimah*-Amazigh-Arabya-Moroccan-British-*muhajjaba* (or adopting a *hijab*) writing in a Western academic context represents a complex and multifaceted aspect of my position. Although I came to the study of the veil through Orientalism, researching the dress as a *Muslimah muhajjaba* reveals some of the complexities of my own positionality in relation to the research process.

I have found 'the politics of location' a useful way of capturing these complexities. This term was first coined by Adrienne Rich in a series of essays published in the early 1980s. For Rich a politics of location was about thinking from the particularity of one's own situation as a woman. Indeed a politics of location was for Rich a way of deconstructing 'hegemonic uses of the word 'woman' within a context of US racism and elite or academic feminist practices' (Kaplan, 1994, p. 138). It is unsurprising given its origin that the politics of location has come to have a particular resonance and

meaning for postcolonial feminists. For example Chandra Mohanty (2003, p. 106) defines the politics of location as 'the historical, geographical, cultural, psychic, and imaginative boundaries that provide the ground for political definition and self-definition'. Although her analysis pertains to US feminists, a politics of location is useful insofar as it provides a tool for how we can 'determine and produce experience and difference as analytical and political categories' (Mohanty, 2003, p. 106). The concept of the politics of location has undergone what Caren Kaplan (1994, p. 138) calls a process of 'cultural translation and transformation' which functions as a 'marker of Western interest in other cultures' and 'signals the formation of diasporic identities'. As she notes:

> Whether it encourages resistance to hegemonic formations, whether it becomes its own academic reification—turning into an instrument of hegemony itself—or whether it marks important shifts in discourses of location and displacement depends, not surprisingly, upon who utilizes the concept in what particular context

The politics of location represents a useful tool to conceptualise a consideration of how my positionality influences the research I am undertaking. In the framework of the 'production of experience and difference' outlined by Mohanty (2003, p. 118), a politics of location allows me to engage with and reflect on my research within a Western academic context. Occupying such a position, however, entails a greater responsibility for a postcolonial *Muslimah* writing and speaking in a Western academic context. As a postcolonial *Muslimah*, my experience and difference remain significant points shaping my study of Islamic dress. This is why I would like to emphasise the importance of time and space throughout my research. As a postcolonial *Muslimah* writing in the twenty-first century Western academic framework, my present location cannot erase the temporal and spatial dimensions of my experiences and histories in Morocco. While my research and writing spread over a few years, it involves the study

of the veil within different historical and local dimensions, moving from Orientalist and colonial eras to the contemporary media, and from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the last decade. In terms of space, my project equally moves between France and Morocco, and between Egypt in the Mashreq to Morocco in the Maghreb. Experience and difference therefore can be added to the time/space dimensions which represent important aspects of my politics of location. Locations are not stable, but move as we do.

For Caren Kaplan (1994), a politics of location is also about *how* we relate to the past. She usefully describes how in identifying 'marginal space as both a site of representation and resistance, location becomes historicized and theoretically viable— a space of future possibilities as well as the nuanced articulation of the past' (Kaplan, 1994, pp. 143-144). In terms of my research, my position as a Moroccan-British postcolonial-*muhajjaba* or *Muslimah* with a *hijab* in England can be viewed as a marginal space, which can be stretched to my position in a Western white-majority country in which Muslims constitute a minority, of which Arab/Amazigh/Maghrebi Muslims represent an even smaller minority. This minority space, however, becomes an opportunity to re-consider the past and present associations of the veil. What Kaplan refers to as the 'nuanced articulation of the past' involves in my study a consideration of how historical meanings of the veil compare with its contemporary associations in the print media. Because of my own location, because of how the veil matters to me personally, I wanted to think about the history of the veil in new ways.

The question of the personal cannot be separated from the question of audience. We might write *as*, but we also write *to*. As Marnia Lazreg (2001, p. 291) in her writing about Algerian women states:

I am writing in English about a reality that is generally unfamiliar to an English-speaking audience. The problem is not only linguistic, it is also one of sharing with an audience a history and culture, a frame of mind, significant silences, and a multitude of things that are said but dispense with explanations.

Applied to my research, as a Moroccan born person writing in English to an English-speaking audience, there is a need to provide additional contextual frameworks for the study of Islamic dress in France and Morocco. As a postcolonial *Muslimah* writing about the veil in Morocco and France in England, translation, which I discuss in a later section of this chapter, offers a means of filling part of the gap which separates texts from various contexts. The fact that researching the veil in Morocco and, to a lesser extent France, poses problems that go beyond language and translation to differences in terms of history and culture, and what Lazreg refers to as 'a frame of mind' or a worldview opens questions that complicate the notion of positionality.

Admissions of positionality are thus not about securing one's place but showing how place is complicated. As Lata Mani points out, the 'revised' politics of location demonstrates that the relation between experience and knowledge is now seen not to be one of correspondence, but one 'fraught with history, contingence and struggle' (quoted in (Kaplan, 1994, p. 149)). I was born and brought up in Morocco, a postcolonial nation-state, which is geographically located in the North Western part of Africa, which is also called the Maghreb. Morocco, despite the many differences it has with other Middle Eastern countries, shares various affinities with them, namely linguistic and socio-cultural – Arabic is its official language and Islam – its declared state and majority religion. Growing up in an open yet religion-conscious family, I found myself constantly negotiating the interplay between what I understood to be Muslim practices within my immediate close family environment and French ideals and values, which remained central in my primary, secondary and higher education as well as the wider family and social environments I inhabited. As a young Muslim child

and teenager, my feelings of being divided between two different worlds were intensified by the Moroccan culture which overemphasised the values of self-effacement, reserve and restraint. While these were widely held as primordial for the construction of an ideal femininity, forms of modest Islamic dress remained marginal amongst my immediate and remote families, my friends and acquaintances, and the society at large. With the rise of Islamic consciousness during the 1990s in line with the Islamic revival currents of the time, Islamic dress has nowadays been widely adopted throughout the Middle Eastern and Maghrebi countries including Morocco. It is noteworthy, however, that this Islamic consciousness was also accompanied with a feminist consciousness. As Mir-Hosseini (2000, p. 10) describes:

> In Iran, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, women who acquired a feminist consciousness in either a Western or an indigenous form have always faced a tension between the different components of their identity: their Muslimness is perceived as backward and oppressed, yet authentic and innate; their feminism as progressive and emancipated, yet corrupt and alien. Over time, the Iranian revolution deepened the perceived divide between Islam and feminism, forcing many Iranian women—both religious and secular—to re-examine and redefine the relation between their faith and feminism, thus opening a new phase in the politics of gender in Muslim societies and fostering a new gender awareness.

To be a Muslim/Islamic feminist can be to face tensions between different aspects of one's own identity. These tensions are about how we are perceived: it is about how feminism and Islam are perceived as being in tension. Framing my analysis of Islamic dress within a postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminist perspective, and taking these theories as the theoretical frameworks for my study, I cannot escape the tensions implied in the coupling of the terms 'Muslim' 'Islamic' and 'feminism'. Being a *Muslimah muhajjaba* myself who has adopted the *hijab* by my own choice, the 'feminist consciousness' which motivates my research to a significant degree has led

me to reconsidering the relationship between Muslimness and feminism. Still largely perceived as 'corrupt and alien' in Muslim contexts, feminism has been associated more with the secular fringes of Muslim-majority countries including Morocco, hence with a category of people who define themselves against religious frameworks. As a *Muslimah muhajjaba* writing about Islamic dress, my research can be considered as an attempt to re-consider this often polarised relationship between Islam and feminism, and to consider ways in which Islam and feminism can be re-visited.

An important component of my politics of location is thus Islam. Saba Mahmood (2004, p. 1) notes that while attempts have been made to integrate issues of sexual, racial, class and national difference within feminist theory, questions regarding religious difference have remained relatively unexplored. Since my research as a postcolonial *muhajjaba* in England focuses on associations of the veil, it cannot be dissociated from Islam as veiling is also considered a religious practice. Rather than meaning Islam as a homogeneous fixed entity, I refer to Islam as a way of life which influences one's experience not only of growing up in a Muslim-majority country, but also of living in a Muslim-minority country such as England. As a postcolonial Moroccan-British *Muslimah* now living in the West, my visible religious difference is also part of a politics of location. Consequently, this difference ought to produce a different analytical or political category since my positionality with its complex elements inevitably impacts and informs my research. What are the politics of the production of this particular knowledge? Mir-Hosseini (2000, p. 4) offers some useful reflections:

> If we are Muslim, whether or not believing or practicing, Islam is part of our identity, or way of life, a culture, a system of values. We may be at ease with it, or find our position painful and ambiguous. If we are Muslims, Islam is the "other", but whoever we are, since Said's *Orientalism* our position is inevitably affected by a healthy scepticism toward common Western media

representations of Islam as a unitary phenomenon like no other religion, incapable of development, reflection, or self-knowledge, and above all anti-woman...With globalisation, deterritorialisation, and the blurring of Islamic discourses with others, the battle is no longer contained within the Muslim world.

To write about veils is certainly to be involved in a battle. This was a key reason I chose to research how the veil is represented (rather than to interview Muslim women about their experiences of the veil), because I realised that this battle was a battle over representation, one that cannot be 'contained within the Muslim world.'

We are as Muslims in many worlds. My own history as a Muslim child and teenager growing up in a postcolonial nation-state a generation after independence from French colonial rule in a middle class family are all closely interrelated: the dimensions of gender, nation, class, ethnicity and religion all come to define my location as a postcolonial subject in a Western academic context. This means that these various elements have an impact on my own political and intellectual location, to borrow Chandra Talpade Mohanty's (1991, p. 3) phrase, the 'maps I draw are necessarily anchored in my own discontinuous locations'. Mohanty (1991) in her work questions how the figure of 'the third world woman' appears as a homogenous category within feminist work. Mohanty (1991, p. 4) challenges this figuration into order to foreground the links among histories and struggles of third-world women against racism, sexism, colonialism, imperialism and monopoly capital. Mohanty (1991, p. 4) proposes an 'imagined community' of third-world women as a way of opening up 'potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries'. Mohanty (1991, p. 4) argues that the idea of imagined community is useful because it leads us away from essentialist notions of third-world feminist struggles in which 'women with divergent histories and

social locations, woven together by the *political* threads of opposition to forms of dominance that are not only pervasive, but also systemic'.[19]

By the categories of gender, nation, class and religion, I do not mean any homogeneous entities constituting my location, neither do I imply any 'national' or given categories of definition. Rather, I want to emphasise the importance of considering these diverse dimensions as crucial in terms of intellectual production in a Western country. As a postcolonial *Muslimah* residing in England, I am also affected by the positioning of the third-world woman in terms of 'underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, religious fanaticism' noted by Mohanty (1991, p. 5). What seems to constitute 'women of colour' or 'third-world women' as a viable oppositional alliance, as Mohanty (1991, p. 7) argues, is a '*common context of struggle*' rather than a racial identification. Similarly, it is the third-world women's oppositional *political* relation to sexist, racist, and imperialist structures that constitutes a potential commonality; it is the common context of struggle against specific exploitative structures and systems that determines our potential political alliances (Mohanty, 1991, p. 7).

It is useful to view my project through the lens of a modest 're-writing of history' based on the particular locations and histories of struggle of postcolonial women (Mohanty, 1991, p. 10). As a postcolonial *Muslimah*, my work constitutes an attempt to revisit the various histories of the veil, departing from my location as a postcolonial *Muslimah*. This location is further complicated by a revision which addresses a Western academic environment. Within the concept of feminist struggle, I am interested in the 'ideological, discursive level which addresses questions of representation' (Mohanty,

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[19] It is noteworthy that, in her definition of the geographic composition of the 'third-world', Mohanty (1991, p. 5) omits the Middle East and North African nation-states which also constitute parts of the non-European third-world.

1991, p. 21), and in how the veil is constructed and re-constructed through different past and present texts. Significantly, Mohanty (1991, p. 21) states that colonial relations of rule 'form the backdrop for feminist critiques at both levels.' It is important that feminist analysis has always recognised the centrality of re-writing and remembering history, as writing often becomes a 'space for struggle and contestation about reality itself, as written texts are also the basis of the exercise of power and domination' (Mohanty, 1991, pp. 34-35). In this context, (feminist) scholarly practices (whether comprising reading, writing, critical or textual) are 'inscribed in relations of power—relations which they counter, resist, or even perhaps implicitly support. There can, of course, be no apolitical scholarship' (Mohanty, 1991, p. 53).

I would like to draw attention to the meanings attached to Islamic modest dress in various texts and to the effects of these associations within the different historical and socio-political frameworks. The production of meanings of the veil cannot be dissociated from the histories of the veil within Orientalism, colonialism, and its long history of meanings. In my research, I am also interested in what Grewal and Kaplan (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 2) term 'problematizing theory' which tends to be a 'homogenizing move' in many locations across Europe and the US and seems to be unable to deal with alterity. 'Global feminism', for instance, has 'elided the diversity of women's agency in favor of a universalized Western model of women's liberation that celebrates individuality and modernity.' (Grewal & Kaplan, 1994, p. 17) As far as my position is concerned, I use theories that have emerged and flourished outside the boundaries of Morocco, but which have intervened in relation to processes such as homogenisation and essentialisation which are central to my project. Postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminisms, which are crucial to my study of Islamic dress in the contemporary print media, contribute not only to questioning these processes, but also to providing clues regarding how they operate through time and space. To battle with representations of the veil is a decolonising strategy. In my endeavour to engage with texts and problematise essentialist discursive constructions of Islamic dress, I would like to stress the importance of Islam and being a Muslim as a crucial component of

my engagement with such theoretical approaches, and present a 'revision' that is informed by my politics of location.

Additionally, the issue of race forms an important background to my politics of location as a postcolonial Moroccan-British *Muslimah muhajjaba*. These categories add up to categories of class and sex which may be equally important to religious and racial modes of identification. Positioning myself, however, should not lead to a type of Muslim-centric agenda which would result in reinforcing dichotomies where difference prevails over affiliation, and separation over solidarity. The challenge, therefore, lies in resisting dominant structures of power while remaining vigilant to the more implicit power relations and types of essentialisation inherent in one's own cultural and religious frameworks. This double vigilance should allow us to move beyond the black/white divide which characterises a considerable amount of scholarship.

How useful can the politics of location be in my research as a starting point? In later chapters, I focus on how the veil is constructed through different texts and historical contexts. The construction of Islamic dress within defined meanings ensures its fixity in essentialist and homogeneous terms. This hegemonic construction of associations of the veil is what my research attempts to question through following the dress across texts and contexts, and the various meanings attached to it. Kaplan (1994, p. 139) also warns us to be 'suspicious of any use of the term [politics of location] to naturalize boundaries and margins under the guise of celebration, nostalgia, or inappropriate assumptions of intimacy'. As I mentioned earlier, I do not assume that terms such as 'West' 'Moroccan' or 'England' refer to fixed, closed entities, with clearly delineated boundaries in a world increasingly connected, where the physical and political boundaries are broken by new technologies. What I would like to stress instead are the power structures inherent in these different locations and what results from them.

It is not my intention to celebrate Morocco as an authentic nation. Displacement should not be a pre-requisite for idealisation or celebration of 'home'. What being part of a Muslim diaspora can allow is to revisit home. Ien Ang (2001, p. 21) argues that diasporas should make the most of their 'complex and flexible positioning as it is precisely that complexity and flexibility which enable the vitality of diaspora cultures...a critical diasporic cultural politics should privilege neither host country nor (real or imaginary) homeland, but precisely keep a creative tension between 'where you're from' and 'where you're at'. Ang (2001, p. 35) also speaks about the 'third space of hybridity which enables us to come to terms with the fact that 'the cultural context of 'where you're at' always informs and articulates the meanings of 'where you're from'. "Only when we utilize the notion of location to destabilize unexamined or stereotypical images that are vestiges of colonial discourse and other manifestations of modernity's structural inequalities can we recognize and work through the complex relationships between women in different parts of the world." (Kaplan, 1994, p. 139)

My project seeks precisely to examine and thus destabilize these stereotypical images as vestiges of colonial discourse. To revisit history is also to revisit home. Marnia Lazreg (2001, p. 291) emphasises the importance of re-considering the past in order to understand the present (especially the colonial past):

> Colonialism and its interface with the economy and religion overdetermine any study of Algerian women in complex ways that have yet to be understood. I am thus compelled to revisit two formidable realities, colonialism and Islam, that have defeated more than one scholar.

What I would like to highlight at this point is the link between colonialism, Islam and the study of representations of the veil in the contemporary media and political texts in Morocco and France. Because the histories of the veil are intertwined with Islam and

colonialism, any study of the veil in the postcolonial framework needs to re-consider the veil within these particular frameworks. More particularly, Lazreg's (2001) idea of how the 'colonial past still haunts the present' represents an important aspect of my research which seeks to explore associations of the veil in relation to its histories within colonialism and Orientalism. Following the veil and its histories, therefore, seeks not only to draw out the links between historical and current meanings attributed to the veil in various texts and contexts, but also to ask, if such links are shown to exist, how are they manifested through language, and what effects do they produce? My aim is to scrutinise examples of textual representations and discourses about the veil in media texts, and ask the following questions about them: how do the contemporary associations of Islamic dress compare with historical Orientalist and colonial associations of the veil discussed in earlier texts; how the veil is constructed within otherness; what are the effects of these associations regardless of the intentions of their authors? Before expanding on my textual analysis of media texts, let me introduce the concept of the veil archive which is important for my project.

3.2. The Veil Archive

What do I mean by 'veil archive'? When we think of archives we might think of places that you can go to read texts that have been deposited. An archive in this sense would refer to both a place and a function. If you archive material so that it can be accessed, then archiving also involves a judgment about the value and significance of that material. A veil archive is not an archive in this sense. I use 'veil archive' following from the concept of 'an imperial archive' developed in postcolonial studies. To start with, Thomas Richards (1993, p. 6) defines the imperial archive as:

> a fantasy of knowledge collected and united in the service of state and Empire. Though a literary fantasy, it was shared widely and actually had an impact on policy-making. Its impact can be quickly summed up by the way in which the

word 'classification' changed its meaning in the late 19th century. At mid-century it meant ordering information in taxonomies.

I find this conceptualisation of the archive useful for a study of the veil, whose 'archive' can be considered within these dimensions: the archive as a form of this 'fantasy of knowledge' and a body of constructed knowledge on the one hand, and an ordering of the veil into specific meanings and associations which serve political purposes of state and empire on the other. The archive here has a different status and temporality: it is not simply or only about where you put material, it is how material is generated. An imperial archive does not just deposit texts; it creates texts that are 'in service of state and Empire.' To read the material I have gathered in this thesis as a 'veil archive' is to point to how they are made to serve.

Within cultural studies an archive is regularly referred to not as something 'out there' that we go to, but as what we assemble through the research process. I thus still had to make decisions about which texts to include in my own archive (I will explain these decision more fully in due course). One decision I made early on was to think of my archive in terms of written texts and words rather than visual images, although I acknowledge the importance of the visual. I have always been fascinated by words and language (I will explain this fascination in my section on translation). And it was the words that surround the veil that caught my attention. In particular I decided to focus on 'associations.' An association is about the relationships between words. So I began to focus on the relationship between veil and other words; these relationships seem to be how the veil came to matter; how the veil came to operate 'in service of state and empire.'

In the previous chapter, I acknowledged the importance of Edward Said's (1979) work on Orientalism to my study. Orientalism is a thesis of the intimacy of power and

knowledge. It is also a text that has helped me to develop my own methodology. In this book, Said primarily analyses what we might call 'literature.' But he also offers a thesis of 'inter-textuality': how Orientalist texts cite other Orientalist texts. Whilst Said mainly analyses literary texts, he does in his introduction also refer what we call postmodern or electronic media. He (Said, 1979, p. 26) suggests the following:

> One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films and the media resources have forced information into more and more standardized models. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping *have intensified the hold of the nineteenth century academic and imaginative demonology of the "mysterious Orient"*.

A key decision I made in my research was to widen my archive to include contemporary press alongside nineteenth century travel writing; I wanted to explore this intensification of the hold the veil has. I thus treat press material as literary material; reading the press too for the associations between words.

In some senses, however, my archive expands beyond what we might call a 'Western archive.' In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said (1994, pp. xxiii-xxv) discusses the 'Western cultural archive' in which the narratives, histories, travel tales and explorations of imperial powers such as France and Britain constituted discourses which involved power during the nineteenth century. Although my research includes an analysis of the Orientalist and media meanings of the veil in French travel literature and print media which can be considered as part of a 'Western archive', I additionally include texts produced in the *Nahda* period witnessed in Arab countries, as well as the contemporary Moroccan press, both of which can be situated outside the archive envisioned by Said. The concept of the archive, however, remains pertinent for my study. My veil archive

also includes the body of texts about the veil produced not only during the Orientalist and colonial and *Nahda* eras in which the veil represents a focal point of interest, but also in the postcolonial times in which the media presents one of the most powerful means of representation and domination.

My project aims to not only follow the veil through its archive, but also to create a space in which texts of the veil speak to one another and can be read against each other following meanings which get attached to it, and comparing these meanings through history. The concept of the archive also allows for consideration of texts on the veil not as separate entities, but as an ensemble or a relational web. The recurrent themes which emerge in relation to the veil remain the thread linking various texts produced through different times and spaces. As Said (1994, p. 59) pointed out, it is possible to 'reinterpret the Western cultural archive' and do another reading and interpretation. My research aims to go beyond texts produced in a Western context to include texts of the veil from Arab and Muslim contexts which have been outside the canon. This body of literature constitutes a starting point for a comparative analysis which is not only transhistorical, but also transcultural and translational. I will deal with the issue of translation of the archive in a subsequent section.

Within a postcolonial context, the archive offers a ground for a vision of the veil as an object whose image has long been tied with colonialism and otherness. Since my analysis builds on a combination of postcolonial Muslim and Islamic feminist epistemologies, the concept of 'a veil archive' presents us with a body of Orientalist, colonial and postcolonial texts on the veil, and an opportunity to examine its movement in history through its assigned meanings and associations. It is not my intention to provide a comprehensive analysis of this archive, which would be impossible for the scope of my research. Rather, my analysis focuses on some of the dominant meanings emerging from the archive which will be discussed in detail. More particularly, my study of these examples pays close attention to words and concepts circulating around

the veil and their effects. The texts, which are subject to scrutiny, have been selected as representative examples which focus on defining Islamic dress, and the associations, which have become an organising tool, help us understand 'what the veil gets associated/linked/affiliated with' through texts, times and spaces.

More significant than a collection of texts, the concept of the archive within postcolonial studies has been linked with:

> the collectively imagined junction of all that was known and knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern, a virtual focal point for the heterogeneous local knowledge of metropolis and empire...The ordering of the world and its knowledges into a unified field was located explicitly in the register of representation. (Richards, 1993, p. 11)

A veil archive becomes a unified field to the extent that it is located in the register of representation. My reading and interpretation of examples from the veil archive seeks to investigate the **'**collectively imagined junction' of meanings attached to the veil and its representation, which is also a means of producing knowledge about and **'**ordering' (Stoler, 2009, p. 20) [20] of the veil within defined and fixed parameters. My first reading of the archive constituted a preliminary step to identify the themes which later became the focus of my analysis. The subsequent division of the meanings attached to the veil into three key areas: political, sexual and ethical helped to categorise associations which formed both the focus of my study. I then focused on close reading (strategy of reading for associations and links), translation and editing of the archive material, followed by a textual analysis paying close attention to the linguistic features of the

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[20] In her study of the Dutch colonial archive, Ann Stoler (2009, p. 20) speaks about 'the colonial order of things' to refer to that which is seen through the record of archival productions.

material and the images around the veil. Although my study does not claim to provide a comprehensive investigation of all the associations of Islamic dress, it contributes to a more crosscultural crosshistorical study of Islamic dress and offers a consideration of how Orientalist and colonial modes of representation, some of which carry racial overtones, are still alive today. It is an attempt to question and unsettle essentialist constructions of the veil which posit the body of the *Muslimah* within otherness and difference not only in Western contexts (France and Orientalism), but also in Muslim contexts (Morocco and the *Nahda*).

In his discussion of the British imperial archive, Richards (1993) links knowledge and representation with empire and archive-building. Similarly, in the case of the veil archive, we can think about the veil and its image through different texts and histories. While the veil represents a travelling entity, its meanings and associations present us with fixity and immobility in a way that the image of the veil becomes itself a 'fixed place' where the power to represent the veil parallels affixing it within meanings of otherness.

The veil archive around which my research is based comprises texts starting from Orientalist and *Nahda* periods which coincided with the colonisation of different parts of the world and the colonial eras to the contemporary postcolonial times in which the media has become one of the most important vehicles for the circulation and dissemination of information and knowledge about different phenomena. The archive is therefore linked with the generation of texts around the veil which cross boundaries of time and space in the construction of the veil as a symbol of otherness in the colonial and postcolonial eras. A veil archive is thus also a long history. Yet my work concentrates on examples from the Orientalist, *Nahda* and postcolonial texts ranging from literature to the print media and political documents.

I am interested in how the veil travels from Orientalist and *Nahda* eras to postcolonial times in postcolonial print media by carrying or sustaining associations. An archive is a kind of retainer. The circulation of these meanings and their persistence in the present texts demonstrates how the power of representation is important to the production and dissemination of the veil archive. What my research seeks to investigate are the links, connections and 'junctions of meaning' of the veil through a close textual analysis of specific examples. In an increasingly borderless and interconnected world, in which the 'Islamic threat' has become a focus of attention in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts (Western secular and Arab secular states), it becomes politically important to think about how histories are preserved in or as archives.

As I noted already, power often works by what Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) calls the 'suppression of heterogeneity'. The focus of her own analysis is on the discursive production of 'the third world woman.' Said (1994, p. xiii) draws our attention to the 'power to narrate or to block other narratives from forming and emerging' as an important aspect of culture and imperialism. My choice of Orientalist travel literature (and the *Nahda* writings from the Arab Muslim-majority countries) is related to the fact that these types of literature are affiliated and coincided with empire and colonisation. Similarly, the *Nahda* historically coincides with the colonial era in many Arab and Muslim countries. The *Nahda* and Moroccan texts additionally provide an opportunity to examine the archive beyond the Western Orientalist context to include a non-Western perspective on the veil through Arabic colonial and postcolonial texts from Morocco and Egypt. Although the *Nahda* was partly inspired by the colonial presence in various Middle Eastern and Maghrebi countries, and sought to adopt different concepts and ideas from Western countries, it nonetheless flourished in Muslim-majority countries and generated debates that have had an impact on these countries. In the second part of my research focusing on postcolonial texts, media texts produced in Morocco and France during the past decade constitute a starting point for a study of the veil archive examples in the postcolonial era. The comparative analysis includes France, a previous colonial power, and Morocco which was subjected to

French colonial rule up to 1956. In a similar vein, the Moroccan and French press present meanings and associations of the veil from the perspectives of two different postcolonial spaces.

As far as data collection is concerned, Morocco and France have been the major sources for my archive of veil documents. For the French press, the *Institut Français* in Morocco was a starting point, followed by direct access to online material and databases for the French press and academia. The archive department of the IF also helped me access some resources from the French press. Regarding the Moroccan press, the archive section of the newspaper *Al-Tajdid* in Rabat was my starting point. The National Moroccan Library (*Bibliotheque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc, BNRM*) was also a significant source and step in my research for the collection of material for my study (especially in terms of postcolonial *Maghrebi*/ Arab feminism, and texts in Arabic and French). Various universities and centres in London also offered me access to important resources. The people I met during my research journey for the past few years in England, Morocco, Egypt and France also inspired me in many ways. An archive can be about how you find materials, as well as who you encounter along the way.

My selection of material came primarily of thinking about audiences: I wanted to analyse texts that had a wide reach. As far as the French press and the *hijab* controversy are concerned, I chose to focus on examples of texts from three French weeklies which have some of the highest readership within the French mainstream press. Although I have limited my analysis to these three mainstream weeklies, I have chosen them as representative examples of texts that have focused on the *hijab* affair. Additionally, these weeklies have tended to devote more detailed accounts and opinion sections for the debate on the *hijab* affair. The interest of the Moroccan weeklies in the Islamic dress debate was also a criterion for their selection as sources of data for my study.

As Islamic dress remains a more problematic topic in a Muslim-majority country such as Morocco, the Moroccan weeklies which count the highest numbers of readership are also the ones that have addressed the debate more openly and directly. The Moroccan weeklies have also tended to address the issue of Islamic dress from a more liberal and secular perspective, which is worth reading in comparison with the French press weeklies. In contrast with the partisan press, the independent Moroccan press has devoted more issues to questions regarding Islam, secularism and women and has taken a more independent line in questioning definitions and practices of Islam. My choice of *Tel Quel* and Nichan as my two major sources is based on their obvious interest in issues pertaining to Islam and women in general and to Islamic dress particularly. *Tel Quel* is one of the most widely read Moroccan Francophone weeklies. Founded in 2001 and defining itself as independent and private, *Tel Quel* advocates (in its 'A Propos') 'a diverse, plural, democratic and secular Morocco'. It is read by a Moroccan elite that can be considered literate, educated, urban and secular. All translations of the archival texts under study are mine unless otherwise stated. *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* share similar content and have the same publisher. Both advocate reconsidering religious values and practices in Morocco in relation to a secular model and present their publications as a part of a new independent Moroccan media.

Regarding the Orientalist and *Nahda* texts, the choice of some of the Orientalists and *Nahda* intellectuals similarly rests on the importance they have given to the veil, among other Orientalists and Arab *Nahda* intellectuals. I have chosen texts from three Orientalist writers: Gerard de Nerval, Catherine Valerie Boissier (Countess de Gasparin) and George de Castellan and four *Nahda* intellectuals: Malak Hifni Nasif, Nazira Zain Din, Qasim Amin and Tahar Haddad. Although numerous studies have focused on Nerval, much less attention has been paid to works by Orientalists such as Boissier and Castellan. Although I have included Gerard de Nerval and Qasim Amine who have been subject to various studies, I have attempted to include more marginal female voices from the *Nahda* and Orientalism (Gasparin, Malak Hifni Nasif and Nazira Zain al-Din) who have previously been overlooked. This also applies for the

focus on the Moroccan print media which has been marginalised in academic studies. The texts which comprise my veil archive remain representative examples of discourses on the veil in both historical and more contemporary times. My focus on associations and the themes emerging from these texts in relation to Islamic dress represents the thread linking these various elements of the veil archive. After building a list of Orientalist tropes of the veil through the examples of three Orientalist figures, my reading of subsequent texts from the *Nahda*, the Moroccan and French press revealed a reiteration of these tropes, which I classified under political, sexual, and ethical associations of the veil. The similarities which emerged as I started analysing the primary data and texts was subsequently developed into a concentration on specific themes which at once became the main focus of my study.

3.3.Approaching Texts

My approach is to offer textual analysis; a close reading of how the veil comes up in a range of texts. I began with the Orientalist travel writing. The idea of 'veil associations' came from this initial period of research and became the main focus of my study. Close textual analysis of the archive also meant moving from Orientalist and colonial *Nahda* times and spaces to postcolonial and contemporary contexts. This has allowed me to examine how associations of the veil past and present compare with one another. Scrutinising the words, language and images through textual analysis has also allowed me to show how the associations of the veil have repeatedly constructed a veil difference, albeit in different ways, which has proved to renew itself within the new press and political discourses. My research has also enabled me to understand the difficulties and challenges of working across various socio-historical, transcultural and linguistic frameworks. The close comparative reading, re-reading, translating, editing and analysing of texts and case studies have all been part of the process which has opened a space for a critical look at contemporary modes of politicisation, racialisation and sexualisation of Islamic dress in the French and Moroccan contexts. The contemporary textual representations should be read as part of an ongoing and continuing process of 'othering' which my research seeks to question.

As an object of study, the veil can be researched in many ways. Contrary to works which have focused on defined historical periods and particular locations, or social and cultural settings for the study of female dress, my study offers a comparative textual analysis of the veil in the print media in France and Morocco. In other words, I explore Islamic dress not only through different historical periods, but also through various locations comprising the *Maghreb* (Morocco), and *Mashreq* (Egypt), and France. In following the veil through various texts in order to examine the different meanings and forms of knowledge attached to it, I pay close attention to the linguistic and textual aspects of discourse. Ann Stoler (2009, p. 36) in her work on the Dutch colonial archive usefully describes how we can attend 'to the "words in their sites" and the conceptual weight they bear, the authority with which they are endowed'. By analysing the different meanings of Islamic dress across time and space, I also explore how words have their sites. This emphasises the importance of language and words in constructing meanings and understandings which become authoritative.

In her study of woman in the Qur'an, Islamic feminist Amina Wadud (1999, p. xvii) critiques the inclination of the Islamic intellectual legacy to marginalise the views of women and make women as 'subjects of male construction' or subjects without agency. She uses the strategy of '*what* the Qur'an says, and *how* it says it, what is said *about* the Qur'an, and *who* is doing the saying, have been supplemented by a recent concern over what is left *unsaid*: the ellipses and silences' (Wadud, 1999, p. xiii). In my research, I am similarly concerned with what the texts about the veil are saying, how they are saying it, but more importantly, I am interested in the things that are left 'unsaid' and hence made implicit in the texts. My strategy for reading the texts therefore relies on drawing out some of the tacit references or on bringing them to the surface. Yet rather than focusing on 'who is doing the saying', my reading discuses both the explicit and more implicit or silenced and muted references and meanings attached to the dress through words. I also consider this reading to be part of what Wadud (1999, p. 1) refers to as:

the process of reviewing the words and their context in order to derive an understanding of the text. Every 'reading' reflects, in part, the intentions of the text, as well as the 'prior text' of the one who makes the 'reading'. Although each reading is unique, the understanding of various readers of a single text will converge on many points.

In reading texts from a veil archive, I am interested in this 'process of reviewing words' in their contexts so as to understand the texts, and how the veil associations come to be constructed through words and language. As Wadud (1999, p. 97) argues regarding the implications of individual words or word-groups, 'words, particles, syntax...and contexts are all part of a multi-layered interpretation process'. There is a double aspect to producing associations of the veil in the texts in question: the meanings are conversely explicit and implicit.

It is important to consider *how* the veil is positioned as the other: in other words, we need to describe the *techniques* of othering. We can return now to Said's model of Orientalism which could be usefully understood as an explanation of how othering is achieved. Said (1994) considers texts not only as material productions, but also as representations which in turn depend on institutions and traditions, highlights the necessity to link representations of Islamic dress with broader bodies and establishments which contribute to constructing the veil:

each work on the Orient *affiliates* itself with other works, with audiences, with institutions, with the Orient itself. The ensemble of relationships between works, audiences, and some particular aspects of the Orient therefore constitutes an analysable formation—for example, that of philological studies, of anthologies of extracts from Oriental literature, of travel books, of Oriental fantasies-whose presence in time, in discourse, in institutions (schools,

libraries, foreign services) gives it strength and authority (Said, 1994, p. 20) (emphasis in the original)

I have approached the veil as one such analysable formation. Although I have confined myself to a few examples from each of the named eras and contexts, my critical analysis of texts enables me to scrutinise the veil archive in more detail, an initiative that would have been compromised with the choice of a wider body of texts. When following the veil through texts and various historical and cultural settings, I read for associations of the veil which are the focus of my study, following a reading of 'words in their sites' which I mentioned earlier. What brings the archive of texts and documents together in my research are the associations, and how these are linked with the dress through various texts. I have categorised these associations into four major areas: political, sexual, and ethical.[21] My reading of texts is part of an attempt to read for resonance, repetition and reiteration. I track how the veil associations get adopted and updated in the more contemporary media. From a postcolonial Islamic pro-feminist (I borrow the term from Amina Wadud (1999)) standpoint, my study is part of a critical reading of discourses seeking to 'otherise' Islamic dress by positioning it within the scope of a political, sexual and ethical otherness in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts. Throughout my research, I take a critical stance regarding the textual manifestations of colonial discourse through scrutinising examples of these manifestations in different texts, and through a close reading of the words revolving around the veil.

3.4.Translation

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[21]My study does not claim to provide an exhaustive consideration of all the meanings attached to the veil. Rather I focus on these categories which seem to be predominant in the discourses of the veil past and present.

This project has relied upon translation. My work is situated at the crossroads of three languages (Arabic, French and English). Translation was crucial to the research process and is part of my methodology. In doing the difficult work of translation I not only brought different materials together, but I learnt from this difficult work about those materials.

I have studied translation in its different forms (including legal, literary, and scientific), and I have practised and worked as a translator and interpreter in the three languages. Translation is thus part of my educational and professional background, as well as being one of my keen interests. Equally significant is my position as a multilingual person who grew up accustomed to hearing, speaking and reading in different languages which also positioned me in various world visions. Having additionally been raised in a country where languages were given importance at the educational level, I have developed a fascination and interest in words and languages from a very early age. In fact, since my primary school, I already felt a desire to pursue my fascination with words and language. While most of my classmates strove to excel in science and maths, I felt inclined to devote more time to reading, words and languages. My interest in languages led me to specialise in English for my undergraduate studies. My focus on language, however, also emanated from a family environment and social life where multilingualism were the norm rather than the exception. In my parents' house, for instance, Moroccan Arabic, Amazigh and French are routinely mixed in conversations. Even personal letters to my French cousins which I took great care to write reflected that floating amidst different languages and different cultural frames of reference.

During my research not only my primary material was translated from Arabic and French into English, but also some of my secondary sources and theories. My project therefore aims at making accessible some of the Arabic and French texts on the veil to an English-reading audience. Translation is a particular kind of work. Gayatri Spivak (1993) describes how the 'labour of translation' involves an ethical responsibility. My

research project was also a translation project; and this fact was key both to the ethics of my research and my personal ethics. Starting from classical Arabic, which represents a near-native language with Amazigh, French similarly occupies the position of a near-native language, both of which I started learning from the age of five along with classical Arabic, in contrast to English which was later introduced in secondary school. The question I would like to consider is: how can my histories with languages impact on the translation process which forms a core element of my research? In other words, how does my position vis-a-vis these different languages affect the labour of translation in my research process?

In order to consider such a question, I turn to Spivak and her comments on translating the literary works of Indian feminist Mahasweta Devi. In her preface to the translated novel, Spivak (1996, pp. 269-270) speaks about 'something that has not got across' in relation to the translation and profound engagement with a text/person, a concept which Spivak calls a 'secret'. In her essay, Spivak (1996, p. 273) quotes JM Coetzee asserting that:

> It is in the nature of the literary work to present its translator with problems for which the perfect solution is impossible...There is never enough closeness for fit between languages for formal features of a work to be mapped across from one language to another without 'shift of value'...Something must be 'lost'; that is features embodying certain complexes of values must be replaced with features embodying different complexes of values in the target language. At such moments the translator chooses in accordance with his [sic] conception of the whole—there is no way of simply translating the words.

Regarding my translation work, the focus of my study on the language disseminated around the veil was not accompanied with a straightforward translation of words from

source to target language. Rather this process was done through a close consideration of the meanings that such words communicated in their particular cultural frameworks of reference. The task of translation I faced, therefore, involved communicating these frames of reference which would be unknown in the target language. Although my research centres on words and language, the translation process made the task of researching the veil more complex. The task of translation introduced issues of cross-cultural translation, and communicating the meanings of words and language which were often made implicit in texts.

The veil archive examples which I use for my analysis comprise texts from Arabic, French and English. However, the primary material consists of French Orientalist literature, Arab *Nahda* writings, French media texts and Moroccan French and Arabic press. A great deal of time has been invested in translating and editing these texts into English. Arabic is a near-native language, French can be considered as my first foreign language, followed by English which occupies the position of a third foreign language. The challenges of translation into a second or third foreign language are supplemented by the task of travelling through different text genres and historical moments. This can be added to the position of English in my linguistic background as the last acquired foreign language after not only classical and Moroccan Arabic, but also French and Tachelhit (one of the local indigenous dialects of Berber). Regarding the task of translation, my position as a postcolonial Arabic-Amazigh native language speaker and translator has been further complicated by tackling not only Orientalist texts, but also postcolonial material and theory much of which was originally written in Arabic and French. As a postcolonial translator, I am inevitably influenced by my historical and cultural baggage that accompanies any translator faced with the task and challenges of translation. In addition to the significance of positionality, my experience and background therefore form an inseparable element from my experience as a translator of given texts. What is distinctive about my work is my attempt to introduce a cross-cultural study of the veil, and my reading of these texts within a comparative framework. The 'labour of translation' discussed by Spivak (1993) has formed an

integral part of my research process as well as a significant tool in making some examples of the veil archive accessible.

In addition to making Arabic and French texts more accessible, translation has allowed me to provide a comparative framework for the study of veil. Translation has further enabled me to travel through different texts, following the veil and its meanings across languages and worlds, working on Arabic *Nahda* texts in comparison with French Orientalist literature, and on French press texts in comparison with Moroccan Arabic and French media texts. Regarding the distinction between text and words in the context of translation, Paul Ricoeur (2006, p. 30) notes that:

> ...it is texts, not sentences, not words, that our texts try to translate. And texts in turn are part of cultural groups through which different visions of the world are expressed, visions which moreover can confront each other within the same elementary system of phonological, lexical, syntactic division, to the extent of making what one calls the national or the community culture a network of visions of the world in secret or open competition.

Although my analysis focuses on meanings of the veil in various texts and text genres, the process of translation involves the communication of texts and their translation. These texts are themselves associated with cultural aspects and what Ricoeur refers to as 'visions of the world in secret or open competition'. Needless to say cultural translation has been an important part of the process across not only three different languages and cultural frameworks, but also worlds and worldviews. Translating from a non-Western (Arabic) to a Western (English) framework, and from a Western (French) to a Western (English) framework, emphasising issues of cultural baggage. Translation itself as a practice acquires importance in postcolonial studies. It becomes a tool for critically assessing colonial discourse and its various manifestations in the more contemporary times, and bridging gaps between different 'worlds', and between the colonial and the postcolonial through crossing spaces and times.

Translation additionally represents an important process within postcolonial studies. Homi Bhabha (1994) in his influential book, *The Location of Culture* discusses the relation between translation and 'cultural untranslatability.' He (Bhabha, 1994, p. 224) writes:

> This liminality of migrant experience is no less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one...the subject of cultural difference becomes a problem that Walter Benjamin has described as the irresolution, or liminality, of 'translation', the *element of resistance* in the process of transformation, 'that element in a translation which does not lend itself to translation'... The migrant culture of the 'in-between', the minority position, dramatizes the activity of culture's untranslatabililty; and in so doing, it moves the question of culture's appropriation beyond the assimilationist's dream, or the racist's nightmare, of a 'full transmissal of subject-matter', and towards an encounter with the ambivalent process of splitting and hybridity that marks the identification with culture's difference.

Bhabha here positions migrant experience not only as a transitional, but also a 'translational phenomenon', thus equating migration with a form of translation, an 'in-between' position contained within migrant life, as the 'subject of cultural difference'. In Bhabha's terms, the migrant culture and minority position 'dramatizes the activity of culture's untranslatability'.

To relate this to my work, my experience as a postcolonial *Muslimah* writing and translating in a Western academic context represents a 'translational phenomenon' in a way that my in-between position as the subject of cultural difference constitutes 'that element in translation which does not lend itself to translation'. Bhabha (1994, p. 225)

speaks about the 'present of translation' not as a 'smooth transition, a consensual continuity, but the configuration of the disjunctive rewriting of the transcultural, migrant experience'. Translating texts from the veil archive has similarly not been a 'smooth' operation. Rather, my experience as a minority, and the position of Arabic as a minority language have made the task of translation more challenging than continuous. A contrast can also be drawn between the discontinuity that characterises the translation process, and the continuity of otherness that the veil embodies within the veil archive. Bhabha (1994, pp. 226-227) again notes that:

> the 'present' of translation may not be a smooth transition, a consensual continuity, but the configuration of the disjunctive rewriting of the transcultural, migrant experience...To dream not of the past or present, nor the continuous present; it is not the nostalgic dream of tradition, nor the Utopian dream of modern progress; it is the dream of translation as 'survival' as Derrida translates the 'time' of Benjamin's concept of the after-life of translation, as *sur-vivre*, the act /of living on the borderlines.

In my work on the veil, reading, translating and interpreting veil texts from the archive has been an integral part of my experience as a 'transcultural subject' working within the orbit of three languages and 'worlds'. The transition from one language and world to another, and more specifically from near-native languages to a non-native language has constituted an attempt to connect various culturally different and disparate aspects of my position as a Moroccan Arabic/Amazigh native speaker reading and translating from classical Arabic and French into English. In this sense, the process of translation can be equated with 'survival' as it also represents the fact of 'living on the borderlines' where the intervening space of translation can be paralleled with occupying what Bhabha calls an 'empowering condition of hybridity'.

In the process of translating the material which constitutes the basis of my study of the veil, I would like to use Gayatri Spivak's (1993, pp. 189-190) description of her translation of Mahasweta Devi's works:

> The understanding of the task of the translator and the practice of the craft are related but different. Let me summarize how I work. At first I translate at speed. If I stop to think about what is happening to the English, if I assume an audience, if I take the intending subject as more than a springboard, I cannot jump in, I cannot surrender. My relationship with Devi is easygoing. I am able to say to her: I surrender to you in your writing, not to you as intending subject. There, in friendship, is another kind of surrender. Surrendering to the text in this way means, most of the time, being literal. When I have produced a version this way, I revise. I revise not in terms of a possible audience, but by the protocols of the thing in front of me, in a sort of English. And I keep hoping that the student in the classroom will not be able to think that the text is just a purveyor of social realism if it is translated with an eye toward the dynamic staging of language mimed in the revision by the rules of the in between discourse produced by a literalist surrender.

To relate Spivak's description to my work as a translator, the process of translating from Arabic and French to English must first involve what Spivak (1993, p. 183) refers to as 'surrender', a process through which the translator surrenders to the original text which often means 'being literal' and paying attention to the 'rhetorical aspect' of texts. One can describe such as process as yielding to the text and its words which are given equivalents in the target language, and letting oneself go with the original text. This means that the primary consideration during the first stage of the translation process is the textual stage, in which the translation transfers the textual component of the written word from the source language or languages to the target language. The major concern during this process of 'surrender herself to the linguistic rhetoricity of the original text'

(1993, p. 189) and the 'writing' is accuracy and precision. The distinction which Spivak draws between surrendering to the author in her writing rather than to the author as 'intending subject' is also relevant to the task of translation which I carry out throughout my research. In approaching different texts of the archive which belong to various registers and genres, the translation process of these texts is accompanied with a focus on texts rather than on 'intending subjects' or their actual authors. Just as my study of veil associations emphasises the important of words in constructing understandings of the dress through time and space, my translation of the archive material similarly stresses the significance of words and texts in the process of 'othering process' to which the veil is subject. The movement of getting immersed in the text which results from the strategy of 'surrender' is part of this attempt to understand how and why words acquire such an importance in the translation process.

The second stage following the 'surrender' consists of revising one's translation in order to produce what Spivak (1993) calls 'a sort of English'. Interestingly, considering that English is my fifth language by order of learning, my position as a postcolonial *Muslimah* translating into English texts that were originally written in Arabic and French highlights that the English language which I produce through translation can be considered as a 'variety of English'. The process of translating, therefore, cannot stop at the literal level of the text in which the main concern is transferring the words from an original to a target text. It is in fact the revising and editing of translation which demands a higher focus and more time. The translation process and its politics therefore entails a consideration of the challenges posed by the act of translating from an Arab context to an English context, and from a French context to an English one. The movement which this process of translation brings is also the bridge which makes us cross space and time in the study of Islamic dress.

In this chapter, I have reflected on the research process and the methodological tools I have employed in my study of Islamic dress. These have included a consideration of

the significance of the politics of location, the notion of the archive which I use for my study of the veil as an archive, on how I have approached texts within that archive, as well as the process of translation which has accompanied my research on the veil. It is now time to turn to the texts themselves.

4. **Orientalist Veils**

In this chapter I explore meanings of the veil in some nineteenth century French travel literature. First, I examine how the veil is tied with the notion of happiness. Secondly, I analyse how it is associated with imprisonment and enslavement. Third, I look at how the dress links with exoticism. The last section considers how the veil is affiliated with darkness. My aim in this and the next chapters is to provide a comparative study of the veil between the Orientalist and *Nahda* eras, both of which coincided with the colonisation of different countries, including Arab countries of the Middle East and the Maghreb. The Orientalist and *Nahda* chapters also offer a background for the later study of contemporary veil associations in France and Morocco. The key themes which I explore in the present and following chapters will be discussed in terms of how they link with the veil, which embodies otherness through notions such as happiness, sex and race, and how these can be used for 'othering'. I ask the following questions in this chapter: what are the different meanings attached to the veil in Orientalist texts? How does the construction of the veil as an object of otherness operate in these texts?

Why use the contrast between Orientalist and *Nahda* eras? I chose to conduct the analysis this way so I could also explore the connections between colonialism and Orientalism, and the role of French Orientalism in defining practices such as the veil. To lay the foundation for further research and build on already existing scholarship, it therefore seems essential to consider the veil in both Orientalist and *Nahda* texts, in order to better understand how and why the dress represents such a focal point of attention in the contemporary Moroccan and French print media. Additionally, a historical analysis of veil associations will enable us to understand how the histories of the veil are intertwined with the histories of Orientalism, the *Nahda* and colonialism as we follow its meanings through different texts and historical periods of the archive. The historical tropes of the veil will be compared with the more contemporary associations of Islamic dress in the Moroccan and French press and politics, which I

discuss in subsequent chapters. The themes I examine in this and the next chapter will provide points of comparison for meanings of the veil in the French and Moroccan press and politics. I am presenting my argument through key themes not only as a way of organising the material of the veil archive, but also because of the repetitions and resonances which I began to notice when working with these materials closely. So, for instance, I did not originally expect to be considering veils in relation to happiness, but was struck by how happiness came up in the texts themselves.

The texts taken together are travel writings, and they travel through the veil. As a way of assembling and recording information, travel was usually found in societies with a high level of political power, as the traveller was 'sustained by a nation and empire, not only militarily and economically, but also intellectually and spiritually' (Kabbani, 1986, p. 1). European travel narrative about the East, in particular, contained knowledge that served the 'colonial vision' (Kabbani, 1986, p.139). Muslim feminist Haideh Moghissi (1999, p. 13) argues that, although gendered practices and legal traditions are a 'recurring theme in travellers' tales, diplomats' reports and the diaries of Europeans recruited by Middle Eastern states', it is particularly after the colonial encounter that we discern in European scholarly and literary works of the 'West's inferiorizing gaze'. What does the language and words used to describe the veil tell us about the archive, its 'colonial vision' and 'inferiorizing gaze'? Although women and Islam constituted a part of the European narrative of Islam early, they only appeared at the core of this narrative during the late nineteenth century's colonial rule in Muslim countries (Kabbani, 1986, p.150). This explains the importance of the Orientalist and *Nahda* time frames in defining the Muslimah, and more particularly the veil, through their different literatures.

4.1. Unhappy Veils: 'Miserable Conditions' 'Melancholic Expressions'

In this section, I analyse Orientalist associations of the veil with unhappiness during the nineteenth century. The examples of texts from Orientalist travel writing will be

read in conjunction with postcolonial and Muslim/Islamic feminist theories, with a focus on concepts pertaining to Orientalism and the representation of otherness through the veil. Starting from Reina Lewis's category of the 'Orientalised' as a classification meaning 'racialised, gendered and classed' (Lewis, 2004, p. 75) in Orientalist discourse, I focus on how associations of the veil in Orientalist and *Nahda* texts under study codify it in terms of happiness, sex and race. As I noted in my introduction, I did not predict to study the veil through tropes of happiness and unhappiness but was surprised by how often they emerged. If Orientalism is a technique of 'essentialising other cultures, people and geographical regions' (Said, 1979, pp. 108-109), then I explore how and why happiness becomes a technique, that is to say how the veil becomes a signifier of the misery of others.

How do Oriental texts associate veils with unhappiness? Countess de Gasparin[22] inscribes misery to the veiled woman. During travels with her husband to different parts of the Orient in the nineteenth century, Gasparin took great care in writing about the Muslim 'veiled woman'. Writing about Turkish women in the harem, for instance, she notes how they are living under 'miserable conditions', yet expresses her surprise at them being endowed with 'many modest values' much needed by European women. During one of her trips to Turkey, she (Gasparin, 1985, pp. 557-558) portrays what she perceives as the harem confinement, a term which she equates with the veil:

> As for me, I am surprised that, being placed under such miserable conditions,
> covered in this idleness which is a form of demoralisation, deprived of duties

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[22] Valérie de Gasparin, Boissier (1813 – 1894) is the daughter of Jacques-Auguste Boissier, and Carole Butini.. She published Nouvelles in 1833, and Voyage d'une ignorante dans le midi de la France et l'Italie in 1835. The death of her mother in 1836 was followed by her involvement in the movement of Revival. Her works, both social and literary, carry a religious character, with more than eighty titles, including Le mariage du point de vue chrétien (1843) and Camille, her sole novel (1866), which was translated in English. In 1859 she created with her husband, l'école normale de gardes-malades à Lausanne, which later became La Source, the first independent secular school for nurses.
http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/f/F11123.php

that create energy, of tenderness that gives courage, of faith that explains existence and makes it bearable, I am surprised to find them (Turkish women) endowed with such calmness, such a sweet resignation, the restraint that is suitable, and with many of these modest virtues that we perhaps would have needed, we the strong women of Europe who are a bit too emancipated, a bit too determined, a bit too 'good lad type'.

In this example, the image of the veiled woman is that of deprivation: she is deprived of happiness, energy and life. It is due to the misery of her condition that Gasparin is surprised to find the women themselves to be 'endowed with modest virtues.' It is possibly the acceptance of her state which makes the fate of the veiled woman so miserable. In another chapter of her work entitled '*Veiled Women',* Gasparin (1985, p. 568) makes a more explicit reference to the veil, noting the 'sadness', 'melancholic expression' and 'languishing eyes' of the harem women. The veiled woman at this point is given the expression of misery; her condition is reflected in her eyes and facial expression. She (Gasparin, 1985, p.568) describes how she perceives veiled women of the Orient, and wonders:

What sadness, indefinite wave, weighs on this sweet face, all the ladies keep the same melancholic expression. People speak of their happiness, they say that they spend their lives entertaining themselves; I only crossed languishing eyes. Not a single joyous laugh, neither from children nor from mothers comes to break the barely audible murmur of these harems in celebration, and when I ask Fatma if she goes every week to fresh water sites, she hesitates and answers: when the husband permits it.

Here Gasparin explicitly refutes the views of unnamed 'people' that these women can be happy. She negates this view not only assuming she can read their generalised

expression of misery ('cross languishing eyes', 'melancholic expression') but from her own encounters with individual women. She assumes female obedience and restraint as a sign of unhappiness not only of a condition but with a condition. In the same text, Gasparin speaks explicitly of being deprived of happiness. She (Gasparin, 1985, p.568) notes:

> …there are concerns and pains under these charming figures that remain without light, as if the absence of happiness has tarnished them. One could well be the second, third, fourth or fifth spouse of an *Effendi,* this did not prevent her from giving him all her heart. In the absolute emptiness that life in the harem creates...when the earth deprives you of happiness, and the sky itself does not hold any definite hope for you?

Surprise is a word repeatedly mentioned by Gasparin in her writing about veiled women and the harem. In *The Promise of Happiness* (2010, p. 125), Sara Ahmed shows how empire is justified as a 'happiness mission', carried out by the coloniser to save others from their state of misery. We can certainly see how European women, including Gasparin herself, make happiness into a mission: she must save veiled women from their state of misery. Unveiling the Muslim woman therefore becomes a happiness mission, unveiling as making happy.

It is important to consider how gender equality becomes tied to an idea of happiness. Countess de Gasparin also provides descriptions of the equality women enjoy in Europe, while ignoring the boredom, frustration and unhappiness which many women like her suffered in their own societies (Mabro, 1991, p. 11). The image of the harem woman 'covered in idleness' refers not only to the assumed laziness and inaction attributed to the harem life, but also to the veil that presents the most visible sign of the difference between the veiled woman and the her European counterpart. Although

the explicit reference is to the harem, the implicit reference is to the veil as the material or cloth of idleness, and how the veiled woman becomes clothed by her condition. The image of the veil's idleness also communicates the idea of fixity and stillness of the veil, and through the veil, of the oriental woman herself.

In addition, idleness of the harem is equated with 'a form of demoralisation', a term which evokes not only sadness and unhappiness, but also depression and annihilation tacitly caused by the veil. The Turkish woman described by Gasparin is 'covered' not only by the harem and its idleness, but also by 'demoralisation' and the veil which is a more direct and concrete form of cover. We can speak about a physical or material veil, a spatial veil in the form of the harem, and an emotional or affective veil. The word used in the original French text to refer to the veil is 'enveloped' which is synonymous with 'covered', and implicitly refers to the veil that unsettles Countess de Gasparin who seems to forget that the veil has been practiced in Christianity and Judaism for centuries (Tillion, 1983, p. 163).[23] Moreover, even today, Mary the Virgin is always represented veiled and the veil has been an integral part of Christianity. Whether in the rural or urban areas, it has been obligatory to enter the Church with one's head covered, in accordance with prescriptions of the New Testament (Baubérot, 2004, p. 11). So it is only some veils or covering that become identified with idleness and unhappiness. My analysis has already implied a connection between a happiness mission and a life mission. By contrast, the veil is dark, and is associated with death and extinction. These distinctions are affective.

