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THE ETHICS OF REPRESENTATION:
MUSLIM WOMEN REENACTING AND RESISTING WHITENESS

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of Arts and Humanities

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Haneen Shafeeq Ghabra

June 2017

Advisor: Bernadette Marie Calafell

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ABSTRACT

This study examines Muslim women's performances and embodiment of White femininity. It addresses invisibility/visibility and problematic rhetorical constructs for re-securing and replicating White femininity, which in turn reasserts White masculinity as the dominant ideological structure in service of Whiteness. To be exact, the aim is to specifically focus on how Whiteness travels globally through Muslim bodies and subjects who speak the language of the imperialist and not the vernacular. This language of the imperialist is also the language of heteronormativity, class, and educational privilege. These intersections are not stand-alone categories but instead seep into one another in the service of Whiteness. The study performs an archetypal criticism, a method that examines controlling archetypes emerging from the Western Media. Three archetypes for Muslim women are identified in this study: The Oppressed, The Advocate, and the Humanitarian Leader. Through an intersectional feminist ethic the study concludes by offering further directions for understanding and naming moments when marginalized persons embody privileged identities.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Erasing Our Identities

We call out

Distress Agony

Vulnerable hands reaching out towards you

Helpless Victims

You grab our hands

Ethical Discoveries

Epiphanies

Moralities

wrapped in epistemology and ontology inquiries

Identities

Complexities

Disabilities

Femaleness

Brownness

Fatness

Queerness

Transness

Fear of the Other

We call out

Distress

Agony

Vulnerable hands reaching out towards you

Helpless Villains

Others

You don't grab our hands

Alterity

Alienation

Suffocation

Anti-Identity Scholarship



Trying to fight back tears as I read an email from a College of Arts and Culture in Bethlehem, Palestine, inviting me to attend a Resistance Conference, I realized that my academic investments come from sites of pain. These sites of pain are spaces of contestation and grievance over the wounds of occupation in my country of origin, Palestine. I had never been to occupied Palestine and so this email was an invitation to allow me to face the loss of an anguished community. As I dwelled over the invitation for hours, feelings of resistance and worry came to the fore. I wasn't ready to face the pain my community was going through. I wasn't ready to confront the Israeli Defense Forces. In addition, the conference was in May and I was supposed to be TAing and teaching my own few weeks of Arab feminisms in my advisor's classroom. This would mean I would miss a week and a half of class. I started to worry as this class was one of the core classes that I had been waiting to TA. I wanted young college students to understand the complexity and chaoticness surrounding the way the West portrays Muslim women. I needed them to be able to deconstruct archetypes of Muslim women that are being used by the West to further political and economic agendas.

My heart started to race as I picked up the phone and called my father telling him I was being invited to the conference and that they would pay for my accommodation as well as produce a publication out of the paper. As he encouraged me to attend, I realized that my heart was racing in fear of hegemonic structures and in fear of facing the pain of setting foot on a homeland that once belonged to my ancestors. In my mind I started to practice performances of Whiteness, as I knowingly would have to pass through Israeli customs in order to enter occupied Palestine. I would walk up to the officer and tell him

that the goal of my academic work is to save Muslim women from their oppression. Being that the officer is probably a product of a hegemonic structure he would most likely enjoy listening to negative stereotypes about our culture. I would then tell him that I was there to present on terrorism and how we can solve this and follow the West and Israel as an example of success. My heart raced faster, I remembered the story of my father's friend and how they confiscated his laptop with all the information in it. What if they read this introduction? Would they send me back? Would they detain me there? Will my Kuwaiti passport protect me? Clouds of emotions overcame me as I came to the reconciliation that I had the ability to perform Whiteness because I study it for a living. When I refer to Whiteness I am speaking of a system of power that privileges performances of Western civility through a White/Anglo-Saxon learning. This includes racial superiority, such as favoring philosophies and performances of both the White people and those who re-perform and re-secure it adequately. It is also a system that secures and further produces patriarchy, heteronormativity, privilege positionalities, and the scripted standard norm for "acceptable" performances (Calafell, "Performing the Responsible" 73). These "standard" performances could include the embodiment of the following privileges: educated, White, male, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied, thin-bodied, Christian, upper-middle class, stereotypically attractive, and so forth.

Through my intersectional training in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Denver I delved deeper into ideologies of Whiteness and performances of femininity and masculinity. I soon became heavily invested in intersectionality, which asks us to consider how all of our identities come together

simultaneously shape our lived experiences within structures of power. Intersectionality also asks us to recognize how we may occupy both spaces of privilege and marginalization. I more fully address intersectionality in Chapter Two. I grew angrier as I watched the media and popular culture create archetypes of Muslim women in an attempt to speak “for” instead of “with” these women (Alcoff, “The Problem of Speaking” 6). When we speak “for” another positionality our social identities have a massive impact on our claims and can authorize or disauthorize one’s speech (Alcoff 7). Even further, speaking “for” the Other becomes a way the speaker re-inscribes hierarchical structures (29). Identity becomes key when we privilege a Western understanding of the self when also speaking “for” the Other. This is due to the fact that the Western concept of the self in relation to the Other is a subjectivity based on Whiteness in the service of White people. Therefore, it reduces Other identities to the status of object (Alcoff, *Visible Identities* 57). Therefore, identity and location become crucial when speaking for or/and about Others. Location becomes epistemologically vital and privileged locations become dangerous. In other words, we cannot only look at the location of the speaker, but must also look at where the speech will go, and what affects it will have. Alcoff raises the question, “Can a White woman speak for all women simply by virtue of being a woman? If not, how narrowly should we draw the categories” (“The Problem of Speaking” 7). This is crucial in understanding our positionalities as researchers and how reflexivity becomes central to a research project. This is also central in understanding the ethical predicaments that occur through representation in the media and popular culture. As the

field of ethics centers around a Western concept of the self, ethics becomes defined by Whiteness.

As I dug further throughout my studies, I kept track of different archetypes that the Western media was creating “for” my community. I watched Hillary Clinton, Liz Cheney, George Bush Sr., and Barbara Bush speak “for” Third World women and Muslim women. However, it was much more complex than that. Even though I was engaging in decolonizing thought processes, there were times that I needed to critique my own patriarchal communities, but would refrain in fear that I would open a door for Whiteness to seep in and re-inscribe itself. However, I couldn’t just give the men in my own communities a free pass due to the fact that we suffered the same racial oppression as people of color. I would need to find a way to do it without reinforcing White constructs and archetypes of Muslim women that were in need of saving.

I write this because these narratives are a site of contestation for myself and for Other women around the world who struggle between the West and East. As Middle Eastern feminists we struggle through what I have termed, Intersectional Dualism or Binary where we face double the work of critiquing our own patriarchal struggles and Whiteness simultaneously (Ghabra, “Through My Own Gaze” 15). This is no unique phenomenon as Other scholars have voiced this struggle (Anzaldúa; Holling and Calafell; Moraga). It is not an easy task as it creates a demarcation between us (women of color) and both White and male communities. What becomes even more vivid is that the lines dividing “us” and “them” aren’t always so clear all the time. At times people of color embody Whiteness through the abjection of the self. This in turn, reinforces performances

of White femininity and/or White feminism through Other bodies that are not necessarily White.

For this reason this study is geared towards examining the invisibility/visibility and problematic rhetorical constructs for re-securing and replicating White femininity, which in turn reasserts White masculinity as the dominant ideological structure in service of Whiteness. To be exact, the aim is to specifically focus on how Whiteness travels globally through Muslim bodies and subjects who speak the language of the imperialist and not the vernacular. This imperialistic language is the language of heteronormativity, class, and educational privilege. These intersections are not stand-alone categories but instead seep into one another in the service of Whiteness. This study problematizes women who speak for their own communities that operate in Western binaries because they negate their own communities. It is important to note that while I refer to these women as Muslim I am identifying these women as Muslim, but also recognizing that they are at times rejecting Islam. I am also speaking of “Muslim” as a cultural phenomenon and not necessarily a religious one. Many women identify as Muslim culturally and not necessarily as religious. By looking at Muslim communities, I allow a more accurate and elaborate analysis as a Muslim identified woman.

Through the performance and rhetorical elements of discourse, this study aims to explore and resolve a number of pressing research questions around rhetorical constructs. How are Muslim women internalizing and reproducing Whiteness in moments of speaking “for” their own communities and how does this contribute to dominant/hegemonic media discourses? In what ways has their embodied discourse

demonstrated an internalized desire for Whiteness by moving towards White femininity and feminism and away from their own identities? How are White femininity and White masculinity re-secured and replicated but also resisted through Muslim femininity? Even further, how are we colonized and how can we move beyond this towards a feminist ethic?

These questions directly relate to my positionality as a researcher because of my salient location, of being an Arab Muslim woman who has been Western educated. For years, my body was the Muslim carrier of White femininity. I adopted, enacted and performed White femininity and White feminism on a daily basis. My personal narrative fuels the study with a unique perspective in delving deeper into how hegemonic structures and performances of Whiteness are carried through our bodies. Like Anzaldúa, I remain “sandwiched between two cultures” (100), attempting to critique my own performances, but being setback by the pervasiveness of Whiteness. Therefore, my positionality allows me to undertake a project that is of great need in the field of Communication Studies. Furthermore, this project adds value to the field because there remains a massive lack of scholarship on how “Other” femininities sustain and embody White femininities. Therefore this study is also an attempt to move beyond just studying White femininity and masculinity to studying how Muslim women or women of color at large reveal deeper complexities in today’s foreign policy and in today’s hegemonic structures. Therefore, it is integral to understand that even though I am looking at “Muslim” communities I am more interested in how women of color at large are embodying White femininity. I use the term Muslim women for identification purposes;

however, this study could be applied to women of color at a general level and how they internalize and reproduce White femininity, feminism and masculinity. I conduct this through the research of archetypes of prominent Muslim women that circulate in the media and that are carriers of White femininity and White feminism. Therefore, in order to understand the underpinnings of this study, it is vital to map out the ethical and historical contexts and genealogy of archetypes.

An Understanding of Ethics

In order to understand and map out the ethical implications of Muslim women archetypes, it is important to map out the history of how the general field of ethics was created around Western concept of the self, ethics becomes defined by Whiteness. As marginalized identities begin to embody privileged identities, they do so through concept of the self in relation to the Other. This relational binary, developed for the global society, was developed by White men and therefore applies to only White men.

In the field of ethics, there is debate as to whether ethics is subjective or objective (Singer 4). Those in favor of objectivity for instance, state that reason guides our ethical conduct. This school of thought is empirically and epistemologically grounded and rejects the connection between feelings and ethics. Plato for instance, states that ethics is with the advantage of the stronger party, for instance this could be the government. Morality prevails is what is considered advantageous to the government. Therefore, one's ethos prevails by following what the government has laid out as moral conduct (Plato 23). Similarly, Kant concludes that we are subject to our own moral laws (39). On the

other hand, Marx notes that ethics is built into the economic arrangements that humans are part of (18).

However, another direction that ethics has taken is the ethos of subjectivity. Unlike ethics as objectivity, ethics is based on the emotive (Singer 8). Intuition becomes the leading guide of morality and truth can be reached by intuition (9). Hume for instance has suggested that morality is in the feeling (37). Mencius echoes Hume's claim that men will be guided by their feelings as what to do in times of danger (28). However, Hobbes claims that ethics is suspended during wartime (33). While Gilligan follows by stating that women are ethically different than men (56).

My point in providing this brief overview of ethics is that each and every theory mentioned above fails to consider the intersections of race, sexism, classism, and so forth. The subjectivity of an ethos allows us to be guided by our feelings without even considering identity and how identity can affect subjectivity. Similarly, a more objective ethics dwells around epistemological claims but pretends identity does not exist. I argue here that due to a lack of reflexive intersectionality and the positionalities of these Western White male theorists, a massive gap was left open which today has been translated into areas of marginalization. Whether morality is left in the hands of the government (ironically power structures) or the individual (who could be a product of power structures), there certainly is no morality in the field of ethics. For instance, Mencius claims our feelings will guide us no matter what. So if a soldier kills a Palestinian child at a checkpoint, are they still acting from a standpoint of morality

because their feelings guided them? Gilligan on the other hand, essentializes all women regardless of race, class or sexual Orientation, into one category.

This is problematic because it leaves absolutely no room for intersectionality, for identity, and for marginalized groups such as women of color to build a feminist ethic (and the LGBTQ community, who were also left out of this literature). Even further, it reveals that because of the pervasive nature of Whiteness and Westernization, archetypes that circulate in Western media will only be portrayed through a Western concept of the self, creating an ethical dilemma of representation for these images.

Archetypes: Mapping out a Historical Context

Images that circulate throughout the media are defined by Anglo-Saxon norms of democracy (Collins 7). While White Western concepts define these archetypes, the media sets the foundation for these standards to emerge and circulate. Thus, archetypes become the vehicles that spread White Western norms throughout the globe. When I refer to archetypes I am speaking of a recurring character in cultural narratives in the media and popular culture. These narratives, that have an identification appeal allow us to see ourselves as characters of a larger story. These archetypes are a deep faceted standard that sustains hegemonic dominance. It differs from a stereotype and image in that it can reach both an unconscious level and is hidden in plain sight. However, it is the same in that it is a stereotype and a controlled image simultaneously.

Patricia Hill Collins examined archetypes as controlling images that were designed to sustain racism, sexism and poverty while appearing under the guise of “normal” (77). The archetypes of Black women began in the slave era and continue

today. They continue to morph with the times. While White women were known to uphold piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity, Black women were defined through more negative connotations (79).

Black women are stereotypically portrayed as either mummies, matriarchs, welfare recipients and hoochies. As the “Others” of society who can never belong they belong by being Otherized (Collins 77). One way in achieving this is by creating binaries similarly to what I discussed earlier where the Other is always in relation to the self binary created for White individuals. For example, Collins asks us to think of the binary White/Black, male/female, straight/queer. In these binaries, the Other is always in a position of no power: Black, female, queer. Difference becomes defined in oppositional terms and this objectification becomes central to oppositional thinking because one side becomes Otherized and therefore objectified (78). Collins asserts this is how one side of the binary is made to control the Other. This study extends Collins controlling images of Black women into Muslim women and archetypes.

The archetypes operate through apparatuses such as schools, media, governments and popular culture (Collins 93). These edifices sustain, control and reproduce these images. Where of course there are instances of resistance such as in universities where women can challenge these images, these same institutions also teach women to learn their subordinate positions. Within the binary thinking are beauty standards such as White vs. Black. Color hierarchies are embedded into the system where Latinas, Asian-American, Native American, and I would add Middle Easterners, remain in the middle of this spectrum because of their brown skin (98). For example think of the story of “Snow

White” or Whitening creams that are popular in third world countries. Standards of beauty become impossible to deconstruct and escape and remain wedged into the global system.

These very same standards of beauty and Whiteness are also embedded into our understanding of pedagogy, history and engender the Anglo-Saxon point of view. It is important to understand that the Anglo-Saxon view is not a point of view that is wrong, but becomes wrong when it constructs archetypes of Other communities. This same point of view seeps into our both our theoretical and activist frameworks around feminism. As I have mentioned earlier, for years I embodied White western feminism. This is due to the fact that this is the only feminism that we hear of throughout the media, popular culture, and through education.

White Western Feminism

Western (White) feminism is based in the idea that sexes were both biologically and culturally created (Baumgardner and Richards 50). The concept of feminism developed as means to cater to each and every politically and conscious individual whose goal was to work for equality whether inside or outside the movement (54). Second wave feminism, was a movement in the name of White middle class women who wanted meaningful work (73). Foust and Simon illustrate that post feminist discourses have been a conservative attempt to reflect back on the memories of second wave feminism (2). While feminism has been framed in waves, that often construct White feminists as enlightened activists who create spaces for women of color, scholars such as May and

Collins have argued that women of color have been feminist activists alongside White women for decades.

U.S. feminists developed two sites of argument: rights and virtue. Virtue was the concept that women were different than men. While rights, was the notion that men and women were equal. However, feminine virtue symbolized White upper class women who were in a relationship to the “non-White” Other. This very same virtue was also in relation to masculinity and Whiteness (Rogness and Foust 152).

For this reason, when I refer to White western feminism, I am speaking of a universalized feminism that has emerged out of Whiteness and is the prevailing feminism we hear of throughout apparatuses such as the media, popular culture, education and so forth. This White feminism and femininity reproduces White patriarchy (Shome, “White Femininity and the Discourse of the Nation” 323). Additionally, when I refer to intersectional feminism I refer to feminism that was birthed out from of the grounds of women of color in the United States who felt left out of mainstream feminism. I will go into this in more detail in the next chapter.

I also build upon the term White femininity as an extension of White patriarchy (Moon, “Critical Reflections” 179). White women are taught to reproduce the White patriarchal gaze and align themselves with White hegemony and supremacy (182). I define White femininity as the ability to extend and circulate the reach of Whiteness and White patriarchy. Performances of White femininity can be replicated through the modernity, hegemonic civility, and by privileging heterosexuality, White feminism, class privilege, and so forth. For instance, White feminism is a product of White femininity.

Putting this into context, many archetypes today are a direct product of power structures. White women's agency enables them to speak publically as equals, centering ethos around feminine virtue. The notion of centering the ethos sets up high credibility for who is speaking or performing White femininity. This discursive space is largely defined by White norms of democracy and freedom. However, this is permitted and spread by women as public actors of all feminist movements. The White audience in particular, already accepts these so they are persuasive. Therefore, one can only imagine the repercussions when a gendered performance deviates away from the "norm". If this deviation contradicts the norm, negative archetypes are produced and reproduced by the media and popular culture. However, what happens when these archetypes reproduce and center the positionality of White Western feminism? What happens when a women of color sustains these archetypes? Do these women break away from the standard White feminine archetypes in moments of disidentification?

Even though this study argues that the archetypes I am looking at embody and reproduce White femininity and/or feminism, there are moments where these women also occupy a third space, called disidentification. By looking at this through a much broader brushstroke, performances of dominant structures do not necessarily operate in an unequivocal binary. Muñoz asserts that performances are not necessarily with or against hegemonic structures but instead occupy a third space, disidentification (5). The concept of disidentification is a mode of survival in which subjects work both within and outside hegemonic spheres. Not only is disidentification a way of resistance but can also be a means to conform (5). It is important to note that Munoz proposes disidentification as a

strategy for queers of color; however I use it for non-queer individuals due to the fact that they also occupy a marginalized identity and struggle between resistance and conformity. As a survival strategy, performances of disidentification create social relations that become a new roadmap for minoritarian counterpublic spheres (5). As marginalized people engage in a fierce and exhausting tug-of-war between working with and/or resisting dominant identities, those who assimilate become “good subjects” while those who resist become marked as “bad subjects” (11). However, disidentification becomes an alternative way in which subjects neither resist nor conform (11). Disidentification is “Hermeneutic, a process of production and a mode of performance” (25). It is also about “Recycling and rethinking encoded meaning” (31). It is also a structure of feeling that works to tap into energies produced by ambivalence (71).

As identity performance becomes a constant struggle for those that embody Whiteness, masculinity and heteronormativity, it is in those spaces of tension where we as researchers can identify moments between performance of identity as a fixed self and as societal constructed roles. It is vital to note, that I am not in anyway trying to condemn or relegate the women that I aim to research, but instead am mapping out an understanding of both the ethical complexity of performances of White femininity by women of color and problematizing the spaces in which White femininity and feminism dominates these performances. My end goal is to move beyond spaces of colonization whether through assimilation, resistance, or disidentification and to spaces where you, the reader can deconstruct these moments when witnessing them in popular culture or the media. When we are better able to critically identify moments in which power structures

take over, we will also be able to build awareness, mobilize and create change within societies.

On these grounds, this study will first lay out the theoretical and methodological frameworks for deconstructing performances of three archetypes. The next chapter, “Understanding the Postcolonial and Performance through Whiteness and Intersectionality” addresses postcolonial methodologies that specifically attend to issues of Whiteness as an ideological system. This is overlaid with theories of intersectionality that are integral to systems of privilege and oppression. I aim to explore and address how systems of ideology and hegemony such as Whiteness work and how decolonial and postcolonial theory is an art of speaking back to systems. By looking at this through an intersectional lens I am better able to deconstruct Muslim women’s archetypes across the interstices of gender, race, sexuality, and class. In this chapter, I also delve into Muslim feminism and its tensions.

My rhetorical analysis focuses on three distinct archetypes that have become global archetypes in both the media and popular culture. While Other archetypes do exist I have limited them to three distinct communities: The Oppressed, The Advocates and the Humanitarian Leaders.

When I refer to rhetoric in this study, I follow Wanzer-Serrano in defining rhetoric as “The study of situated public discourses” (15). He asserts that the discursive is always the product of context, and therefore cannot be separated. For this reason it is vital to follow texts, images, and discourses as clusters (16). Additionally, I refer to the concept of agency as the ability for an individual to express his/her own thoughts and

actions. For instance, dominant ideologies such as Whiteness govern how much an agent can or cannot have over his or her thoughts and/or decisions.

In Chapter Three, “Malala Yousafzai: The Oppressed Muslim Woman and the Search for Agency”, I focus on the Community of the Oppressed through the performances of Malala Yousafzai, a young fifteen-year-old girl, who was highly active within the issues of education in Pakistan and frequently blogged about it. Malala has become a bodily symbol whose story travels intersectionally through a multiplicity of mediums. Like Other oppressed women, Malala is able to sustain White femininity through her negation of Muslim women. It is in the moments of these rhetorical acts that colonialism is further produced, Muslim femininity sustains it and women of color remain stuck in a universalistic binary. However, I also aim to identify moments in which Malala disidentifies with hegemonic structures. This chapter is focused on Malala’s speech to the United Nations because of her salient location that has transitioned her positionality as a “spokesperson” for young Muslim women. Therefore, I trace and deconstruct her performance in delivering the speech.

In Chapter Four, “Ayaan Hirsi Ali: The Advocate and the Rejection of Islam”, I center the Advocates as my focal point of research. I channel this through Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s book, *Infidel*, which, is an autobiography about a woman who manages to escape genital mutilation and the brutalities of Islam. By becoming a well-known writer and a member of the Dutch parliament she has become a leading example for women around the globe. This chapter problematizes the rhetoric of Ayaan Hirsi Ali and her written performances of heterosexual White femininity. Advocates and women of color feminists

that operate from a White Western framework often embody the positions of the colonial subject and unknowingly spread the very same ideologies that have harmed them in the first place. As they speak out in the name of Muslim communities, they negate their communities in the name of White Western feminism and advocacy. Through a critical reading of Ali's text, I aim to demonstrate and identify the tensions of the embodiment of Whiteness and the implications of credibility when a women of color is speaking "for" her own community.

Centered on the Humanitarian Leaders through Queen Rania of Jordan, Chapter Five, "Queen Rania: The Humanitarian Leader and the search for a Counter-Narrative", addresses the visual discourse of performances of White femininity. Known for her humanitarian efforts, elegance, beauty and modern clothes, Queen Rania has become a global symbol to many. As a symbol of femininity, her voice carries magnitude globally. As a representation of both motherhood and humanity it is important to examine Queen Rania as a site where White femininity is produced, and re-secured globally. For this reason, in this chapter I examine Queen Rania's visual performance through the discourse of visual images. These images have created a plethora of meanings that are very similar to Princess Diana's images. As Queen Rania becomes both a symbol of global motherhood and the nuclear family, her upper class standing intersects with her performances of White femininity, reasserting ideologies of White heteronormativity. As I examine these performances I aim to also identify moments where Queen Rania's performance of White femininity allows her resistance to be more widely accepted due to her embodiment of White femininity.

It is important to note that the archetypes I am addressing are not limited to the oppressed, advocate, and humanitarian leader images. There are Other archetypes that exist such as the exotification of women, such as with the image of the belly dancer who have not only been co-opted by White woman who have adopted the dance, but have been exotified and imperialized through this dance. Belly dancing has become a site where liberal Orientalist perspectives of Muslim and/or Middle Eastern women are being applied and where imperial power is negotiated through the liberation of the body (Maira 322). It is also highly sexualized and exotified. This is similar to the jezebel image of the black woman. Similarly after 9/11 belly dancing has become both hypervisible by White women who are seen as sympathizers of Muslim women (327). While for Middle Eastern women belly dancing is part of a culture and a way of connecting to Other females, the West has exotified it. While I am interested in the study of how images of Muslim women are co-opted by White women and exotified, for the purpose of this study I focus solely on those archetypes that embody White femininity. In a future study, it would be interesting to look at Muslim women archetypes that have been exotified or altered by US imperialism.

Finally, in the Conclusion, “A search for an Intersectional Feminist Ethic”, I discuss the implications of emergent archetypes of gender performances that may be mixing with vernacular elements. This is an archetype that is still being created. There are moments of resistance, of dominance, and of disidentification. I connect this with agency and relate to my own embodiment of femininity. I question the consequences of each archetype and how to move beyond these. I do this by also introducing a feminist ethic as

an undertone that emerges as a result of studying these archetypes. This feminist ethic follows the pathway of intersectionality in order to find better performances of femininity that don't replicate dominance.

In essence resistance and conformity are two sides of the same coin. If we resist the embodiment of White femininity we risk being alienated by dominant structures. This is no easy task as it permeates into the workplace, the global arena, social circles, and so forth. If we conform, we risk losing ourselves. However, if we disidentify, we face the danger of navigating ambivalent spaces. These are uncomfortable spaces where we continuously adapt our performances and reenact them. Together, let's explore the possibilities beyond femininity and into the ambivalent spaces that constantly haunt us as women of color.



Ambivalence

A heavy shadow... A battling phantom... A plague that eats away at us

Haunts us like a ghost

Heavy on our chests creating rapid breaths

Rapid like a wave thrashing against our bones and flesh

The flesh we were born with.. The flesh that we theorize through

The flesh that we dis attached from because of Whiteness's pervasiveness

Amnesia

Creating moments of forgetfulness Removing us from our essence

I realize we must move on... move on from these claustrophobic spaces

It's when the wave hits you that you finally know that you have truly mourned your losses.

The loss of resisting those ambivalent spaces

for without the mourning we can never move on

Mourning the death... the death of certainty

For it is only in the comfort of uncertainty that we can finally break free and

Heal

CHAPTER TWO: UNDERSTANDING THE POSTCOLONIAL AND PERFORMANCE THROUGH WHITENESS AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a Borderland, is what makes poets write and artists create. It is like a cactus needle embedded in the flesh. It worries itself deeper and deeper and I keep aggravating it by poking at it. When it begins to fester I have to do something to put an end to the aggravation and to figure out why I have it. I get deep down into the place where it's rooted in my skin and pluck away at it, playing it like a musical instrument- the fingers pressing, making the pain worse before it can get better. Then out it comes. No more discomfort, no more ambivalence. Until another needle pierces the skin. That's what writing is for me, an endless cycle of making it worse, making it better but always making meaning out of experience, whatever it may be. (Anzaldúa 95)

I begin this chapter with a quote by Anzaldúa because it describes the tensions that people of color and those who occupy Other marginalized identities often face when writing. It creates what Anzaldúa describes as a state of psychic unrest. More than often, the general public is not exposed to critical perspectives, especially when culture becomes the focal point of discussion. In the rare instance that they are (usually in an academic environment), theoretical and methodological frameworks are based out of a Eurocentric canon. This creates both ambivalence and instability for those in marginalized identities who are not exposed to Other frameworks. As we develop ourselves to think critically we must consider the voices, places, and examples we are learning from. Furthermore, we need to find theoretical and methodological havens that will create what Anzaldúa stresses, will make meaning out of experience (95). These havens need to be in synergy with the intersections of our identities. For example, using

theories and methods written by women of color is one way in which we can create meaning out of experience. Without locating these havens, we in turn further distance ourselves from a feminist ethic. Staying close to a feminist ethic means engaging in an intersectional moral system that can assist us in being fully reflexive in the politics of citation and where we choose to locate these theoretical and methodological havens. It is also a way of being fully reflexive of our privileges when speaking to someone in a less advantaged positionality (Ghabra, “Disrupting Oppressed” 12).

In my graduate program it was difficult to locate what hooks defines as a ‘homeplace’; how I make sense of my being in physical, cultural and intellectual spaces (43). Every space I navigated through, taught me critical thinking but nothing felt like a homeplace. It was not until I was exposed to intersectionality and postcolonial theories and methodologies through my advisor Bernadette, that I found my homeplace. I write this, because I firmly believe that intersectionality is one of the only inclusive theoretical frameworks for understanding marginalized and privileged identities. Postcolonial theories further compliment this by being able to interrogate overarching dominant structures. In addition, intersectionality and postcolonial theories are carried on the backs of people of color. They allow us as researchers to also resist Eurocentric canons that have been confining us to unproductive spaces for centuries. As we write through and against these canons, performative writing also becomes integral for embodying the experience of the researcher and relating this experience to the researcher’s audience.

As we dig further into embodiments of White femininity, in this chapter I aim to address tensions within feminisms and their historical contexts, as well as existing

literature on postcolonialism, Whiteness, and intersectionality. As I have mentioned previously, many Muslim feminists face tensions between critiquing their own cultures and Whiteness simultaneously. For this reason I begin this chapter with an overview of the postcolonial context of the tensions around Muslim women, followed by an overview of intersectional feminism. I then introduce postcolonial criticism through theories of Whiteness and archetypal criticism. Finally, I outline the importance of performative writing.

A Post Colonial Overview: The Arab World

For way too long, Muslim women have been used as competing political and economical tools. This has caused a divide between those that are secular and those that identify as Islamic feminists and can be traced back to modernization and colonization. When I refer to Islamic feminists I am referring to those that work within the Islamic framework and within their communities to gain their rights (Cooke “Islamic Feminism” 228). For example, during World War II the U.S. allied with Islamists in Afghanistan in order to fight against the Soviet Union (Kumar 64). After WWII the U.S. started to develop programs to study the Middle East, Asia, Latin American and Near East. Orientalism and modernization were central to these programs. It is important to note that the Reagan administration was interested in freeing the region from consumerism and they supported and became a fundraising source for organizations that were supported by Osama Bin Laden. As a result, thirty-three branches were opened across the United States of America (L. Ahmed, *The Quiet Revolution* 178). These very same Afghan veterans

who were being trained throughout the 1980s and 1990s, would later use these skills against the West from the 1990s and onwards (179).

In the 1980s Israeli right-wingers and neoconservatives began the project of “Islamic terrorism” (Kumar 40). The United States’ politics and the Palestinian/Israeli conflict is what led to a strong divide in the Arab World, as it is a conflict that has had a particular impact on the region because of its imperialist and colonial overlays. The bifurcation of feminisms and divergent modes of thought at large was between anti-occupation and anti-imperialism and between those who approved of modernization and Westernization (L. Ahmed, *The Quiet Revolution* 35). Fanon describes the branch of feminism that is pro-Western as a relationship of inferiority in which the woman of color strives toward Whiteness by rejecting her blackness (*Black Skin* 27). In other words, Muslim feminism has directly blossomed out of the history in the region between the colonial and non-colonial powers. Evidently, Muslim women have become caught at the crossroads between ideologies (Kumar 8). They have been divided into different feminist camps with even more complexities within each camp. Today, secular Muslim feminists borrow from Western feminism in order to produce feminism (Kumar 8). When Muslim women approach feminism from the standpoint of Western feminism, their identity becomes hijacked due to the fact that they have no agency (I will return to this). However, Western feminism has been the only feminism handed down to them in the global arena. For this reason there is a need to study the term secular due to the fact that its meanings has changed over time and in various locations (L. Ahmed, *The Quiet Revolution* 298). For instance, secular was a term for those who did not wear the hijab

and were not Islamist (299). Many secular feminists vocalized their dislike for Islamism (300). State feminism, communism, and Zionism were also among the most hated enemies of Islamism in 70s and onward (301). As secular and Islamic feminists grow farther apart from each other, we again start to lose sight of that intersectional feminist ethic that can instead bring us together by being aware of our differences.

What I have described above has created divergent trajectories for many Muslim/Middle Eastern feminists who oscillate between defending their own women against Western feminism, which directly aids imperialism, and tackling oppression in these very same local-centric communities.

However, Muslim women have different individual experiences and cultural understandings across the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. This is crucial in understanding how Muslim women remain divided and how a certain strand of Muslim women and feminists have been led to believe, by Western feminism, that they are oppressed and in need of saving. This narrative is one that is present in a variety of mediums including speeches by Hillary Clinton (Clinton 2), radio addresses by Laura Bush (Bush 1) and keynote speeches by prominent figures such as Liz Cheney (Cheney 2). These images are present in magazines (Bieber) and a plethora of mediums. This is the only narrative that is present when speaking of Muslim femininity. Thus, the Western press creates international opinion. When a Western journalist interviews a colonized subject, it is rarely done as service to the colonized community (Fanon, *Wretched* 37). Even further, Western interventions have caused hundreds of thousands of deaths while claiming that the West is bringing freedom and women's rights to these Other cultures

(Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving* 114). Simultaneously, abusive behavior gets attributed to culture when it occurs in minority cultures (127). Hence, these women that are in need “of saving” have become victims of the Western binary that also discipline them into re-creating themselves into a Whiter self. As their subjectivity becomes defined by these Western binaries, it becomes even more vital to deconstruct how the embodiment of White femininity becomes both a messy contradiction of assimilation, rejection, and disidentification due to both contradictions within Muslim definitions of feminism and hegemonic Western structures.

