

Text 2: What the Head Scarf Means, When Everyone Wears One

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CAIRO — As far as wardrobes go, the head scarf worn by a Muslim woman to cover her hair has become the most loaded political and religious symbol today. And while the West wrestles to accept it, Muslim societies where the majority of women now wear the veil are wrestling to understand what it means beyond its standard function.

With the veil becoming the norm here, worn by more than 89 percent of Egyptian women from the ages of 15 to 29, it ceases to be a testament of piety or an assertion of identity. Its meaning is convoluted with the numberless tones of color and styles available.

This has led an increasing number of women to take the extra stride toward covering their face as a more solid articulation of piousness or rejecting the veil as a superfluous piece of cloth and taking it off altogether.

Dozens of interviews with young Egyptian women on either end of the spectrum revealed the deeply personal and sometimes painful struggle they confront in trying to assert their individuality. And the head scarf in this context can be seen as a mosaic of experiences stitched into a single piece of fabric that, for the moment, gives cover to a society largely unsure of where it wants to go.

To take off the veil, as some women have done, is to ask the candid question of what it means to be a Muslim woman today.

Zeinab Magdy, 21, started wearing the veil when she was a senior in high school. “Up until today I really don’t know why I put it on,” she said. “But a lot of it was peer pressure. A lot of people were starting to wear it; it felt like fitting in or belonging.”

She cried profusely the first day she wore it because halfway through the day she wanted to take it off, but felt trapped.

Fearing the social stigma associated with taking off the veil, Ms. Magdy continued to cover her hair for two and a half years, until she summoned the courage to reverse her decision halfway through college. She had joined a creative writing class, and by beginning to discover what she loved to do, she felt more sure of who she wanted to be.

The veil was simply not a part of it, she admits. “I remember the sensation of the air in my hair,” she recalled with a twinkle in her eye.

Ms. Magdy, like others in her social stratum, was lucky to be able to choose relatively freely. Some young women who come from a less privileged or less educated background or live in more conservative neighborhoods and cities are a lot more bound by tradition. They do not have the luxury to be different.

Marwa Muhammad, 26, a manicurist in a hair salon who has worn the veil for nine years, recently started to take it off at work then put it back on as she made her way back home

every night. She says she spends long days at work, sometimes forgetting to get up and pray, a religious duty that she notes is more basic and essential than veiling.

She casually allows her male colleagues to style her hair, and she removes the veil for a stretch of time when she goes to the beach in Alexandria every summer, where no one would recognize — or judge — her. “I’m wearing it because I can’t walk in the street without it,” Ms. Muhammad said. “I’m wearing it, but it’s as if I’m not.”

Ms. Muhammad is very honest about her divided relationship with the veil. She believes it is a religious duty and aspires to one day “really” wear it, but only when it speaks to a more genuine piety.

Stories abound, and through it all, there is no real social consensus.

“There’s this desire to make everybody fit into something. But what is that thing?” asks Hanan Sabea, a professor of anthropology at the American University in Cairo. “It’s an incredible moment of unsettled universe; there is a great contestation over it. That’s why there is an investment in all these labels and categories. And it’s still very mushy and .uncertain.”

The revival of orthodox religious discourse in the past three decades led many Muslim women, whether through conviction or convenience, to take on the veil. In this traditional and patriarchal society, where the image of the woman is connected to such concepts as family honor, national pride and social values, the spread of the veil became the most visible manifestation of a swelling religious identification.

But now that the vast majority of women in Egypt are in fact veiled, it is no longer a mark of distinction, or even piety. It is not unusual to see a young veiled woman in tight jeans and a catchy top strutting provocatively down the street holding her boyfriend’s hand. And the veil, which represented some measure of respectability, no longer protects or prevents harassment on the street.

This saturation of the veil has also given way for young women to mark their religiosity by putting on the niqab, a full face cover. According to a survey conducted by the Population Council in 2009, about 5 percent of Egyptian women from the ages of 15 to 29 now wear the niqab.

“When you reach a new normal, people begin to distinguish themselves differently,” said Hania Shalaani, an expert in gender studies at the Social Research Center at the American University in Cairo. “Because the veil is no longer a sign of religiosity or respectability, it is expected to see this polarization.”

Manal Mahmoud, 21, a graduate of English studies from Cairo University, wore the veil when she was 14 and upgraded to the niqab at the age of 17.

Ms. Mahmoud said she was against covering her face until five of her friends, who started wearing the niqab one after the other in the span of one month, were criticized and attacked by teachers at school for wearing it. She eventually became convinced that it was the better choice and found that covering her face was a more sincere attempt to obey God than to merely cover her hair.

