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'VEILED FANTASIES: CULTURAL AND SEXUAL DIFFERENCE IN THE DISCOURSE OF ORIENTALISM'

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> If one wants to understand the racial situation psychoanalytically . . . considerable importance must be given to sexual phenomena.
>
> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

> The phantasy is the support of desire; it is not the object that is the support of desire. The subject sustains himself as desiring in relation to an ever more complex signifying ensemble.
>
> Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*

Unveiling as political doctrine

Erecting a barrier between the body of the Oriental woman and the Western gaze, the opaque, all-encompassing veil seems to place her body out of the reach of the Western gaze and desire. Frustrated with the invisibility and inaccessibility of this mysterious, fantasmatic figure, disappointed with the veiled figure's refusal to be gazed at, Western desire subjects this enigmatic, in Copjec's terms, 'sartorial matter', to a relentless investigation. The practice of veiling and the veiled woman thus go beyond their simple reference and become tropes of the European text in Hayden White's sense: 'the data resisting the coherency of the image which we are trying to fashion of them.'[1] It is no surprise that there are countless accounts and representations of the veil and veiled women in Western discourses, all made in an effort to reveal the hidden secrets of the

From: Meyda Yeğenoğlu (1998), 'Veiled Fantasies: Cultural and Sexual Difference in the Discourse of Orientalism, pp. 39–67, in Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Orient. The very depiction of the Orient and its women, 'like the unveiling of an enigma, makes visible what is hidden'.[2] The veil is one of those tropes through which Western fantasies of penetration into the mysteries of the Orient and access to the interiority of the other are fantasmatically achieved. The most blatant example of the fear of the other and the associated fantasy of penetration is French colonialism's obsession with the woman's veil in Algeria. As we learn from Fanon, 'the Algerian woman, in the eyes of the observer, is unmistakably "she who hides behind a veil".'[3] Fanon continues: 'this enabled the colonial administration to define a precise political doctrine: "If we want to destroy the structure of Algerian society, its capacity for resistance, we must first of all conquer the women: we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the men keep them out of sight".'[4]

I propose to take this 'precise political doctrine' seriously, because it provides us with several possibilities at once: first, a critique of the critiques of the ethico-political program of European Enlightenment from the point of view of the double articulation of global-cultural and sexual differences, hence a new way of dealing with the entanglement of questions of imperialism and gender; second, a critique of the critiques of colonial discourse from a feminist point of view, hence the development of a new feminist perspective in the analysis of colonial discourse. I must warn my reader that I claim no privilege for the veil as an object of study. The grand narrative of the imperial, sovereign subject is complex and constantly changing, and the veil is privileged only to the extent that it enables us to see some of the complexity of this narrative.

The question of why the veiled woman has such a high profile in the French colonization of Algeria seems obvious at a first glance: in the colonizer's eye Algerian resistance is condensed in the veil which is seen as an obstacle to his visual control. Conquering the Algerian women is thus equal to conquering Algeria, the land and people themselves. This is surely not a simple military question in a narrow sense, but it is rooted in a problematic of power, which not only takes Algeria as a land to be conquered, but which establishes such conquest in terms of an epistemological superiority.[5] One of the axioms of the European Enlightenment is 'the disenchantment of the world' in which 'knowledge, which is power, knows no obstacles'.[6] In his study on modern forms of discipline, Michel Foucault demonstrated that this problematic of knowledge as power is tied to a social program and strategy according to which space is organized in a particular way which makes its individual occupants and their behavior visible and transparent. With modernity comes a new form of institutional power which is based on visibility and transparency and which refuses to tolerate areas of darkness. The epitome of this modern form of power, Bentham's model prison, the panopticon, embodies the concept of an eye which can see without being seen.[7] For Foucault, the social practice of transparency completes the philosophical ideas of the Enlightenment, for instance Rousseau's well-known dream of a perfectly transparent society (we might also say that it reveals the other side of these ideas).[8] Foucault's view is supported by Jean

Starobinski's interesting study on the theme of transparency and obstacle in Rousseau. Starobinski shows that Rousseau attached a negative value to anything hidden or mysterious and elaborated a whole theory of unveiling the truth.[9] Indeed, in the political doctrine of French colonialism, the veiled woman is made 'a case which, at one and the same time, constitutes an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power', and Muslim women are classified as a group of people 'who have to be trained or corrected, classified, normalized, excluded, etc'.[10] As Foucault has succinctly argued, these objects of discourse are not a pure creation of discourse, they are rather objects (and subjects) identified by discourse as problems to be dealt with, and objects to be known and controlled (only once they are identified, they enter into a process of construction in and by discourse). Surely, the veiled woman is already other-ed in her own culture, gender-ed in and by a particular form of dressing, but she is other to the Western subject in a way that differs from her position relative to the dominant male subjects of her culture. I would like to argue here that the case or tropology of the 'veil' is not simply a signifier of a cultural habit or identity that can be liked or disliked, be good or bad, but 'in a world bewitched by the invisible powers of the other' for a subject, i.e., for the European subject in our case, it signifies the production of an 'exteriority', a 'target or threat', which makes possible for that subject to 'postulate a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base'.[11] This enables him to produce himself, vis-à-vis an other while simultaneously erasing the very process of this production.

The veil can be seen as the resisting data or tropology of this modern power whose program aims to construct the world in terms of a transparency provided by knowledge as power. However, limiting itself to Europe as the sovereign subject of history, Foucault's analysis of such power has remained blind to the role played by these technologies and their epistemological and subjective import in the European colonization of the world. Gayatri Spivak suggests that we write against the 'possibility that the intellectual is complicit in the persistent constitution of other as the self's shadow'. I take her words as a warning:

> The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung and heterogenous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the symmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subject-ivity. It is well known that Foucault locates epistemic violence, a complete overhaul of the episteme, in the redefinition of sanity at the end of the European eighteenth century. But what if that particular definition was only a part of the narrative of history in Europe as well as in the colonies? What if the two projects of epistemic overhaul worked as dislocated and unacknowledged parts of a vast two-handed engine? Perhaps it is no more than to ask that the subtext of the palimpsestic narrative of imperialism be recognized as 'subjugated knowledge' . . .[12]

The subtext of the palimpsestic narrative of imperialism is demonstrated in the fact that, whether he likes it or not, for the European subject, there is always more to the veil than the veil. A very interesting example is Gaëtan Gatian de Clerambault, the nineteenth-century French psychiatrist who was fascinated with the foldings of North African dressing and took hundreds of photographs of veiled people. Clerambault seems to constitute the unique instance of a subjective approach to North African Islamic culture which needs to be explored further. According to Gilles Deleuze, if Clerambault's interest in Islamic folds 'manifests a delirium, it is because he discovers the tiny hallucinatory perceptions of ether addicts in the folds of clothing'.[13] The Islamic veil is considered by Clerambault and Deleuze as providing a unique form of perception of a world of 'figures without objects'.[14] I see this as a legitimate area of research into the Islamic veil/fold, but I am interested here in a dialectics of seeing and gazing. Although Deleuze considers this a more restricted area of the 'optical fold',[15] I argue that its ethico-political implications exceed its epistemological limits. A general study of the fold and of its varieties remains limited in a different way, if we remember that, writing against the always-already existing possibility of the constitution of the other as the self's shadow, Spivak's 'two-handed engine' would ask for a re-inscription of the Islamic fold/veil as *subjugated knowledge* of the Western imperial palimpsest in Clerambault's psychological 'discoveries'. And Malek Alloula's well-known *The Colonial Harem* undeniably demonstrates the place of sexual difference in the signification of the Islamic fold/veil. Alloula's semiological classification and reading of erotic postcard pictures of half-veiled Algerian women opens up the problematic of cultural difference into a problematic of sexual difference. Although his approach is a semiological/Barthesian one which does not employ a thematics of fold, I suggest that we take this work as a warning for the Deleuzian overlooking of sexual (and cultural) difference in the fold/veil.[16]