When I refer to Western feminism throughout this study my goal is to show how Third World women are continuously codified as either Western or non-Western/women (Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes” 52). If Middle Eastern and Muslim women are constantly essentialized into one category, there remains no need to de-essentialize the category of White Western feminism. If Muslim women are always in relation to Western feminism then their narratives will constantly be in relation to, and therefore in a position of inferiority. This relational dialectic, which is prevalent in most theoretical and academic literature, will always place those in marginalized identities in a zero sum relationship. This is also evident in the field of ethics where the relation of one to the Other is what will determine what is moral or not. I will return to the field of ethics in detail throughout the chapters and in the conclusion. For this reason, narratives of Muslim women are constantly seen as incompetent, oppressed, and in need of saving because they are seen in relation to the dominant structure, meaning White, heterosexual,

male, and so forth. When I refer to Western feminism, I refer to a heteronormative¹ neoliberal universalized feminism that stems out of Whiteness and is the only feminism one hears of throughout institutional structures such as the media.

In this instance by delving into a more elaborate analysis of the historical bifurcation between Muslim communities with hegemonic structures, one may witness a more complex glimpse into the lives of Muslim women. Through the management of dominant discourse, Muslim women have been at the center of negation. By being presented as an invisible exception, they have consistently been used as a tool of negotiation between competing patriarchies (both Middle Eastern and Western) but more particularly, by Western hegemonies. Even further, they have become a tool to further spread and reinstate White patriarchy and White femininity. However, a more critical rethinking of modernity and gender can assist us in reassessing the projects that are shaping women in the Middle East today (Abu-Lughod, “Feminist Longings” 8).

For this reason it is important to situate postcolonialism within a Middle Eastern context in order to reveal a number of complex struggles. Edward Said has made the important point that under Western hegemony emerged an Orient that was suitable for studying (7). This, Said averred, was a style for dominating and establishing continuous authority over the Orient. This style of thought, through an ontological and epistemological distinction, between the “Orient” and the “occident” represented the

¹ Heteronormativity is defined by Gust Yep as “the standard for legitimate, authentic, prescriptive, and ruling social, cultural and sexual arrangements (institutionalized)” (13).

concept of Orientalism, a discourse that was created in uneven exchange with various hegemonic powers (5). Thus, the term Orient was made up of both human effort and partly a process to identify the Other (Said xvii). Orientalism is not only an exercise of cultural strength but is a discourse that is always produced in an uneven exchange and is shaped by political powers (12). It represents the cultural and ideological discourses as modes of discourse through institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery and colonial styles (2). Television, film and the media have standardized these cultural stereotypes (26).

However, Lewis complicates Said's Orientalism even further. She states that most Orientalist images are of women and that the female gaze produced these imperialistic images. She urges scholars to look at Orientalism through the intersections of race and gender (Lewis 3). By focusing only on imperialism, she argues one neglects the importance of focusing on how women were cultural producers and were also affected by colonial ideology (13). By complicating Orientalism through gender and race one can begin to understand how discourses of femininity were attributed to White women built on the basis that they were racially different (15). Lewis asserts that Said fails to question women's absence as producers of Orientalist discourse, resulting in a narrative that depicts women as playing no role in cultural expansion (18). Moreover, she states that the Orient emerged as part of a shared field of critical discourse, making criticism influenced by readers and cultural producers (32). Additionally, Said asserts that two key issues have contributed to perceptions of Arabs and Islam: the tension between the Arabs and Israeli

Zionism and its effects upon American Jews and the globe at large, and the absence of any cultural position making it hard to identify with Arabs or Islam (27).

Orientalist images of Muslim women have always been situated uniquely in which they have become both symbols of identity and objects of negotiation. Feminism has followed closely behind these Orientalist discourses. However, Muslim women's participation in feminist struggles are manifested in a variety of manners. Finally, the role of the West in the question of Muslim women alters and negotiates these debates (Abu-Lughod, "Feminist Longings" 3). In this context we need to interrogate and question the resemblance of colonial discourses with Western feminist discourses.

In order to understand more deeply the colonial context in which women became the center of Western and anti-Western debates, it is important to situate it within Islam. First, women suffered a decline in status with the emergence of urban centers and city-states in around 3500 and 3000 B.C.E. (L. Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* 11). Second, there were both matrilineal and patrilineal systems during the time of the rise of Islam, meaning there was no single fixed institution of marriage (43). Uxorilocal practices trace back to prophet Mohammed's background (43). Prophet Mohammed himself, first married Khadijah who was economically independent, had no male guardian, and was fifteen years older than Prophet Mohammed (5). It was not until her death that he decided to marry more than one woman, all were non virgins, with no stigma attached, with exception to his wife Aisha. Seclusion was introduced by Prophet Mohammed to protect his wives from grabby men who would come to his house for dinner. Veiling was not introduced by him and nowhere in the Qur'an are there explicit

details about women's clothing except that they should guard their private parts and throw a scarf over their bosoms (55). Evidence also suggests that in the first Muslim society women frequently divorced without stigma (75).

Focusing on Islamic feminism as a postcolonial framework for rights, Islamic feminism is defined as the notion that women can work within their communities and towards Islam to gain their rights. Dating back to the 7th century, many women fought side by side with Prophet Mohammed (Cooke, "Islamic Feminism" 228). However, following his death, many claimed that women should be secluded from the public eye, going against parts of the Qur'an that call for all to be active in Islam and bear arms (229). By the 12th and 13th century masculinization rhetorics and interpretations started to take over, associating the term Jihad with fighting non-Muslims and having virgins in the after life as an incentive to fight (230). Additionally, historians have under documented women's participation throughout the history of Islam (230). Women are indeed working within the Islamic framework and are fighting for Jihad by no longer looking at the father, brother, or son as the authority figure but turning to god who supersedes the patriarch when there is danger (232). Through challenging interpretations, that negate and oppress women, they are working within Islamic frameworks to gain their rights. However, their activism is not recognized by the West (234).

Moving in to the period subsequent to colonization, Leila Ahmed suggests that in Egypt for example, women were already being employed, schools were being established, and education was increasing (Women and Gender in Islam 136). When the British occupation began, girls' education decreased due to the British's desire to

capitalize on political and financial gains. In 1881 prior to colonization seventy percent of students received government assistance for education related issues. Ten years later, after the British occupation, seventy-three percent paid all their expenses (337).

As British domination continued, the centrality of women's issues became a focal strategy for the occupiers. Additionally, Muslim men such as Qasim Amin's famous book, *Tahrir Al Mar'a* (The Liberation of Women) became celebrated as the beginning of feminism (L. Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* 145). As men like Qasim Amin began to reflect the internalization of the narrative of the colonizer, they began to be celebrated as feminists. Amin for example, calls for the abolishment of the veil and to change women's customs. His rhetoric reveals that the veil was an obstacle between nation and advancement (160). Leila Ahmed, remarks of this colonial feminism; "Feminism as used against Other cultures in the service of colonialism was shaped into a variety of similar constructs each tailored to fit the particular culture that was the immediate target of domination- India, the Islamic world, sub-Saharan Africa" (151). This new colonial discourse on Islam centered on women by focusing on the veil as a symbol of oppression, which reflected the backwardness of Islamic society.

This rhetoric is indicative of how Western discourse and the centrality of Muslim women in these narratives paved the way for the emergence of resistance movements (L. Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* 164). Additionally, these discourses indicate that those who considered themselves feminists had to vocalize the colonial narrative, while those that resisted colonial narratives were framed as anti-feminists (162). This is similar to the good and bad Muslim narratives in which Muslim women that adopt the secularist

view become defined as the good Muslims and define the bad Muslims (Cooke et. al 113).

Addressing this intersectionally, secular feminists were mainly upper and upper middle class, and had a desire towards economic and class standing as well as Westernism (L. Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* 174). However, those of lower and lower-middle class who were not benefiting economically, were anti-west (148). Therefore, it is important to understand that the colonial thesis has a class and economic dimension and has led to divisions between those that were and still are pro-West and anti-West (148).

However, Abu-Lughod asks, "How can one question modernity without implying that one longs nostalgically for some pre modern formation?" ("Feminist Longings" 12). She notes that we must examine the entanglement of postcolonial conditions instead of being stuck in a binary between the East and the West. For example, she asserts that cultures cannot displace one another but instead overlap and are hybrid ("The Marriage of Feminism" 263). Through examining narratives of television shows Abu-Lughod demonstrates that there is overlap between Islamic and Secular projects ("The Marriage of Feminism" 248). For instance, Islamists stigmatize sexual independence as Western but then do not question women's rights to work or education. In addition, they embrace the idea of bourgeoisie marriage and the nuclear family, while the latter are all part of modernist projects (243). The solution is to stand outside these debates with an awareness that these struggles are multifaceted and are intertwined (246). At a general level, she

accedes that feminist projects needs to revolve around rights, law and so forth but should always be related to colonization (“Contentious Theoretical Issues “28).

At a more tactical level, the words “Muslim” and “woman” combined into one word, Muslimwoman, has evoked a singular identity where race and gender become conflated. This new term, Muslimwoman, has become more visible post 9/11 where there have been anxieties around what is right or wrong for Muslim women (Cooke et al. 91). The Muslimwoman signifies race, citizenship, and gender while the veil functions as a racial indicator that is always attached to the body of the Muslim woman. Thus, the Muslimwoman is always deprived of any agency. For example, the politics of covering is one way in which women are deprived of agency. In Turkey and Europe women are banned from wearing it, while in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Afghanistan they are forced to wear it (92). Additionally, Islamists control Muslim women’s bodies while neo Orientalists force themselves into narratives of “saving” these women. As this archetype has emerged and has silenced Muslim women into these roles, more and more women are finding agency within the very same place that once silenced them. For instance, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern women are mobilizing and finding common platforms (93). For this reason, engaging in Islam is vital so that it is not hijacked. This requires an effort by both secular and non-secular to reclaim this identity of the Muslimwoman. Thus, the more women represent themselves and bring forth Other narratives of the Muslim imaginary, the more control they will have over their hijacked image (99).

In a roundtable discussing the term, Muslimwoman, Margot Badran claims that women are refusing the set image of the Muslimwoman that has been handed down to them (as cited in Cooke et al. 104). She asserts that we must be wary of the dangerous binary between defending Islam and the Muslimwoman into an essentialization and condemning Islam (as cited in Cooke et al. 104). She stresses that defensive rallying, allows the West to set the parameters of the debate between good and bad muslimwomen (104). However, today the West is constructing a more moderate Muslimwoman image, the one who will not rock the boat in Western discourse (105). Moallem claims that the term Muslimwoman, can be a site of activism against colonial framings (as cited in Cooke et al. 106). Thus, investing in the female body as a cultural marker between the East and the West and the civilized versus barbaric becomes integral here because women's bodies will always belong to either one (109). She calls for a politics of mediation in which one needs to interrogate whether representations of Muslim women are credible as truth of Muslim cultural and religious systems. Similarly, Jasmine Zine claims that the Muslimwoman archetype is deployed as someone who does not live this identity due to the fact that her body has been hijacked by Western discourse (as cited in Cooke et al. 110). As Orientalist images continue, Muslim women's bodies become regulated in public spaces such as in the example of veiling in France and Turkey (111).

Furthermore, Muslim women that adopt the secularist view become the good Muslims, which then defines "bad" Muslims. As a woman who was once veiled and now is unveiled, Zine reveals how her Muslimness becomes less visible without her hijab (as cited in Cooke et al. 113). Therefore, it is important to note here, that the hijab becomes

the marker of the Muslim women who can easily be marginalized by more secular Muslim women. Hence, we can locate another level of power plays, privileges, and oppressions here between those that wear the hijab and are marked and those that can get away with the privilege of not wearing the hijab. However, Zine also questions whether we can claim an essentialist identity, such as Muslimwoman, while maintaining our independence as subjects. She warns us from essentializing by using the word Muslimwoman (as cited in Cooke et al. 115). While Cooke reminds us that by deploying the word Muslimwoman, she wants to draw attention to the way religion and gender became conflated into one category. She stresses that it is important to understand how non-Muslims and Muslim religious extremists have deployed this new identification and how it is useful to many to recognize this as a strategy to an essentialist identity (as cited in Cooke et al. 117). She concludes, the goal will always remain the same: to manage Muslim women.

For this reason, intersectionality becomes key, as an intersectional feminist may ask, how can we address the tensions between opposing feminisms without aiding imperializing projects, and without aiding local patriarchal projects within the region? How can we be more conscious of embodiments of White femininity? By addressing the tensions around Muslim women archetypes I aim to reveal a complexity of performances both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic.

Intersectionality and Archetypal Criticism through Whiteness

Intersectional Feminism

At the most general level the theoretical scope of this project, my framework is guided by the work of intersectional theorists (Alcoff; Anzaldúa; Calafell; Collins; Crenshaw; May; Mohanty) who claim that the experiences of women of color are the product of interlocking patterns of racism, classism and sexism (Crenshaw 1243). Collins, a Black feminist theorist, expresses the necessity of intersectionality, one that echoes Crenshaw's call by introducing the matrix of domination. The matrix is vital in the sense that it can be used as a roadmap to assist those that are in privileged or oppressed positionalities understand the power dynamics at play.

These power dynamics are evident through a number of interpersonal, economic, political, and ideological dimensions that have kept black women in subordinate positionalities (Collins 7). For example, the economic dimension exploited black women's labor at the expense of capitalism while the political dimension historically denied these women the right to vote or hold public office (7). In addition, the ideological dimension oppressed women through racist and sexist images such as the mummies, aunt Jemima, Black prostitutes and welfare mothers (7). One example of this ideological subordination is in feminist scholarship where (Western) feminist perspectives emerge as universally applicable concepts when in reality they are created for a White middle class group (8).

Even further, there remains a series of domains in which power operates to keep women of color marginalized: The structural domain is one area that operates through the

legal systems, labor markets, schools, housing, media and the government. It is heavily involved in policymaking and works to keep women excluded (Collins 295).

The second domain involves the disciplinary management of power where organizations are managed through bureaucracies, such as surveillance through prison systems, the workforce, or even within academia (Collins 299). While the disciplinary domain manages bureaucracies, the interpersonal domain manages power through the micro and everyday interactions. This mode of interpersonal power operates in the day-day practices and is recurrent but also hard to identify because it is part of everyday culture and interactions (307).

In contrast to the disciplinary and structural power that operate through policies and bureaucracies, the hegemonic domain of power operates through ideological and cultural components (Collins). As mentioned in the latter paragraphs, the ideological and cultural dimensions produced controlling images of black women such as the mammy, matriarch, and welfare mothers. The hegemonic domain is thus the connecting factor between the institutional (structural), the practices (disciplinary) and social interaction (interpersonal) (302). Ideological power is extremely difficult to resist because it is hard to recognize. Through family, school and the media, ideologies are created in order to sustain oppression (303). However coming to the realization that one is taught to believe these fabricated ideologies, can be liberating for women of color (305). For this reason Collins calls for an empowerment of needs to be structured across these four domains and along the interstices of race, class, gender, sexuality, and the nation (308).

Delving deeper, the matrix allows one to understand how they can participate in dominance, harm, and subordination simultaneously (Collins 4). For example, my positionality as a Muslim woman of color who is a Kuwaiti-Palestinian is in a constant space of marginalization. However, my upper-middle class upbringing, my identities as heterosexual, cisgender, and able bodied, place me in spaces of privilege. Privileges are often in conjunction with what is dictated to be 'normal' by society. It is the intersection of these dynamic privileges and oppressions that allow for power dynamics to come into play while communicating with others whose identities will be as varied. Often I have been in situations where individuals focus only on racial oppression while ignoring Other oppressions that are of equal importance such as the LGBTQ community, the disabled community or even bodies that do not fit societal expectations, such as 'fat' bodies. As I dig deeper into feminist theory, I am aware that this study will require me to be extremely reflexive of both my heterosexual and cisgender privilege. For instance, feminist studies have constantly left transgender individuals out (Salamon 97). Instead of being inclusive, this scholarship often operates in binaries of men/women and male/female. This undermines the political project of intersectionality because intersectional feminists heavily believe that marginalized identities should be treated on equal footing across the interstices of any oppression whether it be race, gender, sexuality, education, ability, religion, class and so forth. However, the term intersectional feminist has been appropriated by theorists who focus on one component, such as race or gender. When intersectionality is used properly, one identity should not be ranked higher than the other (Moraga 44). In other words race is not more important than queerness and vice versa.

For example, we can see this in Fanon's work, who focuses solely on race and ignores gender. However, it is important to note that this does not mean that one cannot undertake a racial project. Consider this, I am critiquing Whiteness in this study and how it is embodied by Muslim women, it may appear that this is a racial project, but by paying attention to notions of femininity, heterosexuality, and so forth, it starts to evolve as an intersectional project.

Another example of this is in queer politics where dichotomies have been implemented between heterosexuality and "queer," which can have limitations because other important intersections, such as race and class can easily be ignored (C. Cohen 34). However, queer theory because of its theoretical (though not always in practice) insistence on multiplicity has been seen as being in opposition to identity based movements. The concern rests mainly with those who are only interested in one version of queerness, while ignoring how race and class nuance and create more complex queer experiences with power (34).

Therefore, it is crucial in truly understanding how power intersects convolutedly. The golden key to intersectionality lies in always being grounded in and in-tune with one's privileges and oppressions simultaneously and continuously. For example, my oppression as a woman of color has been extremely painful, but staying grounded in my privileges is as painful, because it is the moment when we recognize that our existence in a system oppresses Others. Therefore, as feminists we must be reflexive of our privileged positionalities especially when researching Other bodies. As a cisgender, heterosexual, and able-bodied woman who is also an intersectional feminist, I am committed to being

reflexive of Other marginalized positionalities that I do not occupy while engaging in research. Thus, the intersections of experience based on one's privileges and oppressions become integral to both scholarship and to communication. Additionally, relating the personal to power structures is of vital importance. For example, a radical interactionality, is the concept where one shifts perceptions of identities as discrete to the perception of identities as complex and multifaceted (Chavez 52). Radical interactionality builds on intersectionality and beings to critique the root problem of oppression and reveals how power creates bodies, institutions and ideologies that will either enable or constrain political response (51).

Understanding power allows one to understand how the move against identity has also been a move against intersectionality. It is no coincidence that critics identify theories of intersectionality as inadequate when these theories have been developed by women of color (May 103). Ideas that feel like common sense will often align with hegemonic norms (105). For instance I am often told by reviewers of journals that I need to add Aristotle, Foucault and Deleuze to my work, when I have made a conscious effort to cite women of color and queer scholars. The common theorists that we are forced to cite in order to survive in academia are a product of hegemonic powers in the sense that they are White men. Therefore, common sense is hegemonic and theories developed by those in oppressed identities are certainly not hegemonic or common sense. This is why it is easy to dismiss intersectionality and critique it. Another critique of intersectionality is that it is repetitive. May refutes this by asking, "What larger structures are at play when we feel the need to repeat ourselves?" (11) However, I question whether the issue here is

repetitiveness or that due to the rise of globalization, intersectionality adapts and progresses to hegemonic structures that continue to become faint to the sight when neoliberalism comes into play. Therefore, intersectionality becomes muted, and for this reason I argue that we need to be repetitive because no one is listening and because context is always changing.

Like Calafell, I want to stress that the elimination of intersectional narratives inscribes Western feminism onto a plethora of bodies, even bodies of color. She writes, “We theorize not simply through experience, but through histories, and I would argue, the relations, that are written in and through our bodies” (“(I)dentities: Considering Accountability” 7). Sexuality and gender are constantly critiqued but the intersections of racial bodies are ignored (10). In this instance, there is a need to look at political and cultural landscapes and reevaluate notions of feminisms by creating new ones. Calafell explains that the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality have never felt so vital (“The Future of Feminist Scholarship” 267). Of importance in this study is creating contradistinctions between the intersections of racial bodies and between what is being said in Western discourse. How can critiquing racialized bodies push research towards dismantling subterfuge discourses that negatively affect Muslim women and reinscribe White femininity?

For this reason this study also addresses how scholars can connect intersectionality to the deconstruction of inimical discourses around Third World women but even more specifically, Muslim women. As Mohanty writes, “This average third World woman lead an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read:

sexually constrained) and her being ‘third world’ (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized etc.)” (Under Western Eyes 56). For this reason, one needs to raise questions about the history of whom they are studying (3). Unlike Western feminism, the history told of Third World women is extremely limited (4). The project of feminism needs to entail a combination of deconstructing and dismantling, and of building and constructing. This can be done simultaneously so that Third World feminisms are not marginalized due to the fact that colonization is a discursive force that focuses on appropriating and codifying women (52). For this very reason, it is of necessity to focus on deconstructing universalized and hegemonic rhetoric because it is by far the most destructive force throughout history.

Postcolonial-Archetypal Criticism through the Rhetoric of Whiteness

While I remain committed to revealing how Muslim femininity sustains White femininity, it remains of equal importance to tackle regularities of Whiteness as overarching hegemonic discourse through archetypal criticism. Archetypal criticism, which I will argue is a type of postcolonial criticism that allows the researcher to engage in critiques of communities and deconstruct them. I will return to this after delving deeper into postcolonial criticism.

First, I deem it essential to address a tension in the field of Communication Studies and beyond. There have been recent criticisms that the word ‘post’ implies that colonialism is over. For example, Linda Smith strongly suggests that when we use the word ‘post’ we create colonial formations that are ahistorical (25). Smith defines decolonial methodologies as driven by a framework that entails taking apart stories and

texts, and as a method that intersects colonialism and imperialism in a multitude of ways. Furthermore, she emphasizes two major strands of critiques within indigenous research; one that focuses on a time before colonization, while the other strand reveals how we are colonized and what it means for our present and future (25). She distinguishes decolonization as encapsulating both methods. While I agree with Smith that it might suit our work better to move away from ‘post’ towards ‘de’, I also find it problematic to create an antagonistic binary between the two. Some of the most influential postcolonial scholars in the field of Communication Studies and beyond are certainly not implying that colonialism is over with (Bhabha; Shome; Hasian; Hegde; Kraidy; Said; Spivak). In fact they very much do what Smith’s second strand of decolonialism claims to do. While I have witnessed decolonial scholars engaging more with their own indigenous communities (Wanzer-Serrano; Calafell; Smith), I witness postcolonial scholars focusing on rhetorical criticisms (Hasian; Hegde; Shome; Kraidy). However, both methods are merely two sides of the same coin. However, decoloniality is a more radical challenge to the structure and is an override of an entire system (Calafell; Smith). Postcoloniality is a challenge to the system, but not a complete override (Hasian; Shome).

For this reason I use both decolonial and postcolonial theories and methodologies because there needs to be a move towards synergizing these two similar strains of thought. However, in terms of word usage I use the word ‘postcolonial’ to refer to the problematization of colonization and decolonization (Shome and Hegde 250).

Postcolonial critique questions why situations are the way they are and formulates strategies to reverse and resist these situations. Decolonization is a means for changing an

existing order or system (Fanon, *The Wretched* 2). It is historical process that can only be understood within its context and urges for the existing situation to change (Fanon, *The Wretched* 2). Thus, the colonist and colonized are very old acquaintances; therefore when one challenges the colonial they are asserting that their world is different (Fanon, *The Wretched* 6). Therefore, it is essential to situate postcolonial critique within its historical and international dimensions to power structures through the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality and nationality (Shome and Hegde 252).

Hall has made the important point that popular culture is “One of those sites where this struggle for and against culture of the powerful is engaged” (79). It is also, “The area of consent and resistance” (79) and “It is partly where hegemony arises and where it is secured” (80). Therefore, one needs to focus on the moments around narratives and to pay particular attention to the ‘in-between’ spaces that can recreate new signs of identity, contestation, and collaboration (Bhabha 2). This in turn, allows a further exploration of intersubjective interstices of nationness, community, and cultural values. To this notion, Bhabha states, “How are subjects formed ‘in-between’, or in excess of, the sum of the ‘parts’ of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)?” (2) This excess is what I accede establishes a background for one to understand how Muslim femininity can be read as excess, but simultaneously be read as a site where White femininity is secured, reproduced, and sustained. In this instance, Spivak explains, “We see the third world as a displacement of the old colonies, as colonialism properly displaces itself into what is termed, neocolonialism. In this context neocolonialism is, “Largely economic rather than the largely territorial enterprise of imperialism” (3) Even

further, women are displaced. Spivak clarifies, "The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish" (308). In this context one may witness a problematizing of essentialism and identity. Spivak breaks down the word "woman" because she believes that if one were poor, black, and female they would face oppression along three interstices. However, by moving this formula from the first-world context to the postcolonial, "black" or "color" has no significance. She describes it as a double displacement in which one needs to find a story that will accommodate third-world woman with the first. She says in learning to speak to, rather than listen to, or speak for, the historically muted subject of the subaltern woman, the postcolonial intellectual systematically might be able to unlearn female privilege (295).

Another vital component in the performances of Muslim femininity is to understand the psychology of colonialism and find answers to the cycle between White people being stuck in their Whiteness and people of color trying to assimilate. As mentioned earlier, Fanon allows for a rethinking of communication in terms of race and language (*Black Skin*). The more one rejects their culture the whiter they become (*Black Skin* 3). In essence, how is it that certain communities of Muslim women try to assimilate? Have they completely rejected their culture or have they maintained a balance between assimilation and rejection? Thus, people of color can reinforce White supremacy (Fanon, *The Wretched* 3). Language is one way in which this is re-secured. In a broader brushstroke, this is reinforced through transcultural relations and through globalization.

As iconic figures such as Malala Yousafzai, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and Queen Rania take the stage, they do so with the language of the colonizer.

Postcolonial critique also interrogates the ahistorical. History is about power; it is a story of how hegemonic structures became powerful and how they continue to use their power to control Others (Smith 35). In other words, what divides the world is what species or race one belongs to (Fanon, *The Wretched* 5). What is important here about history is that it does not reflect the history of those from indigenous populations (Smith 35). This also applies to academic knowledge that privileges certain aspects of history and privileges certain ideas over the other. Consider this, while you are reading my proposal are you finding yourself steering away from my text and thinking of mainstream scholars that could aid my writing? If you are, you have also embodied the privileged texts; the texts that have hurt marginalized communities for centuries. On this account, I follow Wanzer-Serrano in steering away from Western-centric or post structuralist theorists, like Deleuze, Marx, Lacan etc. but they will have frequent “guest appearances” in my study (12). In order to offer an elaborate, but also effective postcolonial critique, it is essential to privilege the “marginalized” in my writing and give a back seat to the mainstream scholars who have and are part of the history that has always been about “them” and not “us”. However, like Hasian I assent that there are times when the “subaltern” can use the master’s tools (*Colonial Legacies in Postcolonial Contexts* 27). I believe it is essential to occasionally use these tools in order to dismantle the master’s house.

On these grounds, there is also a need to further situate postcolonial studies in Communication Studies. This allows for a problematizing of communication and allows one to identify how Western realities have spread globally (Shome and Hegde 261). Hasian raises the dilemma, “Do we valorize the voices of the Other, emphasizing the power of indigenous communities in their subaltern struggles?” (Hasian, *Colonial Legacies in Postcolonial Contexts* 2). He elaborates, “Do we take the other extreme and study the psychic and structural dimensions of colonial discursive fabrications filled with subject positions, “hybridity” and “in-betweenness” (2). Hasian brings forth a massive tension between centering the voices of our communities or/and studying the fabrications that have altered, and suppressed marginalized positionalities. I echo Hasian in calling forth for a need to study the tension between dominant narratives and subaltern counter narratives (3). Similarly, media texts produced in the United States mobilize the intersections of gender, race class and sexuality. Unpacking these texts through postcolonial critiques provide a space to contribute to critical studies (Parameswaran, “The Other Sides of Globalization” 117).

There also remains a need to critique texts in regards to neocolonialism and racism. In this context, there are three areas of concern for postcolonial studies: discursive imperialism, hybrid and diasporic cultural identities, and postcolonial academic self-reflexivity (Shome, “Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical Canon” 42). These areas of concern can assist us in questioning how imperialism has colonized us discursively such as in the politics of power surrounding linguistics, communication, technology and cultural power (Shome, “Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical

Canon” 43). This allows us to recognize that the postcolonial is always transnational, hybrid and always dwelling in the borderlands (45). Even further, academic reflexivity is an integral component for the postcolonial critic. By questioning material, methods, and ideological reflections in academia, one must find a balance between completely resisting Eurocentric canons or/and adding on to them (46).

As hybridity dwells at the borders, it also must be understood as a communicative process that is interlaced by sociopolitical and economic which can only be understood by becoming aware that transcultural relations are dynamic (Kraidy 317). On that account, there is a need to analyze hegemonic structures for their construction of hybridities (334). Thus, hybridity is where international and intercultural communication performances are negotiated (317). As this study traces and analyzes the communicative processes of different women of color, their performances are hybrid. In other words, I aim to seek how women of color perform and internalize the hybridity of Whiteness, heteronormativity, and Otherness simultaneously.

More importantly we need to begin to understand that rhetorical postcolonial studies needs to rethink ways of thinking about textuality, authority, and social agency (Hasian, “Rhetorical Studies” 23). Researchers need to expand their horizons by treating texts as fluid and constantly changing. This will assist the conventional “text” in expanding to objects, bodies, and so forth (Hasian, “Rhetorical Studies” 23). For example, Holling and Calafell stress that Latin@ vernacular discourse also “implicates the decolonial” (22). By experiencing the effects of colonization, Latin@s and Chicana/os are able to theorize decolonizing as counterhegemonic. In particular, it is vital

to look at the ways that hegemonic discourse has affected vernacular discourse. Limited research has been conducted on examining decolonizing and historical contexts of vernacular discourse. Many theorists merge these simultaneously by also paying attention to the body as a site of resistance, such as Enck-Wanzer's essay "Trashing the System: Social Movement, Intersectional Rhetoric, and Collective Agency in the Young Lords Organization's Garbage Offensive", or Calafell's piece "Pro(re-)claiming Loss: A Performance Pilgrimage in Search of Malintzin Tenépal". The body becomes a site for agency, resistance, and community building. For this reason, I also theorize through my own body in an attempt to theorize through the flesh (see Moraga and Anzaldúa).

On another note, academics must be reflexive about who has the authority to represent the view of the Other (Hasian, "Rhetorical Studies" 24). For instance, a speaker's location has an epistemically significant impact on the speaker's claims (Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking" 7). This 'location' refers to the 'social identity' of the speaker and whom the speaker is speaking "with" or "for". Holling and Calafell bring forth another notion of reflexivity, the sense of betrayal when writing about oppressive elements within their own cultures. They also take this notion a step further to question whether this sense of betrayal is gendered (24). This is critical because it demonstrates the axiological dilemmas that researchers face. Similarly, Anzaldúa also embodies the dilemma she faces as a Mestiza that is stuck between two cultures, "Though I'll defend my race and culture when they are attacked by non-mexicanos, conozco el malestar de mi culture. I abhor some of my culture's ways, how it cripples women, como burras, our strengths used against us, lowly burras bearing humility with dignity" (43). I extend

Anzaldúa's notion of the Mestiza, calling the Arab Mestiza, a Muhajana woman while exploring the different ways in which I face both Arab and White masculinity and the ways in which I remain in an ambiguous space being Kuwaiti-Palestinian ("Disrupting Privileged" 5). Finally, one must continue to deconstruct the interstices of media and account for tensions between "Production text and audience reception" (Parameswaran, "Local Culture in Global Media" 313). Even further, is the need to engender the role of the reader/listener/audience as crucial. This can push forth critical attention to the ways in which gender and sexuality come in to public view and how they are replicated under transnational conditions (Hegde, "Circuits of Visibility" 1). For instance, how is heteronormativity constantly performed and re-performed through heterosexuality in the media and popular culture? Transnational media terrains are integral sites in which one can deconstruct and critique contradictions between gendered constructions and globalization.

For this very reason a postcolonial view of Whiteness can enable one to locate and contextualize it. By reading Whiteness as a "Historically embedded or contextual sociological category" and as the "History of group formation" one can understand how it is constantly evolving and changing depending on location (Alcoff, *The Future of Whiteness* 22). However, it is critical to understand that even though Whiteness is a historical formation of racism, it is not all that Whiteness has been about (98). Whiteness as a term is not fixed and has varied meanings. It can be an idea of a specific historical genealogy, a nationalist identity, a mythic idea, or White vanguardism. For example, Whiteness in terms of an idea or a myth becomes racism but when used to define a

group becomes a social attitude (150). Whiteness is a social location within macro structures with differential advantages while White identity is the way one conduct' one's own life (147). As I use Whiteness for this project, I use and describe it as a force that moves within and beyond these structural systems. It is an ideology of power that does not mean that White people are racist but rather the ideology of Whiteness affects all individuals across the intersections of race, gender, sexuality and class this includes White and non-White people. Whiteness is the system that seeps into the macro and micro through the interstices of race, gender, sexuality, education, citizenship, civility, and so forth. Heteronormativity is at the service of Whiteness. Intersectionality as a whole can assist this study in identifying interlocking points of privilege and oppression; however by mapping out Whiteness intersectionally, we can identify overarching power structures that become the breeding ground through which an intersectional analysis can emerge.

Whiteness is leaky and can only be seen in relation to other categories such as gender, class, and sexuality and is therefore strategic (Wander, Martin, and Nakayama 34). One of the strategies of White supremacist terror during slavery was White people's control of the black gaze (hooks 21). While bell hooks lives and moves in spaces of Whiteness there is no comfort that makes terrorism disappear for her (23). Whiteness is in a continual state of being dressed and undressed, of marking and cloaking (Frankenberg 74). It is thus positioned in relation to Others; meaning Whiteness is relational (75). For this reason it is of necessity to examine Whiteness in relation to

Muslim femininity. It is also integral to note that Whiteness re-secures other privileged intersections such as heterosexuality and class privilege.