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[23] In her study of women in the Mediterranean area, Germaine Tillion (1983) provides useful examples of veiling in countries (comprising Spain, France, Italy, Greece and Cyprus and Christian Lebanon). Regarding veiling in Christianity, she refers to Saint-Paul's statement that women's veil in Christianity symbolises their subjugation to men, as it was mentioned in the Corinthians of Saint Paul. See also Fadwa el Guindi (1999), Leila Ahmed (1992) and Billie Melman (1995).

The associations made between the veil of the Oriental woman and negative qualities contrast it with the positive attributes linked with the European woman. In this comparison, the veil implicitly stands as the boundary distinguishing and separating the Oriental woman and her European or Western counterpart. Portrayed as a major source of unhappiness, the veil marks the difference between misery and happiness, faith and non-faith, emancipation and submission, feminism and non-feminism, thus embodying an antithetical relationship to everything that is European. This is an instance of how the veil creates an 'essential difference' (which I referred to earlier in relation to the European subject) of the 'emancipated' women like Gasparin. Her examples show how this 'essential difference' of the veil becomes affective as the garment represents a source of mixed feelings for the European gaze. Surprise, admiration and horror seem to define the carrier of the 'happiness mission' as the veil becomes a trigger for mixed and contradictory feelings.

The oriental woman is figured as lacking what the liberated European woman has. Postcolonial feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) examines the production of the image of what she refers to as an 'average third-world woman'. Such women are constructed as living lives that are 'sexually constrained' (Mohanty, 2003, p.52-53). Her status is coded as 'poor, ignorant, uneducated, tradition-bound, religious, etc', a figure which contrasts with the self-representation of Western women as 'free, educated, modern and having control over their bodies and sexualities' (Mohanty, 2003, p.52-53). We can now also show how unhappiness and happiness participate in this distinction. While the categorisation of writings such as Gasparin's as 'feminist' remains open to question, the imagined feminist agenda, which Gasparin exemplifies, endorses the Orientalist and later colonial narrative contrasting the 'Oriental woman' with her European counterpart through equating veiling with unhappiness and constraint and unveiling with happiness and liberation.

Just these small examples of how veiled woman are described as miserable participate in a broader discourse of Orientalism, which gives a collective notion of Europeans against others, and the idea of European identity as superior in comparison with non-European culture and people (Said, 1979, p.7). These binary oppositions were often used to justify imperial control of the 'uncivilised Orient'. Such scripts of cultural superiority can also become feminist scripts. Muslim feminist Sherene Razack (1998, p. 6) notes in her contemporary study of racism and sexism in courts and classrooms, narratives of Western superiority often meet up with a 'Western feminist script' whereby African and Asian women are depicted as victims of their cultures, when European women can haste to save them, affirming their own 'positional superiority'. In Gasparin's examples, the contrast drawn between the European woman and the veiled woman also relies on an assumed superiority whereby Gasparin justifies the need to civilise the Oriental woman and save her from unhappiness. She also repeatedly makes reference in her writing to the mission of European women as bringing meaning to the existence of women who are said to have lost all 'hope'. The constructed image is that of a 'miserable Muslim woman' in need to be saved by her European counterpart whose mission acquires a spiritual level (namely of converting the Muslim woman to Christianity) as well as an emotional dimension (releasing her from her miserable condition). Additionally, happiness as a mission is coupled with conversion as another mission to which the veiled woman becomes a target. Connecting happiness not only with unveiling but also with converting to Christianity further posits the European woman as the bearer of civilisation and happiness through conversion. Converting to Christianity thus becomes equated not only with a 'happiness mission' but also with a 'happiness conversion.'

The image of the secluded veiled Oriental Muslim has been a source of fascination to the West for many centuries (Lewis & Mills, 2003, p. 15). The examples from Gasparin illustrate this fascination. Yet, associating the Muslim woman's veil with unhappiness demonstrates how feelings about the Oriental woman are ambivalent 'fluctuating between desire, pity, contempt and outrage' (Kabbani, 1986, p.26). Gasparin's

examples mainly portray the veil as an object of unhappiness, thereby emphasising the pity and outrage which characterises her depiction of the veil.

4.2. Oppressive Veils: 'Enslaving Harems'[24] and 'Prison Hoods'

In this section, I look at how Orientalist texts associate the veil with seclusion, oppression, inferiority and imprisonment. In the first part, I tackle meanings of the veil with the institutions of veil-harem-polygamy and the inscription of the veil within seclusion and oppression.

In her anthropological analysis of the institutions of the veil-harem-polygamy, Muslim feminist anthropologist Fadwa El-Guindi (1999, p. 3)argues that, from a feminist perspective, this complex set of institutions is considered a direct expression of women's oppression through the ages. Islam was regarded as inherently and permanently oppressive to women and customs such as the veil and segregation embodied that oppression (Ahmed, 2003, p. 43). Western-ideology feminists (in both East and West) have dominated the discourse on the veil, viewing it as patriarchal: as a sign of women's 'backwardness, subordination, and oppression', thereby reducing its long and complex history to a 'fixed thing'. (El Guindi, 1999, p.3). More generally, the category of 'woman' undergoes a significant amount of homogenisation that often overlooks not only considerations such as gender, class and culture, but also religion and race. As Mohanty (2003, p.53) reminds us, 'women are characterised as a singular group on the basis of a shared oppression and what binds (them) together is a sociological notion of the 'sameness' of their oppression. These postcolonial and

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[24] Fadwa el Guindi (1999, p. 25) notes the sacred aspect embedded in the concept of harem 'from the Arabic term *harim*, the notion of *haram* means sacred. Both *harim* and (the Turkish term) *haramlik* refer to the women of a household and to women's quarters, as opposed to guest (and men's) quarters, which are called *salamlik*.

Muslim feminist studies represent a valuable starting for a consideration of the veil in Orientalist texts.

Despite the great cultural diversity in the practice of veiling, one particularly widespread phenomenon is Western reaction to it (Hirschmann, 1998, p. 349). In addition to feminists, non-feminists frequently assume that it is an inherently oppressive practice through which women are brainwashed or coerced to wear the veil as a key emblem of this oppression (Hirschmann, 1998, p.349). The central significance of the veil in European representations of oriental society arises not only from its role as the most public and visible signifier of 'radical sexual segregation', but also as the major symbol of the 'essential inferiority' of Islamic societies (Macmaster & Lewis, 1998, p. 121). In texts, paintings and photographs, the image of the veil is deliberately placed to 'signify a much wider field of religious, social and cultural practices which include the *purdah*, harem, polygamy, and a repressive political order based on 'the subjugation of women, Oriental despotism, sadism and lasciviousness' (Macmaster & Lewis, 1998, p. 121). These additional studies highlight the links between the veil and the harem and concepts such as oppression, segregation and polygamy.

In the Orientalist discourse, the harem represents a polygamous realm which includes different forms of tyranny, excess and perversion (Lewis, 2004, p.182). During the colonial era, the Muslim woman is subject to a discourse that stresses her victimisation (Bessis, 2007, p. 35). The veil often signified oppression through being associated with other practices such as the harem and polygamy. Take for example the following statement made by Countess de Gasparin (1985, p. 630) when writing about 'Arab women' in relation to the harem:

Living for one man and with one thought inside their apartments, spending the day on the divan knotting their hair, graciously disposing of the considerable amount of jewellery that they wear, breathing the fresh air of the mountains or the sea from the top of a terrace or through a window covered with wire mesh, walking a few steps under orange and pomegranate trees in a small garden, in order to dream at a side of a pond animated by the murmur of splashing water, healing the people in the household, making the bread dough with their own hands, sorbets, jams, going once a week to spend the day in the public bath accompanied by all the young women of the town, and singing some stanzas of Arab poets accompanied with a guitar: here is all that the Orient life amounts to for women.

This example summarises in an effective way the vision of the Oriental woman: forced to live for one man (in an earlier example, Gasparin notes the unhappiness of the Muslim woman who may be the 'fifth spouse'), the Arab woman is secluded in the harem, with 'wire mesh' confirming her imprisonment.[25] Confinement in the apartments exposes her to the emptiness and idleness of harem life, in which women allegedly only occupy themselves with their hair and jewellery. When she ventures out, she is still confined to the terrace or the window, or the garden where she can walk 'a few steps'. On the whole, the place of this woman is the household and her life is restricted to the domestic sphere (Mernissi, 1998, p. 14). The occasional public bath ritual only puts her in another confined place, and her singing a few poem stanzas does not change her situation. The last phrase marks a dramatic statement: 'all the oriental life amounts to.' We can see how she reduces life for Oriental women in how she describes that life as reduced.

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[25] Muslim feminist Haideh Moghissi points that both the condemnation of Islamic treatment of women and the recurring indulgence of 'signifier of female enslavement' (*harem*, veil, polygamy) contributed to 'obscure and legitimise sexual and cultural repression of women in Europe, their non-person status and the sexual double standard'. (Moghissi, 1999, p.16.)

In the section entitled 'Veiled Women', Gasparin further describes her feelings and sympathies for the victimised Oriental women. Her depictions abound with negative feelings and conditions of life that she associates with the veil-harem-polygamy institutions. In her example, the charming features of the veiled women, that repeat the Orientalist trope of exotic beauty and will be investigated in more detail later, are contrasted with 'concerns and pains' which are associated with the harem. This strikingly contrasts with some Muslim feminists' definition of the harem as a space where women sometimes exercised their power. Regarding the harem, Leila Ahmed (1992, p. 84.) states that despite the fact that women did not have much power over their sexual, psychological and emotional lives, some elite women 'did command fortunes and consequently did have power over the lives of some men and women'. Nashat and Tucker (1999, pp. 84-85) additionally assert that, although female seclusion and sexual segregation permeated the Middle East during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women were not completely closed off from political power and possessed multiple ways in which they could influence power relations.

The sadness to which Gasparin refers is also implicitly caused by polygamy which victimises the 'Oriental woman'. Ironically, Gasparin refers to the woman as the 'fifth spouse' of an effendi. Added to this sadness is the presumed emptiness of the harem that constitutes another cause of victimisation of these women. She is not only subject to and forced into a polygamous marriage, but also into confinement in the harem, and into 'relative ignorance'. In contrast to the absolute ignorance mentioned in other examples, Gasparin links the veiled woman only to 'relative ignorance', hence attributing some knowledge to her.

All this summarises the 'horror' in which this woman is living, with no hope of being saved either by the 'sky' or by her 'Christian woman'. Ironically, despite the fact that veiling and seclusion have been practiced in other cultures, the idea here is that it is

exclusive to 'Oriental women' who happen to be Muslim.[26] The veil, which is symbolised by the harem and represents an extension of the practice, is thus confined to the frontiers of Islam. Concerning seclusion and polygamy, which were key to the dominant Orientalist fantasy, Reina Lewis notes that, by the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, both practices became almost completely associated with Islam in the Western imaginary, and the harem was conceived as 'essentially and unavoidably polygamous' (Lewis, 2004, p. 98-99). However, the veil precedes Arabs and Islam (El Khayat-Bennai, 1987, pp. 24-25). Ironically, such concepts as female domesticity, sexual purity and chastity were considered appropriate in Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and were resolutely promoted at home, while for Muslim women it was presented as 'evidence of sexual slavery' as well as signs of a 'peculiar moral and religious deficiency of the other' (Moghissi, 1999, p.15). If we look closely at the language used, a range of terms situate the veil in the realm of darkness, ignorance and even savagery and barbarity, which all implicitly contrast with the European woman's enlightenment, knowledge and civilisation. These associations will be investigated further in this chapter.

We could usefully describe these styles of representation of the veil in terms of objectification. In her work on the representations of 'third-world women', postcolonial feminist Mohanty (2003, p.54) argues that the mode of defining women primarily in terms of their object status is what characterises the use of 'women' as a category of analysis. This objectification process is what Gasparin's example illustrates through the veiled woman. She summarises the life of the Oriental woman in terms of her object status and victimisation. Not only is the Muslim and Arab woman a victim of the veil, she is also a victim of the harem and polygamy, which are regarded

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[26] Leila Ahmed (1992, p. 18) argues 'During the first Christian centuries the notion of women's seclusion [...] together with veiling and attitudes about the proper invisibility of women, became features of upper-class life in the Mediterranean Middle East, Iraq and Persia [...] Widespread by the early Christian era, they did not emanate (as is often suggested) solely from the Persian world but seem rather to represent a coalescence of similar attitudes and practices originating within patriarchal cultures of the region.

as extensions of the veiling practice. These institutions grouped together define her oppression and inferiority. Therefore, Gasparin contributes to the Orientalist discourse that seeks to assert the 'objectification' of the Muslim woman, which also implicitly contributes to confirming the subject position of the Western/European subject. In his study of Orientalism, Said refers to the 'objectification' of the Orient. He states that the Orient [is considered] as an 'object' of study, fixed with an otherness, will be 'passive, non-participating, endowed with a historical subjectivity, above all, non-active, non-autonomous, non-sovereign with regard to itself' (Said, 1979, p.97). As shown in the examples, in the more particular discourse on the veil, the Muslim woman is 'othered' in a way that makes her victim of many institutions (veil-harem-polygamy), positioning her as an oppressed, inferior and backward being defined by others. The fixed character assigned to the veil in the Orientalist tradition bears not only a confinement in relation to space which the harem and the material veil embody, but also in terms of a time which marks a difference with the European, emancipated and enlightened subject. This helps to define the veiled woman as an object fixed in time and space.

Some Orientalist texts also associate the veil with slavery, imprisonment and the absence of freedom. Nerval's[27] description of the 'Oriental woman' displays an equivocal stance towards the veil in this respect (Nerval, 1985, p. 859):

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[27] Gérard de Nerval, of his real name Gérard Labrunie, is a French poet. He is the son of a doctor who had served in the Grand Army, and particularly in the Russian campaign. He began his literary career with a translation of Goethe's Faust. His unsuccessful love experience with Jenny Colon, and her subsequent death plunged him into the most violent despair. During this time, he travelled to Italy, then to Germany, Holland and the Orient. Since 1841, he suffered from madness, but recovered. For ten years he continued to write books, and in newspapers and magazines, including La Presse where he wrote with Théophile Gautier. In 1855, his body was found hanging from the bars of a gate leading to the Place du Chatelet. His literary works include Slylvie, Aurelia and les Filles du Feu. (Encyclopedie de l'Agora) http://agora.qc.ca/Dossiers/Gerard_de_Nerval)

...we feel the need to interrogate the eyes of the veiled Egyptian woman, and this is the most dangerous thing. The mask is composed of a thin and long piece of black mane that stretches from head to feet, and pierced with two holes like the hood of a prisoner, a few glittering rings are made to slide in the space joining the forehead to the beard of the mask, and it is behind this barrier that passionate eyes await you, armed with all the seductions that they can borrow from art.

The focus in Nerval's example lies on the eye, the only visible body part that the veil reveals. The veil itself is synonymous with a prison, much like the harem is equated with a prison in which the Oriental woman remains confined. The veil in this type of discourse is an expression of women's oppression, and the veiled woman is defined as a victim of the veil. Yet despite this visual barrier, the Western traveller still sees an item through which he can fantasise and exteriorise his desire. The urge to interrogate the eyes involves a 'danger' which is also an urge to unveil this woman and strip the veil placing a barrier between her and the 'Western eye'. The verb 'to interrogate' also carries the connotation of the prison guard as the Western man becomes complicit in the imprisonment. The viewer is tempted to see 'behind this barrier'. Although he can only see the eyes of the veiled woman, this does not block Nerval from presenting the veil paradoxically as a symbol of confinement and seclusion through the expression 'hood of a prisoner', and a sign of seduction and 'oriental beauty' with 'glittering rings', 'ardent eyes and seductions'.

This can be considered as an instance of a 'dual paradigm' emphasising the representation of the veil within oppression and confinement on the one hand, and with seduction and sexuality on the other. Muslim feminist Malika Mehdid (1993, p. 26) notes how popular myths of the Arab female seem to have revolved around dual paradigms, hovering between the image of a 'silent beast of burden', that of a 'capricious princess, half naked odalisque or the shapeless figure of a woman wearing

the veil' in Mehdid's words. The Arab female who goes through the process of orientalisation becomes a 'nebulous creature [...]enduring and universal, devoid of depth and deprived of historicity and a consciousness' (Mehdid, 1993, p.26). Nerval's veil thus fluctuates between its representation as a 'sexual object' and an 'object of oppression', thereby emphasising its ambivalence. The association of the oriental veil with danger further positions it within a sexual threat that remains open to the Western subject.

Interestingly, this section is entitled '*Mask and Veil*', building a dichotomous vision of the veil as both a confining and exotic device, or as an element of both mystery and threat. The use of the word 'mask' itself is suggestive, connoting disguise and concealment on the one hand, and obscurity on the other. Nerval's mixed meanings attributed to the Egyptian veil therefore reiterate its Orientalist depiction as a sign of oppression and victimisation of the oriental woman. However, going beyond the 'objectification' of the veiled woman and the reduction of the veil to the oppression and inferiority of Muslim women and Oriental societies, his depiction of the Egyptian veil marks a definition of the veil within an otherness that oscillates between oppression and an active sexual threat on the other. The sexualisation of the veil within these terms complicates its dominant association with oppression and inferiority which are commonly linked with the Orientalist discourse.

We could think more about how the veil becomes imagined as a prison. In his book *The Colonial Harem*, Malek Alloula's (1986) postcolonial reading of Orientalist cards points out that the veil of the Algerian woman during colonisation is also perceived as a type of 'perfect and generalised mask' that constitutes the everyday 'uniform and instils uniformity for the French colonial photographer' (Alloula, 1986, p.11). The expression 'hood of the prisoner' can be paralleled to the recurrent theme of imprisonment. The idea that women are inaccessible to sight by being veiled is linked with their imprisonment, equating veiling with imprisonment (Alloula, 1986, p.21). In

her study of the veil and Orientalism, postcolonial feminist Meyda Yegenoglu (2003, p. 547) argues that it is believed the veil is hiding something behind it, a 'knowledge that is kept secret'. The veil thus becomes for Yegenoglu ambivalent: what is revealed, what is hidden. Nerval's account of the veil is likewise ambivalent. The veil is an object of danger and threat. However, the veil is also a source of seduction and attraction as the expressions 'passionate eyes' and 'seductions' connote. The word 'brightened' reiterates the reference to light which paradoxically stands behind the barrier that the imprisonment veil hampers. The link between the mask/veil and the 'black mane' in Nerval's text, which refers to thick long hair, also suggests the growth of animal hair, positioning the veil and the Oriental woman within sub-human parameters. Not only does the veil present a mask which may possibly be hiding the 'truth' of the woman, but it also associates her with a prisoner. The combination of the expressions 'mask', 'mane', 'prisoner hood', and 'barrier' position the veil within associations of deception, imprisonment and animal-like state, thus de-humanising the veil.

4.3.Exotic Veils: 'Coquettish Nuns', 'Frail' and 'Muslin Veils'

After illustrating how the veil is associated with imprisonment and enslavement, I discuss examples of how the dress is portrayed as an emblem of exoticism. This section therefore looks at associations of the veil with exoticism and eroticism in Orientalist texts through examples of texts from Nerval, Castellan and Gasparin.

In his travels to the Orient in the nineteenth century, for instance, Gerard de Nerval (1985, p.858) describes his experience of a traveller discovering the city of Cairo:

> Cairo is the city of the Orient where women are still the most hermetically veiled. In Constantinople and Smyrna, a white or black gauze sometimes allows us to get a glimpse of the features of the beautiful Muslim women, and the most rigorous orders rarely succeed in thickening this frail material. These are

gracious and coquettish nuns who devote themselves to one spouse, and who are nonetheless not sorry for causing unhappiness to the world. Yet Egypt, serious and pious, is always the country of enigmas and mysteries, beauty encircles it, as it did in the past, with veils and bandages, and this dark attitude easily discourages the frivolous European man.

In this example, the expression 'hermetically veiled' implies a tightly sealed item which prevents the European subject from seeing the veiled woman. If we link the term hermetic to its original meaning, the veil can be read as also preventing access to air and water, which are the basic elements for life. The veil is, therefore, implicitly associated with death and seclusion through the figure of the 'hermit'.

The veil is understood as a form of withdrawal. Malek Alloula notes how the veil constitutes the origin of the coloniser's initial 'experience of disappointment and rejection' when the Algerian woman discourages the 'scopic desire' of the photographer; the photographer faces three types of rejection: rejection of his desire, the practice of his photography as well as his place in an environment to which he does not belong (Alloula, 1986, p.7). In her study, Yegenoglu discusses the depiction of the veil as a mask hiding woman. She states that the 'opaque veil' is often represented as a type of mask hiding the woman and turning her into an enigma, and that this type of discursive construction presumes that the 'real nature of these women is concealed, their truth is disguised and they appear in a false, deceptive manner' (Yegenoglu, 2003, p.547). If we apply this description to the Orientalist example, it becomes clear how the veil, which Nerval also ties to 'masks' in the title of his chapter, represents both an element of exotic beauty, grace and coquetry, and a sign of mystery, enigma and death at once. In contrast to the enigmatic veil to which he refers earlier, the veil in Constantinople and Smyrna allows a glimpse of the features of Muslim women. It moves from being a symbol of mystery and enigma to being synonymous with beauty, exoticism and sexual attraction.

The veiled woman in the example reminds us of the odalisque, the most important symbol in the harem, filling it with a 'presence that is at once mysterious and luminous' as she is 'hidden yet available, core, always throbbing with restrained sensuality' (Alloula, 1986, p.74). The veiled women of Constantinople and Smyrna are equated with nuns, but they are somewhat different. Although the religious aspect of the veil is mentioned through the analogy with nuns, it is also a symbol of grace and coquetry and is linked with sexuality and attraction. The image of enigma and mystery is extended to Egypt through 'veils and bandages' as well as 'enigma and mystery'.

Nerval associates the veil with coquetry and playfulness by contrasting the 'hermetically veiled' women of Cairo with the 'lighter' veils of women in Constantinople and Smyrna. On the one hand, the veil figures as a source of seduction and oriental sexuality, and on the other a source of concealment and mystery. These meanings can all be derived from the attributes used to describe the veiled women who are once well-mannered, and sophisticated (and possibly even humane as the word 'gracious' implies), or stern, dark and dangerous beings as implied by words such as 'serious' ,'bandages', 'enigmas and mysteries' and 'gloomy'. This woman can also paradoxically be seductive as the expression 'coquettish nuns' denotes, or even weak and vulnerable as is implied through the term 'frail'. The adverb 'hermetically' also conveys the idea that the veil is darker on the one hand, and obscure and difficult to understand on the other hand. It therefore comes as no surprise that the word 'gracious' is ironically used with the word 'nuns', implying that civilisation and sophistication are perhaps attainable only through embracing Christianity. Although Nerval does not directly refer to the 'civilising mission' of bringing Christianity to the oriental woman, the use of positive attributes in relation to nuns may be part of a 'civilising mission'. This can however be reversed through the use of the term 'coquettish', which implies seduction and sexuality which are attributed to the Muslim veil.

In the example, the veil is equated with 'beauty' and 'coquetry'. The veiled Egyptian women whom he calls 'nuns', discourage the 'frivolous European man'. He contrasts what he refers to as the 'serious and pious Egypt' with 'enigma' and 'mystery' attached to 'veils and bandages'. On the one hand, Nerval attributes a religious aspect to the Egyptian veil through the use of the word 'nuns', a characteristic which he extends to Egypt as being 'pious' and 'serious'. On the other hand, he associates the veil with mystery. Only allowing the sight of the eye, the veil is perceived as a 'means to reveal charms'. At this point, the veil stops being a religious symbol and a sign of piety. The coquetry which he attributes to Egyptian women is what 'defies the forbidden' and 'excites desire'. These expressions and images position the veil within sexual attributes which are implicitly contrasted with piety. The sexualisation of the veil in this type of Orientalist discourse frames the dress within non-religious terms, away from a religious practice and a sign of piety.

This construction of sexualised veils is common in Orientalist writings. Castellan[28], for instance, writes the veil as a symbol of the Turkish exotic Orient (Castellan, 1985, p. 442):

> We cannot better determine the beauty of women in these places than when we meet them in the streets, as they are also covered with a large *feretg*é, and their head is encircled many times with a muslin veil, which only allows the sight of the eyes, yet the coquetry, which is more powerful than fear in all countries,

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[28] Antoine Laurent Castellan (1772-1838) was a French painter, traveller, man of letters and a famous engraver. He was born in Montpelier in 1772. After his studies in landscape painting under Valenciennes, he visited Turkey, Greece, Italy and Switzerland, and published several series of letters on his trips. These letters were illustrated with views drawn and engraved by himself. His best known work is his book *Moeurs, Usages et Costumes des Othomans* which was published in 1812, and which was highly praised by Lord Byron. Castellan was also the inventor of a new process of painting in wax. He died in Paris in 1838. https://archive.org/details/cu31924092716962

defies the forbidden, excites desire, and designates to women the means to reveal their charms.

In Castellan's example, the veil is likewise equated with exoticism and 'oriental beauty'. Rather than being represented as a victim, the 'oriental woman' 'defies the forbidden', 'exciting desire', revealing her charms through the veil, hence becoming active rather than passive. The description of the veil with sexuality and exoticism and the oriental woman as an active subject in relation to the 'Western viewer' contrasts with earlier examples of the veil as a sign of passivity and inaction. Here, the oriental woman is out in the public space of the bazaar, among men and women who are complete strangers, she is no longer the victimised, imprisoned being who needs to be freed from the harem.

The description of the dress (large *feretgé*) and the muslin veil which is repeatedly encircled around her head echoes the earlier example of the veil being equated with 'bandages'. The binary oppositions also confirm the ambivalence of the discourse: coquetry contrasts with fear, and the forbidden with desire, yet the eyes of the veiled woman still enchant the Western subject. Although the veiled women who are described are almost totally covered (the large *feretgé* being like a long cloak worn with a face-veil which leaves only the eyes visible), they are nonetheless subject to a Western male fantasy as they become the source of seduction, provocation and sexual appeal for Castellan. In her anthropological study of the veil, Fadwa el Guindi notes that the veil has replaced the older obsession with harems and *hammams*, the veil now 'evokes a public sexual energy that early Christianity, puritanist Western culture, and contemporary elements of fundamentalist Christianity have not been able to come to terms with, comprehend, or tolerate' (El Guindi, 1999, p.10). Castellan's description provides an example of Orientalist discourse on the veil which evokes this 'sexual energy', and in which the oriental woman, who is now in the street instead of the harem,

becomes active and yet still subject to sexual fantasy. The veil functions as a tool to maintain the oriental woman within the realm of a sexual object.

The coquetry is described as being stronger and therefore also potentially transcending fear. This coquetry is also triggering sexuality, allowing veiled women to unveil their 'charms' which can also categorise them as women with magic power and witchcraft. The example thus moves us from the representation of the veil as a symbol of oppression, submission and danger to an object of desire, sexuality and seduction. This adds another more explicitly stated dimension which carefully combines various veil associations within the same text.

In another text, Castellan (1985, pp. 442-443) extends beyond simply defining the veil within explicit sexual parameters as an object of danger, by introducing the figure of the 'oriental man':

> ...one has to be suspicious of these attractive, dangerous and sometimes treacherous beginnings. If we were to neglect consulting caution for a well ephemeral pleasure, we would expose ourselves to the cruel effects of revenge resulting from the jealousy and superstitious hatred of the Turks. After having made you fall in the trap, they would only grant you the favour of life in order to force you to adopt the turban.

In Castellan's words, the term 'amorce' in French not only means beginning, but also refers to a 'detonator' or 'bomb' which positions the veil within the realm of not only treachery and deceit, but also of a potential terror object. These elements justify the 'suspicious' stance of the European who can nevertheless still be subject to the 'revenge', 'jealousy' and 'superstitious hatred' of oriental men. The potential pleasure

attributed to veiled women, and which again associates the veil with sexuality and Oriental lasciviousness, is countered with the negative and dangerous attributes of Turkish men. Castellan again implicitly places the veil within sexuality, but also within an object of terror and fear as it triggers feelings of suspicion and caution.

Although he represents it as an exotic and sexual symbol that excites the desire of the 'Western man' (Fanon, 1967, p. 43), the veil is also subject to suspicion as it may contain or hide elements of danger, treachery, vengeance, jealousy as well as 'superstitious hatred'. The Muslim veiled woman becomes a 'suspicious being' who has 'attractive' yet 'dangerous' and 'treacherous' moves. The 'ephemeral pleasure' is replaced by 'cruel effects of revenge', and the 'jealousy' and 'superstitious hatred'.

The veil is often given quite paradoxical qualities. Fanon notes in the context of French colonial rule in Algeria that the European's aggressiveness will be expressed in contemplation of the Algerian woman's morality, and her qualities and characteristics (such as timidity and reserve) are transformed into the opposite as the Algerian woman becomes 'hypocritical, perverse' (Fanon, 1967, p.46). In Castellan's example, although the veil is linked with the exotic and sexual, it is also an element of danger, treachery and revenge, and a possible hatred of 'Turks'. In this example, it goes beyond the Muslim woman's morality (if we consider that exoticism and sexuality are part of the realm of desire which is forbidden in Castellan's eyes), and Nerval's reference to the 'frivolous European' in the 'serious and pious Egypt'. All the negative attributes Castellan wields in his account imply that the 'Oriental woman' is being watched by her husband, and that one should not venture into such grounds. Against the short-lived pleasure derived from looking at the 'veiled woman' moving along the bazaar and shopping, Castellan sets characteristics of the 'oriental man' that locate this figure within an otherness in relation to the 'white man'. As Yegenoglu (2003, p.543) argues, the veil produces an 'exteriority' or a 'target or threat' for the European subject, which enables that subject to produce himself, vis-a-vis an 'other' while, at the same time,

erasing the process of this production. Moreover, the cruelty of the 'Oriental man' would go so far as to force the 'Western man' to adopt the turban, hence to become Muslim.

In Castellan's example, describing the veil in terms of a sexual threat is made more explicit. In his writing about the 'veiled woman', he cautions against 'attractive, dangerous and sometimes treacherous beginnings', implicitly attributing danger and threat to the veil which he had previously defined as a sexual symbol. Furthermore, he warns against the 'cruel effects of revenge' ensuing from 'jealousy and hatred of the Turks'. In this example, Castellan superposes the sexualisation of the veil with threat and treachery. Through these associations, the veil is positioned not only within sexual terms, but also within emotional and ethical dimensions.

In the Orientalist examples, the veil is implicitly positioned as a 'threat' which at once contrasts with its sexual overtone and its association with oriental seduction and sexuality, a threat that extends to the Oriental man who becomes a potential second source of danger for the European man. For Castellan, this implies the compulsion to adopt the Oriental man's religion. In contrast to Gasparin's 'civilising mission' to Christianise the victimised veiled woman, Castellan fears the forceful Islamisation of the Turkish man, which, if declined, would mean his death. This idea of death and killing also reminds us of the image of the Orient as a land of barbarity and savageness, this time linked to the Oriental man. In short, Castellan's narrative shows instances of an Orientalist discourse which emphasises the placement of the veil within exoticism, sexuality and pleasure yet, paradoxically, attaches meanings of danger, threat and hatred to it. Unlike Gasparin's examples which focused more on oppression, inferiority and unhappiness, and Nerval's which used more metaphors of exoticism and sexuality, Castellan's writing of the veil adds more explicitly the dimension of threat to veil associations.

To conclude, the analysis of some Orientalist texts on the veil demonstrate how the dress is constructed through various and sometimes dichotomous associations. As we have seen through the examples from Orientalist texts, the veil acquires various meanings through language and words that circulate around it in texts. I have explored placements of the veil within the concepts of happiness, slavery, imprisonment, oppression and lack of freedom as well as exoticism and sexual threat. I now turn to the Arab *Nahda* texts of the early twentieth century to consider some of their associations of Islamic dress.

5. *Nahda* Veils

In this chapter, I examine associations of the veil in *Nahda* texts of the early twentieth century. First, I analyse images of happiness in relation to the veil. In the second part, I examine associations of the veil with enslavement and imprisonment. In the third part, I look at meanings of seduction and attraction attached to the dress. In the fourth, I consider images of ignorance and backwardness before ending with tropes of darkness and enlightenment. During the *Nahda* period[29], in which the Arabic press, and more pertinently women's journals and literature flourished, women intellectuals represented the first generation of Arab women to write and publish their works as printed texts (Baron, 1997, p. 1). These writings provide unique historical sources to consider the meanings attached to Islamic modest dress during the *Nahda* and colonial epochs. As feminist Beth Baron (1997, p. 2) informs us, this was a time when the middle and upper-classes had the resources to invest in literature, and when journals and newspapers fast became vital media for communication, with women's journals providing an opportunity to debate issues such as marriage, divorce, veiling, seclusion, education and work.[30] Regarding the *Nahda* era, much attention has been devoted to Qasim Amin[31] who is considered a central figure in the turn of the century debate on

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[29] Of course I still had to make a small selection from vast bodies of work from different countries. The fact that I discuss *Nahda* figures from Egypt (and one from Tunisia) can be justified intellectually by the prominence of Egypt as a pivotal point for the *Nahda* movement, and with the longest history within the movement itself to which it gave rise. Additionally, Egypt offers original texts and a significant body of material on which I can draw from and expand in my particular study to think about contemporary media associations of Islamic dress.

[30] Margot Badran (2009, p. 18) argues in this context that the emergence of women's earliest signs of 'feminist consciousness' was 'first discernible in occasional published writings (poetry essays and tales) by the 1860s and 1870s, preceded colonial occupation and the rise of nationalism', but 'was more widely expressed from the 1890s in the rise of women's journalism and salon debates'.

[31] Qasim Amin (1863-1908) was an Egyptian jurist and one of the founding members of the Egyptian national movement and Cairo University. His mother was Upper Egyptian, and father an Ottoman who had served as an administrator in Kurdistan then Egypt. Amin is most renowned as an early advocate of women's rights. His 1899 book *The Liberation of Women* (Tahrir al mara'a) and its 1900 sequel *The New Woman* (al mara'a al jadida) examined the question of why Egypt had fallen under European power, despite centuries of Egyptian learning and civilisation, and concluded that the explanation was the low social and educational standing of Egyptian women. He grounded this criticism on Islamic scholarship

women and society. Yet writings of women such as Malak Hifni Nasif[32], Nazira Zain al-Din[33] and Tahar Haddad[34] have been overlooked, as much as the bulk of literature of al *Nahda al nisa'iya*[35] (women's awakening) which constituted a part of the broader *Nahda* movement originating from the Middle Eastern countries and later spreading throughout Arab and *Maghrebi* countries. On the one hand, my work is part of an attempt to recover these voices which have been neglected from the dominant discourse of the Arab *Nahda* movement. On the other hand, a study of some of the key meanings and tropes of the veil in *Nahda* texts provides a preliminary background for the consideration of current associations of the veil in Morocco, a postcolonial nation-

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and argued that women should develop intellectually in order to be competent to bring up the nation's children. Amin was a central figure of the *Nahda* movement.
http://www.in.com/qasim-amin/biography-225775.html

[32] Malak hifni Nasif (1886-1918) known as *bahitat al-badiya* (seeker in the desert) was a poet, writer and feminist. She was born in Cairo into a literary family. She spoke on Fridays at the women's lectures at the Egyptian University, and in the offices in the liberal paper *al-Jarida*. Her speeches and essays were published in 1909 under the title *al-Nisaiyat* (Feminist Pieces). She was a strong advocate of rights for women within marriage. (Badran & Cooke, 2004, p. 134)

[33] Nazira Zain al-Din was born in Lebanon in 1905. Her father, who was a scholar of Islamic religion and jurisprudence, encouraged her education and intellectual development. She met learnt men, and more particularly religious scholars, with whom she debated topics such as the veil.
(Badran & Cooke, 2004, p. 270)

[34] Tahar Haddad (1899-1935) was born in the medina (old quarter) of Tunis. He grew up in a family that lived in extreme poverty, and was called upon to contribute to the family income. The hardships Haddad experienced left an indelible mark on him, even though he was able to improve his circumstances through education. This happened after his religious studies at the famous Zaytuna mosque, where he graduated in 1920 with a licence to practice as a notary-public. Politically, these were important times in Tunisia with the emergence of a nationalist movement that called for the end of the French colonial rule. During his studies Haddad became part of the nationalist reformist movement which shaped his social and political thought. Together with an interest in workers' and women's rights, education would remain a leitmotiv in Haddad's thought, as expressed in his writings. He is mostly known for his work Our Women in Muslim Law and Society (1930). The book represents an indictment of the condition of woman in traditional society, and the injustice suffered by the poor in the Tunisia Haddad wrote from the position of a Muslim scholar who used religious sources to support his views. He was accused of heresy and infamy.
http://www.english.globalarabnetwork.com/201003035045/Culture/taher-haddad-the-precursor-of-womens-rights-in-tunisia.html

[35] As Beth Baron (1997, p. 188) informs us, not only did *al nahda al-nisa'iyya* (women's awakening) expand opportunities for women, but it also set grounds for later female activism in Egypt and throughout the Arab world.

state having experienced the influence of the *Nahda* during the early twentieth century colonial period in the Maghreb as I explained in my introduction.

5.1. Unhappy Veils: Law, Order, Justice and *Hijabs* of Hardships

In this section, I explore how the veil becomes a signifier of unhappiness and misery in some Arab *Nahda* writings of the early twentieth century. In these texts, the veil sometimes figures as a cause of unhappiness or as embodying unhappiness itself. Unveiling, as the examples will demonstrate, is in turn implicitly constructed as a way to attain happiness not only for the Arab Muslim woman, but also for the whole Muslim *Ummah*, or the community of believers.

During the *Nahda* era in which the texts under study were written, women entered the realm of print culture at a dynamic moment in Arabic literary history, and hoped to encourage social reform and women's awakening through the creation of literary texts (Baron, 1997, p. 39). Part of their attempts included a call for unveiling, which referred both to removing the face-veil or the *niqab* which was commonly worn among the middle and upper classes, and the call for ending seclusion (Baron, 1997, p. 39). In the early twentieth century, Malak Hifni Nasif[36], considered as one of the first Egyptian and Arab feminists, writes an article entitled 'My View on the *Hijab*' where she advocates gradual unveiling, justifying her call for unveiling with the unhappiness that has come as a result of the practice. She states (Nasif, 1962, p. 272):

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[36] Malak Hifni Nasif wrote and gained literary experience in the bi-weekly then weekly paper *al-'Afaf* (The Virtue) which started in 1910. She became one of the best known speakers of the day and one of the most prominent women who joined the *Nahda* movement.

...Were it not for the hardships in our Egyptian homes caused by the veil, and the feeling of the majority of us of the unhappiness of life as a result of our inequitable and restrictive marriages, I would by no means call for change from following our old system.

Here Malak Hifni Nasif associates the practice of the *hijab*, then meaning seclusion and face-veiling, with the 'hardships of Egyptian homes' and with unjust and restrictive marriages in reference to the inequitable treatment of women and their confinement by their husbands to the private realm. She also refers to the *hijab* as 'the old system' which she considers should be gradually changed, and emphasises the equation between married or domestic life and the *hijab*. Hifni Nasif writes about women at the turn of the twentieth century when not only many Muslim, but also Coptic women, particularly those of the middle and upper classes, were still veiled and could not move about without being accompanied or having a reasonable purpose, in contrast to lower class women who were not veiled or secluded to the same extent (Baron, 1997, p. 39). Veiling and seclusion were not restricted to Muslim women.

While the Orientalist examples I examined in the previous chapter associate the veiled woman with unhappiness in relation to the spatial *hijab* of the *harem*, Hifni Nasif's example emphasises social injustice manifested in 'inequitable and restrictive marriages' as the main cause behind the majority of Egyptian women's state of unhappiness. Her call for a gradual unveiling, therefore, is motivated by a need to improve social justice within Egyptian homes, since the *hijab* which refers to both confinement to the domestic space and the *niqab* (or material face-veil) in Hifni Nasif's days is perceived as a barrier for improving women's condition within society. What Hifni Nasif refers to as 'the hardships of our homes' and the 'unhappiness of life' constitute the two factors enticing her to call for a 'change from following the old system' of the *hijab*. We can consider how her association of the veil with unhappiness is a reiteration of the Orientalist trope of unhappy veils. We can, however, see how her

concept of happiness and the *hijab* presents a discontinuity from the Orientalist discourse, from a focus on the *harem* as a space of unhappiness to an emphasis on the material and space *hijabs* in the shape of the *niqab* on the one hand, and confinement to the domestic realm on the other. Her call needs to be read within debates for social justice and women's rights in the early twentieth century *Nahda* period.

Happiness becomes here a strategy of improvement, and unveiling as self-improvement. In the framework of *al Nahda al-nisaayia*, Nazira Zain al-Din (al-Din, 1928) not only associates the *niqab* with unhappiness and unveiling with happiness in her book *Asufur wal Hijab* (*Unveiling and Veiling*), but also attributes order, justice and law to unveiling. She ties the dress with unhappiness and despotism, implying that the veil is an oppressive exercise of power by men.

In the context of her critique of the *hijab* (the face-veil and seclusion), Nazira Zain al-Din (1928, pp. 58-59) extends the notion of unhappiness in relation to the *hijab* from the space of woman and the small family to that of the whole society and Muslim community:

> ...the family and society can only find order and happiness when justice and law prevail [...]. There is therefore no happiness, integrity or order with despotism, oppression and half of the family and society remaining deprived of that light [...] denied freedom and all means of progress, which in turn deprives her of the ability to raising her children and making them happy.

In this example, there is a similar discourse about women's rights in society. An examination of the positions and aims of women writers in the early years of the women's press shows that the phrase 'the rights of woman' had many connotations

and that the views of female intellectuals covered a wide range of meanings (Baron, 1997, p.104). Similarly, and as the examples from Hifni Nasif and Zain al-Din illustrate, the veil and happiness were conceptualised differently during the *Nahda* era. In her call for unveiling, Zain al-Din emphasises justice and law as prerequisites for the happiness and order of the family, and the overall society and Muslim community of believers. In addition, Zain al-Din places 'integrity' and 'order' as antithetical to happiness. She associates the veil with unhappiness, despotism and oppression, additionally tying the absence of happiness with woman's inability to fulfil their roles of raising children who are in turn happy. The transformation of women's state from unhappiness to happiness therefore entails the establishment of social justice and the rule of law, which would ensure happiness not only for women, but also for the generations to come.

In another article where Zain al-Din compares Muslim women with Christian nuns, she contrasts the 'freedom, independence, development and knowledge' of the nuns with the 'unhappiness and blindness' associated with the Muslim veil. What we have in this example is a transposition and contrast of two veils, with the Christian nun's veil associated with happiness and the Muslim veil with unhappiness. Veils become positive or negative through these associations. It is interesting to read this comparison with the earlier comparison that Countess de Gasparin draws between the veiled woman and her European counterpart, attributing unhappiness, idleness and weakness to the first one and happiness, strength and emancipation to the latter. In Zain al-Din's discourse, the veil fluctuates between an unhappiness caused by the absence of law and social justice on the one hand, and that caused by lack of progress and development and ignorance on the other. While she links unhappiness with injustice, despotism and oppression, she equates happiness with freedom and progress, which can only be achieved with removing the veil.

Even when the veil maintains its association with unhappiness, there are differences in how it is represented. Couched within a discourse of women's rights and development which were crucial to the *Nahda* proponents, how Zain al-Din's links the veil with unhappiness (in the sense of the physical *niqab* and space confinement) is different from Hifni Nasif's highlighting of the *hijab* as the main cause of the Muslim woman's unhappiness. Although both evoke happiness in relation to unveiling and associate the veil with unhappiness, Zain al-Din expands the scope of the 'happiness mission' of her predecessor to include references to law, social justice and the attainment of freedom and progress through enlightenment and unveiling. Both writers, however, offer expanding models of the Orientalist depiction of the veil as a fixed miserable condition, confined to the face-veil and the harem. Hifni Nasif's and Zain al-Din's texts extend the Orientalist happiness notion to a consideration of the veil (in both material and spatial senses) as an element preventing social, legal and intellectual happiness. Additionally, Hifni Nasif's and Zain al-Din's examples illustrate how the happiness notion is not merely restricted to space and a removal of the space hijab which prevents women from attaining their full rights in Muslim society, but also attaining the happiness of the global Muslim *Ummah* (crosscultural, crossborder, transnational happiness).

Orientalist texts imply a forward movement or progression in time in relation to attaining happiness which they tie with unveiling and conversion (making unveiling a condition for happiness). *Nahda* texts of happiness in relation to the *hijab* equally emphasise the concept of time, and the necessary movement forward towards progress and freedom to attain happiness. Yet such a type of happiness expands the individual level of Orientalist happiness mission to include that of the society and the Muslim *Ummah*.

Likewise evoking a discourse about women and human rights that was prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century, Qasim Amin reminds his readers of the right woman has

to pursue 'happiness in the outside world' through the same means as her male counterpart. With the increasing debate about women's status and role in society which gained momentum at the turn of the century, the writings of Qasim Amin provoked a debate which must be read in the context of women's press and its concern with the rights of women (Baron, 1997, p.21-22). In his book *Al Mar'a al Jadida* (*The New Woman*) (Amine, 1987), he writes about the concept of happiness in relation to the veil in more detail:

> We have overlooked the fact that she [the woman] is a human being like us, and that she has the right to pursue her search for happiness with the means placed in the outside world for men to seek happiness. When we brought down the status of woman without justice, justice has taken revenge on us and has heightened it. It has thus prevented us from genuine happiness, has brought our morals down, and spoiled our children's upbringing as misery and unhappiness have overwhelmed our hearts until many among us thought the life of Islamic nations has come close to an end (1987, p.46-47).

Like Nasif and Zain al-Din, Amin here refers to the *hijab* as a practice depriving women from their humanity and happiness. He additionally attributes unhappiness to the injustice brought upon the status of woman. Moreover, the link Amin establishes between injustice and unhappiness is added to the one he posits between unhappiness and immorality, which he also implicitly associates with the spatial and material *hijabs*. In addition to a humanitarian discourse of the veil, Amin adds an ethical dimension to the issue of the veil through the link between the dress, happiness and morals. He therefore ties the absence of happiness with the material *niqab* and the spatial *hijab* or confinement on the one hand, and with immorality and spoiling children's upbringing on the other. By implication, he also considers the veil to be a compromise for the happiness of the children, or generations to come. In this statement, Amin further positions the veil as an object potentially causing the death of the 'Islamic nations' as

the example states. His writing of the veil as unhappiness includes not only a human rights discourse emphasising woman's rights and the need for social justice, but also an ethical dimension linking the veil in both dimensions with immorality and the potential death of Islamic nations. This evokes Gasparin's own association of the veil with annihilation. Amin's concept of happiness in relation to the veil therefore adds to the space and time dimensions an ethical aspect whereby the *hijab* embodies a negation of moral values within Muslim society. His example illustrates how the meaning of happiness as it pertains to the veil expands both the Orientalist notion of the 'happiness mission' and Hifni's and Zain al-Din's social, legal and intellectual dimensions of happiness to include an ethical happiness that crosses the borders of the Islamic nations. Let us now consider associations of the *hijab* with sexual meanings.

5.2. 'Veiled in her house, Veil on her face' 'Prison of the *hijab*'

The Arab *Nahda* texts also tie the veil with slavery, imprisonment and lack of freedom. During the early days of the *Nahda al nisa'iya*, Malak Hifni Nasif warns about keeping the veil tradition exactly as it has been adopted in the past. Advocating a 'moderate creed' between Western unveiling and the old traditional Egyptian veiling, she cautions against a veil that 'would create a prison constraining body and mind and destroying well-being' (Nasif, 1962, p.271). Such a vision of the veil emphasises not only the physical restriction assigned to the *hijab*, which is also extended to the spatial confinement in the private realm, but also points to the intellectual constraints of the veil, as denoted by the complex 'body and mind'. We need to consider this statement in the context of a period when women's education became subject to a wide debate in Arab countries which were still under colonial rule.

Later on during the *Nahda* era and at the peak of decolonisation movements in Arab countries, Nazira Zain al-Din's writings offer an instance of how the early Arab feminist discourse has taken a step further in openly advocating unveiling. Zain al-Din also relies on associations of the veil with slavery and imprisonment in her writings. In

an article entitled 'The Freedom of Veiling and Unveiling', she condemns the veil as a symbol of woman's subjugation in society:

> Since the creation of human beings, people have differed in their approach to the protection of woman. Some have considered that a woman can be protected only through subjugating her [...] enslaving her, depriving her of her freedom and imprisoning her veiled in her house, and drawing the veil on her face (Zain-al Din, 1928, p.46).

In a similar vein, Qasim Amin evokes freedom and enslavement in relation to the status of the Muslim woman in his society during the *Nahda* era:

> The man who compels his wife not to leave the house without a reason except his own desire for her to leave it, does not respect her freedom. She is from this perspective a slave, or rather imprisoned, robbed of her freedom in a worse way than a slave [...] we all know that it is very rare for woman to be left to her own will and choice in her movements [...] Whether the imprisonment of woman is lessened or not, she is still restricted to her house which the best woman for them does not leave (Amin, 1987, p.30).

Zain al-Din adopts here a humanitarian discourse, suggesting that the *hijab* is a form of 'protection of woman' that restricts her movement. The *hijab* in both examples not only refers to the material bodily *niqab* which women widely adopted at the time, but also the space *hijab* which confined women to the house. Both examples equate the two forms of *hijab* with subjugation, enslavement and imprisonment. Yet while Amin blames the Muslim man for the veiled woman's state and for being disrespectful to her

freedom, Zain al-Din implicitly contrasts the subjugated status of the veiled woman to that of the European woman which is presented as the model to be emulated.

In the framework of the debate regarding women in Islamic countries, Leila Ahmed argues that proponents of improving women's status during colonial times placed their demands in the 'need to abandon the (implicitly) 'innately' and 'irreparably' misogynist practices of the native culture in favour of the customs and beliefs of another culture—the European' (Ahmed, 1992, p. 129). Zain al- Din's writing about the *hijab* can be couched within such rhetoric of the veil. In her example, the veiled woman symbolises deprivation, imprisonment and enslavement. Her discourse about the veil additionally relies on a defence of women's rights within an Islamic framework. Being the daughter of a renowned *cheikh* (religious scholar), Zain al-Din was in a position to challenge the patriarchal norms of society without compromising her religious credentials.[37] We can position her examples within a discourse advocating women's rights in Islam on the one hand, yet calling for freedom and emancipation in a discourse which bears resonance with a Western Orientalist tradition and 'colonial vision' equating unveiling with freedom and emancipation.

In her book, Zain al-Din (al-Din, 1928, pp. 58-59) draws a clear contrast between freedom and slavery, and between a slave (in reference to a veiled woman) and a knowledgeable person:

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[37] Zain al-Din (1928, p. 50.) also evokes the support of authorities in this respect. In a later article, she considers the presence of authorities a 'blessing' and an 'opportunity for women to appear in the way they want to' (that is without the face-veil). She therefore attributes them with having 'freed [her] intellect, will, pen and belief, and having removed enslavement from the world.

I believe that unveiling, knowledge and freedom call more for protection, honour and modesty than veiling, ignorance and slavery, and that they pertain more to the meaning of motherhood, the human family and the good of society. This is because good manners are not implanted in the soul of an ignorant person in the way that it does in the soul of a knowledgeable one, nor is it consolidated in the mind of a slave in the way that it is in the mind of a free person.

In a more explicit fashion, Zain al-Din equates veiling with ignorance and slavery, and unveiling with knowledge and freedom. The veiling to which Zain al-Din refers here covers the material *hijab* (which is also called *niqab*) and the spatial *hijab* which confines woman to the house. As such, the *hijab* in both forms is constructed as a barrier against freedom and knowledge.

In her study of woman's identity in relation to the Qur'an, Islamic feminist Nimat Hafez Baraganzi (2004, p. ix) states that the traditional Muslim focus on educating woman so that she can play only a 'complementary and domestic role' conflicts with Qur'anic principles and the lived realities of Muslim women. In parallel with her call for 'civilisation', Zain al-Din advocates 'freedom' which would be unattainable with the double *hijab* to which Muslim women are subject. Repeating the Orientalist association of the veil with enslavement and imprisonment, Zain al-Din's examples further highlight the importance of 'knowledge', which would be possible once the veil is removed from the veiled woman. The *hijab* in both senses therefore stands in the way of intellectual fulfilment, and epitomises not only a physical and spatial imprisonment, but also a cognitive enslavement.

At another level, while unveiling, which is equated with knowledge and freedom, is connected with positive attributes such as protection, honour, modesty, and 'good

manners', veiling is conversely associated with ignorance, slavery, and more tacitly with lack of honour, immodesty and 'bad manners'. Zain al-Din further equates the veil with a potential failure in the 'meaning of motherhood, the human family and the good of society'. All these associations attribute morality to unveiling and immorality and decadence to the veil. Reminiscent of earlier examples associating the veil with lack of modesty and honour, this example considers unveiling closer to protection, honour and modesty in such a way that 'good manners' are seen as more easily instilled with unveiling than with veiling.

The veil becomes like a prison, or even becomes a prison. In a personal note to one of her conference speeches, Nazira Zain al-Din reminds her audience that it was her father who has feed her from the 'prison of the veil'. She declares (al-Din, 1928, p. 59):

> I hope you gentlemen will not accuse me of transgressing the system and escaping from the prison of the veil [...] He [my father] is the one who has considered my prison as opposed to the justice of God, the good of the family and society, and has put faith in my soul and manners, sending me unveiled to life and light.

Here Zain al-Din gives a speech unveiled in front of an audience of men and women, evoking 'transgression' in relation to breaching both the visual and spatial *hijabs*. She relies on the authority of her father who is a religious scholar. The image of the 'prison of the veil' reiterates its vision as an object of enslavement and subjugation, which Zain al-Din opposes not merely to 'the justice of God', but also to 'the good of the family and society'. The expressions 'prison of the veil' and 'unveiled to life and light' equate the veil with imprisonment, and unveiling with 'life and light', which reminds us of associations of the veil with enlightenment which I discuss in a subsequent section. The dichotomy is reiterated between prison and freedom, life and death, and

light and darkness, in relation to veiling and unveiling respectively. Zain al-Din's association of the veil with imprisonment therefore additionally evokes wider social and ethical notions through the link established between unveiling, the justice of God and the good of family and society, as well an affective dimension tying the veil with death and darkness.

Unveiling becomes associated with freedom. Like Malak Hifni Nasif, Nazira Zain al-Din (1928, p. 62) also advocates gradual unveiling in order to achieve woman's emancipation, considering unveiling to be the primary stage in the ladder of this liberation. In her words, this is 'because veiling leaves half of society paralysed, and a society half of whose organs are paralysed cannot excel, triumph, win or gain victory'. In an article about nuns and the lessons that Muslim women should learn from them, Zain al-Din (1928, p. 138) again equates the veil not only with imprisonment, but also with blindness and death:

> ...As for us, miserable ones, nothing suits us better than blindness and putting an end to the soul, and imprisonment under the heavy cover which is like a shroud or a cage. It is not suitable for us to emerge from their [men's] private quarters except to go to our graves.

In this example, Zain al-Din equates the veil not only with imprisonment through the word 'cage', but also death through the term 'shroud'. Likening the veil to a 'shroud' or a 'cage', she additionally attributes blindness and death to the state of the Muslim woman in her society. The veil is further inscribed within the states of blindness and death. The concept of imprisonment repeatedly connected with the veil in both visual and spatial senses, as I have illustrated, is complicated with the reference to blindness, which is a form of visual impairment, and 'end of the soul' which echoes physical and spiritual and intellectual death. Such images of the veil therefore include references not

only to the visual blindness which can be linked with the visual *hijab* (or *niqab* in the modern sense of the word), but also to the physical death which can be associated with physical confinement. The *hijab* becomes and embodies both physical and intellectual death.

There are many examples from the archive that associate unveiling with freedom. Another *Nahda* figure whose texts evoke freedom in this way is Qasim Amin. Take the following quote from *The New Woman* (Amine, 1987, pp. 47-48):

> Concerning the veil, its harm consists in depriving woman of her innate freedom, preventing her from completing education, and from getting her means of livelihood when needed [...] Freedom's merits consist of removing all the harms arising from the veil, and [...] its only harm is that, in its principle, leads to misuse [...] but it is easy for her to do so with freedom, which she will achieve as other Western women have achieved it.