THE RHETORIC OF THE VEIL: ORIENTALIST TRAVEL WRITING IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In a sentence which predicts Alloula's work, 'in the Arab world' writes Fanon, 'the veil worn by women is at once noticed by the tourist . . . [it] generally suffices to characterize Arab society'.[17] Can this immediate attention be considered as an instance of the celebrated Lacanian 'triumph of the gaze over the eye'?[18] If I am wary of Foucault's complicity with the very form of power he analyzes because he overlooks its working outside Europe, or of Deleuzian analysis of the fold, I am also wary of a kind of psychoanalysis which is blind to the historical inscription of its conceptual apparatus. The question posed by François Wahl to Jacques Lacan in his seminar on the gaze is instructive in this sense. Against Lacan's insistence that all eye is evil eye, Wahl brings up the example of the 'prophylactic eye' (an eye that protects one from disease) in the Mediterranean cultures. Lacan's answer is that the prophylactic eye is allopathic, i.e., it cures the disease by exciting a dissimilar affection, and that the

prophylactic objects are clearly symbols of the phallus. In the same place, he refers to the North African–Islamic 'baraka' and, despite a few places where he admits that he hesitated, concludes that the eye is always maleficent rather than beneficent.[19] I take the hesitation rather than the conclusion as my guide, but I am interested in a deconstruction of the sovereign subject rather than an ethnography of Islamic culture. In other words, I am more interested here in demonstrating the *historical determination* of the Lacanian gaze, of 'the form of a strange contingency, symbolic of what we (they) find on the horizon, as the thrust of our (their) experience, namely the lack that constitutes castration anxiety'.[20] Within such an approach, I consider the European's immediate object of attention in the horizon of Muslim culture as *his* construct: the veiled woman is not simply an obstacle in the field of visibility and control, but her veiled presence also seems to provide the Western subject with a condition which is the inverse of Bentham's omnipotent gaze. The loss of control does not imply a mere loss of sight, but a complete reversal of positions: her body completely invisible to the European observer except for her eyes, *the veiled woman can see without being seen*. The apparently calm rationalist discipline of the European subject goes awry in the fantasies of penetration as well as in the tropological excess of the veil. This is why the precise political doctrine is not simply a military matter, but, as I will demonstrate below, the strategic desire which defines it is structured through fantasy. Drawing upon his experience as a psychiatrist, Fanon emphasizes the violent play of this reversal:

> Thus the rape of the Algerian woman in the dream of a European is always preceded by a rending of the veil . . . Whenever, in dreams having an erotic content, a European meets an Algerian woman, the specific features of his relations with the colonized society manifest themselves . . . With an Algerian woman, there is no progressive conquest, no mutual revelation. Straight off, with the maximum of violence there is possession, rape, near-murder . . . This brutality and this sadism are in fact emphasized by the frightened attitude of the Algerian woman. In the dream, the woman-victim screams, struggles like a doe, and as she weakens and faints, is penetrated, martyrized, ripped apart.[21]

The veil is then part of or an element of a highly charged fantasmatic scene. Nevertheless, the fantasy of penetration is only one aspect of a more complex ideological-subjective formation which oscillates between fascination and anger and frustration. In the nineteenth-century European travellers' obsession with the veil, the 'precise political doctrine' dissolves into a textual inscription which is witness to an underlying enunciative (and subjective) formation traversing different fields of writing. These texts clearly display the veil's specific polysemy. As is well known, in Lacan's approach the gaze is not seen, but is imagined by the subject in the field of the other.[22] Orientalist writing is the European imagination at work in the field of the other. The veil attracts the eye, and forces one to think, to speculate about what is behind it. It is often represented as some kind of a mask, hiding the woman. With the help of this opaque veil, the Oriental woman is considered as not yielding herself to the Western gaze and therefore imagined as hiding something behind the veil. It is through the inscription of the veil as a mask that the Oriental woman is turned into an enigma. Such a discursive construction incites the presumption that the real nature of these women is concealed, their truth is disguised and they appear in a false, deceptive manner. They are therefore other than what they appear to be. Edmondo de Amicis' statements reveal this figure of deception: 'it is impossible to say what they contrive to do with those two veils . . . making them serve at once to *display*, to *conceal*, to *promise*, to *propose* a problem, or to betray some little marvel unexpectedly'[23] (emphasis added).

The figure of the masquerade is frequently employed. Théophile Gautier, in his description of the women of Istanbul, expresses both his denunciation of the veil and his identification of the true nature of the city through this same figure: 'an immense female population – anonymous and unknown – circulates through this mysterious city, which is thus transformed into a sort of vast masquerade – with the peculiarity, that the dominoes are never permitted to unmask.'[24] Edmondo de Amicis describes the women on the streets of Istanbul in a similar manner:

> The first impression is most curious. The stranger wonders whether all those white veiled figures in bright colored wrappers are masquerades, or nuns, or mad women; and as not one is ever seen accompanied by a man, they seem to belong to no one, and to be all girls and widows, or members of some great association of the 'ill-married' . . . One is constrained to stop and meditate upon these strange figures and stranger customs.[25]

The veil gives rise to a meditation: if they wear a mask, or masquerade or conceal themselves, then there must be a behind-the-mask, a knowledge that is kept secret from us. The *mystery* that is assumed to be concealed by the veil is *unconcealed* by giving a figural representation to this mask and to the act of masquerading as an enigmatic figure. However, what is thus concealed, i.e., the 'masquerade', the 'veil', is the *act of concealment itself*. The veiled existence is the very truth of Oriental women; they seem to exist always in this deceptive manner.

This metaphysical speculation or mediation, this desire to reveal and unveil is at the same time the *scene of seduction*. The metaphysical will to know gains a sexual overtone. Troubled with this mask, the Western subject is threatened and seduced at the same time:

> These then, you think, these are really those 'conquerors of the heart', those 'founts of pleasure', those 'little rose leaves', those 'early ripening grapes', those 'dews of the morning', 'auroras', 'vivifiers', and 'full moons'. These are the *hanums* and the mysterious odalisques that we dreamed of when we were twenty years old . . . It is a costume at once

> austere and sweet, that has something virginal and holy about it; under which none but gentle thoughts and innocent fancies should have birth.[26]

Since he is devoid of any true perspective on the Oriental woman, Amicis can never be sure. The Oriental woman/Orient is so deceptive and theatrical. With her, everything is an enigma. Amicis continues: 'that jealous veil that, according to the Koran, was to be "a sign of her virtue and a guard against the talk of the world" is now only a semblance.'[27]

This fear of being deceived by the masquerading Oriental woman is also what characterizes Loti's representation of the Oriental woman in *Disenchanted*. In this novel, two Turkish women and a French writer, Marc Helys, write a letter to Loti, simply because they want some divergence from their monotonous life and would like to teach him a lesson by making him an object of ridicule. The women approach Loti under their veils, thus remaining completely incognito.[28] Uncomfortable with their invisible presence, Loti asks them to remove their veils, but they refuse to do so. During their conversations, when the women speak a few Turkish words with each other, Loti immediately warns them that he knows the language sufficiently well and would be aware if any 'uncivil remark' was being uttered about him.