Whiteness is also about the empirical, imaginary, and subjective Whiteness. Empirical Whiteness studies an entity with ethnic, political or economic correlations, and is usually descriptive (Alcoff, *The Future of Whiteness* 77). On the other hand imaginary Whiteness is a “Mythic imagery and unconscious ways in which people have affective and dispositional attitudes about Whiteness- that is what Whiteness stands for, what it means, imagined genealogy and how it is qualitatively distinct from Other groups” (Alcoff, *The Future of Whiteness* 78). This can help in an understanding of how mythical beliefs and ideas are birthed. By addressing Whiteness as imaginary one can then imagine a different future (81). Lastly, subjective Whiteness is a relation between Whiteness and the self. As Whites begin to perceive the world, it is because they are taught to perceive that way. Therefore, by delving in to unconscious habits, one can open up areas for reflection (87). The imaginary, the subjective, and the empirical cannot be separated. The imaginary helps shape subject formation, which may produce judgments that affect empirical realities of race (89). As one begins to deconstruct performances of White femininity it becomes essential to understand how the subjective, imaginary, and empirical affect performances of Muslim femininity. This is one step closer to breaking through the unconscious and to being self-aware of the complexity of our performances.

The complexity of Whiteness must also be understood as a communication phenomenon (Martin and Nakayama viii). In communication we are constantly involved in the process of articulation (Halualani and Nakayama 7). Through communication as

articulation one can identify different degrees of power and privilege. Therefore, there is a need to continuously re-articulate contexts and intervene in changing forces (8). In turn, this can assist in creating better methodologies that can take research forward. By following hegemonic discourses, one can learn how to rearticulate our communication. One can also learn how to rearticulate the rhetoric that is carried out among our own communities.

By introducing an intersectional feminist postcolonial critique this study can interrogate Whiteness with new frames. So how is it then that one can work towards understanding how privilege has become normalized into global systems? How is it that one can understand how images of oppressed Muslim women have been normalized into these very same systems but also simultaneously adopted and re-secured through Muslim femininity? For this reason I aim to identify how Whiteness travels and continues to permeate through Muslim women's bodies, and more specifically, through discourse. Muslim women's bodies; therefore, are the vessels and the carriers of White femininity and patriarchy. At times these bodies re-secure White femininity, but in some cases they disidentify with ideologies of Whiteness.

However, what is lacking in literature is how Whiteness can occupy space and how it travels to other worlds through popular culture and the media (Shome, "Whiteness and the Politics of Location" 108). Whiteness is about the discursive because neocolonialism sustains global White dominance (108). Whiteness resides in location, context, power, and history (109). Nonetheless, it is important to note that a colonial culture can remain even when the colonizer is no longer there (111). Therefore, structures

of Orientalism can be internalized by those deemed to be the Other (112). For example, in India, British cultural forces influenced the matrix of the country; therefore, Western education was a sign of elitism and class (112). Progress and modernity became married to class (113). Today, the highest paying jobs in India are held by those who are Western educated Shome (116). Additionally, there exists a politics of skin color, meaning the fairer, the more beautiful (118). An analogy exists between the male and White gaze; therefore, “the look” at our non-White bodies is different when in the US. Shome discusses returning the gaze and how it is met with complete denial. Therefore, looking relations are historically and culturally learned. In this instance, I echo Shome again in discussing how my accent becomes a marked site under “White eyes” (125). However, taking this further, this very same gaze and way of knowing is one of the central strategies of Western discourse.

Whiteness also operates at the intersections of race, gender and sexuality. In particular, White femininity produces an extension of White patriarchy. It is a means to reproduce, sustain, and spread patriarchy. Dreama Moon, for example, argues that it is “Unwise to pretend that White people somehow are not implicated in the everyday production and reproduction of Whiteness” (“White Enculturation and Bourgeois Ideology” 179). White women, for example, are taught to reproduce the White patriarchal gaze. In addition, in order for women to be empowered, they must align themselves with White hegemony and supremacy (182).

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Collins described archetypes of black women as a way to understand power and controlling images. The mammy, for instance,

is characterized as the faithful, obedient, submissive domestic servant and is a symbol of the dominant groups perception of how the black female should behave in relation to White male elite power (80). The mammy is asexual because she has devoted everything to her job and it glosses over the fact that white men raped Black women who were slaves. This is evident in the workplace where White women expect black women to perform the role of the submissive mammy. Unfortunately, for those who internalize these socially constructed archetypes they unintentionally spread more racial oppression (82). This internalization is crucial in understanding how women of color become vehicles that spread global archetypes further.

In contrast to the image of the mammy, who is faithful to the White master, is the matriarch who is the “failed mammy” that is incapable of sustaining her household (Collins 83). This image, removes notions of inequity and capitalism and focuses on the image of the black women who cannot teach her children how to grow out of poverty (84). This woman is also aggressive, assertive, and abandoned by the men in her community. Even further, the creation of the matriarch has been used to influence black masculinity into rejecting black women as marital partners (86).

Like the matriarch, the welfare mother is constructed as the sole cause of her poverty and was never able to overcome it. This archetype is further stigmatized due to the fact that the welfare mother is not in a heterosexual marriage (Collins 87). By centering attention onto the black woman herself as a failed woman, one easily turns a blind eye away from the structural poverty to the victims themselves (87). This is crucial in understanding how Western constructions of archetypes shift attention away from

hegemonic structures and inequities to women themselves as sources of failure. In contrast to the welfare mother, is the black lady, who is able to work hard and rise out of poverty. However, she is also stigmatized due to her high education and assertiveness; therefore, she cannot stay with a partner or get married (89). She is also seen as taking away jobs from “more qualified” White men.

The final archetype and most prominent archetype in popular culture and music videos is the jezebel (whore or hoochie) that constructs an image of a sexually aggressive woman. Not only does this provide a rationale for assaults by men onto slave women (Collins 89), but it also creates Other images of the gold-digging hoochie who wants to get married, the club hoochie in slutty clothes, and the hoochie mama who gets paid for sexual favors in order to support her children (Collins 91). The jezebel deviates from the heterosexual norm; therefore, she is labeled freaky. She represents the deviant component of the heterosexual/queer binary. For instance, building on Collins work, Durham argues Beyonce is an icon that merges the freak with the lady (the modest middle-class lady) to describe and perform the freak-lady. This is an example of how controlling images and sexual scripts are re-performed by prominent figures (85). Furthermore, Calafell describes how women of color have been monsterized and labeled as freaks as she details her experience in academia (*Monstrosity, Performance, and Race*). She describes how women of color must shape shift their performances depending on what will best protect them in a hostile space (5).

White feminine performances are also multifaceted and have their own variety of archetypes. Building off Collins archetypes, McIntosh argues White femininity can be

categorized into six archetypes (3). The “White virgin” who must serve patriarchy by performing heterosexuality is the first archetype (12). This “White virgin” needs to be saved by White men (12). This image is also heavily implicated today with Muslim women in the media that needs to “be saved” by White men. While Muslim women will never be White women, the rhetoric of “saving her” carries American politics and neoliberalism into the region and in a more modern form of colonialism, but this time under the guise of saving Muslim women. The Muslim woman becomes an object that needs to be saved in relation to Whiteness. The second archetype is the “The good White female employee” (14). One of the performances of the good White female employee is “ignorance” (17) and passive aggressive interactions (18). This employee is strongly prominent in academia. Other archetypes of White femininity include the “White pin up”, who performs sexuality in accordance with male standards (20), the “White supermom”, and the White “trash mama”. As Collins use archetypes to identify controlling images invented by the White media, I aim to complicate this further by identifying archetypes that the White media has created, but also to identify who is performing hegemonic archetypes, and how are they playing them purposefully in everyday life. Overall, I am developing and using Muslim archetypes to understand communication as an everyday performance.

As a result, archetypal criticism can be situated as a critical method for intersectional feminists to critique standards that are performed by the marginalized in the name of dominant performances. Thus, archetypal criticism is connected to both political structures and gender performances. It interrogates the language of the marginalized in

service of hegemonic powers. Archetypal criticism allows us as researchers to interrogate global spectacles that dominate the media, popular culture, education, and so forth. It questions common figures that speak out in the name of communities in an effort to pinpoint and take apart representations of dominant communities. Archetypal criticism allows for a closer reading of performances. It also paves a space to allow audiences to group, identify, and be consciously aware of essentialized performances. This does not necessarily mean that the criticism one engages in always need to be hegemonic, at times these performances also embody counter-hegemonic moments, and it is vital to trace these moments. As researchers, when one engages in criticism there is a need to be cognizant of the community that is being studied. This can be done through self-reflexivity and through merging criticism with performative writing. In complex spaces accountability to others and to the researcher is integral in deconstructing the working of power (Calafell, "(I)dentities: Considering Accountability" 7). This is due to the fact that we theorize through experience, history, and relations that are written through our bodies (7). As I theorize the different components of my own performance, as a Muslim woman who at times embodies and resists White femininity, this reflection allows me to detail a more elaborate understanding of the controlling images of Muslim women that are produced by the media and popular culture, how they are embodying history and colonialism, as well as how they inform their performances.

By allowing performative writing to take its course while undertaking the process of deconstructing and analyzing hegemonic texts, I aim to create a more holistic and embodied but also rhetorical methodological approach. This study envisions a process of

interplay between hegemonic narratives and personal narratives, thus deconstructing and then reconstructing. I aim to integrate personal narrative and poetic inquiry throughout my criticism. An intersectional feminist scholar might ask, what are our key commitments to the performative? Embodiment is at the core of performance. It is a site of contestation where we affectively try to resolve the everyday experiences with power that has been perpetuated by larger structures. Thus, there exists a need to perform theory and lived experience on the page through the performative writing (Spry 77). Stories are an embodiment of our multiracial experiences (Spry 272) and our pain (Madison, “Theory/Embodied” 108). I envision personal narrative as a way in which to reclaim the discourses and images of women of color that have been lost in the midst of hegemonic rhetorical discourses (Calafell, “Pro(re-)claiming Loss” 47).

Performative writing is a means to better understand relations of the self. It assists in understanding individual and societal values (Spry 51). It is meant as a critical understanding of one’s oppressions and privileges. Additionally, it is a tool to negotiate one’s own narrative in various situations (54). More importantly, by putting forward the personal, one may begin to understand the socio-political and the historical (124). Performative writing allows the researcher to reflect on painful experiences within connections and disconnections (125) Thus, agency is gained through critical reflection and the researcher’s goal remains to engage in patterns of meaning with his or her audience (126). Additionally, theorizing through the flesh is important for both the embodiment of history and through the remaking of performance (Calafell,

“Pro(re)claiming Loss” 52). Calafell for example, through mourning and reclaiming the loss of her culture, was able to create new spaces of possibilities (52).

By weaving in the personal, one can disrupt master narratives and rearticulate them (Corey). Master narratives are often heteronormative, forceful, public, historical, and domineering, which in turn leaves space for the personal narrative to reverse the narrative (250). The personal narrative moves in between the private and the public, flowing, deconstructing, and challenging these hegemonic narratives. The personal narrative is a revelation of the truth through vulnerability (252).

Performative writing can also be brought forward through a politics of love through affective narratives and poetry (Calafell, “Love Loss and Immigration”, 155). Poetic inquiry is a means to illustrate and produce shared experiences between the researcher, the audience, and the participant (Faulkner 12) As a performative methodology, it creates a narrative truth and embodies an experience in which the reader can relate affectively with the researcher (15). Performative writing thus represents the researcher’s relations that in turn define connections to the isms (sexism, racism, classism). To be able to use methodologies that are closer to a more complex and intersectional ethic is a step towards dismantling hegemonic narratives within an erroneous society.

As I examine three different communities of women of color that are vital in revealing the complexities and diversity within Muslim communities, the texts and images that will be elicited from three key figures that represent three distinct communities that not only sustain and reproduce White femininity, but also perform and

at times resist it simultaneously. As Shome's work illustrates, White femininity is a force that produces borders and boundaries around gender, race, sexuality, class, and defines what it is to be modern (Diana and Beyond 20). By extending on Shome's work I aim to illustrate how discourse on Muslim femininity has become an important extension of White femininity and heteronormativity, one in dire need of addressing. Thus, my goal is to add a unique dimension to archetypal criticism by studying the performances of words, bodies, and images that misrepresent Muslim femininities, but at times uses the language of the oppressor in a strategic but counterhegemonic attempt, such as in the case of Queen Rania. Additionally, another goal of this project is to layout a groundwork for many to identify future moments in which Muslim women are deprived of agency and how to make the invisibility of this visible. It is also a method to bring to the limelight the controlled images/archetypes that have been developed by the West for centuries.

Thus, through an intersectional postcolonial approach, informed by an attention on Whiteness, this study will reveal how power operates on Muslim femininities to negate it and how this is crucial for the reproduction of White femininity. In the next chapter I focus on the archetype of the oppressed through the rhetorical performance of Malala's Yousafzai's speech to the United Nations and through other examples that have sustained this archetype as the most visible stereotype of the Muslim woman today.

CHAPTER THREE: MALALA YOUSAFZAI: THE OPPRESSED MUSLIM
WOMAN AND THE SEARCH FOR AGENCY

The TV is playing in the background... Voice Over: I thought I would never see David again when he went away to Afghanistan. He was badly hurt when he stepped over a land mine and his medical health has been a process. I try to support him in every way that I can because he dedicated his life to protecting our country from the terrorists

My stomach starts to twist and pull... I am angry... What about the people that died in Afghanistan and in Iraq? What about the children with lost limbs and the daughters without mothers? I reflect... Like an ill body rejecting medical treatment... I absolutely cannot ingest it. I can't ingest Whiteness... Suddenly the thoughts start seeping into my head... What if this veteran thought he was doing the right thing? Was he devouring Whiteness, trying to save brown women? What about Malala? What if she wasn't saved? Would she be dead now? Am I internalizing Whiteness? If I reject Whiteness will I risk women being hurt in other countries? I have no idea what is right anymore... My thoughts feel like swarms of hurricanes, slamming me down, picking me up, spinning me around until I can no longer see. Blinding me to the pervasive nature of Whiteness... To the invisibility of hegemonic ideologies... I don't blame the veteran... I don't blame the Army... They just can't see past the whirlpools of Whiteness that constantly blind us from being able to identify colonial agendas. But what if I am wrong?

What if we need White people to “save” us from brown men? After all, isn’t our region lagging behind? What if modernization is good for us?

NO..

I can’t think like this... This is the ideological force of Whiteness...

Remember Guantanamo Bay? Remember Abu Ghraib? Remember Iraq?

Suddenly my thoughts come together

But hurricanes sometimes hit when you are least expecting them to.



I write the narrative above because I believe that showcasing the reflexive dimension of the researcher is integral in highlighting the ambiguity and tensions that lie in public performances of Whiteness and how they affect individuals in relation to overarching power structures. As I explore my own internal struggle and thoughts as a transnational feminist, it isn’t so black and White after all. On a daily basis we battle competing thoughts between Whiteness, resistance, and disidentification. At times we can train ourselves to become more aware of when our thoughts become co-opted by standard ideologies of thinking. However, without the necessary tools to break down the internalization of hegemonic thought we risk fully conforming to performances of Whiteness. Additionally, by fully rejecting ideologies of Whiteness we also risk falling behind as a region. It is a tricky contradiction that we must navigate carefully. Furthermore, as Muslim women take center stage in the global media arena we fall more susceptible to performing and internalizing performances of White heterosexual femininity.

In this chapter I focus on one dimension of these performances through the rhetoric of the oppressed by looking at Malala Yousafzai's speech at the youth takeover to the United Nations. I first identify and explain how the oppressed archetype developed; and reveal short examples of women who have been used as a tool by the U.S. media, the U.S. government, and Western discourse. I then focus on Malala, who has become a universal symbol for oppressed Muslim women and a representation of fear for those that resist Western interventions. By the end of the paper my goal is to reveal the critical tools necessary to be able to identify performances that negate Muslim women. Thus, my argument is that the oppressed archetype embodies, sustains, and reproduces both White femininity and feminism, which in turn negates Muslim communities worldwide.

Whiteness, Colonialism and Saving Muslim Women

Communication, whether through books, the media, popular culture, or schooling shapes and builds our imaginaries into a White imaginary. An imaginary Whiteness is a way in which people are socialized unconsciously to believe what Whiteness is. This imaginary can be contradicted with the reality of events (Alcoff, *The Future of Whiteness* 79). This is what eventually leads to the development of multiple and competing imaginaries. As many resist these imaginaries, many internalize them simultaneously. Additionally, these imaginaries not only construct the way one may view the world, but influence the narratives that we are exposed to through apparatuses like the media, the education system, and popular culture. As these hegemonic imaginaries become stronger, certain archetypes of racial or gendered communities come forth into the limelight. Previously I discussed how Black women were stereotypically portrayed as mammies,

matriarchs, welfare recipients, and hoochies in mainstream U.S. media (Collins 77). Jack Shaheen has made the important point that Hollywood has used repetition to continue stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims. In film for example, they are usually murderers, sleazy rapists, religious fanatics, oil rich sheikhs, and abusers of women (8). U.S. Americans, for instance are the leading exporters of film and this assists in pushing stereotypes further. Shaheen asserts that it is not that the Arab should not be portrayed as a villain, but that almost all depictions are negative ones (17). These villains have been projected in over 1000 feature films, and are either sheikhs, terrorists, maidens, Egyptians, Palestinians, anti-American, and evil people from other surrounding Arab countries (19). He adds women are depicted as belly dancers, slaves, erotic, as shapeless black objects, black vampires, and bombers. Additionally, in most movies the Arab woman dies if she falls in love with the Western hero (29). Women are also covered in black, when women wear a variety of apparel in the Arab and Muslim world (29). These stereotypes worsened in the 40s when the State of Israel was created on Palestinian land and continued throughout the war and into the 70s. In the 80s and 90s this persisted during the Palestinian Intifada and Israel's invasion of Lebanon (35). The stereotypes further increased in the late 90s with the Gulf War and 9/11. Shaheen emphasizes that these stereotypes circulate in Hollywood due to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the lack of film critics, silence, and lack of presence (39). I would argue that it is also difficult for academics who are critical of these representations to publish journal articles or even create more momentum to voice their presence.

Muslim women have been portrayed as exotic, oppressed, uncivilized, exceptional secular feminists, humanitarian figures, and domestic. In this chapter, I focus on the archetype of the oppressed Muslim woman. One of the oldest archetypes, the exotic Orient for example developed under the umbrella of colonialism and the study of the Other. Thus, the image of the Muslim woman as the exotic Orient was only a starting foundation for a number of archetypes that would soon develop by the West. The term Orient was made up of both human effort and identification of the Other (Said xvii). Therefore, Orientalism is not only an exercise of cultural strength, but is a discourse that is always produced in an uneven exchange and is shaped by political powers (12). As the West began to identify the East as uncivilized, they also began to identify it as exotic. Like Black women in the U.S. who were identified as hoochies, Muslim women became to be known as hypersexual and exotic. For instance, the frequent image of the belly dancer became a symbol of eroticization, even though belly dancing is a Middle Eastern dance and not Muslim specific. Again one witnesses the conflation between Middle Eastern and Muslim when not all Middle Easterners or Muslim and vice versa. The stereotypical Muslim woman permeates not only into our imaginaries but also even into Disney characters like Princess Jasmine. Along with colonization came the need to unveil the Orient. In Egypt, for example, Lord Cromer who was the consult general for the British, stated that changing the position of women in Egypt was a prerequisite to the country's advancement and to its independence from British control (L. Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution* 33). As they began to push for the unveiling of women, a struggle arose between those who would support modernization and those who would not. The

European views of the narratives of the veil then became part of a middle and upper class society (35). As the colonizers handed over Egypt to the elite, the veil became more prominent in those among the lower class (L. Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution* XX). Therefore, for centuries, Muslim women have been Orientalized in an effort to either unclothe/clothe or exotify them. With this exotification, was the need to “rescue” and “save” these women.

With saving these women, came the image of the oppressed woman. Note that images of Muslim women also started to appear around the late eleventh century; however, this did not emerge full-fledged until 19th century. This narrative presented women as subjugated, oppressed, and a little bit better than slaves (Kumar 44). In contrast to women elsewhere, Muslim women’s issues created international and public debate (Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women* 14). With it, came an obsession with Muslim women and their need to cover due to their subjugation to their own men (17). Today, this is not a new phenomenon; the image of the oppressed woman has become one of today’s modern day weapons to gain economic and political control of the Muslim region. The War on Terror for example has been one of the most painful occupations of the century. Starting with President Bush and continuing until today, we see a resurgence of the colonial period in which brown bodies are being managed and war and occupation is meant to bring civilization and democracy to the Middle East North African and South East Asian region. Following September 11th, an International Military Colonization Strategy was deployed under the name of “democracy”. Women have been at the center state of this strategy used by the U.S. to enter the region politically, militarily, and

economically and by their own men to resist or assimilate into democracy and Westernization.

Alongside this strategy came images of Muslim women circulating the media, even though the Middle East, North Africa, and South East Asian region is home to a plethora of religions included, but not limited to Christianity and Judaism. According to the Pew Research Center, Muslims in the Asian-Pacific region account to sixty two percent of the Muslim population, twenty percent in the Middle East and North African and sixteen percent in sub-Saharan Africa, three percent in Europe and less than one percent in North America as well as in Latin American and the Caribbean ("The Global Religious Landscape: Muslims"). Despite the fact that the majority of Muslims live in the Asian-Pacific region, only one in four people are Muslims. On the other hand, Pew indicates that in the Middle East-North African region, the population (93%) of Muslims only represents twenty percent of the world's Muslims ("The Global Religious Landscape: Muslims"). Additionally, the largest numbers of Muslims are in Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria. Ironically none of these countries are Middle Eastern but Muslim and Middle Eastern are often conflated in the media. As the West enters the region politically, militarily, and economically, the archetype of the Muslim woman remains a central strategy in Western discourse. As images circulate the media, the affect and sympathy towards Muslim women becomes a justification for going to war.

One prominent image was a picture of Bibi Aysha on the cover of Time magazine on 29 July 2010. The headline read, "What happens if we leave Afghanistan?" In addition

under Aisha's photo a short sentence read, "Aisha, 18, had her nose and ears cut off last year on orders from the Taliban because she fled abusive in-laws" (Bieber).

The photo of Bibi Aisha's mutilated face performed a rhetorical approach in altering the U.S. American public's perception on the war in Afghanistan. First, the photo represents the need to "save" women in Afghanistan and a need for U.S. American citizens to support the U.S. government's decision to go to war. The missing nose represents a barbaric history, a brutal region, and a ruthless lack of democracy. Abu-Lughod has made the ironic point that these acts of mutilation had been carried out while both U.S. and British troops were in Afghanistan (Do Muslim Women 27). Therefore, the justification of war was carried out through the guise of "saving" Afghan women from brown men (29). As Abu-Lughod recognizes the struggles and violence that women endure in Afghanistan, it is important to separate the violence that women endure due to patriarchy and the public's rationale for going to war (29). Thus, when "oppressed" women become center stage in Western discourse, they fall victim to competing patriarchies. As the East and the West go to battle over whether Muslim women are oppressed or not, Muslim women are stripped of any every opportunity of having agency over their own bodies. Thus, the search for agency becomes impossible.

In a featured article, Aisha is described as upset when she learns about the shooting of Malala in Pakistan (Lemmon). The story was titled, "Bibi Aisha Seeks Rebound in U.S. After Taliban Cut Off Nose, Ears". The entire story was about the plight that Aisha had to endure in Afghanistan and her recovery in the U.S. Accompanying the article was a picture of Malala and the caption read: Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Birmingham / Getty Image. What struck home for myself, as a woman of color, was the fact that the entire story was about Bibi Aisha while the picture accompanying it was of Malala Yousafzai. There was no indication of who the person in the picture is. The reader would automatically assume that Malala is Aisha even though the intention was to link Malala and Aisha's story together. However, conflating women of color's experiences is not a new phenomenon. Women of color are constantly thrown into a homogenous category. Bibi Aisha is from the country of Afghanistan. Malala is from the country of Pakistan. These are two different cultures with different customs and languages. Thus, they will have different experiences. To conflate the two is to sustain Whiteness as the center of dominant structures. Whiteness as a rhetorical construction has the ability to make itself visible and invisible. It constantly centers and re-centers itself leaving everything else at the margins (Nakayama and Krizek 293). By tunnel visioning onto Bibi Aisha and Malala Yousafzai, Western rhetoric pushes its ideology of Whiteness further. It creates a conceptualization of the Middle East and Islam that will miscommunicate the multifaceted dimensions of oppression.

Another prominent image that circulated in 2002 around the War on Terror was the image of the "Afghan Girl". Interestingly enough, this was not the first time the Afghan's girl was featured on the National Geographic. It was featured on the cover of National Geographic in 1985 (McCurry). After the 9/11 attacks the National Geographic team decided to go back to Pakistan to find the Afghan girl. The headline read, "Found After 17 Years: An Afghan Refugee's Story" (McCurry). While in the 1985 photo she is wearing a hijab that is half off, showing off her beautiful green eyes, this time she was

covered in burqa from head to toe. Later, her real name was revealed as Sharbut Gula (Newman). While the 1985 photo centers Sharbut's tragedy as the result of the Soviet bombing in the 1980s, the 2002 one centers Afghanistan as once destroyed by the Soviets and constantly living in a state of war today (Newman). As biopolitics² manages bodies that are either worth or unworthy, certain bodies become excluded through inclusion. This state of exception is a space where certain bodies are included by excluding others (Agamben 138). As Sharbut is being excluded by being included, her body becomes a strategic weapon. Today, she currently undergoes investigations by Pakistani authorities who claim she bypassed the government's National Identity Card System when applying for a Pakistani ID (Sieczkowski). As an Afghan refugee barely surviving, this was her only option. However, as her story was brought into the limelight, it cast a heavy burden on her status as a Pakistani as she now undergoes investigations. My point is to prelude to something benighted here. As Sharbat has traversed through her lifetime as a refugee, her exclusion has become static. Through fame she has been reduced to an object, but then reduced again to the final point of exclusion by being interrogated by the Pakistani government. As her body is written as one of exclusion it transnationally crosses borders and boundaries through the use of death tactics that capitalize on bodies as corporeal and discursive weapons creating a mirage of freedom. Like so many Other women who have

² Biopolitics is politics concerning the management and administration of bodies at the level of population (Dean XX).

been cast into the limelight of rhetorical discourse, Malala Yousafzai has been cast in the leading role of the community of the oppressed.

Malala Yousafzai and the Performance of White Femininity

The oppressed Muslim Woman is an archetype that has taken central stage in the public sphere. Malala Yousafzai, a fifteen year old girl who frequently blogged about the importance of education was shot by the Taliban while on her way to school. She sustained injuries to her face and body and was then transferred to the United Kingdom. Today she has become a prominent spokesperson for Muslim women's rights and education. Not only is Malala a symbol whose story resonates through a multiplicity of mediums, but has also become an endorser for prominent US political figures.

For instance, her dramatic image appears on the cover of Time Magazine on 29 April 2013 as one of the top 100 most influential people. Her hijab also remains half off representing a new life that is finally forming or a new moderate Muslim archetype. The black and white contrast fabricates the pensiveness and solemnness of the story. Other images appear in the magazine, both in black and white (Seliger). Will Malala be a symbol of education for women all over the world? In addition, an article in the very same issue describes Malala as finally "where she wants to be: back in school," suggesting that women have no access to education in Muslim countries, when in fact she was shot on her way to school. Again, this reasserts the "Muslim region" as peculiar to notions of brutality, barbarianism and violence. The article also confirms that "The Taliban almost made Malala a martyr; they succeeded in making her a symbol" (Clinton 140), again displaying notions of hegemonic narratives that fear what the Taliban might

do to the U.S. when ironically, Western mediums and U.S. officials have been the ones using her as a symbol. Coincidentally, the article was written by Chelsea Clinton. Concomitantly the following April (2014), Hillary Clinton was revealed as one of the top 100 most influential people. Coincidentally, Malala wrote the article herself praising Clinton for saying that “Women’s rights are human rights” (“The Advocate for Women Leaders”). My use of the world coincidentally is meant as a means to reveal the concurrent activity of the way the rhetoric around Malala is embedded so deeply into the ethico-political institutions.

Not only are these narratives so deeply disseminated worldwide, harming Third World women, but are also reflected as coherent and believable. However, the use of Chelsea and Hillary Clinton suggests its immorality. One witnesses the sustainability of White patriarchy through White femininity. Thus, Western cultural imperialism needs this White femininity to continue to perform its masculinity (Shome, “White Femininity and the Discourse of the Nation” 333). By tying narratives with alarming low rates of fidelity to U.S. officials, truths about Muslim women become submerged. The lived experiences of Muslim women become a far distant star; unattainable and unachievable. The only Truth we hear is one of “White saviors” and “Western feminism” and of “justifications of war”.

Malala is on a plethora of communication mediums; she has a book, a movie, a Nobel peace prizewinner, and has been on the cover of many magazines. One medium does not surpass the other, reemphasizing the effectiveness of Western movements in aiding and pushing their rhetorical agenda further. Malala is an iconic figure that is being

used as a means to move bodies, texts, and images as rhetorical constructs. Her rhetoric justifies the movement of U.S. American bodies into Pakistan and the region as a whole. In addition, her own body is being used as collateral and as part of a larger hegemonic discourse.

On July 12, 2013, Malala gave her groundbreaking speech at the United Nations youth takeover. This followed directly after she was named top 100 by Time Magazine in April of 2013. Following that, she won the Nobel peace prizewinner in October of 2014. This was during the time period that the U.S. and Pakistan were involved in military clashes along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border from 2008 until 2012. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Malala was a Pakistani girl who became the center of Western discourse in 2012.

During Malala's speech at the United Nations, her hijab remained half off, representing a turn towards modernization but a desire to hold on to her Muslim tradition. The pink color of her hijab signifies a stance towards heteronormativity, as she becomes a symbol of Muslim femininity that sustains White femininity. Does the Muslim region appear inorganic towards heteronormativity? Or do ideologies of Whiteness make it appear so?

It is important to note that there are moments where Muslim women that embody Whiteness counter resist it simultaneously. Even though this study argues that the archetype of the oppressed woman embodies and reproduces White femininity, there are moments where these women also occupy a third space, called disidentification. By looking at this through a much broader brushstroke, performances of dominant structures

do not necessarily operate in an unequivocal binary. Therefore, performances are not necessarily with or against hegemonic structures, but instead occupy a third space, disidentification (Munoz 5). The concept of disidentification is a mode of survival in which individuals work to both resist and/or conform to hegemonic spheres (5). As a survival strategy, performances of disidentification create social relations that become a new roadmap for minoritarian counterpublic spheres (5). As marginalized identities engage in a fierce and exhausting tug-of-war between working with and/or resisting dominant identities, those who assimilate become “good subjects” while those who resist become marked as “bad subjects” (11).

Is Malala’s hijab both a moment of disidentification and an opportunity for a counterpublic? For instance, consider the debate around the hijab. This was only able to occur due to a normalized narrative of White femininity, reproduced by White patriarchy. In the context of White heterosexual women, she is there to be looked at (Shome, *Diana and Beyond* 22). On the other hand, the covered woman represents a threat to the White male gaze and to relations between White women and White men. When the White male cannot see the veiled women, he loses control over female desire (24). It is important to note that a gaze refers “To the act of looking...A way of thinking about, and acting in the world” (Devereaux 347). However, it is the male gaze that often sexualizes and objectifies the female through the act of looking (Tragos 547). Mulvey has concluded that this leaves no room for a woman to explore her own gaze (6). However, Shome problematizes Mulvey’s concept of the male gaze by calling forth for one to look at the gaze through the intersections of race, gender and sexuality (Shome, “Whiteness and the

Politics of Location: Postcolonial Reflections” 125). The White gaze for instance would be historically and culturally learned (125). I argue that various forms of oppression and dominance are created through a White male heterosexual gaze and are reflected in modern day fairy tales such as Beauty and the Beast (“Beauty and the Beast” 28). This gaze normalizes oppressive aspects that are hard to see. Thus, popular culture and the monstrous creations are symptomatic of colonial anxiety in the context that they are a direct result of dominant ideological structures within today’s contemporary storytelling. These narratives that are portrayed through a White male gaze; reflect even deeper anxieties within the U.S. and beyond (33). One of these anxieties is the White male’s fear of the covered up woman. This directly situates Muslim women into the limelight.

However, as Malala wears her hijab we can conclude that her body still resists the hegemonic gaze even as she performs and sustains White femininity. However, Fawzia Ahmad has made the important point that today the west is constructing the moderate Muslim woman, the one who won’t rock the boat in academia and in Western discourse (cited in Cooke et al. 108). However, as Malala transitions into the moderate Muslim woman one may still see moments of conformity and resistance to White femininity. For instance Malala resists narratives that the hijab remains a symbol of oppression by stating, "I believe it’s a woman’s right to decide what she wants to wear and if a woman can go to the beach and wear nothing, then why can’t she also wear everything” (“I Don’t Cover My Face”). As Malala conforms to White femininity she also resists the White gaze by keeping her hijab on. However, has her loosely worn hijab become looser as she gains more and more popularity? One needs to be cautious of falling into the moderate

Muslim woman role because of the tendency for this Western constructed archetype to mute and conflate the experiences of Islamic and Secular women. As Malala sets the stage for Muslim women's identity, White femininity produces a focal ideological force in the performance of national identity (Shome, Diana and Beyond 20). The national and the global are thus intertwined in that the national is informed by larger global relations and the global is supported by national logics (5). This informs how a rethinking of White national femininity through a global and geopolitical lens is vital (5).