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Ms. Mahmoud recalls that she was shocked to realize that when she first wore the niqab, it didn't transform her behavior or turn her into an "angel." But it did bring her closer to women who thought and felt like she did.

With that, Ms. Mahmoud gradually gave up her passion for watching movies and stopped listening to music. "Through the niqab, I determined what I wanted to do," she said. "You call it identity, I call it going on the right path."

Clauses

Clause ID	Conjunction	Clause	Process
1.		As far as wardrobes go the head scarf worn by a Muslim woman to cover her hair has become the most loaded political and religious symbol today.	Relational id
2.		[the head scarf worn by a Muslim women]	Material
3.	And while	the West wrestle to accept it (hijab)	Material
4.		[to accept it]	Mental
5.		Muslim societies where the majority of women now wear the veil are wrestling to understand what it means beyond its standard function	Material
6.		[to understand what it means beyond its standard function]	Mental
7.	[where	the majority of women now wear the veil]	Material
8.	[what	it means beyond its standard functions]	Relational id
9.		With the veil becoming the norm here, worn by more than 89 percent of Egyptian women from the ages of 15 to 29 it ceases to be testament of piety or an assertion of identity	Relational att
10.	[With	[the veil becoming the norm here]	Relational id
11.		[worn by more than 89 percent of Egyptian women from the ages of 15 to 29]	Material
12.		Its meaning is convoluted with the numberless tones of color and styles available.	Relational att
13.		To take off the veil, as some women have done, is to ask the candid question of what it means to be a Muslim women today.	Relational id
14.		[To take off the veil]	Material
15.	[as	some women have done]	Material
16.		[to ask the candid question of what it means to be a Muslim women today	Verbal
17.	[what	it means to be a Muslim women today.]	Relational id
18.		Zeinab Magdy, 21, started wearing the veil when she was a senior high school	Material
19.	[when	she was a senior high school]	Relational att
20.		“Up until today I really don’t know why I put it on,” she said . “But a lot of it was peer pressure. A lot of people were starting to wear it; it felt like fitting in or belonging.”	Verbal
21.		[Up until today I really don’t know why I put it on]	Mental
22.	[why]	I put it on	Material

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23.	“But	a lot of it was peer pressure	Relational att
24.		A lot of people were starting to wear it	Material
25.		[to wear it]	Material
26.		It felt like fitting in or belonging.	Mental
27.		She cried profusely the first day she wore it	Behavioural
28.		[the first day she wore it]	Material
29.	because	halfway through the day she wanted to take it off	Mental
30.		[to take it off]	Material
31.	but	felt trapped	Mental
32.		Fearing the social stigma associated with taking off the veil, Ms. Magdy continued to cover her hair for two and a half year	Mental
33.		[Ms. Magdy continued to cover her hair for two and a half year]	Material
34.		[to cover her hair for two and a half year]	Material
35.	until	she summoned the courage to reverse her decision halfway through college.	Verbal
36.		[to reverse her decision halfway through college]	Material
37.		She had joined a creative writing class	Material
38.	and	by beginning to discover what she loved to do,	Material
39.		[what she loved to do]	Mental
40.		she felt more sure of who she wanted to be	Mental
41.	[who	she wanted to be]	Mental
42.		The veil was simply not a part of it, she admits	Verbal
43.		[The veil was simply not a part of it]	Relational att
44.		“I remember the sensation of the air in my hair,” she recalled with a twinkle in her eye	Verbal
45.		[I remember the sensation of the air in my hair]	Mental
46.		Ms. Magdy, like others in her social stratum was lucky to be able to choose relatively freely	Relational att
47.		[to be able to choose relatively freely]	Relational att
48.		[to choose relatively freely]	Mental
49.		Some young women who come from a less privileged or less educated background or live in more conservative neighborhoods and cities are a lot more bound by tradition.	Relational att
50.	[who	come from a less privileged or less educated background]	Material
51.	[or	live in more conservative neighborhoods and cities]	Behavioural
52.		They do not have the luxury <u>to be different</u>	Relational att
53.		[to be different]	Relational att
54.		Marwa Muhammad, 26, a manicurist in a	Material