This short scene sums up the whole theme of the novel: it is about how Loti is seduced but at the same time mocked by these veiled women. As they themselves express through their attitude, it is precisely with their veils that Oriental women can seduce, mock, and threaten him. The veil places them at a distance Loti cannot reach. In warning them that he knows Turkish, that he can understand them, he in fact expresses his own anxiety. This anxiety is caused by his lack of a true, fixed perspective; he cannot position himself vis-à-vis them. He reminds them of his knowledge of their language precisely because this knowledge does not seem sufficient to him to gain control over their veiled presence, for they masquerade and their dress is deceptive. It is this incapacity to fix and control that is unsettling and terrifying and yet so seducing.

A variety of reasons are offered by the European subject to explain this obsession with the Oriental veil: 'civilizing', 'modernizing', and thereby 'liberating' the 'backward' Orient and its women, making them speaking subjects. These are the manifest terms of the political doctrine. But then what do we make of the above texts obsessed with the veil? Joan Copjec suggests that no rational explanation can account for the West's preoccupation with lifting the veil, for this is a preoccupation sustained by fantasy and hence belongs to the realm of desire. According to Copjec:

> What was capital in this fantasy was the surplus pleasure, the useless *jouissance* which the voluminous cloth was supposed to veil and the colonial subject, thus hidden, was supposed to enjoy. Every effort to strip away the veil was clearly an aggression against the bloated presence of this pleasure that would not release itself into the universal pool.[29]

Simultaneously attracting and repelling the subject, the veil occupies the place of the *objet petit a*, the object causing desire in Lacanian psycho analysis. Lacan writes that 'the object a in the field of the visible is the gaze'.[30] However, such an object does not exist objectively, in itself, but is constructed retroactively by the subject. Although any object might potentially be an object of desire, what transforms an object into *objet petit a* is, in Slavoj Zizek's words, 'an interested look, a look supported, permeated and distorted by desire'.[31] Such a look is possible within fantasy. Fantasy is basically a scenario filling out the fundamental lack in the subject caused by a splitting in the language. In Heath's words, 'no object can satisfy desire – what is wanting is always wanting, division is the condition of subjectivity'.[32] The concept of fantasy is crucial in Lacan's account of sexual relationship: Jacqueline Rose shows that it is at the level of fantasy that man achieves his identity and wholeness: 'the idea of a complete and assured sexual identity belongs in the realm of fantasy', and 'the man places the woman at the basis of his fantasy, or constitutes fantasy through woman by transposing *objet a* onto the image of woman who then acts as its guarantee. 'The absolute Otherness of the woman, therefore, serves to secure for the man his own self-knowledge and truth.'[33] We have seen above how the veiled Oriental woman is given precisely such a status in Orientalist discourse. In Orientalist writing, *discourses of cultural and sexual difference are powerfully mapped onto each other*. What is crucial in this process is that the very act of representing the veil is never represented; the desire that represents the veil can not be represented. The subject can not represent (see) himself representing (seeing) himself.[34] The metaphorical excess of the veil is thus an effacement of the *process of production* of the subject. Placing desire on the side of the being rather than on that of the thing, Jacques Lacan writes: 'This lack is beyond anything which can represent it. It is only ever represented as a reflection on a veil.'[35]

WOMAN AS VEIL: NIETZSCHE AND DERRIDA, OR LIMITS OF THE DECONSTRUCTION OF METAPHYSICS

We have then a very precise relationship established between the veil, masquerading, truth and woman. These themes are familiar in post-structuralist, psychoanalytic and feminist theories. By a detour through these theories, I am going to argue that, since the veil is a figure essential in the construction of femininity in a patriarchal order, the European's strange obsession with the veiled woman also has implications for a more general analysis of patriarchy.

The representation of 'womanliness as masquerade' finds one of its most powerful expressions in Nietzsche's work, where he associates femininity with the tropes of truth and veil.[36] For him, woman, like the truth, is enigmatic and has a deceptive appearance. She adorns herself and by adorning herself she seduces and fascinates man: 'woman, conscious of man's feelings concerning herself, walking beautifully, dancing, expressing delicate thoughts: in the same way, she practices modesty, reserve, distance – realizing instinctively that in this

way the idealizing capacity of man will grow.'[37] She has no truth nor she does or can want enlightenment about herself;[38] Her truth is her adornment and her style is appearance and disguise. She is nothing but a pure spectacle.[39] Here is Nietzsche's description of the feminine:

> Unless a woman seeks a new adornment for herself that way – I do think adorning herself is part of the Eternal-Feminine? – surely she wants to inspire fear of herself – perhaps she seeks mastery. But she does not *want* truth: what is truth to woman? From the beginning nothing has been more alien, repugnant and hostile to woman than truth – her great art is the lie, her highest concern is mere appearance and beauty.[40]

Faced with this destabilizing, fearful and enigmatic figure, we find a perplexed man who tries to grasp the essential femininity that lies behind her mask. Nietzsche's 'nothing but pure spectacle' is only apparently opposite to the veil as a dark figure or as an obstacle to vision. The underlying question is the same as de Amicis' or Loti's: how can he attain the knowledge of this enigma, how can he reveal what lies behind her veiled appearance (i.e., the lie as her great art)? These are the questions de Amicis, Gautier and Loti ask in their search for the truth of the Oriental woman as an appearance of femininity. In their rhetorical and epistemological move which I describe as the double articulation of cultural and sexual difference, culture and gender are other-ed through each other. These European men bring their insight and knowledge, their intuition and contemplation to the task of uncovering her hidden truth, yet they are not successful. Their solution is to posit the truth of a particular culture from within a certain patriarchal metaphorics: deception and dissimulation are essential characteristics of Oriental cultures. According to Nietzsche, however, woman's deceptive style does not mean that she conceals an essence behind her appearance and adornment. She is deceptive *because* she has no essence to conceal. It is her masquerading style which makes one think that she hides an essential truth.

Nietzsche's aim in establishing an association between the tropes of woman, truth, and veil is to develop a critique of the philosophy of truth, which is the problematic commanding European Orientalist writing. An analysis of the veil occupies an important role in his attack on metaphysical discourse and the various set of oppositions established within it. The parallelism he establishes between the movement of truth and the deceptive feminine gesture enables Nietzsche to criticize, but at the same time to reinscribe the tropological system of metaphysics. The veil functions to make 'truth profound, to ensure that there is a depth that lurks behind the surface of things'.[41] It is precisely by attacking this figuring of the veil that Nietzsche is able to take a critical distance from the metaphysics of truth and the essentialism immanent in such discourses as Loti's or de Amicis'. He refutes the idea that there is an essence or 'real' behind the veil and increases the value attached to appearance over truth or real: 'we no longer believe that truth remains truth when the veils are withdrawn; we have

lived too much to believe this. Today we consider it a matter of decency not to wish to see everything naked, or to be present at everything, or to understand and "know everything".'[42]

Metaphysical discourse is able to secure the various sets of oppositions it constructs between appearance and reality, surface and depth, precisely through the figuring of the veil as that opaque curtain which conceals, covers, hides or disguises an essential nature. Nietzsche, by distancing himself from the idea of a 'real' residing beneath appearance and by valorizing the appearance over this 'real', attempts to undermine the oppositional structure that characterizes metaphysical discourse. However, as Doane rightly points out, while taking up a critical distance from the metaphysics of truth, Nietzsche reinforces the association between woman and dissimulation or deception, for 'the pronoun *she* plays a major role in delineating the operation of this mode of deception'.[43]