Performing White Femininity through 'Terrorism' and Education

Understanding White women's relation globally as a bookmark for securing White heteronormative patriarchy, allows one to rethink Muslim women's relations to both White femininity as both a continuation of White femininity and as a producer of common archetypes of Muslim women. In this context, Malala's spoken words throughout her speech, implicate her performance as a carrier of White femininity through education and terrorism. She says,

Malala day is not my day. Today is the day of every woman, every boy and every girl who have raised their voice for their rights. There are hundreds of Human rights activists and social workers who are not only speaking for human rights, but who are struggling to achieve their goals of education, peace and equality. Thousands of people have been killed by the terrorists and millions have been injured. I am just one of them. So here I stand. So here I stand, one girl, among many. I speak not for myself, but so those without a voice can be heard. Those who have fought for their rights. Their right to live in peace. Their right to be treated with dignity. Their right to equality of opportunity. Their right to be educated. (Yousafzai, "Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013")

This narrative reinforces the notion that all Muslim women are oppressed and have no access to education. Her statement reflects equality from a White Western feminism point of view, which attends to equality of opportunity as opposed to the

intersections of each woman's unique identity. Nonetheless, her performance engenders a relationship between the visual and her words, creating more credibility and thus tapping into the emotive. Additionally, Malala emphasizes the concept of human rights in her speech. Asad clarifies that by looking at the historical development of human rights during the 17th-19th century, citizenship rights were divided among the civil, political and social. This classification that was derived out of an Anglo American tradition is what has become part of today's declaration of human rights (9). In other words, states will use human rights against their citizens in the same manner that colonial empires use it against their subjects (8). Therefore, one needs to problematize the concept of human rights in the same manner that one would problematize hegemonic thought and the idea of Whiteness.

It is important to also emphasize that Malala indeed suffered at the hands of the Taliban but that her narrative reinforces discourses that all women suffered in the same manner. It also underlines narratives of Whiteness that violence by Muslim identified groups are associated with terrorism in contrast to mental illness if violence had been associated with White men. As Malala performs her speech she risks not only re-securing White femininity, but also negating Muslim men globally by reducing them to categories of violence and terrorism and reifying racist hegemonic discourses.

Conquergood elaborates that there are four ethical pitfalls in performance: the custodian's rip off, the enthusiast's infatuation, the curator's exhibitionism and the skeptic's cop out (4). The custodian's rip off is when performances of Other cultures are appropriated (6). Additionally, the enthusiast's infatuation is when one too easily

assumes an identity with the Other and generalizes. The curator is committed to the difference of the Other through exoticization, romanticization, fascination or primitivism (7). On the other hand, the skeptic's cop out is a detachment from considering ethical performances and does not attempt to perform whatsoever (8). In turn, the performances above stray away from ethical performances that are true to nature. Conquergood introduces the dialogic performance as an ethical performance, which is a process that brings different views, voices, beliefs into conversation with one another, while also merging the self and Other between cooperating ideologies (9). Madison extends this by introducing the dialogic as co-performative witnessing ("Co-Performative" 826). It is to engage in dialogue and a political act while also witnessing simultaneously. While Conquergood and Madison's arguments are about ethnography, I argue that this can be extended to other fields of research where the postcolonial critic observes the performance of a subject who has either engaged or disengaged with the dialogic. Conquergood urges us as researchers to merge our self with the cooperating ideologies, this can be applied to Rhetorical or Postcolonial Criticism in two ways. First, the postcolonial critic is an observer who merges her/his self with what she/he is witnessing and with the cooperating ideologies. This allows the critic to deconstruct when ideologies are being co-opted. However, the critic must be extremely reflexive of when he/she is embodying privileged positionalities. Second, by extending Conquergood's dialogic performance into postcolonial criticism, one can examine how the subject at study is navigating and performing between the four ethical performances that he describes. By observing Malala through a postcolonial critique once can witness how she moves in

between performances. As Malala is seen as engaging in a dialogic performance, because the audience is unaware of her embodiment of White femininity, it becomes very difficult to witness the moments in which she is not in the dialogic.

Malala's performance, situated in the custodian rip off, has been appropriated by ideologies of Whiteness as she speaks out in the name of all Muslims that need "saving" and "educating". In this context where as in ethnography the observer has appropriated another culture, Malala is embodying this appropriation. As she internalizes White femininity she appropriates the performance of her own culture while simultaneously gaining credibility as a Muslim woman speaking "for" Muslim women. Due to the internalization of White femininity she also performs the enthusiast's infatuation as she generalizes her own identity.

She continues,

Dear friends, on 9 October 2012, the Taliban shot me on the left side of my forehead. They shot my friends, too. They thought that the bullets would silence us, but they failed. And out of that silence came thousands of voices. The terrorists thought they would change my aims and stop my ambitions. But nothing changed in my life except this: weakness, fear and hopelessness died. Strength, power and courage were born. (Yousafzai, "Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013")

The audience's applause to the statement above is significant as Malala's tone and volume in voice increases, representing strength and assertiveness, reaffirming her spoken words. As her performance evokes the emotive among the audience it also induces fear among feminists like myself who worry that this reinforces the rhetoric of saving women. As feminists we need to accept difference and explore the implications of freeing women to become more secular and modern. Additionally, we need to be weary

about the rhetoric of saving others because of what it will reveal about our attitudes (Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving* 43).

Consider the next part in which she also Re-performs White femininity through Education:

Dear sisters and brothers, we realize the importance of light when we see darkness. We realize the importance of our voice when we are silenced. In the same way, when we were in Swat, the north of Pakistan, we realized the importance of pens and books when we saw the guns. The wise saying, “The pen is mightier than sword” was true. The extremists are afraid of books and pens. The power of education frightens them. They are afraid of women. The power of the voice of women frightens them. And that is why they killed 14 innocent medical students in the recent attack in Quetta. And that is why they killed many female teachers and polio workers in Khyber Pukhtoon Khwa and FATA. That is why they are blasting schools every day. Because they were and they are afraid of change, afraid of the equality that we will bring into our society. (Yousafzai, “Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013”)

Earlier I had mentioned that second wave feminism, was a movement in the name of White middle class women who wanted meaningful work and equal opportunity (Baumgardner and Richards 50). Popular discourse exposes audiences to a White Western feminist point of view, one that was birthed out of second wave feminism. Malala’s appeal to education and equality re-secures a feminism that was birthed out of a White heterosexual middle class narrative. This negates women of color, queer, and poor communities who may have different experiences. As the discursive space becomes defined by White norms and sealed by Muslim women, the inclusion of any other narrative becomes close to impossible. Thus, through narratives of education and equality, Malala paves the way for the archetype of the oppressed Muslim woman. Additionally, her use of the words “dark” and “light” assume a primitive vs. modern

binary. Her narrative assumes that this “dark” notion is anti-education while the “light” will bring about education and modernity.

The Universality of Gender Oppression and the Rhetoric of Sameness

Another prominent theme throughout Malala’s speech is the universality of the oppression of women. This narrative continuously erases differences between women; therefore, it also erases various forms of discrimination. Throughout her speech Malala paints the oppression of Muslim women as a local problem that only exists along Muslim societies. She says,

Honourable Secretary General, peace is necessary for education. In many parts of the world especially Pakistan and Afghanistan; terrorism, wars and conflicts stop children to go to their schools. We are really tired of these wars. Women and children are suffering in many parts of the world in many ways. In India, innocent and poor children are victims of child labour. Many schools have been destroyed in Nigeria. People in Afghanistan have been affected by the hurdles of extremism for decades. Young girls have to do domestic child labour and are forced to get married at early age. Poverty, ignorance, injustice, racism and the deprivation of basic rights are the main problems faced by both men and women. (Yousafzai, “Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013”)

White femininity is already implicated in the creation of borders and boundaries around the issues of gender, race, class, sexuality, globality and in performing the modern (Shome, Diana and Beyond 20). Muslim femininity that is produced by Western discourse re-enacts these performances preserving and continuing the script of White masculinity, thus, functioning as a tool for the maintenance and management of region affairs. As competing patriarchies of both the East and the West enter the global sphere, it is crucial to unpack how Western discourse only reveals one side of the story.

Additionally, it is imperative to recognize that when a Muslim icon asks the West to intervene in the region by pertaining to violence as a Muslim specific problem, this type

of rhetoric disregards women's oppression in the United States (Cloud 289). It also negates feminists in the region that are already doing the work within their own communities.

Dear fellows, today I am focusing on women's rights and girls' education because they are suffering the most. There was a time when women social activists asked men to stand up for their rights. But, this time, we will do it by ourselves. I am not telling men to step away from speaking for women's rights rather I am focusing on women to be independent to fight for themselves. (Yousafzai, "Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013")

As mentioned earlier, Malala continues to appeal to education; thus, re-securing a narrative of White femininity. Additionally, she appeals to women as a homogenous category in opposition to males. First, this forces individuals to identify as either men or women, while many identify as nongender, meaning they do not identify with either or are in between categories such as trans individuals. Her rhetoric, as a whole, negates that there are Other marginalized communities such as the LGBTQA community.

Second Mohanty warns against discourses where women are identified as a coherent group with the same interests regardless of class, race, ethnicity and so on (Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders* 21). As Malala identifies women as one generic group, she structures a dichotomy where women are in opposition to men. Consider, the Arab and Muslim societies that appear as one standard group when in reality they consist of over twenty countries (28). Moreover, Arab and Muslim societies include a variety of religions and ethnicities. Not every Arab is Muslim and not every Muslim is Arab.

However, Third world women as a group are read as:

religious (read: not progressive), family-oriented (read: traditional), legally unsophisticated (read: they are still not conscious of their rights), illiterate (read:

ignorant), domestic (read: backward) and sometimes revolutionary (read: their country is in a state of war; they must fight!). (40)

On account of this, the universality of gender oppression is a violent cycle, on the result that it erases class and race and highlights the gender oppression aspect. This in turn, devalues women as having intersectional experiences (107).

Universal sisterhood (the transcendence of the “male world”) ends up being a middle class, psychologized notion that effectively erases material and ideological power differences within and among groups of women, especially between First and Third World women. (117)

Again, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that women’s experiences differ depending on their intersections of their race, class, gender, class, ability, body type, religion, and nationality. A Muslim, Arab heterosexual, able-bodied woman will have completely different experiences than a black, lesbian, Christian, US, able-bodied woman.

Malala also appeals to a rhetoric of sameness in order to continue the narrative of oppressed Muslim women. Towards the end of her speech Malala continues,

Dear brothers and sisters, we want schools and education for every child’s bright future. We will continue our journey to our destination of peace and education for everyone. No one can stop us. We will speak for our rights and we will bring change through our voice. We must believe in the power and the strength of our words. Our words can change the world. (Yousafzai, “Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013”)

Ironically, as Malala appeals to rhetoric and language as the means to change the world, the audience is again deceived into a universal narrative. This again strays one away from a true dialogic and ethical performance. What words are changing the world? That Muslim women are oppressed? Malala is certainly right, that words can change the world, however; whose words are changing the world? In the earlier chapter, I had

mentioned that a speaker's location and claims determine if the speaker is speaking "with" or "for" the Other (Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking" 7). As many theorists have explored the consequences that occur when a different identity speaks "for" an identity that they do not share, there is a lack in literature of what occurs when the speaker has full claims to the culture that they are speaking "for". This creates a mirage that masks the fact that identities can in fact embody Other positionalities and perform them as such. Malala, a Muslim woman speaking "for" Muslim women, appears as speaking "with" due to her visible identity as being a Muslim woman. However, her embodiment and performance of White feminist ideologies reveal that as she presents herself as having a salient location, she is in fact still speaking "for" and not "with" through her embodiment of White femininity. Again, being aware of the multiple states of consciousness and embodiments in performances can assist one in being able to identify when these performances negate the community being spoken "for".

Towards the end of her speech Malala adds,

Because we are all together, united for the cause of education. And if we want to achieve our goal, then let us empower ourselves with the weapon of knowledge and let us shield ourselves with unity and togetherness. Dear brothers and sisters, we must not forget that millions of people are suffering from poverty, injustice and ignorance. We must not forget that millions of children are out of schools. We must not forget that our sisters and brothers are waiting for a bright peaceful future. (Yousafzai, "Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013")

As Malala appeals to notions of "unity and togetherness" she mistakenly appeals to the rhetoric of sameness that erases difference. Furthermore, as she brings in other aspects such as poverty and ignorance, it implies that developing countries were the cause of their own poverty, and globalization and neoliberalism had no part in poor countries

becoming even poorer. When one engages in a critique of developing countries, one must be wary of the damage that accompanies critiques that do not link local country-specific issues to larger structures that are controlled and managed by globalization and neoliberal markets. As globalization spreads, the developing countries are also affected. As Malala promotes the rhetoric of unity and sameness, she fails to see the West's role in poverty and ignorance. Failing to link larger structures to local issues, negates the culture, country and its people, and does not address the root problem. Consider illness. When one has symptoms of sickness or a medical problem, it is best to find the root problem and address it, instead of taking medication to mask the symptoms. In other words, when one addresses local problems without addressing larger structures, they ignore one of the fundamental root problems. Additionally, as globalization forces the entire globe to learn the universal language of English and performances of Whiteness, the world learns about the West while the East's knowledge of the rest of the world remains limited. She further secures this through her use of "bright" again pertaining to notions that light is a more modern appeal for the future of education. Malala reinforces this notion of globalization as a positive force that will end the struggle against oppression: "So let us wage a global struggle against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism and let us pick up our books and pens. They are our most powerful weapons" (Yousafzai, "Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013"). Again, as terrorism becomes associated with the Taliban who shot Malala, it also becomes conflated with the category Muslim. Additionally, Malala proclaims to the world that terrorism is Muslim specific, she avows the accuracy in this rhetoric due to her salient location. She ends, " One child, one teacher, one pen and one

book can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first” (Yousafzai, “Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013”). However, we must question how one teacher and one child can change the world? How can we transcend multiple identities and multiple locations through one narrative?

Romanticizing Power Structures

As Malala reduces women to a homogenous category, she then appeals to a call for action:

Dear sisters and brothers, now it's time to speak up. So today, we call upon the world leaders to change their strategic policies in favor of peace and prosperity. We call upon the world leaders that all the peace deals must protect women and children's rights. A deal that goes against the dignity of women and their rights is unacceptable. We call upon all governments to ensure free compulsory education for every child all over the world. We call upon all governments to fight against terrorism and violence, to protect children from brutality and harm. (Yousafzai, “Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013”)

Again as Malala reduces world leaders into one common group, the consequences become multifold. This is where layered contexts become important. First, which world leaders is she referring to? Second, is the audience assuming that all world leaders must change their policies are is she only referring to the leaders of the Third World Countries? This leaves the audience to assume that Third World leaders and governments must change their policies. It also romanticizes governments and world leaders, hiding corruption and making it seem that governments and world leaders can easily put women at the forefront of issues. One must be wary in romanticizing governments because policies and regulations can always be passed, but the enforcement of them is not always so clear-cut. Racism interjects when political power gives orders to kill and let die. Groups are divided into species. Some become more worthy than others. Biopolitical

powers begin to believe that in order to survive, others must die. The death of the Other, the death of the minority is what makes political powers thrive and proliferate (Foucault 69). Consider, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, where Palestinians have been killed daily in favor of the creation and expansion of the State of Israel. As political powers such as governments set the stage for which group is more worthy than the Other, and do so under the guise of a democratic state, one may begin to understand how Muslim bodies are already sentenced to death in popular culture and the media through the rhetoric of Whiteness, Westernization, democratization, and modernization. As Whiteness defines which political powers may enter the playing field, the Muslim women become the bargaining chip between competing patriarchies on the world stage. Malala continues:

We call upon the developed nations to support the expansion of educational opportunities for girls in the developing world. We call upon all communities to be tolerant – to reject prejudice based on cast, creed, sect, religion or gender. To ensure freedom and equality for women so that they can flourish. We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.

Again as Malala appeals to women through a White Western feminist point of view, she negates the issues of access to education in the U.S. by highlighting education in developing countries. In fact many Muslim identified counties have extremely high literacy rates, and continue to rise (Adult and Youth Literacy). Additionally, regional literacy rates mask individual country rates where one country may be significantly higher than a neighboring country in a specific region. For this reason, one must be circumspect in promoting sameness in literacy rates for women in developing countries because the date will vary significantly from country to country. This also indicates that not only do Western narratives tend to negate certain races, genders, and ethnicities

through a White dominant narrative, but statistics additionally reaffirm this through the blending and homogenization of minority statistics into regional statistics. Hence, one may witness a similar pattern one that succumbs to a hegemonic narrative of Whiteness.

As Muslim feminists, such as Malala, begin to dismantle and bring forth narratives in the name of oppression, they also negate Other feminists that are trying to fight oppression in their own region. For instance, Malala states, “We call upon our sisters around the world to be brave – to embrace the strength within themselves and realize their full potential” (Yousafzai, “Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013”). Her statement implies that women in developing countries need to realize their potential because they are not yet modern or civilized. However, by calling upon women to realize their utmost potential, one risks creating a narrative that feminists in the region are not doing the necessary work when in fact they are. It also assumes that resistance only takes one form.

Consider the concept of feminism, which can be many forms of consciousness working concurrently, such as rejection, awareness, and activism (Cooke, “Multiple Critique” 92). One may reject patriarchal values in their own culture, while also rejecting global narratives of discrimination, simultaneously raising awareness of how narratives of Whiteness cannot be applied to the region, while also raising activism for women’s issues at a local level. Feminism is not a standardized category, instead many states of mindfulness are working together at the very same time. What becomes problematic, is when only one form of discrimination risks being the only narrative in Western discourse, such as the rhetoric of the oppressed. As Western discourse ranks oppression it becomes

anti-intersectional. As we are called upon by feminist leaders, such as Malala to realize our potential, it becomes a slippery contradiction that traps feminists like myself. This is due to the fact that our narratives never reach the limelight because they are not in line with the general White Western narrative. However, coming to the realization of this, is a first step in dismantling hegemonic narratives in the name of Muslim femininity, serving White femininity in the name of White patriarchy.

Disidentification

However, Malala's ties to her religion do allow for a more accurate portrayal of Islam:

I do not even hate the Taliban who shot me. Even if there is a gun in my hand and he stands in front of me. I would not shoot him. This is the compassion that I have learnt from Muhammad-the prophet of mercy, Jesus Christ and Lord Buddha. This is the legacy of change that I have inherited from Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This is the philosophy of non-violence that I have learnt from Gandhi Jee, Bacha Khan and Mother Teresa. And this is the forgiveness that I have learnt from my mother and father. This is what my soul is telling me, be peaceful and love everyone. (Yousafzai, "Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013")

I had mentioned earlier that Conquergood's concept of dialogic performance and Madison's co-performative witnessing allows one to be engaged in a political act in order to perform deep moral issues ("Co-performative" 829). This allows for a truer and more ethical and intercultural understanding (10). As Malala switches into a dialogic performance in the above excerpt we witness a dialogic that is open to difference among religions and iconic figures. If Malala were to perform her entire speech in the dialogic, first, it would evoke a more accurate portrayal of both the culture and Islamic religion, changing the landscape of the normative archetype of the oppressed. Second, it would

allow for a platform for cross-cultural relations that are allow for a feminist ethic to emerge that would lead to a safer and moral space for women across the intersections of class, gender, sexuality, and class. I return to this feminist ethic in the conclusion. However overall, Malala's speech suppresses the dialogic and in turn brings forth a narrative of White femininity and feminism. This is due to the fact that Malala's embodiment of White feminism disengages her from an ethical dialogic performance and instead allows her to re-perform the appropriation of another culture, and to assume an identity that is not hers. Shome explains, "White femininity is always a doing and not a being. It is always pushed and pulled, routed and rerouted to script national desires. And it is in the pushing and pulling, routing and rerouting, that it functions as a site of cultural politics" (Diana and Beyond 21). Hence, Muslim femininity is similar in that it is also pushed and rerouted to function as a site of cultural politics, but is made invisible to the public eye when it does not re-secure and replicate White femininity. To that end, it is crucial to bring forward narratives of subaltern voices that do not make it to center stage to set a platform to bring forth the visibility of resistance narratives. Even though Malala has instances of resistance and dialogical attributes in her performances, the majority of her narrative does reawaken and sustain White femininity in the name of White masculinity. If her narrative were entirely resistive in nature she would definitely not be cast as the main spokesperson for Muslim women.

In an attempt to explain the misuse of Islam Malala says,

I remember that there was a boy in our school who was asked by a journalist, "Why are the Taliban against education?" He answered very simply. By pointing to his book he said, "A Talib doesn't know what is written inside this book." They

think that God is a tiny, little conservative being who would send girls to the hell just because of going to school. The terrorists are misusing the name of Islam and Pashtun society for their own personal benefits. Pakistan is a peace-loving democratic country. Pashtuns want education for their daughters and sons. And Islam is a religion of peace, humanity and brotherhood. Islam says that it is not only each child's right to get education, rather it is their duty and responsibility. (Yousafzai, "Malala Yousafzai United Nations Speech 2013")

In the excerpt above Malala resists the narrative that Islam is a terrorist religion by highlighting Islam's fundamental values. However, as the Taliban is accused of misusing Islam, one cannot separate the Taliban's actions ahistorically. Rather, one needs to question why a resurgence in extremism has arisen in the region and what factors, both in the East and the West, have contributed to the formation of such extremist groups. How has the colonial, political, economic and neoliberal residue contributed to such developments? As Malala continues her performance, she strays away from a dialogic performance, paving the way for an opportunity to advance the political and economic agenda of the Western hemisphere.

Malala: An Interview With Emma Watson

Towards the end of 2013, Malala published her book, *I am Malala*, with Christina Lamb. By 2015, Malala's movie, *He named me Malala*, was released. Shortly after the movie was released, Emma Watson, a British actress, model, and activist interviewed Malala. The interview also conformed to a script of White femininity ("Emma Watson Interviews"). A few themes are worth considering.

First, Malala's hijab now reveals her neck and is loosely worn in contrast to her tightly wrapped hijab during her speech to the UN. This represents earlier discussions of the West's efforts to create the moderate Muslim woman who does not rock the boat. As

one travels through a historical timeline with Malala's performances, her hijab becomes a performance, evolving, and re-adapting to Malala's increased performances of White femininity. Thus, the hijab adapts and succumbs to Malala's internalized White femininity.

Emma Watson, another symbol of White femininity, speaks of the notion of equality from a White feminism point of view, delivered a speech to the UN in 2014 about gender equality. She urged men to join the equality movement and referenced other ground-breaking speeches, such as Hillary Clinton's speech in Beijing about women's rights. When in theory, Clinton is held to high regards as a woman seeking change for all women, her speech speaks "for" and not "with" women at a global human rights level. This places women into monolithic categorizations, stagnating any chance for women to voice their experiences intersectionally. This also raises the question of how and when one must claim responsibility in their privileged positionality when speaking "for" Other women. As Hillary Clinton claims authenticity as a speaker she does so as a White heterosexual feminist. For this reason, her rhetoric will always reflect her positionality as a White woman. It is integral to understand that her narrative is not a wrong narrative, on the contrary, it becomes inauthentic when her positionality and location as a speaker mutes a location of a community whose voice cannot be heard.

As Emma Watson places Clinton on a pedestal she also presents Malala as the symbol of authenticity for all Muslim cultures. As Watson leads the interview she has the power to appeal to Malala to follow her narrative of White femininity. Emma asks Malala about feminism, Malala responds that Emma inspired her to call herself a feminist when

she heard Emma saying, “If not now when, if not me who”. Malala states in the interview, “Feminism is just another word for equality”. Even though Malala states she hasn’t chosen a political side in the current presidential elections, she endorses Clinton by saying that America needs a woman president (“Emma Watson Interviews”). As demonstrated earlier, the synergetic cycle between Chelsea, Hillary, Emma, and Malala is only one of many examples of how Western apparatuses such as the media work in collaboration to spread institutional and hegemonic values from an U.S. American, Western, heterosexual, middle class, able-bodied White lens. As a result, Western discourse will in most cases, reflect this positionality as the only “normal” positionality.

Earlier in the chapter I had discussed Malala’s pink hijab as a symbol of heterosexuality. At times throughout the study I questioned myself as to whether I had read too much into Malala frequently wearing pink. However, in the interview, Emma also asks Malala why she is always wearing pink. Malala responds, “I don’t know this but I have always liked pink color and when I was going to the UN speech I wore pink that day, I don’t know why and so yes now the film is orange and pink so pink is everywhere”. Emma responds, “So it must be a thing” and then says

I feel it’s nice because I get the impression that you are a person who is generally shy, struggling with all the attention being thrust on her. I though its wonderful that you chose this bright color which meant you wanted to be seen and you know you wanted to spread your message in spite of that and I thought that was wonderful. (“Emma Watson Interviews”)

Is the hearsay about Malala’s pink hijab really an attempt to gain people’s attention and spread a message or is it heteronormativity working in the background? Does the color of pink and the talk about the color of pink reinforce White

heteronormativity in the name of heterosexuality? One must certainly always question the meaning and interpretations behind performances and their implications on various audiences. I believe the color pink is no coincidence but on contrary reinforces the heterosexual nuclear family as the correct and modern way.

Additionally, Malala explicitly states that her goal is to see every child go to school. This statement, which is frequently heard throughout Malala's rhetoric, is unrealistic in the sense that it erases other factors that could prevent a child from receiving education such as poverty, ability, and sexuality. It is unrealistic to assume that every child in the world will be able to attend school. There are economic, as well as global factors, that continue to contribute to under development and this affects education. So one must question the role globalization via the West and how it has contributed to a decline in education. For example, earlier I had mentioned the decline of education in Egypt shortly after colonization. Malala's notion of inequality only focuses on gender as a problem. She asserts that individuals shouldn't be discriminated against due to gender. The focus on gender as the only interstice that exists for Muslim women is a process in which race and religion become articulated through gender difference, such as with the formation of the Muslimwomen that I previously discussed, where race, gender and citizenship become conflated (Cooke, "Islamic Feminism" 108). The only visible marker becomes gender, and it is for this reason that gender masks the ability to see other factors that could lead to a lack of education such as economical, racial, ethnic, and other forms of discrimination.

However, Malala also enters into moments of disidentification where she informs Emma that Islam has been misinterpreted and that contrary to public belief, Islam is a peaceful religion that promotes education. Additionally, at the end of the interview, she also asserts that one must hold governments accountable, implying that Malala is also aware of the role government's play in this dangerous game.

As I have aimed to demonstrate we witness a blend of intersecting texts and images in which the archetype of the oppressed is pushed further in Western discourse. However, it does not stop there. We also notice more multifaceted dimensions of Malala's rhetoric that are omnipresent when visiting the Malala fund website (Malala Fund). The website allows us (as a collective public) to connect with Malala via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Email and Google +. Not only does each social media site target a certain form of rhetoric, but it connects bodies of color all over the world. When visiting the website one witnesses oppressed young girls from Nigeria, Jordan, and Pakistan (Ironically three different continents are grouped into one). The affect of the images, words, and connection of these bodies leaves the viewer/reader with hope that Third World women can be saved. Hope, that they will eventually be able to live as humans, practice democracy, and have an education. Women with fully forming faces. Women with freedom. In reality though, it only stagnates women and paints a picture of the region that is untruthful and will displace Muslim women further. One can't see the harm in this archetype because of its hegemonic civility. Thus, its effectiveness is massive and its ethics is detrimental. The whole world has affectively related at the same register as Malala and the global public doesn't know that they have

affectively tuned into something violently unethical. This immoral register will in turn harm more bodies of color especially with the spread of capitalism and neoliberalism as more bodies are thrown under the exception. Hence, we see Muslim women's bodies torn and pushed into the limelight by the West and then further disciplined by their own patriarchies.

Conclusion

In the beginning of this study, I had discussed White women's agency as being centered around their ethos and feminine virtue. As the notion of centering the ethos sets up high credibility for women's agency to speak publicly as equals, it also erases gender, racial, class difference and inequality. As feminine virtue symbolized White upper class women who were in a relationship to the "non-White" Other, it also sets the foundation to what performances of femininity will be acceptable in the public eye (Rogness, and Foust 152). Thus, Malala is a rhetorical construct created by the Western media. She is an archetype that must perform to White femininity in the service of White patriarchy.

As Malala becomes one of many faces that symbolize oppression in the Muslim world, it becomes problematic. When one form of discrimination risks being the only narrative in Western discourse, such as the rhetoric of the oppressed, Muslim women are suppressed further. While Muslim women previously have had to resist patriarchy at a local and regional level, now they have to work even harder to resist Western discourse defined through a White patriarchal lens, placing them into a tug of war between competing patriarchies. The oppressed woman's image, not only negates Muslim women, but also negates feminists working in the region. When in reality feminists are working

within the systems that have marginalized them, Muslim women are still perceived as victims (Cooke, "Multiple Critique" 93).

As Muslim women are caught in a battle between the East and the West, told how to perform, what to wear, and what to say, they lose any chance of preserving any agency possible. The only visible marker becomes gender and it is for this reason that gender masks the ability to see other factors that could lead to a lack of education, such as economical, racial, ethnic, and other forms of discrimination. The issue with Western discourse and its control of Muslim women's images causes a major setback for Muslim societies. Where feminists in the region have already begun to do the necessary work, they cannot continue the work because they must stop and defend inaccurate circulating images of themselves in Western media. This prevents them from continuing work at a local level because they are trying to deflect harmful archetypes at a global level. In this context, agency becomes displaced over and over again. As the West and the East compete over whether Muslim women are oppressed, women's agency becomes displaced at a local, regional and global level. As Muslim women's agency becomes defined for them, it is easy to overlook that it is being defined "for" them and not "with" them. When France bans the veil, women's agency is being defined for them and one often tends to conform to what has been laid out for them to follow. However, this does not mean that Malala has no agency whatsoever or that her story has not been met by resistance.

Consider the backlash against Malala in Pakistan. A number of Pakistani schools have created an "I am not Malala" day in demonstration against her activism. They state

that Malala's book is extremely controversial due to its anti-Islamic and anti-constitutional rhetoric. These small movements have arisen because of the belief that Malala is being used by the West to further promote their anti-Islamic discourse (Kedmey). My belief is that these demonstrations are exactly what we need to pay attention to. Studying the vernacular discourse of these movements and why they are developing in resistance to global narratives is crucial. These protests are stemming out because of an attack on a specific religion and culture. They are proliferating because of Western imperialism.

On the other hand, Malala is also trying to gain her own agency. She signifies a struggle between the West co-opting her body while also speaking "for" her, and between trying to assert her own agency. In today's global age the assertion of her agency can be ignored but not to its fullest extent. However, as Malala continues to travel on speaking tours she will continue to lose more and more agency due to her embodiment of Western feminism. It is my hope though, that she will hang on to those moments of disidentification.

However, what remains at core is, the danger of Muslim women internalizing White femininity but also speaking for their own communities. How can one be critical of Muslim women when they are speaking for their own community thus appearing as speaking "with" and not "for"? How can one reach a more ethical feminism? For this reason questioning what is beyond the physical body standing before us is of necessity. Additionally, problematizing the performance becomes vital. This requires us to be able to identify narratives of dominance and when a speaker has little to no agency. My goal

in critiquing Malala's performance was to demonstrate how sometimes agency can appear resistive, but it is simply parroting a dominant ideology. As Malala is showcased as a feminist, she is showcased as a woman who took control of her own agency. However, she is performing the agency of another. In reality she has no agency except in her moments of disidentification and dialogic performances.

Another goal of this chapter was to showcase how one can become more aware of narratives that harm Muslim women under the guise of saving them. In the archetype of the oppressed, as gender becomes the only visible marker for Muslim women, it masks the ability to see other factors that could lead to a lack of education such as economic, racial, ethnic, and other forms of discrimination. It also leads audiences to assume racial, religious and cultural stereotypes about "the oppressed Muslim woman." This does not reflect an intersectional feminist ethic. As gender masks the intersections of race, religion, and class, it becomes extremely difficult for one to bring forward a feminist ethic. An intersectional feminist ethic takes privilege, power, resistance, oppression, and performances across a spectrum of interconnected points through race, gender, sexuality, ability, body type, education, and religion. More importantly, it takes identity into consideration, but also takes into account what kind of identity is being performed. As most of the field of ethics has steered away from identity (Aristotle; Bakhtin; Buber; Foucault; Levinas), an intersectional feminist ethic advocates for our identities at the core value of any ethics. My being as an Arab female is an ontological state. What I learn about my place of being in the world becomes epistemological. I could epistemologically learn to perform White femininity for example, even though my ontological state will

remain an Arab-Muslim woman. I will return to a feminist ethic as an implication in my concluding chapter.

My goal is to create an understanding of archetypes that are being created by Western discourse, how performances by Muslim women can negate their own women and how we can identify these moments. It allows for an understanding of how larger ideologies create archetypes as rhetorical constructs and how a feminist ethic can assist in understanding power, privilege, and oppression. It is to showcase the tensions that feminists, such as myself, endure between resisting discourses of global systems while simultaneously battling patriarchy in our local communities. Thus, archetypal criticism is a method that can allow one to identify these tensions and understand how larger ideologies can cloud one's judgment.

However, how can women critique global systems and their own patriarchy simultaneously (Cooke, "Women, Religion, and the Postcolonial" 160)?