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		hair salon who has worn the veil for nine years, recently started to take it off at work	
55.		[to take it off at work]	Material
56.	[who	has worn the veil for nine years]	Material
57.	then	put it back on as she made her way back home every night	Material
58.	[as	she made her way back home every night]	Material
59.		She says [she spends long days at work, sometimes forgetting to get up and pray, a religious duty that she notes is more basic and essential than veiling.]	Verbal
60.		[she spends long days at work]	Material
61.		[sometimes forgetting to get up and pray]	Mental
62.		[to get up]	Material
63.	[and	pray,]	Material
64.		a religious duty that she notes is more basic and essential than veiling.	Relational att
65.		She casually allows her male colleagues to style her hair	Verbal
66.		[to style her hair]	Material
67.	and	she removes the veil for a stretch or time	Material
68.	when	she goes to the beach in Alexandria every summer where no one would be able to recognize or judge her	Material
69.	[where	no one would recognize]	Mental
70.	[or	judge her.]	Mental
71.		“I’m wearing it because I can’t walk in the street without it,” Ms. Muhammad said .	Verbal
72.		[I’m wearing it]	Material
73.	[because	I can’t walk in the street without it]	Material
74.		[I’m wearing it]	Material
75.	[but	it’s as if I’m not]	Material
76.		Ms. Muhammad is very honest about her devided relationship with the veil.	Relational att
77.		She believes it is a religious duty	Mental
78.		[it is a religious duty]	Relational att
79.	and	aspires to one day really wear it	Mental
80.		to one day really wear it	Material
81.	but	only when it (hijab) speaks to a more genuine piety.	Relational att
82.		The revival of orthodox religion discourse in the past three decades led many Muslim women, whether through conviction or convenience, to take on the veil	Material
83.		[to take on the veil]	Material
84.		In this traditional and patriarchal society, where the image of women is connected to such concepts as family honor, national pride and social values	Relational id

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85.		the spread of veil became the most visible manifestation of a swelling religious identification	Relational id
86.	But	now that the vast majority of women in Egypt are in fact veiled	Material
87.		it is no longer a mark of distinction, or even piety	Relational att
88.		It is not unusual [to see a young veiled women in tight jeans and a catchy top strutting provocatively down the street holding her boyfriend's hand.]	Relational att
89.		[to see a young veiled women in tight jeans and a catchy top strutting provocatively down the street holding her boyfriend's hand.]	Mental
90.		[strutting provocatively down the street]	Material
91.		[holding her boyfriend's hand]	Material
92.	And	the veil, [which represented some measure of respectability], no longer protects	Material
93.	or	prevents harassment on the street.	Material
94.	[which	represented some measure of respectability.]	Relational id

Text 2. Transitivity System of What the Head Scarf Means When Everyone Wears One

Material clause								
Clause ID	Conj.	Actor	Process	Goal	Scope/Range	Beneficiary		Circumstance
						Recipient	Client	
2.		by a Muslim woman	worn	the head scarf				
3.	And while	The West	wrestle	to accept it (hijab)				
5.		Muslim societies	are wrestling	to understand what it means				where the majority of women now wear the veil (place), beyond its standard function
7.	where	the majority of women	wear	the veil				now (time)
11.		by more than 89 percent of Egyptian women	worn					from the ages of 15 to 29 (extent)
14.			to take off	the veil				
15.	As	some women	have done					
18.		Zainab Magdy, 21,	started wearing	the veil				when she was in senior high school (time)
22.	why	I	put on	it (hijab)				
24.		A lot of people	were starting	to wear it (hijab)				
25.			to wear	it (hijab)				
28.		She	wore	it (hijab)				the first day (time)
30.			to take off	it (hijab)				
33.		Ms. Magdy	continued	to cover her hair				for two and a half year (duration)
34.			to cover	her hair				
36.			to reverse	her decision				halfway through college (time)
37.		She	had joined	a creative writing class				

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38.	and		by beginning to discover	what she loved to do			
50	who		come				from a less privileged or less educated background (place)
54.		Marwa Muhammad, 26, a manicurist in a hair salon who has worn the veil for nine years, recently	started	to take it off (hijab),			at work (place)
55.			to take off	it (hijab)			
56.	who		has worn	the veil			for nine years (duration)
57.	then		put back on	it (the veil)			
58.	As	She	made		her way		back home every night (time)
60.		She	spends	long days			at work (place)
62.			to get up				
63.	and		pray				
66.			to style	her hair			
67.	and	she	removes	the veil			when she goes to the beach in Alexandria (place) every summer (time)
68.	when	she	goes to	the beach			in Alexandria (place) every summer (time)
72.		I	'm wearing	it (hijab)			
73.	because	I	can't walk				in the street (place) without it (accompanient)
74.		I	'm wearing	it (hijab)			
75.	but		'm not (wearing)				
80.			to wear	it (hijab)			one day (time) really (quality)
82.		The revival of orthodox religion discourse	led	many Muslim women			whether through conviction or convenience(means), in the past three decades (duration)
83.			to take on	the veil			
86.	but		are in fact veiled	the vast majority of women			Now (time), in Egypt (place)
90.			strutting		down the street		provocatively (manner: quality)