Despite his attempt to devalorize the association of truth with what is behind the veil, Nietzsche's work still retains the categories of deception and femininity as deception. Although, in Nietzsche's philosophy, there are no negative connotations attached to deception and appearance (on the contrary he values them), Doane argues that these categories nevertheless 'place the woman as the privileged exemplar of instability'.[44] In other words, despite his attempt to dissociate the value attached to truth, Nietzsche still remains locked within the binary logic which construes truth and appearance as opposites. What Nietzsche fails to address is posed by Irigaray, as her criticism targets the very opposition between real and appearance itself and the *interest* that resides underneath such an opposition: '*what* that we should question has been *forgotten*, not about a truer truth, a realer real, but *about the profit that underlies the truth/fantasy pair?*'[45]

The profit that underlies the truth/fantasy pair is what I have described as the European's fictional unity and command of experience, i.e., the production of their subjectivity, which de Amicis, Gautier and Loti had managed by a textual proliferation of discourses through the tropology of the veil.

Joan Riviere's important work 'Womanliness as Masquarade' also brings out an implicit criticism of the Nietzschean critique of metaphysics by providing us with a powerful discussion of how the figures of woman or femininity and veil/mask are closely associated in a masculine order.[46] Unlike Nietzsche's approach, Riviere's exposes man as the one who formulates the question: for Riviere, the term 'masquerade' refers to the *male's representation* of woman on the one hand and how this representation constitutes her identity on the other. These two aspects are closely related, for the question of representation is at the same time a question of constitution.

The concept of 'womanliness as masquerade' refers to a male's representation, to masculine construction: 'The masquerade is a representation of femininity, but then femininity is representation, the representation of woman.'[47] This trouble with masquerade is man's trouble: 'the conception of womanliness as a mask, behind which man suspects some hidden danger, throws a little light

on the enigma.'[48] It is man's assumption of femininity which turns it into an enigma. As Stephen Heath observes: 'Man's suspicion is the old question, *Was will das Weib?, Das ewig Weibliche* (What does woman want? Eternal feminine) all the others, always the same . . . the masquerade is the woman's thing, hers, but it is also exactly *for* the man, a male representation.'[49] The question 'What does she want?' is paradigmatic here: de Amicis articulates this question when he 'wonders whether all those white veiled figures in bright colored wrappers are masquerades, or nuns, or mad women' or when he cries, in fervor, before the cold mute masks: 'come, more like other men for once! tell us who you are.'[50] We learn from Riviere's psychoanalytic-feminist criticism that the question of what woman wants is the man's question. According to her, it is precisely this characterization of femininity that incites contradictory desires; the desire to know and uncover her truth on the one hand, and the desire to distance her and thus avoid the threat her unpredictability and inaccessibility pose, on the other. Consequently, the man is seduced and mocked and threatened all at the same time. Such a contradictory and ambivalent desire, caused by *the continual displacement of his perspective on or lack of knowledge of the woman*, lends itself to an over-representation (the excess of the veil) and to an endless investigation of the feminine in an effort to evade such a lack and constitute his subjectivity. As such, the instability he experiences is dissipated by projecting it onto the feminine and characterizing her as the sex which is unpredictable and deceptive. At this point we also need to remember Freud's endless attempts to evade his inability to know and conquer the 'darkness' that hovers around the feminine sexuality – *at the same time a darkness he himself construes through his own representation*. For example, he is as confident to study and know men's sexuality as he is totally puzzled by the other sex: 'That of women – partly owing to the stunning effect of civilized conditions and partly owing to their conventional secretiveness and insincerity – is still *veiled* in an impenetrable obscurity' (emphasis added).[51] As Doane suggests, 'the horror or threat of that precariousness (of both sexuality and the visible) is attenuated by attributing it to the woman, over and against the purported stability and identity of the male. The veil is the mark of that precariousness.'[52]

Derrida is another critic of Nietzsche and the last figure in our detour through post-structuralist theory. Although affirming Nietzsche's attack on the metaphysics of truth through the metaphor of woman as the name of untruth, Derrida nevertheless gives it another twist in his *Spurs*. His concern is, like Nietzsche, to undo the metaphysical discourse that sets truth and untruth as opposites. While Nietzsche compares woman's deceptive veiled gesture to the movement of untruth, Derrida compares the feminine gesture to *writing* or *style*. The concept *writing* is one of the central instruments in Derrida's deconstruction of metaphysical binaries. Refuting the idea that woman has an essence, Derrida argues that 'there is no such thing as the truth of woman, but it is because of the abyssal divergence of the truth, because that untruth is "truth". Woman is but one name for that untruth of truth.'[53] The metaphors

Nietzsche uses for femininity such as instability and dissimulation are also deployed by Derrida. In his case, she appears as the figure for undecidability (associated with but repressed by metaphysics), but as a figure nevertheless:

> It is impossible to dissociate the questions of art, style and truth from the question of woman. Nevertheless, the question 'what is woman?' is itself suspended by the simple formulation of their common problematic. One can no longer seek her, no more than one could search for woman's femininity or female sexuality. And she is certainly not to be found in any of the familiar modes of concepts or knowledge. Yet it is impossible to resist looking for her.[54]

Derrida represents a step further than Nietzsche in deconstructing the metaphysics of truth. But his deconstruction of metaphysics by way of associating woman with undecidability and unpredictability implies turning woman into a ground or instrument of deconstruction. However radical this aim is, she becomes a vehicle of deconstruction rather than a subject of it. In Spivak's words, 'as the radically other she does not *really exist*, yet her name remains one of the important names for displacement, the special mark of deconstruction'.[55] As Spivak rightly suggests, to avoid this 'double displacement of woman', what is needed is the deconstruction of the 'opposition between displacement and logocentricism itself'. Spivak further argues that the task of deconstructing the sovereign subject cannot be accomplished if we limit our investigation to the question of what woman is, for this is only another way of asking the question 'what does woman want?' With this question, woman is still posed as the *object* of investigation. Rather, the feminist gesture requires asking the question that will allow the woman the *subject* status and the positioning of a questioning subject: what is man? what does he want? It will then be possible to 'bring back the absolutely convincing deconstructive critiques of the sovereign subject'.[56]

I take Spivak's suggestion that a deconstruction of the opposition between displacement and logocentrism is necessary in order to pose the question of the itinerary of man's desire in an attempt to deconstruct the imperial European subjectivity.[57] The question of what man wants, of 'the itinerary of his desire', does not only make women subjects of inquiry but it also opens the inquiry to a *global socio-economic and cultural inscription*, for which nineteenth-century Orientalist writing is but one remarkable instance. We are now in a better position to ask what 'interest' is involved here and what is 'the profit that underlies the truth/fantasy pair'.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EUROPEAN SUBJECT AS SOVEREIGN

Two modes of differentiation, the sexual and the cultural, are thus not simply two distinct, singular moments in the representation of *difference*, but rather, as Homi Bhabha phrases it: 'within the apparatus of colonial power, the discourses of sexuality and race relate in a process of *functional over-determination*.'[58] The

structural affinity between the two with respect to the display of difference establishes a chain of equivalence in which woman is the Orient, the Orient is woman; woman like the Orient, the Orient like the woman, exists veiled; she is nothing but the name of untruth and deception. If the Oriental is feminine and if the feminine is Oriental, we can claim that the nature of femininity and the nature of the Orient are figured as one and the same thing in these representations. This equivalence positions the Orientalist/Western colonial subject as masculine: the other culture is always like the other sex.[59] This is why the Western subject, *whether male or female*, is always fascinated by the veil or harem, the truth of culture in the space of woman, in the body of woman. But then what does he see when the mask is lifted? Is it ever lifted? How can the subject of knowledge know and be certain about what lies behind the mask? Nietzsche refutes the view there is an essence behind the veil. Riviere reinscribes the question as man's, but then reads it also as constitution of femininity (which is representation of woman).[60] Irigaray also resists differentiating between the veil and what exists underneath it, by writing that 'beneath the veil subsists only veil'.[61] But for her – and especially we might say, if representation is constitution – there is an interest in the question and a profit in the discourse which it produces.

