

# Muslim women's views on dress code and the *hijab*: some issues for education

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Recent French and Turkish bans on Muslim women wearing Islamic head coverings in schools, colleges and universities starts this discussion of religious discrimination and the value of interreligious open dialogue in which neither side holds entrenched positions. The paper links dialogue with the ethnographic methodology and uses this to examine the varied attitudes of Muslim women towards their dress code. It locates this issue in the critical educational concern for equity and argues for dialogue to inform educational provision to help the next generation tackle global insecurities.

## Introduction

This paper examines and discusses issues surrounding the range of views Muslim women hold about their dress code and public attitudes towards this, particularly as illustrated by judicial and political actions. The initial context of the study was current legislation in France and Turkey requiring Muslim women not to cover their hair when attending education institutions. In the UK school uniform for Muslim girls has over the years been addressed sensitively, however, a court ruling in 2006 has placed some restriction which we will discuss. This raises questions about wider attitudes and understandings of Muslim perspectives within the broader debate on discrimination and multiculturalism.

## Methodology

The ethnographic methodology involved observation, participation in family and school events, discussions with informants and field visits in Britain, Pakistan, South East Asia and the Middle East. Interviews with Muslim women took place within a wider sharing of social life and education: in many cases the context had as much significance as the transcribed words. The following paper draws on qualitative interviews with a range of Muslim women ( $n = 45$ ) of varying ages and ethnographic observations within the Muslim community worldwide and, in particular, within a diverse Pakistani family. The data set is broad, but not representative of the vast range of Muslim contexts. It shows a diversity of views within a common theology and faith position. That the researcher is a male was not a problem: the response to my open interest in the topic was positive and, indeed, was an ice-breaker, and how Muslim women react in my presence is part of the data. I focus here on the Muslim female perspectives only, which may differ from Muslim male perspectives. The women's views are illuminated by examples within the literature.

Ethnography is the discipline of observing how people behave and live. A long history in social anthropology and sociology has defined fieldwork methodologies which are closely related to our discussion of dialogue. The ethnographer goes into the 'field' with an open mind to observe, record and ask questions. The purpose is to record processes and practices accurately and to discuss relationships, values and meanings. This is primarily descriptive rather than theorized (although *a priori* theories such as functionalism and structuralism are found). Ethnographers refer to Clifford

Geertz's (1975) phrase 'thick description' for the process of uncovering underlying patterns, social networks, power structures, processes, inner conflicts and values to describe the nuanced situation. He also warned observers not to impose their world view and view of selfhood, but to listen and observe patiently: 'seeing their experiences within the framework of their own idea of what selfhood is' (Geertz, 2001, p. 261). Ethnography involves dialogue—patient listening, asking, responding, interpreting, being corrected. Discussion with members of a religion is crucial for learning. Dialogue suggests a two way process, with each side prepared to be open, honest and non-conflictual, attempting to explain rather than persuade and to jointly tackle critical and ethical concerns. Dialogue requires openness to others. To be effective, dialogue requires discussion over time to promote deep reflection and thought. This creates a friendship which breaks down 'otherness' ('not us') into 'us', where differences of opinion are then viewed as interesting, thought-provoking, but not threatening. Such discussions can produce a synthesis which establishes common ground and which helps to understand differences. We try to look at issues as an insider might (to respect our dialogue partner) and as an outsider might (to raise critical issues). Dialogue thus requires an open state of mind, being prepared to discuss rationally and to learn from others. In this reflective self-critical process the sense of 'having to be right' is eroded. Variety in world view appears as enriching rather than divisive as each person's point of view is deemed to have value. Non-Muslims can explore the personal significance of dress to Muslim women without negative assumptions.

### **The international context**

In 2005 separate legislation in France and Turkey restricting Muslim women's traditional dress in public received public comment.<sup>1</sup> The government in Turkey has long *Women's views on dress code and Hijaab* equated 'progress' with secularism and has legislated to force people into western ideas and clothes. In this view, retaining a traditional religious dress code is viewed as an attack on national aspirations. The desire for Turkey to become part of the European Union (EU) added further impetus, however, their EU negotiations required revision of legislation about religious groups. Canon Ian Sherwood, Anglican Chaplain in Istanbul, accusing the Turkish authorities of persecution of non-Muslim religious minorities, observed the process of secularism:

The Turkish state has always feared the splintering effects of Islamic dissension and the violence that often underlies many movements that intertwine religion and the state in a way that is innate to Islam. ... The state historically has felt the need to be firm in exercising the laws of the secular state to preserve the unity that is the Republic of Turkey. (Forum 18 bulletin, 19.1.2006)<sup>2</sup>

The Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, beginning the Dutch EU Presidency (21 July, 2004),<sup>3</sup> warned (in the wake of the Madrid bombings) against raising new barriers to particular religions:

the decision on whether to open EU membership talks with Turkey, due to be taken in December, must be strictly on the basis of whether or not Turkey meets the agreed standards of human rights and democracy. There was not a problem that Turkey was a Muslim nation.