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91.			holding	her boyfriend's hand				
92.	And	the veil	protects					no longer (time)
93.	or		prevents	harrasment				on the street (place)

Mental process					
Clause ID	Conj.	Senser.	Process	Phenomenon.	Circumstance.
4.			to accept	it	
6.			to understand	what it means	beyond its standard function
21.		I	don't know	why I put it on	really, up until today (duration)
26.		It	felt	like fitting in or belonging	
29.	Because	She	wanted	to take it off	halfway through the day (time)
30.	but		felt	trapped	
31.			Fearing	the social stigma associated with taking of the veil	
39.	what	she	loved	to do	
40.		She	felt	more sure of who she wanted to be	
41.	who	she	wanted	to be	
45.		I	remember	the sensation of the air in my hair	
48.			to choose		relatively freely (manner: quality)
61.			forgetting	to get up and pray	Sometimes (frequency)
66.	where	no one	would recognize		
67.	or		judge	her	
74.		She	believes	it is a religious duty	
79.	and		aspires	to one day really wear it	
89.			to see	a young veiled women in tight jeans and a catchy top strutting provocatively down the street holding her boyfriend's hand.]	

Verbal process									
Clause ID	Conjunction	Sayer	Process	Quoted	Reported	Verbiage	Target	Receiver	Circumstance
16.			to ask			the candid question of what it means to be a Muslim women today			

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20.		She (Zainab Magdy)	said	“Up until today I really don’t know why I put it on”; “But a lot of it was peer pressure. A lot of people were starting to wear it; it felt like fitting in or belonging.”					
33.	Until	She	summoned			the courage to reverse her decision			halfway through college (duration)
42.		She	admits		The veil was simply not a part of it				
44.		She	recalled	“I remember the sensation of the air in my hair,”					with a twinkle in her eye (manner: means)
59.		She	says		she spends long days at work, sometimes forgetting to get up and pray, a religious duty that she notes is more basic and essential than veiling				
65.		She	allows		to style her hair			her male colleagues	
68.		Ms. Muhammad	said	“I’m wearing it because I can’t walk in the street without it,”					

Relational attributive process							
Clause ID	Conjunction	Carrier	Process	Atribute	Attributor	Beneficiary	Circumstance
9.		It (hijab)	ceases to be	testament of piety or an assertion of identity			With the veil becoming the norm here, worn by more than 89 percent of Egyptian women from the ages of 15 to 29
12.		Its meaning	is	convoluted			with the numberless tones of color and styles available (comitative)
19.	When	She	was	a senior high school			
23.	But	a lot of it (wearing hijab)	was	peer pressure			
43.		The veil	was	not a part of it			simply (quality)

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46.		Ms. Magdy, like others in her social stratum	was	lucky to be able to choose			relatively freely (quality)
47.			to be	able to choose			
49.		Some young women who come from a less privileged or less educated background or live in more conservative neighborhoods and cities	are	bound			a lot more, by tradition (means)
52.		They	do not have	the luxury to be different			
53.			to be	different			
64.		A religious duty that she notes	is	more basic and essential than veiling			
76.		Ms. Muhammad	is	very honest			about her devided relationship with the veil (matter)
78.		it	is	a religious duty			
81.	but only when	it (hijab)	speaks	to a more genuine piety			
87.		It (hijab)	is	no longer a mark of distinction, or even piety			
88.		It	is not	unusual to see a young veiled women in tight jeans and a catchy top strutting provocatively down the street holding her boyfriend's hand.			

Relational Identifying process						
Clause ID	Conjunction	Identified	Process	Identifier	Assigner	Circumstance
1.		The head scarf worn by a Muslim woman to cover her hair	has become	the most loaded political and religious symbol		today (time)
8.	what	it (hijab)	means			beyond its standard functions
10.		the veil	becoming	the norm		here (place)
13.		To take off the veil, as some women have done	is	to ask the candid question of what it means to be a Muslim women today		
17.	what	It	means	to be a Muslim women		today (time)
84.	where	the image of women	is connected	to such concepts as family honor, national pride and social values.		in this traditional and patriarchal society (place)
85.		the spread of veil	became	the most visible manifestation of a		

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94.	which	(the veil)	represented	swelling religious identification some measure of respectability		
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Behavioural clause						
Clause ID	Conjunction	Behavior	Process	Behaviour	Phenomenon	Circumstance
27.		She	cried			profusely (quality), the first day she wore it (time)
51.	or		live			in more concervative neighborhoods and cities (place)