In a more explicit reference to the 'Western woman', Amin contrasts the veil with freedom, and woman's access to public space, education and work. He is suggesting here that whilst freedom can be harmful when it is misused, the veil is much more harmful. The veil is the harm of being deprived of freedom. In the example, freedom is equated with the achievement of modesty, work and responsibility, as well as self-reliance and integrity which as qualities are implied to be unachievable with the veil. Amin's association of unveiling with freedom, education and employment therefore implicitly equate the *hijab* (in both senses) with imprisonment, ignorance and unemployment. In her study of woman in the Qur'an, Amina Wadud (1999, pp. 7-8) notes that while women have been restricted to biological functions, men are deemed superior, more human, and benefiting from 'the choice of movement, employment, and social, political and economic participation on the basis of human individuality,

motivation and opportunity'. Wadud thus criticises the tendency of patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an to deprive *Muslimat* from the agency which the Quranic text grants them.

The *niqab* and physical confinement of Arab women is thus associated with negative attributes which reinforce the image of the veiled woman as a victim. In his book *The Liberation of Woman*, Amin (1987, p. 72) equally associates the veil with lack of education, work and intellect:

> The desire to gain knowledge, the interest in exploring what people are doing in their works, and the desire to explore the truths and everything that draws the soul to investigate and learn lessons cannot be achieved by the woman with her veil. This is because the veil imprisons her in a confined and closed circle in such a way that she only hears and sees and knows about trivial events happening outside, as the veil stands between her and the live world which is the world of intellect and work.

Here the veil is understood as a bar on a woman's intellectual life by blocking her access to the main source of knowledge which is the outside world. In another example, Amin (1987, p. 75) blames the veil for spoiling a woman's health due to her confinement at home, and depriving her of air and sunshine and all physical activity. Having emphasised the equation of the garment with slavery and imprisonment, Amin introduces an intellectual dimension to unveiling. She would be freed because her mind would be freed.

As the examples above illustrate, Malak Hifni Nasif, Nazira Zain al-Din and Qasim Amin affiliate the veil with spatial confinement which is reminiscent of the *harem* and

polygamy in the case of Orientalist texts. The examples, however, emphasise notions of enslavement and imprisonment in the form of both visual and spatial *hijabs* of confinement (the house becomes a metaphor for the veil). By contrast, Mernissi (1991, p. 43), who grew up in a Moroccan harem in the city of Fez in the 1940s, defines it firstly as a 'power structure' where the aspirations of young women vary depending on their status. While women holding a higher status (such as daughters of *harem* owners) reinforce their power within the group and develop complicity with other women, young women from 'poor classes' are subject to the law of the group, that of men and more powerful women within the *harem* (Mernissi, 1991, p. 43). In her ethnographic study of the veil, El Guindi (1999, p. 36) argues in her ethnographic analysis that the *harim* is not about 'women, sexualised life and seclusion', but rather 'a structure of governance, management, negotiation of a relational setting of gender complementarity.' Such studies complicate the unidimensional depiction of the harem as a sexualised realm. The *Nahda* texts present the veil as a prison for the body and the mind. While Zain al-Din's and Nasif's examples emphasise the importance of a humanitarian and women's rights discourse against seclusion and the *niqab*, which they both equate with imprisonment and enslavement, Amin's and Zain al-Din's examples highlight the significance of education, knowledge and the perfection of intellect to achieve freedom, an asset which they contrast with the practice of veiling.

More than a symbol of sexual segregation and oppression, the *Nahda* examples portray the veil as a barrier against not only the 'good of the society' and a 'human family' but also with the 'justice of God'. The *Nahda* discourse of the veil therefore complicates the Orientalist depiction in terms of oppression and victimisation to a humanitarian and ethical discourse which also defines divine justice in opposition to the practice of veiling. In parallel to the Orientalist discourse, the *Nahda* texts equate veiling with enslavement and imprisonment and unveiling with freedom and emancipation. However, the texts additionally associate the veil with knowledge, the good of the family and society and the justice of God, thereby complicating the dominant

Orientalist depiction of the veil. The 'prison of the veil' is contrasted with ethical and moral aspects which shall be developed in a subsequent section.

In contrast to the focus of Orientalist texts on the institutions of the veil-*harem*-polygamy, the *Nahda* associations of the veil and oppression emphasise the link between the face-veil and home confinement and the Arab woman's imprisonment and enslavement. The examples focus on the veil (as meaning the physical face-veil and the broader confinement) as a symbol of the Muslim Arab woman's oppression. These *Nahda* examples illustrate how the veil was repeatedly linked with the imprisonment and enslavement of the Muslim woman. Furthermore, as the texts from the three *Nahda* writers demonstrate, the association of the veil with imprisonment and enslavement during the colonial period of the *Nahda* parallels its association with ignorance, lack of freedom and intellectual deficiency.

Whether implicitly or explicitly evoking the model of the 'Western woman', the examples advocate a vision of the veil as an object that should be viewed through time and space. Already defined in visual and spatial terms, the veil in such a discourse also acquires a temporal meaning which positions it outside the *Nahda* time, and as a practice to discard in order to attain enlightenment. This type of discourse can be considered as part of the 'objectification' of the veiled woman, perceived as the victim of the institutions of the veil. In parallel with an Orientalist discourse focused on fixing the veil in terms of otherness, the *Nahda* examples fix the veil within meanings of imprisonment and enslavement, and space and time which nonetheless mark some differences with the Orientalist discourse.

5.3. Seductive Attractive Veils: Thin, Transparent *Burqu's* and Revealing *Mu'zars*

The *Nahda* texts affiliate the veil with attraction and seduction as I illustrate in this section. One instance of *Nahda* writing that draws the veil into the ambits of seduction

comes from Malak Hifni Nasif's (1962, p. 82) speech in *Al Jarida* (the newspaper office), which was attended by hundreds of women. She links the veil (the *burqu'*) with a dress that reveals more than conceals the female body:

> ...As for the veil (*burqu'*), it is more transparent than the heart of a child, so what is the purpose of the *Izar*? The aim behind it is to cover the body, the clothes and the adornments which Allah has made forbidden. So does this go in accordance with the current *Mu'zar* which has become a dress revealing the breasts, the waistline and the bottoms, in addition to the fact that some women have started wearing it in blue, brown and red?

Nasif here opposes the *Mu'zar* (which is a long cloak usually worn over clothes), and which has become a means of sexual attraction in Nasif's days. Although she is less vocal about total unveiling, and considers it a gradual process to be experienced in a society where the majority of women still have very little access to education and public space, she however provides us with some examples of how early Arab feminist writings associated the veil with meanings of seduction and sexual attraction. Nasif therefore contrasts the meaning of the veil in the religious discourse as that which covers the sexual aspects of women's bodies, with the adoption of the veil in her times in order to highlight and draw attention to the female body and anatomy. Speaking about the purpose of the *Izar* (which is similar to the modern equivalent of the *jilbab*, or a long cloak usually worn over other clothes), she rhetorically asks her audience if the *Izar* accords with the more current *Mu'zar* which reveals the female body and exposes it in public. She therefore equates the veil in her era with sexual attraction and seduction.

In an article entitled '*My Doctrine on Veiling and Unveiling*', Nasif (1962, p. 273) writes a response to criticism from one of her opponents, a man of law who was surprised by her previous silence regarding the issue of veil:

How would the veiled woman be harmed by the white *niqab* (*burqu'*) and the old veil (*milaa'a*) if she observes seriousness in her walking, and elaborates her veil (*mu'zar*)? If all women beautified themselves with the new *niqab* which our free jurist advocates, would the new veil cleanse their hearts from filth and their bodies from swaying and swaggering? [...] The moral is through woman's education and her will. Let her wear whatever pleases her from appropriate dress and let her be modest in her walking and no harm shall afflict her. I consider the unveiled woman who has good morals better than the veiled woman who is wearing the heaviest silks and the most inhibiting veils and who is licentious and frivolous.

In this example, Nasif associates the *niqab* with playfulness and coquetry (which reminds us of earlier examples from Orientalism also linking it with coquetry). The *niqab* or *burqu'* here embodies a beautifying and aesthetic element of the female attire, rather than a modest dress. The words 'swaying' and 'swaggering' suggest that the veil can be used as a means of sexual attraction, which contrasts with the modesty associated with it in other writings, and within the religious discourse of Islamic dress. In contrast to Amin's earlier reference to the veil as harm, Nasif wonders how a veiled woman can be harmed if she observes seriousness and 'elaborates her veil'. The 'new veil' in Hifni's words, is characterised with 'swaying and swaggering bodies' and 'filth of the hearts' to the point where unveiling is equated with good morals while the veil epitomises immorality and playfulness. These images reinscribe the veil within not only seduction and playfulness, but also with impurity and obscenity. Hifni's depiction of the veil, however, relies on the idea that women's dress ought to be devoid of exhibitionism (*tabarruj*), following the Qur'anic insistence that women do not wear makeup or ornaments in public space, and the requirement to cover all part of the body except the face and hands (Saadawi, 2010, p. 85). Unveiling the face was a process which would make the practice moral.

Nasif describes the *burqu'* as 'more transparent than a child's heart', in addition to describing the *mu'zar/Izar* as a 'revealing dress' increasingly worn by Egyptian women of her time while revealing the contours of the female body in public space. Adopting a religious discourse to criticise this practice of veiling, Nasif cautions against what she regards as the increasing sexualisation of modest Islamic dress at the turn of the nineteenth century. Although she did not advocate total unveiling, Nasif both spoke and wrote about the importance of education and upbringing in combating the sexualisation of Islamic dress. In contrast to the Orientalist discourse which emphasised the European subject's sexualisation of the Oriental/*harem* veil, the *Nahda* examples stress the uses and abuses of the veil by Muslim women in order to emphasise certain features of the female body, thereby focusing on the sexualisation of modest dress by veiled women themselves.

This type of veils becomes a source of seduction and sexual attraction (*fitna*). In another example, Qasim Amin associates the *burqu'* or *niqab* with *fitna* (seduction and sexual attraction). He writes (Amine, 2003, p. 64):

> The *burqu'* and *niqab* increase the fear of *fitna* because it is behind this white thin *niqab* that charms appear and imperfections disappear. The *burqu'* hides the area of the nose, mouth and lower jaw, and reveals the forehead, eyebrows, eyes, cheeks, temples and the surface of the neck. These covered items in fact are part of the beautifying elements of the desiring onlooker, and they urge him to discover little that has been hidden after being charmed by a lot that has been revealed. If the woman disclosed her face, her whole being would turn one away from looking at her.

Here the *niqab* or *burqu'* is seen as a means of seduction rather than an element of Islamic modest dress. The invisibility of the facial features is what makes it a sexually appealing symbol as the covered face which reveals the eyes and the eyebrows also exposes what is under the thin *niqab*. Thus the veil is associated not only with sexual attraction and seduction, but also with the fear of *fitna*. In relation to the notion of *fitna*, Margot Badran (2009, p. 74) states that, in popular belief, women were believed to be 'essentially sexual beings' and considered to 'possess greater sexual instincts, threatened to ignite chaos, or *fitna*' with which they were associated. In Amin's example, the *burqu'* and *niqab* are directly associated with the 'fear of *fitna*'. Portraying it as an item which 'reveals charms' and 'hides imperfections', he also adds to the sexual appeal of the veil an aesthetic dimension. In addition to echoing the Orientalist discourse of the veil as a symbol hiding the 'beautifying elements of the desiring onlooker', Amin links unveiling with turning the gaze away from women. It is interesting to read Nasif's and Amin's examples in parallel with the religious discourse part of which uses the idea of *fitna* as a justification for the practice of veiling. Opposing this type of discourse, Amin links the increase of *fitna* with the *burqu'* and *niqab*, which he maintains 'urge to discover more'. Moving away from the association of the veil with the sexualisation of the female body, the concept of *fitna* is introduced as a potential threat which can be caused by the veil rather than its absence. The sexualisation of the veil read within this concept therefore emphasises its sexual threat mentioned earlier in the Orientalist examples which I examined in the previous chapter.

What is striking about the above examples is that, in contrast to the dominant religious discourse which equates veiling with modesty and honour and emphasises the de-sexualisation of the female body in public space, *Nahda* proponents tie the veil with sexual attraction, seduction and *fitna*. As the examples illustrate, linking the veil with these notions positions unveiling not only within seriousness and a-sexuality, but also with morality. The veil in these terms stands against reaching a moral status. Unveiling thus becomes a means of achieving a better society which is implicitly unattainable with the veil. The association of the veil with sexual playfulness and unveiling with

seriousness and morality explicitly contrasts with the prevalent religious discourse which emphasises the importance of the veil in maintaining modesty within the public space. The examples from these texts therefore mark a difference with the dominant religious discourse of the veil as a means of achieving morality.

5.4. 'Veiled in her Ignorance and Backwardness' and 'bonds of ignorance and the veil'

Nahda intellectuals additionally classify the veil as a symbol of backwardness and ignorance. In his book *Athar Bahithat al Badiya*, (*Reports of the Seeker in the Desert*) (Nasif, 1962) Malak Hifni Nasif's brother, who collected her writings and later published them, introduces the works of his sister, whom he considers the first feminist woman orator in Egypt who openly fought for women's rights at the dawn of the twentieth century. In his writing about women's conditions during colonialism, he states (Nasif, 1962, p. 67) that:

> At that time, the veiled woman was veiled in her ignorance, backwardness and misguidance, and the cowardice of many of the reformers, the hegemony of the British colonial rule, the power of the foreign infiltration, and the weakness of governors and men of letters.

Directly linking the veil with ignorance and backwardness, Magd Deen Hifni Nasif blames not only the reformers, but also the British colonial rule as well as the weakness of the governors and men of letters of the time. The veiled woman becomes an example of ignorance due to the lack of education that was widespread, and additionally embodies backwardness which contrasts with the implicit progress and power of the colonial rule. The metaphor 'veiled in ignorance and backwardness and misguidance' explicitly refers to being denied and deprived of education and knowledge, but implicitly refers to the veil as an epitome of ignorance and backwardness. This

inherently associates unveiling with knowledge and progress, both of which are linked with the colonial ruler. Writing during the British colonial rule in Egypt, Magd Deen Nasif contrasts the 'power of foreign infiltration' with the 'cowardice of reformers' and the 'weakness of governors and men of letters'. He ties the veil with ignorance and backwardness which also implicitly contrast with the 'hegemony of colonial rule.' This was a at a time when the reformers and intellectuals were debating issues pertaining to women's rights, seeking means to improve their status which was also perceived as a means of achieving the progress of the whole nation and Muslim *Ummah*.

The image of the veil as a form of ignorance and backwardness echoes its colonial and Orientalist counterpart, but the allusion to 'colonial rule' and 'foreign infiltration' emphasise the dilemma faced by many colonised peoples of the time, having to negotiate between borrowing from the West, yet struggling against colonial intrusion, and between adopting Western ideals, and maintaining local religious and cultural specificities.[38] The discourse of the veil as a symbol of ignorance and backwardness is therefore part of an Arab reformist discourse aiming at changing the practice of veiling which had previously confined women to the private space.

There are many examples in *Nahda* texts which equate the veil with ignorance and backwardness. In his book, *The New Woman* (Amine, 1987), Qasim Amin likewise associates the veil with ignorance. Towards the end of his book, he offers a solution that would take his people out of their backwardness. In a more explicit nationalist stance, he (Amine, 1987, p. 140) proposes to 'raise them [his people] to the ranks of civilisation':

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[38] In the case of the Algerian colonial battle, Muslim feminist Marnia Lazreg (1994, p. 54) notes how the veil's shape changed as it became longer and acquired a new importance not as an emblem of cultural difference, but also 'protection from and resistance to colonial-qua-Christian domination'.

It is the liberation of woman from the bonds of ignorance and the veil. We have not invented this method, and we have no merit for inventing it, but other nations have used it before us and have benefited from it [...] Despite differences in their countries of origin, race, language and religion, these women have united on the issue of possessing their freedom and enjoying their independence. This is the freedom that has taken the Western woman out of her old backwardness.

Qasim Amin's expression 'the bonds of ignorance and the veil' positions the dress within the constraints of a lack of knowledge. The veil thus becomes an embodiment of ignorance and darkness, against the implicit light and knowledge of the Western woman. The veil is ignorance and darkness. Advocating the liberation of the Arab Muslim woman from 'old practices' such as the veil, Amin also supports the view that emulating Western women would save veiled woman from the 'old backwardness' of her Western counterpart. Unveiling epitomises a movement of progress. The double image of 'ignorance' and 'backwardness' reiterates the superiority of the Western model, and inferiority of the veiled Muslim woman. Fixing the veil within ignorance and backwardness likewise positions the dress in a time frame that is past and needs to be crossed to achieve knowledge and progress. Openly adopting a liberal discourse of emancipation, Amin stresses the importance of benefiting from 'other nations' and advocating the model of the Western woman. In order for the veiled woman to achieve progress and civilisation, following the Western model of freedom and independence are imperative. Unveiling, which he advocates in his books, are defined as the only means of saving the veiled woman from backwardness and ignorance, allowing her to join the Western woman who had already achieved freedom and independence.

Another *Nahda* proponent who evokes the issue of ignorance and backwardness in relation to the veil is Nazira Zain al-Din. In her book *Asufoor wal Hijaab* (*Unveiling*

and Veiling) (al-Din, 1928, p. 46), she implicitly links the *hijab* (both visual *burqu'* and spatial confinement) with making Muslim women 'ignorant', 'lacking intellect and religion'. The association of the hijab with lack of religion contrasts with some Muslim and Islamic feminists' equating Islamic dress with religiosity and piety (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. xiv). Associating the *hijab* with a form of protection for woman, Zain al-Din contends that 'it has taken the shape of oppression, ignorance and confinement to the house', as well as the adoption of two forms of the veil: the face-veil (or *burqu'*) which is the direct one, and the house which operates like a metaphor of the veil as it 'veils' woman from the outside world. Like in the earlier example, the veil embodies lack of intellect and reason, therefore ignorance. Although considered a more concrete and committed form of practice of religion and a sign of an increased religiousness, the veil for Zain al-Din is paradoxically linked with lack of religion. In addition to this, the *hijab* in both forms limits woman to 'the production of progeny' and 'serving men', implicitly preventing her from accessing freedom, independence and emancipation.

Tahar Haddad (1978) pursues the *Nahda* association of the veil with ignorance in his book '*Our Woman in Shari'a and Society*', which caused an uproar at the time of its publication in Tunisia during the *Nahda* period due to its call for unveiling. He asks (Haddad, 1978, p. 91):

> Can you imagine that after Muslims have strived to prepare the woman to confront society and accurately exploit the rights Islam has provided her with, this same reform which has solved her problem has thrown her back to the depths of homes veiled from the world which has made her the most striking example of ignorance, foolishness, injustice and bad education?

Here the expression 'depths of homes veiled from the world' equally positions home as a metaphor for the veil. The veil in both forms (the *niqab* and home confinement) is

associated not only with ignorance as in earlier examples, but also with foolishness, injustice and bad education. Calling for the removal of the visual and spatial *hijabs*, Haddad evokes ignorance and 'bad education', which implicitly posit the European subject as the holder not only of knowledge and education, but also enlightenment against the darkness of the *hijab*. Moreover, he refers to injustice in relation to the veil. Taking an Islamic perspective in his argument for the rights provided to Muslim women within an Islamic framework, he calls for unveiling which would not only free Muslim women from both visual and spatial *hijabs*, but also provide her with knowledge, justice, intelligence, and education, all of which are unattainable with the *hijab*. He stresses the idea of the veil as antithetical with intellectual ability and knowledge. Although he grounds his argument on Islamic principles, he reiterates the essentialist tropes of the veil that were common in the Orientalist tradition.

Similarly adopting a human rights discourse about the Arab woman, the Tunisian-born reformist states that the reform of women's rights has paradoxically led to an increased adoption of the *hijab*, the confinement and face-veiling of women which were common practices at the time. In this rhetoric of intellectual deficiency, the veil does not only mean ignorance and lack of education, but also injustice associated with confinement and veiling.

Zain al-Din similarly uses a discourse of women's rights in relation to the concept of knowledge as an ideal that is unattainable with the practice of veiling. In an example I cited earlier, she (al-Din, 1928, pp. 58-59) likewise equates veiling with ignorance, which she contrasts with knowledge and freedom provided by unveiling:

> ...I believe that unveiling, knowledge ... call more than veiling (*hijab*), ignorance...for protection, honour and modesty... This is because good manners

are not implanted in the soul of an ignorant person in the way that they do in
the soul of a knowledgeable one.

This example similarly equates veiling with ignorance whilst unveiling, which is
equated with knowledge, is connected with positive attributes. Similar to the previous
example which links the veil with the restriction of woman to her reproductive
capacity, Zain al-Din here equates the veil with a potential failure in the meaning of
motherhood, the human family and the good of society. All these associations attribute
morality to unveiling and immorality and decadence to the veil. Additionally, Zain al-
Din ties the veil with 'making woman ignorant' in addition to it being a means for
'attributing to women lack of intellect and religion'. Alluding to a long tradition of
excluding women from the fields of intellectual production and religious interpretation,
she challenges the perception of woman which reduces her to 'serving man and the
production of progeny'. In her association of the veil, she establishes the significance
of education, including in religious matters, in order to overcome the ignorance of the
veil. Unveiling becomes a means of raising woman's status from simply serving man
and producing progeny, to becoming knowledgeable and improving her status within
the family and the overall society. Through the association of the veil with ignorance
and backwardness, Zain Din reiterates the Orientalist trope of ignorance and darkness
of the dress, yet further emphasises the discourse of human rights that was prevalent
during her time, in which woman's status was increasingly debated among the Arab
intellectual elite in various Arab and Muslim countries. Progress, knowledge and
enlightenment in these terms were only achievable through unveiling.

Other *Nahda* figures used the idea of ignorance and backwardness regarding the veil.
Another *Nahda* proponent who also associated the veil with backwardness and
ignorance was Qasim Amin whose books *The Liberation of Woman* and *The New
Woman* focused on the issue of Islamic dress as the point of departure for any reform
in the Arab countries. In his first book, he discards the idea of following Western

nations in all their traditions for the sake of imitation and mimicry, or of getting attached to new habits merely on account of their novelty. However, he demands a 'lightening of *hijab*'. In this context, Amin (2003, pp. 68-69) directly links unveiling to progress when he asks the question:

> Is it now necessary for us to live and stay alive, or condemn ourselves to die and become extinct? [...] Or do we have to observe how others have progressed and we have regressed, how they have gained power and we have become weak? [...] This is a serious matter to which we have turned our attention.

In addition to indirectly connecting the veil with death and extinction through the expressions 'to die and become extinct', Amin explicitly associates the dress with regression, backwardness and weakness, which contrast with Western progress, enlightenment and power. On the one hand, this reiterates the dichotomous and hierarchical relationship between Western progress and Eastern backwardness through the image of the veil. On the other hand, these themes position veiling as a movement back in time, in opposition to unveiling as a movement forward in time. Veiling becomes a backward movement, unveiling a forward movement. The *hijab* is accordingly symbolic of the division between a West which unveiling has made stronger and more developed, and a weak East whose veiling keeps it backward.

Still emphasising the dichotomy between East and West, Amin compares the levels of education of Christian women and Muslim women in the East. He (Amine, 2003, p. 75) concedes that, due to their free mixing, Christian women have been able to develop mentally and intellectually, and have therefore gained a higher status than Muslim women, despite both women being from the same countries. Amin thus contrasts Western progress with his people's backwardness and Western power with his people's weakness. Bringing images of death in relation to maintaining the practice of veiling

and seclusion, he calls for 'life' which he associates with discarding the veil in order to achieve progress and power. The veil thus becomes weakness, unveiling power.

5.5. Veil and Dark Times: 'Darkness of the veil' or 'Enlightened Guardians'

The ideas of darkness and enlightenment were also part of the *Nahda* discourse of the veil. In a chapter of her book where she openly calls the authorities to free women from their low status, Nazira Zain al-Din draws an image of darkness with the veil and ignorance:

> Some of us have been cursed in the East with four types of darkness: darkness of the veil (*niqab*) in a woven cloth, darkness of the veil (*niqab*) in ignorance, darkness of the veil in hypocrisy, and darkness of the veil in inertia. We are therefore placed within many types of darkness, and the veils have grown to terrify us to the point where we almost fear the East draws a veil between us and its true luminous state (al-Din, 1928, p. 50).

In her association of the veil with darkness, Zain al-Din enumerates four different types of darkness. She adds to the material darkness symbolised by the *niqab* cloth the darkness of the metaphorical '*niqab* of ignorance', the darkness of hypocrisy, and the physical darkness of inertia and inaction. After naming these different types of darkness, Zain Din cautions against the 'terror' which she associates with the veil, and against the East 'drawing a veil between us and its luminous state'.

In contrast to the West and its 'enlightened' state, the East is 'cursed' with different layers of darkness of which the veil (or the *niqab/burqu'* more precisely) becomes an embodiment. The veiled woman is here clothed in various kinds of darkness. Positioning the veil within an antithetical relationship to enlightenment and progress,

the example also implicitly contrasts it with knowledge, education, sincerity and action. We can link the reference to the veil and hypocrisy with the idea of wrongly forcing women to veil without any religious basis. Additionally, the veil seems to cause strong emotions of fear and horror. The veil is thus not only dark, it embodies various forms of darkness. The curse of the veil is dark, and it is not only temporal, but also affective.

The image of darkness is also paralleled with a vision of the East as 'luminous', a perception which moves away from the previous association of the East with darkness and absence of enlightenment, which is attributed only to the Western model. Rather than echoing the dominant discourse of the veil as a symbol of the ultimate darkness of the East, which is in need of emulating the West to achieve progress, Zain al-Din's reference to the 'luminous state of the East' complicates the dominant discourse exclusively linking enlightenment with the West, and total darkness with the East. Although she recognises the four types of darkness, she nonetheless attributes a potential 'light' which the East can draw from its state. The physical, material, metaphorical types of darkness which represent a 'curse' for the Muslim woman can be overcome not through Western enlightenment, but via the 'true luminous state of the East' itself. Unveiling is thus associated not only with a Western model, but with a search for an 'authentic' and genuine enlightened state of the East. The veil darkness can be overcome through Eastern light.

The link established between the veil and darkness is sometimes crouched within religious references. In her book, for instance, Zain al-Din (1928, p. 51) blames men for deceiving women into thinking that the veil is an obligation (an action which maybe be linked to the image of 'darkness of the veil in hypocrisy' mentioned in the example above):

How much have they put a strain on us, what have they concealed from us in the dark periods of time that religion wants us to cover our faces, and their distortion was associated with compulsion, and not with valuing woman [...] How many enlightened guardians are there, whose hearts have bled at the sight of unmarriageable relatives oppressed in the darkness of the veil against their own wills. Compulsion originated from every person who had a fantasy until the Muslim woman witnessed every backward person or every person with an aspiration as a master, a guardian and a representative of her matters.

The veil is yet again associated with darkness. Here Zain al-Din draws a contrast between 'enlightened guardians' and their implicit unenlightened and backward counterparts who have forced women to wear the veil. As in the previous example, she directly ties the veil with 'darkness'. This contrasts not only with the 'enlightenment' of 'many guardians', but also the West, which is perceived as the model to be followed. Haideh Moghissi (1999, p. 15) draws our attention to how the trope of the 'domesticated, subjugated, unenlightened Other as opposed to the liberated, independent and enlightened Western self was used as a moral prop to legitimise colonial power relations'. We can see how Zain al-Din uses the idea of darkness to emphasise the superiority of the Western model in contrast to the Muslim other in need of enlightenment.

In her writing about the practice of face-veiling, Zain al-Din confirms that man has put a 'strain on woman', concealing from her that the *niqab* is not a religious obligation. This distortion to which she refers dates back to the 'dark periods of time'. Zain al-Din stresses that men have concealed knowledge from women in relation to the *niqab*, a compulsion linked with backwardness in her example. She thus establishes a connection between the *niqab* imposition and the 'dark times', and between the *niqab* and backwardness. She additionally ties unveiling with 'enlightened guardians' as both images reiterate the association of the veil with darkness, and unveiling with

enlightenment. The images of darkness/enlightenment and backwardness/progress draw the veil within the ambits of a discourse which again equates the practice with the dominant meanings of darkness and backwardness. Enlightenment, which is implicitly equated with unveiling, repeats the Orientalist images of the veil as a barrier against freedom and emancipation. The veil embodies darkness, tension, and perhaps damage and harm, duplicity, compulsion and distortion at once. As the example illustrates, the images attached to the garment situate it not only within the traditional darkness/enlightenment dichotomy, but also within an emotional realm. The veil is thus an affective object.

Zain al-Din repeatedly alludes to the images of darkness in her writings about the veil. In a similar example, she (al-Din, 1928, p. 51) calls upon the authorities of her country to 'dispel the darkness of ignorance and tyranny':

> Since you [authorities] have freed yourselves from the West in the last period of time, the light of freedom and knowledge has been reflected upon us, shining and dispelling the darkness of ignorance and despotism. We have been educated and have considered our religion with all its wisdom and eminence, and have found in it the opposite of what they have been hiding from us. We have seen that religion wants us to unveil our faces to the air and the light as all people uncover their faces.

Zain al-Din refers here to the decolonisation movements witnessed by many Arab countries during the beginning and middle of the twentieth century. She points out that the 'light of freedom and knowledge have been reflected on us', which she contrasts with the 'darkness of ignorance and despotism' attributed to the 'East' (which reminds us of the dichotomy made between darkness and enlightenment). The image here is that of reflection: the light of freedom and knowledge is 'reflected' on Muslims, and

Muslim women become a reflection of the West, an image or clone or mirror of the West. Unveiling is reflectional and inspires reflection.

Like in the earlier example, Zain al-Din ties the veil with deception and secrecy, while she equates unveiling with 'air and light'. We can read this as another reference to enlightenment, as well as to life itself which contrasts with the death of the veil. The veil embodies death, unveiling life. She attributes not only 'light' to the colonial rule, but also knowledge and freedom, which are contrasted with local darkness, ignorance and despotism. Speaking from a position of knowledge, she notes that education and religious knowledge are the means through which she found that religion advocates unveiling 'our faces to air and light', again reiterating the image of light to unveiling. As her examples illustrate, the veil does not only embody darkness, but also deception and death. In addition to being affective, the veil is deceptive and perhaps unethical.

What is the significance of the contrast between Orientalist and *Nahda* eras? As the comparison between the Orientalist and *Nahda* texts illustrates, decolonisation struggles such as the *Nahda* movement can retain many of the colonial meanings and tropes attached to the veil in their writings. If we consider these meanings in terms of continuity and discontinuity, we can argue that the veil represents a line of continuity of construction between Orientalist and *Nahda* writings of the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, whilst the *Nahda* texts retain and reiterate these associations of the veil, and whereas the different writings of the *Nahda* intellectuals demonstrate how the *Nahda* preserves the basic Orientalist discursive construction of the veil in terms of an 'other' object, they nonetheless diversify and expand this construction by embodying and embedding/fixing veils more in their local contexts and struggles.

On the one hand, Orientalist and *Nahda* texts use the trope of happiness to construct of the veil as a signifier of unhappiness. Yet while Orientalists emphasise the idea of

unveiling as a happiness mission coupled with a life mission which associates the veil with death and extinction, *Nahda* writers construct the veil as a signifier of unhappiness not only of the Muslim woman, but also of the Muslim society and global *Ummah*. Against the Orientalist limiting the notion of happiness to the victim-status of the Oriental woman in the harem, *Nahda* writings embed the notion of happiness within not only the concept of the *hijab* (visual and spatial veils), but also the notions of social justice, law and women's status in the family and Muslim societies at the beginning of the twentieth century. The *Nahda* writings therefore retain the construction of the veil with unhappiness, yet position it within broader debates about women in Arab Muslim contexts. As my analysis has shown, *Nahda* texts also demonstrate how the trope of happiness is embedded in an ethical and affective discourse of the veil. Regarding associations of the veil with enslavement and imprisonment, the Orientalist texts reiterate the trope of victimisation through the veil by constructing the veil as a prison, while the *Nahda* texts expand the Orientalist trope to include not only physical and spatial confinement, but also embodied and intellectual slavery. Although their writings rely on a colonial discourse for unveiling, their construction of the veil as a signifier of enslavement and imprisonment emphasise the importance of intellectual freedom, divine justice and the good of the family and society, hence including an ethical dimension to unveiling. Likewise, *Nahda* texts retain the Orientalist construction of the veil within exoticism and sexual seduction, (veil as sexual emotional and ethical dimensions) but expand these notions to include notions of the veil within immorality, impurity and obscenity. In contrast to the sexualisation of the Muslim woman in Orientalist writings, *Nahda* texts stress the abuses of the veil by Muslim women themselves, and the sexualisation of modest dress to include the notions of morality and *fitna*. The additional tropes of ignorance, backwardness and darkness which I have analysed in this chapter likewise retain the construction of the veil within these meanings. However, the *Nahda* writings continue to position meanings of the veil within their local struggles for women's rights and the attainment of justice, knowledge and progress which are constructed as antithetical to the hijab. Their constructions of the veil in these terms in turn emphasise the status of the veil as not only embodying these various associations, but also adding affective and ethical

dimensions to those embodiments. Analysing the construction of the veil in this comparative framework has allowed to see how the Arab *Nahda* texts of the early 20th century retain many of the basic constructions of the veil that were prevalent in Orientalist writings. As my analysis has shown, the contrast between texts from both eras demonstrates how colonial meanings of the veil can be adopted even within the framework of anti-colonial struggles of the early twentieth century. Yet although maintaining these colonial and Orientalist constructions, anti-colonial movements such as the *Nahda* also incorporate divergences from the traditional Orientalist tropes. These deviations operate, in constructions of the veil, as attempts to embed debates about the *hijab* within local struggles of the early twentieth century contexts of Arab and Muslim countries. The veil thus functions as a line of both continuity and discontinuity between Orientalist and *Nahda* constructions of the Muslim/Oriental woman.

6. **French Veils**

The previous chapters investigated the veil within Orientalist and *Nahda* texts of the archive, and tracing its trajectory through the histories of Orientalism, postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminism, and setting the background for a study of contemporary associations of Islamic dress in France and Morocco. As I elucidated in my methodology chapter, I chose Orientalist and *Nahda* texts because of the historical specificities of Morocco and France within these traditions and time frames: France with its long Orientalist tradition and colonial history, and Morocco due to its involvement with the Arab *Nahda* movement and its history as a Maghrebi North African nation-state and previous French protectorate.

Starting from Afsaneh Najmabadi's (2006) argument that 'the meaning of a Muslim woman's veil is both multiple and historically contingent, that this meaning has been subject to challenges and negotiations', the comparative focus of my analysis enables me to consider Islamic dress through different social and historical junctures in order to examine its meanings through time and space, and assess how the currently heightened preoccupation with the Muslim woman in media and politics is illustrated through the focus on the dress of the *Muslimah* in the French and Moroccan contemporary press. This can be added to my personal histories of a postcolonial diasporic *Muslimah*.

In this chapter, I analyse the meanings of the veil in three French mainstream weeklies during the *hijab* controversy which preceded the 2004 *hijab* ban in France[39], and

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[39] Alma and Lila Levy (daughters of a Jewish father and a *kabyle* mother, *Kabyle* referring to *Amazigh*/Berber people of Algeria) are expelled from their school in Aubervilliers in 2002 by the disciplinary council. The event marks a starting point for a polemic that will lead to the *hijab* ban in

consider first how the *hijab* is attached to different notions and values. In particular, I explore how the *hijab* becomes an embodiment of fundamentalism[40], Islamism[41] and extremism,[42] and how the garment is constructed as antagonistic to, or irreconcilable with, secularism and the French nation as defined by the French mainstream press and politics. In the second part of the chapter, I explore how the dress becomes associated with sexual otherness through the notions of oppression, inferiority and stigma, and how it comes to embody an attack to emancipation and equality. In the third and last part of the chapter, I examine how the veil signifies an ethical and communal otherness through acquiring meanings of proselytising, propaganda and communalism. I explore the various meanings of the *hijab* in the press and politics through a close examination of examples of texts from the weekly newspapers *Le Nouvel Observateur,*[43] *Le Point*[44]

French public schools in 2004. I chose this timeline of the headscarf affair as it provides the first case which led to the *hijab* ban which is still in place today.

[40] Olivier Roy (2007, p. 9) defines fundamentalism as follows: 'when religion separates itself from the surrounding cultures and defines itself as pure religion in a system of explicit codes (in its political form this is called Islamic ideology; in its strictly religious form, it is Salafism)'.

[41] Olivier Roy's also defines Islamism as 'the brand of modern political Islamic fundamentalism that claims to re-create a true Islamic society, not simply by imposing sharia, but by establishing first an Islamic state through political action. Islamists see Islam not as a mere religion, but as a political ideology that should reshape all aspects of society (politics, law, social justice, foreign policy, and so on). (Roy, 2002, pp. 58-59)

[42]'*Fondamentalisme'*, '*integrisme' (or extremism)* and '*islamisme'* are French words which have been used to describe French Muslims who adopt the *hijab* in France. In contrast with 'liberal and moderate French Muslims' who are categorised as proponents of French secularism (laicity), Muslims donning Islamic dress are viewed as a threat to the republic which is interpreted as symbolising allegiance to an Islamic political ideology at the expense of French secularism and laws.

[43] *Le Nouvel Observateur* which has been named *L'Obs* since 2014 is a weekly French newsmagazine which is based in Paris. It is the most outstanding French general information magazine as far as audience and circulation are concerned. Since its inauguration in 1964, the weekly has covered political, business and economic news, and features coverage of European, Middle Eastern and African political, commercial and cultural affairs. It is most notable for its strong political and literary issues, and is well-known for its detailed treatment of current issues. Its current editorial board is presided over by two of its co-founders, Jean Daniel and Claude Perdriel, two editors-in-chief, Laurent Joffrin and Serge Lafaurie, as well as director general, Jacqueline Galvez. A 65% stake in the magazine was purchased by the owners of Le Monde in 2014. Jean Daniel and Claude Perdriel were the founders of the 1964 magazine. The circulation of the magazine during the first half of 2013 was 526,732 copies. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Nouvel_Observateur (accessed)

[44] *Le Point* is a French weekly political and news magazine published in Paris. It was established 1972 by a group of journalists who had left the editorial team of L'Express, which was then owned by a member of parliament of the Parti Radical (Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber). Le Point is published

and *Marianne*[45] as well as the Stasi Commission Report and Jacques Chirac's speeches.

As I noted in my methodology chapter, my choice of the three weeklies is based on the important readership that they have within the French mainstream print media. Although my study does not claim to provide a comprehensive consideration of all the associations and meanings which are evoked in relation to the *hijab*, the three weeklies remain representative examples of a wider discourse on the veil within French print media. In addition to the press, I have examined examples from political texts which include President Jacques Chirac's speeches and the Stasi Commission Report[46], both of which constitute the basis on which the 2004 *hijab* ban was issued.

My analysis also aims to compare how the current meanings of the *hijab*[47] evoke older colonial meanings and images of the veil; they re-evoke an 'essential difference' of the veil. I argue that in the French publications and texts, we can read associations of the *hijab* in terms of a colonial discourse adopted and updated to suit the contemporary context. Throughout, I will be reading the archival texts in the light of postcolonial, Muslim and Islamic feminist frameworks. After I analysed how the veil operates as a metaphor of otherness within Orientalist and *Nahda* texts, I compare this construction

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weekly by Le Point Communication. The editorial team of spring 1972 was directed by Claude Imbert. The magazine has recently modelled itself closely on Time Magazine and Newsweek. Le Point has a conservative and centre right stance. The 2013 circulation of the magazine was 417,062 copies. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Le_Point

[45] *Marianne* is a weekly news magazine based in France. It was inaugurated in 1997 by Jean-François Kahn with Maurice Szafran as editorialist. The weekly claims a distribution of 300,000 copies per week. It has a centre-left, left-wing stance. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marianne_(magazine))

[46]The name of the Commission was taken from its heading member, Bernard Stasi who was the spokesperson for the government.

[47] As Caitlin Killian (Killian, 2003) points out, the girls concerned with the 2004 ban and who were at the center of the controversy usually wore Western clothes with a veil (*hijab*) pinned around their face to cover their hair. As we shall see through the examples, this distinction will be obscured through references to other elements of modest attire such as the *niqab, jilbab or khimar*, which have also been attributed to the young French *Muslimahs*.

with the more contemporary one emerging from texts within the French press and politics. So what meanings are attached to the veil before the 2004 *hijab* ban? How do these compare with Orientalist and *Nahda* tropes of the veil?

6.1. Political Threats to the French Nation

6.1.1. Islamist Violent Fanatic and Other French *Hijabs*

This section explores texts in the French press and politics where the veil is affiliated with a difference that is defined explicitly in political terms. It is noteworthy that, as Pnina Werbner (2007) noted in her comparative study of Muslims in Britain and France, although the meanings of veiling differ depending on contexts, the French have emphasised 'the pernicious features of veiling' in discussing and passing the law against the veil in schools. These include stories about the veil which are linked in public imagination with violent compulsory veiling in Iran after the revolution and in Afghanistan under the Taliban (Werbner, 2007). In what follows I consider veil associations with Islamism[48] and violence where 'political Islam' is presented as a 'creeping danger' that seeks to manipulate the French political scene (Gozlan, 2004). In the French weekly *Marianne*, for instance, during the heated debate about the *hijab* affair, Martine Gozlan (Gozlan, 2004) asks the question:

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[48] Nilüfer Göle refers to the terms 'Islamist movements' and 'radical Islamism' interchangeably to name 'Islamic movements as a collective action whose ideology was shaped during the late 1970s by Islamist thinkers all over the Muslim world (such as Abu-Maudoodi in India, Sayyid Qutb in Egypt, Ali Shariati in Iran, and Ali Bulac in Turkey) and by the Iranian Revolution'. The term 'radicalism' connotes 'a return to the origins, to the fundamentals of Islam, to address a critique to Western modernity on the one hand and a desire to realize a systemic change, to create an Islamic society, on the other'. (Göle, 1996, p. 1). Lila Abu Lughod (2001, p. xiii) additionally notes that the term Islamism emphasises 'self-consciousness about Islamic identity and the very deliberate way that people who adopt this identity want society to conform to Muslim values'.

Who are the authors of this [veil] manipulation? Is it the vast galaxy exploiting the Islamic frustrations to revive, all around the world, this intensely violent identity which is the launch pad of political Islam? The affair of the veil is like holy bread and the veil the banner which floats on every major Muslim crisis. Its adoption or refusal have accentuated in a century (in reality since the dawn of Islam, but let us stay in the contemporary age, from Turkey to Egypt and in the *Maghreb*) all the tragic forward and backward social movements caught between the obsession of the past and the dizziness of the future. It is therefore logical that the Arab-Islamic world - mainly Islamist in answer to the attacks to which it has been a victim, has been at once subject to manipulation and has been manipulative – as it gave in once more to the spell of the battle of the veil.

In addition to attributing the *hijab* to an undefined 'nebulous group', Martine Gozlan also identifies it with a major symbol of political Islam and Islamism, and evokes the Islamic Revival movement experienced in Muslim countries through the terms 'revive' and 'Islamic frustrations'. Gozlan further ties what she calls 'the battle of the veil' (la bataille du voile), and implicitly Islamic Revivalism, with an 'intensely violent identity' systematically associating the *hijab* (and the wider Islamic Revivalism) with an extreme form of violence. As Islamic belief and the *hijab* become an indicator of a 'latent commitment to violence that can never fade,' (Razack, 2008, p. 47) we can link this vision of the *hijab* with a violence which remains invisible. Against the disturbing visibility of the garment in public space, the invisibility of violence is considered to be inherent and intrinsic to the *hijab* as a symbol which promotes an extremist and 'intensely violent identity'. In their insightful study of 'honour killings', Heidi Safia Mirza and Veena Meetoo (2007) argue that, since September 11, 'young ethnicised women have become highly visible. However, they are now problematically contained and constructed in the public consciousness within a discourse of fear and risk posed by the presence of the Muslim alien 'other'' (Meetoo & Mirza, 2007). We can see how such a discourse can be applied to the visibility of the *hijab* in the French context. It is a visibility of young *Muslimahs* through which the *hijab* is constructed as a 'violent'

symbol. It is also the higher visibility of the *hijab* in public space which paradoxically allows for a greater emphasis on the risk that the dress poses. Characterised by a global transnational impact reaching beyond the French national borders, the violent identity of the (Arab-Islamic) *muhajjaba* moves from the 'mainly Islamist Arab-Islamic world' to the French scene. The example thus equates the *hijab* not only with an extremely violent identity, which has its roots in a geographically remote place (the Middle East and the *Maghreb*), but also with an ideological difference with this 'other' space, defined as violent and Islamist.

There is a context to how the *hijab* becomes an Islamist threat: even if we know this context, we still need to understand it. September 11 has marked what Göle refers to as the 'violent eruption of Islam at the heart of Western hegemony' where Islamism, which we cannot reduce to terrorism alone, acquires 'transnational dynamics, and establishes itself in Western spaces' (Göle, 2011, pp. 32-33).[49] Although Islamism encompasses various dimensions and one needs to distinguish between Islam as a religious practice and Islamism as an ideology, in the example the *hijab* becomes a symbol of radical Islamism which promotes violence and terror. In other words, it is through the values projected onto the *hijab* that Islam as a religious practice is conflated to Islamism as an ideology.

As Naima Bouteldja (Bouteldja, 2007) argues, 'as Muslims and Islam are increasingly conflated with Islamists and terrorism, it is fast creating a climate in which Muslims are presumed guilty until proven innocent, and where many feel they have no other choice than to withdraw into an identity being constructed for them' (Bouteldja, 2007). Violence, terror and Islamism are thus conflated with the *hijab* which in turn positions

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[49] Sulltana Alvi (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. xiv) additionally point out to the tendency of Western media and political leaders to associate Islam with terrorism.

the French *Muslimah* in a state of culpability. There are many examples of this conflation; it has become routinised. For instance, the text also defines the 'Arab-Islamic world' as 'Islamist', reinforcing at once the assumption of a systematic link between Islam and extremism, hence the conflation of religious or pious practice and violent ideology. The statement further limits religious fanaticism to the Islamic religion. Amina Wadud (Wadud, 2006, p. 57) notes that, in the context of Judaism, the term 'Zionism' disentangles the political and the sacred spheres, whereas there exists no similar operation to distinguish political Islam from the sacred, making it difficult to understand what the term 'Islam' means when it is used. The example systematically affiliates the *hijab* with political Islam and violence, thereby conflating the practice of veiling with the promotion of violent Islamism. The associations of the *hijab* with manipulation, violence and fanaticism parallel the Orientalist and colonial themes I discussed in earlier chapters. There are similar instances of associations of the veil with a violent and extremist symbol in Castellan's texts, and Fanon's writing about the mission of the French coloniser to attack the most visible symbol of Algerian tradition.

The use of the expression 'Arab-Islamic world' (*monde arabo-musulman*) additionally shows an imprecise view of the homogenised and essentialised category 'Arab': not only is it monolithic and implies the existence of a homogeneous and fixed unity, but it is also questionable since not all Arabs are Muslims and not all Muslims are Arabs (Razack, 2008, p. 34). In this context, anti-Muslim racism or what is referred to as Islamophobia has produced an 'Arabification' of Muslims and 'Muslimification' of Arabs (Razack, 2008, p. 34.). In fact, in addition to the fact that Arab countries are inhabited by other ethnicities, Arabs represent a minority among Muslims worldwide. Many Muslims in Arab countries, or countries that have a majority or near majority of people who identify themselves as Arab, may share certain characteristics pertaining to Islam, yet there are differences in branches of Islam such as *Sunni*, *Shi'a*, and *Matha'hib,* or major recognised Islamic schools of thought within Sunni Islam, *Hanafi, Hanbali, Sha'fi'i or Ma'liki*. Additionally, Arabophone Muslims speak different dialects of Arabic (as well as indigenous dialects such as Amazigh or Berber), and they

have no political or economic union, such as the European Union. Moreover, in addition to Christians and Jews, different ethnicities inhabit Arabophone countries, among which one of the major distinctions in North Africa is between the Berber or *Amazigh* people, and the people of Arab descent who later conquered Maghrebi countries. Also the use of 'world' implies an imagined unity which remains rather mythical.

In addition to indicating a preoccupation with the Islamic and Middle Eastern countries and their associated Islamic Revivalism symbolised by the veil, the term 'Arab Islamic' also denotes a concern with the French Muslim population from Maghrebi origin through the link with the 'battle of the veil' which refers to the French *hijab* controversy, and more tacitly to the colonial battle of the veil in Algeria. Coding the *hijab* with the category 'Arab' additionally racialises French *Muslimat* (Muslim women) by depicting them through their historical cultural/ethnic Maghrebi origins, hence restricting the *hijab* to a particular racial and cultural category. This is comparable with Amina Wadud's statement about wearing the *hijab* which has raised her 'ethnic anonymity' in different countries including the United States, not disclosing her African origins and making others identify her with various Muslim ethnicities. (Wadud, 2006, p. 224.) In the case of French *Muslimat*, rather than being anonymous, the *hijab* instead becomes synonymous with their ethnic/cultural background as it unambiguously marks their cultural and historical North African origins. The French *Muslimah* is thus identified through her *hijab*, hence becoming 'ethnically' remarkable and 'racially' outstanding.

We can further draw an analogy between the category 'Arab' and that of 'immigrant' which, as Sunera Thobani (2007, p. 76) argues, unsettles the notion of the nation as a 'homogeneous non-racial entity, drawing attention to the presence of 'racial Others'. Paradoxically, the racialised category immigrant also 'upholds the myth of the homogeneous nation' by constituting immigrants as 'perpetual strangers' even when

they belong to the second or third generation (Thobani 2007, p.76), in this case of French-born citizens. Sara Ahmed (2000, p. 16) has also pointed out to how the 'figure of the stranger' is constructed through various discourses, arguing that the difference of 'strangers is claimed as that which makes the nation be itself'. The categories 'Arab-Islamic' and '*Maghreb*' which Gozlan evokes in relation to the *hijab* affair construct the *hijabed* body of the French *Muslimah* within a racial, ethnic and cultural difference and otherness in relation to the French non-Arab, non-Maghrebi, non-Muslim citizen. The example thus constructs the *hijab* within racial terms, or a 'racialised knowledge production' (Razack, 1998, pp. 94-92) of the *hijab* as an alien element to the French nation. The French 'battle of the veil' which evokes the colonial times becomes a means of linking the practice not only with an 'Arab' and 'Maghrebi' phenomenon, but also with an 'Islamist' threat, hence both racialising and politicising the *hijab*.

The homogenisation of the French nation accompanies that of the *hijab* as a political 'Arab' 'Islamist' phenomenon having roots in the 'Arab-Islamic world'. In the review of the histories of the veil, I discussed Mohanty's idea of 'homogenisation' in the Western feminist representation of the 'third-world woman'. We can usefully apply this idea to the homogenisation of the 'Arab Islamist world' on the one hand and the 'Islamist veil', both of which serve to draw frontiers between France and the 'Arab world,' and distance the *hijab* from the French context. The idea that the majority of the 'Arab world' is 'Islamist' implies that Arab nation-states adhere to a violent type of Islamism which remains unclear and non-defined in the example.

In practice, governments and states of the Arab and Maghrebi regions, whose legal systems have been changed since the colonial era, seek to promote a modern reading of Islam. This is the case for Morocco which will be examined in the next chapter. The predominant nationalist ideology in Tunisia, for instance, held that liberalism and secularism should be the founding principles of the Tunisian nation, and woman the 'bastion' and force that should hold the burden of the national project after

independence from colonial rule (Daoud, 1993, p. 12). In various Muslim countries, the influence of modernisation was manifested in women's discarding of the Islamic dress.

The abandonment of the veil endorsed by Muslim countries through their experiences of modernisation following decolonisation movements, and the secularisation policies adopted in most Muslim-majority nation-states, represent an instance of a discourse which equates the veil with non/anti-modernity. Yet, as Olivier Roy notes, the process of westernisation of Muslim countries, although it has been followed by an Islamic revival in different points (political, societal, increased veiling, references to sharia in the law) does not signify a 'return to a premodern society' but rather an endeavour to 'Islamise modernity'. (Roy, 2002, p.18-19) In the more recent European context, Göle states that Muslim women's participation in public life, their visibility in urban spaces as well as socialising with men point to a secular way of life, and a significant change in the way public life is structured (Göle, 2011, p.107-108). The 'secular way of life' which French *Muslimat* in *hijab* adopt through their visibility and participation in urban space contrasts with the homogeneous image of the *hijab* as an exclusively violent Islamist, and by implication an anti-modern symbol which promotes a violent Islamisation of the French political and social systems.

At another level, against the affiliation of the *hijab* with an 'intensely violent identity' which symbolises a threat to the secular ideal, the process of immigration is accompanied by 'acculturation concerning organised religion and authority, as young Muslims usually part with traditional interpretations of religion' (Göle, 2011, p.23).[50]

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[50]Regarding the term acculturation which has replaced the word assimilation, Caitlin Killian (2006, p. 8) argues that 'acculturation differs from assimilation because it implies becoming competent in the ways of the host society while continuing to be identified by others as a member of a minority group— in other words assimilating culturally but not being socially and/or economically assimilated into the host country's institutions. Used this way, acculturation reads much like segmented assimilation'.

The image of the veil as a fixed, homogeneous and violent symbol which is importable from a remote place rests on the assumption that it constitutes an essential Islamist and violent object which systematically transfers violence to the French scene. The example endorses a vision of the *hijab* as a culturally, racially and ethnically alien symbol to the French framework and the secular normative subject, further emphasising its otherness.

The expression 'battle of the veil', which is also the title of the article, emphasises the danger that Arab/Maghrebi Muslim countries pose to France through the 'violent Islamist' threat. This places the *hijab*ed body of the *Muslimah* outside the borders of the French nation as it represents an 'Islamist' 'Arab' and 'Maghrebi' threat, and therefore an alien element to the French secular space and geographical boundaries. 'The Battle of the Veil' also connotes the colonial obsession with the veil in Algeria evoked by Fanon. We can draw a parallel between the battle in France taking place prior to the *hijab* ban, and the older colonial battle of the veil in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, with the difference of the 'Muslim other' being a second and third-generation French-born-citizen rather than a colonial Maghrebi subject. The transposed 'battle of the veil' reinscribes the *hijab* not only within an otherness defined in racial and cultural terms ('Arab' 'Maghrebi') but also in political terms as a metaphor for manipulative, violent Islamism.

The idea of the *hijab* as a violent Islamist symbol is sometimes more explicitly tied with its notion as a threat to the republic, thereby pitching the republic against what it

calls 'fanaticism' or 'extremism' as in this statement from *Le Point* by Jean Francois Revel[51]:

> ...the headscarf attack is launched by girls who are not suddenly caught by a renewal of their faith, but are duly reprimanded and manipulated by Islamist fanatics. That is why the headscarf in schools is not a simple religious sign, indicating the faith of those who wear it. It is the message which the Islamists send to us, and they decide to lead the assault against the Western values. It is the Muslims who are sincerely republican who denounce this danger with the utmost lucidity in our country. Our leaders, on the contrary, believe they can overcome the difficulty by declaring that it does not exist [...] But the conflict is already open, and the activated war is not that of the republic against Islam, but of fundamentalism against the republic (Revel, 2003)

Similar to the image of the 'battle of the veil', this article attributes expressions to the *hijab* which include 'attack of the veil' (*offensive du voile*), 'open conflict' (*conflit ouvert*) and 'activated war' (guerre activée), all of which suggest a combat launched by the *hijab* against the republic. As Werbner writes in the context of 'embodied struggles' among Muslims in Britain and France, in addition to being perceived as the forerunners of a dangerous attack to French secularism, the girls who wear headscarves in France are comprehended as the pioneers of more 'extreme demands for separate institutions and special treatment, and for the predatory expansion and colonization of

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[51] Jean-François Revel, whose real name is Jean-François Ricard, was born in 1924 in Marseille. From 1943 until the end of the war, he participated in the Resistance led by Auguste Anglès, under the pseudonym "Ferral." It was during this time of war that he published his first texts in the magazine Confluences. He left University in 1963 to devote himself to a career as a journalist and writer. His literary career began in 1957 with the novel Histoire de Flore. He is the author of about thirty works, the most famous of which are Ni Marx ni Jésus (1970), La Tentation totalitaire (1976), Comment les démocraties finissent (1983). He regularly collaborated to the art magazine *L'Œil* from 1961 to 1967. Pamphleteer and essayist, he collaborated with France-Observateur, and became director of L'Express in the late 1970s,which he left in May 1981. Jean-François Revel has also worked as a columnist for radio stations: Europe 1 (1989-1992), RTL (1995-1998). From 1982 he was a columnist for the newspaper Le Point. http://www.babelio.com/auteur/Jean-Francois-Revel/3818

public spaces'. (Werbner, 2007) We can certainly see how the use of terms such as 'attack', 'conflict' and 'war' in relation to the *hijab* in France depict the French *Muslimah* as a potential threat to French secular values. The *hijab* in such a discourse not only embodies an attack, but also carries potential 'extreme demands' by French Muslims who are grasped as 'colonisers' of French secular space.