Cooke makes the important point that we must engage in multiple critique. She states, "Multiple critique is not an authorizing mechanism but a fluid discursive strategy that allows for conversations with many interlocutors on many different topics" (163). Thus, critique allows for contradictions a critic engages in critique at both a local and global level. To critique archetypes, such as that which Malala represents, at only a local level, always results in a narrative of oppression. Consider this statement: Women in Pakistan are oppressed due to patriarchy. This statement certainly stands true but failing to link it to global structures creates an illusion that patriarchy is Pakistani or Muslim specific. Instead if one were to say: Women in Pakistan are oppressed due to patriarchy but

patriarchy manifests itself differently from country to country and exists worldwide. In the latter statement one is able to critique at a local level while linking it globally. The same applies for narratives of extremism that are often linked to the Muslim world. Critics need to interrogate historical, economical, and political causes and how and why these groups have formed and for what reasons. As Malala enters center stage she does so as a woman that was oppressed and deprived of an education. For example, not once does Malala link her experience to women in the U.S. who also suffer similar experiences. If Western rhetoric continues to focus on Muslim women as oppressed, women in the U.S., and in other Western countries will continue to also suffer violence under the guise that violence has been eradicated. It is a lose-lose situation for all women across the intersections of race, gender, class and so forth. However, this also opens up a space for allyship and awareness among different communities. In turn, this can assist in entering the dialogic performance. In the dialogic performance we are open to difference and challenging our own cultures when learning about others. Dialogic criticism merges two voices who speak interactively instead about "each other but "with " and "to" each other (Conquergood 10). The dialogic performance is about finding the ethical center and a true intercultural understanding (10). At those rare moments that Malala entered the dialogic, one was able to enter into a more ethical understanding of the culture such as when Malala promoted Islam as a peaceful religion that promoted education. When we as a community become more aware of how we as individuals are performing in a collective society, and are aware of those moments in which we perform an identity that is not consistent with our core and ethical beings, then maybe we can begin to enter into a

global dialogue that would be much healthier and acceptable for both Muslim women and women worldwide.



Agency and Clarity are two words that cannot flourish together. Like oil and water they separate at the very instance that they touch. Clarity floats to the top, clouding the sight of agency.

I am oscillating back and forth between defending my own men while resenting them for their patriarchal nature. When I am angry at the Muslim man, I blame my culture. When I am angry at the Muslim man I resent myself for ever taking the time to defend the Muslim culture. When did masculinity take over our culture? Why am I so invested in this? The oil continues to rise to the top... But... I encounter Whiteness, the White man, the White female... I feel oppression shoved down my throat like bad-tasting cough syrup. I am angry... Angry at White patriarchy for taking over my culture's narrative... Angry at White femininity for sustaining it., Angry at White masculinity and femininity for disciplining me in such a civilizing manner.

Do I have agency as an Arab and Muslim woman? As I battle competing thoughts of oppression, it seems that competing patriarchies are at battle again inside my head. Am I another Muslim body that has been used by a tool as I write out the tensions and negation that is being placed upon Muslim women's body? Or is this study, the only way in which I can hope for agency for Muslim women? The oil finally settles at the top. Sometimes the struggle for agency isn't so crystal clear after all.

CHAPTER FOUR: AYAAN HIRSI ALI: THE ADVOCATE AND THE REJECTION
OF ISLAM

Competing Patriarchies

The West seeps in

Our saviors. Here to free us from our oppression. Our heroes
bombs dropping, mines exploding

I can still hear the sounds of the missiles and the drones

Dying families, refugees multiplying, a lost homeplace. a lost race

France, Belgium and the Netherlands ban the hijab

The East retaliates

Traitors. Here to take our country. Killing us. Taking our resources.

We will manage our women, who are you to save them?

Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iran enforce the hijab

I can't see the past the voices in my head

I can't see past the contesting patriarchies

I can't tell what's worse

That we are being torn off like petals on a dying flower or that

Our lives have been co-opted by White and Brown patriarchies



In the previous chapter I discussed the archetype of the oppressed Muslim woman and how it has become focal point in Western discourse. Malala Yousafzai signifies a vital struggle between the moments of disidentification, while oscillating agency. However, the oppressed woman's image is not the only archetype circulating in Western discourse. Another prominent archetype that has also become central to Western discourse is the advocate. When I refer to advocates, I am referring to women of color feminists that reproduce and center the positionality of White Western feminism. This archetype usually, but not always, is labeled under the term secular. I say not always because there are feminists who are critical of the West and identify as secular. The advocate operates from a White Western framework and embodies the very same colonial position that has negated them in the first place. Similar to the archetype, of the oppressed woman, the advocate may have fallen victim to oppression, but now actively speaks out against Islam. Unlike the oppressed woman archetype, the advocate has abandoned any identification with his or her culture. It is important to note that the archetypes that I discuss are not static, but in flux and leak into Other archetypes.

In this chapter I focus on the textual performance of Ayaan Hirsi Ali's book, *Infidel*. Hirsi Ali has become a symbol of advocacy globally (Manji, "Ayaan Hirsi" 17). As her rhetoric rarely disidentifies with, but instead completely embodies, White Western feminism and a desire towards Westernization, she gains agency as a spokesperson who does not need to be managed in the same manner that Malala does. Instead, because she completely rejects narratives that support Islam and Muslim women, she is constructed as having more agency. Her complete embodiment of White supremacy and White

feminism allows for more agency by Western discourse. The more she rejects Islam and embodies Whiteness, the more she will be able to speak freely, win more book awards and become a prominent public figure. Western rhetoric operates in a manner where narratives of oppression are highlighted, while narratives of resistance are minimized. Thus, her image as both a secular Western feminist and advocate come to the fore in a simple and believable manner.

In this study I review her book *Infidel* due to a number of reasons. First, it was a New York Times best seller and won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award: an award that recognizes books that have contributed to our understandings of racism (Anisfield-Wolf). I also chose it because it was a story of her autobiography, which also meant it would be more personal and from her perspective. The personal is political, and for this reason the text is a representation of her, how her thinking was shaped by ideologies, and how she came about to embody White ideologies. The book was published by Simon and Schuster, a subsidiary of the CBS Corporation that was founded in New York and who has a worldwide audience. Recently, Simon and Schuster have funded a book deal with Milo Yiannopoulos, a U.S. based British journalist who is known for being Islamophobic, racist, sexist and transphobic. Many have started to boycott the publishing house. For instance, the Chicago Review of Books announced they would boycott coverage of the book for a year (Towle). For this reason, it is important that when we critique rhetoric, that we also critique which organizations and publishing houses are sustaining these powerful ideologies.

In her book, *Infidel*, Hirsi Ali details the story of her life, a Muslim woman born in Somalia, brought up in Kenya, Saudi Arabia, and Ethiopia. She later sought asylum in the Netherlands, pursued her studies in political science, became a Dutch citizen, then a member of parliament, and later migrated to the U.S. Throughout her journey as a Muslim woman, she was subjected to the brutality of Islam through genital mutilation, beating, veiling, and an arranged marriage. I aim to critique these themes and demonstrate how Hirsi Ali internalizes and performs White feminism through narratives of both colonialism and patriarchy.

Approaching the text critically, we need to question both the limitations and power of writing as communication. Discourse is a performance, while texts are also parts of larger discourses. These fragments, become a reader's explanation of power or an excuse for action (McGee 279). If we cannot locate an argument or question the cultural milieu in which it was formed, we risk losing the historical context that generated the fragment in the first place. As critics if we learn to treat fragments as part of a larger whole or context then we will be better able to identify moments where discourse becomes co-opted by larger power structures. As Western discourse through ideologies of Whiteness provide series of fragments that depict Muslim women as either oppressed or depict White Western feminism as the only feminism that exists, these fragments become part of a larger narrative. The more it is repeated, the more the narrative becomes believed as the truth. It is our job as critics to uncover these fragments as part of larger power structures. As I aim to demonstrate, Hirsi Ali's narratives are situated as fragments

of part of a broader ideology of Whiteness that negates Muslim women and Islam at large.

Hirsi Ali's Rhetoric of Sameness

One way in which Hirsi Ali's fragments become part of a grander ideology of Whiteness is through a rhetoric of sameness. In this context she appeals towards the Western canon and simultaneously denies that differences exist within power and privilege. She writes:

As Muslim girls, a dainty Luo woman called Mrs. Kataka taught us literature. We read 1984 Huckleberry Finn, The Thirty-Nine Steps. Later we read English translations of Russian novels with their strange patronymics and snowy vistas. We imagined the British moors in Wuthering Heights and the fight for racial equality in South Africa in Cry The Beloved Country. An entire world of Western ideas began to take shape. All these books even the trashy ones carried with them ideas- races were equal, women were equal to men, and concepts of freedom, struggle and adventure that were new to me. Even our plain old biology and science textbooks seemed to follow a powerful narrative: you went out with knowledge and sought to advance humanity. (Hirsi Ali 69)

In this context, Hirsi Ali further sustains White feminism in the service of colonialism by promoting a rhetoric of "sameness," such as by saying "races were equal," and a rhetoric of White feminism by saying, "women were equal to men." As she internalizes the Western canon, through the readings she is exposed to in school, she further sustains Whiteness. Hirsi Ali further promotes the rhetoric of sameness when describing her factory job in the Netherlands:

At the factory almost all the workers were women, and they divided clearly into ethnic groups: Dutch women on the one hand and Moroccan and Turkish women on the other. They kept apart in the lunchroom and on the factory floor as well. If a Moroccan woman was paired with a native Dutch woman, the work would be done shoddily and there would be constant conflict, with packages piling up and falling on the floor, whereas if Moroccans worked together they made an effort to get the job done right. It was mutual xenophobia: the Dutch thought the

Moroccans were lazy and unpleasant and the Moroccans said the Dutch stank and dressed like whores. Both groups saw themselves as superior. (Hirsi Ali 221)

Claiming that women of color and White women stand on equal grounds, erases intersectionality in the service of White femininity. Whereas earlier I had outlined intersectionality as a way to highlight women's unique experiences across the interstices of race, class, gender and sexuality, Hirsi Ali instead reproduces and universalizes gender oppression and racial sameness in the excerpts above. The two excerpts above read together as two fragments of part of a larger narrative of Whiteness where sameness fosters more racism because it implies that there are no differences and racism is over. Additionally, as Hirsi Ali describes both the Moroccans and the Dutch as superior, she is implying that women of color do not face marginalization from White women which further negates racism that women of color have had to face for centuries.

Oppression of Women is Islam specific

It is vital to note that due to the fact that the rhetoric of sameness has the potential to erase race and class in the service of gender, narratives of the oppression of women will erase historical contexts of colonialism or ideologies of Whiteness. When gender becomes a prevalent factor of a specific culture or religion, it erases both the historical context and conflates race and gender into one category (Cooke et al. 91). Therefore, the only visible identity that remains is the woman who is oppressed. Her gender becomes her racial signifier. For example, when we see a woman wearing hijab, her veil functions as a racial signifier, combining both her Gender identity (woman) and her veil as a racial signifier. For this reason, citizenship, race, and gender are usually conflated into one category for the Muslim woman.

For instance Hirsi Ali says:

I wanted Muslim women to become more aware of just how bad and how unacceptable their suffering was. I wanted to help them develop the vocabulary of resistance. I was inspired by Mary Wollstonecraft, the pioneering feminist thinker who told women they had the same ability to reason as men did and deserve the same rights. Even after she published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, it took more than a century before the suffragettes marched for the vote. I knew that freeing Muslim women from their mental cage would take time too. I didn't expect immediate waves of organized support among Muslim women. People who are conditioned to meekness, almost to the point where they have no mind of their own, sadly have no ability to organize, or will to express their opinion. (Hirsi Ali 295)

Previously I discussed that the words "Muslim" and "woman" combined into one word, Muslimwoman has created one singular identity, conflating race and gender while simultaneously depriving Muslim women of any agency (Cooke et al. 91). As Hirsi Ali claims to develop a vocabulary of resistance for Muslim women based on White feminist theorists, she first fails to transcend an ethical vocabulary of resistance due to the fact that she is using White feminist approaches or theories onto the bodies of a completely different race and culture. By claiming that she is speaking "with" as a Muslim woman, she is in fact speaking "for" because her knowledge and theories are grounded in White Western feminism. Her narrative keeps Muslim women trapped into a singular identity. For instance, when she says, "People who are conditioned to meekness, almost to the point where they have no mind of their own, sadly have no ability to organize, or will to express their opinion," she asserts that these women have no mind of their own or will to express an opinion. As Hirsi Ali tries to establish agency for Muslim women, she rids them of any agency by reducing them to mindless beings who have been conditioned to submissiveness. As critics we must question the effects the text has on its audience; the

intention does not necessarily have to be ill-natured. While Hirsi Ali probably has good intentions to “free oppressed women,” her failure to link oppression globally as a patriarchal or masculinity problem is what in fact negates Muslim women further.

Consider this excerpt:

My central motivating concern is that women in Islam are oppressed. That oppression of women causes Muslim women and Muslim men too, to lag behind the West. It creates a culture that generates more backwardness with every generation. It would be better for everyone- for Muslims, above all if this situation could change. (Hirsi Ali 349)

In contrast to Malala, who does not completely reject Islam, Hirsi Ali rejects Islam and Muslims as a whole. She links oppression to Islam and backwardness, insulting and negating not only a whole region and population, but also a culture and a way of life. Again, this feeds back into narratives of civility and colonial discourses that say Others lack civility and need to be civilized. In a similar passage she says:

Sister Aziza used to warn us of the decadence of the West: the corrupt, licentious, perverted, idolatrous, money-grubbing, soulless countries of Europe. But to me, there is far worse moral corruption in Islamic countries. In those societies, cruelty is implacable and inequality is the law of the land. Dissidents are tortured. Women are policed both by the state and their families to whom the state gives the power to rule their lives. (Hirsi Ali 350)

It is important to not dismiss the fact that women are oppressed, but it becomes problematic when one discusses the oppression of Muslim women as only a Muslim issue. Hirsi Ali claims that women are policed both by the state and their families. While this claim could be true, it is of the utmost importance to link this to context, history, and colonialism. When one claims that all Muslim women are policed by all Muslim countries and all families, it generalizes Muslim women’s oppression and only reveals one side of the coin. Indeed, some women are oppressed and some Arab states do have

stricter policing of Muslim women's bodies, but we must also take into account colonialism, and how the West also competes with the East over the management and policing of Muslim women's bodies. The local should never be separated from the global, but in Hirsi Ali's case she portrays global powers as here to save local powers.

Muslim Women are Subject to Domestic Abuse

Looking deeper into Hirsi Ali's rhetoric on oppressed woman, she introduces key themes that sustain the oppression of Muslim woman: domestic abuse, the hijab, arranged marriage, and genital mutilation. One prominent theme that she highlights is that Muslim women are subject to domestic abuse. In one excerpt she says,

Some of the Saudi women in our neighborhood were regularly beaten by their husbands. You could hear them at night. Their screams resounded across the courtyards: "No! Please! By Allah!" This appalled my father. He saw this horrible casual violence as a prime example of the crudeness of the Saudis and when he caught sight of the men who did it- all the neighborhood could identify who it was, from the voices he would mutter, "stupid bully like all the Saudis" he never lifted a hand to my mother in this way; he thought it was unspeakably low." (Hirsi Ali 47)

As Hirsi Ali refers to domestic abuse as a Saudi Arabian problem, she generalizes abuse to Arab nations, but more specifically Saudi Arabia. She also says, "Islamic law in Saudi Arabia treated half its citizens like animals, with no rights or recourse, disposing women without regard" (60). While it is true that laws are stricter on women in Saudi Arabia, it does not necessarily mean that all Saudi Arabian women are continuously oppressed. Consider the law that women must cover. It deprives women of any agency because they are not allowed to choose whether to cover or uncover. There may or may not be women who prefer covering in order to deflect the male gaze, but the West's usage of Muslim women as oppressed in the media equally deprives women of agency as well.

In addition, Western countries, such as France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, that ban the wearing of the hijab equally deprive women of agency. Hirsi Ali further makes the claim that only Muslim women are subject to domestic abuse when visiting shelters in the Netherlands. She says:

It was particularly striking when I visited women's shelters-terrible, depressing places. The addresses were supposed to be secret. Perhaps thirty women but sometimes as many as a hundred, would live in each shelter and children ran everywhere in the living space. There were hardly any White women: only women from Morocco, from Turkey, from Afghanistan-Muslim countries-alongside some Hindu women from Surinam. (Hirsi Ali 243)

Previously I discussed that any rhetoric that portrays violence as a cultural problem, such as a Muslim specific problem, disregards women's oppression in the West (Cloud 289). By asserting that women of color (mostly Muslim women) are subject to abuse in the Netherlands, negates the violence and abuse that happens to White women both in the Netherlands and worldwide. By lending a critical eye to rhetoric that sustains White patriarchy we may be able to uncover how rhetoric in turn harms both White women and women of color. Thus, uncovering harmful rhetoric may open more spaces of allyship. In contrast, Hirsi Ali focuses on abuse and violence as an Islamic problem and her rhetoric continuously reasserts narratives of Whiteness:

I was only a translator but I absorbed these stories and had to confront the unfairness of it. The social workers would always ask the women, "Do you have family here? Can they help you?" The women would say to me, "But they support my husband, of course!" You must obey your husband if you are Muslim. If you refuse your husband and he rapes you, that is your fault. Allah says husbands should beat their wives if they misbehave; it's in the Quran. (Hirsi Ali 244)

In a critique of Ayaan Hirsi Ali's work, Rula Jebreal makes the important point that Sharia (Islamic Law) is always in flux and that context and interpretation are

fundamental factors when reading the Quran (“Ayaan Hirsi Ali”). Additionally, interpretations have changed in conjunction with social change (Jebreal). Jebreal argues that experience and context allows one to experience Islam differently. For instance, through her upbringing and her father’s influence she had a different experience than Hirsi Ali did. She claims that through state religion in Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism enforced a strict interpretation that promoted violence against women. This is the very same tradition, that Hirsi Ali was raised in and is the same tradition that groups such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda were birthed out of. Because Hirsi Ali was brought up under the influence of such an ideology, she conflates her experience as the only experience linked to Islam. For this reason, we must never separate context and history from experience (Jebreal). However, feminists in the region must continue to tackle women’s issues, especially in the case of Saudi Arabia where women are subjected to numerous laws that constrict their freedom. This is not an Islamic problem, more than it is a masculinity or patriarchal problem that is disguised under the name of Islam. I make this point, because I believe women are oppressed to different degrees from country to country and I would not want the reader to mistake my critique of Whiteness for a disregard of the various forms of oppression happening in our region.

The Hijab is Oppressive and Monstrous

Due to Hirsi Ali's embodiment of ideologies of White feminism, her interpretation of the hijab, the abaya, and the burqa³ will also stem out of the strict ideological context in which she was brought up. There are times in which she disidentifies to a lesser extent with Western ideologies but returns back to her Western ideology:

My mother had no protector in Aden- no father, no brother. Men leered and bothered her on the street. She began wearing a veil, like the Arab women who robed when they left their houses in a long black cloth that left only a slit for their eyes. The veil protected her from those leering men and from the felling of vileness it gave her to be looked at that way. Her veil was an emblem of her belief- to beloved of god you had to be modest and Asha Artan wanted to be the most proper, most virtuous woman in the city. (Hirsi Ali 11)

In this context, Hirsi Ali is referring to the fact that her mother started to wear the veil in Aden, Saudi Arabia and that it would protect her from the male gaze. However, as she starts to disidentify, she links the veiling specifically to Saudi Arabia and the burqa to Islam. First, the burqa differs from the hijab in that it is culturally and not religiously worn. Second, she frames modesty as something that is anti-feminist when in fact there are feminist interpretations of the veil (L. Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution*). Additionally, she describes Arab women in Saudi Arabia wearing burqa as follows:

And all the women in this country were covered in black. They were like humanlike shapes. The front of them was black and the back of them was black too. You could see which way they were looking only by the direction their shoes pointed. We could tell they were women because the lady who was holding our

³ An abaya is a long black loose cloak that is used to cover the women's body and sometimes goes over the head but can be worn around the shoulders as well. A burqa covers the women's face as well.

hands tightly to prevent us from wandering was covered in black too. You could see her face because he was Somali. Saudi women had no faces (Hirsi Ali 40). We pulled away and ran over to the black shapes. We stared up at them trying to make out where their eyes could be. One raised her hand gloved in black and we shrieked, “they have hands” we pulled faces at her. We were truly awful but what we were seeing was so alien, so sinister that we were trying to tame it, make it less awful. And what these Saudi women saw of course was little black kids acting like baboons.” (40)

First Hirsi Ali internalizes racial inferiority by referring to Black children as baboons. As she Others herself and these kids she is performing White supremacy which has alienated black people for centuries. As she internalizes self-hate she also monsterizes herself, the Black children and the Saudi women. For instance, she monsterizes these women by referring to them as humanlike and black shapes. Her narrative creates a narrative of Otherness, further negating women. Monsterizing Others stems out of a deep anxiety that exists within humanity. When the monster is framed as appearing at crisis, it represents a clash of extremes (J. Cohen 6). For this reason monstrous difference is always racial, cultural, political, economical and sexual (7). Calafell has also made the important point that monstrosity is correlated with people of color and reflected in personal and public venues (Monstrosity, Performance, and Race 3). For instance, she has been often animalized, sexualized, and exotified in the White academy her “excess” body marks her as monstrous Other. She asserts that it is the intersectional nature of race class and gender that informs the co-production of monstrous characters (4). These black shapes that “have hands” are already feared by society as they are described as human like shapes. Narratives such as these, not only negate women but monsterize them. As previously discussed the covered up women represents a threat to

the White male gaze (Shome, Diana and Beyond 24). For this reason, the covered woman is monsterized, and in many cases, portrayed as spreading “Muslim terrorism”.

In the same manner that White femininity is seen as spreading White masculinity, Muslim femininity that rejects Whiteness is seen as a vehicle that spreads Muslim masculinity, thus, “terrorism.” If a Muslim woman’s view are not aligned with White ideologies, she will not make it very far in public discourse and most often will be seen as aiding Muslim masculinity, which as Jack Shaheen reminds us has for years been conflated with terrorism (13). The movie American Sniper, for example, showcases a woman wearing an abaya. The U.S. soldier yells out to the other soldiers that the woman doesn’t have sleeves; however many traditional abayas are made without sleeves. Instead she is monsterized and depicted as aiding a Muslim man in a terrorist attack by hiding weapons under her abaya. Hirsi Ali’s internalization of the White gaze, which we have learned is reproduced by the White women, creates two images of the covered women: She is either a monster or subjugated. She is monsterized when she rejects the internalization of White femininity, and at times subjugated when she internalizes White femininity. Hirsi Ali also frames women as needing to cover due to Muslim men’s gazes, which cannot be controlled, again reframing and stereotyping Muslim masculinity:

As women, we were immensely powerful, sister Aziza explained. The way Allah had created us, our hair, our nails, our heels, our neck and ankles- every little curves in our body was arousing. If a woman aroused a man who was not her husband she was sinning doubly in god’s eyes by leading the man into temptation and evil thoughts to match her own. Only the robe worn by the wives of the prophet could prevent us from arousing men and leading society into fitna uncontrollable confusion and social chaos. (Hirsi Ali 83)

It is important to note that ideologies of Whiteness portray the Muslim man's gaze differently than the White male's gaze. While the White man's gaze is civilized through hegemonic civility, the Muslim man's gaze is one of perversion, unable to control his sexuality. Even though the Muslim's gaze is more prevalent, it does not mean that the Muslim man is more debased. On the contrary, hegemonic civility, "an organized process which results in suppressing or silencing any opposition in favor of the status quo," contributes to this exaggerated portrayal (Patton 65). As hegemonic and White civility teaches bodies to perform in a civil manner, such as when a male looks, it should be conducted discreetly, men of color are outcast and portrayed as sick and perverted because they are not conforming to White civility. So while in theory men of color seem to "gaze" more, in reality they are disidentifying from a more "civil" gaze. Therefore, the Muslim man has also been given an archetype of his own: he has a perverse sexuality, is a playboy, a sheikh, is angry and violent. These stereotypes continually erase the fact that White Western men can be perverse sexually (Shome, Diana and Beyond 166). It also erases the violence that happens in military occupations by U.S. soldiers, such as the rapes that occurred in Iraq when the US invaded Iraq (Al-Ali 230).

Similarly, Shohat argues that the narrative of the perverted male goes far beyond just stereotypes of how the Muslim man is portrayed in popular culture. For example, as the exotic Sheikh is portrayed as a man with many women, which she describes as soft pornography, a masculine envy develops from the Western man. With censorship codes where Hollywood cannot show sexual scenes to a certain extent, the heterosexual desire of the man toward many women gets displaced onto another culture. His desire is

suppressed by Hollywood and White civility and therefore the image of the perverted male is about the suppressed White patriarchal desire that becomes displaced onto the Muslim man's body (Shohat). Other common images of the Muslim man are the greedy Muslim man, especially after the oil boom in the 70s and the terrorist image, which has escalated further after 9/11 (Shaheen 35). Additionally, Islam is often conflated with being only from the Middle East and Northern African Region (MENA), when in fact the MENA region is home to a plethora of Other religions. Additionally, not all Muslims live in the MENA region ("The Global Religious Landscape: Muslims"). In general, images of Muslim women and men operate and change according to US foreign policies (Shohat). In Hirsi Ali's narrative, as the women must cover her body from the Muslim man that cannot control his sexual arousal, the women's image becomes one of subjugation that must tame the aroused man that is uncivilized unlike the Western man. As Hirsi Ali's narrative internalizes both the envy and displacement of White masculinity, it continues the stereotypical narrative of both Muslim men and women.

It is important to note that individuals go through stages of performing and internalizing Whiteness. This is due to a colonialist view of Whiteness and individuals' internalizing Whiteness (Fanon; Bhaba). Hirsi Ali's earlier performances of White femininity were less prevalent than her current performances. For example, she describes how wearing the black robe made her feel when she was younger:

It had a thrill to it, a sensuous feeling. It made me feel powerful: underneath this screen lay a previously unsuspected, but potentially lethal, femininity. I was unique: very few people walked about like that in those days in Nairobi. Weirdly, it made me feel like an individual. It sent out a message of superiority: I was the one true Muslim. All those other girls with their little White headscarves were

children, hypocrites. I was a star of god. When I spread out my hands I felt like I could fly. (Hirsi Ali 85)

Again, Hirsi Ali starts to frame her black robe as something powerful, but then names it “weird” that she felt like an individual and that “she was a star of god” (85). As she reflects on the past as someone that has fully internalized White femininity, she describes this past as “weird”; however, her reflection on the past provides an interpretation that her power is deflecting the male gaze and protecting her body. Therefore, one can witness her evolve into White femininity through her narratives. As she evolves through metamorphosis, we can trace her transformation into White femininity. Consider the next narrative where she oscillates between subjugation and resistance to the hijab:

I was beginning to rebel internally against women’s traditional subjugation. In those days, I was still wearing a hidjab. I thought a lot about God and how to be good in His eyes and about the beauty of obedience and submission. I tried to still my mind so it would become a simple vessel for the will of Allah and the words of the Quran. But my mind seemed bent on being distracted from the Straight path. (Hirsi Ali 93)

In the excerpt above she begins to reject Muslim femininity in favor of White femininity. Western frameworks often create binaries where one must identify with one side of the binary; however, most Muslim cultures do not operate in such binaries. Many operate in the space in between, adopting from both the West and the East.

Hirsi Ali then seeks asylum in the Netherlands after running away from an arranged marriage, she decides to remove her hijab:

The next morning I decided to stage an experiment. I would walk out of the door without a headscarf. I was in my long green skirt and a long tunic and I had my scarf in a bag with me in case of trouble, but I would not cover my hair. I planned to see what would happen. I was sweating this was really Haram and also for the

first time I had walked in a public space with my hair uncovered since I was sixteen. Absolutely nothing happened. The gardeners kept trimming the hedges. Nobody went into a fit. Still, these were Dutch People, so perhaps not really men. I walked past Ethiopians and Zaireans and no one paid attention to me; but then, these people were not Muslim either. So I walked over to a group of Bosnians. Nobody looked at me. If anything, I attracted less attention than when I was covering my head. Not one man went into a frenzy. (Hirsi Ali 195)

As Hirsi Ali explains how when she removed her headscarf her internalization of Whiteness prevents her from understanding how her Muslimness is less visible without her hijab (Cooke et al 113). As she removes a marker of Islam (the hijab), that has marked Muslim women as deviant for centuries, she easily marginalizes women that wear the hijab. As she rejects White femininity, she paints the wrong picture for Muslim women. She also refers to the hijab as a form of brainwashing:

When the number of women wearing headscarves on the street became impossible to ignore, my Labor party colleagues thought it was only recent immigrants who would soon abandon the practice. They failed to realize that it was the second generation, who were rediscovering their “roots,” brainwashed by jargon I recognized: tawheed, kufr, the evil Jews. (Hirsi Ali 276)

As the hijab becomes quantified into a series of numbers that must be managed by government and labor parties, Hirsi Ali presents another problem, that it is second-generation immigrants that need to be managed and have been led to believe that removing the hijab is a sin. As biopolitical institutions through immigration policies, try to manage Muslim women through an article of clothing, in the narrative above we witness an even deeper level of the management of bodies. Second generation immigrants must be managed because they are a threat to society. As Hirsi Ali’s narrative indicates a problem that must be managed, an article of clothing becomes a means of controlling women’s bodies. For this reason, today all debates about democracy and the

Muslim woman that revolve around that piece of cloth is the essence of Muslim identity (Mernissi 188).



My mother was yelling from downstairs. “Haneen you need to hurry before the Mbarakiya Market closes”. I rushed out of my room throwing on a tank top to complement my brand new jeans. I loved going to Mbarakiya and buying traditional Keffiyehs.⁴ I often took them back with me to Denver giving them away to my favorite colleagues and professors. I secretly thought that I could spread nationalism through the symbolism of these scarfs and resist the stereotypical way the scarfs are portrayed in Western media- always worn by the terrorist. It also reminded me of Palestinian freedom. The Keffiyeh held so much meaning to me and I wanted to spread it as much as I could. I raced back upstairs to grab my Abaya. As a woman who always wears Western clothing in Kuwait, there are no restrictions on clothing, but we were going to Mbarakiya. In Mbarakiya most of the stores are dominated by men and I wasn’t about to give them the satisfaction of undressing me with their eyes. The Abaya made me feel safer from the prevalent male gaze. I draped it onto my shoulders and ran out the door. In many cultures the abaya, and sometimes the hijab, is not a static or fixed item of clothing. Instead, many women wear it depending on the environment. I would wear it to markets, such as the Friday and Gold Market, but would wear a tank top and jeans to the mall or when going

⁴ A Keffiyeh is a traditional Middle Eastern scarf with a checkered pattern

out with friends. As neo-Orientalist thinkers, such as Hirsi Ali, depict the hijab and the abaya as a means of control, they fail to showcase the hijab and abaya as a means of power for many women. Instead, it is portrayed as a static object, when in fact the abaya and/or hijab is always in flux, changing and adapting to the cultural milieus.



Arranged Marriages are a Form of Control

As the Muslim woman is oppressed through domestic abuse and veiling, she is also portrayed as having no agency or say in both dating and marriage. Hirsi Ali paints a narrative that arranged marriage is the only form of marriage in Muslim countries that is honored:

Love marriages were a stupid mistake and always ended badly in poverty and divorce, we knew this. If you married outside the rules, you didn't have your clan's protection when your husband left you. Your father's relatives wouldn't intercede on your behalf or help you with money. You sank into a hideous destiny of impurity, godlessness and disease. People like my grandmother pointed at you and spat at you on the street. It was the worst thing you could do to your family's honor: you damaged your parents, sisters, brothers and cousins. (Hirsi Ali 79)

Again as Hirsi Ali's description of love marriage is birthed out of a more extreme ideological view of marriage in which she depicts family honor as only linked to marriage under Islam. However, Suad Joseph describes family honor as the concept in which "Sense of dignity, identity, status, and self, as well as public esteem are linked to the regard with which one's family is held by the community at large" (200). Honor has also become a means for controlling women's behavior in every aspect including economic, sexuality and even in the social arena (S. Joseph 200). The difference between Hirsi Ali's narrative of honor and Joseph's is that Hirsi Ali links marriage to Islam

throughout her book and further negates the religion and its culture. Joseph on the other hand, like many Other feminists is trying to do work at a local level, linking it as a means of patriarchal control. In Joseph's analysis we witness control as an ideological entity where masculine ideologies control women's bodies instead of implying that patriarchal control is Muslim specific, such as in the case of Hirsi Ali.

Additionally, she creates another breeding ground to foster Eurocentric narratives that depict arranged marriage in one way only, oppressive:

Most of my Muslim classmates were steeped in these cheap paperbacks, and they made us all unhappy. We too, wanted to fall in love, with men we imagined in our bed at night. Nobody wanted to get married to a stranger chosen by her father. But we knew that the best we could do was simply stave off the inevitable. Halwa's father allowed all his daughters to finish school before marrying them off. Halwa used to beg her father to let her off the hook even after she had finished school. She used to tell me sometimes that I was lucky: with my father away, no one would make me get married before I finished my first round of exams at least. (Hirsi Ali 79)

In her book, Hirsi Ali describes how she fled to the Netherlands after getting married against her own will. Below she documents a conversation with a woman about her arranged marriage:

One of the women said, "It's horrible, what has happened to you, but how many women from Somalia are married against their will?" "It's our culture," I said. "Practically all of them." "And what about other countries?" she asked me. "Does it happen elsewhere?" I think in every Muslim country." I told her. (Hirsi Ali 192)

In the narrative above, arranged marriage is revealed as oppressive and rids women of all agency. One is led to believe that marriage against the will of the woman occurs in every Muslim country; therefore, in most Muslim families. However, similar to the hijab, arranged marriages also have multiple interpretations. They cannot be viewed in black and White polarities. There is a grey spectrum that many arranged marriages fall

into. First, arranged marriages can be a method to establish relationships between families (Joseph 197). Second, when surveying individuals married by choice vs. those married through an arrangement, no differences were found in satisfaction level. In those where marriage was arranged by the families, marital happiness was more important than love, which was the precursor for marriages out of choice (Myers et al. 186). These findings suggest that unlike Western beliefs, those that enter arranged marriages can be both happy and satisfied. Furthermore, love is seen as something that will grow with time (187).