What do we make of these Orientalist and masculine representations which presuppose and pose a place and a cultural/sexual secret behind the Oriental feminine veil? We have seen that European writers first posit the Oriental veil as an object of investigation and presuppose that there is something behind it, but then this very presupposition is both denied and accepted by the conclusion that the very nature or being of the Orient is veiled. On the surface, this is a process in which the veil is incorporated as an object of discursive and textual play. These two processes however, political and cultural, as separate they are, are not simply chronologically ordered. While the political project has been a precise strategy of unveiling, i.e., an implementation of the European principle of government based on an ideal of transparency and visibility, the textual and conceptual dimension, the inscription of the veil in the European text is witness to a constitution of subjectivity, an imaginary unity and command of experience in the encounter with the other. A careful reading of this constitution might enable us to see that the profit that underlies the truth/fantasy pair is not a simple plus on the side of European subjectivity. Since such profit, such surplus of subjectivity is in the *excess* of the tropology of the veil, it is subjected to a mechanism which remains *beyond its control*. What the Orientalist texts manifest in their paradoxical attempt to other the veil is that the reference is always veiled and remains other to what it signifies. This is the point where 'real' politics (the world of conflict) and textual 'sublation' (*belles lettres*) are necessarily conflated with each other. What appears through this conflation might be called an *ethos*. The ethos in question, that of the sovereign subject of Europe, is described by Marx in his critical reading of Hegel. Gayatri Spivak observes that, according to Marx, 'Hegel's picture of the subject appropriating the

object' was really charged by 'a deep hostility'. In Marx's own words, 'the appropriation . . . must proceed from indifferent alienness to real hostile engagement'.[62]

If Europe's outside is made an integral part of its identity and power in discourses such as Orientalism, this is, paradoxically, only by the creation of such outside in terms of an absolute and essential difference. If the veiled woman/culture remains always different or infinitely dissimulating in Orientalist logic, this is *not* because of the complexity of her/their being-in-the-world, in which one might find continuities as well as discontinuities with one's own culture/subjectivity, but because they are always and absolutely different. They *should* remain different, because I should remain the *same*: they are not/should not be a possibility within my own world, which will thus be different. This is the 'deep hostility' which is pointed out by Spivak and Marx, in resonance with essentialism conceived as a philosophy of the 'proper'. That is to say, such hostility does not refer to a mere prejudice or uncultivated aggressive behavior which can be corrected or repaired by simply taking a more peaceful, good-natured, tolerant or sympathetic attitude. Deep hostility is not merely a subjective or personal characteristic, changing from one person or group to another, and thus adaptable or normalizable. While personal or even group characteristics might well be affected by education, to think that such an education will thus erase the *subject position* is rather disingenuous. It is not a question of liking or disliking the Orientals, their women, and their culture. The hostility expressed here is the force of negation which constitutes the subject *as* sovereign, that stern force which drives the machine of his self-production in the dialectical, restricted economy of the production of the self as same. It is therefore a necessary moment in his encounter with the culturally/sexually different.

MIMICRY AND THE QUESTION OF THE VEIL

I have argued above that if the concept-figure of veil provides the Orientalist with an imaginary control of his colonial displacement, its textual inscription nevertheless remains beyond his control. I have thus located an incessant movement of desire at the center of orientalist discourse. This is part of an attempt to transform and reformulate the very means by which we identify the nature of colonial oppression and hence rethink the problematic dichotomies between self and other, structure and agency, domination and resistance.[63] To rethink Orientalism's discursive field through the psychoanalytic concept of desire enables us to conceive colonial domination as being based on an ambivalent and conflictual economy. To give an account of otherness through the concept of desire implies a formulation of the process of colonial identification not as an affirmation of a pregiven identity, but as a *process* in which both the 'Western subject' and the 'Oriental other' are mutually implicated in each other and thus neither exists as a fully constituted entity. As Bhabha suggests, 'the desire for the Other is doubled by the desire in language, which *splits the difference* between Self and Other so that both positions are

partial; neither is sufficient unto itself'.[64] My purpose, in pointing to the complexity and contradiction of desire in the representations of cultural and sexual difference, is twofold: to understand the process of exclusion and differentiation through which the Western self is constituted and achieves the appearance of an autonomous identity precisely by veiling its dependency and indebtedness from its excluded and marginalized other; second, to capture the unavoidable trace of the other in the subject and the consequent resistance it exerts upon him.

The notion of ambivalence and the contradictory economy as developed by Bhabha enables us to understand the excesses or slippages within colonial discourse.[65] Such excesses or slippages imply the impossibility of formulating the relationship between the Western subject and its colonial other in dualistic terms which implies setting up oppression and agency as two different poles of a binary opposition. My reiteration of the concept of desire should thus be conceived of as an effort to displace the notion of colonial discourse as an affirmation of a pregiven Western identity. The crux of my argument is that *not only the very identity of the Western subject is constituted in the movement of desire, but also the potential resistance to this constitution is also inscribed in this very process*. Fanon's observation is pertinent for understanding this dynamic: 'when it encounters resistance from the other, self-consciousness undergoes the experience of *desire* . . . As soon as I *desire* I am asking to be considered.'[66]

Before I proceed to the discussion of the ways in which the veil *might* acquire a subversive quality, I would like to recapitulate what I have been suggesting regarding the moment of colonial resistance. To inquire into the 'mechanism' of the Western subject's constitution through the psychoanalytic concept of desire is not to suggest that its identity is fully determined.[67] On the contrary, it should be seen as an attempt to explain the constituted character of the subject and thereby to argue that both the closure of the subject's identity and the resistance of the other is never final, but always partial and relative. As Judith Butler warns us, it is erroneous to assume the subject in advance so as to protect its agency, because to argue the constituted character of the subject is not to suggest that it is determined. In other words, the power that constitutes the subject does not cease to exist 'after' constituting its subject, for the subject 'is never fully constituted, but is subjected and produced time and again'.[68] Therefore, if we are not in search of an a priori guarantee for the agency of the subject, then we cannot afford not to scrutinize the process of the constitution of the subject. The inquiry into the agency of the subject can be made only when it is not presumed and such an inquiry is contingent upon understanding its constituted character.

How does the desiring subject's ceaseless pursuit of its absent object and the disruption of the stability of this desire refigure itself in the context of colonial discourse? If we claim that the subject can never achieve a full closure in constituting his identity, what role does the unique text-ile of the veil, a text-ile which 'conceals' and 'hides' the other from the colonial gaze, play in this

process? How can we seek out the residues, the remains or traces of the veiled other which exceed the phallocentric and Orientalist representations? Where can we locate the moments of recalcitrance? What, if any, role do the unique characteristics of the veil play in this?