As the carrier of an 'Islamist message', the *hijab* is portrayed not merely as an assault to Western values (Zuhur, 1992)[52], but also a war of the republic which fights against 'fundamentalism'. The inscription of the *hijab* within fundamentalism suggests a process of 'looking backward' which contrasts with the 'looking forward' promoted by the ideology of progress and enlightenment on which secularism is based. In his study of Islam in the media, Edward Said argues that the concept of 'fundamentalism' which is constantly evoked in the media, has come to be routinely tied with Islam' and that 'the deliberately created associations between Islam and fundamentalism ensure that the average reader comes to see Islam and fundamentalism as essentially the same thing' (given the tendency to reduce Islam to a handful of rules, stereotypes, and generalizations about the faith, its founder, and all of its people) (Said, 1997, p. xvi).

In Revel's example, the *hijab* epitomises not only an implicit 'backwardness', but also an essentially 'fundamentalist' symbol of Islam in France. The *hijab* embodies a broader 'fundamentalist' war. The example yet again conflates Islam as a religious practice with fundamentalism, which is in turn equated with Islamism. Notions such as 'radical Islamism' and 'neofundamentalism' seek to explain Islam's political and collective renewal, yet the perspectives adopted by political scientists stress the collective and ideological aspects of the movement, without considering the

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[52] In her study of Islamist movements in Egypt during the 1980s, Sherifa Zuhur notes that the word 'fundamentalism [*usuliyya*] suggests ahistoricity and looking backward.' (Zuhur, 1992, p. 10.)

'problematic and personal relation to modernity' (Göle, 2011, p.46-47). Similarly, equating the *hijab* with fundamentalism and fanaticism overlooks the personal dimension that French Muslim girls hold in relation to the dress. As Werbner notes, the *hijab* which is worn in Britain communicates a 'new identity' which is not necessarily 'fundamentalist, Islamist or radical' because its signification and the politics of embodiment it symbolises can vary to a great extent in different contexts as well as among individuals. (Werbner, 2007) The 'activated war' which the example establishes between Islamic fundamentalism and the republic further stresses the idea of the nation facing a threat embodied by the presence of the *hijab* in schools. Such a discourse of the *hijab* as an essential symbol of fundamentalism (and a threat to French civic culture) needs to be considered not only within the framework of a post 9/11 fear of Islam, but also in the context of fear that members of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) were organising in France, and images of forced veiling in Iran and Algeria since the early and mid-1990s. (Killian, 2003) These contexts have also contributed to reinforcing the image of the veil as a fundamentalist threat.

We can add the link which the earlier example sets between the *hijab* and the categories 'Arab' '*Maghreb*' and 'immigrant' to the category of 'Muslim' girls who are strictly defined following their religious/cultural belonging, and who are thus reduced to their visible/visual Muslimness. Additionally, allying French *Muslimat*'s bodies with a 'terrorist threat' through the named expressions serves to reproduce 'past encounters in the present times', as Thobani notes in the Canadian context of constituting the Canadian 'sense of nationality' in terms of 'actual and paranoid encounters' as 'the protection of nationals from explosive racial and terrorist violence through the strengthening of state power becomes the solution to the presence of potentially lethal racial strangers'. (Thobani, 2007, p23).

The fundamentalist threat attributed to the *hijab* in the French republican schools is an instance of a discourse which defines French *Muslimat* against the ideal secular

national subjects. As the most visible symbol of Muslimness in France, the example constitutes the *hijab* as an assault not only against the French secular normative subject, but also against 'Western values' and identity, portrayed as a fixed and static entity in open combat against dangerous 'Islamist fanatics' and 'fundamentalist' others. Sara Ahmed's notion of 'strange encounters' and Thobani's 'paranoid encounters' can be usefully applied to the idea of the *hijab* as a threat to the French republican school, extending to the republican values and nation. These encounters with 'potentially lethal strangers' position the *hijab* not only within a political threat, but also with an inherently racial and cultural threat to the French republican subject and its values. The *hijab*ed *Muslimah* thus embodies and consolidates the vision of the French secular subject as one that is distanced from the Islamist, fanatic, and fundamentalist other. Equally important is the attack said to have been launched against the French republican values, which emphasises the dichotomy between superior French Western values, and inferior Islamist values assigned to the *hijab*.

The image of French *Muslimat* 'manipulated' and controlled by their male counterparts and the example's allusion to *hijab*ed girls 'manipulated by Islamist fanatics' recall the image of the Oriental woman as a victim of her male oppressor. As Mirza and Meetoo argue in relation to the more recent Islamophobic discourse of the media, 'ethnicised women' are 'pathologised as victims' (Meetoo & Mirza, 2007). Positioning French *Muslimahs* as tools deployed and controlled by 'Islamist fanatics' is an instance of a discourse which equates them with victims. Not only are they 'ethnicised' through references to their racial/ethnic origins, but also 'pathologised as victims' of a fanatic fundamentalism. This idea is that of French Muslim girls being coerced or forced to wear the *hijab*, despite the fact that many were repeatedly requested to remove it, either by their parents or schools authorities, and others voluntarily quit school after being expelled. The title of the article '*Extremism against the Republic'* reinforces the idea of a violent battle against the *hijab* which embodies fanaticism, which further suggests links with the war fought between coloniser and colonised during the colonial era. Revel tacitly positions 'secular' Muslims against other French 'extremist', and

'fundamentalist' Muslims, contrasting 'republican Muslims' with non-republican ones against whom the war is waged. The binary construction republican/non-republican Muslims hence sets the ground for a vision of the West as a homogeneous entity with a 'duty to sort out good Muslims from bad Muslims' (Razack, 2008, p.49). These binary oppositions also serve to alienate young *hijab*ed *Muslimat* and situate them as 'outsiders' to the secular nation, as the others who cannot be accepted within the republican school.

There are many examples associating the *hijab* with extremism. In an article affiliating the *hijab* of French *Muslimah*s with Islamism, Claude Imbert[53] from *Le Point* allies the dress with demands by French Muslims, masking extremist views that are irreconcilable with the 'French democracy' (Imbert, 2004):

> ...Because we quickly understood that the veil of the young ladies announced only a veiled and joint operation of evident fanatics, that in certain classes, the teachers could not teach any more without being threatened, either in biology, or history of the religions, or the *Shoah*, and that the aversion of Jews proliferated in classes. In hospitals, the women refused the ungodly exam of the doctor. In brief, a certain Qur'anic law instilled in various places its unbearable taboos. And the declared opponents of democracy began to challenge the rights of our open and gentle democracy to their profit.

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[53] Claude Imbert was a French journalist who was born in 1929 at Quins in the Aveyron. He began his career at Agence France-Presse on behalf of which he spent several years in Africa. In 1964, he joined the newspaper L'Express, of which he was chief editor since 1966. In 1971, he left L'Express and became chief editor at Paris Match. The following year, he founded Le Point where he was managing editor and general manager before giving his post to Franz-Olivier Giesbert. He however continued to deliver a weekly editorial to the magazine. In 1976, he was editor of samedi matin at Europe 1, with Jean Daniel and Serge July. He participated for several years in a weekly current affairs debate with Jacques Julliard on LCI. http://www.babelio.com/auteur/Claude-Imbert/68403 http://www.aveyron.com/accueil/imbert.html http://www.revue-medias.com/claude-imbert-l-homme-qui-fait-le,70.html

Set within a discourse of rights, the example draws a contrast between 'democracy' and an implicit 'theocracy' linked with the *hijab*. The image of a 'veiled and organised operation of evident fanatics' suggests an Islamist threat against the republic, resonating with earlier references to the 'battle of the veil' 'war' and 'veil attack'. The example constructs this hidden 'joint operation' as a dangerous Islamist threat organised against republican values, and challenging its laws. The *hijab* thus stands as the marker of a political difference (Islamist, theocratic) against the French nation (secular, democratic). Turned into a national threat, the few instances of students who refused to attend some biology classes, religious history and the *Shoah,* and women expressing their preference for female doctors are portrayed as part of a 'joint operation of evident fanatics'. The text also contrasts 'Qur'anic law' with republican laws offered by an 'open and gentle democracy' (Baraganzi, 2004, p. 6). In short, the example not only aligns the *hijab* with fanaticism and extremism, but also with a war waged against republican schools, hospitals, and laws. The reference to Qur'anic law, which is itself misleading, explicitly contributes to contrasting the *hijab* with French democracy, further marking it with an ideological difference from French secular laws. Similarly, the implicit equation of the veil with theocracy and more explicitly with 'Qur'anic laws', locates it outside the French republic. Regarding Qur'an and *Shari'a*, Baraganzi argues that 'the constructs 'Islamic law' and '*shari'a* law' do not represent the Qur'anic *Shari'a* (with capital S), meaning the collective guidelines of the Qur'an that encompass an intertwined moral and legal bind once the individual accepts the guidelines of his or her belief system, nor do they represent the Qur'an's principles' (Baraganzi, 2004, p.6). By giving these opinions a legal status as 'law', Orientalists and contemporary Muslims have confused the Qur'anic *Shari'a* (guidelines) with other legislation or canonized laws (Baraganzi, 2004, p. 6). We can notice how Imbert's reference to 'Qur'anic law' represents an instance of attaching 'laws' to the 'Qur'an' which provides guidelines rather than 'laws'. This conflation of Qur'an with laws additionally marks the *hijab* of the French *Muslimahs* with 'laws' which belong outside the 'democratic' laws attributed to the republic.

The image of the dress 'veiling' a 'vast invisible mass of evident fanatics' bears resemblance with the perception of veiled women as agents for the battle against the colonial power during the Algerian national liberation struggle, when '*haiked*'[54] women were actively involved in the war that brought about the end of colonisation. The same scenario was repeated in Morocco where sisters, wives and members of the resistance participated in the struggle during two years preceding the independence of Morocco from French colonial rule, when they were reported to have used their veils to carry weapons (Daoud, 1993, p.255). Fanon's accounts show how Algerian women used the *haik* as an instrument, a form of camouflage against the colonial authorities, making them play a decisive role in the Algerian national liberation movement (Fanon, 1967, p. 67). A similar image inhabits the perception of the French *Muslimah* as the newly dressed threat to France. Yet, rather than being a threat to colonial power, the *hijab* prior to the 2004 ban represents a threat to the French republican values.

We can think about the image of the *hijab* as a threat in other terms. Razack argues in her study of the construction of such categories as the 'dangerous Muslim man' and the 'imperilled Muslim woman', 'the eviction of a groups of people from political community begins with their *difference*' (Razack, 2008, p.84). In the case of the *hijab*, expelling the *hijab*ed body of the *Muslimah* from the recognised political community and secular space similarly operates through inscribing it with a difference which is incompatible with the French republic and its values. Marked as a political threat to the French nation (Islamist, fundamentalist, extremist, fanatic), the examples further define the *hijab* as belonging to a race, culture and ethnicity situated outside the French republic, which adds both a cultural and racial difference to the political one. Reviving

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[54] Similar to my use of the term *hijabed* and *niqabed* to refer to a person wearing *hijab* or *niqab*, I use *haiked* to mean wearing a *haik* which is type of long and ample cloak Maghrebi women wrap around their bodies from head to ankles, the only visible parts of the body being the eyes, and sometimes the nose.

'old colonial relationship and the structures of feeling on which they rely' (Razack, 2008, p. 178), the examples reiterate the vision of the veil not only as a hidden political threat, but also as a legal threat to the French laws (by implication: the *hijab* becomes against law). While the *haik* was used as a tool of resistance during the Maghrebi wars for independence, the *hijab* of French *Muslimat* is used to reinforce the image of the French nation against French Muslims who are said to undermine republican laws. In 2002, the *hijab* is perceived as an immediate menace and in an open war against the French political and legal systems.

The French Stasi Commission Report (Commission de Reflexion Sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité Dans La Republique, 2003) similarly establishes links between the *hijab* and Islamism. In recalling the historical battles between Church and State in France that led to the crystallisation of French secularism, the Report declares that 'the spiritual and the religious must renounce their political dimensions' (Stasi Report). It further states that 'laicity is incompatible with any *conception of religion that would wish to control*, in the name of its supposed principles, *the social system or public order*' (Commission de Reflexion Sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité Dans La Republique, 2003).[55] (Emphasis mine) The Report therefore assigns a political dimension to the *hijab* through which it aims at 'controlling public order and society'. The implication is yet that, on the one hand, the religious includes a political dimension, and that the *hijab* hides a will to control public order and society. As we will see in later examples, the vision of 'control' is also linked with the depiction of the *hijab* as a proselytising tool.

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[55]Regarding French secularism, Olivier Roy notes that France has battled against religion in order to impose a state-enforced secularism, and that laicite is an 'exacerbated politicized, and ideological form of Western secularism' that has evolved at two levels: 'a very strict separation of church and state, and an ideological and philosophical interpretation of laicite that claims to provide a value system common to all citizens by expelling religion into the private sphere'(Roy, 2009, p.xii). Naima Bouteldja (2005) also refers to French secularism as 'a historical construct that blossomed with the victory of the republic over the Catholic Church. Its three founding juridical principles are the separation of church and state; the freedom of thought; and the free exercise and organisation of worship'.

Another statement in the Stasi Report implicitly affiliates the *hijab* with fanaticism. In its defence of French secular history, the Commission (Commission de Reflexion Sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité Dans La Republique, 2003) declares that to manifest one's 'cultural identity' cannot be done 'in the shape of a *fanaticism of difference* inclusive of *oppression and exclusion*' (emphasis mine). The Report attributes a 'cultural identity' to the *Muslimat muhajjabat*, yet again defining the *hijab* as the embodiment of a cultural/ethnic/racial origin, and which also conveys the idea of a fixed and unchanging entity. The automatic association of the *hijab* with a culture (implicitly an Arab/Maghrebi/North African origin) and with 'fanaticism of difference' is another instance of a homogenisation and essentialisation of the dress, perceived as a gendered Maghrebi/Arab/Muslim phenomenon. The Report thus views the *hijab* worn by French *Muslimat* as essentialised and embodying a 'culture' located outside the boundaries of the French nation. This is an example of how Islam as a religion can be conflated with 'Muslim culture'. (Roy, 2006, p.10) As Killian argues in her study of North African women in France, the *hijab* affair reveals how different societal groups 'continue to use women in battles over culture and identity and how Muslim women in particular bear the brunt of fears about the "other". (Killian, 2006, p.11) *Hijab* stands for a 'culture' and 'identity' situated outside the French republic.

The idea of the *hijab* in such a depiction is comparable with 'a disloyalty that is visible not in *what people do but in who they are*' and 'who people are is formulated in terms of an unchanging essence derived from their histories, associations, and religious practices, a constellation of *invariant* characteristics inherited from a culture, religion, and region' (Razack, 2008, 28). As Joan Scott (2007, p. 149) stated in her insightful study of the veil in France, the headscarf was deemed 'a flag of a different color' which indicated 'disloyalty' to the values of the republic. Who *Muslimat* are therefore matters more than what they do, as the *hijab* becomes the means through which they are defined.

In its attempt to construct the unity and indivisibility of the French nation, the Stasi Commission defines the *hijab* in terms of an essential difference and 'unchanging essence' encompassing not only the political domain through the expression 'fanaticism of difference', but also a racial and cultural difference through its reference to 'cultural identity'. The example thus ties the *hijab* with a specific culture and religion deemed inferior to the French nation and secular model. It is useful to think about this association through the concept of disloyalty evoked by Razack, which the governmental political body (the Stasi Commission) recognises in 'who' the *hijabed Muslimat* are: as the descendents of immigrants, the *hijab*ed girls concerned with the ban are defined through an essential cultural, religious and geographical origin perceived as a threat to the loyalty and allegiance requested by the French secular nation. The visible nature of this disloyalty in the secular space enables the Commission to condemn young *Muslimat* of being outside the boundaries of its constructed national community.

We can additionally read the examples of the Report through the notion of a 'communalising power', a process through which the state constitutes the Muslim community as a distinctive cultural and racial group (through religious belonging and ethnic origin), existing outside the bounds of the nation (Thobani, 2007, p.149). In her study of the narratives constituting the Canadian national subject through various historical junctures, Thobani highlights the 'power of the state as a 'communalizing power', that is, a power which constitutes communities as discrete racial, ethnic, and cultural groups existing within its territorial borders, yet outside the symbolic bounds of the nation' (Thobani, 2007, p.149). If we consider both concepts together, we can notice how the language and images used with reference to the *hijab* of French *Muslimat* contributes to emphasising their 'disloyalty' and 'communalism', both constructions being part of a broader process linked with their visible difference within the secular nation. As Göle argues, the presence of Islam in Europe, manifested through its immigrant population, seemed to the European consciousness as a 'forcible

intrusion' and an 'invasion' which has provoked a feeling of 'losing the bearings of its identity, its geographical and cultural borders' (Göle, 2011, p.40). Joan Scott similarly notes how headscarves were considered an 'intrusion of religion into the secular sacred space of the schoolroom' (Scott, 2007, p. 90).

In contrast to the vision of the *hijab* as a 'communal' dress, Göle notes that, Muslims who seize the new values of Islam today are involved in an 'ethnic-identity process' which manifests itself in personal practices, and that the contemporary Islamic identity 'is defined less by a collective and discursive process than by a performative and personal one that seeks to inscribe it in public space' (Göle, 2011, p.121). Although limiting the practice of veiling to an 'ethnic-identity process' can be restrictive and risks 'ethnicising' Islamic dress, it is useful to think about the *hijab* of many French *Muslimat* as a 'performative and personal practice', especially considering that many of them adopted it against the will of their families, and that the majority of the *Muslimat* concerned with the ban are second and third-generation French born citizens. This does not occlude the fact that pressure can be exercised on some young women to wear the *hijab*, but attributing pressure to the adoption of the dress amounts to another instance of homogenising the practice and the multiple experiences of veiling, as well as denying young *Muslimat* agency. As Killian demonstrates in her study of cultural adaptation and privatisation of religion of Muslim women in France, religion which was a communal matter in North Africa, becomes an 'affair of the heart' for some Muslim women in France as headscarves are relegated to the private space of home (Killian, 2007). Such studies problematise the homogeneous vision of the *hijab* as an automatically imposed dress, which is also 'communal'.

The examples from the weeklies and the Stasi Report tie the *hijab* with Islamism, extremism, fundamentalism and fanaticism, which inscribe it with a political difference in relation to the French nation. Alongside the equation of the *hijab* with these meanings, the examples additionally mark the dress as a culturally, ethnically and

racially different entity, constructing it outside the definition of the French political and national community. The essential difference of the *Muslimat muhajjabat* hence goes beyond the political field of imposing an Islamist and fundamentalist stance to the dress, to that of the racial realm through imposing a cultural, ethnic and racial otherness in France.

To sum up, associations of the veil with violence, Islamism and fanaticism and a political threat to the French republic serves to show how it is irreconcilable with the concept of the French nation as the holder of democracy and progress. The inscription of the *hijab* as a political and national threat also shows how a more implicit cultural and racial threat is coded on the dress as an alien element of the French nation. The multi-sided threat serves to stigmatise French *Muslimat* not only as potentially lethal dangers to the French nation and republican laws, but also a racial threat to the republic's cultural identity and values, which are repeatedly constructed in homogeneous and essentialist terms. Linked to this construction of the *hijab* is that of the dress as an Islamist threat to national cohesion and civilisation.

6.1.2. French Civilisation, Islamist Veils

In this section I analyse how the dichotomy of 'civilised' and 'uncivilised' maps onto a distinction between French values and that of Islam and the *hijab*. As I noted in chapter two, Orientalism often operates by making ontological distinctions. Edward Said (1979, pp. 300-301) describes how Orientalism creates a distinction between the West and the rest: by positing an 'absolute and systematic difference between the West as rational, developed, humane, superior,' Orientalism creates an Orient that is 'underdeveloped, inhumane and inferior'. In this section I explore how the distinction between France and Islam becomes defined in terms of civilisation.

Before the 2004 *hijab* ban, many French political and media texts from the archive imagined the *hijab* as a threat to the French civilisation. Jean Daniel[56] from *Le Nouvel Observateur* entitled 'Marianne and her Veil' contrasts 'Islamist French people' to 'republican citizens' (Daniel, 2004):

> However minor they are, the Islamists have asserted in broad daylight a presence which we suspected but also a determination of which we ignored the coherence. The advantage of the project of adopting a law is to reveal this dismaying and irrefutable fact: these Islamist French people speak about Islam as a nation, and about their traditions as a civilisation. They do not adhere individually, as citizens, to the republic. They collectively claim to Islamise it by contamination.

Through the image of 'contamination', Jean Daniel transposes the danger of 'Islamists' to the French nation via its population of French Muslims. We can consider this image in the context of a perception of French Muslims, and the *hijab* in particular, as a 'cultural' symbol from which French *Muslimat* must be, in Razack's terms, 'deculturalized before they multiply to contaminate the superior civilization in which they have migrated' (Razack, 2008, p.108). The image of Muslims 'Islamising' the republic' by contamination' projects an idea of the French *Muslimah* as the 'inassimilable and diseased Other' (Razack, 2008, p.108) who posits a threat of contamination to the French nation. Regarding the French assimilationist model, Roy (2002, p. x) states that access to citizenship 'means that individual cultural

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[56] Jean Daniel (Jean Daniel Bensaid) was born in Blida, Algeria in 1920. As a young man he moved to France and became a freelance journalist. He worked with L'Express. In 1964, Daniel left L'Express with several other journalists, including André Gorz, to establish Le Nouvel Observateur, a weekly news magazine. In 1982 he helped establish the Saint-Simon Foundation think-tank. http://spartacus-educational.com/JFKdanielJ.htm   See also http://www.thenation.com/article/175947/colonist-good-will-albert-camus#

backgrounds are erased and overridden by a political community, the nation, that ignores all intermediary communitarian attachments (whether based on race or ethnic or religious identities) which are then removed to the private sphere'. The *hijab* in this context is read as an 'inassimilable' difference.

We can also tie the image to the concept of the threat of contamination, and the idea of the 'possibility of being pathological, yet appearing normal'. The idea of a 'sleeper cell' can be extended to the vision of the veil as a latent threat which the example characterises with coherence and resolution. Against the autonomous individual promoted by the republic, the communal *hijab*'s 'pathological' stance lies in its ability to contaminate the republic through Islamisation. However, as Roy (2002, p.14) notes, the process of re-Islamisation in terms of personal behaviour (*hijab*, veil, beards) and an increase in religious practices have been accompanied with a process of westernisation. In evoking the image of 'Islamist contamination' in relation to the *hijab* in France and the concepts of Islamic 'nation', 'tradition' and 'civilisation', the example constitutes the French citizen and national subject within a nation (and civilisation) that contrasts with the communalisation of the *Muslimah* whose belonging to Islam which marks her as an outsider to the community of citizens. The references to 'tradition' and 'civilisation' further codify the *hijab*ed body within an essential racial difference and belonging to an 'other' nation, culture and civilisation situated outside the boundaries of France. The feelings of concern and anxiety justify the need for a law despite the stated 'minor' number of 'Islamists'. The Islamist *Muslimah muhajjaba* parallels the 'figure of concern' and 'strange encounter' evoked by Ahmed and Thobani. It is this figure that casts the Islamist stranger and outsider--the figure which threatens to contaminate the republic--against the trope of the insider French citizen who is in danger of contamination. Within the context of schools, as Joan Scott noted, girls in headscarves symbolised the danger from which other children needed to be shielded, and that they 'carried the virus' of religion into the school (Scott, 2007, p. 107). Legislating against the *hijab* hence becomes an imperative step to protect the 'civilised' French citizen against the uncivilised Islamist.

The images of a 'coherent presence and determination', and 'collective Islamism' make a minority of French *Muslimat* appear like a militant and organised movement of a gigantic proportion that presents a danger to the French nation.[57] The example refers to the allegiance to Islam, through wearing the *hijab* and expressing an opposition to the ban in public, instead of loyalty to the republic, a loyalty implicitly coded with unveiling and supporting the ban. Constructed as an attack on republican values that position religious practice as secondary to republican belonging (French citizenship preceding religious practice), the *hijab* represents the devotion (hence to the notion of loyalty) of French *Muslimat* to Islam at the expense of a community of citizens. The example contrasts individual citizens to 'Islamist French people' who are defined through their assigned 'religious community', and the ones who adhere to the republic 'individually' against those who adhere to it 'collectively'. The 'Islamist French people' are therefore reconstructed in opposition to the principles of the modern individual (Göle, 1996, p.19). While the French model citizen is portrayed as an individual whose allegiance is to the republic and the nation, the *hijab* confines the *Muslimah muhajjaba* within a definition which contrasts with that of the autonomous citizen. The adoption of the *hijab* marks her body as alien to the community of French citizens. Marking the *hijab*ed body with an outsider nation, tradition and civilisation further emphasise the status of the autonomous and secular normative French citizen whose 'nation' and 'civilisation' are constructed as superior. These additional notions inscribe the veil within a cultural and racial difference. Grouped together, the terms

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[57] In contrast to the image of 'Islamists' as a fixed, united and coherent entity constituting a threat to the French nation and values, the French Muslim population has been divided into groups represented by various Muslim and non-Muslim associations, many of whom supported the ban (January 2004 CSA poll, 42 percent of Muslims favored the ban (CSA 2004). (Killian, 2007). In addition to having different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the percentage of French Muslims provided by studies and the media amounts to about five million Muslims. Moreover, the national census excludes all references to religion, ethnicity or ethnic origin and language, and the percentage of French Muslims who were in favour of a ban, according to the official discourse, exceeded that of Muslims who were not. The anti-ban demonstration was made threatening by the media that portrayed it as a national peril, and a proof that Islam has become a dangerous threat to the republic, as the example from *Le Nouvel Observateur* demonstrates.

equally inscribe the *hijab* within a hierarchical relationship whereby the French nation, tradition and civilisation is positioned as superior to the other (Islamist nation, tradition and civilisation) to which the *hijab* belongs.

The association of the *hijab* with an outsider nation operates in an increasingly interconnected world. The definition of a public space identified with a 'pre-established' national community creates 'tensions and exclusions in a world traversed by migratory and transnational dynamics', whether they are religious, economic, or cultural (Göle, 1996, p.10). The *hijab* paradoxically places French *Muslimat* within the loyalty to religion (Islam) in a nation that only acknowledges loyalty to the republic (France), and therefore assumes an opposition between 'Frenchness' and 'Muslimness'.

The *hijab* of the French *Muslimat* also epitomises the impossibility of Muslims to become civilised. In their study of the narrative constructions of Muslim women in British schools, Meetoo and Mirza (Meetoo & Mirza, 2007, p. 127) argue that 'the reification of (young women's) cultural/religious difference, and in particular the preoccupation with their over-determined dress, has made them an Islamophobic signifier, symbolic of the 'barbaric Muslim Other' that has existed in Western imagination since the terrorist attacks of 9/11'. We can notice how, in the French context, an implicit correlation is drawn between the *hijab* and the figure of the 'barbaric Muslim Other'. It is through delineating the parameters of the French civilisation that the *Muslimah muhajjaba* comes to be positioned not only as an other to this civilisation, but also as lacking this civilisation. The *hijab*, which already stands as an 'Islamophobic signifier' now also epitomises barbarism and savagery. While in the colonial era, the trope of civilisation was harnessed to position Islam and the veil as inferior to Western civilisation, the French press revives the concept of civilisation to contrast Western superiority with Muslim inferiority through the *hijab*. The *hijab*ed body of the *Muslimah* thus operates as a tool for maintaining French Muslims within

the realm of non-civilisation and barbarism, and the French nation in the sphere of progress and civilisational superiority.

We can further link the notion of civilisation with modernity. Writing about the narrative of modernity, Göle states that the concept is grounded on a universalism which also carries a 'characteristic of civilisation and a pretention of a superior way of life that makes Western men and women more civilised than the 'barbarians' (Göle, 2011, p.112-113). The example's reference to civilisation in relation to the *hijab* and Islam within the republican space represents an instance of a universalist discourse based on the idea of a linear progress and universal history. Contrasting the republic of citizens to the Islamist community is another way of building a dichotomy between progress and backwardness, and between civilisation and barbarism. In addition to the repeated inscriptions of the *hijab* within a political threat to the republican values I discussed earlier, the example further codes the *hijab* within a cultural and racial otherness through allusions to civilisation and tradition.

In the political rhetoric, the idea of an 'Islamist coherence' finds parallels in portraying the *hijab* as an organised threat to 'national cohesion', advocated by President Jacque Chirac (2003.2) in one of his speeches on secularism:

> It [laicity] sends us back to the issue of our national cohesion, and our ability to live together, and meet around what is essential. Let us transform the interrogations of today into the assets of tomorrow by resolutely seeking the unity of the French people. By confirming our attachment to an open, generous laicity, as we have known how to invent it year after year, by making equality of chances live better with the spirit of tolerance and solidarity, and by undertaking a resolute battle for the rights of women, and gathering around the values that have made and still make France.

In order to put Chirac's speech in context, let us remember that the debate around secularism in France witnessed a resurgence prior to the 2004 *hijab* ban. The Stasi Commission, which was charged with considering secularism in the framework of the *hijab* controversy, supported a ban which was often constructed as a protection of French secular values. Chirac's speeches, which equally focus on laicity, implicitly contrast it with the *hijab*. Through the expressions 'national cohesion', 'unity of the French people', and 'generous laicity', the example associates the French republic with one indivisible unity. When we compare the expressions with earlier ones such as 'Islamist cohesion' and 'collective Islamism', we notice how Chirac not only portrays the *hijab* as a threat to the French nation, but also as antithetical to national cohesion and unity, and to the 'generous laicity'.

In contrast to the press examples' association of the *hijab* with a salient political symbol, Chirac represents it instead as an enemy of national cohesion, since it expresses a visible difference within the republican space. Through the focus on expressions of unity, cohesion and togetherness, there is an implicit coding of the *hijab* as a divisive object creating conflict and separation. The republic unites whereas the *hijab* divides. In her discussion of citizenship and Muslim visibility in France, Göle points that 'the confrontation between this space defined as public space and a place of gathering and regulation at the same time, and the inscription within it of a difference and a non-conformity that raise a problem' (Göle, 2011, p.131). As Scott notes in her compelling study, the distinction between private and public is grounded on traditions which are historically linked with Christianity (Scott, 2007, p. 92). The difference that the *hijab* marks in a space defined as a place of 'living together' 'around what is essential' is also perceived as a breach of that space and of secular rules of bodily visibility. The expressions build a certain consensus of all citizens on what is most important and refers back to the 'common good' mentioned earlier. Olivier Roy states that today's laicity is built on 'the myth of a consensus', and specifically on the consensus of republican values'; rather than dismissing believers, laicity was a bout

outlining a space of neutrality, and the consensus is on 'respect for a rule of the game' rather than on values. (the political and constitutional principle of laicity and not philosophy) (Roy, 2007, p.21) Chirac rightly points out that laicity has been invented and reinvented through the years. Starting as a principle of freedom of religious practice, it has acquired an anti-clerical stance. Through its reference to laicity as the founding principle of the republic, the example further inscribes the *hijab* as an element preventing the 'living together' of French citizens. The visible non-conformity of the *hijab*ed body to the secular norm of visibility in public space is inscribed as an affront to secularism, and a barrier against national unity and cohesion.

Jacques Chirac (2003.1) repeatedly uses the concept of civilisation in relation to the *hijab* before the 2004 ban, as he does in another speech on secularism in which he states:

> This battle [for the republican values] is one among other ones that will draw the face of tomorrow's France. The degree of civilisation of a society is measured firstly by the place that its women occupy.

Setting his speech on secularism within a 'battle for republican values' which resonates with earlier examples of the *hijab* waging a war against France, Chirac estimates the degree of civilisation of societies following the position its women occupy. The statement affirms the position of France as a 'civilised' nation, implicitly contrasting it with the 'non-civilised' others. Chirac names the battle of the veil which the press has repeatedly used a 'battle for republican values'. Not only does he position an implicit hierarchical relationship between a civilised superior republic and non-civilised societies hence attributing universality to a 'Western cultural model' (Göle, 1996, p.12-13), but also tacitly places the *hijab* outside the symbolic boundaries of the French republic and civilisation. In its battle for republican values which resonates with

the colonial battle of the veil, women's position, considered unequal within Islam, presents a marker of civilisation. Systematically understood as a symbol of oppression, subjugation and inequality, the *hijab* of the French *Muslimah* poses a challenge to the values of emancipation and equality which are considered to be inimical to the secular liberal subject.

The importance of evoking the idea of civilisation lies in its ability to divide the world into civilised and barbaric, cultured and uncultured, superior and inferior. Latently marking the *hijab* with such characteristics contributes to 'culturalising' the dress as well as 'racialising' the difference of the French *Muslimat*, who are tacitly framed within a culturally and racially inferior status. Tilting between symbolising inferiority and threat, the *hijab* epitomises the new centre of attention for the forthcoming ban and its justification.

To sum up, associations of the *hijab* of the French *Muslimah* with political meanings construct it as a multi-dimensioned peril to the French nation, republican society and its values. The examples analysed in this section illustrate how it is repeatedly affiliated with Islamism, extremism, fundamentalism and fanaticism, as well as an attack to the French nation and its Western values of democracy, secularism and the rule of law. The current inscriptions of the *hijab* with a political threat and attack to the republic need to be read as a continuity of a discourse which can be traced to Orientalist and colonial eras. Let us now turn to another set of associations of Islamic dress with sexuality in the French weeklies and political texts.

6.1.3.   The *Hijab* and the Threat to Gender Equality and Emancipation

In this section, I explore sexual associations that have occupied an important part of the French print media and political texts prior to the 2004 *hijab* ban in France. I analyse how the *hijab* is repeatedly defined as an attack to gender equality and

emancipation, two of the founding principles of secularism. In the previous section, I have demonstrated how political associations of the *hijab* mark the body of the French *Muslimah* with an irreconcilable difference with the French nation, and how attaching the *hijab* to particular concepts and language (how words around the veil matter) contributes to constructing it as an alien element of the French symbolic nation and values. The question in this section is how does the French press and politics, through the examples of the named weeklies and political texts, define the *hijab* within sexual parameters? How do the texts mark the *hijab* within a sexual difference and otherness? I want to use the concept of a 'communalising power' which I mentioned earlier to think about how detaching the veil from notions of gender equality and emancipation contributes to similarly 'communalising' it with a specific racial/ethnic/cultural group, defined in terms of being outside the borders of the French republic.

6.1.4. *Hijab*s of Oppression, Inferiority and Sexual Stigma

Starting from the premise that the idea of the oppressed Muslim woman is mostly often characterised as the norm by Western media (Wadud, 2006, p.41), I want to examine how the *Muslimah muhajjaba* is perceived as a victim of her patriarchal culture or religion, and how defining the veil within sexual parameters contributes to coding it as a racial and cultural symbol. My focus is on how the *hijab* associations outside gender equality and emancipation consolidate what Razack refers to as the 'othering and inferiorising of people of colour in the North' (Razack, 1998, p.7). The veil as a sign powerfully re-enacts the 'otherness' of Islam to the West, as women's bodies and sexuality resurface as a 'political site of difference and resistance to the homogenizing and egalitarian forces of Western modernity' (Göle, 1996, p.1). Through a close analysis of sexual associations of the veil, I examine how this 'othering' of the veil operates not only within the concept of the nation, but also within that of gender. This process enables marking the *hijab*ed body within a sexual difference. In her study of the Qur'an and woman, Wadud (1999, pp. 7-8) argues against values that have been assigned to women in comparison with men, which include the vision of women as 'weak, inferior, inherently evil, intellectually incapable, and spiritually lacking', and confining them to biological functions, in contract to men who are estimated as

superior. The sexual difference and otherness evoked by the French weeklies and politics can be considered within this framework where the historical and contemporary attributes to women as inferior to men define Islamic dress as a symbol of inferiority.

Numerous texts codify the *hijab* with an otherness defined in sexual terms. Michèle Vianès[58] from Marianne, for instance, evokes the rule of law against 'the Islamist *hijab*', identifying the *hijab* as a violation of women's dignity (Vianès, 2004):

> The Islamist *hijab* [...] is an infringement on the dignity of women, considered only as a sex to be hidden. In our state under the rule of law, as in any democratic society, the freedom of some ends where that of the others begins. Only law allows the liberties of some and others to cohabit rather than oppose one another [...] The personal, religious or political choices are not rights that the community [of people or citizens] would have the obligation to grant.

Tying the *hijab* with Islamism as in earlier examples, Vianès portrays the dress as an 'infringement' and 'encroachment' on the dignity of women, considered 'only as a sex to be hidden'. The paradoxical image of the 'Islamist *hijab* or headscarf' (*foulard*

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[58] Born in 1947, Michèle Vianès was a French teacher and feminist activist, founder of Regards de femmes, a NGO association of special status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council. As part of the association, she has organized conferences in partnership with the Comité laïcité République (secular Republic Committee). She was a founding member of the committee of Ni putes, ni soumises (Neither whores, nor submissive) in Grand Lyon et Rhône. She was also General Secretary (2006 to 2010) and Vice President (2010 to 2012) of the French Coordination for the European Women's Lobby, an association that has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. She was a city councillor in Caluire-et-Cuire, and delegate to gender equality from 2001 to 2008. She was also at the top of the list of European elections in 2009 in the South-East constituency. Archives : http://ripostelaique.com/author/Michele-Vianes Twitter : https://twitter.com/michelevianes Other : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbN3MkS2LMc

islamiste) combines an active extremist political stance (Islamism) and a passive status of inferiority (oppressive headscarf), hence both endowing and depriving the Muslimah with agency. The example contrasts the dress with the democratic space of liberty, cohabitation and the rule of law granted by the French state to its community of citizens. The text also codes the 'Islamist *hijab*' as inhuman through recognising women only as sexual objects. By contrast, the 'democratic society' governed by the rule of law places freedom, cohabitation and law against the *hijab*, also depicted as a 'personal, religious and political choice'. This triple and paradoxical depiction of the *hijab* with Islamism and victimisation/oppression on the one hand, and as a 'choice' on the other hand, posits the French law as the protector and guarantor of these principles, and implicitly classifies the dress not only with Islamism and theocracy, but additionally with disrespect and indignity. The *hijab* of the French *Muslimah* is Islamist and oppressive, and yet it is a choice. As Werbner argues, in the context of migration and the headscarf affairs, the meaning of veiling as well as modesty has become so burdened that it produces a variety of 'contradictory messages' which bestow or deny or disallow agency to young Asian and Muslim women. (Werbner, 2007) The example from Marianne illustrates such a message about the French muhajjaba as the carrier of ambivalent meanings.

The statement indicates links with the Orientalist and colonial discourses of the veil through reiterating the image of the veiled women's oppression, and contrasting the *hijab* with concepts of freedom and emancipation for which the state is said to be the guarantor and protector. Coded as a sexually 'inferiorising' object and a potential source of conflict and opposition in democratic societies, the example contrasts the *hijab* with democracy, the rule of law and freedom, duplicating an Orientalist and colonial discourse of the veil and Islam with autocracy and tyranny. This is moreover in line with a process of constructing the bodies of Asian and African women, in this case a majority of Maghrebi women, as Muslim bodies of 'the oppressed other in need of protection and thus open to pastoral intervention' (Mirza & Meetoo, 2013, p. 127). Reduced to a sex devoid of dignity, the presence of the Islamist *hijab*ed body, which

the example also classifies as dishonourable, necessitates the intervention of the French state to secure democracy, freedom and cohabitation. Marked as superior, the state's values and rule of law simultaneously position the *hijab*ed *Muslimah*'s body as belonging not merely to an inferior undemocratic and oppressive religious tradition, but also to one that is inhuman. The oppression and indignity attributed to the 'Islamist *hijab/headscarf*' positions the *hijab*ed body within an inferior sexual difference to the secular normative body. Not only is the dress associated with an Islamist stance, but also with a cultural and religious practice that needs to be regulated by the French state.

This process parallels what Reina Lewis (2004, p. 142) refers to as the use of 'the female body as a marker of a racialised difference' in her study of Ottoman women's writings, and how the gaze is 'racialised' in relation to Oriental women's bodies (Lewis, 2004, p.142). The example illustrates how the *hijab* of the French *Muslimah* is not only 'sexualised' through being defined in terms of oppression and indignity, but also 'racialised' through its association with inhumanity, tyranny and an inferior society and community, and through coding it with an inferior cultural and religious practice. The example emphasises the idea that the 'community of citizens'[59] gains precedence over the individual and personal choices, which contrasts with the concept of individual rights and freedoms promoted by French secularism.

Although the republic guarantees liberty and democracy for all its citizens, it paradoxically puts an end to these notions when a 'personal, religious or political choice' is concerned. Razack's concept of a 'space of exception' where the rule of law does not apply to Muslim bodies is useful in thinking about this point. The republican space and its institutions such as the school become in this case spaces where the rule

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[59] The original French word 'collectivité', which is synonymous with community and society, also ironically refers to the Church and monastery, which contrasts with the idea of a community of citizens free of all religious affiliations.

of law does not apply to *hijab*ed bodies. Yet as Werbner and Killian note, despite calls for religious privatisation and secularism, French schooling is inherently Christian, as most public holidays are saints' days (Werbner, 2007). The calendar and cultural atmosphere are additionally favourable for practicing Christianity and not to practicing Islam (Killian, 2007). The personal or religious choice to which the example refers therefore does not apply to French Muslimahs who are requested to fit into an already implicitly Christian school system. The Muslimat muhajjabat are therefore requested to discard the *hijab* in a space which is officially defined as secular, and yet accommodates Christian believers.

The statement's reference to cohabitation and to preventing 'opposition' in rights suggests the *hijab* is a source of tension and hostility. This further conjures up the capacity of the veil to provoke feelings of fear and anxiety. Affiliated with a regression from the principle of freedom and equality of the sexes, the example also equates the *hijab* with undermining republican values and national harmony. These are implicitly opposed to the dress itself which the example links not merely with oppression, subjugation and indignity, but also with opposition, conflict and disruption of national harmony[60].

At another level, the *hijab* of the French *Muslimah* operates as both a sign of disrespect to women, and a symbol of disrespect for the state's concepts of freedom and equality. The indignity attributed to the dress therefore acquires a double dimension whereby it poses a threat to the *Muslimat* wearing it, as well as the state under whose laws they live. This type of disrespectful and dishonourable *hijab* allows the justification of a law

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[60] This scenario was more recently repeated prior to the niqab ban in France. As Naima Bouteldja notes (2011), the more recent 'battle of the veil' which concerned the niqab witnessed the emergence of a consensus which potrayed 'many innocuous forms of Arab/Muslim cultural and religious expression as serious threats to national harmony'

in order to protect not only the *hijab*ed body from lack of dignity, but also the state from potential conflicts and oppositions.

These associations make the *hijab* a threat to the republic and its values, moving between epitomising a political danger to embodying a sexual, religious and a more latent cultural attack. The year 1989 marks the first *hijab* controversy, initiated by expelling two girls from primary school under the claim that their *hijabs* violate French secularism. Debates over the controversy led to issuing a law containing implicit references to the veil, portrayed as an 'attack to dignity', and a symbol of women's inferior status. Many years later and prior to the 2004 *hijab* ban, these references are reiterated in the French print media and political texts.

There are other examples equating the *hijab* with indignity. In the political texts, Jacques Chirac uses the symbolism of the veil as an attack to the dignity of women, as is illustrated through one of Chirac's speeches (2003.1):

> One has to be vigilant and uncompromising against threats of a return backward [...] We cannot accept that some people, hiding behind a biased conception of the principle of laicity, seek to undermine what our republic has acquired: equality of sexes and dignity of women. I solemnly proclaim it: the republic will oppose everything that separates, everything that removes and everything that excludes! The rule is co-education, because it brings us together and puts everyone on an equal footing, because it refuses to make distinctions based on sex, origin, colour or creed.

The Stasi Report makes a similar reference to dignity when the Commission recalls the law regarding freedom of expression in schools. During the first *hijab* affair of Creil,

the French *Conseil d'Etat* (highest administrative court) states obligatory points in the 1989 law pertaining to education and freedom of expression for students, among which is the fact that 'any forms of behaviour likely to cause *harm to dignity*, pluralism or freedom of a student or any other member of the education community, and forms of behaviour that jeopardise their health or security are prohibited' (Commission de Reflexion Sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité Dans La Republique, 2003). Chirac suggests a state of alert conveyed by the word 'vigilant'. He warns against 'threats of a return backward', which he associates with the adoption of the *hijab* by French *Muslimat*, thus inscribing it against the implicit 'forward' movements towards progress of the republic. Allying the *hijab* with backwardness further conveys an idea of the garment as a culturally/religiously retrograde and inferior practice which constrains young *Muslimat*'s bodies with a gap in time in relation to the republic. A 'return backward' therefore operates as a temporal backwardness of the *hijab*. This enhances the role of the state to bring these bodies to enlightenment and progress through unveiling them. It suggests an image of unveiling as a process of 'moving forward' in opposition to the 'moving backward' attached to veiling. The movement 'forward' towards the future (of unveiling) is what prevents the return 'backward' towards the past (of veiling). It is the same movement which allows evolvement and progress towards a more advanced state.

Chirac euphemistically refers to French Muslims as 'some people', and attaches a 'biased conception of laicity' to them through their opposition to the forthcoming ban. We can read this idea of a partial or prejudiced conception of secularism through the concepts of 'disloyalty' and 'deceit' both which I mentioned earlier. Chirac's language connotes the 'disloyalty' and 'deceit' of French Muslims regarding French secularism. The notion of bias also connotes lack of reason and holding hostile feelings and opinions, thereby associating French Muslims with hostility and lack of reason which have been historically used constructs in relation to the 'Oriental' figure. As a majority of second and third-generation French nationals, French Muslims are hence accused of distorting the concept of secularism in order to oppose the *hijab* ban. The vigilance of

the state is accordingly heightened with the values which the *hijab* is said to undermine: the equality of sexes and dignity of women. The *hijab* is again portrayed as inherently and essentially antithetical to equality and dignity. Numerous Islamic feminist scholars, however, demonstrate how the Qur'an promotes egalitarianism, against the inequality existing in practice within Muslim-majority countries. Amina Wadud (2006, p. 187-188), for instance, notes that precisely because women are not deemed as important as men in most Muslim-majority communities, they do not enjoy an equal status to men, and that 'unraveling the binds of patriarchy in Muslim cultures' will take more time.[61] Despite the research done by Islamic feminists regarding gender in Islam, the veil in media and politics, as exemplified by the French press and politics, continue to essentialise the *hijab*.

The association of the *hijab* with indignity has also been accompanied with references to separation and segregation, as is the case when Chirac refers to the importance of co-education in the French republican school. His statement additionally equates the *hijab* with 'removal' 'separation' and 'exclusion' (Hamzeh, 2012, p. 48). In her study of the gendering discourse of veiling, Manal Hamzeh (2012, p. 48) demonstrates how some hadiths with androcentric intentions made the *hijab*s as tools of seclusion and exclusion of women in the public space, hence closing off the potential of entrusting Muslim women in public affairs. As has been argued by numerous Islamic feminists, the Qur'an does not advocate the exclusion and removal of women from public spaces. The notions of exclusion, removal and separation evoked by Chirac codify the *hijab* with an irreconcilable difference from the French community of citizens, and echo segregation and seclusion which has been historically associated with the veil and the

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[61] On the egalitarian vision of Islam as expressed through the Qur'an as the 'root of democratic feminism' see Nimat Hafez Barazangi *Woman Identity Quran* (2004), and the gender egalitarianism contained in the ethical vision of the Qur'an, Leila Ahmed *Women and Gender in Islam* (1992).

harem.[62] As Wadud (2006, p. 175) notes, gender separation was never highlighted in the Qur'an, which urges women and men to abide by modesty while they are in each other's presence. We can therefore notice how the various notions which Chirac attaches to the *hijab* rely on historical assumptions about the inferior status of woman in Islam.

The language of the veil carries additional meanings in the political texts. In a grave tone, Chirac declares that the rule is co-education and equality regardless of 'sex, origin, color or creed'. It is ironic that, as Scott (2007, p. 109) points out, mixed-sex schools were non-existent before the 1960s in France, and that they appeared due to a shortage of funds for separate buildings for boys and girls. Expelling the *hijab*ed *Muslimat* from the republican school, however, precisely excludes them from the equality which the republic guarantees for its citizens. The *hijab* becomes a religious and cultural practice linked with their status as second or third generation immigrants. The Stasi Report makes an analogous link between the *hijab* and harm to 'dignity, pluralism or freedom'. Similarly to the earlier examples, the *hijab*ed body is equated with oppression and subjugation. In a more serious tone, the Report attributes the threat to dignity to the *hijab*, which is supplemented with a risk to health and security. The image of the veil as a political and sexual threat is therefore complicated in this instance by its depiction as a **security and health** threat in the political discourse.

In addition to affiliating the *hijab* with indignity, the French weeklies and political texts portray it as a form of sexual stigma and impurity of the *Muslimah*'s body. The Stasi Commission Report, for instance, explicitly positions a correlation between the *hijab* and stigma through asserting that 'the meaning of the Islamic veil stigmatises the

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[62] As Wadud (2006, p. 175) notes, gender separation is not an Islamic principle, and was never highlighted in the Qur'an, which urges women and men to abide by modest limits while they are in each other's presence.

young girl of puberty age or the woman as the only person responsible for the desire of man, a vision that is presented as contravening the principle of equality said to be established between men and women' (Commission de Reflexion Sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité Dans La Republique, 2003). Resonating with earlier images of woman's body as only a sex 'to be hidden' and the sexualisation of Islamic dress, the Report's definition of the *hijab* as stigma additionally endorses a vision of the *hijab*ed body within sexual stigmatisation. As a symbol of shame, 'the Islamic veil' positions the young *Muslimah* as the only one responsible for male desire, a perception which is more in accordance with a Christian vision of veiling. The *hijab* registers not only a sexual difference from the normative secular body, but also a religious and cultural otherness which tacitly contrasts it with the principle of gender equality which the Report ties to French secularism. Defining the *hijab* as a symbol of stigma and shame therefore allows the Commission to position 'the Islamic veil' as a religiously and culturally alien object to France. This definition similarly marks the *hijab* in an inferior status to the normative secular body and its presumed intrinsic gender equality.

There are many examples equating the *hijab* with stigma in the French texts. For instance, Bernard Henry Levy[63] from *Le Point* declares the 'battle of the veil' as also one of women's emancipation since it symbolises stigmatisation and hatred (2004):

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[63] Bernard Henry Levy was born in 1848 in Beni-Saf, Oran Algeria which was then part of France. He is associate of philosophy, writer, novelist, journalist, filmmaker, activist and founder of the magazine La Règle du Jeu. He is a columnist for Le Point, the Corriere della Sera, and El Pais in Madrid. He also contributes to various publications including political, artistic and cultural events such as the New York Times, the Huffington Post, Daily Beast, Haaretz, Aftenposten, Espressen of Stockholm and New Republic. He is accused of being too media-savy due to his frequent TV apparitions. He had his look-alike puppet in the French show Les guignols de l'info (1988). In 1981, Lévy published *L'Idéologie française* ("The French Ideology"), arguably his most influential work, in which he offers a dark picture of French history. Source :http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0529717/bio?ref_=nm_ov_bio_sm Official : http://www.bernard-henri-levy.com Twitter : https://twitter.com/bernardhl Other : http://www.c-span.org/person/?bernardhenrilevy

The veil is not a sign of piety, but of stigmatization and hatred. Leading a woman to cover herself, and telling her, in contempt [...] that wearing the *hijab* is a sacred command; hiding from her the fact that there are important commentators supporting, for example, the idea that the *hijab* was the privilege of the women of the Prophet and that it is a sin of pride, on the contrary, to claim their status and dignity.

In advocating a law against the *hijab*, Levy here not only distances and dissociates the *hijab* from piety, but also attaches it to the 'hatred' (*haine*) and 'stigmatisation' (*stigmatisation*) of woman. The term stigma, which also connotes humiliation and shame, contrasts the veil with notions of respect and honour (Werbner, 2007). In relation to the veiling of Muslimat in France and Britain, however, Werbner points to how the veil is a 'protective shield against the male gaze' and 'unwanted advances by young men', particularly in crowded immigrant districts, mixed schools and universities; and how the veil in such a context conforms to the 'honor shame code that demands respect from outsiders' (Werbner, 2007). It is interesting to consider how a symbol that is part of the Judeo-Christian tradition is here portrayed as a non 'pious' sign. Moreover, attaching such notions as stigma and hatred with the *hijab* contrasts with the meanings of respect and honor which some young women associate it with in the minority spaces of Europe where Muslimahs are already perceived and constructed in terms of their ethnic, racial and cultural origins as noted earlier. The equation of the *hijab* with stigmatisation and hatred moreover implies that it taints the French *Muslimah* by positioning her within attributes of shame and hatred, hence with her assumed inferiority to Muslim men (Wadud, 2006, p. 37). As Wadud (2006, p. 37) has demonstrated in her studies of gender in Islam, the assumption of male superiority is not 'essential to Islam, but is rather produced by culture and circumstantial convenience'. Indirectly raising the status of superiority of non-*hijab*ed women, the example marks the *hijab* with a sexual and cultural difference which represents an attack to the concept of gender equality, and an implicit otherness in contrast to the implicit humility and superiority of the non-*hijab*ed body.

The idea of stigmatisation is sometimes accompanied with references to the *Muslimah*'s body in terms of sin. In Levy's article (2004), the necessity for legislating against the *hijab* in France also stems from its additional link with the view of woman as an 'offense to God':

> to make her believe that her face is an insult to God, her body a source of sin, her sex a stain. This is why you should not be afraid of asserting it: even beyond this law on the school, the battle against the veil is a battle for the freedom of women, thus for human rights, which will not stop at the re-affirmation of the principles of laicity.

Levy here adopts a human rights discourse in favour of a ban. He evokes 'the battle against the veil' which resonates with the often reiterated colonial battle, as one established for 'freedom of women' and 'human rights' within the context of secularism. Through the violent expressions 'insult to God', 'source of sin' and 'sex as stain', reference is made to the *niqab* (through the generic term *voile*) which was not debated prior to the 2004 *hijab* ban.[64] Although it was the *hijab* that posed the point of controversy, the example instead codes the *niqab/burqa* as a culturally alien and violent symbol which scripts the body of the French *Muslimah* as an outsider to the republican secular subject who is marked as enjoying freedom, equality and human rights. In a similar fashion to the examples linking the 'Islamist *hijab*' and predisposition to violence in the political associations, Levy's statements posit a correlation between the veil and violence against the French *Muslimah*'s body.

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[64] Levy's expressions refer to the full-face *niqab* or *burqa* worn by some *Muslimat* in various parts of the world. There was no reported case of French Muslim girls entering schools with either the face veil (*niqab*) or the full-face veil (*burqa*) in 2002. The *niqab*, however, was subject to a more recent ban in public space, which is enforced in France today.

We can read the violent religious and cultural meanings assigned to the veil within a definition of immigrant women as more 'family and tradition bound, amenable to greater patriarchal control by men in their families and communities', and the Orientalist constructs which position these women as 'passive and highly subservient and their communities as inherently patriarchal as a result of their 'backward' cultures and traditions' (Thobani, 2007, p.132). The example implicitly evokes the idea of deceiving *Muslimat* through 'making them believe' their own body stigma. It fixes the *hijab* of the French *Muslimah* as a religious and violent emblem, and tacitly defines her in oppositional terms to the enlightened emancipated (and perhaps even gentle and peaceful) secular subject. The images also confine the French *Muslimah* to the boundaries of a patriarchal cultural and religious tradition and simultaneously distances her from French values. Furthermore, the definition of the French *Muslimah* in these terms contributes to elevating the republic to the level of the superior protector and guarantor of human rights. The regulation of the *hijab* becomes justified on the grounds that it contravenes republican principles and poses a sexual, cultural, and religious threat to the girls concerned. 'The battle of the veil' is a battle of superior republican values against the inferior and violent patriarchal and religious others. The republic, which the example portrays as committed to the values of secularism, bears the responsibility of ensuring the re-affirmation of its principles against a violent and threatening patriarchal practice. From another angle, the example's references to expressions of blame and guilt provide an image which codifies the *hijab* with an ethical otherness. Besides the sexual/cultural otherness attributed to the dress, the example further embeds it within an ethical otherness attached to stigma, which also tacitly equates unveiling with innocence and piety.

Such visions of the veil as a fixed symbol of sexual oppression have been challenged by some Muslim and Islamic feminists. Homa Hoodfar, for instance, argues that, while the veil was invented and perpetuated within a patriarchal framework, women have appropriated it to 'loosen the bonds of patriarchy' (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 39). She adds

that it is the lack of acknowledgement of women's agency and the tendency to view women 'as passive victims that has flawed the debate, distorted the image of veiled women and promoted the divide between those who do and those who do not wear the *hijab*' (Hoodfar, 2003, p.39). The images of the *hijab* as a sexual stigma represent an instance of not only othering the veil, but also 'inferiorising' it, and positioning it within the realm of another religion, culture and race which belong outside the boundaries of the secular republic. The process of othering the *hijab* has also been accompanied with affiliating it with lack of emancipation and equality.