As I read Hirsi Ali's narratives on arranged marriage I battled mixed feelings between sympathizing with her experience as a woman and being frustrated by her skewed perception of our culture and religion. Arranged marriages are multifaceted, and each marriage, like experience, manifests and grows in its own form. My cousin dated her boyfriend for years before they got married but because dating is secretive in our society, her boyfriend had his family call her family and they pretended it was an arranged marriage. Many families may say its arranged when its not. Additionally, many will have their families arrange a meeting and then allow them to spend time together for a few months (sometimes engaged and sometimes not). This can be equivalent to dating in Western societies or being setup by your parents. Others may have stricter arranged marriages where the man never sees his wife until the wedding day but these are mostly in the minority and can be seen as a form of patriarchal control not religious control. Arranged marriages manifest and grow differently and to categorize them into one generalization negates the custom and tradition that has been the cause of many

successful marriages. That is why the personal matters, the personal allows the reader to glimpse into a more authentic reading of culture, far more authentic than numbers and graphs. As Hirsi Ali presents her narrative as personal it causes a dilemma due to her internalization. However, that is why it is our job as researchers to insert our personal narratives to disrupt the master narratives

Hirsi Ali also describes dating in a similar manner:

Many kids had relationships—they kissed and touched in corners, but you weren't supposed to admit it. It was shocking un-Islamic, un-Somali to fall in love. You were supposed to hide such as thing. Of course someone would have noticed and gossiped; but you were supposed to wait until the boy's family asked your father and then you were supposed to cry. I was violating all codes. Gossip was rampant. (Hirsi Ali 127)

I still remember the butterflies in my stomach and the rush that would take over me, when I would date in secret. It was like a scary and thrilling roller coaster ride. My parents were always open to me dating whomever I wanted, but always warned me it would be wiser to keep it secret so that society wouldn't gossip about my family. I didn't mind, dating in secret, it was exciting and invigorating, it was like a love affair kept secret only there was no affair. I mostly met men the "regular" Western way but I had plenty of friends who met guys the traditional way. I remember my frequent visits to Salhiya Mall, a popular dating spot in Kuwait: my friends coached me on how to date the traditional way, it was completely foreign to me. I had never experienced this style of dating because I attended mixed American schools in Kuwait and was brought up in a secular family who internalized Whiteness to a certain extent with exception to being pro-Palestinian, which isn't favored among Western thought. I dated the so-called "normal" way and like Other Westernized Arabs thought that any other style of dating

was backwards. It wasn't until I began to study postcolonialism and Whiteness that I started to view our culture more openly, I was more accepting. During my PhD I came back to visit for the summer and my friend begged me to go with her to Salhiya mall, she claimed it was a hot dating spot for people our age. I went along for the experience even though my internalized Whiteness made it feel wrong and foreign. As we sat down at one of the restaurants, my eye caught the eye of a handsome man on a nearby table and I said to my friend: "He is so handsome." She replied, "Then keep staring throughout dinner and once we get the check, he will get his check as well and will find us downstairs as we are walking out of the mall." I was confused and baffled. "How will he find us? Don't we have to tell him where we are going or when?" She replied, "Trust me they are experts, he will know how to find you, besides the point is you can't talk here cause it's secret." My anxiety started to peak, I wasn't used to this sort of non-verbal communication and uncomfortable eye contact throughout an entire dinner. I was nervous. I began to eat faster. I knew nothing about this man, his age, his history, nothing. I looked at my friend and said, "What if he is too young? What if I don't like his views?" She said, "Then you don't continue the conversation, he is going to give you his number or ask you for yours and then if the phone call goes well, you can have another call and then once you two are comfortable you can meet up in person. It's like Tinder only in real life!" My friend signaled the waiter for the check, he immediately flagged the waiter down as well. He came up to me downstairs when we were far from the crowd and asked me if we could exchange numbers....

I write this narrative because I once internalized White femininity and frowned upon any type of dating that didn't start off at some sort of social event or through friends. I write this narrative because due to the internalization of Whiteness many women reject their own cultural norms and practices. As Hirsi Ali refers to dating and kissing outside the bounds of marriage as "Un-Islamic", it has nothing to do with Islam and more to do with cultural norms. In fact it keeps the relationships in a constant state of excitement for many and it allows individuals to keep their dating history private. After all, isn't privacy one of the core tenets in Western thought?

Genital Circumcision is Islam Specific

In another narrative on arranged marriage, Hirsi Ali conflates marriage and genital circumcision:

Sahra told Haweya how awful it was to be married. She said her husband, Abdallah was repulsive. She told Haweya what it was like when Abdallah first tried to penetrate her after they were married: pushing his way into her, trying to tear open the scar between her legs, how much it had hurt. She said Abdallah had wanted to cut her open with a knife, because she was so sewn so tight that he couldn't push his penis inside. She described him holding the knife in his hand while she screamed and begged him not to- and I suppose he felt pity for that poor fourteen-year old child, because he agreed to take her to the hospital to be cut. (Hirsi Ali 91)

As discussed earlier arranged marriages have been stigmatized and associated as an Islamic source of oppression. As Hirsi Ali conflates marriage with genital circumcision, she paves a pathway for genital circumcision to also be understood as Islam specific.

The story frightened me: a huge group of people, a bloodied sheet- a kind of rape, organized with the benediction of Sahra's family. It didn't in the least seem like something that could happen to Haweya or to me. But this was marriage, to Sahra: physical assault, public humiliation. (Hirsi Ali 91)

In another similar excerpt she says:

In Somalia like many countries across Africa, and the Middle East, little girls are made “pure” by having their genitals cut out. There is no other way to describe this procedure, which typically occurs around the age of five. After the child’s clitoris and labia are carved out, scraped off, or in more compassionate areas, merely cut or pricked, the whole area is often sewn up, so that a thick band of tissue forms a chastity belt made of the girls’s own scarred flesh. A small hole is carefully situated to permit a thin flow of pee. Only great force can tear the scar tissue wider for, sex. (Hirsi Ali 31)

In another part of the book she elaborates,

It wasn’t completely because of Islam that we were not cut: not all Muslim women are excised. But in Somalia and the Other Muslim countries, it was clear that the Islamic culture of virginity encouraged it. I knew of no fatwa denouncing female genital mutilation; on the contrary suppressing the sexuality of women was a big theme with imams. (Hirsi Ali 217)

As it is essential to highlight the fact that genital circumcision is a violent act and should not be permitted in any shape or form, it is also as crucial to link it to the context in which genital mutilation developed. Hirsi Ali highlights it as Islam specific, when in fact it is practiced among Other religious societies.

Consider this, discussing genital mutilation, Comedian Bill Maher who has been an outspoken commentator against Islam said:

Ninety-one percent of Egyptian women have had their clitorises removed; 98% of Somali women have. Ayaan Hirsi Ali grew up in Somalia and was one of them. She was scheduled to speak at Yale last week but the school's atheist organization, my people, complained that she "did not represent a totality of the ex-Muslim experience." Meaning what? That women like mutilation? You're atheists. You should be attacking religion, not siding with people who hold women down and violate them which apparently you will defend in the name of multiculturalism and then lose your shit when someone refers to Chaz Bono by the wrong pronoun. (Shwartz)

Reza Aslan, Professor at UC Riverside responded to Bill Maher comments by saying:

When it comes to the topic of religion he is not very sophisticated in the way he thinks. I mean the argument about the female genital mutilation being an Islamic problem is a perfect example that, it is not an Islamic problem it's an African problem" ("Does Islam Promote"). He adds, "Eretria has almost 90% female genital mutilation, it's a Christian country. Ethiopia has 75% Female genital mutilation, it a Christian country. Nowhere else in the Muslim majority states is female genital mutilation an issue". ("Does Islam Promote")

Similarly actor Ben Affleck responds to Bill Maher:

What is your solution? To condemn Islam? We have killed more Muslims than they have killed us by an awful lot. We have invaded more countries by an awful lot but yet somehow we are exempt form these things because they are not really a reflection of what we believe in. We did it by accident that's why we invaded Iraq. ("Real Time With Bill Maher")

My point in writing these narratives is to showcase debates that claim authority of speaking "for" as opposed to "with" Muslim societies. As Bill Maher and others claim that they have narrative authority as White heterosexual men, they paint a picture of Islam from a White Western framework. As Aslan and Affleck try to respond and criticize Maher and his supporters, it is of importance to understand that these narratives are often silenced and overpowered by dominant narratives. Even though Affleck brings credibility as a White heterosexual male, his narrative will always be overpowered by dominant narratives, such as Maher's and Hirsi Ali's. When "we" as an audience begin to understand how to scrutinize and question master narratives, "we" can begin to uncover instances where marginalized voices become co-opted by mainstream voices.

Hirsi Ali and Foreign Policy: 9/11 and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

I have detailed how Hirsi Ali frames the oppression of women through domestic abuse, the hijab, arranged marriage, and genital circumcision. These narratives are part or a larger simulacrum of both internalized Whiteness and colonialism. As discussed earlier,

colonialism and Westernization are often met with resistance and this can be rooted in fundamentalist views. As Westernization expands globally, fundamentalism and resistance will also expand. However, due to Hirsi Ali's rejection of her culture she is unable to comprehend reasons for fundamentalism. For instance, consider Hirsi Ali's narratives on 9/11: "Again and again we watched the horrific footage of planes hitting the towers. I found myself screwing my eyes right shut and thinking, in Somali, "Oh Allah please let it not be Muslims who did this" (Hirsi Ali 268).

In another excerpt she says: "We began talking about the Twin Towers attack. Ruud shook his head sadly about it all. He said, "It's so weird, isn't it, all these people saying this has to do with Islam?" I couldn't help myself. Just before we reached the office, I blurted out, "But it is about Islam. This is based in belief. This is Islam" (Hirsi Ali 268). In this moment, Hirsi Ali's internalized Whiteness blames the attacks on Islam as a belief. When in reality it is of utmost importance to situate how the attackers came to this belief and how colonialism, globalization and Westernization played a role in fueling their motives. Additionally, 9/11 has been an important narrative that has stirred the U.S. American public but how many bodies are lost daily by U.S. forces in the region? However, Hirsi Ali continues the dominant narrative:

There were tens of thousands of people in Africa, the Middle East -even in Holland- who thought this way. Every devout Muslim who aspired to practice genuine Islam-the Muslim Brotherhood Islam, the Islam of the Medina Quran schools- even if they didn't actively support the attacks, they must have at least approved of them. This wasn't just a band of frustrated Egyptian architects in Hamburg. It was much bigger than that, and it had nothing to do with frustration. It was about belief. Infuriatingly stupid analysts especially people who called themselves Arabists, yet who seemed to know next to nothing about the reality of the Islamic world – wrote reams of commentary" (270)

She continues:

People theorized beautifully about poverty pushing people to terrorism; about colonialism and consumerism, pop culture and Western decadence eating away at people's culture and therefore causing the carnage. But Africa is the poorest continent, I knew, and poverty doesn't cause terrorism; truly poor people are usually angry at their own governments; they flock to the West. I read rants by antiracist bureaus claiming that a terrible wave of Islamphobia had been unleashed in Holland that Holland's inner racist attitude was now apparent. None of this pseudointellectualizing had anything to do with reality. (270)

As Hirsi Ali turns a blind eye towards theories of resistance, it is important to note that in narratives such as this, her performance of White femininity has little or nothing to do with her actual physical brown body. Her Blackness pushes her to a desired performance of White femininity. The important point here is that understanding the psychology of colonialism will pave the way for an understanding of how Black people reject their culture (Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks* 14). The more assimilation, the more one rejects their culture and the Whiter you become (3). As Hirsi Ali completely rejects the corporeal and brown markings of her body, these very same markers of "brownness"/ "blackness" become the vehicle that makes her more credible to the general public as an ex-Muslim woman someone speaking for Muslim women. Fassin contends that Hirsi Ali embodies this "sexual clash" due to the origin and skin color which reaffirms that the issue is about civilization. He extends Spivak's interpretation that a brown woman will always justify better than a White woman when White men are saving brown women from brown men (509). As her discursive overpowers narratives of marginalization and resistance she also links 9/11 to wider issues: "Other articles blamed the Americans 'blind' support for Israel and opined that there would be more 9/11's until the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was resolved" (Hirsi Ali 270). She continues:

If the hijackers had been Palestinian men I might have given this argument more weight, but they weren't. None of them were poor. None of them left a letter saying there would be more attacks until Palestine was liberated. This was belief, I thought. Not frustration, poverty, colonialism or Israel: it was about religious belief, a one-way ticket to Heaven. (Hirsi Ali 170)

Throughout her book she describes how Muslims blame Jews for everything:

Sister Aziza told us about the Jews. She described them in such a way that I imagined them as physically monstrous: they had horns on their heads and noses so large they stuck right out of their faces like great beaks. Devils and djinns literally flew out of their heads to mislead Muslims and spread evil. Everything that went wrong was the fault of the Jews. The Iraqi tyrant Saddam Hussein, who had attacked the Islamic Revolution in Iran, was a Jew. The Americans, who were giving money to Saddam, were controlled by Jews. The Jews controlled the world, and that was why we had to be pure: to resist the evil influence. Islam was under attack, and we should step forward and fight the Jews, for only if all Jews were destroyed would peace come for Muslims. (Hirsi Ali 85)

She continues:

In Saudi Arabia everything bad was the fault of the Jews. When the air conditioner broke or suddenly the tap stopped running, the Saudi women next door used to say the Jews did it. The children next door were taught to pray for the health of their parents and the destruction of the Jews. Later when we went to school, our teachers lamented at length all the evil things Jews had done and planned to do against Muslims. When they were gossiping, the women next door used to say, "She's ugly she's disobedient, she's a whore- she's sleeping with a Jew". (Hirsi Ali 47)

Earlier I discussed how the United States politics along with the Arab/Israeli

Conflict led to both a strong impact and massive divide in the region due to its imperialistic overlays. This bifurcation was between those who supported occupation, imperialism, and Westernization, and those who opposed it (L. Ahmed, *The Quiet Revolution* 35). As the West continued to expand into the region and Israel continued and continues to displace Palestinians, it became a common figure of speech to blame anything on the Jews. Due to the fact that Zionism incorporates Jews to a certain extent

into the homeland “Israel”, Muslims interchangeably started to conflate Jews with Zionism in the same manner that the whole world conflates Arab with Muslim. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the most talked about issue in the region, with the largest impact, and has played a huge part in both anger and resistance towards the West. However, Whiteness also plays a historical role in stereotypes of the Jews. In the excerpts above, Hirsi Ali discusses how Sister Aziza describes the Jews as “physically monstrous: they had horns on their heads and noses so large they stuck right out of their faces like great beaks.” It is important to note here that in addition to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, which has had its particular affects in the region, Jews were historically portrayed in Western media as monstrous. They were often seen as Dracula wearing a Star of David necklace in the 1930s (Phillips 24). As the U.S. feared Eastern-European immigrants coming into the United States, Dracula represented the fear of the migrant Other and the fear of altering American life (24). The image of Dracula with his long nose and his Star of David necklace promoted an anti-Semitic and Nazi like narrative (24).

As U.S. Americans feared Other ethnic groups landing on American soil, we witness a similar narrative today with Trump’s Muslim ban. Is the Muslim ban a fear of the Other? Can we consider Trump’s xenophobic narratives a fear of altering U.S. American soil and a fear of the unknown body?

Hirsi Ali’s Denial of Racism

As Hirsi Ali’s social imaginary becomes co-opted with Whiteness and she begins to think from a place where she fears the Other (who ironically is herself), the moments

in which she disidentifies or rejects ideologies of Whiteness become null. When I refer to disidentification in this context, I am referring to the ability to reject ideologies of Whiteness and being able to identify some aspects of White racism. As Others around her disidentify, she is not able to reflect and see past this disidentification due to her complete rejection of Islam. For example she says:

Yasmin didn't like Holland. She said the Dutch had treated her like a criminal at the airport. The air stank of cow dung and the language sounded stupid. She called the Dutch gaalo and kufr. Being nice in Somali terms means when someone gives you what you ask for. So if someone politely said no, even if they explained why they couldn't do something, Yasmin and the others saw this as arrogance or racism. (Hirsi Ali 198)

In another excerpt, she writes:

Naima complained constantly but it was about the Dutch. She was always insisting that shopkeepers looked askance at her because they were racist and they didn't want Moroccans in their shop. Personally I thought they were staring at her bruises and told her so. They never looked strangely at me and I was far darker than Naima. She said it was different for me because I was a refugee and Dutch people thought refugees were romantic. I thought this was illogical: How could anyone tell that I was a refugee? (Hirsi Ali 232)

As Hirsi Ali completely rejects her Brownness, she is unable to identify moments in which her friends and family experience discrimination. Her complete rejection of her culture, religion, and her denial of racism becomes the driving factor in embodying both White femininity and Whiteness at large. For example she says: "I think now that this obsession with identifying racism, which I saw often among Somalis too was really a comfort mechanism to keep people from feeling personally inadequate and to externalize the cause of their unhappiness" (Hirsi Ali 232).

When Hirsi Ali fled to the Netherlands, she applied for asylum as a refugee. Instead of telling the interviewer she was fleeing a marriage, she fabricated a story telling

them she was fleeing from a civil war. Years later, during her time as a member of Parliament, the Dutch government tried to revoke her citizenship when she lied during her asylum interview. Hirsi Ali says: “ I was taken aback by how many people kept coming up to me to tell me how angry they were with the Dutch government. I found myself constantly explaining that Holland wasn’t a xenophobic country and had not suddenly kicked me out” (345). Hirsi Ali ended up resigning from government, and her citizenship was never revoked. However, she decided to move to the United States. It is important to understand here that even as ideological entities and apparatuses attempt to reject Hirsi Ali’s brownness, she is unable to identify this. For example, all colonized people position themselves in relation to the civilizing language, the more they assimilate, the more they reject their culture, the whiter they become (Fanon, *Black Skin* 3). The colonial subject learns to say in his or her place and will sometimes train themselves to use his muscles against his or her own people (Fanon, *Wretched* 15). For example, the concept of the Western self teaches individuals to become a self through the “Other”. In order for an individual’s self to be complete, it must be in relation to the “Other”. This relation to the “Other” in a self/Other binary is what dehumanizes brown people (Fanon, *Black Skin* 18). Instead, we must evolve beyond the self/relation binary. As individuals like Hirsi Ali recreate themselves through language and reject their

brownness in the service of Whiteness, it becomes vital for us as researchers to showcase communication as language and communication as a method of control.⁵

Conclusion

In the beginning of this chapter discussed how the advocate archetype can seep into the oppressed archetype. Both archetypes depart from a point of oppression; however, unlike the oppressed archetype, the advocate completely departs from any performances of resistance. As the advocate evolves, such as in the case of Hirsi Ali, her brown body completely deviates from her performance and internalization of Whiteness. For this reason Hirsi Ali is granted more agency due to the fact that she does not need to be managed. As she completely rejects any opposition to Westernization, she becomes a trusted subject and one that does not need to be managed; therefore, becoming the face of Muslim women. Abraham contends that politicians in Netherlands were quick to realize that she would be the best-suited spokesperson due to the fact that she was an insider and could get away with racism (301). Audiences are interested in experiences that they have not had, which makes her memoir so popular. Abraham brings forth his experience as a Jew who has had similar conversations to Hirsi Ali with his father. He asserts that if you change her use of the word Quran to Torah, Allah with Ha'shem, prophet with Moses and Amin with Amen, the conversation remains the same (300). However, in Hirsi Ali's case

⁵ Another important event worth mentioning is the film *Submission* that Hirsi Ali created with Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh who was murdered on the streets of Amsterdam in 2004 by a Muslim due to the film controversial in which it featured verses of the Quran written on the bodies of naked women, in protest to the oppression and submissiveness of Islam.

the conversation remains fixed onto Islam. As she internalizes racial inferiority, she is unable to see past her desire towards Whiteness:

People accuse me of having interiorized a feeling of racial inferiority, so that I attack my own culture out of self-hatred, because I want to be White. This is a tiresome argument. Tell me, is freedom then only for White people? It is self-love to adhere to my ancestors' traditions and mutilate my daughters? To agree to be humiliated and powerless? To watch passively as my countrymen abuse women and slaughter each other in pointless disputes? When I came to a new culture, where I saw for the first time that human relations could be different, would it have been self-love to see that as a foreign cult, which Muslims are forbidden to practice? (Hirsi Ali 348)

Hirsi Ali's concept of feminism can be seen as incompatible with Islam; however, we must re-examine the concept of feminism as a tool for assessing both gender expectations and moments when something has gone wrong in the treatment of women (Cooke, "Multiple Critique" 92). Many critics of Islam claim that Islam and feminism cannot go together. However, this is symbolic of the ways that postcolonial women struggle for both space and power through contradictory positions (93). The term Islamic feminism allows us to commit to both faith and women's rights simultaneously, creating a new subject position. Those that engage in Islamic feminism are contending that Islam is not more violent or patriarchal than Other religions, but instead is a means of linking religious, political, and gender identities in resistance to globalization, local nationalism, Islamization, and patriarchy (94). In essence, while many Muslim feminists are concerned with the treatment of Muslim women at the local level, they are ignored by Hirsi Ali (Jusová 151). As Hirsi Ali dismisses these feminists, she insists and reasserts that her way is the only feminist way (151). This is crucial to understand because it connects to controlling Muslim archetypes that the West creates. As White feminism and

its performance become the only accepted ideology, controlling archetypes of Muslim women will continue.

As Hirsi Ali erases the agency of Other feminists that contradict her idea of feminism, she rids them of any agency. However, one needs to explore how Hirsi Ali's experience has shaped and affected her internalization of Whiteness. For instance, diasporic writers have the ability to go beyond national boundaries but also ideological boundaries (Blumenthal 251). As they depart from their physical homeland, they engage with an ideological homeland through the use of the Western canon (252). As an example, Hirsi Ali's memoir documents her displacements from Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Kenya and so forth but at the heart of her text is a search for an ideological homeland. This homeland is a place where she can lay her experiences to rest as an ex-Muslim woman (254). As Hirsi Ali argues for a space for freedom, she does so through the Western canon and turns to the West as that ideological homeland (255). She creates a homeland for herself as her narratives indicate her decision to have a Western and secular homeland as opposed to a Muslim one (259). For instance, we witness this through her support of Trump as she says, "In temporarily banning citizens from just seven countries, however, it was also too narrow (citizens from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and several North African countries have also been implicated in terrorism)" ("Trump's Immigration Ban" Hirsi Ali). She also states, "President Trump was right back in August. The threat posed by 'the hateful ideology of radical Islam' needs to be countered. American citizens — including immigrants — must be protected from that ideology and the violence that it promotes ("Trump's Immigration Ban").

Additionally, Hirsi Ali groups Muslim immigrants into four groups: adapters, menaces, coasters, and fanatics. The adapters conform overtime to Western values, while the menaces drop out of school, commit crimes and go to prison. The coasters live off welfare, and the fanatics use freedom to spread Islam. As Hirsi Ali completely rejects her homeland in favor of the West becoming her new homeland she begins to reject her Muslim past through extremist narratives of Whiteness. For this reason it is essential to understand that Hirsi Ali's diasporic experience and struggles shaped her narratives as her own homeland. As many turn against the West in their own diasporic experiences, Others also turn towards the West. Therefore, it is imperative to situate her narratives as grounded in her specific experience, but also problematize how narratives such as Hirsi Ali's negate Muslim women globally. For instance her politics are a result of her experience as a Muslim woman (Jusová 150); however, it becomes problematic when she is the only individual positioned to address third world perspectives (150). Power explains Hirsi Ali's failure in her discourse around Islam:

How could Islam be a rigid set of one-size-fits-all edicts, as the zealots claim, when it's a faith with followers who range from dreadlocked Oakland grandmas to Hyderabadi mystics to French businessmen? How could it be rigid when interpretations range so widely, running the gamut from bans on women driving (see Saudi Arabia) to giving women the right to lead countries (see Pakistan and Bangladesh)? Such is the decentralized nature of Islam's majority Sunni sect, which lacks an organized clergy, that it allows followers to go from scholar to scholar until they find an opinion that matches their own. (Power)

Cooke asserts that the wave of neo Orientalist Muslim women writers are under the illusion that they are exposing misogyny but instead are mobilizing Muslim women as marketing tools. As they present themselves as Muslim women, they gain narrative

authority (Cooke et al 94). As Muslim women like Hirsi Ali are taking autobiographical authority, their culture becomes a site of truth telling (109).

Additionally, these neo Orientalist women embody and re-inscribe patriarchy as they begin to use Muslim women as tools, ridding them of any agency. This again creates an archetype that is either granted more agency due to standard performances of Whiteness, or denied agency due to the rejection of these standard performances. Mir-Hosseini claims that women are forced to choose from two options: those who want to impose patriarchal interpretations of Islam's sacred texts and those who pursue a neo-colonialist hegemonic global project in the name of enlightenment and feminism. Those of us committed to achieving justice for women and a just world have no other option than to bring Islamic and feminist perspectives together (9). She states that there always have been, and will be, competing interpretations of Islam's sacred texts. The power of any interpretation depends, not on its correctness, but on the social and political forces supporting its claims to authenticity (11). For instance, icons such as Ayyan Hirsi Ali have created fabrications and imaginaries that conflate the "liberation of women" with the "war on terror" (Leeuw, and Wichelen 326). Hirsi Ali has become a leading voice against the Dutch government's welfare and multicultural policies (Mahmood 122). Her claims were that policies have fostered domestic violence against Muslim women by allowing the Islamic community to practice its patriarchal traditions and customs without being regulated by the state. Consider the Iranian thinker and French writer, Chahdortt Djavann, who has claimed veiling is similar to a women's rape and those who have worn the veil, like her, should rightfully speak about the issue (123). This certainly sets the

tone for an ethical quandary that negates women instead of seeing the meaning of the hijab or veil as dynamic (L. Ahmed, *Quiet Revolution* 212).

The difficulty lies in resisting and counteracting these schools of thought because individuals that breed these ideologies, become ambassadors of the international community of the oppressed (Mahmood 124). This is detrimental because these women only represent a small slice of a massive Muslim community. It is also vital to understand that we are not disputing that women are not prone to violence in Muslim societies, but that the attention on Muslim women as suffering in mainstream discourse is what is negating them (129). Thus, the Muslim female body is constantly displaced on the international media landscape (Al-Mahadin 9).

For this reason, women's rights are in desperate need of improvement in our region and worldwide. However, an intersectional feminist must ask, how can we address these issues locally without aiding imperialist projects, including war projects that kill these very same women under the guise of "saving them." One way to resolve the tensions is the exigent need to track Muslim women's rights into the multiple social worlds in which they operate, especially particular in terms of their mediations and transformations (Abu-Lughod, *Do Muslim Women Need Saving* 2). As a result, we need to step away from debate and follow Muslim women's stories and mediate their lives in divergent locations (2). Hence, when we treat women's rights as a social fact rather than a "rallying cry," we can ensure a more elaborate understanding of gendered, global, national and local power (34). This solution entails engaging in critical thinking, dual

critique, cross-cutting parallels, and never erasing the historical and economical (Kahf 123).

There is also a need to problematize concepts that are interdependent such as power, femaleness, relationship to time, and how this is connected directly to discourse on identity (Mernissi 188). Today all debates in democracy and the Muslim woman's question is directly related to that the piece of cloth, (the veil) which has become the essence of Muslim identity (188).

Therefore, when we begin to challenge our own communities by looking inward instead of fixating on the hijab. This will allow Muslims to focus on other problems like poverty and violence. By neutralizing the hijab, the unveiled woman becomes as significant as the veiled woman (Cooke, Multiple Critique 101).

Additionally, reframing domestic violence, as a patriarchal problem, not a cultural one, can also assist in drawing attention away from "Muslim" women to women across the intersections of gender, race, and class. For example, in Palestinian societies, women face oppression from both the patriarchal sociocultural system (Israeli and Palestinian men) and the Israeli occupation (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 584). This also applies to other forms of violence such as genital mutilation. Likewise, one must bring forth the personal in order to dismantle larger ideological stereotypes such as in the case of arranged marriages. The problem is that when individuals like Hirsi Ali take the limelight in the service of Whiteness, it hurts feminists in the region who are tackling a triple patriarchy in Iraq (Al-Ali 240) or honor killings in Occupied Palestine (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 584). It creates more work for us, and shifts out attention to defending our perceptions in the

media and popular culture instead of tackling the serious problems, such as violence against women. As critics we must work towards breaking the ideological glass ceiling that has muffled us for centuries. It begins with learning how to break down hegemonic rhetoric and discourse.

After all Calafell breaks the silence by asserting:

While I am marked through the lens of monstrous femininity in the academy, I refuse to be marginalized. I name this space in order to disrupt it. I make this connection in order to disempower and disidentify with it. I name this space so that you might join the conversation and accept this invitational performance". (Monstrosity, Performance, and Race 126)

Through uncovering hidden moments of Whiteness we can re-train ourselves to develop methods of awareness and resistance. Awareness is a powerful tool because it can mobilize the masses. Most individuals are not aware of hegemonic rhetoric and ideologies. Therefore, through critical rhetoric and by naming the spaces that Calafell asks us to disrupt, we might be one step closer to exiting the boundaries of marginalization that have confined us for centuries.

CHAPTER FIVE: QUEEN RANIA: THE HUMANITARIAN LEADER AND THE SEARCH FOR A COUNTER-NARRATIVE

I could hear the tires screeching in the background as we touched down at Washington Dulles Airport. I couldn't tell if we had landed or if I was still dreaming. I was still thinking of my grandmother's dementia and if she would still remember me once I finished my PhD. After a thirteen-hour plane ride back from seeing my family, I was ready to be home. But Denver wasn't my home. It was my transit to something larger. It was the stepping-stone that I needed to be able to survive in the increasing age of globalization. For after all, Whiteness has taught us that an American or European education is the only worthy education. So where was my home? I certainly didn't feel complete in Kuwait. I wasn't the typical traditional Kuwaiti woman because I oozed of Palestinian blood. My lighter skinned features, certainly gave it away and marked me everywhere I went. My Western and modern clothes also paved the way for my performances of White femininity as well. I was neither the traditional women or U.S. American because I looked Arab. I have struggled my whole life trying to find a home place because I have always been torn between the U.S., Kuwait and between my Palestinian origins. These are the side effects of diaspora. They haunt us on a daily basis. The screeching of the tires got louder and the plane began to shake. My half asleep thoughts instantaneously went into ALERT mode as I remembered that I would have to

go through immigration. I suddenly forgot about my Palestinian origin and my dilemma of being a Westernized Arab woman. I started to prep my self up for my performance of White femininity. I grabbed a book on spirituality (in English of course). I made sure I had my Converse shoes on, all my papers were ready and that I looked visually presentable in the most modern way possible. This included getting rid of any trace of an Arabic accent. My heart began to race, what if the immigration officer thought I was too Americanized in my performance? Would he get suspicious and think that I am today's newly disguised terrorist? My anxiety began to soar and I sought refuge in my phone as I started to message my family.

I write this narrative because I have had many unpleasant encounters with immigration. Encounters that forced me to perform White femininity when I needed to survive. Encounters that have shaped me into who I am today as a researcher and writer.

For after all, my homeplace is always in my writing.



In the earlier chapters my goal was to reveal internalized hegemonic rhetoric through both the performance of speech and text. Rhetoric can take on many forms; therefore, it is of value to a look at rhetoric through different mediums. As we begin to develop a critical rhetoric, other forms of rhetoric such as the visual become as important as the textual. The visual also tells a narrative and functions as a performance of discourse.

This chapter focuses on photographic images of Queen Rania of Jordan. Through searches of key images of Queen Rania, on her social media sites and on google, I looked

for images that had recurrent themes. For example visiting a refugee camp or a family photograph. These were images that would recur and therefore suggest a certain ideology or argument. As themes emerged I decided to choose one to two photographs for each theme. However, though I am solely analyzing images in this chapter, I still believe it is important to compare these images with narratives as a form of evaluation and support. Four key themes emerged under the umbrella of White femininity: Colonial modernity, transnational motherhood, the nuclear family, and education. Additionally, through visuals of Queen Rania, White femininity becomes a parallel dimension of upper class privilege as the two are conflated. For instance, to perform upper class is also to perform White civility. As Queen Rania's images demonstrate, hegemonic rhetoric and Whiteness occupies not only the discursive but the visual as well.

Visual Rhetoric

Since the 1950s Visual Studies capitalized on its connections to popular culture (Barhurst et al. 616). However in the 1990s there remained a debate over whether photographers and filmmakers record unthinkingly or express a vision over the visual they are producing. For instance, studies in psychology paid attention to transferring two-dimensional experience into a three-dimensional representation while Anthropology and Sociology devoted more attention to the meanings, context, and interpretation behind images (Barhurst et al. 629). Therefore, visual studies emerged from a plethora of fields.

Rhetorical approaches to images focus on persuasion and the ideological underpinnings of visual material (Barhurst et al. 629). Thus, visual rhetoric pushes the critic to arbitrate between the visual object and the viewer. For instance, photographs

reflect dominant ideologies and shared understandings of events. In turn, this influences both identity and political behavior (Lucaites and Hariman 39). The way in which photographs reflect shared understandings of events is similar to what I had discussed in the previous chapter on McGee's concept of fragmentation (279). One must treat fragments as part of a larger context in order to identify moments where discourse becomes co-opted by larger power structures. Visual objects such as images also reflect fragments or shared understandings that are part of a larger visual narrative and culture.

The visual is a performance in that it is aesthetic (Lucaites and Hariman 41). The image for example performs and defines experience in relation to overarching structures. Additionally, a photos' ability to freeze time brings more attention to the experience while defining public culture at that given moment (41). It provides the audience with the ability to pause and reflect on the narrative that the visual moment is providing them.

The visual pays attention to the complexities of both everyday life and transnational consciousness (Calvente 8). It is both an integral part of popular culture and the place where struggles over ideologies and hegemonies occur (8). Furthermore, the visual allows one the possibility to discover how the modernity-colonial relationship has advanced (8).