In France a secularist system has legally banned (from 2005) religious symbolic dress and symbols of any religion being worn to school, college or university, including items of dress which betoken religious identity. The legislation bans students from wearing head coverings which serve a distinctively religious function. Such symbols and dress are represented as an attempt to convert and so an attack on secularist education. Muslim women's dress code is further viewed as required of women and therefore patriarchally repressive and an affront to secular freedoms. Although the French legislation covers all faiths, Muslim women have been particularly affected. The BBC web site<sup>4</sup> supported a documentary covering the first days of the implementation of this new legislation in a French college. In this institution there was

some compromise, with bandannas, simple fashionable headscarves, allowed so long as the ears were exposed. Elsewhere examples of no compromise were reported, with young women forced to leave education if they would not comply. The college staff were shown as divided: some regarded headscarves as symbols of female oppression (whatever the different opinion of those wearing them) while others were angry that this further obstacle to education and qualifications had been placed in the path of young Muslim women. The programme also investigated claims that Muslim women are denied jobs because of their dress.

‘What does this veil mean to me?’ asks Touria, a softly-spoken and serious pupil at Delacroix. ‘It’s part of who I am. It’s not just some bit of fabric on my head. It’s everything. Looking back on it, I can’t imagine taking it off. What I’m wearing today I consider the minimum’. What Touria is wearing is a bandanna, a simple scarf that covers her hair but not her ears or neck. She says she prefers to wear this so she doesn’t draw attention to herself or her religion. (BBC web site)

In France the separation of state from Catholic church provides the seedbed for secularism. The explicit assumption is that religious dress and symbols advertise a religion and impede cultural harmony and assimilation and that people should regard themselves as French first, rather than Muslim. Although a uniform can appear aggressive, adopting a particular dress code because of fundamental values about the human body is very different. Like Sikh turbans, particular dress can be seen as a religious duty, a voluntary declaration of faith and allegiance. For Muslim women, voluntary covering of the head, hair and body is a response to their religious and social values. In the UK school uniforms used to be a trigger for concern amongst Muslim families, particularly skirts for girls and sports kit. Efforts to remedy problems have meant that generally school uniform has not been a flashpoint for Muslim resentment in the UK. In a current exceptional case Denbigh High School, Luton, with predominantly (79%) Muslim pupils, was found in the Court of Appeal to have breached the rights of a pupil who wished to wear the full-length *jilbab* cloak; in 2006 this decision was reversed by the House of Lords on the grounds that the school had sensitive uniform requirements that had been accepted by the Muslim community generally. The pupil was reported as saying: ‘I had to make a stand about this. Many women will not speak up about what they actually want. I still don’t see why I was told to go home from school when I was just practising my religion’.<sup>5</sup> These very recent cases show Muslim young women having clear views on dressing according to their religious conscience, and being excluded from education if they adopt this dress code. This paper seeks to examine the issue from Muslim perspectives, particularly listening to Muslim women, following the example of Parker-Jenkins and Haw (1996).

### **Tradition and tensions**

The Ishmaeli Muslim Brotherhood give the following in a policy statement on women which in general emphasizes equality between the sexes:<sup>6</sup>

The woman’s nature as the mother means that there are certain virtues which Allah has made specific to her such as the protection of her honour and the honour of her offspring.

For example, religious texts ordained that the woman’s body, except for the face and the hands, should be covered in front of all except those who are a *mahram* (those she is forbidden to marry). And that a woman should not sit in private with a man who is not *mahram*.

Their fear of western freedoms is that ‘western society has almost completely stripped women of their morality and chastity’. In encouraging women to play an active part in politics, the policy stated that proper segregation be provided so the sexes do not mix (‘We do not call for immodesty and free mixing of the sexes’).