We have seen above that the colonial subject's desire to control and dominate the foreign land is not independent from his scopic desire, from his desire to penetrate, through his surveillant eye, what is behind the veil. *The invisibility the veil secures for the colonial other is simultaneously the point at which desire is articulated and the ground upon which the scopic drive of the subject is displaced*, for there is always the threat of the return of the look of the other. In Fanon's words, 'it was the colonialist's frenzy to unveil the Algerian woman, it was his gamble on winning the battle of the veil'.[69] In this battle 'the occupier was *bent on unveiling Algeria*',[70] because 'there is in it the will to bring this woman within his reach, to make her a possible object of possession'.[71] But what explains the obsession with lifting the veil is something that is always-already inscribed in this unique sartorial matter. The veil is seen as a border which distinguishes inside from outside, as a screen or cover, and women are associated with the inside, home and territory in the native Algerian culture.[72] Of course at the same time the veil demarcates a boundary and delimits the colonial power. As Malek Alloula's analysis of the French colonial picture postcards demonstrates, the veil that covers the Algerian woman indicates a refusal to the French soldier. The photographer, whose scopic desire is discouraged, experiences disappointment and rejection.[73] Similarly for Fanon, since the veil allows women to see without being seen, it disallows reciprocity, and implies that the woman is not yielding herself, making herself available for vision.[74]

It is this disappointment and frustration which disturbs the voyeuristic look of the subject. Unlike looking at a photograph or a screen, by looking at a veiled other, the subject cannot have the security of 'I look at it, but it does not look at me looking at it',[75] because there is always the threat of the return of the look of the other. This implies that the pleasure of seeing is not entirely on the side of the subject, but he himself is subject to a look and hence is not inscribed, to borrow from Metz again, as an 'invisible' subject.[76] The structure of voyeuristic pleasure which is based upon the 'invisibility of the subject' and the 'visibility of the object' is being reversed here into its opposite. Instead of being looked at, the object now looks at.[77]

The subject cannot ignore that he is being looked at as he tries to unveil the other in order to satisfy his voyeuristic pleasure and thus fails to fantasize himself as a full subject.[78] The look that filters through the tiny orifice of the veil is the statement of the absent and invisible other and this statement can be translated, to borrow a formulation from Bhabha, into: 'as even now you look/but never see me'.[79] In other words, the invisible other speaks from its absent location. The countergaze of the other should be located in this absent-presence, in this space of the in-between. It is the veil which enables the Oriental other to look without being seen. This not only disturbs the desire of the

Western/colonial subject to fix cultural and sexual difference, but also enables the colonial other to turn itself into a surveillant gaze. It is in this space of absent-presence that there emerges the challenge of the 'invisible', 'hidden' other. To recapitulate, *it is through the veil that the colonial Western desire to see emerges and is erased simultaneously*, and this is what enables the veiled other to destabilize the identificatory process of the subject. It is this moment of seeing or these eyes that filter through the veil which frustrate the voyeuristic desire of the colonialist and displaces his surveillant eye.

If it is through this uncanny look, which her absence/invisibility provides to her, that the other constitutes its 'I' and thereby unsettles the colonial gaze, then one might ask what the difference is between my account of the other's resistance through its enigmatic absence and the representation of the veil in Orientalist discourse? Are these two discursive systems not based on the recognition of the other as absent, invisible, hidden, and do not both register this absence as enigmatic?

In his discussion of the Algerian liberation struggle, Fanon claims that during the anti-colonial resistance movement, the veil 'has been manipulated, transformed into a technique of camouflage, into a means of struggle'.[80] What transformed the veil from being an element of tradition into an element of strategy of subversion? Fanon at times claims that the veil was used by women as a protective mask in order to carry bombs and weapons for the revolutionary movement – 'every veiled woman, every Algerian woman, became suspect'.[81] But this is not a sufficient explanation because many women during the revolutionary process reveiled themselves in order to affirm 'that it was not true that woman liberated herself at the invitation of France and of General de Gaulle'.[82] Apparently what used to be an 'oppressive' item which confined women to the private domain of the home now enabled them to assert their subjectivity and agency.[83] The affirmation of the veil in the anti-colonial struggle was a direct response to the colonial desire to unveil, reveal, and control the colonized country. It is not surprising after all that women's agency emerged out of the *texture* of their own culture. Or, given the immense significance of the veil for both sides, should we not say that the anti-colonial resistance emerged under the banner of a metaphor – veil – that belongs to, that is woman? However, this culture was no longer the same. In taking up the veil as a constituent symbolic element of their subjectivity, the Algerian women did not simply continue their traditional roles, because the veil had now become the *embodiment of their will to act, their agency*. It was thus reinscribed and re-charged in the colonial situation and acquired a symbolic significance that directly *affected* the struggle. I talk about the consequences of this situation for the relationship between nationalism and women in 'decolonized' societies – the question of the manipulation or control of women by 'post-colonial' nation-states – in chapter 5 of *Colonial Fantasies*, the publication in which this article originally appeared. Now I should like to explain how the veil turned out to be a subversive element. In order to do this, I want to use the concept of mimicry as explained by Luce Irigaray.

In her critique of phallocentrism, Irigaray insists that a mere reversal of this system cannot constitute a subversive politics, for it remains locked within the same economy that it aims to shatter. What could displace and hence shake the ground of the phallocentric representations is a purposeful but distorted imitation of the characteristics attributed to the feminine:

> There is, in an initial phase, perhaps only one 'path', the one historically assigned to the feminine: that of *mimicry*. One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it . . . To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself – inasmuch as she is on the side of the 'perceptible', of 'matter' – to 'ideas', in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by masculine logic, but so as to make 'visible', by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language. It also means 'to unveil' the fact that, if women are such good mimics, it is because they are not simply resorbed in this function. *They also remain elsewhere.*[84]

Following Irigaray's formulation, I suggest that by claiming and playfully repeating the very attributes of concealment and dissimulation, the Algerian women managed to stay elsewhere, indeed to create an 'elsewhere', an 'outside' that displaced the French colonial power. But how does one distinguish between a subversive repetition and a loyal one? For Irigaray, parodic repetition differs from mere loyal repetition, for it consists of simultaneous recognition and denial of the dominant codes of femininity. However, repetition of the dominant norms in and of itself may not be enough to displace them, for there is a risk involved in it. The trap here is becoming complicit by receding back into the old definitions that one seeks to combat. Hence mimicry does not automatically produce a subversive outcome; it can achieve such an effect to the extent that it is, as Braidotti notes, 'being sustained by a critical consciousness'.[85] That is, it can be subversive on the condition that the naturalized gender codes are critically reflected upon. The re-articulation, reworking and re-signification of the discursive characteristics of phallocentrism can open the possibility of an in-between ambivalent zone where the agency of the female subject can be construed. In our case, the colonization of land and culture in Algeria was strategically entangled on the body of women – such is the articulation of the historical and fantasy. This created a unique situation for native women and produced a historically specific kind of critical consciousness. Always-already articulated as the most inner core of culture, of the very nativity and territoriality of culture, Algerian women had become able to embody their difference vis-à-vis the hostile foreign power. It is in this very particular kind of historical conjuncture that the veil shifted from a traditional to a subversive role. This is no doubt a historically specific situation or conjuncture of our modern times, that is repeated in so many

anti-colonial and national resistance struggles, a strange and unique historical moment or process in which tradition does not simply disappear in loyalty to the forward march of progress but instead ceases to be traditional and loyal and becomes the signifier of an active, resistant and transformative subjectivity, a moment of empowerment and agency. Surely this is not an unproblematical moment, given the nationalist elite's patriarchal framework. But blindness to women's irreducible power and seeing their difference as simply contained within nationalist leadership is indeed to reinscribe the power of female agency into the grand illusion of the forward march of history.