However, the meaning of Whiteness is also a technological construction. White in the field of visual technology, can signify a hue, skin color and/or the symbolic (Dyer xx). With Dyer, we can begin to understand how aesthetic technology implies that technologies are also ideological (83). For instance, photography and cinema privilege White people through a media of light (83). Beauty pleasure and representation are

provided through technological constructions. Together, the actual technology of lighting and the actual movie lighting have racial implications (84). Movie lighting provides visibility for the performer (87). Historically, photography, media, and film have focused on movie lighting based on Whiteness. In other words, human skin has a multitude of colors and needs different lighting; however, lighting was developed taking the White face into consideration. Makeup and lighting was set up as “normal,” meaning White (90). Creating the perfect image, meant capturing ideas of Whiteness, color, lighting, and hue (96).

For this reason, rarely do we witness a person of color lit in equal lightning. Lighting was created to discriminate due to the fact that those who were not White would always be deemed inappropriate subjects for lighting (Dyer 102). Therefore, Whiteness seeps not merely into apparatuses and institutions, but creates and privileges Whiteness in aesthetic technology and photography (122).

Queen Rania: The Humanitarian Leader Archetype

Queen Rania, was a Palestinian born in Kuwait to Faisal and Ilham Yassin. Her father was a physician from the city of Tulkaram in Palestine. She later on received her graduate degree in business administration at the American University in Cairo (“Queen Rania Biography”). Her family fled Kuwait during the first Gulf War in 1991 and moved to Jordan. In 1993, she met Prince Abdullah II and was married six months later (“Queen Rania Biography”). She was framed as a modern day Cinderella who found her Prince Charming (“Life in a Fairy Tale”). Oprah Winfrey asked her, “When you were a little girl, did you ever dream of becoming a queen? It was a dream. I know. But what’s it like

to be a real one?” (“Al-Abdullah, Interview by Oprah Winfrey”). Queen Rania has a strong commitment towards issues of health and education for women. She is known for her elegance, beauty, modern and fashionable clothes. As a global symbol, she has also become an emblem of femininity.

As a representation of humanity, I examine Queen Rania as a site where White femininity is produced and re-secured globally through the archetype of the humanitarian Leader who is also a symbol of motherhood, the nuclear family, modernity, and education. As I examine Queen Rania’s performances I also will identify moments where her performances of White femininity assist her in narrating performances of resistance. My use of the term modern, is used in the context where the modern is juxtaposed to the primitive Other. The Other or the primitive is seen as irrational, deprived, childlike and different while the modern or Anglo-Saxon is mature, rationale and normal (Said, *Orientalism* 40). In general the primitive is portrayed as uncivilized and backwards while the modern is civil and more educated. When I use modern for the purpose of this chapter I am referring to a position of superiority of Whiteness and civility this could be portrayed in the way one dresses such as with Western style clothing, performing in a civilized manner and highlighting education as the way out of primitiveness.

Shome has argued that the link between White femininity and national identity is lacking in literature (*Diana and Beyond* 2). Princess Diana, for example, is a site where one can examine the workings of White femininity as it connects to issues of “global motherhood,” transnational masculinities, fashion, the body, cosmopolitanism, and spiritual appropriation. Through the humanitarian archetype, Princess Diana is able

to carry a plethora of meanings about White femininity and how White and non-White women are positioned in relation to that performance of White femininity (12). As Shome, seeks to understand how media narratives of White femininity produce meanings about White women's relation to the nation, I aim to understand how it also produces Muslim women's relations to White women's femininity. Hence, Muslim women must define themselves in relation to White women. With that comes an internal battle between either replicating performances of White femininity or resisting them. As global caretakers, such as Queen Rania, take the stage, they do so in an unconscious effort to sustain and reproduce White femininity through a humanitarian lens. However, in her performance of White femininity, Queen Rania is also able to disidentify and reproduce counter narratives/narratives of resistance. Her performances of White femininity aid her in refuting stereotypes about Islam.

Colonial Modernity and Royalty

As Queen Rania's visual image comes to the forefront of the global arena, one prominent theme that sustains White femininity is Rania's performances of Colonial modernity and royalty. Through the replication of White global figures such as Princess Diana, Queen Rania sustains and reproduces performances of modernity. However, Queen Rania's actual narratives carry a plethora of moments in which she disidentifies, while her body contradicts her spoken narrative. Take for example the photographic image below:



Figure 1: L-R: Princess Diana of Wales; Princess Margaret of Kent; Princess Grace Kelly of Monaco; Queen Rania of Jordan; Duchess Katherine of Cambridge; Princess Letizia of Asturias (“Bridal Dictionary”).

The website where the image is featured, discusses Queen Anne necklines on dresses and uses Snow White as the example. Following that, the picture above details how modern royals have taken up the style. All the women in the pictures above are White women with exception to Queen Rania who blends in because of her White skin color and her ability to perform White modern royalty. Even though the picture above reveals Queen Rania as appearing “less White,” due to the White women surrounding her, when portrayed alone or with Other people of color, Queen Rania appears Whiter. The photograph above also symbolizes standards notions of beauty and femininity, as well as who is allowed to be the face of beauty, femininity, and thus, modernity.

Additionally, because of her ability to perform modernity so properly, she is often seen with White royalty or Other non-White royalty that perform modernity. Most frequently, she is seen with Queen Letizia, of Spain who similar to Queen Rania performs standard notions of White femininity and beauty. As Queen Rania has remained the focus of fashion magazines like Glamour and Vogue, she is portrayed as a symbol of modernity and described as choosing not to wear the hijab due to power and not fashion, (even though this is a description of her and not her actual words) (Ibroscheva 887). White femininity produces various boundaries around gender, race, class, sexuality, and in staging the modern (Shome, Diana and Beyond 20). Muslim femininity replicates this and sustains White femininity through both royalty and modernity. As Queen Rania performs normalized Western values her body becomes a medium to transition stereotypes of Arabs and Islam through her practice of modernity (Yessayan 435). However, some of the narratives and images I gesture towards in this chapter also indicate that through her colonial royal and modern performances she is able to present a counter narrative to Western ideals of the Arab World. In other words, through her visual performance of modernity, she is able to disidentify. Through racial passing, the marginalized person takes on the appearance of the dominator (Calafell, Latina/o Communication 89). Consider Ricky Martin whose visible Whiteness (skin color) carries privilege that allows him to pass from Latinx territory into public spaces of Whiteness (90). His body becomes a mediator between both the Latino and White community (92).

Similarly, Queen Rania's Whiteness, by both her skin color and her performances of White femininity, such as speaking fluent English and dressing modern, also allow her

to move between the West and the East. For instance, in a recent television interview with Fox News, Queen Rania dressed in Western style clothing, speaks English fluently, while not wearing a hijab. Her appearance allows her to pass her narrative through to public spaces of Whiteness. In her interview she states,

The two things I would like people to understand is Islam in no way condones the acts of these extremists, those barbaric savage acts, the public beheadings, the rape, the slavery, the mass murders. I know that some people say that there are verses in the Quran that refer to violence but I would say that there are such verses in the bible as well. If you take something out of context to serve your agenda, and these people are not bound by any morality or constraints so they say whatever they want. (Al-Abdullah, “Jordanian Queen”)

Queen Rania uses common words used to describe Arabs such as “barbaric” and “savages” which reinforces the stereotypes that have circulated around Arabs for centuries. However, simultaneously she refutes the idea that violence is specific to Islam by bringing forth the idea that context matters. Therefore, she creates a counter narrative through her performances of White femininity. If it were a woman wearing a burqa being interviewed she would not be able to cross over into public spaces of Whiteness in the same manner that Queen Rania can. This crossover into public spaces of Whiteness enables her to further spread Whiteness. It also enables her to resist or present counter narratives when appearing in these public spaces.

One site in which the modern is formed, is through fashion, such as in Figure 1 revealing royal bridal dresses that are both modern and fashionable. The fashionable female body is a site where the nation creates reasons of belonging (Shome, Diana and Beyond 76). As Queen Rania creates spaces of modern belonging, we can consider how

she does so through the corporeal. For example, consider the photo below along with the caption.



Figure 2: Whether she's stunning in traditional dresses, right, or dazzling in haute couture gowns, left, Rania has adopted a regal style befitting on a modern royal (London).

Queen Rania appears modern even when wearing a loosely fitted hijab. Her performance of White modernity allows her to trespass into White spaces. In Figure 2, she wore the hijab to meet Pope Francis at the Vatican Church. While Queen Rania is performing White femininity, she is also revealing that the veil can be worn in Other religions. As her White modern feminine body enters a Christian privileged area, it also

signifies a moment of disruption where the veil is disassociated solely with Islam. Even though some Christian women cover their heads in church, it is her brown body and her role as a Queen that is important in terms of marking difference here. As Queen Rania covers her hair at forums in Saudi Arabia for example, she also covers when visiting the Vatican church. What is also important here is that the media produces Queen Rania only as a modern subject because her appearance is in agreement with the White feminine subject. However, when one digs into the source and context in which this photo emerges and into Queen Rania's narratives, one witnesses how she softly creates a counter narrative. Yessayan has noted that Queen Rania's unveiled body assists a stereotypical image of the veiled woman while simultaneously creating Orientalist discourse by being the unveiled Western woman (435). I extend this and argue that her unveiled body creates both a hegemonic and counter-narrative concurrently. As she performs modern royalty through fashion, she is able to carve a space where she simultaneously disidentifies with stereotypical White Western narratives of Muslim communities.

Thus, fashion is a site where national relations of the corporeal become negotiated (Hansen and Madison). For instance, Blackness fashion narratives create animal visualities where Black women are often dressed in tribal or animal print clothing (Shome, Diana and Beyond 82). For instance, supermodel Iman Mohamed Abdulmajid was portrayed as exotic, tribal, and barely able to speak English, when in reality she was a university student who spoke five languages. Shome asserts that the modern doesn't sell with Black women (83). However, Queen Rania can sell modernity through her White skin color and White feminine performances and she certainly does this through fashion.

Transnational Motherhood

As Queen Rania exemplifies, one can appear modern while resisting Orientalist ideologies. However her body also enacts performances of transnational motherhood, carrying over logics of the White savior narrative. When we see White Western women such as Princess Diana, Angelina Jolie, or Madonna saving and rescuing international children from underprivileged countries, we in turn reinforce a White patriarchal nationalism (Shome, "Global Motherhood" 390). These familial requirements reinforce a White heterosexual patriarchal family, while erasing the violence by Western colonialism that destroyed familial systems in many underprivileged nations (390). Additionally when a celebrity makes a stance on a certain issue, they are performing what their audience will want to see in a certain humanitarian setting (Hasian, *Humanitarian Aid* 2). For this reason, scholars need to pay attention to the critical ways in which they read celebrities because these celebrities gain support and popularity the more they adopt neoliberal logics (11).

Queen Rania is frequently seen visiting underprivileged hospitals and schools. Hasian has argued that 'affective identification' with underprivileged children can divert attention from the real structural causes of poverty, famine and so forth (*Humanitarian Aid* 65). In the image below her face is illuminated and illuminating the face of a black child. As her hand touches the child it reminds the viewer of transnational motherhoods' healing capabilities. The modern body transforms the dark subject to the light of modernity (Shome, "Global Motherhood" 396). Therefore, her body can bring the child's body out of the dark, meaning primitive, into the light, meaning modern. Whereas White



Figure 3: Queen Rania of Jordan, A member of the UNICEF global leadership initiative for children, visits Cape Town (Salbi).

women symbolize transnational motherhood as an ethic of virtuousness, they also do so through standardized notions beauty (393). As Queen Rania enters public spaces of Whiteness through her beauty and aesthetics, we witness the continuation of the script of White femininity. Additionally, when an ethos emerges out of the relation of a privileged group to a marginalized or Other group, the ethic becomes negated. One cannot be in an equal relation to another when that individual is in a privileged positionality, and has not reflected on how their privilege can oppress the Other. This is similar to what I discussed earlier in terms of speaking “for” the Other. Whether Queen Rania is in a privileged positionality due to her upper class standing or due to her performances of Whiteness, the ethos becomes negated once a performance of White femininity becomes the symbol of transnational motherhood. As Shome has stated:

Overall, Global motherhood must be situated in the context of contemporary neoliberal conditions of unequal flows of global capital and cultural exchanges that make possible such transnational linkages in which the White Western woman becomes a staging ground for a Western-driven ethics of global

multiculturalism while at the same time co-opting that multiculturalism into Western (particularly North Atlantic) logics of familiarity. (Shome, *White Femininity* 389)

Additionally, Queen Rania is touring on behalf of the UNICEF. While the UNICEF focuses on children's rights, especially in the area of education, it is important to question the basis of rights. In my earlier discussion of the concept of human rights and how it evolved from Anglo American thought, states will use human rights against their citizens in the same manner that colonial empires use it against their subjects (Asad 8). As we must problematize the concept of human rights, we should also question structures that are birthed out of the UN. Institutions like the UN, World Bank, and IMF aid in the biopolitical management of populations and are merely seen as funders of neoliberal policies. While the UNICEF picks up the pieces and damage that Western structures have caused and also critiques social structures, it does so without questioning the causes of underlying disparities (Klees and Qargha 326). Is it capitalism? Is it neoliberalism? Is it the structural effects of colonization? These are the questions that the media always omits. The "what caused it?" question always gets dropped in the name of power structures.

As Queen Rania frequently visits underprivileged areas, it is important to understand that the dynamics shift when she visits sites that are closer to home. Take for example her visit to the Palestinian and Syrian refugee camps; while some pictures reveal Queen Rania as a maternal healer (similar to Figure 3), this is not necessarily the case when the visits are closer to home. Even though other iconic figures, such as Angelina Jolie, have been seen at refugee camps in Jordan, they have done so in the capacity of the

UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Jolie for instance has been involved in humanitarian efforts since 2000 and named the UN high Commissioner for Refugees in 2001. (Hasian, Humanitarian Aid 158). In 2011 her movie *In the Land of Blood and Honey* a movie centered around a love story of a rape victim who falls in love with her rapist during the Bosnian war (160). In 2010 the Bosnian government denied Jolie permission to film in Bosnia because victims were uncomfortable with the love story so Jolie movie the location to Bulgaria (160). Many said that Jolie had no insight into the daily suffering of those who were actually raped in Serbian camps (153). Even though Jolie was faced with resistance by the communities that were the actual victims, she still carried on with the movie. Her privileged celebrity positionality allowed her to do so. Similarly, as Western women save and rescue international children they re-introduce them to a White Western heterosexual logic. As the trend for celebrity White women is to spread transnational motherhood, they in turn do so at the intersections of heteropatriachal desire, at both a national and international level (Shome, "Global Motherhood" 392). Even though Queen Rania brings forth this trendy logic of global motherhood, she also introduces a counter-narrative, one in which she is not necessarily illuminating the child but in turn revealing an affective economy. Thus, an affective economy is one in which emotions create effects and boundaries between a person and society as a whole (S. Ahmed 4). These emotions create effects between bodies and are a form of capital. The affects that emerge out of these forms of capital are circulated as a result of its circulation (S. Ahmed 5). Adding to this, Shome has made the important point that while the West feels compassion for starving children it is due to underlying

feelings of hatred towards the nations (402). This hatred allows one to feel gratitude that they are not some starving child in some underprivileged nation. As a result, the gratitude fuels feelings of pity, which in turn produces an affect of care (402). As Queen Rania enters underprivileged areas she is not illuminating or saving the children, but in turn is producing a mutual understanding of affect of a community that belongs to her. Even though her upper class standing certainly places her in moments of privilege in contrast to the refugees, it does not completely aid her performances of White femininity. As she performs White femininity on a daily basis, in the picture below (Figure 4) her White femininity is negated as she stares away together with a child that resembles her. She cannot light up this child's face who shares the same racial features as her in the same manner that a White woman can but on the contrary can circulate an affect of tragedy and trauma. As Queen Rania touches the child as they both look towards another refugee, there is no hierarchy of lighting or touch but instead a mutual understanding of equality that can only be generated by an Arab/Muslim woman who is aware of the meaning of suffering, displacement, and has not rejected her diasporic homeland; in contrast to Hirsi Ali who has rejected her Islamic past.

In the case of Queen Rania, her understanding of displacement stems from her Palestinian origins; therefore, she is familiar with the meaning of diaspora. Whereas the White woman transforms pity and hatred into gratitude, the Arab woman transforms pity into pain. However, both women of color and White celebrities meet on the same ground in terms of class. For instance, sometimes when White women and middle-upper class women of color align in their performances due to a shared class or economic



Figure 4: Concern: This afternoon Rania tweeted: 'The international community must support humanitarian agencies like the IRC and UNHCR for their tireless work in helping refugees #Lesbos' ("Queen Rania Makes an Impassioned Plea").

understanding, this can be dangerous as it erases the experiences of under privileged communities at both an economic and racial level. As being middle and upper class becomes a way to act Whiter, this reveals how easily connecting to other women on a class privileged level can mute Other marginalized identities. As celebrity figures are class and economically privileged it is important to note that this also fuels their pity for not being in an underprivileged area. While this gratitude might cause pain for the women of color, it merely causes more gratefulness for the White woman. It is also important to note that the both Queen Rania and the child in the image are light skinned which also might play into why this child's photo was chosen.

Additionally, Queen Rania shifts the dynamic of transnational motherhood into one of local kinship. As she supports an older Arab woman, it reminds the viewer of Arab

collectivity and kinship (Figure 5). The elderly, often a marginalized group are held with high regard and respect among many Middle Eastern communities. Her gesture to help the older woman walk is a reminder of the values of Middle Eastern societies to care for the elderly.

Overall, as Queen Rania paves the path for an ethic of transnational motherhood, she is able to empathize with those from her community while simultaneously spreading a Western-centric ethics laced in White femininity; therefore, enabling more White patriarchal elements. It is vital for critics to be able to identify moments in the media and popular culture when iconic figures spread and resist logics of White femininity concurrently. As Queen Rania continues the script for the meaning of global motherhood, she also sets the stage for the ideal notions of the heteronormative family.



Figure 5: Call for safer routes: Rania told the gathered crowd at Kara Tepe, said to be one of the safer camps, that refugees would continue to tread dangerous paths in a bid to reach a better life ("Queen Rania Makes an Impassioned Plea")

Heteronormativity: The Nuclear Family

Queen Rania's Instagram and Twitter accounts read: "A mum and a wife with a really cool day job." While in the previous section I discussed a global motherhood, in this section I am interested in the nuclear family as a continuation of transnational motherhood at a ground or local level. As Queen Rania emphasizes her "really cool day job," she creates an illusion that her role as a queen is a middle class job. This is similar to Princess Diana who often reduced her royal functions to a job, portraying her self as middle class (Shome, *Diana and Beyond* 66). Additionally, having the ability to manage a career while also being attentive to the family, symbolizes a normative mother who can be everywhere and do everything (68). It also represents a blatant form of White feminism while erasing the intersections of race and class. This is problematic as the normative mother becomes in direct contrast to non-White and working class mothers who do not have the benefits of an upper class standing (68).

As Queen Rania follows in the footsteps of other White feminine royal figures she begins to paint a typical White middle class heterosexual nuclear family, such as in Figure 6. It is the perfect, modern, and Westernized family where all family members also appear heterosexual: usually a mother and a father with their 2-3 children in a garden or in front of a White picket fence. It is in these visual cues, that all the intersections of queerness are erased. It is not to say that a family should refrain from taking family photos, rather that they are learned to be normative by ideologies of Whiteness and therefore appear heterosexual. It is not that these visuals are problematic; it is that they erase visuals of queer families as normative. Images of Princess Diana symbolized a

nuclear family that negated those that are in contrast to the nuclear setup such as non-White or non-Western (Shome, Diana and Beyond 69). This negates Other types of families such as the single mother, the queer family, and any type of family that deviates from the “normal.” This is not to say that there aren’t commercials or images that target queer families, where for instance I have seen insurance commercials who reveal two White men with a child. However, these commercials are targeting these marginalized communities to benefit economically instead of challenging the heteronormative norm. For instance constructing the family as a site of both nation and queer, meaning the homonational, allows the state to be autonomous in order for corporations to thrive in the midst of neoliberalism (Puar 62). The vital factor behind homonational spending is that governments benefit from capitalism. Thus, if one queer community brings in more capital, the government will certainly include them. For instance, White couples are more



Figure 6: With 10 days until the end of year, I am happy to share our family picture for 2016 ("Queen Rania’s Facebook Page").

likely to invest in real estate and get insurance as opposed to Black couples. The nation benefits from homonationalism through tourism, travelling and because many of these couples have no children. (63). Moreover, advertising fuels this further by linking Patriotism to consumption and to tourism. Touristic exceptionalism creates a commitment from the queer community to nationalism and patriotism

However, this does not necessarily mean that heteronormativity is no longer the script. For instance, in the picture above, the family stands in the garden in front of their house, symbolizing the standard recipe for a nuclear heteronormative family. This sets the tone for what is deemed “normal” in society. It is important to note that class and Whiteness function in parallel to each other. Those of upper class standing are also cultured on how to act White. This includes acquiring notions of modernity and White civility. As Figure 6 reveals, Queen Rania’s family is standing in the garden (similar to the standard White family behind the picket fence), continuing the script of White heteronormativity.

In Figure 7 Queen Rania sets the tone for motherhood and marriage. As she holds her son Hashem, who is being playful with her daughter Salma, she sets the standards for a normative family and women’s expected gender roles. As her hand touches Hashem, her wedding ring finger becomes the standing visual for heteronormativity. Yep contends that the violence of heteronormativity impacts all identities in a variety of ways. For instance, within the LGBTQ communities this is manifested through four domains: The first one Interior-Individual, is where the individual internalizes homophobia and is self-destructive. The second domain, Exterior-Individual is when the individual is subjected



Figure 7: The gift of motherhood comes in small packages, and it keeps growing. Throwback to 2006 with Salma and Hashem ("Queen Rania's Facebook Page").

to emotional or physical violence and so forth. The second two domains involve the collective (society) and can manifest as an interior-collective such as discursive violence or images and words that oppress LGBTQ community. It can also manifest as an exterior-collective, meaning institutional violence where heteronormative ideology is manifested through numerous institutions such as family, education, public life, media, etc. Therefore, the pictures of Queen Rania and her family are a continuation of the exterior-collective that is the standard heteronormative ideology that is only an aid for the violence against the LGBTQ community.

Additionally, what is important is that both heterosexuality and Whiteness are invisible but normalized as “gender becomes inextricably linked to sexuality in the ongoing tension and struggle between heterosexuality and Whiteness to reproduce and sustain a White heteropatriarchy—a self-evident standard against which all differences

are measured” (Yep 34). Even further, Yep illustrates that the violence of heteronormativity affects heterosexual men as well as women. For the men, heteronormativity represses their desires as they learn how to be “real men.” Additionally, women are not allowed to feel anything that deviates from heterosexuality, which leaves women to focus on marriage and motherhood. As Queen Rania emphasizes her role as a wife and a mother with a “very cool day job,” she in turn has not only internalized the violence against heterosexual women but continues the script of what is necessary for a “normal” family.

Whiteness and the Logics of Education

As Queen Rania continues the language of White heteronormativity, she also carries on elements of Whiteness through education. The Queen Rania Foundation is an organization for education and development. The slogan reads, “What the Arabs need today is an education revolution” (“Queen Rania Foundation”). Additionally, Queen Rania is the appointed UNICEF’s Eminent Advocate for Children. As she travels around the world, speaking about education, she has become a prominent face that many look up to in hope of blossoming out of poverty. She is frequently heard saying, “When you educate a girl she becomes a woman who lifts herself and her family out of poverty” (Al-Abdullah, "Queen Rania's Remarks"). Not only has she traveled to schools around the world promoting education, but she has spoken frequently at major global events. For instance, she spoke at the Clinton Global Initiative, where she awarded Malala the Clinton Global Citizen Award for Civil Society and said, “For Malala, education is about global social justice for all and how learning can free people from the shackles of poverty

and the constraints of prejudice. How it can be a prescription for good health and prosperity” (Al-Abdullah, “Interview by Oprah Winfrey”).

As I previously discussed, it was not a sheer coincidence that Chelsea Clinton had written an article about Malala or that Hillary Clinton was revealed as one of the top 100 most influential people. It was also not a coincidence that Malala praised Clinton for saying that, “Women’s rights are human rights” (“The Advocate for Women Leaders”). As Queen Rania joins this dynamic, it is a lesson to remind ourselves how fragments become small parts of a larger narrative. While Queen Rania praises Malala’s work and links it to poverty, one must be wary of the implications this can have. It implies that poverty can be eradicated through education, implying that anyone can access education easily when in reality not everyone has the opportunity to education. Similarly, her photos imply the theme.

In Figure 8 Queen Rania visits a school in South Africa run by the South African government and UNICEF. Again, her Whiteness is hypervisible as she is the focal point of the photographic image. As she turns towards one of the students, she illuminates the room. As she introduces logics of education, the photo reminds viewers that anyone can access education. Additionally, it implies that White Western women can “save” those that are from underprivileged communities because they are more modern and educated. This feeds into a primitive vs. modern binary as well. This concept of “saving” will bring the world’s children out of poverty. Further, her UNICEF t-shirt risks feeding back into neoliberal accessories. White femininity and upper class standing are closely tied to education. Without a decent class standing and a Western education, one cannot simply



Figure 8: Queen Rania visits the Phefeni Secondary School in Soweto, Johannesburg, South Africa (Al-Abdullah, “A Promising Glimpse”).

receive an education and lift themselves out of poverty. Additionally, only Western institutions are seen as worthy educations. When a young woman receives an MA from a local university in a third world country, she is often forced to repeat her education in the Western country she travels to. Therefore, it is of equal importance to understand that like the logics of Whiteness and class, education has also been globalized, modernized, and Westernized. However, even in those cases where students are able to receive a Western education in their home country, they risk being co-opted by institutional Whiteness. For instance, Al-Saif and Ghabra examine the American University in Kuwait and state that challenges that institutions such as the AUK face are “how to retain the merits of a Western educational system without most of the associated hegemonic and Whiteness tropes that are reflected academically, culturally and racially at times and ensure that the American and Kuwaiti components that are part of the name, AUK are balanced to say

the least and not allow the American component to overpower if not erase the Kuwaiti component” (109). For this reason it is important that one be able to access a Western education because Western imperialism has defined that as the “norm.” However, it is of equal importance to be able to hang on to cultural notions that are anti-Western while engaging in a Western education.

As I starting researching Queen Rania, I knew she would be the leading example of a humanitarian royal figure embodying White femininity. I was ready. Ready to critique her for sustaining colonial logics, ready to tear her apart. All I needed was my pen and paper. However, I was taken aback. As I began to look through her visuals which of course symbolized the typical White and modern woman, I realized there was more to her than just her modern and White feminine image. She frequently created a counter-narrative in both her visual and spoken rhetoric. Her disidentification was so prominent that in many cases it allowed her to trespass into White spaces and present her counter narrative.

Disidentification: Creating a Counter Narrative

Unlike many women that embody and perform White femininity, Queen Rania weaves in a counter narrative by trespassing into White space. In the photo below, she attends a protest in solidarity with the Jordanian pilot that was killed by ISIS. Unique to this situation, is that she is wearing a Kaffiyeh. The Kaffiyeh has been a scarf that is frequently worn by the so-called terrorists in many Hollywood movies that stereotype Arabs. In reality, for Arabs it is a symbol of nationalism, pride, and for many a representation of the struggle for the Palestinians, and for Arab unity. Even though the



Figure 9: “Jordanian Queen Rania holds a placard during a demonstration on February 6, 2015 in the capital Amman to express solidarity with the pilot murdered by the Islamic State (IS) group” (Agence France-Press, “IS ‘bunch of Crazy People’”).

red Kaffiyeh is often associated more with Jordanian nationalism than the white and black Kaffiyeh that represents Palestinian nationalism, they are both still stereotyped often in Hollywood movies. Queen Rania says, “People call them ISIS, I would love to drop that first ‘I’ because there is nothing Islamic about them. They have nothing to do with faith and everything to do with fanaticism” (Feldman). As Queen Rania protests against ISIS, she also denounces that ISIS has nothing to do with Islam. This is important as her performances of White femininity allow her to create a counter-narrative in a space that provides no room for the separation of the “I” from ISIS.

Queen Rania is also frequently seen wearing the traditional Palestinian/Jordanian dress at numerous occasions including the anniversary of the independence day of Jordan. Additionally, she is frequently heard creating narratives that resist the typical “oppressed woman” narrative. For example, Queen Rania was asked by Oprah on The

Oprah Winfrey show why some women choose to wear the veil and others do not. She responded:

It's a personal choice and as long as the woman does it because she wants to and is not coerced into it then that's her right. Unfortunately in the west people look at the veil as a sign of oppression or weakness and this is not true. As long as the woman is wearing it because of her belief. I always say we should judge a woman according to what's going on in their heads rather than what's on top of their head. (Al-Abdullah, Rania. "Interview by Oprah Winfrey")

This narrative allows Queen Rania to trespass into hegemonic spaces due to her modern and Western demeanor. Her perfect English and modern dress allows her to safely voice her narrative. Oprah also asks her, "What would be the greatest misconception that you would want to dispel?" Queen Rania replies "I would like to dispel the misconception that Arabs are all extremists, that the Arabs are violent that the women in the Arab world are oppressed and suppressed because that's not the truth" (Al-Abdullah, "Interview by Oprah Winfrey").

Additionally, Queen Rania spoke at Yale University on the issue of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. She said:

You know, when I started college, back in 1988, Europe was divided. The United States had an existential foe called the USSR. Much of Latin America was ruled by juntas; South Africa by apartheid. Civil conflicts had been raging for decades from Guatemala to Northern Ireland. Nelson Mandela lived in a cell. And Palestine was under occupation. These were the problems we used to describe as intractable, even insoluble. Yet hatreds have given way to handshakes. Prisoners have become presidents. But not in Palestine. In Palestine, walls are going up, not coming down...four hundred kilometers to be precise. The decades have brought what feels like an endless parade of starts and stalemates ... missed opportunities... shattered hopes... and diminishing returns. (A Conversation with Her Majesty)

As Queen Rania has the ability to enter White public spaces, she also has managed to create a counter-narrative, one that frequently clashes with her visual

appearance. This clash, has become a blossoming ground for Queen Rania to refute stereotypical narratives that the Western media and popular culture have created. This is important as it signifies a way in which Whiteness can be resisted through the language and performance of White femininity.

Conclusion

“For the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house. They may allow us to temporarily beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define their masters house as their only source of support” (Lorde 99).

I begin this section with a quote by Audre Lorde because finding a balance between using the master’s tools and resisting them is integral for the future of Middle Eastern intersectional communication studies. As Muslim women and/or Other women of color we risk feeding back into hegemonic structures, but at times gain spaces where we can create counter-narratives. As Queen Rania uses her White femininity as her master’s tools, she is enabling and creating a space to start a counter-narrative. Her royal standing also assists her in entering these spaces compared to the average Muslim woman that does not have such a well-known position. Even though her trespassing into White spaces may never bring about the genuine change that Lorde reveals, it might create a space that can build momentum.

First, Queen Rania’s performances of royal and colonial modernity have paved the way for her to create a counter-narrative. She does this through her visual appearance as White feminine royalty. As she performs the modern, she also verbalizes and refutes

stereotypes of Muslims. As to her visual appearance she is still able to integrate the hijab and wear the Kaffiyeh, and at times is seen wearing traditional Palestinian and Jordanian dresses. As she uses the master's tools she is able to beat the master at his/her own game by softly introducing non-Western elements.

However, as she performs transnational motherhood, specifically with Other nations that are not Middle Eastern, she risks reproducing the modern body that becomes defined as the rescuer, and maternal healer who will create an ethic of transformation and bring the dark child into modernity. The danger here is that a Muslim woman is internalizing and performing White femininity unconsciously and these are the moments in which one must train themselves how to identify how they have internalized Whiteness and are reproducing it. However, bringing it closer to home, as Queen Rania visits refugee camps we witness a different logic, one that can be capitalized upon.

As I mentioned earlier, her visits evoke an affect of tragedy, one that if voiced more often, then publicized more often, may create that momentum that may connect more communities together. Bringing Third World communities into the limelight is a difficult process, one that is often negated and erased by re-focusing on people of the color in the U.S. While this is of equal importance, it is vital when discussing Third World bodies of color, to not re-center to it to US bodies of color. This risks, constantly erasing transnational bodies of color. This is similar to how when discussing Queer material in a classroom for instance, the conversation becomes re-centered to a heterosexual one (Ghabra and Calafell 12). Moving forward, it is essential that Queen Rania and Other Muslim leaders, not only visit these camps but create narratives that

discuss the structural causes behind the refugee crisis. For instance, what was the cause of the influx of Palestinian refugees? Therefore, one needs to take these issues further, and point to the hegemonic structures that have caused displacement for the Palestinians. Was it the UN? The Zionist project? How does Whiteness play into the modern state of Israel? One needs to dig deeper into creating an affect of tragedy and pointing fingers at who and what has created the tragedy. This will create more momentum in creating more counter-narratives and will assist in engendering more ethical trajectories. Even though Queen Rania has made public appearances discussing the Palestinian struggle, her narrative is just a fragment that is not part of a larger story, therefore it both carries no momentum and creates difficulty for audiences to be sympathetic.

However, as we move into logics of kinship and the heteronormativity, Queen Rania introduces the typical White middle class heterosexual nuclear family visual. What is problematic isn't that she is heterosexual and has the typical so-called "normal" "straight" family. Instead what is tricky, is that there is no public involvement of her speaking or being seen with LGBTQ communities. Silence is communication and her silence coats an image of her neutrality being an oppressive element. Injustice requires speaking out and being aware of one's heterosexual privilege. Further, it involves using that privilege to be an ally. It is a process one that never ends. As Queen Rania reasserts heteronormativity she further reproduces it by refraining from issues that involve the LGBTQ community.