Islam lays down that relationships between the sexes be modest and decent, because people are easily tempted (Qur’an 24.31; Doi, 1993). Shazia Nazlee (2001, p. 3f) urged the wearing of the *hijab* (headscarf) as a declaration of faith: ‘We as

Muslim sisters must remember that the Hijaab is one of our means of getting into paradise. We should feel honoured and dignified. We should feel protected, secure and obedient. We should feel guarded like a pearl'. Muslims argue that sexual passions outside marriage should be avoided if men and women are to mingle and work together within the community. Both females and males need to be modest and dress modestly, to cover their bodies and even body shapes with loose garments. A greater burden falls on women as their whole body is assumed to be attractive to men and might attract unwanted sexual attention. Fareena Alam, editor of a leading European Muslim magazine, *Q-News*, said<sup>7</sup>

I began wearing it [the *hijaab*] at the age of 21, against the wishes of my family, while serving as president of the United Nations Students' Association at university. I wanted to assert my identity and counter common stereotypes about Muslim women. A woman who wears a *hijaab* can be active and engaged, educated and professional.

In this view a Muslim woman can maintain public privacy and work effectively without being advantaged or disadvantaged by her physical appearance, without having to make herself physically attractive in order to be accepted in her job. This enables women to be judged primarily by their qualities and personality and not by their looks. This works towards equality of opportunity: women's physical attractiveness can become an unearned job requirement, with selection based on appearance and not merit.

Politics also has an effect on attitudes. The Algerian woman writer and filmmaker writing as Assia Djebar navigated her own life 'uncovered' (i.e. in western dress), being sent to a western school, and in her work explores women in Algerian society, often writing her own life as fiction (see, for example, Djebar, 1992, 1993a, b, 1999). Djebar lived through the Algerian War for independence. She described modernizing trends amongst the young as being complicated by French demands that Algerian women be uncovered as an aggressive means of control, so this became a cause of resentment (see Venn, 2006, p. 80). This promoted the use of Islamic female dress as a mark of religious and national loyalty, as well as ideal camouflage for combatants. She contrasted the freedoms offered by the veil (such as freedom from the male gaze) to the tyrannies that turn the veil into a prison and the woman into an onlooker rather than a participant. The male 'gaze' seeks out whatever glimpse it can for stimulation, even the vaguest of body shapes, making public arenas seem threatening places. If women have to revise their sensitivity to this 'gaze', men also have to develop respect for women (Qur'an 24.30). The French imperialist gaze was an assertion of political power and much less inhibited than the gaze of Muslim men, intending to disempower Muslim men. Morgan (2002), in a thoughtful review of Djebar's work, linked Muslim veiling to similar Christian, Jewish and pre-modern European customs and used the Algerian example to interrogate contemporary religious, self-esteem and gender issues. The French imperial policies were savagely condemned by the Martinique-born and Algerian-based psychiatrist Frantz Fanon (1965, 1967).<sup>8</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre's summary of the protest of the oppressed (*les damnés* in the French title, translated as 'wretched'), from the Preface, is apt even today: 'You are making us into monstrosities; your humanism claims we are at one with the rest of humanity but your racist methods set us apart' (Fanon, 1967, p. 8).

Polly Toynbee<sup>9</sup> condemned the enforced wearing of the *burka* (the complete robe with small grill) by women as an example of oppression by the Taliban and similar hardline groups. Toynbee's support for the modernizing work of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan<sup>10</sup> is to be applauded: free choice must mean the right not to wear Islamic dress, but her criticism should not extend (as it does) to Muslim women who choose to dress traditionally. Supporting Muslim women to exercise their free choice in ways they find personally helpful is not to

defend repression. Dressing modestly from choice is different from being covered up at the insistence of a husband or family or legal system.

The attitudes of Muslim women towards dress are not simple, or necessarily predictable. In expressing themselves through dress, various oppressions may cause reactions. Muslim women in France, Turkey and Afghanistan for different reasons no longer have the right to choose their preferred form of dress in educational contexts and are therefore subject to institutional discrimination.

### **Muslim women's perspectives.**

All the women interviewed felt that they had the freedom to dress as they wished, within the cultural expectations of their family and community. All regarded modest dress as a testimony of faith—and several commented that modest dress, gaze and behaviour is an important male version of *hijaab*. '*Hijaab* is not only for women'. Muslim girls and young women brought up and educated in the UK are negotiating two cultures, resolving issues, balancing tensions and asserting their values and identity. They come from many nations across every continent so attitudes to dress code vary considerably. The common ground is that they consider their dress and demeanour to be modest and unrevealing. One summed up the general tone: 'By dressing up in a Muslim way I clearly express my modesty, religiosity and decency in public'.