The Algerian women thus turned the Orientalist representation into an affirmation and thereby instilled a new definition of the act of concealment by, in Mary Ann Doane's words, 'enacting a defamiliarized version' of the Orientalist representations of the veil. What the colonial gaze saw in the Algerian women's disturbing mimicry was a displacement of its own representation of the veil. Hence what was once familiar and recognizable as concealment, mask, masquerading, has now become unfamiliar, disturbing and uncanny. Therefore, what was implied in this manipulative use of the veil was *not* a strategy of reversal of the Orientalist discourse, for such a strategy would have implied an effort to demonstrate that they were hiding *nothing* behind colonialism's so-long-held object of suspicion. Mimicry revealed that there was nothing but the veil behind the veil. In resuming and reclaiming the veil, Algerian women parodied the Orientalist discourse which construed the veil as a mask. Their strategic use of the veil thus *doubled* the Orientalist representation of cultural and sexual difference and this doubling brought a new mode of representation of the veil as a positive, self-affirming political force. The calling into question of Orientalism's claim on the naturalness of the veil through a mimetic repetition enabled women to constitute a space where they engendered their own subjectivity. The subversive quality the veil achieved in this decolonizing gesture was enabled by the very conditions that construed it. There is an affinity between Algerian's women's struggle and deconstruction which, in Derrida's words, 'operate(s) necessarily from the inside, borrowing all the strategic and economic resources of subversion from the old structure, borrowing them structurally'.[86]

Naomi Schor, in reading the meaning(s) of the concept of mimicry in Irigaray, suggests that, in mimicry, difference is signified as a positivity; it refers to the reclaiming of the characteristics attributed to the feminine. The difference that is brought about in this joyful reappropriation is not only beyond masquerade and mimicry, but signifies 'an emergence of the feminine and the feminine can only emerge from within or beneath . . . femininity within which it lies buried. The difference within mimesis *is* the difference within difference'.[87] Following Schor, I would suggest that we see the difference within the Algerian women's mimicry as the difference within difference – a difference that came out of their doubling of the Orientalist/masculinist representations of difference. In other words, what is revealed in this doubling is the sub-sistence of the 'quite Other' behind its mere difference. The difference represented in the subversive mimicry

of the Algerian women is the *unrecuperable* or *undomesticated* difference that the colonial Subject has ferociously tried to deny. In Irigaray's words:

> Beneath all those/her appearances, beneath all those/her borrowed finery, that female other still sub-sists. Beyond all those/her forms of life and death, still she is living. And as she is dis-tant – and in 'herself' – she threatens the stability of all values. In her there is always the possibility that truth, appearances, will, power, eternal recurrence . . . will collapse. By mimicking them all more or less adequately, that female other never holds firm to any of them univocally . . . Truth and appearances, and reality, power . . . she is – through her inexhaustible aptitude for mimicry – the living foundation for the whole staging of the world. Wearing different veils according to the historic periods.[88]

In exploring the articulation of sexual and cultural difference in the discourse of Orientalism, I have pointed to the inextricable link between the masculinist and colonialist position the Western subject occupies in relation to its Oriental others. A Western reader, more specifically a feminist reader, might feel uneasy about this suggestion, wondering whether the representations of the Orient, veil and woman might be different if the gender identity of the representing agency were woman.

NOTES

1. Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), p. 1.
2. Olivier Richon, 'Representation, the Despot and the Harem: Some Questions Around an Academic Orientalist Painting by Lecomte-Du-Nouy (1885)', in *Europe and its Others*, Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, vol. I, ed. F. Barker et al. (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), p. 8.
3. Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1965), p. 36.
4. Ibid., pp. 37–38.
5. As Said shows, this is evident in a speech by Lord Balfour in which he spends a lot of effort in denying such a superiority, while at the same time proposing it. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 32.
6. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (London and New York: Verso, 1979), p. 3.
7. Michel Foulcault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 200–1; See also the interesting article by Jacques-Alain Miller, 'Jeremy Bentham's Panoptic Device', trans. Richard Miller, *October*, 41 (Summer 1987).
8. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Essays 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), pp. 152–4. Foucault talks about this emergent modern formation as an 'opinion society'. Of course, we are reminded of de Amicis' cry to Turks whose silence must be the result of a secret agreement or of some malady: 'Come, more like other men, for once! tell us who you are, what you are thinking of, and what you see in the air before you, with those glassy eyes!' Turks seem to be a people without opinions, or worse, a people who hide their opinions. See Edmondo de Amicis, *Constantinople*, trans. Caroline Tilton (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1878), p. 305.

9. Jean Starobiski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction*, trans. A. Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 65–80.
10. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 191.
11. I am employing Michel de Certeau's definition of 'strategy' here. See his *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 35–6. For a similar application of the concept of strategy, and an astute analysis of the employment of the trope of veil in Iraqi war, see Mahmut Mutman, 'Under Western Eyes' in *Prosthetic Territories: Politics and Hypertechnology*, ed. Gabriel Brahm Jr. and Mark Driscoll (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995). In an admirable study of the colonization of Egypt, Timothy Mitchell has shown, for instance, how Foucauldian power/knowledge technologies were employed by the French and British colonizers in the so-called model villages, in the military barracks and in the educational apparatus. Mitchell argues that the aim of these strategies was to suppress, marginalize or transform the native culture in order to establish a new one which constructs 'the world as picture'. Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
12. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed., Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 280–1.
13. Gilels Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 38.
14. Ibid., p. 94.
15. Ibid., p. 33.
16. Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
17. Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, p. 35.
18. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York and London: Norton & Company, 1981), p. 103.
19. Ibid., p. 118–19.
20. Ibid., p. 72–4.
21. Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, pp. 45–46.
22. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 84.
23. de Amicis, *Constantinople*, p. 208.
24. Théophile Gautier, *Constantinople*, trans. Robert H. Gould (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1875), pp. 193–94.
25. de Amicis, *Constantinople*, p. 206.
26. Ibid., pp. 206–8.
27. Ibid, p. 207.
28. Irene Szyliowich, *Pierre Loti and the Oriental Woman* (Hong Kong: Macmillan, 1988), p. 97.
29. Joan Copjec, 'The Sartorial Superego', *October*, 50 (Fall 1989), p. 87.
30. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 105.
31. Slavoj Žižek, 'Looking Awry', *October*, 50 (Fall 1989), p. 34.
32. Stephen Heath, 'Joan Riviere and the Masquerade', in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. V. Burgin, J. Donald and C. Kaplan (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 52.
33. Jacqueline Rose, 'Introduction II', in *Feminine Sexuality, Jacques Lacan and the École Freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (London: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 35, 47–8.
34. I adapt Lacan's formulaic statement. See, Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 80–2.
35. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954–1955*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York and London: Norton and Company, 1991), p. 223.