6.1.5. *Hijab*s against Emancipation and Equality

After exploring how the *hijab* figures as a symbol of oppression and inferiority, and how it is coded as a form of sexual stigma, I now turn to explore how the *hijab* is scripted against emancipation and equality. Wasila Tamzali[65] in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, for instance, maintains (Tamzali, 2003):

> This ostentatious veil (*voile ostentatoire*) hides reactionary ideological positions: against the emancipation of women, against the liberation of individuals, and against the other cultures [...] You, politicians, do not play with fire! Be watchful to the respect for the French laws. Fighting against the veil at

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[65] Born in Algeria in 1941, Wasila Tamzali worked in the legal profession at the Court of Algiers and conducted parallel journalistic and cultural activities. Chief editor of the first weekly Maghreb free "contact" (1970-1973), she wrote a book in 1975 on the North African cinema which is a plea for freedom of expression, and an art book on the ornament of Berber women 'Abzim'. In 1979, she joined the International Civil Service at UNESCO where she was in charge of the program on women's rights violations within the Division of Human Rights and Peace, and among other issues, issues of equal rights of men and women and violence against women. Her role in women's struggle in Islamic countries, as well as in the fight against prostitution and trafficking of women is recognized by both associations and decision makers. In 1989 she joined the Socialist Forces Front and holds leadership positions in the party. In 1992, she was a founding member of the Collectif Maghreb Egalité as 1992. Source : http://www.babelio.com/auteur/Wassyla-Tamzali/87667PDF : http://sisyphe.org/IMG/pdf/C.V._W._Tamzali.pdf

the school or on identity cards, it is not attacking a religion. To defend it, on the other hand, is to question the equality of men and women. A proverb says that in case of great danger, the middle way leads straight ahead to death. In other words, if we begin to negotiate, we are lost!

Woman's 'emancipation' and 'the liberation of individuals' are contrasted here with the 'ostentatious veil'. The article adopts an alarming tone reminiscent of the earlier examples from Jacques Chirac. Notwithstanding the fact that many French *Muslimat* chose to wear the *hijab*, at times in opposition to their own parents, relatives, and school authorities, the idea that they are coerced mainly by their male relatives or by Islamist organisations is frequently reiterated in the press and politics. This deprives French Muslim girls of agency, and contradicts the notions of freedom of choice and human rights which the republic advocates. Yet, as Werbner and others have argued, the *hijab* can acquire different symbolisation for Muslimahs. The *hijab* in the French and British contexts, for instance, may be utilised by young Muslim girls as a sign of 'independence and the right to claim autonomous agency vis-à-vis their parents' while symbolising their 'defiance of the wider society perceived to be hostile to Islam' (Werbner, 2007). Coding the *hijab* of the young French *Muslimat* against emancipation and liberation essentialises the dress on the one hand, and homogenises the various experiences of veiling of French *Muslimahs*. At another level, such a script reinforces the idea of inequality of women within Islam, an assumption which has been problematised by numerous Islamic feminists as I mentioned earlier. In this type of discourse, notions such as emancipation and liberation as they have been defined within the Western context and histories are deemed universal models that are applicable to all.

There are various ways in which the *hijab* becomes coded against emancipation. Tamzali implicitly positions the 'ostentatious veil' as an alien element of French history. Through its inscription as an attack to the values of emancipation and

liberation, the example defines the *hijab*ed body as one in need of values which are considered universal. The example invokes French and European histories alongside the notions of emancipation and liberation. This emphasises the enlightenment philosophy which namely advocates the freedom of individuals from the bonds of religion, hence with a vision of religion as part of a backward practice which needs to be discarded. Yet this history led to the imperial enterprise and colonial movements which paradoxically enslaved other societies in the name of civilisation and freedom from the bonds of barbarism. The concepts of emancipation and liberation as they have been developed in the Western context have also been used as effective tools for justifying the colonial enterprise, and the need to save 'other women' from their state of oppression and inequality as Leila Ahmed and other Muslim feminists have demonstrated. French history additionally led to the French Revolution and the ensuing separation of church and state in 1905, and the consolidation of French secularism emphasising the neutrality of public space from religious signs. As Joan Scott (2007, p. 91) points out, in France, the separation of church and state was meant to ensure allegiance of individuals to the republic, and destroy the political power of the Catholic Church. These histories, however, kept women away from the changes in French society, as they were struggling for their rights, including the right to vote. Even today, it is problematic to speak about an achieved 'emancipation' and 'liberation' in a context where women face many forms of discrimination, sexism and violence.

Numerous Muslim and Islamic feminists have demonstrated ways in which Islamic dress can acquire meanings of freedom and liberation. A case in point is the Iranian revolution against the forced 'unveiling' policy of the Shah regime. This was a time when thousands of women took to the streets in *tchadors* in their struggle for emancipation from an oppressive monarchy based on an even more oppressive imperialism (Sabouri, 1995, pp. 60-61). My point here is not to state that the practice of veiling cannot be used in an oppressive manner. Indeed instances of compulsory veiling can be as oppressive as compulsory unveiling laws as some Islamic feminists have pointed out, since these can be accompanied with beatings, fines and

imprisonment for non-compliance, as has been the case in Iran (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 10). In addition to essentialising the *hijab*, the categorisation and categorical association of the dress in the French context with a symbol against emancipation and liberation, however, is an instance of a homogenising discourse which codifies it as different and other to the French society. Moreover, such a process of homogenisation and essentialisation is even more problematic when applied in the context of young Muslimahs who are second and third-generation Muslims in Western secular spaces.

In contrast to the movement for veiling which symbolised emancipation during the *Shah* era in Iran, many Arab countries adopted a discourse of emancipation of women where unveiling signalled a movement from tradition to modernity and from oppression to emancipation. Examples of such a movement include Tunisian President Bourguiba's unveiling of a woman on national television, and the Moroccan king Mohammed V's unveiling his daughter during the French protectorate in Morocco. Both leaders built movements aligning with the Arab *Nahda* to promote women's liberation along the lines drawn by Western colonial powers. These examples also illustrate how different and sometimes contrasting concepts can be attached to the veil, and construct it as either a form of oppression or emancipation.

Wassila Tamzali expands on her description of the oppositional stance which she attributes to the *hijab*. Besides the notions of emancipation of women and liberation of individuals, which are two key principles of French secularism, she positions the *hijab* in terms of a 'reactionary ideological position against other cultures'. This reinforces the *hijab*'s image as an element against 'French culture', which comprises French, Western, European cultures. The multi-oppositional stance which Tamzali links with the *hijab* (against 'emancipation', 'liberation' and 'other cultures') consolidates the view of the French *Muslimah* as inferior, oppressed and in need of values and a culture deemed superior to the the 'culture of the *hijab*' to which she adheres. Furthermore, her statement demonstrates how the *hijab* is tied to a 'cultural/Maghrebi/Arab origin'

which is applicable to a majority of second and third-generation French *Muslimat* who are again associated with their historical cultural/racial/ ethnic origins. Not only does the veil 'hide' a threat to the republican values, but it also 'hides' an assault against 'other cultures'. The visibility of the *hijab* which the text characterises as 'ostentatious' contrasts with its hidden and invisible attack, a mutli-dimensional attack which it poses not only to republican values, but also to undefined cultures. Tamzali addresses politicians in an admonishing tone, and states that any form of negotiation risks causing death. In addition to its sexual otherness which bears a political significance, the *hijab* is yet again defined in terms of a cultural and racial difference which poses a death sentence to French secularism and culture.

There are other examples which illustrate the association of the *hijab* with lack of emancipation and inequality. Jean Daniel from *Le Nouvel Observateur,* for instance, categorises non-*hijab*ed young *Muslimat* wearing 'skin-tight jeans' as 'freed', 'libertines', and 'egalitarian', explicitly contrasting them with young *hijab*ed *Muslimat* as oppressed and unequal (Daniel, 2003):

> at the same time, it [the veil] is an attitude which consists of accepting a submission to a backward pressure, and risking to appear willing to give a lesson to the freed Muslim women, the law-abiding Muslim women or simply polite ones. This scene was witnessed in Morocco, from where I just returned: girls in skin-tight jeans wait on the platform for the boat coming back from France. Some time before the passengers landing, they hurry to wear the veil. Why? It is the fashion in France, and they do not want exiled women to appear better Muslims than the emancipated women staying in the country.

In a similar vein to earlier examples, Jean Daniel defines the *hijab* as a form of a 'submission to a backward pressure', and implicitly reiterates the broader historical

classification of Islam as a backward religion and the veil as an imposed practice.[66] Daniel also tacitly contrasts the *hijab* with concepts of progress, enlightenment and the freedom of choice. Yet he equates unveiling not only with freedom and liberation, but also with being 'law-abiding' (hence sincere, virtuous and ethical) and 'polite' through adherence and compliance with the laws of the republic. It qualifies the 'freed' unveiled *Muslimat* as 'law-abiding' and 'polite', in opposition to the implicitly oppressed, impolite, and possibly dishonest and disrespectful *hijab*ed *Muslimat*. The dichotomy between *hijab*ed and non-*hijab*ed *Muslimat* further emphasises the superior status of values such as emancipation, the rule of law and morality, all of which the example attributes to the unveiled body which conforms to the French secular norm.

The positive characteristics of the Moroccan *Muslimat*'s unveiled bodies contrast with the negative traits marking the veiled bodies with an inferiority that Daniel ties with backwardness and oppression. These distinctions position the *hijab* within an essential difference in relation to the unveiled secular/secularised normative body. At another level, Daniel categorises the *hijab*ed French *Muslimat* as 'exiled', making France not as their 'home', but rather their 'exile'. Pointing to their outsider status, the term suggests their strangeness in relation to the French 'home' nation, as they are again defined in terms of their racial, cultural and ethnic origins (*Maghreb/Arab/Muslim*). The French *Muslimat* concerned with the *hijab* controversies and later ban are, unlike their mothers and fathers, second and third-generation French citizens born and raised in France. The word 'exile' itself implies being expelled from one's country, mostly for political reasons. This echoes the association of the veil with a political symbol discussed in the previous section. With the additional notion of exile, the example

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[66] The Stasi Report (Commission de Reflexion Sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité Dans La Republique, 2003) similarly considers religious signs as an issue to be tackled by the French republic, stating that 'the secular rules cannot remain indifferent [...] to the exercise of pressures, threats, racist and discriminatory practices under the pretext of religious, spiritual arguments undermining the bases of the school. Although the exercise of pressure and discrimination cannot be refuted, the *hijab* adopted by many schoolgirls demonstrates the 'personal and aware appropriation of Islam', which frequently differ with the Islam of their parents. (Göle, 2011, pp. 23-24.)

provides an image of the generous French state offering immigrants and exiles a place to live.

There are other examples from the French press which point to inequality in relation to the *hijab*, as is illustrated by another extract from Claude Imbert in *Le Point.* His example, however, further states that the veil demonstrates practices which victimise gender equality, including 'forced marriages', 'other forms of divorce' and 'polygamy', practices which are also made synonymous with the *hijab* (Imbert, 2004):

> Evidence up to now concealed by official negligence: it has been discovered [...] that wearing the veil shows, in all the Muslim universe, the submission of women, and that gender equality is victim of forced marriages everyday in our country, of polygamy and other forms of divorce. So women rose in a good number in order to denounce the evident symbolism of the veil. And our daughters coming from the *Maghreb* were the most fervent ones in showing the gangrene.

The automatic link which Claude Imbert establishes between forced marriage, divorce, polygamy and the veil constructs the dress as a patriarchal and backward practice which demonstrates gender oppression. The example takes 'forced marriages',[67] 'polygamy', and 'other forms of divorce' as instances of practices already used to associate Islam with gender subjugation and inequality. It hence ties the 'victimisation of gender equality' to these practices through the veil. Muslim and Islamic feminists

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[67] Forced marriages have no basis in Islamic sources where consent from both partners is a condition for the validity of the marriage contract. Although widely but not exclusively practiced by Muslims, forced marriages are considered invalid according to Islamic texts. The practice belongs to a cultural rather than an Islamic tradition, and is governed by patriarchal ideology. Regarding polygamy, it was practiced for centuries before Islam, and was also widespread among non-Muslim populations.

have pointed out that the laws related to rights in marriage, divorce, and child custody have been profoundly resistant to alteration, despite endeavours to promote change in various Muslim countries, where the laws introduced in the first three or four centuries of Islam still rule the interactions between men and women (Ahmed, 1992, p. 242). In relation to divorce, one of the examples of the inequality in divorce in Islamic practice is the unilateral right of repudiation, and the need for court intervention in case women want divorce. (Wadud, 2006, p. 25) For polygamy, Wadud notes that, although it is permitted in the text, it is also based on 'practically unattainable terms of justice'. (Wadud, 2006 p. 193.). Claude Imbert's statement is another instance of how the *hijab* can be scripted with a gender difference which bears imprints of a racial, religious and cultural otherness through which the *hijab* and its associated practices further stress its outsider status in relation to the French context.

Claude Imbert also warns the reader against a 'gangrene' that suggests a threatening decay of the republican body. These associations equally position the secular nation as the guarantor of gender equality, which endorses the position of France as an enlightened and superior nation responsible for guaranteeing emancipation and equality, as well as challenging the decay emanating from the veil. The term 'gangrene', which also symbolises the veil, suggests the idea not only of disease and decay attached to the veil in earlier examples, but also of decomposition of tissue, hence of the metaphorical death of the republican body. The reference to the *hijab* as a gangrene further emphasises its image as a decomposing element associated with death and degeneration.

The "inferiorisation" of the *hijab* operates at other levels, as when the example explicitly situates it with a geographically remote and monolithically constructed space, the 'Muslim universe'. The use of the caricature phrase 'Muslim universe' (similar to the use of 'the Muslim world' in relation to Islamist veils) inflates and dramatises the size of the Muslim population, in addition to homogenising Muslims,

who remain largely unknown to the majority of the French society. The expression also creates confusion through mixing the situation of Muslims in Muslim-majority countries, with that of French *Muslimat*, thereby conflating two different social and political frameworks. The fusion further enables grouping French *Muslimat* with nationals of Muslim countries rather than France. This distancing of French Muslims from French nationals also codifies them with a racial and ethnic difference. Taken as the epitome of oppression and inequality, the example moves the *hijab* from one geographical location ('Muslim universe') to another one ('France') in a way that it becomes tied not only with a spatially, but also a culturally, religiously and even racially 'other' context that is remote from the French republic.

Imbert extends the notion of inequality evoked in relation to the *hijab* to include polygamy, divorce and forced marriages. It affiliates the *hijab* with a breach of the republican concept of gender equality through recalling the three key historical practices that are associated with the inferiorisation of the *Muslimah*, and that have long epitomised her oppression. As signals of the Muslim woman's inequality, these practices operate as supporting evidence for the inscription of the veil within the oppression and victimisation of the French *Muslimah*. Ultimately, the automatic link which the example posits between the veil and these practices situates the *hijab*ed body of the French *Muslimah* not merely within a sexual difference characterised with gender inequality and oppression, but also with a cultural and religious difference and racial inferiority which consolidates the superiority of French values and inferiority of Islam and French *Muslimahs* as demonstrated through its attributed oppressive practices which are understood as being stable and fixed, and unconditionally endorsed by Islamic texts.

Inbert's statement also scripts the *hijab* with an otherness to the French definition of the secular emancipated subject. The automatic link which he creates between the *hijab*, divorce, polygamy and forced marriages simplifies complex practices which

should be considered within their historical, social-cultural and geographical contexts. Indeed the question of women's oppression in Islam needs to be considered within a historical framework where the absence of what Nimat Baraganzi (2004, pp. 33-34) calls 'self-identity with Islam' and the female voice in the realm of interpretation of sacred texts has led to women maintaining their own oppression. As Baraganzi argues, the absence of women's voice in the field of interpretation of religious texts consequently made them 'follow interpretations dictated by others, which has resulted in women's participation in their own oppression' (Barazangi, 2004, pp. 33-34.). It is therefore imperative that Muslimahs engage with religious sources in order to challenge restrictive interpretations and contribute to developing a more gender-sensitive reading of texts within Islam. What poses a problem in Imbert's statement is the automatic equation of Islamic dress (or the veil) with practices which have long been associated with oppression in public imagination. At another level, it reinforces the idea that Western women have acquired emancipation and equality which their Muslim counterparts still need, thereby positioning French *Muslimahs* within a hierarchical relationship which further inferiorises them. The expression 'other forms of divorce', for instance, which defines divorce in Islam as an oppressive practice, overlooks the existence of patriarchal elements in divorce within secular democratic societies which are constructed as models which provide women's rights and gender equality. As Göle (1996, p.77) states, the presence of equality as a principle in the social perception does not designate the presence of absolute equality in practice. Associating the *hijab* with such practices additionally emphasises the oppression to which women are subject within Islam, whereas oppression and inequality exist beyond what is defined as the boundaries of the Islamic religious practice.

Other texts in the French press tie the *hijab* with cultural practices. An example from Marianne similarly connects the veil of French *Muslimat* with immodesty and 'self-discrimination' as the title of the article states (Vianès, 2004):

Today, in our state of law, some persons try to distort the spirit of laws, especially measures concerning the forms of discrimination to which people are subject. They claim discrimination if we ask them to remove the sexual religious attribute worn in public place. This sign, supposed to qualify them as 'pure', separates them from the other 'impure' women. They have the immodesty to show themselves as civil parties against the women who refuse this stigma which is tainted with the blood of raped, whipped, stoned to death, and strangled women because they have refused to wear it.

What is striking about this example is the repeated use of dichotomous references such as 'our State of law', 'we ask them', 'qualify them', 'separates them', 'they have', all of which place the *hijab* in a hierarchical and oppositional stance in relation to the French state, the guarantor of the rule of law. The dichotomies between 'them' and 'us' also serve to distance and symbolically exclude the *hijab*ed *Muslimah*'s body from public space, marking it as an 'other' body which belongs elsewhere. The dichotomies enhance the role of the state in bringing 'different' bodies to conform to the accepted and acknowledged forms of visibility advocated by the French secular republic. Similar to earlier expressions, references to the *hijab*ed bodies as 'other persons' and 'them' emphasise the otherness of the *hijab*, as well as its inferior status in comparison with the implicit superior position of the secular body.

Michele Vianes also attributes discrimination to the *hijab*, and qualifies the girls concerned with the ban as persons 'distorting the laws of the country' through claiming discrimination. While promoting freedom of conscience, expression, and non-discrimination on the basis of religion, race or ethnic origin, the republic justifies the *hijab* ban in the name of secularism, neutrality and democracy. Vianes further qualifies the *hijab* as a 'sexual religious attribute', again suggesting it epitomises the inequality between men and women in public space. The reference to the state asking *Muslimat* to 'remove the religious sexual attribute' is an expression which sexualises and

essentialises the *hijab*. The image of the veil as a means of distinguishing 'pure' women from 'impure' ones further assigns a pejorative meaning to the dress within an ethical realm.

Modesty represents a central meaning characteristic of Islamic dress within an Islamic framework. Nonetheless, the example reverses this through stating that veiled women 'have the immodesty to side against a stigma which is 'tainted with the blood of raped, whipped, stoned to death, and strangled women'. Razack (1998, p.125) notes how images of 'mutilation, barbaric customary rites, severe penalties for adultery, forced veiling, and polygamy are all highly powerful symbols of the barbaric East or South and, correspondingly, the civilized West or North'. As Meetoo and Mirza argue, contrary to the colonial times, Muslim women are not 'saved' amidst discourses of islamophobia and multiculturalism; rather, the discernibility of cultural practices back the 'further construction of the 'other's' barbaric customs and cultures' (Meetoo & Mirza, 2007). We can see how the references to physical violence in the example operate through a similar logic of a 'civilised France' and 'uncivilised *muhajjabat*'. The images evoke violent acts which the example ties to physical abuse against women in some Muslim-majority countries. Relying on an Orientalist baggage, Vianes depicts these oppressive and violent acts, simultaneously presenting them as directly related with the *hijab*. This restricts physical abuse committed against women to a spatially remote space (Muslim countries) and a single religion and culture which is read as Islamic. Such violent practices attached to the *hijab* equally serve to incite feelings of anxiety within a politics of fear often used in media.

Not only is the *hijab* deemed a symbol that provokes, discriminates, oppresses and stigmatises the *Muslimah*, but it inherently carries the stain of various forms of physical abuse endured by all women who refuse to wear it. The dramatic picture offers us a homogeneous view of abuse in the shape of rape, flogging and killing, whereas in Islamic theology, there is no punishment mentioned for women who choose not to wear

Islamic dress.[68] Such a discourse about the *hijab* contributes to emphasising its 'other' status in relation to the French state and its secular values.

We can additionally find references to gender violence of the *hijab* in political texts. In the political discourse, the Stasi Report similarly brings forth physical and psychological violence in relation to the adoption of the *hijab*, referring to the 'resurgent sexism' in relation to the dress, manifested through 'the various pressures, verbal, psychological or physical forms of violence'. The Report further points that young girls are 'forced to wear covering a-sexual garments, to lower their gaze at the sight of man, or else they are stigmatised as whores' (Commission de Reflexion Sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité Dans La Republique, 2003). The reference which the Report makes to a-sexual garments contrasts with the 'sexual attribute' to which the earlier example refers. The idea of being forced to veil which the Stasi Report evokes contrasts with the adoption of the *hijab* by women students in the French and British contexts, a step through which these young women indicate to Muslim male students that they are not available sexually to non-Muslims, and indirectly reques that they in turn behave morally with non-Muslim girls (Werbner, 2007). In such cases, the *hijab* represents a tool for these young women to access public spaces and educational opportunities where free mixing becomes regulated through a language of signs which does not only involve donning the *hijab*, but also signalling messages to other Muslim and non-Muslim men in public spaces.

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[68] Whipping and stoning have been widespread as punishments for fornication and adultery in the Middle East before Islam, stoning was first mentioned in the Old Testament as a punishment for adultery. Women in different cultural frameworks suffer many forms of abuse and crime, as rape, domestic violence and killing are widespread and worldwide (works of different women's organisations and international bodies remind us of this fact). Regardless of racial, cultural, ethnic or religious differences, women suffer different forms of abuse. Therefore, to exclusively associate abuse and crime with the veil, or the refusal to wear it, provides a distorted picture of the global situation of non-Muslim women who are also subject to crime and abuse.

We can read references to violent abuses assigned to the *hijab* in the French context through the notion of violence I discussed earlier. In such circumstances, race becomes an important 'pivot on which the narrative turns', as it enables to 'believe readily in Muslim irrationality and the monsters it spawns' (Razack, 2008, p.47). As the examples I examined elucidate, the reference to these physical forms of abuse and torture implicitly position the *hijab* within a barbarism/primitiveness which defines the *hijab*ed body of the *Muslimah* in opposition to the civilised and enlightened French body. Razack's notion of a 'latent commitment to violence' communicated through attaching the practice of veiling (and by extension being a Muslim) to these violent acts, and their systematic equation with the dress contribute to constructing it within a racial violence attributed to Muslims, which requires the intervention of the rule of law. Such statements tacitly place the secular, rational and civilised French subject against the violent and barbarous Muslim, portrayed as imposing an inherently violent religious and cultural symbol in a space where the *hijab*ed body is read as a threatening racial and cultural object. The image of the dress as a threat which hides crime and abuse is reinforced in such a way that accepting the *hijab* within the republic becomes equated with being an accomplice to these violent abuses. This would ultimately question the superior status of France as the guarantor of the 'rule of law' that must ensure all its subjects are protected against all forms of abuse.

There are also religious references to the *hijab* which link it with impurity. We can trace the dichotomy between the 'pure women' who veil, and the 'impure women' who do not to the Christian conceptualisation of the veil of nuns as an emblem of purity. Similarly, the depiction of Mary the Virgin in paintings includes her wearing a veil which symbolises her purity. Vianes, by contrast, defines the *hijab* as an 'immodest symbol', which strips it from one of its most important characteristics as an embodiment of modesty.

The images associating the *hijab* with sexuality, impurity and immodesty are reminiscent of the stigmatisation attached to the *hijab*ed *Muslimah*'s body prior to the 2004 ban. In her writing about what she refers to as 'the Other Europe', Göle (2011, p. 24) states that the presence of Islam as the epitome of the Other poses the issue of difference in European culture in terms of the notions of the body and sexuality, as Islam challenges the 'emancipatory perception of the subject and introduces another notion of the feminine subject that is simultaneously public and pious'. This point is useful in reminding us that the *hijab*, which is one of the most salient symbols of Islamic presence in Europe, also introduces into the European public space a different notion of the female subject which is at once 'public and pious', a vision which challenges attributing immodesty to the *hijab* of French *Muslimat*.

To sum up, sexual associations of the veil in French texts, as illustrated through the French weeklies and political examples, have defined the *hijab* within an antithetical place in relation to the French concepts of gender equality, emancipation and liberation. On the one hand, I have illustrated how the dress is linked with an attack to equality and emancipation which are deemed central to the republican secularism. On the other hand, I have shown how the veil symbolises indignity, oppression and inferiority, and discrimination against Muslim women, and how the veil is associated with impurity and immodesty as well as stigma and violence. Let us now consider instances where the veil is affiliated with ethical meanings prior to the *hijab* ban.

6.2. French Ethical Threats

6.2.1. The *Hijab* as Propaganda, Mission and Proselytising

The assigned meanings to the *hijab* in political and sexual terms have been accompanied with drawing clear boundaries between an autonomous individual considered to be free from religious affiliations, and a threatening *hijab*ed *Muslimah* whose body often links her with a religious threat and an intrinsic willingness to

islamise the French public space. In this section, I consider how the *hijab* is defined in terms of an ethical (and moral) otherness in relation to the French values. The *hijab* in the French press and politics prior to the 2004 ban is constructed as a threat to the French social space. The French *Muslimah*'s body is hence repeatedly affiliated with propaganda, proselytising and a missionary stance as the examples in this section will illustrate.

In comparison with other religious symbols, the *hijab* is portrayed as an item that 'interpellates' others within the republican school who may be Christian, Jewish, or atheist. Daniel Sibony[69] reference to interpellation suggests the veil constitutes an interrupting and interceding object, sending a moral and ethical message in public space (Sibony, 2003):

> Contrary to the wearing of a cross, a star, a *kippa*, etc., which indicate a certain bond of the believer to their God, a bond which does not seem to interpellate others, the headscarf means for those who wear it decency and modesty. The message which ensues to the other girls or teachers is that they lack modesty and decency. It is thus an implicit and pejorative judgment on others. That is what creates a problem.

Although the *hijab*, like the cross, *kippa* or Star of David, can indicate a spiritual or personal bond for *Muslimat*, Daniel Sibony limits its symbolism to 'decency' and

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[69]Daniel Sibony was born in 1942 in Morocco, in a Jewish family living in the Medina. He is a French writer and psychoanalyst, author of thirty books. At the age of 5, he began to learn French, and emigrated to Paris at the age of 13 years. He holds a PhD from the University of Paris, and a position of lecturer then professor at the same university until 2000. He also studied philosophy and obtained a doctorate in 1985. He became a psychoanalyst at age 32 after training with Lacan and his school. Source: http://www.babelio.com/auteur/Daniel-Sibony/81483
Own Youtube Channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/danielsibony
Other: http://www.danielsibony.com/biographie.html

'modesty'. Contrary to the claim that the headscarf (*foulard*) does not express a bond of the believer, for many *Muslimat*, veiling signifies piety and spirituality.[70] In the framework of Islam in Europe, the veil, like the minarets and mosques in public life, exposes the 'Muslim actors' in European countries (Göle, 2011, p.12). As a potential sign of piety and religious practice, the *hijab* thus marks a visible difference in European countries which Daniel Sibony links with posing a 'problem'. Although Göle defines the veil as a 'mute symbol' which risks fixing it within the realm of voicelessness, her idea of the 'pious Muslim actor' in the public realm of Europe is useful in conceptualising the *hijab*ed French *Muslimah* and her visibility in public space. In such a perspective, piety and spirituality become constitutive elements to the presence of the *hijab* in secular public life. Reading the *hijab* in the French republican school as a derogatory statement that 'poses a problem' expresses a view of the *Muslimah*'s body (and Islam in France) as an outsider to the French context. The 'freedom of conscience' repeatedly emphasised in secular ideology seems to be questioned when the *hijab* is concerned. Distancing the *hijab* from piety and spirituality hence also functions as a way of distancing French *Muslimahs* from a secular space in which some religious signs are accepted and not others.

Although Sibony restricts the practice of veiling to *Muslimat*, many Jewish and Christian women adopt veiling or modest dress today. Women, for instance, cover their heads before entering the Church or attending religious congregations and ceremonials, and nuns are required to cover and dress modestly. Likewise, many Jewish women adopt modest dress often composed of a wig and long garments. Although modesty applies to both men and women in Islam, this virtue has become more linked with Muslim women 'wearing a headscarf and not socialising with men in public' (Hamzeh, 2012, p.79). Borrowing Fatima Mernissi's categorisation of different types of the *hijab*, Manal Hamzeh notes that modesty in dress and mobility in public are manifested

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[70] See (Alvi, et al., 2003), also see (El Guindi, 1999) and (Abu-Lughod, 2001)

through three *hijab*s, and that while the visual *hijab* means covering parts of the bodies, the spatial *hijab* refers to seclusion in private spaces away from public life, and ethical *hijab*s to the protection from forbidden behaviour (Hamzeh, 2012, p. 79). Although still used as a justification for attempting to restrict women's access to the public realm, the concept of 'spatial *hijab*s' and the seclusion of women into private spaces is however challenged by the significant visibility of *Muslimahs* and their different forms of Islamic dress in public spaces today. This is the case in France in which second and third generation French *Muslimahs* have become an increasing visibile minority in French and other European public and urban spheres.

The presence of Muslims in France, as is manifested through the visibility of the *hijab* worn by French *Muslimah*s, is what constitutes a 'problem'. It is not the cross, *kippa* or Star of David that cause concern in the French press and politics, but the *hijab* which is portrayed as an 'other' sign, historically affiliated with Muslims as the colonial 'others'. As Hoodfar notes, in the Canadian context, it is the colonial image of Muslims and the veil, and the continuous demonisation of Islam that have proved a major obstacle to the integration of the Muslims into society (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 39). The vision of the *hijab* as an element that 'interpellates' others is an instance of how the dress, which the media still constructs through discourses of otherness and threat, is defined as a barrier to social harmony and integration. Unveiling is conversely understood as integrating.

We can consider the definition of the *hijab* as a 'pejorative judgement on others' and a 'problem' within the framework of an increasingly disturbing visibility of Islam in France. As Göle (2011, p.40) states in her study, Islamic presence in Europe appeared to European consciousness as a 'forcible intrusion' and 'invasion' which was not desired—'provoking a feeling of losing its identity, geographical and cultural borders'. The expressions 'pejorative statement' and 'creates a problem' serve not only to contrast the *hijab* with other acceptable and tolerated religious signs which are

portrayed in a positive light, but also to emphasise the classification of the *hijab*ed body as a 'problem' to the French social habitat. The division between tolerated and non-tolerated symbols additionally establishes a hierarchical relationship between superior hence better religious signs, and inferior symbols which are not to be accepted. To expand Göle's point, one can argue that what we can call the '*hijab* problem' or dilemma (a notion which can also be extended to the French naming of the issue of the *hijab* as the '*hijab* affair' or *affaire du foulard* manifests itself not only in terms of the visibility of a religion historically classified as other in the secular public space, but also of imposing a different culture and identity in the public realm. The *hijab*'s visibility hence epitomises a threatening 'intrusion' against the geographic, cultural and identitarian borders of the French nation. This incursion, which represents a 'problem' and a cause for worry, anxiety and disturbance, is also perceived as an attack to an institutional space which defines which religious signs are acceptable and which ones are not. The *hijab* thus presents a 'problem' that goes beyond religious difference to include cultural, historical and ethical dimensions which define it against the nation's 'identity' and 'culture'.

The definition of the *hijab* as a 'pejorative judgement' and provocative practice is also related to the pressure it is said to exercise on other girls and teachers in schools. This negative image positions the dress as a source of anxiety. The 1989 Law, which was issued following the emergence of the first *affaire du foulard*, similarly equates the *hijab* with pressure. This law was issued after the expulsion of two girls from school for wearing the *hijab*. The law establishes a connection between the *hijab* and pressure through stating that 'all acts of pressure, provocation, proselytising or propaganda are prohibited within the secular republican school' (Commission de Reflexion Sur l'Application du Principe de Laïcité Dans La Republique, 2003). In his insightful study of French secularism, Talal Asad argues that the *Muslimah*'s displaying the *hijab* is 'said to incorporate the actor's will to display it', hence the simple act of wearing the dress is understood as including a motivation or drive to display it, or to parade it. As Asad points out, the use of the term by the Stasi commission itself, as one of its

members made clear, incorporated the 'will to (make) appear', hence the Muslim identity of the *hijab* wearer was paramount to it meaning itself as the 'will to display it had to be read from that identity' (the act of wearing embodies the will) (Asad, 2006). This idea can be usefully applied to Sibony's vision of the veil as a 'derogatory' symbol that causes a 'problem' as the act of wearing the *hijab* is equated with a will to send a pejorative message to other people in the public space. Because the *hijab* is a sign of modesty, it is understood as negating the modesty of others who share public space. It is read as an act which embodies pressure on other members of the society.

In the political discourse, similar references are made. As I stated earlier, the law issued in 1989 specifically refers to the *hijab* that initiated the debate in media and politics, as it did not make references to other religious items. The Stasi Report (2003) likewise establishes a tie between the *hijab* and acts of pressure and proselytising, which illustrates the vision of the dress as a symbol of proselytising in a more indirect and oblique manner:

> Demanding the neutrality of the state seems little conciliatory with displaying an aggressive proselytising, particularly in the scholarly space. Accepting to adapt the public expression of one's confessional particularities and to put boundaries to the affirmation of one's identity allows the meeting of everyone in the public space [...] The spirit of laicity requires this balance between rights and obligations (Stasi Report).

The inscription of the *hijab* within an ethical difference includes attributing a missionary stance to it. Here, the expression 'aggressive proselytising' suggests the *hijab*'s carrying an inherent mission of not only occupying a scholarly space which is constructed as neutral, but also imposing a violent proselytising in the republican school.

In his study of Islam and secularism, Olivier Roy states that, due to its demographic weight, Islam causes anxiety at the 'banlieue and the world, local and global' levels: 'the communitarian ghetto and triumphant proselytism' (Roy, 2007, p.30). Islam in this perspective is seen as a potential aspect of a deep social change (Roy, 2007, p.30). The perception of the *hijab* as an embodiment of an 'aggressive proselytising' demonstrates this anxiety about the visibility of French Muslims in France. Rather than a culturally, racially or religiously limited practice, the *hijab* in such a case represents a global phenomenon which causes concern.

The additional reference to the *hijab* being 'little conciliatory' indicates its image as a violent antagonistic symbol which presents an attack to the secular school. The Report also considers the disturbing visibility of the dress ('public expression') as a breach of the secular notion of 'freedom of conscience,' which underlies the common perception of the *hijab* as unequivocally imposed on French *Muslimat*. The Report's allying of the *hijab* to these terms attributes a violent stance to it, and a vision of the *hijab*ed body as one that is prone to violent behaviour. I have demonstrated earlier how the notion of violence has been repeatedly used in the political and press texts in relation to the veil. This view further accords with an inscription of the *hijab* with a racial and cultural difference, and its definition with a particular culture (Islamic) and race (Maghrebi/Arab), and with 'confessional particularities' which the Report implicitly contrasts with the confessional and secular norms of the republican institution. As a violent proselytising symbol, the *hijab* of the young *Muslimat* requires to 'adapt' hence adjust to what is understood as a secular normative body appearance. It is this *hijab* which also justifies the intervention of the French state through its Commission to prevent the 'violence' of the veil from spreading within its borders. This means regulating a potentially lethal object that presents a threat to its scholarly space. The history of confrontation between Muslims and Christians, and the histories of colonialism have additionally contributed to maintaining the image of Islam as a missionary and proselytising religion, as I discussed in earlier chapters. The *hijab*

associations in France prior to the 2004 *hijab* ban can also be read as a renewed Orientalist discourse that constructs the veil within a renewed and violent threat.

The image of Islam as an inherently and essentially proselytising religion is also accompanied with the attribution of messianism to the *hijab*, which is also understood as a symbol with an intrinsic vocation to convert and hidden power to change the world. This is illustrated by Claude Imbert's statement in *Le Point* when he (Imbert, 2003) states:

> Islam, in its messianism and its distinctive will to rule not only souls, but also customs and laws is not, cannot and does not want to be a religion like others. Doubtless the great majority of the believers of Islam of France believe that they practice 'a religion like other religions'. At least they aspire to do so. Unfortunately, the devout ones are careful to remind us of the social and political vocation of the Qur'an.

Claude Imbert here ties Islam with an inherent 'messianism', marking it with a difference from 'other religions'. He equates messianism with a 'will' hence a determination and force to rule not only 'souls' but also 'customs and laws'. The *hijab* again embodies a hidden will to rule. The example also contrasts the 'believers of Islam of France' with 'the devout ones' whom it affiliates with the 'social and political vocation of the Qur'an' in reference to the 'will' of Islam to impose Islamic laws and mores in the French context. It is interesting how it is through the *hijab* that references are made about messianism and Islamic laws, and how adopting the dress embodies a 'will' to impose Islamic laws and mores on the French political and social realms. Also significant is the reference to 'customs' which suggest not only unwelcome mores, but also an 'other' civilisation. The battle of the veil in also a battle of mores and civilisation. As Talal Asad notes, however, the young Muslimat concerned with the

ban are French, live in France and are subject to French laws rather than shari'a, which means that the *hijab* indicates an 'imaginary transgression' rather than a real status (Asad, 2006). We can therefore see how the veil embodies not only a religious and ethical difference, but also simultaneously the subordination of women.

In line with the proselytising stance which the earlier political examples emphasise, messianism codifies the *hijab* with an inherent political, religious and cultural otherness which makes it pose a threat to the values and laws of the French society. This is through the example's linking it with a different religious, cultural and political system. As a symbol carrying Islam's 'political and social vocation' and an implied power and will to change the world, the *hijab* bears a potential threat to French secular norms and laws, which are defined in positive terms. Both the ascribed inability and unwillingness of Islam to discard Islamic laws in favour of republican laws and customs places it outside the borders of an acceptable religious practice in the French context. The tacit alliance of the *hijab* with messianism through Islam positions it within a political, religious and cultural difference.

The association of the *hijab* with messianism further includes references to two types of Muslims. The categorisation of French Muslims into 'believers in Islam of France' and 'the devout ones' situates the *hijab* within a dichotomy between an acceptable 'Islam of France' implicitly symbolised by unveiling, and a tacitly unacceptable 'devout Islam' epitomised by the *hijab*. Imbert ties the latter to a commitment to challenge the secular norms of the French society. Similarly to earlier references to 'laic Muslims' and 'Muslim French people', labelling French Muslims and *Muslimat* draws a contrast and delineates the boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable, tolerable and non-tolerable types of Muslims. At another level, such a taxonomisation consolidates the authority of the republic to define Islam and religious practice for its French Muslims, and to promote type of Islam which is in line with its secular norm. This is therefore another instance where the French press defines, delineates, and

determines whose Islam is to be tolerated, and whose is not within the symbolic borders of its secular space.

Ascribing messianism to the *hijab* operates through describing Islam in missionary terms. The example attributes a 'missionary' stance to the dress through Islam, moreover connoting a fear that has existed since the first contacts with Muslims. This was the case more particularly with European missionary movements and the crusades. Later during the colonial era, colonisers fought with representatives of nationalist movements in Arab countries on the issue of Muslim women's liberation. This conflict has resulted in perceiving women's liberation movement as an 'exclusively religious problem', and the conflict against the West was lived as a 'religious crusade' (Mernissi, 1975, p. xii).This is also a time when the veil represents a pivotal point of this religious crusade, and is used by different parties.Once used as a tool against a colonial 'religious crusade' in the context of anti-colonial movements, the *hijab* for Claude Imbert embodies a 'mission' against the French republican society which is not only religious, but also political and social. The danger perceived to emanate from Islam, and the *hijab* as one of its most salient symbols is projected onto French Muslims, and the messianic stance attributed to Islam is manifested through its supposed willingness to govern the laws and traditions of the French republic. The visibility of the *hijab* prior to the 2004 ban is thus experienced as a form of mission or 'crusade' against French laws and customs; hence the preoccupation with the *hijab* also parallels a concern with a 'crusade' which is attributed to its assigned 'social and political vocation'.

The equation of the *hijab* with a missionary stance is repeated in the French press. This is the case in another editorial from Claude Imbert in *Le Point*'s entitled 'Barbarism' (*La Barbarie*) which suggests the depiction of Islam as a 'barbaric religion'. The editorial makes the veil synonymous with a missionary stance having Orientalist and colonial roots (Imbert, 2004):

The veil [...] makes a forceful return in the majority of Muslim countries [...] Europe counts ten million Muslims, and France has become the eldest daughter of European Islam. If it spreads here, the veil will bring in the urban space the insistent spectacle of the Islamic presence, the display of *Allah* in a land of mission [...] the Islamist activists make use of the multiple forms of tolerance which the rights of our free societies offer to the enemies of freedom [...] Only a successful integration will make these Muslim French persons become French Muslims.

The example here refers to the religious revival witnessed in many Muslim countries during the last few decades. The term 'veil', which does not specify any special form of Islamic dress, is linked with a 'forceful return' which resounds with the power, violence and proselytising stances assigned to the *hijab* in the earlier examples. The expressions also highlight the outsider status of the *hijab*, through tying it again with 'Muslim countries', and affiliating it with culturally and spatially remote countries located outside the boundaries of Europe and France. The link which the example establishes between the *hijab* of French *Muslimat* and 'Muslim countries' suggests the dress originates from an 'other' culturally, religiously remote people seeking to invade France. According to such a vision, the West is entangled in a 'violent clash with the Islamic world', which is originally cultural, and 'Islam represents everything that the West is not, namely pre-modern, tribal, non-democratic, religious and barbaric' (Razack, 2008, p.84). The reference to 'Muslim countries', and a 'forceful return' regarding the *hijab* in France therefore serve not only to attribute violence and power to a dress constructed as belonging outside of the French and European contexts, but also to hint at the threat posed by the existence of an increasingly visible minority of French *Muslimat* who wear the *hijab*. Besides its disturbing visibility, Claude Imbert also equates the *hijab* with the 'insisting spectacle of Islamic presence', and the 'display of *Allah* in a land of mission', an imagery that suggests a Christian missionary rhetoric about Islam. As the title of the text euphemistically states, Islam embodies a 'barbaric' force, infiltrating Europe and France. As the 'eldest daughter of European

Islam', France represents the country with the highest threat due to its number of Muslims.

Political texts also contain references to the missionary stance of the *hijab*, albeit less explicitly. In the Stasi Report, for instance, the Commission (2003) notes that the 'visible character of a religious sign is felt by many as contrary to the mission of the school that is a space of neutrality, and a space of awakening critical conscience'. Although the Report remains careful not to make any direct reference to the *hijab*, the allusions and images used in relation to religious symbols hint at a fixation on the *hijab* which has initiated the *affaire du foulard* itself. The Report reads the *hijab*'s visibility as a form of mission that contrasts with that of the republican school, and constructs it as a threat which marks a clear 'breach' of the basic principles of French secularism.

To conclude, equating the *hijab* with propaganda, proselytising, messianism and violence provides instances of how it has been constructed as a threat to the French society and urban space. Now I turn to explore how the *hijab* is repeatedly tied with communalism and a threat to integration.

6.2.2. *Hijab* Communalism[71] and the Threat to French Integration

In this section, I analyse images and language used in the French press and politics in relation to the *hijab* as a symbol of communalism, which contributes to reinforcing the idea of the Muslim other in French society.[72] After illustrating how the *hijab* is

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[71] Olivier Roy (2002, p. 20) defines communalism (communautarisme) as a 'term is widely used in France to describe the trend in which people want to be recognized first as a group (usually ethnocultural) and only second as individual citizens, which means ethnocultural identity stands between the state and the individual. It is a negative term for multiculturalism'.

[72] Roy (2007, p. x) differentiates between two models mobilised in relation to the management of Muslim populations in the West: multiculturalism (usually linked with English-speaking countries such

constructed as an ethical and religious threat to the French nation and its laws and values, I now focus on how, prior to the 2004 ban, communalism positions the *hijab*ed body of French *Muslimah* with a cultural and racial difference, marking the dress as belonging to a different and other community and society existing outside the defined boundaries of the French community of citizens.

The *hijab* has often figured as a signifier for communalism in the French publications prior to the 2004 ban. This has sometimes been accompanied with labelling and classifying Muslims in terms of binary oppositions. Marie Lemonnier[73] in *Le Nouvel Observateur* for instance states (Lemonnier, 2003):

> For the 'liberal' Muslims, wearing the veil is only a recommendation, which has to adapt itself to the society in which the Muslims evolve. 'If the veil prevents women from studying and working, let them remove it [...] Islam is not here to push our daughters to ignorance or unemployment', says Soheib Bencheikh, great *mufti* of Marseille. For the 'rigorists', the recommendation has the value of an obligation. According to Amar Lasfar, vice-chancellor of the mosque of Lille-South, 'there is only a single reading of the Qur'an which is the literal reading.

as the US and the UK, and the assimilationist model (which is officially termed 'integration) which is specific to France, where 'the access of citizenship means that individual cultural backgrounds are erased and overridden by a political community, the nation, that ignores all intermediary communitarian attachments (whether based on race or ethnic or religious identities) which are then removed to the private sphere'.

[73] Lancelin, A., & Lemonnier, M. (2008). Les philosophes et l'amour : Aimer de Socrate à Simone de Beauvoir. Paris: Plon.Linkedin: https://www.linkedin.com/pub/marie-lemonnier/41/234/854

Articles: http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/journaliste/14907/marie-lemonnier.html

The categorisation of Muslims into 'liberal' and 'rigorist' demarcates the limits between an acceptable Islam, and a non-acceptable Islam considered to be incompatible with the republic. In opposition to the Islam which requires 'development' and Muslims who need to 'evolve', ('rigorist' or extremist Muslims), the tolerated and tolerant Muslims ('liberal 'or moderate Muslims) consider veiling as a recommendation rather than an obligation. The proponents of this acceptable Islam are the ones which the example categorises within 'Islam of France', or the type of Islam that is attuned to a secular nation. Conversely, the 'rigorist' category of Islam is characterised with lack of development and progress through the expression 'Muslims evolve', and narrow-mindedness through their 'literal reading' of the Qur'an. The reference to Muslim 'rigorists' also suggests not only their endorsement of a strict and rigid reading of the scripture, but also their being harsh in their refusal to open the text to an alternative reading. This is another instance where the *hijab* and Muslims are affiliated with an inherent and essential inclination for despotism and tyranny, both of which resonate with historical associations of Muslims in such terms. As I detailed in the earlier sections, labelling Muslims also serves to contrast 'fundamentalist Muslims' or 'Islamists' with 'Muslim republicans', or 'laic Muslims' with 'pious Muslims'. This justifies the role of the state in classifying Muslims according to different types and taxonomies. Yet, as Olivier Roy argues, specific categories such as 'Islamist' or 'neofundamentalist' are convenient but cannot purport to incorporate the actual lives of millions of people, as such categorisations 'do not exhaust the complexity of individual religious experience' (Roy, 2002, p.21). Classifying French Muslims into different types therefore risks homogenising the individual experiences of French Muslims which can be far more complex.

The categorisation of Muslims into opposite types and kinds also contributes to showing support and approval to some while denying it to others. This is because the first category is said to adhere to republican values (visibility of body in public realm), whereas the second one shows non-allegiance to these values (adoption of the *hijab*). In the example, the 'great *mufti* of Marseille' is depicted as progressive and 'liberal',

whereas the rector of the mosque in Lille is labelled as 'rigorist', hence illiberal and intolerant. These dichotomies also imply a hierarchy where some Muslims are portrayed as better because they are superior and liberated and evolved, as opposed to others who are inferior, backward, and intolerant. Such dichotomies therefore taxonomise French Muslims by reducing them to a sub-category of Muslims who are defined according to their cultural, racial and ethnic origin, illustrating their reduction to others who belong outside the French society.

The association of the *hijab* with a form of communalism includes references to the notion of integration. Joceline Cesari (quoted in (Killian, 2006, p. 19)) defines France's assimilationist model as one that:

> insists that if immigrants seek to become French citizens, they must eschew their foreign cultural, religious, political and ideological alliances. In other words, they must accept the already existing consensus of reality and polity of the prevailing system and assimilate into it, shedding all alien characteristics. The French policy of Gallicization sees the end result of integration as the privatization of religious practice, with the Muslim individuals becoming socially and economically assimilated.

Cesari's definition elucidates how assimilation, which represents the French model of integration, emphasises the importance of discarding one's 'cultural, religious, political and ideological alliances' in order to become French citizens. Marie Lemonnier's statement implicitly refers to integration. In the example, there is a vague allusion to integration through the use of the verb 'adapt' in relation to Muslims, who are defined in terms of their religious and cultural belonging. This reference also serves to draw a contrast between the 'liberal' Muslims who are framed as integrated to French society, and the 'rigorist' ones who are in need to be integrated. Equally

important is the expression 'Muslims evolve' which communicates a vision of French Muslims as 'backward', in line with a colonial and Orientalist depiction of Muslims in need of progress and enlightenment. This also insinuates that the 'evolution' of Muslims is only possible within French society, the guarantor of progress and development. The link which the example establishes between the *hijab* and pushing French Muslim girls to 'ignorance and unemployment' further emphasises the idea of Islam as a backward religion which prevents young women from gaining knowledge and employment. Although what poses a problem is the presence of the *hijab* in schools during the *hijab* affair, the example positions Islam as a potential barrier for their access to education and employment. As Killian notes, although veiled students are moving towards higher degrees, many non-Muslims persist on presuming that veiling and education for women are paradoxical, while veiling is not inevitably equivalent to being less committed to education (Killian, 2006, p.22). We can see how the idea of the veil as being contradictory with education is adopted by the mufti Soheib Bencheikh. Connecting the *hijab* with lack of knowledge additionally enhances the republican school's status as the knowledge provider, thereby categorising the *hijab* with a difference which also bears racial and cultural connotations of the veil as a signifier of ignorance and unemployment.

Labelling also has a long history. I would argue that the example's labelling of French Muslims resembles how Muslims were grouped into specific categories during the colonial period. During the battle of the veil in colonial Algeria, for instance, the colonial power's attempts to break the resistance of the colonised involved promoting unveiling and the adoption of Western dress. The colonised people were categorised into 'civilised' and 'non-civilised' or 'developed' and 'non-developed' natives, as mentioned in the earlier chapters. The example's labelling of French Muslims examined above perpetuates a similar strategy to the one previously used by the colonial power to mark and sort Muslims who are not to be tolerated. Instead of the coloniser, it is the French print media which defines Muslims in such terms.

Political texts also evoke the French notion of integration. Jacques Chirac, for instance, emphasises the importance of 'integration' and respect for republican laws by 'foreigners' joining the French community of citizens. This integration involves discarding a 'foreignness' that would be contradictory with the 'spirit of the French republic'. In his speech on secularism, Chirac (2003.2) highlights the importance of secularism and its success:

> These successes [of laicity] also have to be prepared with the foreigners who are joining us legally, by asking them to adhere to our values and our laws. It is the whole object of the contract of welcoming and integration put in place by the government on my request, which is proposed to them at an individual level. It gives them access to lessons in the French language, training in French citizenship, and a social follow-up in exchange for a commitment to scrupulously respect the laws of the republic.

The *hijab* affairs which started in 1989 as well as the one preceding the 2004 *hijab* ban involved French *Muslimat* who were born and raised in France. Chirac, however, uses the term 'foreigners' to define French Muslims, conflating both French Muslims and the *hijab* affair with the issue of immigration. This was done through a series of speeches on French secularism prior to the *hijab* ban. It is noteworthy that Chirac's speech is entitled 'speech in relation to the respect of the principle of laicity in the republic'. As a marker of a religious difference repeatedly associated with a cultural, ethnic and racial otherness, the *hijab* implicitly situates young French *Muslimat* not merely as 'foreigners' and outsiders to the French republic, but also as potentially disrespectful to its values and laws. In addition to conflating the *hijab* affair with the issue of immigration, the use of the term 'foreigners' to refer to French Muslims and the *hijab* affair in France also distances the dress, and categorises it as 'foreign' and outsider to the values and laws of the republic. Through banning the *hijab*, the French state also announced that the people who embraced Islam to be 'foreigners to the

French way of life', and although it did not apply to boys and men, it signified that loyalty to Islam was a barrier to full integration (Scott, 2007, p. 149). The additional expression of foreigners 'joining us legally' suggests the existence of illegal immigration, which in turn the example associates with Muslims being lawless and illegal. The successes of French secularism and promise of integration are hence tacitly opposed to the outsider status of Muslims, and the *hijab*ed body in particular, which needs to be secularised and integrated. As Killian notes, the French model of integration entails 'a loss of ethnic identity and pressure to conform to a standard civic model', and the use of the term 'integration' instead of 'adaptation' by politicians and the press suggests immigrants 'should learn to fit in rather than just get along' (Killian, 2003). We can think about Chirac's statement as an implicit call for the French Muslim to 'fit in' with the secular model of integration which requires all signs of belonging be discarded. We can additionally read this call as an example of how the *hijab* is tacitly coded as a marker of a different ethnic, cultural, religious and racial identity that need to be lost in the process of integration to the French model of citizenship. The *hijab*ed body of the Muslimah hence needs to be unveiled to conform to this model.

Chirac evokes additional references in relation to the *hijab* against integration. His statement draws an implicit contrast between 'our values and laws' which are deemed superior, and the values and laws of 'foreigners' which are scripted as inferior. It is therefore the duty of the foreigners to adapt and adjust to the secular values and laws and discard elements of their foreignness including original beliefs and rules. Chirac notes that the 'successes' of laicity have to be prepared with foreigners too, and that these successes depend on the integration of these foreigners in France. As Thobani (2007, p.6) notes, while failings of national subjects are considered as individual and isolated ones, the flaws of outsiders are perceived as reflecting the 'inadequacies not only of their community and culture, but also of their whole 'race'', and their successes are treated as individual and isolated exceptions. Not only does Chirac's statement suggest the position of foreigners (in this case Muslims more particularly) as outsiders to the French nation of citizens, but it also places the republic above 'their'

(other/foreign) values and laws. The process of integration which Chirac advocates hence involves discarding their foreignness which is embodied by their 'other' systems of belief and laws. His statement equally homogenises 'foreigners' by grouping them in a fixed and stable entity, and reducing their various experiences and beliefs into a single system. In highlighting the governmental 'contract of welcoming and integration' proposed to 'foreigners' at an 'individual level', Chirac evokes an image of hospitality offered to Muslims in return for integrating into French society, a process to be reached through 'scrupulously respecting the laws of the republic'. The process of integration and gaining citizenship hence becomes conditional upon discarding values and laws which are associated with people and 'foreigners' who have been historically defined in terms of belonging to 'other' religious, cultural and racial origins. The outsider status of the Muslim 'foreigners' is thus supplanted to the foreign status of Islam and Islamic laws, which are again understood as being imported from the 'Muslim world' through the 'foreigners'.

Chirac often reiterates his association of the *hijab* with communalism. In the same speech (Chirac, 2003.2), he refers to the *hijab* affair more explicitly when he affirms:

> Communalism cannot possibly be France's choice. It would be contradictory with our history, our traditions, and our culture. It would be contrary to our humanist principles, and to our faith in the development of society through the only force of talent and merit, and our attachment to the values of equality and fraternity among all French people. This is why I refuse to engage France in this direction. It would sacrifice its heritage in communalism. It would compromise its future. It would lose its soul. This is also why we have the fierce obligation to act. It is neither in opposition to progress, nor in nostalgia that we will find again a community of fate. It is rather in lucidity, imagination, and faithfulness to what we are.

Chirac here uses a more affective language in his speech on secularism. His statement includes repeated references to the possessive pronoun 'our', which emphasises France's superior status in relation to 'their' (other) communalism, defined in terms of incompatibility with the French 'history', 'traditions' and 'culture' as well as 'humanist principles'. We can read Chirac's statement through the notion of 'culture clash', in which the other is defined in terms of an irreconcilable cultural difference which clashes with the constructed notion of the national citizen. Although the speech makes no direct reference to the *hijab* over which the concept of secularism was evoked, Chirac's references tacitly position the dress in a hierarchical relationship with the republic, deemed to be the holder of superior culture, traditions and principles. At another level, evoking the pride in French history, traditions and culture (as signifiers of a single culture) communicates homogeneous and timeless entities, and a vision of the *hijab* as symbolic of an essential communal and cultural threat. The references to culture, tradition and history position the *hijab* as belonging to the realm of the inferior. By contrast, the republic, with its humanist tradition and secular values, is constructed as superior to the *hijab*ed *Muslimah*, who embodies not only a communal threat to the republic and its values, but also a cultural and racial menace to its superior values.