One interviewee who had elected to wear the *hijaab* gave a long clear statement which I summarize here, using many of her own words. In her view, a modest, chaste attitude of mind is important for Muslims and for creating a properly functioning society. A public emphasis on sexuality heightens desires which affects behaviour. She wishes control over who has the 'right to view'. Wearing the *hijaab* and *abaya* covering her from head to toe allows her to be 'nondescript' and concealed. It is a non-verbal statement, a physical barrier to warn males against inappropriate behaviour or overfamiliarity.

I don't want male non-family members to behave in an inappropriate manner with me—I don't want them to be over friendly or over familiar. If I wear a physical barrier like the *hijaab/abaya* I make this statement non-verbally. If I wear *hijaab* it makes a statement about my faith and to an extent about the level of my faith.

Her dress is a declaration of her faith: 'What it does say is that "I am a Muslim, I have a certain level of expectation of myself and I hope that my appearance exhibits certain limits for you to obey"'. Dressing this way is seen as an act of worship, obeying a divine command. Another declared: 'I see respect in people's eyes which makes me feel very good. Then it gives me internal strength thus making me very confident in public'.

For a UK Muslim from a Hindu background, choosing to be well dressed was important, in a way that was comfortable and encouraged other people to feel easy talking to her. She regarded individual personal choice as most important. She wanted her dress to communicate something about her traditional values:

People think Asian women are fully covered with loose clothes and headscarf are uneducated, and cannot talk for themselves, they hide behind their clothes. But I do not feel that way, my dress makes me stand out of the crowd and it talks about my traditional values.

At work and in public she found this worked well: people found her approachable.

She said:

On a busy marketplace not only here, but in India as well, if I walk fully dressed and well covered, I will have less trouble, compared to a lady who has a tiny skirt, people will stare and whistle at her. Morally I will be respected whereas she will not be given much respect.

One found traditional Islamic dress to be a problem where she lives and works:

I wear a long loose dress, a headscarf and a face cover (*niqaab*) ... . I have found that when I do come into contact with men they are generally more respectful than women. They see my dress as a sign of how to relate to me, most of the time this is with respect and modesty. Women on the other hand make snide comments, laugh and pity me thinking me to be oppressed. When I speak it becomes quite clear to them that I am well educated and am

British born. They then look at me as if I am a bit crazy to dress like this out of choice. ... I dress the way I do because this is an expression of my religious beliefs. In Islam both men and women have been commanded to dress modestly. The aim behind the way I dress is to avoid unwanted attention and to be judged for my intellect rather than physical appearance. These beliefs are dear to me. In London this was certainly the case. I find that the people there are much more tolerant of cultural and religious differences. In Oxford I find that the way I dress attracts more attention to myself because I look odd and different. My aim of dressing not to be noticed is exactly the thing that gets me noticed in Oxford ... . In Oxford I do not like going out alone even during the day because I am often verbally abused because of the way I dress. I am often called 'terrorist' and get comments such as 'where's your machine gun?' Events like this make me worry for my safety, so I do not go out alone very often. I have become a bit isolated because of this. I prefer going to visit a friend at their house rather than go out shopping, or out for a coffee. Due to these experiences I do not plan on permanently living in Oxford.

A clear feeling of prejudice emerges here, limiting her social life. Another talked about 'unnecessary checks at the airport, difficulty in getting a job, and sometimes hatred in people's eyes, especially after the London bombing event'.

A group of female Muslim university students in the UK, mostly the first of their families to go to university, revealed that they were targeted for conversion by a strong Christian Union. This had created a strong bond between the Muslim students, who created an Islamic Society, and to identify themselves openly they adopted a form of traditional dress and hair covering (*hijab/abaya*) which they had not worn at school and was not required by their families. Discussion with them revealed that their solidarity was empowering to them. They participated in a national programme to raise awareness of Islam and their Islamic dress code was linked explicitly with an enhanced feeling of Muslim identity; and it enabled rather than inhibited open friendly interactions with men. Their dress choices allowed them to work in mixed company in an open, frank, friendly, yet non-sexualized way (i.e. without a feeling that their friendliness might be misinterpreted). One, a white British convert to Islam, felt that she had to go through a desexualizing process, i.e. she had to make explicit to men her attitudes towards modesty and personal space. With these students dress was part of an identity package that proved to be affirmative and transformative. For a group of 15-year-old schoolgirls Islamic dress is primarily a declaration of faith and identity, a protection from inappropriate behaviour and a means of gaining respect.