36. Stephen Heath's reading of Nietzsche's representation of femininity as masquerade is very illuminating. See 'Joan Riviere and the Masquerade'.
37. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollongdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 425.
38. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 163.
39. For a discussion of the figuration of woman in Nietzsche's texts see Eric Blondel, 'Nietzsche: Life as Metaphor', in *The New Nietzsche*, ed. D. Allison (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1988).
40. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 163.
41. Mary Ann Doane, 'Veiling Over Desire', in *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, ed R. Felstein and J. Roof (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 118–19.
42. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), p. 38.
43. Doane, 'Veiling Over Desire', p. 121.
44. Ibid., p. 122.
45. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 270.
46. Joan Rivere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade', in *Formations of Fantasy*, ed. V. Burgin, J. Donald and C. Kaplan (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 43. I have benefited greatly from Stephen Heath's reading of Riviere's article: 'Joan Riviere and the Masquerade' in the same collection.
47. Heath, 'Joan Riviere and the Masquerade', p. 51.
48. Riviere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade', p. 53.
49. Heath, 'Joane Riviere and the Masquerade', p. 50.
50. de Amicis, *Constantinople*, p. 206.
51. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 17. I would like to thank Stephen Heath for bringing this to my attention.
52. Doane, 'Veiling Over Desire', p. 107.
53. Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Style*, trans. Barbara Harlow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 51.
54. Ibid., p. 71.
55. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Displacement and the Discourse of Woman', in *Displacement: Derrida and After*, ed. Mark Krupnick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 184.
56. Ibid., p. 186.
57. See the quotation from Karl Marx in ibid., p. 191.
58. Homi Bhabha, 'The Other Question', *Screen*, 24/6 (December 1983), p. 26.
59. The reader will notice that I use the pronoun 'he' to refer to the Western/colonial subject. This is not a mere slippage, but a conscious effort on my part to highlight the claim, as developed most notably by Irigaray, that the subject is always-already masculine, and constitutes himself and retains his autonomy at the expense of the feminine, but disavows this dependence.
60. Riviere, 'Womanliness as Masquerade', p. 38.
61. Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover*, trans. Gilliam Gill (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 110.
62. Karl Marx quoted in Spivak: 'Displacement and the Discourse of Woman,' p. 191. My thanks go to Mahmut Mutman for drawing my attention to this important quote and sharing his ideas with me.
63. There are a number of theoretical approaches one might use to explain the process of the constitution of the subject, such as Foucault's. The reason for my emphasis on the psychoanalytic theory of desire in understanding this constitution is that it enables us to grasp the process of exclusion and differentiation through which the Western Subject constitutes itself.

64. Homi Bhabha, 'Interrogating Identity: The Postcolonial Prerogative,' in *Anatomy of Racism*, ed. D. T. Goldberg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1990), p. 193.
65. Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', *October*, 28 (Spring 1984), p. 126.
66. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 218.
67. This is a persistent and unfortunately not a very substantiated criticism that has been advanced by the critiques of post-structuralist theory and psychoanalysis. Such charges of determinism have been brought time and again in the name of defending the notion of agency. What is overlooked in such criticisms is the assumption of a rigid alternative between, to borrow a formulation from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, total autonomy and absolute subordination. See, 'Post-Marxism Without Apologies', in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, ed. Erneste Laclau (London and New York: Verso, 1990).
68. Judith Butler, 'The Imperialist Subject', *Journal of Urban and Cultural Studies*, 2/1 (1991), p. 77.
69. Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, pp. 46–47.
70. Ibid., p. 63.
71. Ibid., p. 44.
72. When French colonial power identified the veil as a problem and constructed it as an exterior target, it was involved in a reading and writing (or re-writing) of the veil which is different from that of the native culture. In his influential *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu provides an ethnographic study of the native Muslim patriarchal culture. The historical precondition of such a study is of course the French colonization of Algeria. Bourdieu's observation of the binarism which make the native culture is instructive in this sense. Bourdieu does not mention the veil, but he observes that the opposition between male and female is associated with a number of other oppositions between the outside and inside. In the mythical structure of the native society, woman is associated with the inside, the house and the land. The veiled woman represents an 'inside' that needs to be protected. Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of A Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 44–5, 90–4, 122–6. The only place where Bourdieu mentions the veil is a native proverb reserved for the son-in-law, 'the veil cast over shame' (ibid., p. 44). Since woman is associated with evil acts, the lesser evil can only be produced by the protection of a man, etc. Despite his apparant criticism of 'legalism', and his recognition of different interests of men and women, Bourdieu re-inscribes the same mythical patriarchal structure based on sexual difference. In Spivak's words, 'the figure of the exchanged woman still produces the cohesive unity of a clan . . .'. See Introduction, *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 30.
73. Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, p. 7.
74. Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, p. 44.
75. For this formulation see Christian Metz, quoted in Paul Willemen, 'Voyeurism, The Look and Dwoskin', *Afterimage*, 6 (Summer 1976), p. 41.
76. Even Edward Lane, who stands as one of the solemn and least 'masculine' Orientalists, almost confesses this desire to see: 'A man may also occasionally enjoy opportunities of seeing the face of an Egyptian lady when she really thinks herself unobserved; sometimes at an open lattice, and sometimes on a house-top', *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), p. 177.
77. Willemen, 'Voyeurism, The Look and Dwoskin', p. 48.
78. Mary Ann Doane suggests a similar structure of reversal for understanding the difficulty the masculine subject experiences when woman appropriates the gaze and turns herself from being a passive object of look to a subject of active looking, from spectacle to spectator. See 'Film and the Masquerade'.

79. Bhabha, 'Interrogating Identity', p. 190.
80. Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, p. 61.
81. Ibid., p. 62.
82. Ibid., p. 62.
83. To identify Muslim women's gaining her agency and subjectivity by 'moving' outside the home and equating her veiling with confinement implies an unquestioned acceptance of the assumptions of the liberal Western feminism which advocates the unveiling of Muslim women as a means of 'liberation'.
84. Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 76.
85. Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 7.
86. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. 24.
87. Naomi Schor, 'This Essentialism Which is Not One: Coming to Grips with Irigaray', *differences*, 1/2 (1989), p. 48.
88. Irigaray, *Marine Lover*, p. 118.

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5.5

'UNVEILING ALGERIA'

Winifred Woodhull

THE NATIONAL GUISE

In 1964, Germaine Tillion, a French ethnographer known for her extensive work on male-female relations in Algeria, writes that 'on the Muslim side of the Mediterranean, the veil . . . constitutes not just a picturesque detail of costume, but a veritable border. On one side of this border, female societies stagnate; on the other side there lives and progresses a national society which, by virtue of this fact, is but half a society.'[1] To her credit, Tillion painstakingly emphasizes, in the essay in which this sentence appears, the lines of continuity between social practices in the Northern and Southern parts of the Mediterranean in order to counter the view, widespread among her compatriots, that women's oppression in Muslim societies stems uniquely from the supposed barbarity of Islam. As a survivor of the concentration camps, Tillion is keenly aware of Europe's capacity for savagery toward its own people; and as a critical observer of her country's relation to Algeria, she repeatedly calls her readers' attention to the abuses of colonialism, particularly as they have affected women.[2] Yet in the sentence quoted above, Tillion poses the question of women and nationalism in contemporary Muslim societies in terms which, today, obstruct, as much as they enable, feminist analysis of the problem.

In setting the tradition-bound female sphere in opposition to the modern nation and in underscoring women's exclusion from national life in Muslim societies, Tillion's formulation is typical of much Western scholarship on women

From: Winifred Woodhull (1991), 'Unveiling Algeria', pp. 112–31, in *Genders* no. 10.