Let us consider the tacit construction of 'foreigners' as alien to the histories of humanism and modernism. The pride in the 'history' and 'heritage' of the French nation, which are defined within humanist principles including rationalism, contrasts with the implicit irrationality attributed to the religious beliefs of the 'foreigners' and by implication the *hijab* which stands for foreign presence in France. Chirac defines the *hijab* of French *Muslimat* as contrary to its 'soul', in other words its 'essence' and spirit and perhaps its very 'humanism'. It operates as a breach of the 'collective' and 'shared' French heritage which is in turn defined in essentialist terms. We can situate Chirac's statement within a republican discourse emphasising the traditional construction of the *hijab*. In her study of the construction of Muslim women, Razack (2008, p.103) notes that, according to some narratives, Muslim men and women do not possess any 'history, content, or specificity' and everything we know from culture-

clash explanations is that they are 'stuck in pre-history'. Nashat and Tucker (1999, p. xxxiv) similarly argue that the study of third-world women poses a challenge to the notion of a strict dichotomy between traditional and modern, as women's lives demonstrate that traditional cultures are not 'static, monolithic or more misogynist than Western culture'. The elevation of the republican characteristics in comparison with an undefined other, in this case the *hijab*ed French *Muslimah*, marks this other as having no history, and as being absent from the French history, culture and traditions which conversely codify the republic as rational and liberal. The homogenisation of the republican assets equally operates on the basis of the construction of a monolithic other culture, tradition and history in need of adaptation. References to history, tradition and culture further operate to emphasise the repeatedly constructed 'cultural clash' between the French past and 'civilisation' which are in conflict with a foreign presence embodied by the French *Muslimah* in *hijab*.

Secularism, however, which Chirac unquestionably associates with the French republic, has also been part of the 'Muslim world'. Regarding the support of secular values outside the French republic, Martine Gozlan in *Marianne* (2004) links the suggestively colonial 'battle of the Veil' with 'secular Muslims' and 'Arab democrats' asking:

> What can secular Muslims and Arab democrats in France and in the lands of Islam do or say about such a refusal [of secular values]? [...] In the daily *El Watan* newspaper, Ahmed Samil denounces 'the most reactionary forces of the Muslim world inviting themselves to this dance of the scalp which is determined to twist the neck of secularism in the country of Rousseau and Jules Ferry' [...] President Bouteflika who, in the Sorbonne on December nineteenth, quoted secularism among the factors of progress of the Arab societies, a world's first! It is strange that this support for our secular principles from the

Algerian opinion – both the government and opposition - as well as Moroccan democrats was completely silenced.

The codification of the *hijab* against secularism is pursued in the press. In this example, Martine Gozlan aligns the 'secular Muslims' with 'Arab democrats', showing the support of French secularism from countries inhabited by a majority of Muslim people which are termed 'lands of Islam'.[74] Indeed secularisation and secularism have constituted a significant part of the histories of Arab and postcolonial states across the Middle East. In nationalist movements struggling for independence from colonisation, the veil was equated with regression, and progress was often promoted along the lines drawn by the coloniser as I detailed in the earlier chapters. This is the case with Qasim Amine in Egypt and Tahar Haddad in Tunisia, for instance, both of whom wrote on the necessity for Muslims to adopt a more secular ideology in order to achieve progress and civilisation. This is comparable with the example's reference to the 'secular Muslim' and 'Arab democrats' such as President Bouteflika, which the example opposes to a non-secular and undemocratic type of Muslims.

Yet before Bouteflika, other Arab statesmen would have been considered equally as secular in their attempts to promote unveiling. One of the examples of this movement includes King Mohamed V (grandfather of the current king) during whose reign Morocco gained independence from the French protectorate. In a trip he undertook in 1947, at a time when Morocco was nearing its independence from French colonisation, he allowed his eldest son Moulay Hassan (who was to become his successor) and his daughter Lalla Aicha to give speeches during an important gathering. Lalla Aicha only

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[74] This example echoes an earlier example where a distinction is drawn between 'good Muslims' and 'bad Muslims', with the first ones being coded as secular while the second ones are marked as antithetical to secular values.

wore a little white scarf on her head (Daoud, 1993, p.265) .[75] In a more daring move, the late King's sister Lalla Aicha, who was invited to give a speech to French religious figures at the University of Tioumliline in the Middle Atlas, insisted on the importance of emancipation, noting that the veil was not important, herself wearing only a small scarf on her head (Daoud, 1993, p.265). In Tunisia in 1960, President Bourguiba, who played an active role in women's liberation movement and was promoting modernisation and reform of the country, publicly unveiled a woman during an official ceremony filmed in 1960 (El-Khayat, 1992, p. 260). Secularisation has and still is therefore part of many Muslim-majority countries. It can be argued that the labelling of Muslims in the article is an instance of a division which emphasises the superiority of French secularism on the one hand, and a tool to distance French Muslims who are presented as anti-secular and undemocratic, echoing historical associations of Muslims with anarchy and despotism. This labelling hence bears cultural and racial tones.

The first *hijab* controversy in France in 1989, like the ones that followed, involve French *Muslimat* who are second and third-generation children of immigrants mainly from the *Maghreb* countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. Unlike their parents most of whom had an immigrant status, these young girls were born and raised in France and are therefore French. The emergence of the *hijab* affairs coincides with the more visible presence of young *Muslimat* in the public realm and their presence in French republican schools. The *hijab* prior to the 2004 ban stands more for the permanent presence of French Muslims who are paradoxically defined in terms of religious, ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds, as they are labelled '*Beur*' (reversed

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[75]On the second of April 1947, taking advantage of a trip in the international zone of Tangier, Mohamed V publicly demands independence. Next to him are his eldest son Moulay Hassan, and his eldest daughter Lalla Aicha who both give speeches. Lalla Aicha is unveiled, her head was covered with a white scarf. The unveiling of the face is retained more than the terms of her speech. Daoud Zakya (1993) provides more details in her book *Féminisme et Politique au Maghreb*.

slang French for 'Arab'), 'Muslim', 'Maghrebi' and people 'from immigration' as illustrated through the examples.

In European societies, the *hijab* is worn by girls who are much more integrated into these societies than their immigrant mothers, as the *hijab* of schoolgirls which is public and visible, constitutes what Göle calls a 'spatial transgression of moving from the periphery to the centre' (Göle, 2011, p.23-24). As other studies have shown, even the young *Muslimahs* who voluntarily adopt the veil are more French than most would consider them. (Killian, 2003) While these young women discard what they perceive as the reduction of their parents' culture, they consent to integration through schooling and employment and demand to be accepted as both Muslim and French (Killian, 2003). Contrasting the *hijab* with education and employment in the French context therefore remains problematic.

The symbolism of the *hijab* with traditionalism and anti-modernism therefore contrasts with the fact that an increasing number of second and third generation *Muslimat* are visible in European spaces, and challenging traditional divisions of public and private. It is useful to think about the visibility of the *hijab* as a 'transgression', and a movement from the margin to the centre. Similar to the earlier notion of the *hijab*ed body as an 'intrusion' and 'invasion' into the public space, the notion of 'transgression' becomes a useful tool to conceptualise the disturbing visibility of the *hijab* in public space. The *hijab* epitomises in this sense a trespassing of boundaries, a disobedience of a visible minority to the constructed secular space. It thus embodies not only disobedience to the rule of visibility and constructed neutrality, but also a trespassing of the Muslim body from the margin to the centre, and paradoxically from the communal space to the national space.

In the print media, the French weeklies tie the *hijab* to communalism in more affective terms. In *Le Nouvel Observateur*, for instance, Jean Daniel (2003) expresses shock, irritation and embarrassment among the emotions triggered by the dress:

> What shocks, irritates and embarrasses is that there is in the desire to make children wear a veil, a *kippa* or another distinguishing sign, a will to assert a difference which does neither come under a playful eccentricity nor from a solitary challenge. It is an assertion of a collective difference and membership to a community outside the nation. What shocks, irritates and embarrasses is that the guests of a State do not have the politeness to respect the laws of their hosts, and especially their battles. Because it was still necessary to fight a long battle to reach the republican secular school, which is compulsory and open to all. What shocks is the fact of brandishing the freedom of worship in order to deny the equality before the law and the fraternity of children.

A range of emotions are expressed in relation to the veil. In this example from Jean Daniel, it is associated with shock, irritation and embarrassment. The statement draws a contrast between the Muslim community and the autonomous secular subject dissociated from religious, social and cultural bonds. The emotions associate the veil with nuisance, discomfort, shame and humiliation insinuated by the words 'shock', 'irritation' and 'embarrassment'. The comfort originating from the visibility of the normative secular and autonomous body is troubled by the mixed emotions caused by the veil, a sign associated with a visibly uncomfortable, shocking and disturbing presence. Through these emotions, the example codes the dress as a challenge to the nation by embodying a 'will to assert a collective difference'. It further signifies belonging to a 'community outside the nation' and a 'collective difference' to the community of citizens. The veil hence acquires an affective stance.

The example additionally positions the veil as a 'collective difference', and draws a hierarchical relationship which restricts Muslims within the bounds of a communal, cultural and racial difference implicitly classified as inferior. The example thus inscribes the French Muslim community as a visible manifestation of an 'other' and different community separate from the community of citizens. This consolidates the perception of French *Muslimat* as the outsiders within, failing to integrate and become full members of the national community. As Heidi Safia Mirza (Mirza, 2013, p. 96) argues in her insightful study of Muslim women and Islamophobia in Britain, the 'new and open climate of intolerance against the foreign "visible other" in our midst is characterised by a belief that things would be better if minorities, and in particular Muslims, assimilated more'. The image of this 'visible other' is reinforced by the use of the expressions such as 'guests of the state' and 'hosts' and 'battle', which define French *Muslimat* as temporary rather than permanent residents, having their 'home' outside the borders of France. The *hijab* thus remains at the margins of the French nation. It stands as a symbol not only provoking strong emotions linked with the will to affirm a 'cultural' 'collective' and 'communal' difference, but also as being disrespectful to the French values and 'battles' for the republican free school. The *hijab* yet again stands within a cultural, religious and racial difference which is incompatible with the French republic.[76]

The emotions which the example attaches to the French Muslim community and the *hijab* demonstrate an anxiety and fear of a difference which has become more visible with the second and, subsequently, third generation of French Muslims. In this context, Scott states that it was a particular concept of secularism that became an ideological

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[76] As in earlier examples, the veil is associated with impoliteness and disrespect for the laws and 'battles of France', the hosting country that has secured an 'open, free secular republican school to all'. Contrasting this with 'equality' and 'fraternity', wearing *hijab* is also linked with an image of 'brandishing freedom of worship', which suggests a menace to the French republic. The use of the verb 'brandish' itself suggests moving a weapon, thereby posing a deadly threat to the nation. It reiterates the idea of the other as prone to violence, an idea I developed in the political associations of the veil.

means in an anti-Muslim campaign positioning Muslims outside the borders of France by considering their religion and culture 'not only different but dangerous' (Scott, 2007, p. 97). The *hijab*, which has now entered the republican public and scholarly spaces, marks a difference from the constructed secular norm, classifying French *Muslimat* as outsiders to a nation that only recognises visible subjects. The *hijab* becomes a marker of an unacceptable communal difference, and denotes differences within racial and cultural terms. Additionally connected with colonised Muslims, the 'uncivilised other', which was later to become the 'immigrant', the *hijab* today defines second and third-generation French *Muslimat* as belonging to a different community, religion and race outside the acceptable bounds of the community of French citizens. Hence the symbolism of the *hijab* within such terms goes beyond communalism and difference within the French society to a difference originating from colonialism and immigration, and extending to the contemporary globalised world.

As the examples from the press and politics illustrate, we need to consider how the implicit definition of the secular and visible normative subject and its elevation of the French secular model achieves definition through comparison to a 'racialised subject' (Razack, 2008, p.160). The depiction of the *hijab* as antithetical to the French notions of community and nation of citizens contributes to reinforcing its vision as an alien element of the French society, a strangeness often tacitly defined through racial and cultural terms. This is a case where donning the *hijab* makes its wearer more visible, where the French *hijab*ed *Muslimah* becomes a 'target, identified as 'other' when controversies emerge (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 93). She is symbolic not only of 'Muslim community', but more importantly and subtly, of an 'other' often defined along cultural and racial terms.

To conclude, political, sexual and communal associations of the *hijab* prior to the 2004 ban illustrate how the *hijab* comes to embody an antithetical entity to French values and secularism. The examples I have explored from the French press and politics

demonstrate the mechanisms whereby the *hijab* becomes a threat to the French nation, state, secular values and integration. A history of the *hijab* in France is a history of associations: it is a history of what the *hijab* is assumed to embody, to bring with it.

7. **Moroccan Veils**

Why examine associations of the veil in Morocco? Reflecting an increasing climate of Islamophobia that has intensified since 9/11 and – in the Moroccan context specifically – the 2003 Casablanca bombings, the *Muslimah* and, more particularly Islamic attire, has been figured as a renewed threat in Morocco, a Muslim-majority country. The visibility of different types of Islamic dress has been a controversial issue in Muslim contexts too, and particularly within liberal secular circles. In Morocco, the dress has been subject to debate within the liberal press, especially since the ascension of the first Islamic Party (PJD) to the government in 1999. In a country where veiled women could not appear on national television until very recently, my research establishes the need for us to consider the figure of the veiled *Muslimah* as it has been constructed in terms of a threat, especially during the last decade as Islamic clothing has become more visibly adopted in Muslim-majority contexts.

In this chapter, I analyse the meanings of the veil during the years that followed the 2003 Casablanca bombings and the French 2004 *hijab* ban. First I consider how the dress becomes an embodiment of political notions of Islamism[77] and extremism, and how it is constructed against the ideal liberal secular model promoted by the publications. Second, I explore how Islamic clothing symbolises otherness in sexual terms through notions of body denial, deprivation, submission and inferiority. In the third and last part of this chapter, I discuss how the dress comes to signify ethical and socio-cultural meanings of fantasy, fashion and fitna. As I mentioned in my earlier chapters, my analysis focuses on how the veil becomes the embodiment of these particular concepts, and how these different meanings become techniques of

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[77] Olivier Roy's (2002, pp. 58-59) calls Islamism 'the brand of modern political Islamic fundamentalism that claims to re-create a true Islamic society, not simply by imposing sharia, but by establishing first an Islamic state through political action. Islamists see Islam not as a mere religion, but as a political ideology that should reshape all aspects of society (politics, law, social justice, foreign policy, and so on).

'othering'. What struck me when I was researching the veil is how these meanings were recurrent in the media texts, and how veil associations also travel with the veil. A comparative analysis of associations in the Moroccan print media will enable us to assess the heightened anxiety attached to the figure of the veiled woman not only in France, but also in Morocco.

I examine the various meanings of Islamic dress in the press through examples of texts from the Moroccan Francophone weeklies *Tel Quel*[78], *Le Reporter*[79] and *L'Observateur du Maroc*[80], and Arabophone weekly *Nichan*. Researching the veil in the framework of the Moroccan liberal print media means understanding how and why it represents a complex and controversial issue which is less debated in audio-visual media, and much more in print media. As I pointed out in my methodology chapter, a comparative cross-temporal, cross-spatial study of the veil stresses the significance of considering the dress across various junctures and contexts. Contrasting associations thus aims at considering constructions of the dress in comparative perspective with a focus on media. The importance of merging and comparing social contexts and geographies, and more particularly Muslim-majority and Muslim minority ones, has

[78] *Tel Quel* (slogan: "Morocco as it is") is a French-language Moroccan private independent magazine. Its editorial line is often critical of the Moroccan government. Outside of Morocco, Tel Quel is also distributed in France.
The group Tel Quel edited the Arabic dialect weekly Nichane until October 2010. Tel Quel defends a free editorial, without concessions to the state. Several lawsuits have been filed against the magazine since 2003.3 In August 2009, it was the publication of a survey testing the popularity of King Mohammed VI, which has earned the government's wrath. The magazine discusses several topics, combining economy, politics, and society. After the arbitrary arrest of Moroccan journalist Rachid Niny, publisher of the first newspaper in the country Al Massae, April 28, 2011, Tel Quel published an editorial in which the magazine editor expresses solidarity with Rachid Niny and rejection of his arbitrary arrest, despite the differences between Tel Quel and Al Massae. In 2010, Tel Quel's director Ahmed Reda Benchemsi sold his shares to Direct Media (publisher of the magazine) and left the country for the United States.
[79] *Le Reporter* is a weekly Moroccan magazine which was created in 1998. Its coverage includes Moroccan news, politics, economy, society, culture and world affairs. www.lereporter.ma
[80] *L'Observateur du Maroc* is a Moroccan Franch-language weekly which was inaugurated in 2008. Its coverage includes politics, economic, social and cultural issues and world affairs. In 2011, at the ninth edition of the Grand Prix National de la Presse, Salaheddine Lemaizi, who is a journalist for the weekly, received an award for his report on heroine in north Morocco. lobservateurdumaroc.info

been overlooked in the existing literature on the veil. My research is also an attempt to question essentialist constructions of Islamic dress in the Muslim context of postcolonial Morocco, which was previously under French Protectorate rule.

As I noted in my methodology chapter, my choice of these weeklies as sources of data for my study is related to the interest which they have manifested in relation to Islamic attire. Because the veil represents a more problematic issue to debate in Morocco, the liberal press has tended to address the topic more openly and freely from a liberal perspective. This is useful for a comparative study of constructions of the veil in France and Morocco. The contrast allows for a consideration of the links between parts of the French and Moroccan liberal/secular press in relation to the veil, and investigate differences between two postcolonial nation-states with past colonial histories.

Starting from this background, I ask the following questions: what meanings are attached to the veil after the 2003 Casablanca bombings? How do the press weeklies associate Islamic dress with meanings in the political, sexual and socio-cultural realms? I begin with a discussion of political associations of Islamic dress, which will be followed by sexual and socio-cultural meanings ascribed to Islamic dress. As I mentioned earlier, the political, sexual and socio-cultural categories represent the emerging themes which have become the focus of my study of Islamic dress in both the French and Moroccan case studies.

7.1. Political Associations of Islamic Dress

Since the *hijab* affair in France which culminated in the ban of 2004, the Islamic dress debate has emerged in the Moroccan liberal press at different times. In Morocco, a more recent *hijab* ban in prison administrations was issued in August 2008 which nonetheless remains silenced. This ban supplements already existing bans in Moroccan banks, military and paramilitary institutions and many schools and businesses that do

not welcome Islamic dress in any form.[81] In contrast to France, however, the Moroccan press has tended not to address the *hijab* bans explicitly, probably because they contradict the Moroccan government's desire to project the Kingdom as a Muslim country whose official religion is Islam (as declared in the Moroccan Constitution) and which is ruled by *Amir al-Mu'minin* (Commander of the Faithful and descendent of the Prophet). Islamic dress has nonetheless tended to be addressed in relation to broader issues such as religious practices in Morocco, the opposition between secularism and Islam, and women's issues and the status of women in Islam. The publications I have selected more explicitly confront Islamic dress.

7.1.1. Islamism Extremism and the Politicisation and Marketing of 'Ostentatious' *Hijabs* and *Niqabs*

Tel Quel and *Nichan* and *Le Reporter* associate the *hijab* with Islamism, extremism, fundamentalism and the politicization of Islamic dress. In the context of terminology, Leila Ahmed (2012, p. 9) notes that the Islamic Awakening or Resurgence (*al-sahwaal-Islamiyya*) brought 'Islamism' into existence, a term which, in the 1990s, started replacing words such as 'fundamentalism' 'radical Islam', 'political Islam' and '*Salafism*', all of which had been used to refer to different aspects of the Islamic Resurgence and its movements. In the Moroccan weeklies, 'fundamentalism', 'radicalism' and 'political Islam' are still being used in relation to Islamic dress as we shall see through the examples. As I demonstrate, in *Tel Quel* and *Nichan*, Islamism has often been associated with the visibility of Islamic female dress in public space and politics. This is perceived as a politicization of Islam, including an imposition of Islamic laws and an extremist political agenda. In this section, I explore how and why the *hijab* is constructed in terms of this political threat.

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[81] These bans remain silent and rarely evoked in the national press.

The Moroccan weeklies *Tel Quel* and *Le Reporter* equate the *hijab* with extremism, Islamism and an ideological threat. The first two examples are part of a feature report which *Tel Quel* issued on the *hijab* in 2002. Concerned with what it considers as the increasing visibility of the dress in Morocco, the paper asks why such a phenomenon has 'infiltrated' the Moroccan scene, suggesting that the political dimension is the most important one. In response to the question 'Why Speak about the *Hijab* now?', Driss Bennani[82] from *Tel Quel* presents three reasons (2002, p. 17):

> The first one is political, as six women who make the veil an ideological priority have made their entry into the parliament. The second reason is social, as we are approaching the sacred month of Ramadan ... Regarding the third reason, it is cultural, as the phenomenon is subject to superimposed sociological and theological discourses, yet only the religious explanation gets precedence.

The political dimension gets precedence in describing the *hijab* in the parliament. The example presents the six PJD women (Party of Justice and Development) members of the Moroccan parliament from the only Islamic party with government seats at the time as giving an 'ideological priority to the veil'. The term 'veil' in this case denotes a more ambiguous naming which does not make any distinctions among the various types of Islamic dress. This contrasts with the fact that the PJD women in the

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[82] Driss Bennani is the founder of W5 Media in 2009 in Morocco (Casablanca). W5 Media is an agency specialising in editorial communication. W5 Digital provides support and counselling for customers in their editorial projects in print, broadcast, web and creative media. Bennani's agency also publishes 'My Health practice', the first free newsmagazine for health and well-being in Morocco. Bennani is also producer-host of the show Noqat Alal Horouf (Dots on the Letters) in 2M, the second Moroccan national television channel. Noqat Alal Horouf is a political talk show, which hosts politicians, associations, opinion leaders from Morocco and elsewhere. Bennani was also the co-founder and managing editor of Les Echos du Soir, an independent French-language daily newspaper. He worked for Tel Quel, the first French newsmagazine in Morocco. In Tel Quel, he worked as a chief reporter in the realization of large surveys , interviews and feature stories
Tel Quel is the first French newsmagazine in Morocco. https://www.linkedin.com/pub/driss-bennani/46/923/9b1

parliament are *muhajjabat*. The example transposes political, social and cultural reasons for tackling the 'phenomenon' of the *hijab*, and refers to the Islamisation of the Moroccan political scene with the ascent of the Islamic party to the parliament in 2000.

In fact, although they wrote about Islamic dress in their official paper, the PJD members rarely took the opportunity to raise the issue of the *hijab* in parliament. They did so only when there were attempts to ban or discriminate against the *muhajjabat,* such as cases where Moroccan *muhajjabat* were refused employment or education on the basis of wearing the *hijab*. Such a refusal is considered a form of discrimination in both the Moroccan Constitution and the Moroccan Code of Work.[83] In the case of the Royal Air Maroc controversy, the Moroccan airline company included a ban on *hijab,* praying and fasting for its staff. This sparked a debate in the parliament where the head of the group of the PJD, Mustapha Ramid, condemned the company for attacking Moroccans in their beliefs. It is noteworthy that Islamic dress, in all its forms, has always been banned within the Moroccan Airline company. However, this was the first time that the ban was openly mentioned in the Moroccan parliament. The ban exists but is silenced in many other private companies and businesses in Morocco.

In this article, Driss Bennani expresses his concern about the visibility of the *hijab* in Morocco. The title of the article itself *'*Why does the Hijab Gain Ground?' ('Pourquoi le hijab gagne du terrain?') suggests a battlefield where the dress poses a threat of 'infiltration' to the dominant political scene in which the adoption of the dress has been absent. The image is that of an alien intruder 'making an entry' and invading the Moroccan social and political fields. The *hijab,* which Bennani vaguely calls 'the veil', and which also alludes to a cover and disguise, secretly and silently sneaks and creeps

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[83] Article 9 of the Moroccan Code of Work stipulates that any form of discrimination against employees, whether on the basis of race, colour, sex, social status, religion or political opinion, is forbidden.

in. It represents a form of contamination with a will to change the political scene. The term 'gagne' (meaning to win or gain) further suggests the idea of the *hijab* as embodying success and achievement. In gaining ground, the *hijab* gains success and victory. It embodies a triumphant invasion of Moroccan politics.

Bennani considers this relatively new visibility of the *hijab* in the political realm as a will to impose an 'ideological priority.' The term ideology connotes not only a creed or system of beliefs, but also a code of morals, hence an ethical dimension. The vision of the *hijab* as an alien invader of the political realm accompanies its portrayal as a system of beliefs with a *will* to rule the political field. The dress thus also symbolises forceful political rule as Bennani equates the presence of the *hijab* in the parliament with imposing an Islamist political ideology. This is similar to the vision of the veil as the 'emblem of politicized Islam' in the European context, and the equation between veiling and 'making a political claim' which Göle notes in her study of Islam in Europe (Göle, 1996, p. 83). The visibility of the dress in the Moroccan political realm is conflated with a will to impose an extremist Islamist ideology.

Tel Quel also refers to the presence of the *hijab* in politics as an act or business of promoting and selling the dress. Driss Bennani thus classifies the *hijab* as a form of 'Islamist marketing' and a strategy of transferring religion beyond the private space. From a young graduate *muhajjaba*'s statement that 'the woman wearing the veil today is stronger than woman in the past because she is educated', the article proceeds to assign its preferred interpretation, stating that (Bennani, 2002):

> This is called, in the most fashionable Islamist marketing, 'the right of the Muslim woman to decency'...the *hijab* is sold today much more as a 'visa for participation in social life' and not only as a 'religious obligation to which one

has to submit'. This discourse has very visible advocates in Morocco: women from the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) in the parliament.

Bennani employs additional terms in relation to the politicisation of the *hijab* which point to other meanings. He uses the expression 'most fashionable Islamist marketing', indicating not only a fixed Islamist stance which he ascribes to the dress of the PJD *Muslimat*, but also depicting it as a changing technique and strategy for marketing. Bennani therefore characterises the *hijab* as an object of commerce or, more precisely, as a way of selling or advertising religion in the political sphere. The expression 'Islamist marketing' conveys a strategy through which the *muhajjabat* access public space, and advertise the *hijab* as an item of Islamist ideology. The dress incorporates both extremist Islamism and what we can call a 'religious commodification' as wearing it in parliament represents promoting and selling it in public space, as well as advancing Islamism and extremism[84]. The *hijab* hence not only embodies Islamism and extremism, but also an act of promotion, a product for public consumption and transformation.

Bennani mixes references to the dress with 'fashion' and 'marketing,' which inscribe the *hijab* as an object of fashion and trade, hence commodifying it. The *hijab* is thus a type of Islamist commodity, a politicised merchandise. At another level, the equation of the dress with marketing suggests that it promotes an image; hence it becomes a form of propaganda. Since the PJD women represent 'very visible advocates' of the *hijab*, it follows that the promotion of the dress constitutes an act of Islamist propagation and propaganda. The *hijab* therefore symbolises an Islamist propaganda and commodity. By contrast, Bennani ties the garment with 'the right of decency',

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[84] In addition to the associations of the *hijab* with Islamism, trade and the division between private and public space, the Moroccan weekly also equates it with an 'ideological stance' and a 'political commitment' for first generation women (implying women who have witnessed the independence era).

which codes the dress with modesty and morality. The image is that of the *hijab* as an epitome of morality and modesty, but the dress is 'sold' for social participation. The commodification of the *hijab* operates through its marketable virtue.

The link which the Moroccan weeklies posit between the *hijab* and religious extremism is often accompanied with a terminology which resonates with that of politicians and media practitioners in relation to the *hijab* affair in France. This is the case with Brahim Mokhlis[85] from *Le Reporter*, who concedes that it is difficult to differentiate between different motives for wearing 'the veil' (Mokhlis, 2007, pp. 18-19):

[N]othing, any more, allows one to identify the woman who is veiled for a political movement, an ideological position or a choice of a social project. Let us consequently recall that veiled women find themselves, certainly in still unequal proportions, in various political parties, trade unions and associative movements without considering the *hijab* as a major ostentatious sign.

Brahim Mokhlis expresses his lack of knowledge about the various motives behind the adoption of 'the veil'. His inability to 'identify' the different reasons behind veiling for the *Muslimat* provides an image of the dress as a 'disguise symbol' which hides the motives of the *Muslimat*. The veil acts like a mask, a form of camouflage. The article entitled 'Marriage, Work, Security...In the Name of the Veil' introduces three aspects which he associates with the dress. However, what seems to additionally concern Mokhlis is the conspicuous nature or 'ostentatiousness' of the veil which he does not

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[85] Brahim Mokhlis is currently working as a news reporter for the newspaper Maroc Soir. He was previously working as a news reporter for Le Reporter. He has also worked in the fields of editing, surveys and reports during his career as a journalist. He has a background in journalism and law education in Morocco. https://www.linkedin.com/pub/brahim-mokhliss/15/948/b10

define in his article. The expression 'veiled for' codes the veil as a motive itself. Not only does the veil hide motivations, it becomes a motivation itself, a purpose. The Moroccan *muhajjaba* then veils for a purpose and veils a purpose. Mokhlis further refers to the 'unequal proportions' of the *muhajjabat*'s participation in political parties and associations. His depiction of the veil in such terms communicates its unequal presence in the political realm on the one hand, and its status as a 'major ostentatious sign' on the other. It therefore epitomises inequality, yet signifies a major visibility. The veil is at one almost absent, and yet too conspicuous.

The French press and political texts utilise the term 'ostentatious' (ostentatoire), which I have discussed in the earlier chapter, to suggest that the *hijab* symbolises a disturbing visibility within the secular public space and republican school. We can see how a term used in France during the *hijab* ban in 2004 is adopted and replicated in the Moroccan press in order to criticize the visibility of the dress in the Moroccan political realm. This linguistic transposition is striking in a country that purports to be Islamic. Juliette Minces similarly notes the 'ostentatious wearing of Islamic dress', which she attributes to the 'demand for the moralization of economic, social and political life within 'fundamentalism', as exemplified in countries such as Sudan and Iran (Minces, 1992, pp. 96-97). Adopting the *hijab* in such discourses becomes synonymous with hiding and masking a motivation to impose 'an (extremist or fundamentalist) ideological position', hence with a will to rule political life. The 'ostentatiousness' of the veil is synonymous with a disturbingly visible Islamism.

As I explained in the previous chapter, both the Stasi Commission Report and the French press use the word 'ostentatious' in relation to the *hijab*. Mokhlis therefore reiterates the image of a visible threat transposed to the Moroccan political realm with a latent will to impose extremism. The transposition of the word from the French to the Moroccan context offers an instance of how language can travel from a Muslim-minority country to a Muslim-majority country such as Morocco. The veil not only

stands out in the visual realm of a secular nation, but also in the visual field of a country inhabited by a majority of Muslims.

The term 'ostentatiousness' or conspicuousness, which expresses a form of exhibitionism and arrogant display, is comparable with the Arabic word '*tabarruj*,' which refers to veiling and dressing in a way that attracts attention to one's body. Often used in the religious discourse about modesty, '*mutabarrija*' (adjective) refers to a woman who either dresses or veils in a sexually appealing way that makes her body conspicuous and attractive. In the Moroccan and French press and politics, however, it is veiling rather than unveiling that is synonymous with a form of '*tabarruj*'. Bennani and Mokhlis not only equate the *hijab* with being 'extremely' socially and politically visible ('major ostentatious sign' and 'very visible (*hijab*) advocates'), thereby disrupting the visual field of the political space, but also with implicitly imposing an extremist Islamist agenda in politics. The word 'ostentatious' which means something characterised with pretentious display also implies extremism and excess and therefore also associates the veil with excessive display and showing off. The veil becomes ostentatious because it is extreme, and conversely becomes extreme because it is ostentatious. Mokhlis borrows more terminology from the French discourse of the veil. The equation between the *hijab,* Islamism and 'ostentatiousness' strikes a chord with the categorisation of French Muslims into 'secular *Maghrebis*' and 'anti-secular Muslims' and between 'liberal Muslims' and 'rigorist Muslims' in the French press. Mokhlis in his article contrasts 'secular *Maghrebis*' who showed support for the French government prior to the French ban, and 'French people of *Maghrebi* origin' who are coded as 'anti-secular Muslims'. He characterises French nationals as 'Muslims' instead of '*Maghrebis*', which implies the precedence of religious belonging over the ethnic or cultural one. He argues that 'secular *Maghrebis*' represent the majority of Muslims within France, which brings us to question how a few hundred *hijabs* mobilised politicians and media practitioners and culminated in a national ban. The linguistic transposition and 'migration' of words from the French to the Moroccan context shows how terms can be adopted from a secular to a dominantly non-secular

framework. The *hijab* thus represents a disturbing visibility and allegiance to Islam in a Muslim-majority context. The dress does not only embody a visual and visible disturbance, but also an Islamist nuisance.

The association of the *hijab* with political ideology and extremist Islamism, such as we find in *Tel Quel* and *Le Reporter*, implicitly contrasts it with democracy since it stands as a political symbol that represents an 'extreme' as opposed to a 'moderate' practice of religion. In her study of the piety movement in Egypt, Saba Mahmood states that, in contrast to other politico-religious movements, the mosque movement, which is part of a larger piety movement, does not seek to control the state and make Egypt a theocracy (Mahmood, 2004, p. 37). The contrast which the example draws between the *hijab* and democracy implicitly positions it as a symbol of theocracy which resounds with the French association of the *hijab* with theocracy. Such a discourse assigns not only meanings of political ideology and extremism to the *hijab*, but also of theocracy. Although the PJD was the only Islamic Party in the government at the time, it has not shown a will to impose an extremist or theocratic ideology, but rather to uphold its values which include a discourse about the importance of modernisation, democracy and development from which it derives its own name (Justice and Development). Interestingly, the movement also includes a wider piety movement which can be included as part of the Islamic Revival, and its broader initiatives to encourage religiosity and Islamic practices which accompany attempts to revisit religious texts by women.

References to the *hijab* in terms of extremist Islamism, ostentatiousness and theocracy further suggest its vision as a political threat that increases Islamist danger in public, political and social realms. We can associate the *hijab'*s visibility, however, with secularisation and modernisation in the context of Muslim countries. Concerning the penetration of secularism and Islamic visibility, Göle (2011, pp. 107-108) states that 'women's participation in public life as citizens and government officials, their

visibility in urban spaces, their socializing with men, all indicate a secular way of life and an important change in the way civic life is organized'. In the case of the PJD members of the parliament, the visibility of the *hijab* at the governmental, party and associative levels constitutes a secularisation of the dress, which has penetrated the modern state and its secular bases and institutions. The PJD women introduce the *hijab*, which is coded as an Islamist and anti-democratic symbol. It is perceived not merely as a threat to the ideal secular model which promotes the visibility of bodies, but also as an attack to the modernisation efforts promoted by the Moroccan state and its institutions. The ostentatiousness and Islamism of the *hijab* supplements its Islamisation of political life. We can read the *hijab* in the parliament, however, as a 'secularisation' of the dress. The presence of the *muhajjabat* in governmental institutions testifies to an acceptance of concepts such as democracy, modernity and the participation of women in decision-making positions in a Muslim context.

Although both Bennani and Molkhlis concede that there is nothing to inform the observer of the actual motivations for wearing the *hijab* and accepting that such motivations can be political, social or religious, the articles nonetheless proceed to assign Islamism and extremism to the dress, thereby attaching more weight to its political signification. No survey or similar data is presented to support this. The *hijab* thus becomes equated with an extreme practice of Islam that is to be discarded in an ideal secular-modelled Moroccan politics. Saba Mahmood (2004, p. 189) notes that 'the neologism "Islamism"...frames its object as an eruption of religion outside the supposedly "normal" domain of private worship, and thus as a historical anomaly requiring explanation, if not rectification'. The equation of the *hijab* with Islamism and politicisation of space in the Moroccan publications implies that its presence in the public and political spheres constitutes a breach of the separation public/private which forms the basis of a secular state. They therefore suggest that a modern state should be characterized by the separation of the state and religion and based on the ideals of freedom, equality and emancipation as defined within a secular government model. Leila Ahmed (1992, p. 127) notes that, among other factors, the emergence of

"modern" states in the Middle Eastern societies, and the European and colonial domination in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, formed the comprehensive economic and political frameworks of a 'fundamental social transformation'. The call for a secular political space free from religious signs in the Moroccan context should be viewed as a continuity of a discourse adopted since the emergence of the modern states after independence from the French Protectorate. The equation of the hijab with Islamism and politicisation of space in the Moroccan press examples implies that the presence of modest Islamic dress in the public sphere constitutes a breach of the separation public/private which forms the basis of a secular state. Adopted in the Moroccan framework, this vision presents us with a transposition which frames the *hijab* outside what is constructed as the normative political subject adopting a Western-style of dress in public and political spaces. The association of the *hijab* with the PJD and extremist politics is linked to its idea as a political tool representing a threat not in a secular country based on a supposed separation of state and religion (and a supposed neutrality of the government regarding religions), but in a country that states in its Constitution that it is 'Islamic', and that its precepts are based on 'Islamic ideals'.[86] Adopted and transposed in the Moroccan framework, such a vision transposes the conception of the normative secular body from a Muslim-minority context (France) to a Muslim-majority context (Morocco). In the Muslim context, Göle (1996, p. 4) notes that 'the revival of Islamist movements is often interpreted as a challenge to Western modernity, which is built upon a unidirectional notion of evolutionary progress conceived in terms of binary oppositions between religion and secularism, the private and public spheres, and particularism and universalism'. She also notes that 'metaphorically women's covered bodies revitalize contemporary Islamist movements and differentiate them from the secularist project' (Göle, 1996, p. 4). Bennani and Mokhlis interpret the presence of the Moroccan *muhajjabat* in the government as a threat to the concept of modernity, which

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[86] Article 6 stipulates that 'Islam shall be the state religion. The state shall guarantee freedom of worship for all.'

presupposes conforming to a secular bodily appearance instead of a religious one in public space. Although the PJD women may not view their adoption of the *hijab* as an 'Islamist' act, the examples nonetheless assign a political significance to their dress. The ostentatiousness of the *hijab* not only expresses its view as a 'challenge to modernity', but also expresses its image as an 'eruption' or intrusion at the level of a religious practice which needs to be confined to private space. Western-style dress, by contrast, constitutes the norm. The *hijab* thus forms an abnormal apparition considered as alien to the Moroccan politics. It embodies an Islamist outbreak or anomaly in a Muslim context.

In fact, being a member of the Moroccan parliament entails accepting political ideals as they are stipulated in law and the Constitution.[87] These include promoting a 'modern Islam' based on the implementation of universal ideals such as democracy, equality and progress within the framework of modernity. In this context, it is the 'universal vocation' of modernity which explains the impact of modernity on 'other cultures'; the signs of modernity have crossed and persist crossing 'national, cultural, and geographical borderlines and participate in the subjective construction of social meaning' (Göle, 2011, pp. 112-113). The presence of the *muhajjabat* from the PJD at governmental, party and associative levels, and their use of common spaces with their male counterparts, as well as their broader commitment for supporting values such as democracy, progress and equality confirm their adherence to modern principles. These concepts have been adopted since independence and have also been prevalent in the Islamic Party's discourse through their press and political debates.[88] At another level, only personal statute laws related to family matters such as marriage, divorce and custody (the *Moudawana*) are based on Islamic texts and have been subject to revisions

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[87] Article 6 of the Constitution stipulates that Islam shall be the state religion, and that the state shall guarantee freedom of worship for all.

[88] For more information, see Al-Tajdid, the official newspaper of the PJD http://www.jadidpresse.com

and reinterpretations. All other Moroccan laws have been conceptualised following French law since the colonial era, and are consequently not based on Islamic texts.

The perception of the *hijab* in the Moroccan parliament as a sign of the politicization of Islam suggests that the visibility of the garment represents a threat to the ideal modern secular state and its supposed 'neutrality', which Bennani and Mokhlis understand to be reflected by a more Western-attuned appearance and dress code. It is ironic, then, that PJD woman MPs in fact seem comfortable adopting *both* traditional Moroccan clothes (which often include a *djellaba* and scarf tied to the neck) and, more frequently, Western-style clothes including suits with trousers or long skirts. Leila Ahmed (1992, p. 225) points out that Islamic dress can be perceived 'as the adoption of Western dress—with modifications to make it acceptable to the wearer's notions of propriety'. She adds that 'Islamic dress is the uniform of arrival, signalling entrance into, and determination to move forward in, modernity' (Ahmed, 1992, p. 225). The adoption of the *hijab* alongside Western-style garments by the PJD women is an instance of a modified appropriation of Western dress. The *hijab* hence fits Western-style dress and complements it. It also modifies it. As the 'uniform of arrival' which announces the visibility of an embodied pious practice in the Moroccan political realm, the *hijab* signifies morality and ethicality as well as an entrance into modern politics. This contrasts with marking the dress as a traditional and fixed symbol which represents a breach of modernity.

What the examples from *Tel Quel* and *Le Reporter* suggest is that, first of all, a 'modern' state should be characterised by the separation of state and religion, and the adoption of a secular model. Secondly, the examples imply that the *hijab*, which is perceived as an embodiment of an extremist ideological and political form of Islam, has no place in the Moroccan parliament. The preoccupation of the Moroccan independent press with the PJD and women belonging to the Party is demonstrated by the attention allocated to these women in their articles, further exemplifying the

tendency to link Islamic dress with a political threat. There are repeated references regarding the politicisation of Islam in Morocco, the threat of religion and religious practices, and the dichotomous relationship between 'Islamists' and 'seculars', in addition to the idealisation of secularism and the demonisation of Islam, and Islamic dress. This discourse has permeated the secular-oriented press since the ascension of the Islamic Party to the parliament.

If we put the press examples in their socio-political context, we can consider how the *hijab* is attached to such meanings as Islamism, extremism and ostentatiousness. As I mentioned earlier, the inclusion of six PJD women in parliament has resulted in an increasing discourse about the rise of a dangerous Islamism in the liberal press, and a threat to the values of democracy, freedom, progress and emancipation. This type of model is based on the separation of religious and political powers, and equating religion with backwardness and regression. In his discussion of Islam in the news, Edward Said notes that, to Westerners and Americans, "Islam" represents a 'resurgent atavism, which suggests not only the threat of a return to the Middle Ages, but the destruction of what is regularly referred to as the democratic order in the Western world' (Said, 1997, p. 55). For Bennani and Mokhlis, the *hijab*, which represents a visible extremist Islamist practice in the political field, also symbolises a return backwards and a regression from the concepts of progress and democracy as universal models. This opposes progress and development which they associate with secularism. Unveiling hence becomes equated with democracy and progress while the *hijab* is coded as theocratic and backward. Preceded by and combined with 9/11 and the French *hijab* ban in 2004, the May 2003 Casablanca bombings further intensified the discourse about the 'Islamist threat' in Morocco, provoking debates about religious practices and the dichotomy between Islamism and secularism.

The depiction of the *hijab* as a form of backwardness is also accompanied with references to emancipation. In her discussion about veiling in universities, Göle (1996,

pp. 3-4) contends that veiling in urban places, political organisations and industrial places is commonly viewed as a 'force of obscurantism'. Often identified with women's subservience, the veil is interpreted as 'blurring the clear-cut oppositions between religion and modernity and as an 'affront to contemporary notions of "gender emancipation" and "universal progress"' (Göle, 1996, pp. 3-4). The vision of the veil as a symbol of 'obscurantism' similarly echoes linking it with a movement backward rather than forwards towards progress promoted by secularism. As such the presence of the *hijab* in the parliament and Moroccan government parties and associations is perceived as an attack on the idea of progress and development which are believed to be intrinsic to secularism and extrinsic to the veil. Yet such a discourse additionally codes the dress with an attack on the notion of gender emancipation. This is done through emphasising the position of the dress as a threat to these notions.

Tel Quel also links the *hijab* with Islamic Revival. It states that the resurgence of the *hijab* dates back to the 1970s, and that it has been influenced by the Iranian revolution, social evolution, 'Islamist discourse' and 'social conservatism', associating it with a social movement towards a substantial 'Islamisation' of Moroccan society. In her study of the mosque movement in Egypt, Saba Mahmood (2004, p. 3) states that the Islamisation of the sociocultural landscape of society is predominantly the work of the 'piety movement'[89] of which the women's movement is an integral component. In Moroccan society, there is a similar mosque movement also led by Morshidat (*Muslimat* guiders), who are responsible for promoting piety through study groups and mosque gatherings focused on the reading of the Qur'an, *tafsir* and related subjects, as part of the broader Islamic Revival. The PJD *Muslimat* and their associated political party are also involved in a movement promoting a reading of religious texts and educating women in order to empower them and change their status, as I stated earlier.

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[89] Lila Abu-Lughod (1986, pp. xix, xx) notes that the new veiling of the 1970s was associated with the piety movement in the cities of the Muslim countries.

By defining the *hijab* as a part of 'social conservatism' therefore, *Tel Quel* constructs it within a political practice against values such as emancipation and modernity. It restricts the *hijab* to traditionalism. Sherifa Zuhur (1992, p. 10) argues that the Islamic Awakening or Revival included not only Islamic opposition, but also 'intellectual preoccupations with religion, increased personal piety, and theoretical linkage between political circumstances and the situation of faith and modernity'. The restriction of the *hijab* to 'Islamisation' and conservatism risks confining a broader piety movement which was not only concerned with the political situation, but also with piety in society and with women's empowerment through education and contribution to society. At another level, the resurgence of the *hijab* and its increasing visibility in public spaces and politics have accompanied the growing participation of women in public life and politics after independence. The 'social conservatism' and traditionalism contrasts with the 'modern' public visibility and participation of the *muhajjabat* in public and political life. As Leila Ahmed (1992, p. 224) points out, the adoption of Islamic dress does not declare women's place to be in the home but, on the contrary, legitimizes their presence outside it. Hence the veiling of women during the last few decades cannot be seen as a retreat from the affirmations of female autonomy and subjectivity made by the generation of women who immediately preceded them (Ahmed, 1992, p. 224). *Tel Quel* and *Le Reporter*, however, construct the *hijab* at once as Islamist and conservative. The image is that of active extremism and passive regression, Islamism and traditionalism. It is at once backward and Islamist. It is worth noting that the *Maghreb*i feminist construction of Islamic dress has also involved its symbolism as an extremist Islamism. I consider some of these constructions in the next section in order to examine how *Maghrebi* feminism, which includes more elements of Muslim feminism, contributes to building a similar essential image of the veil as a political threat.

7.1.2. *Maghrebi* Feminist Construction of Islamist Veils and Public Space

In parallel to *Tel Quel* and *Le Reporter*, some *Maghrebi* and *Arab* feminist works affiliate Islamic dress with an extreme form of Islamism. Feminist movements promote the participation of women in public space, hence crossing the traditional boundaries imposed on them (Maadi, 1992, p. 80). Some *Maghrebi* feminists, however, oppose the participation of the *muhajjabat* in politics, positioning them as the epitome of radical Islamism, and contrasting them with the modern, emancipated non-*muhajjabat*. This perception crystallises during the 1970s with women's desire to adopt the veil, which was represented as a 'political demand' in Muslim countries as the veiled woman became the 'flag of Islam' and its politicisation (the Iranian Revolution consolidating the vision of the veiled woman with 'radical' Islam promoting *shari'a* law) (Göle, 2003, p. 463). As Sophie Bessis and Souhayr Belhassen (Bessis & Belhassen, 1992, pp. 192-193) argue, whereas *Maghrebi* women removed the veil *en masse* during the colonial and early independence era, since 1970 they have been increasingly adopting it and this, they argue, is indicative of the development of Islamism. The last decades' subsequent veiling experience and the increasing visibility of Islamic dress in the North African cities is perceived only in terms of an expansion and development of Islamism. Houria Alami M'chichi (2002, p. 78) likewise maintains that wearing the veil plays a role in ensuring the 'political visibility of Islamism' in public space, which can then be experienced by women as a 'space of acknowledgement'. Similarly, Zakya Daoud (1996, p. 31) depicts the veil as a 'flag that allows Islamist women to infiltrate all the pores of society', and a new way of 'accessing the political sphere'. In other words, many *Maghrebi* feminists confine Islamic female dress with the rise of Islamism and the politicization of public space, considering the *hijab* as its most salient symbol. Associating Islamic dress with Islamism is therefore not limited to the Moroccan liberal press.

This is despite the fact that, for many Muslim women, Islamic dress carries other meanings and is not necessarily linked to a will to impose an 'extremist Islamist' vision in the political sphere. What such a feminist discourse seems to overlook is that the

hijab for many *Muslimat* is a part of their pious practice, which does not necessarily include a will to impose extremism. Mahmood (2004, p. 119) argues that, in the framework of the Islamic Revival movement, bodily practices such as veiling and praying serve at most as 'vehicles for the expression of group interests or political differences'. In contrast to the normative liberal conception of politics which is separated from ethics and moral conduct, the conception of 'bodily practices' and the forms they take in the Revival movement are not in themselves seen to have political implications (Mahmood, 2004, p. 119). Assigning extremism to the *hijab* in the political realm hence amounts to imposing a political meaning on the garment. The adoption of the *hijab* by the PJD *Muslimat* therefore marks their difference from the liberal conception of politics which may not necessarily carry extremist Islamist implications. For a liberal conception of politics such as the one adopted by the liberal Moroccan press and feminist discourses, the *hijab* constitutes a breach of the liberal vision of politics which should exclude the ethical dimension. The dress is hence read not only as political, but also as extremist.

The Islamist extremism which the press and *Maghrebi* feminists attach to the *hijab* contrasts with the lived experiences of women in Moroccan politics. Although the Moroccan government has signed many international conventions guaranteeing the rights of women within the political realm and their participation in public life, women's involvement in politics remains a minority issue. The Moroccan Constitution states in Article 8 that 'men and women enjoy equal political rights'. Examples of conventions which the Moroccan government has signed include the Universal Declaration of Human rights[90], the CEDAW convention[91]. Additionally, Article 3 of the Convention of Political Rights of Women stipulates that 'women will, in conditions of equality, enjoy the same rights as men to occupy public posts and practice all public

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[90] Article 21 stipulates that 'any person has the right to take part in the direction of public affairs of their country.'
[91] Article 7 states that 'all member parties take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination towards women in political and public life of their countries.'

functions'. However, the political scene in Morocco witnessed an insignificant participation of women, marking the separation of roles as prominent in this field (M'chichi, 2002, p. 93). Furthermore, women who were part of the political scene in Morocco after independence have been adopting a Western-style dress different from Islamic and Moroccan types of dress.

In her discussion of unveiling and education movements across the Middle East after World War I, Homa Hoodfar (Alvi, et al., 2003) notes that, during anti-colonial and democratic struggles, veiling was perceived by women as a 'corruption of Islamic ideals instituted by men in the name of Islam to prevent women's advancement. The *Libas Asri* (or Modern dress), as they are called in Morocco, have been adopted since the colonial era. Wearing such 'modern clothes' denotes a will to build an image based on principles of modernity, democracy and progress as declared by the Moroccan Constitution Moroccan laws. While Moroccan women still draw a contrast between *'asri*/modern dress and *beldi/*traditional clothes with reference to adopting either a Western dress code or a more traditional one, many among them embrace both types of dress in a comfortable manner. Only towards the end of the 1990s did the *hijab* (rather than other types of dress including the *niqab* and *soutra* (which remain rare in Morocco) or the *jilbab*[92]) make its entry into the parliament with a small minority of women. Additionally, the *hijab* has not figured as a priority topic for the PJD in the parliament, just as the application of *shari'a* law has not been on their agenda. Both the Moroccan publications and *Maghrebi* feminism, however, associate the *hijab* with political ideology and extremist Islamism. As my analysis illustrates, the *hijab* embodies a political Islamist threat in their respective discourses, and a will to impose extremism in the political realm.

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[92] The PJD women sometimes wear the traditional Moroccan *jellaba*, which is a long colourful dress with slits on the sides up to the knees and a hoodie, usually accompanied with hand or machine-made patterns and embroidery. In contrast to the black uniform *jilbab* which is more widespread in the Middle East and Gulf countries, the Moroccan *jellaba* represents a local and culturally specific garment which is renewed and fashioned in new styles every season.

Islamic dress, however, also continues to be tied with the absence of women from social life and public space. It is portrayed at once as enhancing the visibility of Islamism and simultaneously blocking women from accessing public space. In this context, Arab feminist Aida al-Jawhari (2007, p. 170) notes that the veil 'excludes woman from the public sphere, from the places of religious and civil law making and from political events more generally'. The greatest impact of the veil on women is considered to be their absence from society and isolation at home. The veil paradoxically allows women to access public space and bars them from it. Malika Benradi (2000, p. 17) argues that women's role in the private sphere remains a priority in Moroccan culture: women can participate in public life and politics so long as their participation does not conflict with the private interests of the family. The traditional separation of work is linked to notions of the private domain of women and male public space, with different roles assigned to each space. Mernissi (1975, p. 143) argues that, traditionally, women using public spaces are restricted to few occasions and bound by rituals, such as the wearing of the veil. She states that the veil means that the woman is present in a male space, but invisible; she has no right to be in the street (Mernissi, 1975, p. 143). Islam, however, does not in itself restrict women's political and social participation. Historically, Muslim women have participated in all fields of public life alongside their male counterparts. During the time of the Prophet, the participation of women encompassed all fields to the extent that there was no field that was specific to men without women (Karkar, 1990, p. 157). Sultana Alvi (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 153) argues that female participation in the early formative period of Islamic history is quite significant, including gatherings in the mosque, and a religious discourse in which great religious scholars had female teachers, and women were among the transmitters of the Prophet's statements. On the one hand, *Maghrebi* and Arab feminist works therefore paradoxically associate Islamic dress with Islamism, extremism and an invasion of the public sphere, implying a forceful imposition of Islamic law in Morocco. On the other, they equate Islamic dress with withdrawal from public space and absence of women in traditionally male-dominated spheres.

Veiling and the division of space into public and private have witnessed various changes over time. Muslim feminists have noted that seclusion and veiling have their roots in pre-Islamic practices in the Middle East (Nashat & Tucker, 1999, p. xxx), and represent practices which are found in many cultures and supported by religions other than Islam (Macleod, 1991, p. 98). Reina Lewis (2004, p. 79) argues that, as a marker of status, veiling was part of a system of seclusion that, like the harem, was a feature of life for urban upper-class and royal women. The practices therefore predate Islam, and did not come as a result of it as is implied through the *Maghrebi* feminist discourse. In colonial Algeria (and Morocco), women involved in liberation struggles both adopted and abandoned the veil as we saw in the first chapter on the histories of the veil (Fanon, 1967, p. 61). After independence, many women in Muslim countries considered the veil as something from the past, and a custom to be discarded in order to achieve the progress and modernity promoted by the coloniser. Progress in this case means identification with the coloniser. While veiling was initially established without affecting women's access to the public realm during the initial period of Islam, it has been turned into a means of blocking *Muslimat* from accessing public space. As Rifaat Hassan (2000, pp. 53-54) notes, Islamic societies put many women 'behind the veil and shrouds, and behind closed doors' while forgetting that, according to *Qur'an*, confining women to their homes was instead a punishment for fornication. The veil has therefore been used to allow women to access public space and at the same time to bar them from it.

The comparison between the press publications and *Maghrebi*/Arab feminism elucidates how Islamic dress, and more particularly the *hijab* in the Moroccan publications, embodies contrasting and conflicting meanings. On the one hand, the dress epitomises an extremist Islamicisation of political life, a marketing of Islamism, and an 'invasion' of the political and social realms. On the other, Islamic dress in its different forms embodies absence and withdrawal from public space in the *Maghrebi* and Arab feminist discourse. The dress becomes an expression of conflicting

associations of both an active 'invasion' and a passive 'withdrawal'. Yet the *hijab* in the Moroccan liberal press is also tied with fundamentalism, ethics and *shari'a* which I explore in the next section. I include these notions here as they can also be considered within the context of inscribing and constructing the veil in terms of a political threat.

7.1.3.   Veils Fundamentalist Ideology, *Shari'a and Radicalism*

I have examined how *Tel Quel*, *Le Reporter* and some *Maghrebi*/Arab feminists affiliate the *hijab* with Islamism, extremism and ostentatiousness, as well as withdrawal from public and social realms. In this section I consider how *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* link the dress with fundamentalism and a latent will to apply *shari'a* laws. Since the publications advocate a secular political system, they often promote the removal of the *hijab*, which they associate with a will to impose *shari'a* and a 'fundamentalist ideology' in the political and public realms. Driss Bennani's (2002, p. 19) discussion of the veil, for instance, ties the dress with the Qur'an and its interpretation:

> What does religion say about the veil? The proponents of the fundamentalist ideology and the ones who insist on propagating an absolutist literal reading of the Qur'anic text cite two verses in particular... (*Surat al-Ahzab* verse 59 and *Surat al-Nour* verse 31) … Historicists who prefer to limit the phenomenon to its original context remind us that the veil appeared initially to distinguish the Muslim population from others. During the pre-Islamic era, prostitution was quasi-legalised and 'closed houses' were tolerated. Islam later insisted on differentiating respectable women.