Some westernize in dress, still dressing modestly. Their argument is that modesty and chastity is an inner quality that does not demand a particular style of dress. Whilst many value the respect they feel their dress earns them, others see themselves as downgraded through stereotype—not taken seriously because they are 'only Muslim women'. According to one, who favours wearing western dress when dealing with westerners, 'Islamic dress, especially the headscarf, seems to become a barrier between people and you can clearly see it on their faces and through their actions'. This is a relaxed view of dress, engaging with the principle of modesty and refusing to see a particular dress code as a requirement. They point out that it is possible to dress traditionally but still be provocative to males: the requirement for modesty needs to be an attitude and state of mind; how this is signalled at any particular time will depend both on the woman's preferences and the attitudes of the men around her. During my visits within Pakistan many educated younger women chose not to cover their heads and used the *dupatta* casually, in whichever way they found comfortable. Married women tend to cover their hair in public if not doing so might cause misunderstanding and potential embarrassment. A university lecturer said

my thinking about this matter is a bit confused (if you see it from the eyes of rigid Muslims). I used to wear veil (*perda*) when I was teenager. The reason was some stupid boys used to stare and follow us (we were three cousins in one class). But afterwards when

I was confident enough, I got rid of that veil. I had worked for 14 years in girls-only schools and I was quite comfortable there. But after joining university again I find myself sometimes in the same position. Some of the university people had an objection on my wearing half sleeves and others on me not covering my hair. I am quite comfortable with what I am but it is the pressure of your surrounding and your culture that works on you. I think if you are on the right path and have covered your body properly, uncovering of hair does not matter.

In a visit to a Pakistan university, the student body of which was four-fifths female, it was noted that in the formal setting of a lecture virtually all women covered the hair and some used a *nikab*, veiling the face, revealing only the eyes. In a later interview one previously veiled student presented herself unveiled wearing a simple *dupatta*, a gossamer shawl, not covering her hair. She explained: ‘families preferred formality in public when giving permission to go to university, but more casual dress was normal socially’. Pakistan is a modernizing country. Although the older generation occasionally brought pressure to bear on younger women to dress traditionally, this did not affect actual behaviour. One reported, somewhat humorously, that as a teenager her grandmother had insisted that she wore a white *hijaab*, under threat that if she didn’t ‘the devil will wee on you’. The *dupatta* is fashionable dress as well as a religious emblem; worn over the shoulders, it can cover the hair in the presence of a man from outside the family. It is not compulsory. Within my host family different women made their own choices whether to regard me as a family member or a visitor who necessitated hair covering.

Muslim women in Malaysia adopt traditional full *abaya* or front-buttoned *jilbab* tunic and *hijaab* head covering as a norm. This distinguishes them in Malaysia from other ethnic groups—a symbol of religious and cultural status. Malaysian women travelling to Europe retain this dress style. I have found them very open in conversation, with the formal dress not being linked with repression or personal inhibition. In neighbouring Indonesia, which is predominantly Muslim, status is not an issue and there is greater variation and less formality.

To sum up, for Muslim women decisions about dress, modesty and protection of honour are multilayered. Theology, culture, identity and personal safety all have influences. The headscarf may feel repressive to some, but voluntarily adopted can be viewed as liberating the women from being and feeling sexualized—being regarded and regarding themselves as sexually attractive first and intelligent human beings only second. Islam gives men equivalent responsibilities, including the duty to support and not to oppress women. Honouring whatever choices women make is part of this.

## **Discussion**

Issues of equity and discrimination are clearly raised. The French legislation discriminates in effect but not necessarily in intention. The law banned all display of religious symbols (even crucifixes) in educational institutions. However, it was only in a few cases that this disadvantaged students. For Muslim women the dress code is not a gratuitous display of religious symbols but a means of retaining personal dignity in public situations: the legislation therefore affected them far more than other faiths. Prohibitions may have the effect of discouraging compromise and polarizing views, as was reported in Algeria; the French legislation was regarded with dismay by Muslim women in the UK, seeing it as a sign that Islam is under secular attack.