Similarly, she reproduces Whiteness again through her appeal to education. However, it is important to note that her efforts to spread and create more educational

opportunities are still important. What is dangerous here, is when she goes to African countries on behalf of the UNICEF it feeds back into the very same structures that created poverty and a lack of education in the first place. Additionally, assuming that the way out of poverty is through education assumes that all children will have access to education, and that the cause of poverty is due to a lack of education. In reality, poverty has a range of causes, from colonialism, to neoliberalism and globalization. Education might help individuals work towards a better future but it cannot eradicate poverty. Instead, capitalizing on education in her home country, in which she already does so would be a less privileged initiative. One in which she can help build better educational systems for children.

However, what distinguishes Queen Rania from Other women that perform White femininity is her ability to create a counter-narrative. Overall, I think Queen Rania's role is important and that she should continue to create cites of disidentification and continue to voice the typical stereotypes that individuals have been conditioned to believe by Western media while also being wary of the moments in which she reproduces Whiteness. In turn, by not only defining her masters house as the only source of support, she might be a symbolism of the bridge between the West and East.



White Femininity

Sustaining, prolonging and lengthening the arms of White heterosexual patriarchy.

Stretching its reach through education, and modernization

White Femininity

I once trespassed into their world

I created, I resisted, I was able to...

Spread a narrative of resistance

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION: THE SEARCH FOR AN INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST ETHIC

I am reviewing all the Facebook posts on the Syrian genocide in the city of Aleppo. I am confused.. Bashar Al-Assad has massacred thousands of innocent civilians... Why are we celebrating him all of the sudden? Why are their pictures of soldiers helping children and mothers out of the rubble? The rebels were militarized and forced into violence by Bashar Al-Assad. He started this genocide! But there have been countless posts today saying that the army has been helping civilians leave Aleppo and there have been dozens of fake pictures of murdered civilians. At one point I almost believed that maybe Assad had been vilified...but I quickly returned to my senses. They are letting him get away with everything. He radicalized these groups in the first place! They are portraying the rebels as terrorists and Assad as an angel!

Assad is able to perform Whiteness through his interviews and his ability to speak English and dress Western. It is much easier for the Western media to portray the rebels as terrorists and Assad as the good guy. However, I am still confused..

But after all there is no truth to rhetoric

I write this narrative because even as I (the expert), am developing a whole study on the embodiment of White femininity, and how we can create the critical tools to unpack Western rhetoric, I am often clouded by and complicit with these ideologies.

However, it is extremely vital to identify when we embody these perplexing moments in order to learn and develop our critical thinking further.

My goal in writing the previous chapters was to develop a critical eye so we may be able to identify the moments in when we can become implicated and manipulated by White ideologies. As I have demonstrated, archetypal criticism is a method that can allow a critic to identify these tensions and understand how White ideologies can become a mode of embodiment for Others. It is a method that allows us to understand the larger modes of archetypal representation that have been created by Western discourse. These modes of global representation and embodiment have caused an ethical dilemma in the portrayal of certain cultures. This is due to a number of complicated and deep faceted issues. As the media and popular culture has the ability to evolve, with technology, social media and so forth, ideologies are also able to evolve and are able to advance in a covert manner. For this reason, as Muslim women have begun to take the stage as much as White women, it becomes harder to identify that these White ideologies still exist and are still working backstage. This creates an ethical dilemma that not only implicates another culture but also negates any Other race that isn't White. Additionally, if we go back even further theoretically and study the field of ethics within Communication Studies, we will witness the same trend that we see in the media and popular culture today.

As previously argued, the field of ethics has steered away from identity. The ethos that was developed for the global society was developed by White men and therefore applies to only White men. For this reason, I begin my overview and extension of the

matrix of domination. I then discuss the concept of agency and how one can reach an intersectional feminist ethic.

Complicating the Matrix of Domination

In the introduction I had discussed, the problems with the field of ethics and the western relational concept of the self. This concept of ethics leaves absolutely no room for intersectionality, for identity, and for marginalized groups such as women of color to build a feminist ethic (and the LGBTQ community, who were also left out of this literature).

As mentioned earlier, the matrix of domination allows us to understand how we can participate in dominance, harm, and subordination simultaneously (Collins 4). It paves way for an understanding of how intersecting oppression and privileges are organized (21). Instead of approaching ethics from a position of objectivity or subjectivity, one needs to approach ethics from the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and so forth. The matrix of domination is the space where oppressions intersect and are contained at the center (246). As domination is manifested through schools, government and so forth, the intersections of those in marginalized identities are also managed and restricted. Thus, the matrix allows us to understand which dominant powers are at play and how they operate to suppress those at the opposite spectrum of the Matrix. Consider this diagram, which outlines those in privileged positionalities:

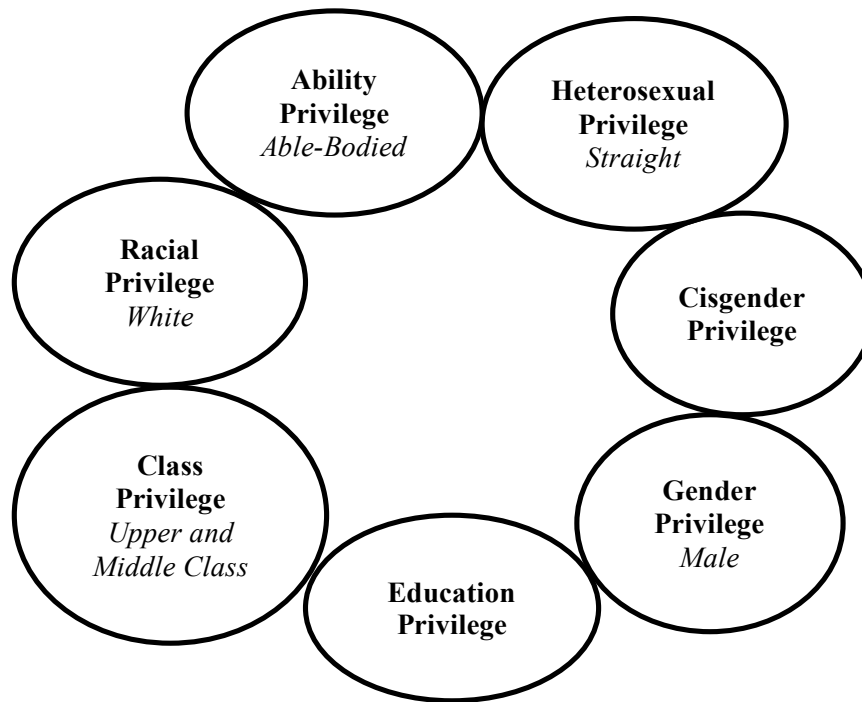


Figure 10: The matrix of domination showing only the privileged positionalities.

Those that occupy the privileges above are in dominant positionalities. Through these ideologies, privilege is learned through school, family and society. It is much more difficult for one to be aware of their privileges than their oppressions. In this instance ethics becomes the focal point in Communication because we must always be aware of our privileged positionalities (Ghabra, “Disrupting Privileged” 11). Additionally, we need to be active in seeking epiphanies that will push us further into mourning with our less privileged sisters and brothers. It is often easy to numb the experiences of our oppressions, the more we gain in privileged positionalities. Consider this diagram below that outlines both privileged positionalities (which I outlined in the graph above) and marginalized positionalities. Each privileged positivity is in direct opposition to an oppressed positivity:

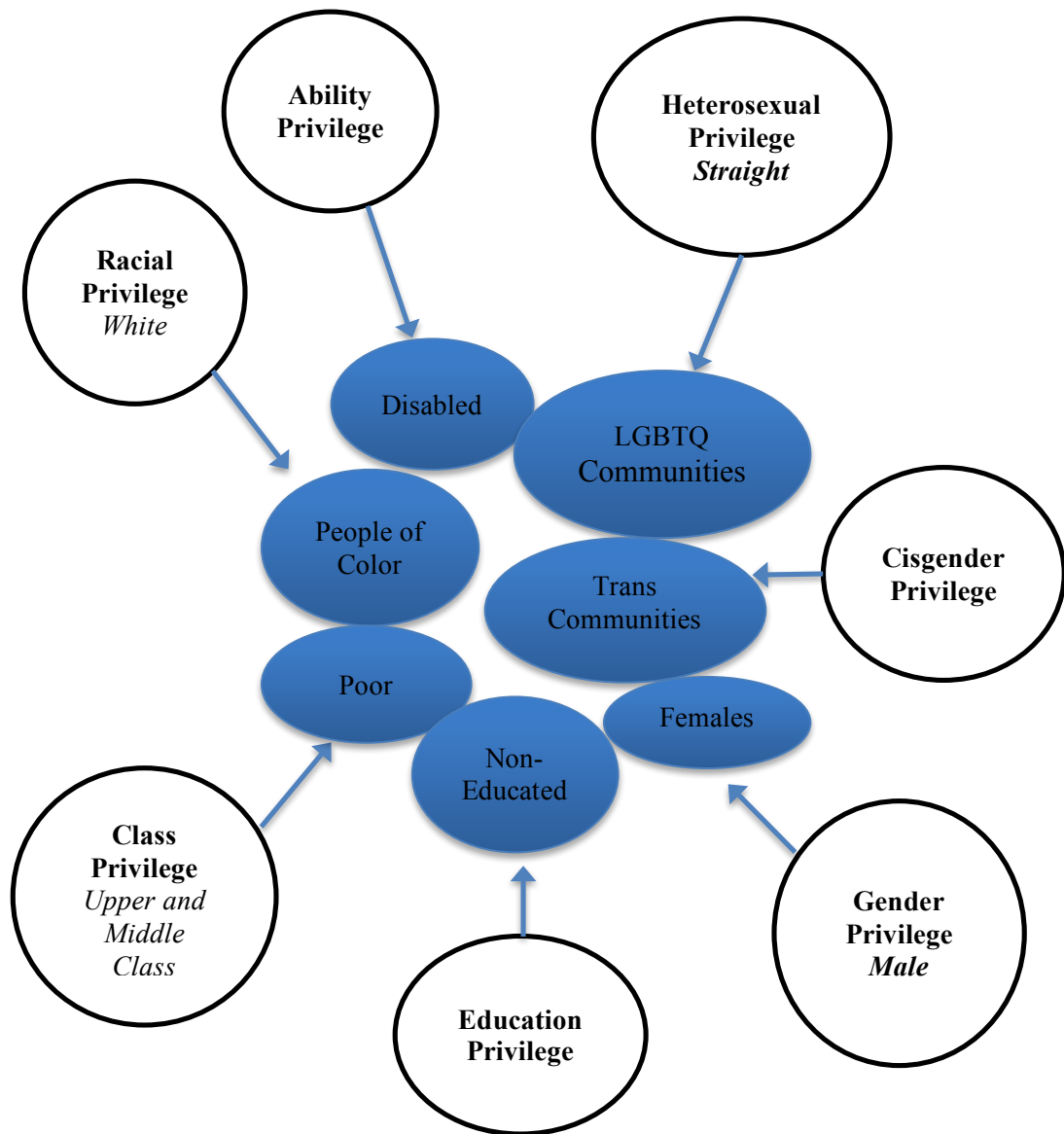


Figure 11: The matrix of domination with marginalized positionalities added (blue) to the privileged positionalities (white).

It is important to note that the privileged and marginalized positionalities outlined above are only a glimpse of some of the dominant and oppressed identities that exist. They are not limited to the privileges and oppressions outlined in the above diagram. There are certainly other privileges that exist such as: religion or Christian privilege, thin-

bodied privilege, standard beauty, and ageism. However, my point in outlining this diagram is to assist the reader in identifying how privileges work to oppress those at the center. Even though many feminists locate privilege in the center and the oppressed identities in the margins, I place those in marginalized identities at the center because it represents how they are suffocated by the periphery, which keeps them contained. Representing them in the center reveals how they are confined and unable to move freely. However, whether at the center or the periphery, the most important point is to reveal how privilege works to oppress marginalized identities.

In the diagram above the identities at the center are the ones that suffer the cost of not being what society has deemed to be “normal” or “dominant.” Often I have been in situations where I draw an intersectionality diagram to explain to individuals how we mistakenly and unconsciously partake in a system of oppression. I am asked why those that are at the center are considered marginalized. For example I would be asked: How is being gay a marginalized positionality? LGBTQ communities are increasing in number and becoming dominant. At other times I am told, being gay is against our religion. Other times I am told: We have a black president, how is White still a dominant positionality? My point in mentioning these resistant moments is that at the baseline to what is considered “normal” by societal standards is most often the privileged and dominant ideology. This is carried out further by institutions, the family, popular culture, and the media. This is important in reminding ourselves that “normal” is what power structures tell us is “normal”: the nuclear family, marriage, heterosexuality, Whiteness, able-bodied, having a thin waist, and so forth. Whenever we are questioning our privileges we must

remind ourselves that we cannot see past our privileges sometimes because they have been normalized by dominant ideologies.

It is at the moments of normalization that we must dig deeper into disrupting our
privileges

and that is where the feminist ethic resides

This is why intersectionality is key in identifying both a feminist ethic and to pinpoint how individuals partake in the system as both a micro and macro level.

However, I deem it necessary to complicate Collins' matrix of domination further.

Consider the figure below:

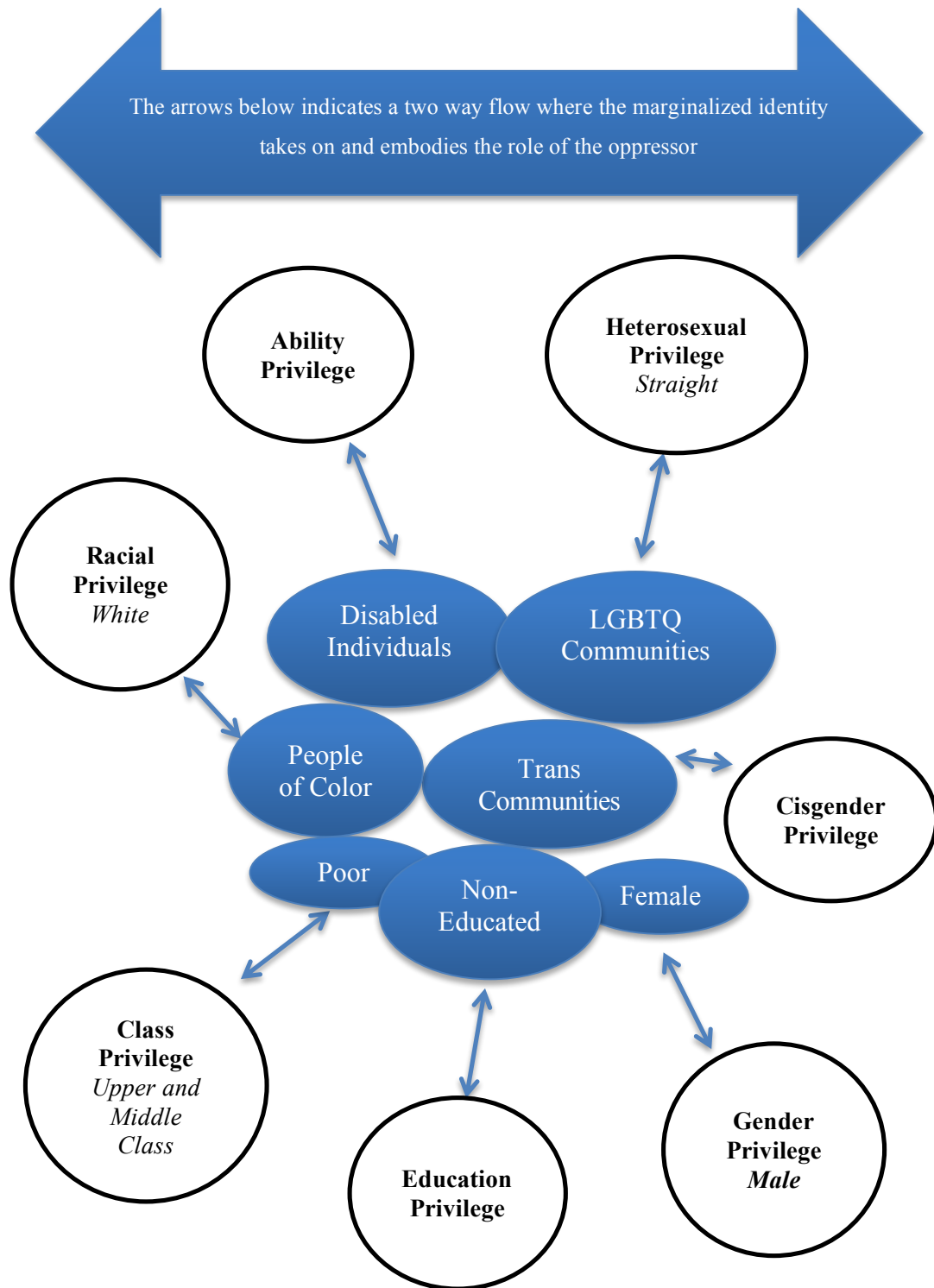


Figure 12: Extending the Matrix.

Today, dominant ideologies are becoming even more and more difficult to identify. We must shift our focus from how privileged communities can oppress marginalized communities to how marginalized identities embody or take on the role of oppressors. This is certainly an ethical dilemma. If one does not develop the critical tools to identify these moments, one can easily fail to recognize when someone in a marginalized identity has taken on the role of the oppressor. Consider the different ways that Malala, Queen Rania, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali embodied the role of White privilege and performed White femininity and White feminism.

For instance, the oppressed and the advocate archetypes depart from a point of oppression. The advocate completely departs from performances of resistance, such as in the case of Ayaan Hirsi Ali where her brown body deviates towards an internalization of Whiteness. The oppressed archetype can at times disidentify or struggle to gain more agency. While the humanitarian archetype adopts transnational performances of White motherhood, education, and heteronormativity. In the case of Queen Rania we can witness the importance of trespassing into White spaces to present a counter-narrative. Here, we are also able to learn how to use dominant ideologies to our advantage.

It is through the embodiment of privileged positionalities that women of color are
able to trespass into White Spaces

For without the notion of embodiment they remain invisible to the global
limelight

The Implication of Agency for Muslim Women

Previously I discussed the implication of a speaker's location and how it has an impact on the speaker's claims (Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking" 7). Thus, the social identity of the speaker and whether the speaker is speaking "with" or "for" is crucial to the concept of agency. My point in writing this study was to demonstrate the ethical implications of embodying the role of privileged positionalities. In this context as Muslim women are robbed of their agency, plenty gets sacrificed. First, Muslim women are caught in the middle between competing patriarchies at a global level. The Muslim woman has no agency to make decisions for herself. As France bans the hijab, Saudi Arabia enforces it. As a media spectacle, she is stripped of any opportunity of having agency over her body. Additionally, it is also important to question when a woman "appears" to have agency. Does she really have agency or is she only appearing to? This is similar to the discussion above where I stressed the importance of developing the critical tools to identify when one has embodied a dominant positionality. Agency can also appear as a mirage, clouding reality.

For instance, Malala struggles appears as if she has asserted her own agency, calling for all women to be educated, when there are many Muslim countries that have highly educated women. She also performs agency at times by still wearing the hijab. Has the West co-opted her body speaking "through" her instead of "for" or "with" her? We have reached a point in this complex era where we are no longer struggling between whether one should speak "for" or "with" another, but instead today dominant ideologies are speaking "through" us. This is fundamental and critical in being able to see past these

moments. Agency often appears as if it is there, but in reality it is the influence and power of the dominant ideology. Therefore, questioning beyond what is physically standing in front of us is crucial. For instance, in Malala's case she has no agency except in the moments in which she disidentifies.

On the other hand, archetypes like the advocate embody a White Western feminism and complete rejection of the cultural being. This absolute rejection allows them the agency to be a spokesperson. Furthermore, Ayaan Hirsi Ali was given more agency, she became a parliament member and a best-selling author. Her complete rejection of Islam allow her complete agency because she has embodied and internalized the oppressor's narrative. As she appears as creating a space for Muslim women to gain agency, she simultaneously rids them of any possible agency by reducing them to oppressed women. She also erases the agency of Other feminists that contradict her ideas of feminism. This negates the existence of any morality due to the fact that feminists, such as myself, spend endless hours defending our own culture against Whiteness when we could be battling oppression in our own regions.

Recently, there have been images of the "moderate Muslim women" circulating the media. While at the surface these images portray Muslim women as "not oppressed," they also negate them simultaneously. For instance, the October 2016 renegade issue of Playboy describes Noor Tagouri as "On the verge of becoming the country's fist hijab – wearing news anchor (Gaizo 67). The article says, "As of June she's an on-air reporter for Newsy, where she provokes the sort of confusion we could use right now, in part by making a surprisingly bold case for modesty" (67). The article also celebrates Noor for

dismantling stereotypes of Muslim women. As she sits in front of a backdrop of an American flag, while appearing more Western, it paints the image of the moderate Muslim women that will not rock the boat.

Similarly, in November of 2016 The Miss Minnesota pageant experienced their first women, Halima Aden, wearing the hijab. When asked why she joined the competition, she replied that she wanted to break down stereotypes about Muslim women being oppressed (Hughes). For this reason, Western rhetoric is now pushing for a more moderate and Western Muslim women image. As these women are trying to dismantle stereotypes about the hijab, it becomes a tricky battle between losing agency through Western rhetoric and gaining agency by pushing forth the hijab as a signifier of non-oppression. As many attacked both Halima and Noor for objectifying their bodies through Playboy and a beauty pageant, once again these women were robbed of their agency as the international community began to dispute whether they should have appeared in these places in the first place.

For this reason, as power and dominant ideologies work against individuals' agency it is important to understand the need for social justice work. This curtails empowerment and investigating how the matrix of domination works and moves about through structural, interpersonal, disciplinary, and hegemonic realms of power (Collins 308). It also entails developing the critical tools to identify this power. As we begin to engage in critique, it is integral to always link the macro to them micro. These two cannot exist in isolation. As hegemonic power operates through both ideology and culture, producing archetypes, it connects the structural, disciplinary, and the interpersonal

domains together. The structural domain manages any institutions such as the media and schools. It operates according to what is the dominant ideology. The disciplinary then sets forth these practices through the workforce, academia, and so forth (299). This then permeates to a micro level where power is seen through everyday interactions (299). For example, as White heteronormativity is the dominant ideology, it permeates the media, schools, and institutions, which are further enforced through the workforce, academia, and even through the family, then internalized through micro or everyday interactions. However, knowing this allows one to be able to identify narratives that are negating Other communities such as in the case where Muslim women embody White femininity because they have been structured to do so.

It is crucial for the reader to understand that I am not saying that oppression does not exist in the Middle East, indeed it does. However, oppression exists in all societies and manifests in different forms. For example, the issues of women's rights in Kuwait will be significantly different for women in the United States. We cannot equate and weigh oppression, we must tackle it differently depending on the context and the matrix of domination. Collins has made the important point that regardless of how a matrix is organized its value is that it captures the universality of intersecting oppressions, organized through local realities (246). For instance in Kuwait (a Muslim country), women are ministers and parliament members. The concern there is about women being able to give their children citizenship if they marry a non-Kuwaiti and about abolishing a law that entitles men to kill their wife, daughter, or sister if he catches her committing adultery. The man will face no more than three years in prison. However, there is a

massive movement, “Abolish article 153” that is gaining a lot of momentum. Hopefully these feminists will be able to continue to tackle local problems and not be co-opted by narratives of Whiteness. In Occupied Palestine, women are being exposed to multiple forms of violence by both Palestinian men and the Israeli defense forces (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 603). In Iraq, women have been exposed to a triple violence: from Iraqi gang members that increased in number after the sanctions sent Iraq into an economic crisis, from the Islamic militia and from the US occupying forces (Al-Ali 214). Violence and oppression differs from one Muslim country to another in the same manner that it differs from one Western country to the other. This also means that the diagram of privilege and oppression that I have outlined above will also change when applied to a local context. For example, in Kuwait there are layers of racial oppression depending on the origins or cultural background that the Kuwaiti is from. Further, there are sectarian oppressions where the Sunni believe that they are superior to the Shi’as. Also, due to oil production and the massive upper and middle class arising, performing upper class becomes conflated (sometimes not always) with performing White civility. However, the diagram that I have outlined still applies to everything at a global level. One merely needs to create a secondary diagram when examining privilege and oppression from country to country.

An Intersectional Feminist Ethic

Earlier in this chapter I discussed the delinquency within the field of ethics as it fails to account for intersecting identities. First, we need to define identities as both positionality and as lived experiences through historical narratives because these are sites

of meaning making and from which one is open to the world (Alcoff, *Visible Identities* 43). Identity is also a source of embodiment it affects the body because it is a lived experience. For instance, women's positionality is a relational term identifiable only within context. Her context could be that she is a poor black lesbian woman who lives in New York. This would be a completely different context than a Muslim woman living in Jordan for example. The position women find themselves in can be utilized as a location for the construction of meaning. In essence, women in a position as woman and within context, for instance the intersections of her identities, can help engender a feminist politics (148). Additionally, if one begins to understand identity as a horizon and opening point from which to see, it would help in understanding privilege and oppression, and they intersect with our own identities. The concept of horizon links experience and identity as ways of understanding without making them all determining. It provides a realistic approach to explaining the relevance and fluidity of identity. Thus, the interpretive horizon can be constitutive of the self, representing the point of view of the self and the object as what it is from the frame of reference or point of view (Alcoff 96).

Lugones notes that as women we have to travel between worlds. Being stereotypically constructed and being your true self are being in two different worlds. She calls this travelling (Lugones 89). I would add we have multiple selves that are always in negotiation and in tension, and this leaves no room for women of color to even apply a philosophy of ethics to themselves. However, it creates spaces for intersectional feminists to develop their own feminist ethic.

Pattisapu and Calafell insightfully urge for identity to take the intersections of privileges and oppressions through coalition into account. I ask for women across race, culture, sexuality, and gender to form coalitions (Pattisapu and Calafell 54).

Understanding identity brings power and relations to the forefront. Through a dire need of family connection, Pattisapu and Calafell demonstrate that a feminist ethic is created through building alliances.

What does an Intersectional Feminist Ethic look like?

As I have tried to make evident throughout this study, the notions of representational ethics has been nullified in Western rhetoric. As many women begin to embody the role of their oppressor we remain at an ethical crossroad of how to incorporate an intersectional feminist morality.

First, ontological and epistemological claims about the nature of humans, ethics, or even identity should never be bifurcated. Rather, they need to be looked at as a whole. One should not exist without the other. My being as an Arab female is an ontological state. What I learn about my place of being in the world becomes epistemological. Edward Said states that the term Orient and the West has no ontological stability. It is simply made up of human efforts in identifying and constructed what they deem to be the Other (xvii). Cultures and histories cannot be understood without addressing power structures (5). The relationship between the Occident and the Orient has always been one of domination and hegemony. I would add that this ethical notion of always relating our fundamental self to the relational Other has for centuries discriminated against a plethora of marginalized groups.

If we always remain in alterity because we have been epistemologically constructed this way from the beginning of our state of ontological being, then where do we depart from? Like Calafell, I recognize that we need to look at political and cultural landscapes to reevaluate our notions of feminisms and create new ones. She states that the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality have never felt so vital (Calafell, "The Future of Feminist" 267). I believe that we need to imagine and introduce an intersectional feminist ethic. An intersectional feminist ethic is one that encompasses a holistic approach to both ontology and epistemology. An intersectional feminist ethic is one that locates positionality, resistance, privilege, and oppression across a wide spectrum of circulatory points that are interconnected and interdependent through race, gender, sexuality, ability, body type, education, and religion. My positionality as a heterosexual, cisgender, class privileged, able bodied, thin-bodied, Muslim who is also a highly educated woman of color (Arab) is what should guide my morality when encountering the Other. Our identities are the fundamental core value of any ethics. Tapping into our privileges is what will create ethical epiphanies. When I walk into a bathroom and see three women attempting to help a woman into a non-handicapped stall, that is what will help me reach my ethical being. I will have the epiphany based on my identity and the Other person's identity. I will be more aware of my privileges and will in turn develop that ethical epiphany based on identity, embodiment, privilege and oppression.

An intersectional feminist ethic also interrogates power structures and power plays and probes deeper into what is being 'framed' as ethical. Through this interrogation

this feminist ethic can bring forward an ethic that is based on reflexivity of one's own positionalities in relation to Other positionalities. With Calafell I stress that we theorize through history, and relations are theorized through our bodies (“(I)dentities” 7). Calafell reminds us that the intersection of racial bodies are ignored. For example, some studies fail to privilege a critical reading of Whiteness while others focus on sexuality and gender while also ignoring how the racialized body intersects (10). She calls for a reflexivity not just in the “I,” but also in the “we” that is found in Otherness (11). Through reflexivity an intersectional feminist ethic can emerge but more importantly can be one that encompasses any identity because of its intersectional nature.

As “I” reflect on my own ethical positionality I have come to the realization that I must be holistically present in my body as I interrogate how my oppressions are being violated by other ethical epistemologies that are not aware of their privileges. However, I also must interrogate how my privileges create ethical epistemologies that can in turn, oppress others if I am not fully engaged in reflecting on my own positionality and identities.

I was guest lecturing for my friend and colleague at another university. The students had voiced that they wanted to learn about Middle Eastern feminism. I had decided to add in a part about the embodiment of White femininity. Following the lecture, I broke them up into groups and gave each group a narrative from either Malala, Hirsi Ali, or Queen Rania. Some narratives were resisting White femininity while others were embodying White feminist ideologies. As we regrouped to debrief, one group, who had a narrative of oppression by Hirsi Ali, was divided on whether Hirsi Ali was

producing or resisting Whiteness. The narrative was clear to the one person of color in the group, but not clear to the White students in the group. We explored this as the students quickly learned that they could not see the embodiment of White feminist ideologies due to their positionalities as White individuals.

When ideologies seem so familiar to us, these are the moments that we must question the performances in front of us.

For the unfamiliar is where we can locate our privileges
As you read this, think of the moments where you disagreed me throughout this study when I was urging for reflexivity or to look at our privileges or maybe you shifted your focus to something else

These are the moments when we become clouded by our privileges

Sometimes we can't see past them

Being reflexive of our privileges can also allow us to identify when we are embodying another positionality and can also help identify when others or embodying privileged positionality. This is crucial in an age of illusion where it becomes extremely difficult to identify oppression because it is clothed in a mirage of power. An intersectional feminist ethical critic might ask? What is the dominant ideology in today's era? As an underprivileged member of a community is speaking in a White Western heteronormative popular culture and media arena are they embodying the role of the oppressor? For example, whether Queen Rania is in a privileged positionality due to her upper class standing or due to her performances of Whiteness, the ethos becomes negated once a performance of White femininity becomes the symbol of transnational

motherhood. Whenever the underprivileged becomes central stage, we must always question what power structures are at play here. Through a feminist ethic embodiment, the self and the collective take part in a dance that informs our reflexivity. It connects to how we are implicated as powerful and powerless, and how we contribute to disempowerment and empowerment simultaneously.

An intersectional feminist ethic allows one to dig deeper and asks those hard questions. For instance Massad's critique on the "gay international" has revealed how it stems from an Orientalist framework in the way it represents and universalizes the LGBTQ communities in the Muslim World. He states, this is done as academic accounts are written by White gay male European or American scholars which accounts for the lives of gays and lesbians or a larger mission where they must be liberated from the oppression they are under. For instance, this can be accomplished through journalistic accounts of lives of gay people in the Arab and Muslim world (Massad 362). Abu Khalil reveals that medieval books contained poetry by and about gay men and women. When in reality gayness has existed naturally for decades in Islamic societies, it was not until Westernization and colonization came to the region and with it of course came ideologies of homophobia and hostility (cited in Massad 368). Until today, it is very typical to see women holding hands with other women and men shopping while holding hands. After some aspects of Middle Eastern culture are segregated and therefore women are naturally closer to women and vice versa. This does not necessarily mean that two women holding hands are queer and/or straight but on the contrary before the West started to put queerness into categories, sexuality at the most part has been very fluid in the MENA

region. Going back to Massad and Asad, we need to think of the politics of feminist ethics and define it contextually and culturally. Massad and Asad remind us that the West always defines the Muslim or/and Middle Eastern image. Therefore, these archetypes are mirroring Western feminism because the West defines it.

My intention in using Malala, Hirsi Ali and Queen Rania of Jordan were because they were visible individuals that are known to many. In using archetypes that are visible, it can assist the critic in following them as archetypes that create fragments of a larger dominant narrative. Additionally, because these women are positioned as public women of color in powerful positions they could employ a feminist ethic if they really want to do social justice work and are aware of the ethical underpinnings of their performance.

Unfortunately, the state of being for women has always been superfluous, always in excess and marked in alterity. “We,” women of color, are always the Lacunae, longing for belonging equally to an inimical ideological structure that is painted in Whiteness, heterosexuality, masculinity, Christianity, ability, thinness, beauty, class privilege, and education. Difference and racism trumps truth and discourse. Ethics have been embedded in differences. Hence, we will always remain in adversity and in alterity unless we move forward with an intersectional feminist ethic. With Calafell “I” can reflect and strive towards a feminist ethic but without the “I” in reflexivity we can never move forward with the “we” (“(I)dentities: Considering Accountability”).

Thus, this study is an invitation to all individuals of all different races, classes, genders, abilities, and sexualities to join me in both disrupting our privileges and developing the critical tools to identify ethical violations of oppression. It is an invitation

to free ourselves from the moral implications of representation and embodiment.

Together, let us tackle the media and popular culture and spread the critical tools of knowledge worldwide. Together, let us dismantle the stereotypes and archetypes that have negated us for centuries.

For Without Criticality there is no Humanity.

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