Bennani here attaches the *hijab* to fundamentalism. In her pertinent study of the veil, Muslim feminist anthropologist Fadwa El Guindi (1999, p. xix) notes that 'fundamentalism' represents an ethnocentric notion imposed on the Islamic movement and that it derives from Western Christianity. Note how the terminology which has been used in the French context of the *hijab* controversies is again adopted in the Moroccan context by the liberal press. After being used as an argument against the *hijab* in France, the notion of fundamentalism is transposed onto the Moroccan context. Bennani opens his article with the vague allusion to the 'veil' which he also euphemistically refers to as 'the phenomenon', blurring distinctions among different types of Islamic dress. In his answer, he positions a dichotomy between 'proponents of *the* fundamentalist ideology' and 'historicists' in relation to the reading and interpretation of the verses relating to modest Islamic dress. The terms code the veil with 'the' fundamentalism which yet remains undefined, and with 'ideology' which connotes not only a system of beliefs and dogma, but also a will to impose fundamentalism, and perhaps a system of ethical and moral values. The veil thus embodies fundamentalism and an inherent will to impose it.

Historicism suggests a vision that the veil is to be limited to its original context: it is a historical and cultural practice that is no longer valid in the modern times. Bennani's expression 'insist on propagating an absolutist reading' emphasises the forceful will to impose a (fundamentalist) reading, and 'propagating' it, which suggests the idea of promotion and propaganda evoked in both the French press and politics and earlier examples. This endows the veil advocates with a will to spread propaganda. The verb 'propagate' (*propager*) further implies an invading revival which is often attributed to the visibility of Islamic dress in public. We can further notice how the word 'absolutist' suggests a link between the veil proponents and autocracy. Advocating the veil therefore amounts to promoting a despotic and tyrannical practice. The veil thus becomes dissociated from democracy. The references which Bennani uses to associate the veil with fundamentalism carry further meanings of the dress which codify it as undemocratic and proselytising. It embodies despotism and propaganda.

Bennani's statement additionally refers to modernism. The article's reference to proponents of 'the fundamentalist ideology' and an 'absolutist and literal reading' of the Qur'an implies its advocating a non-fundamentalist or moderate ideology for unveiling in the contemporary era. In the colonial and *Nahda* eras, a dichotomy was established between partisans of 'social conservatism' who opted for a closed identity symbolized by religious belonging, and reformers who liberally interpreted the *shari'a* as the fundamental source of law (Bessis & Belhassen, 1992, p. 21). The French press and political texts further draw a distinction between 'Islam of France' (*Islam de France*) as the desired one in opposition to 'Islam in France' (*Islam en France*) as the other and outsider type of Islam embodied by the young French *muhajjaba*. Olivier Roy (2007, p. 26) points out how the slogan of 'Islam à la Française' (French Islam) is explicitly aimed at favouring liberal or even secular Islam, 'that is of emptying any religion not necessarily of its transcendence, but for its demand for the absolute.' Similarly, *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* emphasise the necessity to transform Islam in order to make it more compatible with a secular liberal norm. The dichotomy between 'fundamentalist' and 'historicist' readings of the Qur'an represents an instance of a discourse that aims at not only opposing Islamic dress to a 'moderate' practice, but also at advocating and supporting a secular vision of embodiment. Such a vision implicitly contrasts a 'good' and 'democratic' reading with a 'fundamentalist' and 'absolutist' one. Unveiling becomes democratic and moderate while veiling remains despotic and extreme.

The construction of Islamic dress with fundamentalism sometimes includes references to *shari'a* laws. *Tel Quel* specifies recent historical factors to explain the increasing visibility of Islamic dress: 'The resurgence of the phenomenon dates back to the late 1970s, with the Iranian revolution and an increasingly widespread discourse on the

degradation of contemporary Muslim society' (Bennani, 2002). Fouad Madani[93] (Madani, 2007, p. 14) from *Nichan* similarly links the growing visibility of the dress in Morocco to a will to impose *shari'a* laws, stating that:

> The spreading of the *hijab* in the Moroccan context during the last few years is significantly related to the change in the *hijab* to a sign of belonging and 'commitment' to a political religious and social project, especially for woman. And it is profoundly related to the appearance of a political Islamic movement, the *khwanjya*, with their new forms of militant movements ... Such a wearing of the *hijab* combines doctrine, politics, ethics and *shari'a* with the aim of 'cleansing society from the taints of history'. The outward appearance (the beard and *hijab*) have become equal to 'the frontier that must be announced which separates two different representations of the universe, the world, society and politics, and that there is no opportunity to conciliate'.

Fouad Madani here expands on the links between the *hijab*, militancy and *shari'a*. He provides some explanations for the increasing visibility of the dress in Morocco during the last few years, and links the 'spreading of the *hijab*' with the related 'change' which he attributes to the dress. Note how the term 'spreading' communicates an idea about a new invasion of the dress, an 'infiltration' of a strange object, as well as the growth of an alien object in the body of the Moroccan society. In contrast to the symbolism of *hijab* with traditionalism and retreat from social and political lives, he ascribes 'belonging and commitment' to the new dress. Not only the *hijab,* but also the beard expresses an 'outward appearance' as well as a political, religious, and social

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[93] Fouad Madani is a Moroccan journalist who was born in 1984. He holds a diploma in media and communications from the Higher Insitute of Media and Communications in Rabat, Morocco. Madani has previously worked as a journalist for the weekly Nichane and daily Al Massa, as well as the daily newpaper Akhbar Al Yawm and the magazine Al Aan. Madani now works as chief editor for Hespress, and online Moroccan daily newspaper. http://www.almaghribia.ma/

membership, or group and a commitment to an other ideology. The *hijab* thus symbolises not only loyalty and allegiance, but also restriction of freedom. It also hides an invisible, less conspicuous inward side. The term 'profoundly' suggests the mysteriousness as well as 'extreme' stance which he associates with the *hijab*, which Madani associates with the 'appearance of political Islamic movement' (*khwanjia*). The *hijab* is enigmatic, hermetic and obscure and it is extreme.

In *Nichan*, Fouad Madani attributes the increasing visibility of the *hijab* in Morocco to 'movements of political Islam' which he terms 'new militant movements'.[94] The image is reminiscent of the French discourse on the *hijab* as a signifier extrapolated to latent Islamist attempts at undermining the laws of the Republic. The reference to 'new forms of militant movements' further codes the dress not only with radicalism, but also with aggressiveness. Madani's explanation of the visibility of the *hijab* in terms of belonging and commitment additionally refers to 'doctrine, politics, ethics and *shari'a'*. The *hijab* thus not only embodies disloyalty and radicalism, but also a hidden will to impose '*shari'a'* along with doctrine, politics and ethics, hence to rule the Moroccan social and political systems. The floating signifier *shari'a* is not defined.

The *hijab* additionally points to broader 'militant movements'. In her study of veiling as a symbol of Islamisation, Göle (1996, p. 84) notes the paradox of how the black veil, which epitomised a going back to premodern Islamic traditions, expressed the 'active participation' of women in political demonstrations. She also points out how Islamist movements replaced the traditional image of the Muslimah as 'fatalist, passive, docile and obedient' with an 'active, demanding and even militant Muslim woman who is no

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[94] The PJD women have not called for the promulgation of the *shari'a* laws, therefore they do not present a challenge to the type of government advocated by the liberal press. Although the PJD relies on a religious discourse, it strives to promote an Islamic society based on ideals of progress, democracy and modernity as I mentioned earlier. The equation of the hijab with a militant movement therefore intentionally assigns an extremist (as opposed to the implicit moderate) stance to the dress.

longer confined to the home (Göle, 1996, p. 84). Madani's reference to the *hijab* as a militant symbol can be situated within a secular liberal vision which equates the *hijab* with militant Islam. For Madani, the hijab epitomises an aggressive intrusion of religion into politics and society. The link which he draws between the 'Islamist militant movements' and the 'taints of history' underlines the enduring impact of colonisation in Maghreb countries, and the coloniser's efforts to 'unveil' the Moroccan woman. The image of the *hijab* 'cleansing society from the taints of history' alludes to the colonial eras and their attempts to promote unveiling. The image is that of the veil as de-contaminating, sanitising a past contamination. Madani sets a 'frontier' which he concedes *must be* announced between two irreconcilable conceptions of the world: a political Islamic militant conception and an implicit secular liberal progressive conception. The *hijab* hence separates instead of uniting. It is divisive.

Let us consider the reference to the *hijab* in terms of Islamism and the implementation of *shari'a*, which reverberates with the French tying the *hijab* with Islamism and a will to impose 'Qur'anic law'. In Morocco, the laws which are based on religious texts are limited to personal status or family. Moroccan feminist movements have been debating and challenging the Moroccan Personal Code (*Mudawana*), in their attempts to challenge patriarchal readings of religious texts. This has resulted in changes regarding the status of women in family laws which are still subject to debate today. Regarding *shari'a,* Margot Badran (2009, p. 285) emphasises the importance of making a difference between the sacred *shari'a* as 'divine inspiration and guiding principles and the path discerned from the Quran which Muslims are exhorted to follow in life', and the '*shari'a* law(s)' or 'laws originating from the understanding of *fiqh*' which are from humans and hence open to change and inquiry. In Madani's statement, there is no distinction between both meanings of *shari'a*. His statement therefore reiterates an automatic link between the *hijab* and a will to impose laws which are subject to new interpretation and open to question. Madani's reference to *shari'a* therefore hints at the traditionalism which is associated with family laws and women. The *hijab* in this

context does not only embody militancy and radicalism, but also traditionalism and resistance to change.

The dichotomies which are contained in the Moroccan press also repeat the French labelling of Muslims as either 'Islamists' or 'laics', often reiterating the traditional binary opposition between traditionalism and modernism. This debate originates from the time when Muslim states became independent and the new laws were closely connected with the battle between traditional law practitioners and modernists (Mernissi, 1975, p. xix). In the Moroccan press examples, the traditional battle between proponents of traditional and modern laws is transformed into a battle between proponents of a 'fundamentalist' reading of the *Qur'an* and the more modernist reading of it, and between the proponents of Islamic dress and its opponents.

We need to examine the terminology which pertains to Islamic attire, and which has been used in the liberal Moroccan press. In relation to Islamic modest dress, the Qur'an uses the term *khimar* to refer to a veil which was traditionally loosely worn over the head, and which the Qur'an enjoins the *Muslimat* to wear in a way to cover the bosom[95]. The second term which the Qur'an uses concerning modest dress is *jilbab* which is a loose and long outer garment or cloak. Although not specifying any particular form or colour of modest female dress, the *ahadith* (reported sayings and traditions of the Prophet) provide some general guidelines as to its characteristics, namely it being loose, non-transparent garment and not disclosing the contours of the body. A number of *ahadith* also mention the adoption of the veil within the Prophetic era. *Tel Quel* and *Nichan*, however, consider modest dress and the *hijab* as part of an 'extremist' and 'absolutist' reading of the Qur'an and call for a new and moderate reading of the acknowledged sources of Islamic jurisprudence. Some *Maghrebi* feminists similarly argue that the Qur'an does not directly refer to the 'veil', or that the

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[95] Quran, Surat an-Nur 24:31

veil is only applicable to the first Islamic era. In her analysis, Mernissi, for instance, excludes the *ayat* (verses) which refer to *khimar* and *jilbab*.[96]

The other term which *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* use in relation to the *hijab* is *khwanjia*. This is a colloquial *darija* (Moroccan Arabic) term which refers to Moroccan *Muslimat* wearing some form of Islamic dress or men adopting the beard and, in some cases, a traditional garment sometimes accompanied by traditional headgear. The word *ikhwanyi(a)*which is the singular form, is derived from *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun* (the originally Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood), to refer to an imported Islamism. The term links Islamic dress with 'extremist' politics and a will to govern political and social lives in Morocco. *Ikhwany(a)* is used for any person in Morocco adopting Islamic dress, regardless of whether they advocate political involvement or not.[97] The *hijab* therefore is also importable, it is strange and other to the Moroccan context. It is a migrating object too.

In *Tel Quel* and *Nichan,* the *hijab* and the beard represent characteristics of a contemporary socio-political division between Moroccans promoting 'fundamentalist Islam' which it defines as 'militant', and others endorsing a political system based on secularism and the separation, in this case, of religious symbols from politics.[98] In fact, in a country whose system of governance derives its legitimacy from the *imarat al-*

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[96] For a study of modest female dress, see Katherine Bullock (2007)

[97] The word *zif* is an equivalent of *hijab* in the Moroccan Arabic dialect of *darija*; it is also referred to as *derra*, the piece of cloth used to cover the head (or some part of it) and the neck, usually worn with a *djellaba* (the traditional Moroccan dress that has replaced the *haik* or *melhfa* which is still worn in many parts of Morocco even today).

[98] It is noteworthy that the beard has also been subject to bans at Royal Air Maroc and in private companies in Morocco. As another Islamic symbol that is associated with Islamism or an extreme practice of religion, the beard offers another instance of an Islamist threat within the discourse of the Moroccan independent press.

mu'minin (the leadership of the believers),[99] there has been intense debate regarding *shari'a* laws, as seen in the recent reformation of the *Mudawwana.* The debate has often reinforced the opposition between proponents of a code inspired by Islamic texts and supporters of the application of international conventions on women's rights instead. Although the King of Morocco is the prime authority on religious issues and laws (representing the guarantor of sacred values and ensuring the continuity of the *imarat al-mu'minin)*, he is also the precursor for the improvement of women's condition and has placed 'emancipation', 'progress' and 'modernity', at the centre of his strategy.[100]

In addition to attaching the veil to fundamentalism and *shari'a*, the publications sometimes draw a contrast between modernity and tradition in their construction of the *hijab* as a political threat. Yann Barte[101] from *Tel Quel, for instance,* cites the French secular model. He asserts that 'the [French] law banning ostentatious religious signs in schools was an important support as well as a considerable barrier against Islamist attacks' (Barte, 2004). *Tel Quel* pits a 'majority of secular French *Maghrebis'* against a 'rising number of anti-secular Muslims', warning that 'disputes lie ahead.' (Barte, 2004)

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[99] Article 19 of the Moroccan Constitution stipulates that the King shall be the supreme representative of the Nation and the symbol of the unity thereof. He shall be the defender of the Faith. http://www.idea.int/publications/the_2011_moroccan_constitution/loader.cfm?csModule=security/getfile&pageid=56782

[100] This is exemplified namely through speeches which are broadcast live on national television throughout the year and for different national commemorations.

[101] Yann Barte defines himself as a Political and social journalist, and as an 'orphan of the left, universalist and secular'. He previously worked as a journalist in Casablanca, Morocco. He currently lives and works at Journaliste in Paris and is the author of Triso and then! with E. Laloux (2014). He also works as an independent journalist for La Redac Nomade. Barte also has a video channel on dailymotion, where he posts and publishes videos about his reports and trips, including videos about human rights in Morocco. https://twitter.com/yannbarte
http://www.dailymotion.com/Yann333
https://plus.google.com/107698342881305045371/about

Tel Quel portrays the French *hijab* ban as a 'considerable barrier against Islamist attacks' (Barte, 2004). The use of the words 'attacks' and 'Islamists' builds a sense of a violent and aggressive symbol. Barte further depicts the *hijab* ban against 'ostentatious religious signs' in France as an 'important support'. The term 'ostentatious' is again adopted from the French politics and press. The *hijab* represents an ostentatious and Islamist assault. It necessitates not only a 'support' but also a 'barrier' of the law. The example also uses the dichotomy between 'Muslim' and '*Maghrebi*' to contrast religious belonging with cultural or racial identity, and suggest a resistance to French republicanism. It contrasts 'secular French *Maghrebis*' with a 'rising number of anti-secular Muslims'. The *hijab* is therefore also a sign of allegiance and loyalty to Islam which precedes cultural/ethnic/racial belonging (*Maghrebi*) in importance. The *hijab*'s threat and visibility is on the rise. The use of the dichotomy also suggests the incompatibility between Frenchness and Muslimness, *Maghrebi*s can be French whereas Muslims cannot. The *hijab* therefore stands as a barrier. Because they are understood to be anti-secular, they can only be defined following their religious belonging: they remain Muslim, anti-secular. The 'disputes' suggest the link between the *hijab* and conflict. It also embodies antagonism.

The reference to the French model in the Moroccan publications can be accompanied with additional constructions of the veil within extremism. Chadwane Bensalmia[102] from *Tel Quel*, for example, suggests a more direct link between Islamic dress and radicalism, when it states that (Bensalmia, 2004, p. 24):

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[102] Chadwane Bensalmia is a Moroccan journalist who has worked for the weekly Tel Quel. She has covered different areas of journalism with a special focus on women's issues in Morocco. In addition to her career as a journalist, Bensalmia is currently involved in various arts and cultural activities and events including the Moroccan festival Le Boulevard, of which she is an active member. During the third edition of the Grand Prix National de la Presse in 2005, Bensalmia, among other media specialists, was awarded best prize for her work in tel Quel.
http://simosoftdj.canalblog.com/archives/2005/12/07/1081951.html

When countries like France vote for laws banning veils in schools, or when employers in Morocco refuse to hire young veiled women today, some women react in an even stronger manner by renouncing life altogether, a radicalization of religious practice which owes more, perhaps, to social failure than to faith.

Bensalmia here evokes the *hijab* ban in schools and Moroccan businesses and private companies. The example makes a referential shift from the *hijab* to the *niqab* with which the article is concerned. In Morocco, the *hijab* is usually worn with *libas 'asri* (modern clothes) or a *jilbab/jellaba,* and is quite different from the *niqab* (usually black or dark-coloured face-veil accompanied with a black *jilbab* covering the whole body), which is rarely adopted in Morocco. The journalist relates her day out 'In the Skin of a Crow'. She ties the *niqab* and *jilbab* with the 'radicalisation of religious practice', and the decision of 'some women' to leave their jobs instead of discarding Islamic dress is portrayed as a form of extremism. This implies that a moderate religious practice would result in discarding the dress. It is Islamic dress that makes these women 'react in a stronger manner': the *niqab* is a reactionary object. It embodies not only extremism and radicalism, but also backwardness and obscurantism, which are implicitly contrasted with unveiling, which epitomises progress and enlightenment. The veil is also dark, and carries affective qualities. The reference to 'renouncing life' which *Tel Quel* associates with adopting the *niqab* equates the dress with death. The veil embodies darkness and death. By contrast, unveiling symbolises life and enlightenment. The example explains this 'radicalisation' with a 'social failure' rather than faith. The *niqab* symbolises withdrawal from life, and social decline, which also contrast with social improvement tacitly coded with unveiling.

Associating the veil with radicalism, however, includes some paradoxical references. In the same *Tel Quel* article Chadwane Bensalmia equates the *niqab* and *soutra* with making a statement and gaining 'a space of expression' (Bensalmia, 2004, p. 24):

Dressing oneself completely in black, wearing black socks and gloves, covering one's face except the eyes (some go so far as to wear black glasses) … is no longer simply a matter of religion. It is a way of asserting oneself. These women gain a space for expression that they do not explicitly link to a religious movement.

However, *Tel Quel* notes, these women 'are also an expression of despair'. The radicalism of the *soutra* is all the more dangerous because it is defended by the very same women who are 'victims of the dictatorship that mandates it'. The 'radicalization of religious practice' is compounded by the 'radicalism of the *soutra'* which is seen as a threat. It is not only to the outside world, but to the women adopting it themselves, framed as the 'victims of dictatorship'. This makes them, paradoxically, threatening victims. They are both active and passive. Through the *soutra*, the women represent an active threat and a passive victimhood at once. The connection between the veil and death, on the one hand, and between the *soutra* and radicalism, on the other, positions the veil within a threat-victim paradox whereby it symbolizes, simultaneously, a threat to society and the victimization of the veiled woman.

Analysing the various affiliations of Islamic dress with political notions in a comparative framework reveals its complexity not only in a European French secular setting in which the dress acquires a range of associations which position it as a threat to the French nation and values, but also in a *Maghrebi* Muslim-majority context. As I have demonstrated, a study of how the veil becomes attached to these different notions is a means of understanding why and how it is persistently inscribed within an 'essential difference' not only in a Muslim-minority framework, but also in a Muslim-majority context such as Morocco. Yet while this Islamist/fundamentalist/extremist difference is defined in terms of a threat to the French nation and its secular values, it is defined as an increasing infiltration of religion in Moroccan politics, the public realm

and wider socio-cultural life. One inference we can draw is that Islamic practice should remain confined to private space, a vision that is in line with the French model of secularism.

As I have illustrated in this section, journalists from liberal Moroccan weeklies *Tel Quel*, *Nichan* and *Le Reporter* equate Islamic dress in its different forms (*hijab, niqab, jilbab* and *soutra*) with Islamism, extremism and fundamentalism. My analysis of the press examples demonstrates how this equation is made more complex with references to other notions which become attached to the dress. These include visions of the veil in terms of an invasion and contamination of the political and social realms, Islamist commodification and marketing, propaganda, ostentatiousness, camouflage, regression, backwardness and darkness. These notions emphasise the position of Islamic dress as a threat in a Muslim-majority context. Moreover, the inscription of the dress in such terms illustrates how its perception as an assault to the political and social domains is complicated with references not only to its constructed political difference, but also its ethical and affective otherness. Let us now turn to another category of veil associations which pertains to defining the dress in terms of a sexual difference, and examine how the veil is constructed in sexual terms in the Moroccan publications.

7.2. Sexual Associations of the Veil

The Moroccan weeklies associate various forms of Islamic dress with sexual meanings such as submission, inferiority and lack of emancipation. My aim in the second part of this chapter is to consider how such meanings are attributed to the dress in the Moroccan weeklies, and examine how the language used in relation to the veil construct it in terms of an essential sexual otherness. As a gendered object, the veil also represents a practice which has been defined in relation to women's oppression, inferiority and inequality since colonial times. As I illustrated in the previous chapter, these and similar associations have also been used more recently in the media debate prior to the 2004 French *hijab* ban. The question now is how do the Moroccan liberal

publications define the veil within the sexual realm? What links and differences can we discern through comparing the construction of the dress in sexual terms in a Muslim-majority context in the postcolonial era? I first examine this construction through the notions of freedom and emancipation, then through submission, inferiority and violence in the second part of this section.

7.2.1. *Niqab*, *Jilbab* and *Soutra*: 'Greatest Deprivation of Women's Being and Freedom' or 'Reaction Against the Male Gaze' 'Denial of the Female Body'

In this section, I consider examples from *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* associating Islamic dress with lack of freedom and body denial. In one of its special reports, Sana El Aji[103] from *Nichan* relates the experience of spending a day dressed 'Ninja Style', a reference to wearing a black *niqab* and *jilbab*. At the end of her day, she concludes the *niqab* experience (El Aji, 2008):

> As soon as the game ended, I quickly took off my false appearance, eager to breathe air in a normal way. What are the results of the experience? The *niqab*

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[103] Sanaa El Aji is a journalist, writer and columnist. She covers several issues, and is in favour of a 'modernist vision of society, and banning conservative and populist discourses'. Holder in 2008 of the third best investigative journalism Award from Press Now, a Dutch NGO, she has also presented numerous shows and chronicles on Moroccan television including Entreprendre , Compétences, and Ilayki, as well as a weekly social column on Aswat Radio."Batoul", the weekly column she held in Nichane between September 2006 and October 2010, traces the experiences of a young woman (named Batoul), a character which challenges clichés and stereotypes: she is black, divorced, emancipated and curious. Challenging stereotypes, machismo, conservatism and populism every week in Nichane, Batoul tackled all taboo issues including sex, religion, family and politics. Batoul have earned El Aji the status of a famous journalist in Morocco.
Sanaa El Aji was also a member of the jury of the national film festival in Morocco in January 2012.
In 2003, she published a novel in Arabic, Majnounatou Youssef. She also contributed to a collective book entitled "Letters to a young Moroccan" which was released in 2009 in French and Arabic. El Aji also contributed to another collective book entitled "Media Coverage of diversity in Moroccan society", which was published in 2009 by the Center For Media Freedom. Sanaa El Aji is a weekly columnist in the newspaper Assabah. http://www.sanaa-elaji.com/

is the greatest deprivation of women's being and freedom [...] In addition to this, it brings about a completely opposite result: the *niqabed* woman attracts more attention than an unveiled woman. Anything excessive gives a reverse effect.

El Aji here describes her experience of the *niqab* and *jilbab* as a 'game'. The image of a 'false appearance' not only refers to the fictitious appearance which the journalist adopts for a day, but also suggests the idea of the *niqab* (and its accompanying *jilbab*) as an object of deceit and dishonesty, as a fake entity. At one level, the garment operates within a game of dressing up that the journalist adopts to experience the black *niqab* for one day in the Moroccan street. Yet the expression 'false appearance' also hints at the *niqab* more implicitly as a deceptive dress, and a masquerade reminiscent of the orientalist equation between the veil and the mask which I discussed in an earlier chapter. This type of image strikes a chord with the French definition of the *hijab* as a potentially deceptive and dishonest symbol. The *niqab* does not appear what it *is*, it is in itself a 'false appearance'.

The journalist further links unveiling with being able to 'breathe air in a normal way'. The use of 'breathing air', which constitutes a crucial element for life, hints at the construction of the *niqab* as death through the more explicit link of unveiling with 'life'. *Nichan* equates the *niqab* with death and eccentricity through implicitly positioning unveiling with a 'normal way'. Thus the *niqab* is not only an embodiment of anomaly and abnormality, but also death. In answering a question about the results of her experience of the dress, the last statement offers the most important conclusion: the *niqab* is the 'greatest deprivation of woman's being and freedom'. Hence she again ties the dress with the 'greatest' deprivation: the *niqabed* woman is deprived of life, and of freedom. The *niqab* symbolises deprivation, death and anomaly.

Such an inscription of the *niqab* and *jilbab* as we find in *Nichan* marks the dress as an alien and foreign object. Yet Moroccan women have traditionally worn different forms of modest dress, historically accompanied with a face veil or *niqab,* referred to in Morocco as '*ngab'*. This is the equivalent of *niqab* in classical Arabic, which many women still wear in different parts of Morocco today. While many women still adopt the *ngab* such as is the case in many Moroccan rural and to a lesser extent urban areas, the example portrays the garment outside Moroccan women's attire. Although Moroccan women overwhelmingly choose colours other than black, and many have replaced the *haik (*or the *mlehfa)* with *djellabas* having modern patterns, fabrics and colours, many still adopt the *niqab* as part of their dress. By contrast, the *niqab* which *Nichan* and *Tel Quel* mention refers instead to a black outer garment including a black scarf and a face veil, a type of dress which is coded as 'other' as it is tied with a more Middle Eastern and Gulf styles of Islamic attire. The type of *niqab* which the example describes differs in colour, shape, style and fabric from the commonly used garments adopted in Morocco by the majority of women who wear the *niqab* in various colours and textiles often accompanied with a *djellaba* or *mlehfa*. It is also the type of dress associated with a 'radical' form of Islam in the liberal Moroccan press, and is associated with of an imported type of dress.

In defining Islamic dress in terms of sexual otherness, references are also made to patriarchy. In the example from *Nichan*, Sana El Aji (2008) draws a further connection between the *niqab*, the 'male gaze' and patriarchy:

> It is therefore certain that today, the veil is not a religious practice but rather a reaction against the male gaze, a way of acquiring freedoms in a patriarchal environment that curbs the freedom of women, in a society where man is incapable of controlling his instincts. The result is that a woman has to wear the veil and deny her body because that is exactly what the veil means: a denial of the female body.

Here the 'veil' which refers to the *niqab* and *jilbab* is dissociated from the religious dimension with which other examples from *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* associate the *hijab*. *Tel Quel* proposes an alternative explanation. Rather than a symbol of piety and religious practice, Sana El Aji depicts the *niqab* (which includes a *jilbab*) as a 'reaction against the male gaze', hence an attitude and response to the male gaze. The use of the term 'reaction' also suggests a reactionary attitude linking the dress with backwardness. However, in contrast to examples which position the *niqab* as the epitome of slavery, subjugation, and subordination, *Tel Quel* here states that the *niqab* is a way of acquiring freedoms in a patriarchal environment. The dress is also empowering. Yet the *niqab* is also a tool in a society 'where man is incapable of controlling his instincts', and is therefore not only attached to the male gaze, but also instinct. The *niqab* is a barrier against being watched, in a patriarchal context where the *Muslimah*'s body is an object of surveillance. The veiled body is both subject to and blocks visual examination. Hence the invisible body becomes ostentatious. *Tel Quel* offers another reading of the *niqab*: it embodies a denial of the female body. Although it allows women to gain freedoms, the dress constitutes a dismissal and disavowal of the female body. The *niqab* therefore denies and disavows the body, it signifies renouncement.

Nichan defines the *niqab* and *jilbab* in contradictory ways: as being both *against* women's freedom and *for* women's freedom in a patriarchal society. Some Muslim feminists argue that Islamic dress embodies freedom in several circumstances. In her study of the veil in North America, Homa Hoodfar (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 38) for instance notes that framing the debate about the veil in a larger context than the dichotomous one of religion/Islam/patriarchy in opposition to individual freedom of choice provides a more comprehensive understanding of this practice, contributing to a view a veiled woman 'not as a passive subject, but as an active agent involved in defining her position and options in the contemporary context of her life'. Challenging the lack of acknowledgement of women's agency, Hoodfar (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 39) further argues that even if the veil was introduced and disseminated in a patriarchal

framework, women have adopted it to 'loosen the bonds of patriarchy'. Sana El Aji's association of the *niqab* and *jilbab* with lack of freedom is an instance of limiting the debate of Islamic dress within the dichotomy Islam/patriarchy, which tends to occlude women's agency. In such a type of discourse, the unveiled body of the *Muslimah* represents freedom and autonomy while the veil, in this case the *niqab* and *jilbab* stand for choice denial.

Nichan's depiction of the *niqab* and *jilbab* has resonance with colonial and orientalist depictions of the veil as a form of control of male sexuality, and of the blame historically attached to the man for victimising and constraining the 'oriental woman' in order to control his desire. Yet the veil is both subject to control by women, and symbolic of their constraints, an 'ambiguity' which is crucial to understanding the privileged nature of the veil as a symbol in Middle Eastern culture (Macleod, 1991, p. 102). As Arlene Macleod (1991, p. 102) notes, we can read the veil as a 'subtle and evocative sign of the negotiation of power, and the intersection of domination and resistance'. This indicates what Macleod (Macleod, 1991, p. 102) refers to as 'the interpretive struggle to define women's place within the family and the larger society'. The equation between the *niqab* and the denial of the female body positions the *munaqqaba* as the victim of her society, which is also reminiscent of the link between Islamic dress and the negation of the female body which I detailed in the previous chapter. The depiction of the *niqab* and *jilbab* strictly in terms of body denial and domination occludes the possibility of the dress to offer alternative meanings to the women wearing it. The journalist therefore fixes her own reading of the dress, which communicates its vision as a patriarchal symbol.

Muslim women undoubtedly need to change and challenge patriarchal structures from within their own social and historical contexts. Yet in *Maghrebi* and Arab societies, the question of patriarchy involves the situation of women inside the family that can be a means of understanding their problems through time (El-Khayat, 1992, pp. 108-

109). Concerning the dynamics of family and gender, Amina Wadud (2006, pp. 47-48) notes that, as women were not deemed total agents with a view of full choice in their role, their identity has been respective to their role in the family as care-takers. Yet to confine woman's identity to this role, while they are fulfilling other roles, unjustly violates the significance of care, and limits or doubly encumbers women in the performance of other aspects of divine purpose as *Khilafah* (trustees) (Wadud, 2006, pp. 47-48). At another level, as some Islamic feminists argue, discrimination against Arab women is not only an issue of liberation or equality with men, nor is it simply a question of family, personal rights, education or work, but rather a question of social trends drawn from customs and cultural traditions that are predominant within society (Assa'ati, 2000, p. 311). Outside influences of Islam such as tribal norms have significantly determined the status of women in Muslim countries, and have permeated Islamic traditions (Hassa'n, 2000, p. 50). These outside influences are deemed to have affected the attempts of the *Qur'an* to liberate women from various forms of oppression and injustice, often in the name of Islam (Hassa'n, 2000, p. 50). As Wadud (1999, pp. xxi-xxii) argues, it was the interpretation of the Qur'an rather than the text itself which restricted women. She further notes that, while in other religions feminists had to insert woman into the discourse to attain legitimacy, the *Muslimah* has only to read the text to gain 'undeniable liberation' (Wadud, 1999, pp. xxi-xxii). The essentialist and fixed representations such as the ones I have analysed restrict the issue of freedom and emancipation to the *niqab, jilbab* or sometimes the *hijab*. As Nashat and Tucker (1999, p. xxxiii) state, associating oppression with the *niqab* and veiling poses the danger of overlooking the 'interrelationships of multiple forms of oppression such as race, class, imperialism, and gender. The fixations on Islamic dress limit the debate to traditional dichotomies which have been attached to the veil, and overlook the wider issues of inequality and lack of choice and freedom which define the everyday lived realities of the *Muslimat*.

For Morocco, there is a gap between constitutional laws and the lived realities of women (Maadi, 1992, p. 20). In contrast to the unfair policies which do not protect the

rights of the overwhelming majority of poor and institutionally unsupported Muslim women (Wadud, 2006, p. 53), the first Muslim women believers, who accepted the new teachings of the Qur'an to transform the older tribal society, conceived themselves to be 'independent individuals, liberated from the shackles of pre-Islamic customs and a degrading social status' (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 156). The Muslim woman's rights included consenting to her marriage, initiating divorce if it seemed necessary, inheriting from her parents, and developing her intellectual, personal and economic skills (Alvi, et al., 2003, p. 156). Limiting the debate about liberation and patriarchy to Islamic dress therefore is questionable, as well as imposing a patriarchal meaning to its practice. Islamic dress can be a personal choice for many *Muslimat* who do not necessarily view it as a 'negation of the female body'. Fadwa El Guindi's notion of modesty and privacy among Arab cultures, and Saba Mahmood's study of the piety movement in Egypt are pertinent in indicating how Islamic dress can symbolise meanings which challenge the fixed visions of the dress within patriarchy and oppression.

Through coding the veil with body denial, lack of freedom and patriarchy, *Nichan* implicitly marks unveiling with the assertion of women's bodies in public space. The visibility of the *Muslimah*'s body in public space is considered both as a pre-requisite for and a symbol of freedom. The equation of the *niqab* with body denial marks the *niqabed* body as oppressed, which defines the unveiled body as emancipated. Such a notion of body autonomy and women's freedom is based on a universal and liberal concept of the body which equates veiling with oppression and unveiling with emancipation. Commenting on the act of becoming *muhajjaba* in Egypt, MacLeod (1991, pp. 104-105) points to the importance of questioning Western assumptions that the veil means 'subjection and a return to a restrictive and 'medieval' version of Islam in the face of large numbers of intelligent, often educated and modernized women who choose voluntarily to put on this dress'. She further argues that veiling has local meaning in the past or present, which is most fundamental in attempting to understand the nature of the 'power struggles which it carries on and illuminates' (Macleod, 1991,

pp. 104-105). The journalist's assigning meanings of oppression and subjection to the *niqab*, therefore, risks reducing the dress to a uni-dimensional vision which suppresses its complexity. Such a type of discourse on Islamic dress as we find in *Nichan* also suggests its vision as an 'intruder' in a space that should be governed by a universal ideal of the liberal subject, which considers Western dress and unveiling as the norm. When the veil is visible, it is not normal whereas when it's invisible, it becomes normal. This contributes to a normalisation of veiling and "abnormalisation" of veiling. At another level, it is the ostentatious aspect of Islamic dress (disturbing visibility) which makes it abnormal, while the invisibility of unveiling (acceptable visibility) makes it normal. The normality of the veil is conditional upon its invisibility. In addition to these references, the Moroccan publications construct Islamic attire as an embodiment of submission, inferiority and violence which I investigate in the next section. These notions also pertain to defining the dress in terms of a sexual otherness in relation to an ideal liberal and emancipated normative subject.

7.2.2. Submission, Inferiority and Violence

In this section, I analyse examples which associate Islamic dress with submission and inferiority. I tackle these additional notions as part of associations of the veil in sexual terms as they have been used as techniques for othering Islamic dress within the sexual

realm. In a *Tel Quel* article which includes a paradoxical definition of the *niqab*, Maria Daif[104] and Driss Ksikes[105] state (Daif & Ksikes, 2004):

> For me, wearing the veil is nothing else but a new form of feminism. Let me explain myself. By wearing the veil, these women have decided to be masters of their bodies. But one also has to acknowledge that it is also a form of submission to a patriarchal culture, a way of protecting oneself, of giving oneself more worth, or responding to something absolute. There is therefore no single truth regarding the issue which, to me, has entered a phase of trivialisation.

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[104] Maria Daif was hired a journalist in the Moroccan women's magazine Femmes du Maroc in 1997. She held this position for four years, until the creation of the independent weekly Tel quel where I worked for four years. Her favourite subjects and contributions in Tel quel were society and culture. She was approached to coordinate the team of the new women's magazine parade, in which she was later appointed as a director. The publication of the magazine however ceased in 2007. In addition to her career as a journalist, Daif has contributed to Atlantic Radio and Eden Com. She also works as a press secretary in charge of cultural and arts projects, and the field of media and communications consulting partnerships. She is additionally a member of two funds which promote culture in Africa (Art Moved Africa) and the Arab countries (Young Arab Theatre Fund).
http://www.viadeo.com/profile/00226vaw6y2n2u4a?nav=1&navContext=0021p4eevk6lx8r0&consultationType=23

[105] Driss Ksikes was born in 1968 in Casablanca, Morocco. He is a francophone Moroccan writer and journalist. but also a journalist. He wrote two plays: Pas de Mémoire ... Mémoire de Pas in 1998, Le saint des Incertains in 2000, and a novel entitled Ma boîte Noire in 2006, Tarik -Casa- and The Great Breath in 2006. He is mostly known for being the editor of two Moroccan weeklies, Tel Quel and the publishing director of Nichane. Ksikes left his position as managing editor of Nichane after his conviction for 'insulting Islam' in Morocco, following a dossier published in 2006 in Nichane speaking of " Humor of Moroccans " and having included jokes which were considered insulting to Islam.

http://www.babelio.com/auteur/Driss-Ksikes/134047

Driss Ksikes is director of CESEM, HEM Research Center and managing editor of La Revue Economia and works as a writer and analyst for several international journals. He is also managing director of the company Dabateatr and co-founder of the Rencontres d' Averroes, under the sign of Ibn Rushd in Rabat.

https://www.facebook.com/DrissKsikes.CitoyenCritique/info?tab=page_info

On the one hand, Daif and Ksikes codifiy the adoption of the veil as systematically and categorically 'a new form of feminism', which they explain in terms of the veiled women's decision to be 'masters of their bodies'. The image here is that of the veil as a symbol of bodily command and control. Yet the journalists state the obligation to acknowledge its definition as a form of 'submission to a patriarchal culture'. We can note how the depiction of the veil shifts between feminism and patriarchy. The example exposes contradictions within associations of the veil. First categorising the *niqab* as a form of feminism and an instance of women being 'masters of their bodies', they paradoxically portray the *dress* as a form of submission to patriarchal culture including elements of protection, worth and absolutism.

At another level, the example's reference to 'culture' marks the dress with an inferior cultural characteristic, which implicitly contrasts it with a superior culture to which unveiling belongs. Daif and Ksikes also refer to the veil as a form of 'protection', and of giving 'oneself more worth' or 'responding to something absolute'. The term 'worth' suggests not only virtue and morality but also value, pride and arrogance, hence a feeling of superiority. The veil is also narcissistic. The reference to 'something absolute' alludes to the vision of the veil as a form of absolutism, which links the dress not only with extremism, but also with despotism and tyranny. The allusion to 'something absolute' in the article echoes orientalist meanings of the veil with despotism. The symbolism of the veil as submission to a patriarchal culture is supplanted with its epitomising despotism and absolutism. Attaching 'insignificance' to the *niqab*, the example declares the multiplicity of 'truths' regarding the dress.

In the same article, Maria Daif and Driss Ksikes (Daif & Ksikes, 2004) paradoxically affiliate the *niqab* and *jilbab* with superiority, violence and submission:

On the way to the house, H. continuously asks me questions about how I feel in my dress. Is it comfortable? Do I not feel myself slightly above other people? I am thinking about Iranian women. I wonder what they would think about such an assertion. I took away what appears to be a choice and is essentially the outcome of an excess full of violence. These women perceive (a form of) freedom in submission.

Daif relates the time she spent in the company of some women who adopt the *niqab* and *jilbab*. When she was out in the street dressed in a similar way to the women (in *niqab* and *jilbab*), she writes about the 'continuous' questioning which the *munaqqaba* directs at her regarding 'how [she] feels about the dress'. The feeling of disturbance which the word 'continuous' suggests is added to the idea of tenacity and obstinacy which the word communicates. The *niqab* expresses tenacity and repetition. The questions of the *munaqqaba* evoke Iranian women. The Moroccan journalist therefore ties the situation of the Moroccan *niqabed* woman with that of the *tchador* worn by Iranian women. She 'wonders' what Iranian women would think about the assertion of superiority expressed by the Moroccan *munaqqaba*. The act of 'taking away' the *niqab* and *jilbab* also hints at the act of distancing them.

Similar to earlier references, expressions such as 'appears to be a choice' allude to a 'hidden' side of the veil. The *niqab* is not what it appears to be, and it cannot be a choice. The example also links the *niqab* with 'the outcome of an excess full of violence', and an 'apparent choice' which is nonetheless a form of submission. The *niqab* thus hides violent acts against women. Not only is the dress viewed as a proof of women's submission within patriarchy, but it is also understood as a form of violence towards women. The examples show how the association of the *niqab* and *jilbab* with violence reiterates a similar reference in the French press which equates the *hijab* with violence, and associates the dress in turn with *shari'a* law. We can additionally relate the idea of an apparent choice with the visibility and

ostentatiousness attributed to the dress. The visibility of the dress hence becomes a symbol of compulsion, its ostentatiousness a negation of choice.

Positioning the *niqab* as a symbol of inferiority and as antithetical to freedom negates the possibility of it being a tool granting women a form of body autonomy. The statement by the *munaqqaba* questions the 'choice' of the *niqab* without providing any space for these women to voice their thoughts. Concerning the wilful compliance to religiously prescribed social principles, Saba Mahmood (2004, p. 148) notes that the mosque movement women in Egypt are often seen as 'depriving themselves of the ability to enact an ethics of freedom, one founded on their capacity to distinguish their own (true) desires from (external) religious and cultural demands'. She adds that this criticism turns upon 'an imaginary of freedom, one deeply indebted to liberal political theory, in which an individual is considered free on the condition that she act autonomously: that the actions be the result of her own choice and free will, rather than of customs, traditions, transcendental will, or social coercion' (Mahmood, 2004, p. 148). Daif and Ksikes's example from *Nichan* represents an instance of how *niqab* is perceived as a barrier against freedom as it is defined in liberal terms in the Moroccan context, a Muslim-majority country. The inability of the journalists to conceive of a different conception of freedom from that which is contained in the secular liberal ideology demonstrates the extent to which the secular conception of body autonomy norm has been adopted in a Muslim-majority context.

The image in *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* is therefore that of body denial and deprivation from a notion of freedom which understands veiling as subordination and unveiling as freedom and emancipation. Mahmood's notion of an 'imaginary of freedom' is particularly useful in considering how *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* conceptualise individual freedom as freedom from veiling, which is considered as a religious convention to be discarded in order to achieve freedom. Veiling is thus contrasted with autonomy, and

the act of adopting it symbolises subordination to an outside pressure or compulsion. The veil through such a vision is an epitome of coercion and oppression.

The issue of women's inferiority in Arab states is often codified through law and, despite all the judicial changes of the last half of the century, Islam and restrictive interpretations of religious texts are still invoked in order to justify restrictions imposed on women's rights (Bessis, 2006, p. 330). Women's position of inferiority is strengthened by the choice of religious texts and their inferior status is consolidated through the reliance on texts and *hadiths* attributed to the Prophet which are often read out of context. Religion has therefore been used to justify the lower status of women. In the *Maghreb*, the persistence of the inferiorisation of women conflicts with the acknowledgement of equality between the rights of women and men (Tamzali, 2006, p. 412). As I mentioned earlier, the Moroccan Constitution and laws posit equality as a basis, yet many laws still position women as lower and inferior as is the case with family laws and some labour laws that discriminate against women. In addition to these types of discrimination, male domination, including that of the sacred and religious interpretation, still persists in most Arab and Muslim countries (Tamzali, 2006, pp. 426-427). Examples of this attempt to dominate women can be found in laws such as the one making divorce initiated by women more difficult to achieve than those initiated by men, or preventing a woman from accessing or dealing with her private properties without permission from her partner.

As far as equality is concerned, Muslim and Islamic feminists argue that we need to make a distinction between Islam and its precepts, and Islam as it is interpreted and disseminated by official policy. As Mernissi (1975, p. xvi) states, there is a fundamental contradiction between Islam as interpreted in official policy and equality of the sexes. She further states that, in 'Western culture', sexual inequality was based on a belief in women's biological inferiority, whereas in Islam, there is no belief in female inferiority (Mernissi, 1975, p. xvi). The whole system is based on the

assumption that the woman is a 'powerful and dangerous being', and all sexual institutions (polygamy, divorce, sexual segregation, etc) are a strategy to contain her power (Mernissi, 1975, p. xvi). However, in addition to the absence of *Qur'anic* evidence for such a claim, the view of the *Muslimah* as dangerous source of *fitna* and that she is responsible for man's behaviour has no basis in the *Qur'an*. Such a vision of the *Muslimah* as a 'dangerous being' is also used to justify veiling as a male protection from a potential threat. Mernissi also links polygamy, divorce, and sexual segregation with attempts to control women, using similar arguments often employed to charge Islam with oppressing women.[106] According to Rifaat Hassan (2000, p. 25), Islamic societies believe women were created principally to be beneficial to men who are superior to them, and the supposed superiority of men over women which permeates Islamic, Jewish and Christian traditions is rooted not only in the reporting of the Prophet's sayings, but also in the common interpretations of some *Qur'anic* verses. These studies highlight the significance of considering notions such as inequality and inferiority beyond the traditional bounds of Islamic dress.

In this section I have explored examples from *Nichan* and *Tel Quel,* and demonstrated how they depict Islamic dress against freedom and emancipation, and as an epitome of inferiority, submission and body denial. On the one hand, the inscription of Islamic dress within these concepts implicitly constructs it in opposite terms with the ideal secular normative and autonomous body which is understood as visible and free. On the other hand, the portrayal of different forms of dress (and more particularly the *niqab, jilbab* and *soutra*) in the Moroccan weeklies in these terms reveals how the various meanings can be complicated with other implicit references and insinuations to such as deceit, masquerade, anomaly, and death, which allude to the ostentatious disturbance of the dress for the Moroccanpublications. On the other hand, associations

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[106] As far as polygamy and divorce in Islam are concerned, polygamy is tied to requirements which are almost impossible to fulfill, divorce is not one-sided in Islam as women can also initiate divorce and obtain it.

of the veil with lack of freedom allude to visions of the dress as an embodiment of renouncement, control, pride, tenacity and violence. At another level, these further inferences complicate the construction of sexual veils through introducing affective qualities to the dress. Islamic dress in the Moroccan weeklies is hence also affective. Such depictions reproduce traditional dichotomies of the veil which I have examined in earlier chapters. However, they also establish the difference of the veil in terms of an emotional and ethical otherness. I now move to the last section in order to look at examples which pertain to socio-cultural associations of Islamic dress through which it is constructed as the embodiment of fantasy, fashion and *fitna*.

7.3. Moroccan Ethical and Socio-Cultural Veils

7.3.1. Fantasy Fashion and *Fitna*[107] Ostentatious Sexual Fashionable and Religious *Hijabs* and *Niqabs* of Threat and *Fitna*

In this section, I analyse how the Moroccan weeklies inscribe the veil with religious (ethical) and socio-cultural themes. In addition to the associations of Islamic dress within the political and sexual realms, the Moroccan weeklies *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* assign socio-cultural meanings to it. I analyse how they do so. In the first section, I examine how the dress is associated with fashion and *fitna*, and then I explore how the veil is tied with the notions of honour, shame and sexual purity. I am grouping these meanings together under the umbrella of ethical and socio-cultural ones as they are more related to the social and cultural realms. Although these constructions of the veil are closer to those in terms of sexual meanings, I want to make a distinction among the

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[107] According to Margot Badran (Badran, 2009, p. 74), it was popular belief that constructed women differently from men as 'essentially sexual beings', and women were believed to have greater sexual instincts, 'threatened to ignite chaos, or fitna with which she was equated'.

meanings which were viewed exclusively within sexual terms, and the ones that pointed to further definitions of the veil within ethical, social and cultural otherness.

In a *Nichan* article entitled 'Jarrabna Ninja' (We have tried the Ninja outfit), Sana El Aji (El Aji, 2008) spends a day out in Casablanca dressed in a *niqab* and a black *jilbab* describes her day. The word '*Ninja*' likens her wearing of the *niqab* and *jilbab* (black *niqab* with a black cloak) to the persons skilled in *ninjutsu*:

> Even after he walked past me, the young man continued looking in my direction, contemplating my appearance with interest. I could not determine if my 'covered' appearance strengthened his feelings of higher status and authority towards me as a covered female, or if what was agitating him was merely an internal fantasy creating the desire to uncover whatever hidden things were there.

The scene here describes the *niqabed* journalist fully dressed in black walking along one of the main upper-class brand shopping areas in Casablanca. On her way out of a shop, two young men walk past her. One of them comments: 'I like this style', and keeps looking at her with interest. El Aji interprets this gesture as either a proof of her 'covered and hidden' body intensifying the young man's inner feelings of superiority and power over the 'covered female', or merely a sign of his internal fantasy creating a 'desire to uncover what is hidden'. The allusion to the 'continued looking' echoes the earlier example about the woman in the *soutra* who 'continued asking', both examples emphasise the idea of repetition and persistence. The *niqab* is subject to and a cause for the male gaze. The term 'appearance' hints at the veil as an object of display and exhibition. It therefore echoes the notion of conspicuousness attached to the *niqab*, which becomes visible and ostentatious. The term 'appearance' also suggests unveiling, which contrasts with the 'veiled appearance' of the writer. The veil is

apparent and conspicuous. It can become a form of spectacle and show. The expression 'covered appearance' and 'covered female' further suggest the position of the *niqab* as a mask and disguise. The term appearance (external) also hints at the idea of the veil being a fabrication, and a fantasy, which we can compare with the 'internal fantasy' attributed to the male gaze. The veil is thus both a fantasy and a source of fantasy, both an object and subject of fantasy. What it appears to be is therefore different from what it is. At another level, we can link references to appearance with fashion. The veil is therefore a symbol of fashion. The veil additionally agitates, which evokes the idea of disturbance in turn associated with the visibility of the dress. The expressions 'desire to uncover' and 'what is hidden' also point to the perception of the dress as a source of *fitna*. Because the veil covers, it provokes desire to uncover. Unveiling is hence equated with knowing.

As in the previous examples, El Aji ties the *niqab* with male power and authority over women, and reads it as a proof of the inferior status of women. Yet what accompanies this depiction is the vision of the 'hidden' or veiled, in this case *niqabed* female body, as a source of sexual attraction. The *niqab* therefore moves from being an object of passivity (the image of the *niqab* as an oppressive and passive prison) to a symbol of sexual desire and fantasy and active sexual symbol. This movement resonates with the orientalist depiction of veiled women as 'oppressed victims' and 'sexual threats'. The veiled woman is thus at once a passive victim and an active threat. Likewise, during the colonial era, the veil was often associated with exoticism and sensuality, as the body of the Muslim woman 'behind the veil' represented an object of fantasy (Fanon, 1967, p. 43). It was later to be viewed as a threat, as was the case during the colonial battle detailed in the earlier chapters.

The association of the veil *fitna* comes up in other contexts. The weekly *Le Journal* similarly ties the *niqab* and *jilbab* with a strong sexual drive. In an article entitled 'The G-String under the Hijab', Amelie Amilhau[108] states (Amilhau, 2008):

> Passionate is what describes the bearded men and their wives so much hidden under so many heavy black shawls that some people call them *ninjas*? This is not always the case, but we encounter lace and eroticism, more often than we can imagine when we lift the veil.

Amilhau defines 'bearded men and their wives'. Their description as 'passionate' not only hints at the vision of the *niqab* (and now the beard) as a lascivious and erotic object, but also connotes their perception as signifiers of a fervent and zealous disposition. The *niqab* and beard are taken to be fanatical symbols. The expressions 'so much hidden' and 'so many heavy black shawls' intensify and heighten the feeling of surprise which the veil and beard provoke, and additionally suggest the excess and exaggeration which the weeklies attribute to the dress as an extreme practice. The 'black shawls' not only refer to the black cloaks also called *jilbab* which complements the *niqab*, but also more subtly associate the dress with camouflage and mask. The image is that of the veil as a disguise. It is again a semblance and appearance. The

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[108]Amilhau is a journalist and director of production in French broadcast media in Paris. She previously worked for Cosmopolitis production, Courrier Atlas, Pernel Media and SAS Education. She is a correspondant, collaborator and freelance journalist with various French and foreign media including l'Express, West France, France 24 and Mail Atlas. She worked in Morocco as a director journalist and team leader on two television Moroccan programmes in 2M (Lights and Toubkal), the second Moroccan channel, as well as a corresponding and freelance journalist. In Morocco, she has also worked for Le Journal Hebdomadaire, Le Reporter and Morocco Groupe Soir.

http://www.pafandco.com/Membres/7949/Am%C3%A9lie%20Amilhau

https://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=376776775&authType=NAME_SEARCH&authToken=-IMe&locale=en_US&trk=tyah&trkInfo=clickedVertical%3Amynetwork%2Cidx%3A1-1-1%2CtarId%3A1428251044811%2Ctas%3Aamelie+amilhau

'black' darkness and obscurity of the *niqab* itself contrasts with and implicitly defines the lightness of unveiling. The colour also characterises the dress as nebulous and vague. The dark veil embodies gloominess hence sadness and melancholy which implicitly defines the happiness of unveiling. At another level, blackness and darkness also echo invisibility, whereas lightness and brightness suggest visibility. The *niqab* therefore is both visible and makes invisible. By contrast, unveiling is invisible and makes visible.

The article also contains references to the dress as a symbol of eroticism, connecting the veil and 'bearded men' with 'lace' and 'eroticism'. The terms suggest a fabric of silk or cotton used for underwear. Amilhau portrays the *niqab* as a tool for seduction and fashion, and a symbol of eroticism and sexuality. Ironically, the title of the article 'The G-String under the Hijab*'* focuses on the *niqab* rather than the *hijab* as an object hiding eroticism. The view of the *niqab* (and beard) in terms of an active eroticism contrasts with its earlier definition as a form of passive oppression and victimisation within a patriarchal framework. *Le Journal* here presents the dress as denoting the sexualisation and eroticisation of Islamic dress. Although most women interviewed in the article wear the *hijab* rather than the *niqab*, repeated references are made to the *niqab* as an active sexual symbol. The example thus depicts the dress as an item reinforcing the image of the woman not as a negated body within public space, but as a hidden yet sexually active, erotic body.

It is worth considering what Islamic and Muslim feminism says about Islamic dress and sexuality. In orthodox Islam, sexuality is considered as a normative aspect of ordinary and religious life. Outside marriage, however, behaviour between men and women has to be temporarily 'desexualised' (desexualisation) as both body and space need to be regulated and controlled to make public interaction possible (El Guindi, 1999, p. 136). The challenge which Islam poses to individual Muslims is to 'accommodate' both sexuality and religiousness as normative while striving to

accomplish the ideal of 'sociomoral behavior' (El Guindi, 1999, p. 136). El Guindi's concept of 'desexualisation' of the body is particularly useful in considering how *Le Journal* instead emphasises the 'sexualisation' of the *niqab* (and beard) in public space. In contrast to the 'desexualisation' and moralisation of behaviour, Le *Journal* associates the *niqab* with an active eroticism and immorality through constructing the dress as erotic and lascivious.