Since Islam is not counted as a ‘race’ in terms of the Race Relations Act of 1976, extremist groups have sought to evade legal complaints by targeting Islam. A UK bill prohibiting racial and religious hatred was modified and limited in January 2006 after concerns were raised that it could infringe freedom of expression and render religions as beyond criticism (Appignanesi, 2005). The Runnymede Trust published *Islamophobia:*

*a challenge to us all* (Runnymede Trust, 1997), *The Report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-ethnic Britain* (Parekh, 2000), *Realising the Vision* (Runnymede Trust, 2004) and *Islamophobia: issues, challenges and action* (Richardson *et al.*, 2004). These argue that attacking Islam has become a new form of racist harassment. These reports present evidence of Muslim's pride in their religious identity, including the wearing of the *hijab* or various forms of head covering. It claims that unbalanced media reporting has been a problem and that harassment, name-calling and bullying have resulted from current conflicts.

The '9/11' attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001 and other *al Qaeda* terrorist incidents created a climate of nervousness about 'Islamic terrorists'. Some Muslims have felt suspected, vulnerable and that their faith itself was under attack, and traditionally dressed women are noticeable. The confusion between outspoken traditionalist (sometimes called 'fundamentalist') Muslims and so-called 'militants' becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy when legitimate protests are interpreted as fundamentalist militancy. Halliday (2003) challenged the interpretation of Islam as militant, showing how dictators and extremists cannot be oversimplified as a general Muslim threat. Mamdani (2004) challenged the description of 'bad Muslim' to depict terror groups, arguing that the CIA trained and sponsored their early terror activities and so inadvertently created an anarchic monster that uses Muslim anger as a weapon. Fear of terrorists is reasonable, whatever their religious affiliation; fear of all Muslims is not reasonable, since the whole is thus condemned because of the acts of the few. There are lessons in this focus on Muslim women of relevance to all students in schools, colleges and universities. Students today learn about Islam through stereotypes which affect their potential relationships with Muslims. Elsewhere (Bigger, 2004, p. 480) I have argued that:

- (a) young people and teachers need to know more, and in more depth, about Islam and other world religions, including experiences that will prepare them to deal with stereotypes and make decisions and choices based on good information;
- (b) pupils and teachers need to have their assumptions challenged;
- (c) insults to a religion need to be dealt with as unacceptable behaviour;
- (d) pupils need to be taught how to 'read' the media critically.

Change of attitude comes by personally getting to know people from different cultures, getting beyond stereotypes. The Runnymede Trust points to the dangers of continuing religious conflict if we do not repair misunderstandings. This is a point of considerable global significance.

Dialogue, in depth and across time, builds understanding, friendship and confidence. It cultivates an ethos of openness, necessary if issues are to be talked through without offence being taken. This is what Standish, in his defence of 'easy going toleration', called 'knowledge-by-acquaintance' which can model 'the recognition of otherness in a multicultural society' (Standish, 2006, p. 98). Learning through dialogue is a two-way process, and each side can learn from the other. Educational institutions and curricula can gain from this—discussions about ethics, love, respect and justice: who decides what is acceptable; need authority inhibit free thought; need secular rationalism destroy religious perspectives? In a paper entitled *Race, religion and reason* (Bigger, 1996, p. 31) I articulated a vision of respectful dialogue which 'does not take away our responsibility to search for truth, but demands that the search is tempered with humility and responsibility'. On inter-religious dialogue in the political sphere, there has been little progress in this. In Turkey and in France secular western values have been imposed on their 'others' (such as Muslim women) just as colonial hegemony imposed European attitudes on their subjects, the 'others' they called 'natives'. For the next generations respectful and open dialogue between secularism

and religion, together with an ethical critique of social and political actions, are crucial global responsibilities with which education needs to engage.

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### Notes

1. For various cases around the world see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3476163.stm> (accessed 6 March 2006).
2. [http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article\\_id=716](http://www.forum18.org/Archive.php?article_id=716) (accessed 19 January 2006).
3. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3913335.stm> (accessed 16 May 2006).
4. Muslim girls unveil their fears ([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/this\\_world/4352171.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/this_world/4352171.stm)) (accessed 25 June 2005).
5. See, for example, the Court of Appeal case reported on <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4311193.stm> (accessed 6 March 2006). The House of Lords decision is reported at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4832072.stm> (accessed 16 May 2006).
6. *Role of women* (<http://www.amaana.org/ISWEB/woman.htm>) (accessed 27 February 2006).
7. *Viewpoints: Europe and the headscarf* (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/3459963.stm>).
8. The French versions were published in 1961, the year of his death from leukaemia, aged 36.
9. *Behind the burka* (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1284,559536,00.html>) (accessed 25 June 2005).
10. Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, <http://www.RAWA.org> (accessed 6 March 2006).

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