We need to also consider the veil in relation to modesty. In her ethnographic study of Bedouin society, Lila Abu Lughod (1986, p. 165) argues that, for the Awlad Ali Bedouin society, veiling is best conceptualised in a 'symbolic language about morality and a denial of sexual interest, which includes avoiding and acting uninterested in men, dressing modestly so as not to draw attention to their sexual charms, and veiling'. In this context, it is sexuality and the bonds it establishes between individuals that represent a threat not only to the 'conceptual system of social relations', but also to the 'solidarity of the agnatic kin group' which is important in Bedouin society (Abu-Lughod, 1986, p. 145). In the framework of the new veiling movements of the past decades in Egypt and the larger Arab and Muslim countries, the *hijab* of the *muhajjabat* refers to a garment which intends to comply with the Islamic requirement that the dress be 'modest and not sexually enticing', an obligation that applies to both men and women (Ahmed, 1992, p. 221). *Al-Ziyy al-islami* (Islamic dress) is generally understood as robes or loose-fitting long-sleeved and ankle-length garments that do not reveal the contours of the body (Ahmed, 1992, p. 221). In *Le Journal*, the 'dark and heavy shawls' are instead portrayed as sexual objects in a space which supposedly desexualises the body. The modesty and desexualisation which are often attributed to the *hijab* and *niqab* from a religious perspective are reversed to inscribe the dress as immodest and sexual. The veil thus becomes not only immodest, but also ostentatious.

In an article entitled *'Non l'Homme n'est pas un Animal primitif'* ('No, Man is not a Primitive Animal*)*, Maria Daif (2002) from *Tel Quel* similarly ties the *niqab* with sexual instinct, seduction and danger:

> The veil and the large long outfit which accompanies it protect the hair, arms and legs of the woman from the male gaze. Let us not make ourselves blind. It is nothing more than this. This broadly means that the twenty-first century man does not see in the twenty-first century woman anything more than a vulgar object of seduction and a catalyst of his own sexual instincts. In short, she is a danger to be absolutely dismissed.

Maria Daif here reiterates the association of the *niqab* and *jilbab* with a protection of the female body from the male gaze. The expression 'long outfit' which refers to the *jilbab* echoes not only a costume and a guise, but also a uniform. The *jilbab* thus symbolises belonging to a particular organisation, group or clan. Against the act of 'making oneself blind', hence remaining in darkness, Daif offers the only explanation for the adoption of the dress, and proposes to uncover the truth about Islamic dress. The expressions 'vulgar object of seduction' points to a vision of the veil as offensive and filthy. It suggests characterising the veil as indecent, impolite and dishonourable. This positions it within an inferior status. Such a depiction also codes the dress as antithetical to decency and morality. The veil is thus immoral. It is both offensive, and embodies an offense, a sexual attack. At another level, we can note how the use of the adjective 'vulgar' suggests something barbaric, hence connecting the veil with savageness and barbarism. It is also uncivilised. The vulgarity of the veil also makes it stand out as a symbol. Not only does it embody immorality and barbarism, but also ostentatiousness. It embodies a visible sexual offensive to be dismissed.

Tel Quel includes references to Islamic dress, and more precisely the *niqab* and *jilbab* as a symbol igniting the desire to uncover the veiled body. The dress is depicted as a sexual threat, through such expressions as 'vulgar object of seduction' and 'catalyst of man's sexual instincts'.[109] The idea of 'protection from the male gaze' resonates with the historical symbolism of the veil as a protection for upper-class women from the gaze of common men (Nashat & Tucker, 1999, pp. 32-33), in which the practice is equated with protecting women from the male gaze in Moroccan society. We can contrast the vision of Islamic dress as a 'sexual threat' with the assertion of the *hijab* as a 'tool of protection' for women, warning men and strangers that the wearer is a 'good and virtuous woman' (Macleod, 1991, p. 113). In the recent decades, the veil also preserves 'order in the community by Islamist women who wilfully cover their sexuality' (Göle, 1996, p. 93). The example's equation of the veil with a sexual threat and protection from the male gaze therefore assigns both passive and active stances of the dress. The veil thus embodies both passivity and activity. It is both a passive reaction to the male gaze and an active sexual symbol. The examples also express a labelling of *Muslimahs* within an eroticism and licentiousness reminiscent of the historical orientalist and colonial meanings. Viewed as a 'protection from the male gaze', the *niqab* and *jilbab* not only establish the concept of *fitna*, linked with a woman's entire responsibility for a man's attraction, but also with man's inability to control his desires and fantasies.

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[109] A similar discourse among feminists equate the hijab with hiding women's bodies to protect them from the male gaze: A headscarf like any other imposed visual hijab, is supposed to protect the Muslim female's body form a male gaze and hide her body to prevent men from being seduced by her sexual potential. (Hamzeh, 2012, p. 79)

Comparing the various types of Islamic dress among different generations of Moroccan women, an article entitled 'Schizophrenie sous le voile' ('Schizophrenia under the Veil') by Salaheddine Lemaizi[110] notes (Lemaizi, 2009):

> Whilst grandmothers wore the *niqab*, and mothers wore the *zif*, their daughters are wearing the *hijab*...which is sexy. Being a sign of an asserted and ostentatious religiosity, it has established itself as a fashion phenomenon with its media mechanisms and even economic ones. But prior to this, the veil went through a phase imbued with ideology.

In the terminology of the article from *L'Observateur du Maroc*, the generational differences between various forms of Islamic dress omits reference to the *haik* or *mlehfa* which many women in Morocco especially in rural areas still adopt today. Although Lemaizi attempts to differentiate between three generations of women in terms of Islamic dress, the division is nonetheless generalised, as some women today still wear the *niqab* and *mlehfa* (which resembles the *haik* in shape). The *zif* or *derra* which refer to a headscarf, have a more traditional connotation of a head covering which many Moroccan women adopt today, either to cover the whole hair and neck or some part of it, or to be placed on the shoulders on top of a traditional Moroccan *jellaba*. Rather than strictly denoting religiosity, the *zif* or *derra* symbolises a traditional type of garment which may or may not be adopted for religious reasons.

Lemaizi suggests that the contemporary *hijab* is ostentatious and conspicuous, and paradoxically defines it with sexual attraction, 'sexiness' and an 'asserted and

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[110]Salaheddine Lemaizi is a journalist who specialises in the media coverage of political news. He is a part time journalist at Les Echos and l'Observateur, and is based in Casablanca and maintains a blog on Moroccan media: http://journalinbled.wordpress.com/
https://www.facebook.com/salaheddine.lemaizi

ostentatious religiosity' (Göle, 1996, pp. 4-5). In the more contemporary context, veiling represents an 'active reappropriation of Islamic religiosity' and way of life (Göle, 1996, pp. 4-5). Instead of expressing a passive submission to prevalent community norms but, it affirms an 'active interest in Islamic scripture', as young educated lower and middle-class women distinguish themselves from traditional uneducated women (Göle, 1996, pp. 4-5). The notion of appropriation of religiosity is useful in considering the association of the *hijab* with 'an asserted religiosity' in the text. In contrast to earlier depictions of the veil as a passive symbol, the texts of the press which tie the veil with fashion also inscribe it with meanings of assertion.

While the earlier examples from *Tel Quel* and *Nichan* categorise the dress as the epitome of body denial and deprivation (*niqab, jilbab, soutra*), Lemaizi's article positions the *hijab* as the embodiment of assertion and fashion. The veil is another means of performing Muslimness. In addition to connoting it with an 'alleged religiosity', the term 'asserted' conveys a strong and forceful stance associated with the *hijab*, hence to affirm one's religiosity is also equated with force and power. Also important is that this assertion is also a statement about existence. This associates the dress with life which contrasts with death associated with it in other examples. 'Ostentatious' religiosity is what also characterises the new *hijab* of young Moroccan *Muslimat*. In contrast to earlier veils which Lemaizi links with 'ideology', the more contemporary and trendy *hijab* expresses a loud and conspicuous visibility, and an exhibitionistic religiosity. The new *hijab* embodies a disturbingly visible and audible religiosity. Yet it is also a provocative and seductive religiosity.

It is useful to consider Islamic feminist notions of Islamic dress and fashion. Towards the end of the 1990s, some women started adopting a new type of veil through covering their head and body in a seductive manner, and calling themselves '*mutahashimat*' (the modest ones) (Badran, 2009, p. 83). While these women dressed in ways more evocative of the '*mutabarrijat*', they acknowledged their non-adherence to the spirit

of the *hijab* (Badran, 2009, p. 83). Lower-middle class women in Cairo adopted a similar type of *hijab*, which was part of a trend increasingly influenced by the dictates of fashion, a trend which marked a difference from what MacLeod describes as the 'early extremism of the new veiling movement' which was becoming peripheral (Macleod, 1991, pp. 106-107). In the Turkish context, the 'turban movement', which refers to the new 'Islamist veiling,' combines elements of Ottoman Turkish heritage and the West (Göle, 1996, p. 6). In contrast to the traditional headscarf, the turban marks a 'hybrid and transgressive character' of the Islamist veiling movement, and suggests instead 'fashion and change' and a 'modern way of appropriation' (Göle, 1996, p. 6). In her more recent study of Islam in Europe, Göle (2011, p. 95) notes how the contemporary Islamic dress seems to be 'transregional' or 'transnational', as the fabric, colour and cut are inspired by modern fashion trends, and reflecting the shape of the Western woman more. The allusion which *L'Observateur du Maroc* makes through its description of the *hijab* is one that inscribes the dress within contemporary meanings of fashion and change. In contrast to the fixity usually attributed to the veil as an epitome of tradition, this new type of veil which the weekly terms 'ostentatious' represents a 'modern' changing element, responding to the fashion trends where the dress signifies fashion.

The examples which I examined establish a correlation between Islamic dress in its different forms (*hijab, niqab, jilbab*) and fashion on the one hand, and with the notion of *fitna* on the other. The implication is that the dress symbolises an object of fashion and beauty, or an inherent sexual threat. Anyone who walks around major cities in Arab countries today will be exposed to a form of *hijab* that presents the female body as a sexual attraction, with younger women and teenagers being more inclined to adopt this type of dress. The resurgence of the *hijab* in Muslim countries as well as European and other Muslim-minority countries, has been accompanied with a fashion trend. This trend positions the body of the *Muslimah* amidst a growing market geared towards catering for a growing demand of the new fashionable *Muslimah* wear. We need to consider the depiction of the veil within fashion in a context of a discourse of the *hijab*

as a sexual object where the female body is perceived as sexually attractive. The relatively new fashionable veils strive to place the body of the *Muslimah* in the midst of the fashion market where colours, shapes and models have become more important than the concept of modest dress. I now turn to an examination of the veil as en embodiment of fashion and *fitna* within *Maghrebi* and *Arab* feminist debates.

7.3.2. Fashionable and *Fitna* Veils in Feminist Debates

Some Arab and Muslim feminists have similarly constructed Islamic dress as a form of sexual threat. After examining examples of associations of the *hijab, niqab* and *jilbab* with fashion and *fitna* in the Moroccan press, I discuss in this section some *Maghrebi* and Arab feminist texts which define the body of the *Muslimah* in terms of *fitna* and fashion, and the veil in relation to the woman's body which is socio-culturally understood as a source of chaos in society. The consideration of such constructions will allow us to explore how the veil is constructed in terms which consolidate the Moroccan publications.

In the context of associating Islamic dress with a sexual phenomenon, Moroccan feminist Fatima Sadiqi links it with fashion. She notes that this dress has been witnessing renewal and modernisation, with designer houses specialising in '*muhajjabat* dress', and fashion shows specific to this type of clothing (Sadiqi, 1998, p. 33). This is in addition to the different forms and colours of veils, which are sometimes bright and 'may be more attractive to the eyes', and the use of 'accessories and make-up' just like unveiled women (Sadiqi, 1998, p. 33). Similarly, Egyptian feminist Nawal El Saadaoui notes the increase in veiling as a fashion phenomenon. She states that the dress has become a modern veil in the form of a 'scarf covering the hair, accompanied with *kohl,* lipstick, blush, tight American jeans and sharp elevated high heels' (Saadawi, 2000, p. 127). She links the phenomenon with the 'advent of

democratic winds, the free market and privatisation, and the entrance of Egypt in the new modern era' (Saadawi, 2000, p. 127). . In her more recent study of modest fashion, Reina Lewis notes how the spreading of 'fashionabe modesty' has been increased by the internet and information communication technologies (Lewis, 2013, p. 2). Such studies on the veil emphasise its symbolism as a fashion phenomenon. The veil in these terms becomes appropriated by young *Muslimat* as a fashion statement. Sadiqi's idea of the new veils as being 'more attractive to the eye' echoes earlier press examples about the veil as a symbol of sexual attraction and seduction. The veil therefore also epitomises fashion and attraction. Both Saadawi and Sadiqi tie the new fashion veils with modernisation which Muslim countries have witnessed during the past few decades. Saadawi further links them with 'new democratic winds, free market and privatisation'. The new fashion attraction veils can also be democratic, and become part of a market. This is also part of the commodification of Islamic dress.

The modern trend of fashionable types of Islamic dress with designer houses and fashion shows may have been more widespread in some Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt, but Islamic fashion has become a globalised phenomenon enjoying popularity in many Muslim-majority countries including Morocco, as well as Muslim-minority places in Europe and elsewhere. These new styles of veiling and clothing have constituted a shift in the meanings of Islamic dress. However, the Qur'an enjoins women not to use make-up and ornaments, and insists that women's garments should be devoid of exhibitionism (*tabarruj*), which requires that they cover all parts of their body except the hands and face (Saadawi, 2010, p. 85). The association of Islamic dress with fashion places it within a paradigm in which the veiled body of the *Muslimah* is paradoxically Islamic and Western, modern and traditional. The link between Islamic dress and fashion emphasises the concept of the body amidst changing styles and a vision of the dress as an object of fashion. Yet, as Reina Lewis argues, the manners in which 'self-presentation is achieved are myriad and so are the reasons that motivate it' (Lewis, 2013, p.3). Indeed, as Lewis notes 'modest dress can mean different things for different women and can change meanings over the course of their lives' (Lewis, 2013,

p.3). The tendency to reduce modest dress to fixed and unchanging meanings therefore risks not only homogenising the dress or reducing it to particular categories, but also subsuming women's experiences of modest dress and, to use Reina lewis's term, 'modest fashion' into a single and monolithic view.

Other *Maghrebi* and Arab feminists construct the veil from the perspective of the female body as forbidden or shameful. Nouzha Lamrani (1994), for instance, argues that a woman in the street is considered a 'provocation' and even an 'offense' not only in rural areas, but also among urban populations. Because the woman is viewed as a sexual object, she is constantly harassed and sometimes subject to aggression or by the male gaze in the public spaces (Lamrani, 1994, p. 22). By contrast, Tunisian feminist Raja Benslama (2005, p. 53) states that the contemporary *hijab* presents a gender marker (*wasm jandari*) more than an ideological one, and an attempt to remove the concept of desire from public space. She also argues that women today have gone out of their *hijab* (as the traditional space separation between men and women) without changing the relationship structure at the core of family life (Bensalama, 2005, p. 53). Nor has the physical *hijab,* which considers woman as *'awra* and a forbidden body, disappeared (Bensalama, 2005, p. 53). The concept of a woman as *'awra*, which refers to a woman's body only in sexual terms, is nonetheless a notion which predates Islam. In Arab countries, women were considered as bodies or *'awra* that have to be buried alive and disposed of before Islam (Haikal, 2006, p. 20). Benslama provides a double depiction of the *hijab* as an attempt to remove the notion of desire from the public realm (in line with the 'desexualisaiton' noted earlier), and as a symbol emphasising the concept of woman as *'awra* on the other (sexualisation of the woman's body).The definition of Islamic dress in relation to the female body as *'awra* limits the female body to sexuality, and instils a similar discourse to the patriarchal one which it attempts to challenge. The notion of *'awra* as it is used in the sense of woman's body as forbidden and sexual, moreover, does not find support in Qur'an.

The link some *Maghrebi* and Arab feminists establish between Islamic dress and the concept of '*awra* reduces woman to a body rather than a person possessing full intellectual abilities. However, as I noted, Islamic dress is a requirement for both women and men in Islam. In addition to this, the *Qur'an* refers to women as persons equal to men in creation, mental ability as well as rights and responsibilities.[111] Traditional societies have divided the world into two spaces, which expressed a vision of the woman reducing her to a body carrying desire, hence the necessity of 'constraining and confining her behind walls' (Azrwil, 1990, pp. 54-55). This separation has contributed to dividing spaces into a male space where freedom of movement is given, and a female space which restricts women to particular responsibilities and detaches them from the world at large (Azrwil, 1990, pp. 54-55). The division of space, however, is linked to a historical concept of separation between the sexes which predates the advent of Islam. This vision also contrasts with the participation of women and their involvement in numerous activities outside their private spaces and families. Equally important is the fact that responsibilities in the private space are not regarded as an obligation for women within Islam. The cultural belief that housework is restricted to women for instance and that it is included within their religious obligations does not have a basis in Islam. Let us now explore the last cluster of associations which include attaching Islamic dress to notions of honour, shame and sexual purity, which figure among the ones the Moroccan publications associate with Islamic dress in its various forms. As with associations of the veil with fashion and *fitna*, I am grouping the notions of honour, shame and sexual purity together since these tend to be constructed differently from the ones I grouped under the sexual realm. They also pertain more to the ethical and sociocultural realm as my analysis will illustrate.

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[111] See Amina Wadud (2006), Asma Barlas (2002), and Baraganzi (2004)

7.3.3. Veils of Honour and Shame

In this last section I discuss examples of socio-cultural associations of Islamic dress with honour, shame and sexual purity. The themes in this section complicate the earlier associations of *fitna* and *'awra*, and link the veil with both oppression and threat. The meanings of the veil in such terms also complicate earlier associations of the dress with such meanings as oppression, inferiority and lack of freedom and emancipation. In the article entitled 'In the Skin of a Crow*' (Dans la peau d'un corbeau), Chadwane Bensalmia adopts the full-face veil (*soutra*) is reported to have said (Bensalmia, 2004):

> 'I want to protect the honour of my husband. He is my man', H. insisted H. (to be understood as 'my Lord'), as this is exactly what these women signify through such an affirmation. They have chosen to forsake all forms of active social life within society, and to live doubly imprisoned, first by their items of dress, and second by the philosophy that dictates wearing it. All of this is to blindly obey a doctrine which insists on them considering their body as a heavy and dishonourable burden to their men. These women have also abandoned their right to question the logical foundation for this prescription.

Chadwane Bensalmia defines the meaning of the *soutra* through her understanding of the woman's statement. When the unnamed woman expresses her wish to 'protect the honour of [her] husband', the image is that of a woman protecting the dignity and respect of her husband. The example attaches the *soutra* with protecting male honour and withdrawal from social life and a double imprisonment inside the veil and the philosophy dictating it. In addition to implying a moral code, the term honour connotes obedience. The *soutra* here becomes a symbol of loyalty and allegiance to the husband. At another level, the allusion to honour evokes the status of male superiority (her husband), a rank which positions the *soutra* as a signifier of female inferiority. In order

to emphasise the association of the dress with male authority and superiority, Bensalmia explains the woman's calling her husband 'my man' as meaning 'my lord'. The term further stresses the image of the *soutra* as a symbol of female inferiority. The reference to the husband as 'lord' also implies his position as a commander and ruler, which contrasts him with the servant/follower status of the woman in the *soutra*. It also implies the eminence and greatness attached to the term lord, and to the husband in a more implicit manner.

Bensalmia elaborates on what the *soutra* signifies: forsaking all forms of active social life and double imprisonment. On the one hand, the term 'forsaking' indicates the action of abandoning, and turning one's back on something, in this case 'an active social life'. The *soutra* therefore embodies a movement, a 'turning back' and turning one's back. This suggests the idea of renouncement often evoked in the weeklies in relation to Islamic dress. On the other hand, forsaking also implies betraying or deceiving, hence being disloyal. The dress in this sense symbolises both loyalty to the husband, and disloyalty to an ideal active social life and presence in the public realm. It denotes the action of deviating from the normal or expected (which is forsaking the dress for an active and free social life). The *soutra* is therefore marked as an abnormal deviation. It expresses a social withdrawal, a turning one's back on. The idea of double imprisonment of women, (both physically because of the dress and psychologically because of what is referred to as the 'philosophy' of the *soutra*) deprives these women of any will and agency. Although it is stated that they 'choose' to forsake social life for confinement, Bensalmia assumes that they do so 'blindly', following a doctrine that considers their bodies as 'heavy weights' on their husbands.

Bensalmia's statement includes other connotations. The image is also that of a woman who 'blindly obeys' the doctrine that commands wearing it. The veil is again dark. Moreover, it represents a 'heavy burden' and an excessive weight on man, as well as a 'dishonourable', hence shameful and deceitful burden. It is noteworthy that the title of

the article 'In the Skin of a Crow' suggests blackness, darkness and bad luck implicitly inspired by the dress which usually includes a black cloak combined with a *niqab* and *soutra*. In addition to the image of darkness which resounds with orientalist and colonial tropes, the crow itself epitomises bad luck, hence ties the dress with bad fortune. The 'doctrine of the veil' is linked with viewing the female body as a 'heavy and dishonourable burden to man'. The title of the article also refers to Bensalmia donning the *niqab* in order to spend a day with women who wear the *niqab* and *soutra*. At the end of the article she writes: 'These women in Black'. The references to black and crow are metaphors for the *niqab/soutra*. We can see how the association of the veil with the concept of honour triggers a cluster of other meanings through which the veil embodies further constructions of the dress with dis/loyalty, anomaly and backwardness.

Such statements as we find in *Tel Quel* from Bensalmia implicitly affiliate the veil (*soutra/niqab*) with male honour, which is generalised to all women wearing it ('this is exactly what these women signify'). The garment itself embodies honour and its preservation. The definition of Islamic clothing as symbolic of male honour derives from a socio-cultural view of the woman's body as an object of shame rather than a religious one. In addition to this, the value of dignity *('ird)* in popular belief is the axis on which the whole family's reputation (*sharaf*) is based (Azrwil, 1990, p. 180). Since antiquity, Arab societies have cultivated a type of patriarchal family whose characteristics included the concept of honour (also called *nif* in *Maghrebi* culture), the reputation of wives *('ird)*, their moral and psychological chastity *('iffa*), and, most importantly, their premarital virginity (*bikr*) (Chebel, 2003, p. 235). Arab societies are dominated by a patriarchal ideological framework characterised by the power of family and the state, as well as the eminence of one sex over another and the monitoring of women, and their honour (Bataina, 2004, p. 96). The veil in such a view has been used within a patriarchal framework in order to isolate women from conspicuousness and from the outside world under the pretext of safeguarding honour (Naamane-Guessous, 1988, p. 96). Dignity and honour (*'ird* and *sharaf),* albeit to varying degrees depending

on regions and social categories, continue to legitimate social relationships and individual forms of behaviour, and whereas a woman's honour is closely linked to shame (being timid, reserved and acknowledging her inferiority and dependence vis-à-vis men), a man's honour is linked to others, to courage, initiative and strength of character (Harras, 2000, p. 45). These different studies by *Maghrebi* and Arab feminists demonstrate how the notion of honour is closely linked with a patriarchal vision of woman.

We can read *Tel Quel*'s tying the *soutra* with male honour as part of a discourse which imposes a socio-cultural reading on the dress. In her compelling anthropological study of the veil, Fadwa El Guindi (1999, p. 79) argues that the paradigm honour-shame (public/private) is the one most frequently enforced on Arab and Islamic cultural space in order to describe the separation between the sexes. It has been argued that this paradigm is more appropriate to describe European Mediterranean and Balkan culture (El Guindi, 1999, p. 79). It is therefore interesting to consider how a notion which belongs more to a European Mediterranean framework, and which links the dress to male honour, is applied on the *soutra* in Morocco. The statement of the woman herself and Bensalmia's comment link the *soutra* with preserving the reputation of the husband. It correlates with a vision of the woman's body as an object of shame which needs to be hidden for male honour. Such a vision does not have a basis in the Qur'an.

The notions of honour and shame which are associated with the *soutra* can be added to the concepts of chastity and sexual purity which are in turn constructed as inherent to Islamic dress. The Moroccan publications contain instances of how the veil becomes an embodiment of these notions. I am ending this chapter with the article which I first began with, which proposes an answer to the question 'Why is the Hijab gaining ground?', and in which Driss Bennani proposes another answer (Bennani, 2002):

...And even when they do not always acknowledge it, wearing the *hijab* has a close relationship with the look of the patriarchal society which wants women to be 'pure' and 'untouched'. But as soon as marriage is consummated, the question takes another dimension. The woman lives in the pace of her social integration, and from the age of forty, the phenomenon of the veil acquires another meaning.

The article here admits with certainty that the *hijab* signifies sexual purity in a patriarchal framework. It thus purports to disclose information about the 'truth' of the dress. Islamic dress can both reveal and conceal, it can both make known and unknown. The veil can also reveal its own meanings. The reference to the *hijab* and its 'relationship with the 'look of patriarchal society' resounds with the link between the dress and the patriarchal gaze. The term suggests an affiliation and interconnection between the *hijab* and the 'look', which emphasises the visibility of the veil and its conspicuousness. The allusion to women being 'pure and untouched' refers to virginity which is considered as a pre-requisite for sexual purity. The article states that the meaning of the veil changes according to whether a woman is unmarried or married. *Tel Quel* further advances that the veil changes in symbolism after marriage and after the woman reaches forty. It nonetheless does not detail these different meanings. The article's section entitled 'the veil of menopause' claims that Islamic dress changes from a symbol of purity and chastity to one of social status. Ironically women of menopause age and beyond are not requested to cover in the same way as younger women. They can in fact lay aside their 'outer garments', as the Qur'an enjoins them to do.

Let us consider the example through some feminist debates on the notions of sexual purity. Islamic dress, which is also referred to as the 'dress of piety', is linked in the *Qur'an* to the concepts of purity and chastity or virginity (*Naqa'e*, *'afaaf*) when it is mentioned within verses related to Mary the Virgin (*Maryam al 'adraa*). In relation to modest Islamic dress, in the Qur'an, there is no correlation between purity and

donningmodest dress. In her study of the veil in social space, Fadwa el Guindi (1999, p. 113) states that, in comparison with other cultures, purity and impurity are not part of characterisations in Islam in relation to either gender, which instead considers bodies of men and women as temporarily being in 'states of purity or impurity', states which end with washing rituals. However, in Moroccan society, the *hijab* has been considered as symbolic of chastity. A number of Moroccan men prefer to get married to women already adopting the *hijab*, which they consider as a proof for chastity. Therefore the references to purity and virginity are linked to a cultural view of the *hijab* rather than a religious one. The view partly originates from the parallel drawn between virginity and piety which is linked to the image of Mary. In Islamic practice, however, premarital sexual abstinence is required for both men and women. The importance of the concepts of reputation and honour *('ird and sharaf)* is most demonstrated by the importance attached to virginity in young women, and the fact that the hymen is considered as the only proof of chastity (*'iffa'*), and the protection of dignity (*'ird)* (Assa'ati, 2000, p. 186). Traditionally, men have believed in Arab countries that woman is a shame, and that her dignity is linked with her body and virginity (Haikal, 2006, p. 4). The example from *Tel Quel* reiterates a similar association of the veil with virginity and sexual purity. The veil in these terms signifies virginity. In Islamic practice, and contrary to cultural belief and practice, neither virginity nor sexual abstinence is limited to women, nor is Islamic dress a pre-requisite for sexual abstinence. They are practices which include both.

In relation to the construction of Islamic dress in terms of shame, *Tel Quel*'s article entitled 'No, Man is not a Primitive Animal', Maria Daif poses the following question (Daif, 2002):

> Could man be a primitive animal? Yes, but in such a case, neither I nor other women have to suffer the consequences of this. I am of the opinion that I do not have an obligation to hide my body, to deny it. I reckon I do not have to be

ashamed of it. I am undoubtedly ashamed of these men who imprison us and imprison our bodies, who deny us all desires, all sexual feelings – as if we apparently do not react to their uncovered bodies. Yes, I am ashamed of these men who are essentially afraid of us.

Maria Daif starts with the question: could man be a primitive animal? The question hints not only to a prehistoric state, but also to the notion of barbarism evoked in other examples of the publications in relation to Islamic dress: unevolved and underdeveloped or prehistoric condition. Similarly to earlier examples, Islamic dress is equated with body denial and with 'hiding the body'. This evokes not only the act of concealing and making unseen and non-visible, but also masking and obscuring, and to the idea of the veil as a camouflage and disguise. The veil is again dark and deceptive. Daif additionally refers to shame in relation to the dress, which suggests the perception of the female body as an object of shame to be hidden. This shame linked with the female body is reversed by the journalist's feeling 'ashamed' of men who 'imprison our bodies'. The veil therefore is both an object of shame and embodies shame (Abu-Lughod, 1986, p. 108). These men are the ones to blame for denying women 'all desires and sexual feelings'. Daif declares that the *niqab, jilbab* and *soutra* are forms of imprisonment and shame, linking body denial and shame to the veil.

Maria Daif's vision, however, accords more with a cultural conception of the veil rather than a religious one. An example of such a vision can be seen in Awlad Ali's conception of the veil as an item hiding sexuality and sexual shame. In Abu-Lughod's study of Awlad Ali's tribe, she states how aspects of sexuality and sexual behaviour are codified as threatening, and provide a negative view of sexuality (Abu-Lughod, 1986, p. 145). Abu-Lughod states that the origin of the force and persistence of such an attitude lies in tribal socio-cultural model rather than in Islamic ideology (Abu-Lughod, 1986, p. 145). The notions of shame in relation to the female body and the veil do not find proof in the Qur'an. In the *ayas* about modesty in dress which point to

khimar and *jilbab*, no reference is made of the veil as an element hiding shame. Nor is the *Muslimah*'s body mentioned in relation to an object of shame.

It is interesting to consider the associations of Islamic dress with honour, virginity and shame in comparison with the Arab/Muslim feminist discourse about the woman and body exposure. Some Muslim feminists who consider veiling as a negation of the female body (body denial) and the epitome of woman's oppressive patriarchy, also deem body exposure, or the display of woman's body in public space, as a form of liberation, as we have seen in examples in the earlier section. Other feminists, however, argue that veiling is part of a strategy to place woman within public space as a person rather than as a 'female body', or in Göle's terms 'personality rather than femininity'. The veil can therefore also symbolise an emphasis on women as persons rather than bodies in public space. Modest dress is supposed to encourage respect and esteem in both men and women.

In Moroccan culture, as well as in many other patriarchal cultures, the body of the woman is encompassed by many taboos (virginity, chastity and shame). While virginity remains a requirement for both men and women before marriage in Islam, young women can endure considerable psychological pressures to 'preserve' it as opposed to men. It is worth noting that the patriarchal cultural vision of woman's body as an object of shame increases pressure on women in relation to the notion of honour. What is referred to as 'honour crimes' is a case in point. In her study of sexuality in Morocco, Soumia Naamane-Guessous notes that during puberty, Moroccan adolescents are often confronted with a culture that silences them, emphasises the forbidden, and the concept of shame, coupled with a negation of the body and a refusal to speak about it (Naamane-Guessous, 1988, pp. 87-88). An example of the predominance of the concept of shame within Moroccan culture is the silence around menstruations, namely the inability to broach the subject with fathers or other male members of the close family (Naamane-Guessous, 1988, pp. 87-88). The culture of

silence and shame does not have a basis in Islam where the expression '*la haya'a fi deen*' means there is no shame in religion, and no restrictions on discussing issues including ones pertaining to sexuality. These various studies illustrate how notions such as shame and honour are more in accordance with socio-cultural norms than to religious practice.

Concerning bodily acts like wearing the veil and conducting oneself modestly in interactions with people and especially men, Mahmood (2004, p. 158) argues that these bodily acts constitute 'critical markers' and 'ineluctable means by which one trains oneself to be pious'. (being and becoming) 'While wearing the veil serves at first as a means to tutor oneself in the attribute of shyness, it is also simultaneously integral to the practice of shyness: one cannot simply discard the veil once a modest deportment has been acquired, because the veil is part of what defines that deportment (ie behaviour) (Mahmood, 2004, p. 158). Mahmood (2004, p. 158) argues that the importance of this aspect is left out of consideration when the veil is grasped only in relation to its symbolism as a sign of women's submission or Islamic identity.

In this chapter, I analysed how different types of Islamic dress (exemplified by *hijab*, *niqab*, *soutra* and *jilbab*) become associated with meanings which I have identified as and categorised under political, sexual and socio-cultural themes. I have demonstrated how Islamic dress is tied not only with Islamism, extremism and the politicisation of Islamic dress in the Moroccan political and social lives, but also how these notions in turn construct the veil in terms of a difference. This difference is expressed through generating a chain of definitions and references of the dress in terms of and Islamist and extremist invasion, contamination, marketing, commodification, propaganda on the one hand. On the other hand, the inscription of the veil as an Islamist threat defines the dress through meanings of backwardness, autocracy, anti-modernity, propaganda, regression, darkness and barbarism. (camouflage, mask, ostentatiousness) Islamic dress has additionally been repeatedly marked as a symbol against emancipation and

freedom, hence a sign of submission and inferiority. Yet it has also been defined as the embodiment of deception, dishonesty, deceit, death and deprivation. Portrayed as an outsider and strange presence in the Moroccan political and social realms, Islamic attire has additionally been tied with body denial, renouncement, anomaly, as well as violence, tenacity and coercion. (mask, masquerade, ostentatiousness, visible disturbance). In the last section I explored how Islamic dress becomes tied with concepts of fashion, *fitna*.

My analysis has also illustrated how the definitions of the veil in these terms have in turn sparked more implicit associations of the dress with exhibitionism, display, fantasy, eroticism and lasciviousness on the one hand, and darkness, sadness. Other meanings of the veil include *fitna*, indecency, dishonour, immorality, commodification and barbarism. The associations of the veil with notions of honour, shame and sexual purity have in turn included references to the veil in terms of withdrawal, renouncement, anomaly, deviation, darkness, barbarism. (mask, disguise, camouflage,ostentatiousness/invisibility). Many *Maghrebi* and Arab feminist debates have tended to consolidate definitions of Islamic dress from the Moroccan press.

What the themes have in common is the repeated inscription of Islamic dress with the notions of camouflage, disguise and masking on the one hand, and with ostentatiousness and disturbing visibility on the other. Associations of the veil therefore also construct the dress within an affective, ethical and a more tacit cultural otherness in Morocco. Such depictions reproduce traditional dichotomies of the veil which I have examined in earlier chapters. However, they also establish the difference of the veil in terms of an emotional, ethical and cultural otherness. These meanings complicate the continuities and discontinuities of a colonial/orientalist discourse of the veil in contemporary print media, as the re-production of a secular neo-colonial and orientalist discourse in a postcolonial Muslim context introduces differences in the otherness of the veil.

8. **Conclusion**

What have we learned from a study of Islamic dress such as mine? This project has proposed a close and critical textual reading of the veil across different historical and geographical dimensions, and offered an Islamic postcolonial reading of contemporary constructions of Islamic dress, and the broader category of the *Muslimah,* in the Moroccan and French print media and politics. In the thesis I have shown how the veil is simultaneously a mobile sign, one that moves across time and space, but how the veil in moving is also fixing or stabilising. Indeed I have shown how the veil, in moving from Orientalist and *Nahda* times and spaces to postcolonial Moroccan and French press and politics maintains a remarkably consistent range of meanings and values. As Heidi Safia Mirza (Mirza, 2013) argues, Muslim women's dress has turned into being 'interchangeable with essentialist notions of ethnicity, traditionalism and religion'. My study has also investigated and expanded on some of these essentialist notions. In this conclusion, I first return to some of my major arguments. Secondly, I reflect on the implications of my study for Islamic and Muslim feminism today, and on how my study of Islamic dress has contributed to developing my own understanding of Islamic and Muslim feminism. And finally, I discuss potential future directions of research on the veil.

8.1. Veil Comparisons

To what extent can we learn from comparison? A comparative study of Islamic dress allows for a broader consideration of the dress, and its discourses across different parameters. My particular study focused on different time frames (Orientalist, colonial, *Nahda*, postcolonial) and spaces (Morocco, France, Egypt). It highlighted patterns of various constructions of the veil through these various times and spaces. The comparative aspect is also a technique for tracing the various discourses which retain the essentialisation and othering of Islamic dress in different times, spaces, in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts. Additionally, comparisons allow us

to examine how historical and present, Orientalist, colonial and postcolonial associations of the veil relate to one another, how they move yet remain fixed. In the present section, I am pointing to some of the differences in veil constructions, bearing in mind that the texts on the veil are more nuanced, and that they often carry more subtle differences in meanings of the veil.

In the chapters focusing on Orientalist and *Nahda* texts, I explored how the veil becomes associated with unhappiness, enslavement, imprisonment, exoticism, ignorance and backwardness, and darkness and enlightenment. While the *Nahda* texts I examined tended to preserve many of these veil associations, they used them to create a more complex picture, hence both retaining and expanding the meanings of Islamic dress. These *Nahda* texts, therefore, maintain many of the Orientalist tropes, whilst broadening their scope. Orientalist and *Nahda* texts not only depict material veils (bodily face-veil), but also employ the language of the veil to describe space (harem, imprisonment) as well as time (backward, primitive).

The *Nahda* texts which I analysed further expand the Orientalist language of ethics in relation to the veil such as the one on happiness to include a discourse about the family and Muslim society on the one hand, and the global Muslim *Ummah* on the other. These *Nahda* writings emphasise a transnational pan-Islamic, pan-Arab vision of the veil, and a more global ethical and affective discourse (happiness, death, global *Ummah*). The veil marks and is marked by an 'other' time, space, code of conduct and emotions. However, it also embodies an 'other' time and space through its different associations. The veil thus is both a movement and a fixed object.

The comparison of French and Moroccan texts has additionally elucidated how some the veiled *Muslimah* is constructed in both Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority contexts in print media and politics. My study has shown how the *hijab* of the young

French *Muslimah* is not only marked as an essential threat to the French nation (Islamist, fundamentalist, extremist, fanatic and violent), but is further defined, in a more tacit manner, as belonging to another race, religion and cultural origin (Arab/*Maghrebi*/Muslim). This adds a racial difference to the political one, hence simultaneously racialising, culturalising and politicising the French *Muslimah*'s *hijab*. I have also examined how the French press and politics similarly codify the *hijab*, through sexual terms, with a racial and cultural otherness as the dress embodies an essential racial, religious and cultural background, and is fixed as a religious-bound and violent emblem. The dress in these terms confines the body of the French *Muslimah* to the boundaries of a patriarchal cultural and religious tradition.

We have also seen how the *hijab,* in the French press and political texts, is scripted in terms of an-other time through being contrasted with and constructed against secularism, modernity and progress, and space through being tied with the Maghreb and the 'Muslim world'. In relation to time and space, I have examined how the studied texts mark the *hijab* of the French *Muslimah* not only with a sexual difference from the normative secular body (symbolising such notions as inequality, oppression and stigma), but also a temporal, spatial and affective difference through embodying such meanings as backwardness and constraining young *Muslimat*'s bodies. At another level, the French press and political texts under study equate the *hijab* with propaganda, proselytising, violence and a messianic stance. I have thus discussed instances of how the dress was constructed as a threat to the French public space andcommunity of citizens, and an intrusion against the national borders of France, as well as a movement from the margin to the centre. The *hijab* is hence marked as having no history, and as being absent from the French history and time. De-historicising the French *Muslimah* operates through the veil.

My study has also explored how the veil is used to establish norms or ideals of conduct, which we can describe as an ethical realm. The *hijab* is here associated with meanings

such as impurity, immodesty, stigma and violence, which in turn become tools for codifying the dress with an ethical otherness in relation to an implicit normative secular subject. The *hijab* is further associated in the texts with different emotions, such as fear, which helps to script the dress as dangerous and even deadly. It becomes an embodiment of death, opposition, conflict, and disruption of national harmony. At the ethical level, the construction of the *hijab* includes its symbolism as a moral and visual trespassing of boundaries by French *Muslimat*. It embodies another form of disobedience to the laws and values of the Republic. The *hijab* is therefore figured as an intrusion and invasion in the body of the French nation, signifying a religious and cultural otherness that cannot be accommodated.

The French media and political texts I examined also construct the *hijab* of the French *Muslimah* as a communal and religious threat, and as an embodiment of communalism, barbarism, backwardness and violence. The *hijab* through these meanings figures as a marker of an essential racial, cultural otherness (*Maghrebi*/Arab/immigrant), as well as religious otherness (Islamic), and is tacitly contrasted with the secular norm and the French community of citizens. The *hijab* defines second and third-generation French *Muslimat* as belonging to a different community (previously colonised/immigrant) situated outside the bounds of the French nation. The *hijab* hence signifies a religious and communal object belonging to a race, culture, and religion situated outside the bounds of France.

Islamic dress in its different forms in the Moroccan press examples is remarkably loaded with meanings, many of which resonate with the French media and political meanings of the veil. I have illustrated how the publications under study portray the dress as a threat to the Moroccan political and social realms. The symbolism of the veil through meanings such as Islamism, extremism and fundamentalism is moreover made more complex and nuanced with more implicit references to its otherness. I have examined how the French print media and politics emphasise time, space, racial and

and ethical realms in their portrayals of the *hijab*. By contrast the Moroccan press positions the difference of Islamic dress in terms of space (an invasion and contamination of the political and social realms), at the level of time (regression, backwardness and darkness), and in relation to codes of conduct (commodification/marketing, propaganda), and in terms of vision (ostentatiousness, camouflage). In addition to the salience of an emotional language through these various notions attached to Islamic dress, the Moroccan texts I examined often tend to substitute the French focus on racial otherness with a higher emphasis on the visual/visible difference of the veil. This shows how Islamic dress is constructed as a threat in a Muslim-majority context.

My study has additionally demonstrated how the Moroccan texts conflate Islamic dress with a sexual difference which obliquely constructs it in opposite terms to a visible secular liberal normative body. The otherness of the *hijab, niqab, jilbab* and *soutra* is expressed here in terms of time (freedom and emancipation), space (enslavement, confinement), status (inferiority, submission) and embodiment (body denial, violence). Yet, as I illustrated, the Moroccan texts also show instances of more contradictory meanings such as equating the veil with oppression and feminism. The portrayal of different forms of Islamic dress in the Moroccan weeklies in terms of a sexual otherness (also defined as a spatial and temporal difference) reveals how various associations can be complicated with their embedding other ethical and emotional meanings (such as deceit, masquerade, anomaly, and death). These meanings within their contexts in turn allude to the visual and visible disturbance of the dress in the Moroccan context. At another level, these associations indicate affective meanings such as renouncement, control, pride, tenacity and violence. These further inferences complicate the construction of sexual veils through introducing affective qualities to the dress.

My study of the Moroccan press has lastly illustrated how Islamic dress (*hijab, niqab, jilbab, soutra*) becomes tied with fashion and *fitna*. The definition of Islamic dress in

these terms has in turn generated a more implicit chain of meanings embedding the dress with a difference defined in relation to vision (ostentatiousness, display, exhibitionism), ethics (*fitna*, commodification, immorality, dishonour, mask, disguise), time (barbarism, darkness) and affect (anomaly, darkness, sadness). The associations of the veil with notions such as honour, shame and sexual purity have in turn triggered references to the veil in terms of space (withdrawal, renouncement, deviation), time (barbarism, darkness), ethics (anomaly, mask, disguise), and vision (ostentatiousnes, invisibility). *Maghrebi* and Arab feminist debates have tended to consolidate definitions of Islamic dress in the Moroccan press. As I mentioned earlier, I have attempted to highlight some of the most significant differences among the different associations of the veil. My analysis, however, does not claim to be comprehensive, and it is equally important to acknowledge that, although I have drawn out some differences from my particular study, the picture of the veil is also more nuanced and its meanings more complex and ambivalent.

8.2.Implications of Study

What is the significance of a comparative study of Islamic dress in the media? And what are some of the implications of my research and the importance of such a study for Islamic/Muslim postcolonial feminism in the contemporary times? Before considering this question, I first turn to Heidi Safia Mirza's (2009) notion of 'embodied intersectionality' to reflect on how my research has enabled me to develop my own understanding of the veil through Muslim and Islamic postcolonial feminism.

In their study of the gendered and social construction of Muslim women in schools, Heidi Safia Mirza and Veena Meetoo use the concept of intersectionality which refers to 'the interaction between gender, race and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies, and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power'. (Davis quoted in (Mirza & Meetoo, 2013, p. 130)) The epistemological concept of intersectionality represents a useful tool

to think about my particular study of the veil, as it allows for considering Islamic dress (and the category of the *Muslimah*) through the 'interaction' of diverse categories of difference such as race, gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity and class. An analysis of the veil in media and politics necessitates investigating how various intersecting dimensions continuously construct the dress past and present. Indeed, as my study of Islamic dress has illustrated, the construction of the veil, as demonstrated through texts across time and space, depends upon the 'intersection' of different categories such as politics, sex, race and ethics as the *Muslimah*'s body is scripted in terms of a multi-dimensional and 'intersectional' otherness. The body of the *Muslimah muhajjabah, munaqqaba or mujalbaba*, is similarly written through powerful media and political discourses which continually construct her in essentialist terms.

The construction of the veil which comes under the examined political, sexual, ethical and socio-cultural realms illustrates the extent to which the veiled *Muslimah* figures as an object of discourses which have not only 'politicised', 'sexualised' and 'racialised', but also 'ethnicised' and even 'culturalised' her. The media and politics play a crucial role in these processes, not only in Muslim-minority, but also in Muslim-majority contexts. The gender difference symbolised by the veil (as a gendered sign) is therefore complicated and run through by other categories of difference which contribute to retaining the position of the veiled *Muslimah* as a political, sexual, racial, ethnic, religious and cultural threat.

Moreover, theorising the veil at the intersection of these dimensions opens up the possibility of considering the dress not only at the level of media and political discourses, which exercise power through constructing the veil, but also within the framework of 'how [intersectionality] is experienced at the micro level of young women's lives' (Mirza & Meetoo, 2013, p. 129). As a *Muslimah muhajjaba* living in the West, I am also affected by these constructions through embodying the material veil in the shape of a *hijab*. My politics of location, which I detailed in my introduction,

is hence complicated by my location at the intersection of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class and religion which all interact in defining me as a *Muslimah muhajjaba*. As my study of the veil has demonstrated, reading the veil through texts also constitutes a step towards resisting such discourses.

A consideration of intersectionality in the context of constructions of the veil in contemporary media and politics additionally draws our attention to how power traverses the relations among categories such as race, gender, sexuality and ethics. Yet, recognising the significance of this power in terms of building and maintaining discourses of fear and threat around such figures as the veiled *Muslimah* should not overlook the importance of *Muslimat's* agency in resisting and countering these structures of power. In her article about Muslim women in Britain and their narratives of identity and belonging, Heidi Safia Mirza (2013) argues that the concept of 'embodied intersectionality' allows an 'understanding of how power is written through and within the raced and sexed body', and offers a theoretical framework elucidating Muslim women's agency which 'continually challenges and transforms hegemonic discourses of race, gender and religion'. Just as my study of the veil has elucidated the power inherent in retaining the construction of the veiled *Muslimah* in essentialist and 'other' terms, it has equally highlighted the importance of countering that power by *Muslimat* who are also politicised, sexualised, racialised and even culturalised in their individual and respective experiences of the veil. Countering such homogenisations amounts to resisting the power of discourses, such as the media and political ones in my study, in erasing the complexities of women's experiences and the various potential embodiments of Islamic dress. As Mirza and Meetoo point out, in the context of intersectionality, we can expose how 'gendered raced and classed structures of dominance and power shape Muslim women's gendered subjectivity and experiences' (Mirza & Meetoo, 2013, pp. 142-143). My own embodied history of the veil remains important for my research. As a *Muslimah muhajjaba*, I have also come to learn about how the veil represents a heavily loaded signifier through my own embodied experience of the *hijab*.

As a framework for study and analysis, embodied intersectionality provides a route through which I can, as a *Muslimah muhajjaba* myself, intervene and challenge the more contemporary discourses which continue to 'otherise' *Muslimat* through different categories. As Mirza convincingly states, we can 'methodologically operationalise intersectionality' in order to 'map the effect of gendered and raced Islamophobic discourses (Mirza, 2013). The concept of intersectionality allows me to reflect on how power can be exercised through maintaining the difference of the veil in Orientalist, colonial and postcolonial times. It further provides the opportunity to draw the outcomes and consequences of Islamophobic discourses 'as lived in and through Muslim women's embodied subjectivities' (Mirza, 2013). As far as my research is concerned, following the veil through texts provided me with a way of understanding how the various constructions of Islamic dress compare across different axes of power on the one hand, and how I, as a *Muslimah muhajjaba*, am living the impact of these axes through my own embodied experience of a *Muslimah*. How do I experience the concept of intersectionality as a *Muslimah* who embodies modesty through the *hijab*? As I already noted, I argued that the construction of the *Muslimah* in the contemporary media in France and Morocco demonstrates how the process of essentialising and othering Islamic dress operates through a chain of often more implicit web of embedded connotations and references which accompany textual and linguistic representations of the dress. What 'embodied intersectionality' allows us is to consider how the intersection of gender, sex, race, ethnicity, and ethics define Islamic dress through various histories and geographies. The veil is thus located at the crossroads of these dimensions, and is traversed by their power. As a *Muslimah muhajjaba* who has and still lives in and through various 'worlds', I recognise the significance of both engaging with and resisting hegemonic discourses that persist constructing the *Muslimah* in essentialist and 'other' terms, both in Muslim and non-Muslim contexts.

My comparative study of Islamic dress in the Moroccan and French media and politics emphasised the importance of considering such complex objects as the veil from a

cross-cultural, cross-historical and cross-spatial dimensions. Due to the impact of the media in building understandings of various phenomena, the construction of meanings acquires a particular importance at a time when Muslims have become a focal point of attention. It demonstrates how Islamic dress specifically figures as a fundamental tool and technique for othering, and maintaining Orientalist and neo-colonial depictions of the veiled *Muslimah*. As I argued, it is remarkable to notice how the movement of the veil from Orientalist and *Nahda* times and contexts to postcolonial media spaces and times has been accompanied with a movement of meanings historically attached to the veil. My research demonstrates how recent texts reiterate historical associations of the veil on the one hand, and reinvigorate them with additional references and meanings on the other hand. It additionally highlights the ways in which Orientalist constructions of Islamic dress are not a 'European' or 'Western' phenomenon, but also one that exists in Muslim-majority frameworks, as is the case with Moroccan publications and the *Nahda*.

In relation to Islamic and Muslim feminisms, my study represents an attempt to intervene in discourses of the veil which limit it to an essence (Islamist, fundamentalist, oppressive, etc). It offers a vision of the veil from a *Muslimah muhajjaba*'s perspective. Also, as a theory that seeks to promote women's rights and gender justice from an Islamic perspective and challenge patriarchal readings, my study which has relied on Islamic and Muslim feminism sought to question texts and its constructions of the veiled body in both Muslim and non-Muslim contexts. From an Islamic feminist postcolonial perspective, my work represents an attempt towards understanding how and why texts matter, and how meanings of the veil past and present demonstrate the persistent and ongoing difference and otherness of Islamic dress, and its Orientalist and neo-colonial histories.

My comparative media study of Islamic dress has also contributed to developing my understanding of Muslim feminism as a theory that is significant in intervening into

racialising, sexualising, politicising discourses of the *Muslimah*'s body. Although such a focus has been a characteristic amongst Muslim feminists, Islamic feminism has tended to focus on religious texts and scriptures. My work sought to position a middle passage between the essentialising construction to which the *Muslimah* is subject through media discourses on Islamic dress, and a reading of texts from an Islamic feminist perspective. My reading of texts is therefore part of strategy to question existing discourses that maintain the difference and otherness of the *Muslimah* through the veil. This reading is, however, also undertaken from a *Muslimah muhajjaba*'s perspective, and although reliant primarily on Muslim feminism, nonetheless departs from an Islamic perspective. I am reading from the perspective of a *Muslimah muhajjaba*h and a Muslim believer who embodies and lives the *hijab*. With its focus on discourse and language, my study points to the importance of the media and text in building and maintaining understandings of the *Muslimah*'s Islamic dress.

Through the stories/histories of the veil across time and space, I argue that the otherness, difference and essence embodied by the veil and reading the veil through time and space provides an understanding of how its otherness gets renewed and revived in the contemporary media. My study foregrounds the significance of considering Islamic dress not only in terms of a difference constructed in political, sexual, ethical and racial terms, but also in relation to space, time and emotion. At another level, with the increasing Islamophobia and focus of the media on the figure of the 'Muslim' and '*Muslimah*', paying close attention to the histories and repetitions becomes an important step towards building an understanding of how and why the threat that is perceived to emanate from Muslims can be used to maintain Islamic dress within an essential difference that becomes repeated in various frameworks. Furthermore, an understanding of the current postcolonial media in both Muslim majority and minority contexts necessitates a consideration of the veil through history.

From an Islamic postcolonial feminist perspective, my study further seeks to challenge the long feminist histories attempting to 'save Muslim/ Third World/other women'. The media texts in both Moroccan and French cases, as well as Orientalist and *Nahda* writings resound with this concept of saving *Muslimah*s from their state. In the contemporary Islamophobic context, it becomes even more important to question scripts about the *Muslimah* which repeat, albeit with a difference, the otherness of Islamic dress in its various forms, as well as reinforce the images of the veiled *Muslimah* as a victim in need of saving.

8.3.Potential Directions for Further Research

My research touches upon the broader issue of Islamophobia (anti-Muslim racism or prejudice) and what I term 'veilphobia' (phobia of Islamic dress) not only in a Muslim-minority context (France), but also in Muslim-majority context (as is the case in Morocco, the *Maghreb* and the *Mashreq*). In addition to its alleged absence in Muslim contexts, my focus on this transposed or imported Islamophobia in both contexts constitutes an attempt to tackle the issue both inside and outside the Western context, and to assess its impact on Muslim contexts of parts of the Moroccan print media and the Arab *Nahda*. This difference in focus also enables us to map the influence of neo-colonial discourses in postcolonial frameworks. My study can additionally be placed within wider issues of the politics of the veil in an era governed by dichotomies between religion and secularism, Islam and the West, and the heightened threat that 'Islam', as an often homogenised and constructed concept, is said to represent not merely to Western nations, but also to Muslim-majority frameworks. Other potential areas related to my research include freedom of dress and religion, women's and minority rights in Western and Muslim contexts, and issues of immigration and Muslim diasporas in Europe. My project contributes to breaking the barriers often set between different geographic and socio-political frameworks by including a comparative study of associations through the examples of France and Morocco, the *Maghreb* and the *Mashreq*, Orientalism, colonialism and the *Nahda* periods.

Although the veil has been the subject of extensive research, my comparative focus and media analysis through a trans-historical, transnational and transcultural approach alongside my focus on an Arabic and French material introduces a diverse perspective on the study of the veil in a postcolonial context, due to the lack of studies which consider the veil within such comparative frameworks with a focus on media. While my study does not claim to be comprehensive, potential avenues for further research on the Islamic veil include comparative studies of the veil within countries other than France and Morocco. Tunisia and Turkey, for instance, have witnessed significant debates on the veil, which make them equally significant sites for the study of Islamic dress. My own focus has been on secular materials and how they construct Islamic dress, yet a potential route for future research could consider a comparison between secular and religious discourses of Islamic dress in both Muslim-majority and minority contexts. Further studies would consider the veil within other historical eras and media. Potential media for research on the veil include television, radio, film and the expanding cyberspaces that are increasingly transforming religious discourses within a globally connected world, breaking boundaries and traditional frontiers.

As I hope my study has illustrated, undertaking a comparative focus of the veil allows a broadening of our perspective to consider this dress through various historical and spatial frameworks. Further research on Islamic dress could therefore consider including comparisons of different contexts. Additionally, other types of methodologies would be equally important in contributing to a deeper understanding of how the veil is constructed through various discourses, and how the politics of the veil operates in different contexts. Additional qualitative research of Islamic dress could include interviews or focus groups with *Muslimat*, with perhaps a focus on their perceptions and experiences of the media, and their particular reception of such media.

My research has demonstrated how language, as a complex network of codes, has been used in order to disseminate, perpetuate and maintain the veil within the parameters of a renewed and readopted threat across time and space. The comparative focus of my study allowed me to broaden my research scope to include not only Orientalist and colonial histories, but also Arab *Nahda* and *Maghrebi* feminist writings, along with the more contemporary French and Moroccan material from the press. The comparative dimension of my study has further allowed me to acknowledge structural continuities which maintain different forms of Islamic dress within particular ideologies, as well as spot the differences that show how anti-veil rhetoric fluctuates through various contexts. Both my focus on the print media and the comparative dimensions have, I hope, enabled me to provide a contribution to the already extensive literature on the topic, and contributed to the efforts of Islamic postcolonial and feminist gestures aiming at challenging and questioning contemporary Orientalist and neo-colonial representations of the othered *Muslimah*. I would like to end this conclusion with Spivak's statement 'If in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow' (Spivak, 1994, p. 104). My research represents an endeavour to take this female out of the shadow. As a *Muslimah muhajjaba* speaking in the global postcolonial context, my responsibility lies not only in forging a space for this subaltern *Muslimah* to speak and have a voice, but also to unsettle the very structures of domination and power that maintain her within the bounds of a object of construction rather than a subject of deconstruction. Embodying the veil at various junctures thus also entails becoming a site of resistance.

9. **Bibliography**

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