

**Clothed Bodies That Matter:
In Search of a Feminist Perspective on the
Headscarf Controversy**

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ABSTRACT

The following study tries to develop a new perspective on the headscarf controversy in Turkey. By relating the issue to the discussions of body in feminist theory and theories of clothing, it seeks to explore a new way of considering the age-old conflict from a perspective that takes the gendered aspect of it into account. The two campaigns about the issue in 2008's Turkey forms a particular focus of this study in the sense that they have a potential to help us overcome the conventional binary oppositions. The need for developing a more extensive feminist theory and a challenging feminist politics that derives from bodily issues becomes the consequent emphasis of this study.

ÖZET

Bu çalışma Türkiye'deki başörtüsü sorununa dair yeni bir bakış açısı geliştirmeyi deniyor. Konuyu feminist kuramın "beden" tartışmalarıyla ve giyinme kuramlarıyla ilişkilendirerek bu eski çatışmanın "toplumsal cinsiyetli" tarafını da hesaba katan bir bakış geliştirmenin yolunu arıyor. Türkiye'de 2008 yılında bu konuda yürütülmüş iki kampanya, basmakalıp ikili karşıtlıkları aşmamıza yardımcı olma potansiyelleri bağlamında, bu çalışmada özel bir odak noktası oluşturuyor. Bedene dair konulardan yola çıkarak daha kapsamlı bir feminist kuram ve zorlayıcı bir feminist politika geliştirme ihtiyacı da bu çalışmanın sonucunda bir vurgu olarak ortaya çıkmakta.

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Introduction

For the following study, my main concern will be the implications of clothing for the female body in general and more particularly the headscarf controversy in Turkey. While doing this, apart from the experience of political discussions in Turkey, I specifically want to incorporate theories of body and clothing prevalent in social and philosophical thought. I believe that trying to look at the issue from a feminist point of view, in the light of feminist theoreticians' discussions, will enable us to reclaim that the issue is not a gender-neutral one and free us from a gender-blind perspective that I believe what most of the current debates mischievously carry. The challenge of feminist theory has the enabling potential of pointing to the prevarication of the falsely constructed binarisms and I believe this will elucidate a new route to our headscarf issue at hand.

Thereupon, in what follows, I will first examine the approaches developed by feminist theory on the body and then try to relate these discussions to the controversies about clothing. After that, I will handle the current situation in Turkey with regard to the conflict about the headscarf and its implications. What does it mean for the women to put on or take off the scarf? What does the assent of the headscarf in public space connotates? Why it has turned out to be an unresolved conflict for decades? I will try to deal

with these kinds of questions in the light of the theories I have mentioned above, in search of a novel touch to the problem.

So far, since the dualist accounts of Cartesianism has been challenged by deconstruction, the binary of body and mind has been subjected to a serious critique by feminist thought. Body and bodily practices have taken a much more central position than they had before in social sciences. Yet, the body maintains its conflictual character and remains an ambiguous object of study.

When the issue at hand is body, it makes sense to focus on the feminist criticism of mind/body dualism. While the determination of male/female binarism is the main target in feminist criticism, it inevitably comes to question the supposedly irreducible fact of bodily being. There are of course different approaches to body within the feminist theorization too. Below, I will first try to give a brief idea of what those different approaches are enunciative of. After that, I will progress to relate those discussions to the issue of clothing.

In both of her famous works *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*, Judith Butler is arguing that the binarism of male and female is not a natural fact but these are categories that are constructed within the everyday performances of bodies in a hetero-normative tradition. In other words, her effort is towards taking the reality of our sex and gender not as ontologically given, but as constructions that can be deconstructed. Her main point is that

the body is more performative than biological. She rejects any essence of masculinity or femininity prevalent in the body and she suggests that gender is created through bodily performances. Performance is what materializes our corporeality, meaning that gender identity has no existence outside concrete performances and those performances re-enact symbolic law. Symbolic order invests power in the body through reiterations of a heterosexual discursive system which produces taboos and sanctions, sexualities that are excluded or admitted, thus bodies that matter or that does not matter.

Though Butler can be criticized for undermining the lived body because it is the discourse in her work that is addressed as materializing the body, it is clear that she gives an autonomy to language as a precondition of being. The idea of a discursive construction raises questions of agency and subject. But for Butler the brittleness of the linguistic dimension actually refers to a mutable social arena. For her, linguistic and social dimensions are difficult to separate. It can be stated that, after Butler's work we have to admit that the regulatory norms and discursive elements play a significant role in the construction of gendered bodies. But that does not mean that we also have to admit everything is happening in the symbolic realm. The body, as stated above, is not only a site of signification but it also interacts with the world and contributes to that signification too.

Elizabeth Grosz, in her *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*, tries to give an account of a material concept of body by

problematizing the distinctions between ‘physical exterior’ and ‘psychical interior’. The imaginary body and its objective reality always create tensions and subjects can never attain an ideal stable identity. In Grosz, the type of body that one has, definitely influences the lived experiences of masculinity and femininity. Since the body is written on by the patriarchal culture, the idea of a lived, material body conceptualized in Western thought is implicitly male oriented. Thus men can mistake themselves as devoid of their sexuality and identify with a disembodied mind and reason, leaving the women as synonymous with the body. Grosz defines the body as a set of potentialities that can be developed. However, these developments are not chosen consciously. Rather they are bodily habits and practices that exclude different possibilities. In a way this is similar to Butler’s view of a constructed body.

There are also theories that give more emphasis on lived experience rather than the symbolic law and discursive formation. In her *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*, Moira Gatens focuses on two main concerns, one of which is the philosophical representations of human embodiment. For Gatens, the problem of representation of women’s body has a metaphysical basis in Western thought but it can not be confined to the domain of metaphysics. Moral, social and political theory has material effects on how people conduct themselves ethically and politically. Her second major concern is how the resonances of imaginary understandings of body define the body politic and this in turn effects the legal, ethical and social existence of women. Gatens claims that women are closed out of the symbolic system

and the dominant imaginary body is the masculine one. Women can access the public sphere if they associate themselves with male capacities.

Authors like Martin, Hartsock and Young are all advancing the concept of the lived body through using communicative and productive body metaphors. They all share the common point that women's body is made inferior through experiences that incorporate a particular habitus leading to a specific gender performance. It requires considering various dimensions rather than tying it to only the symbolic level. So, an idea of the body which is both textual and material, proves to be a procreative one and feminist writers seem to have started a journey that we have to head off.

Taking the theories of the body as departure point, what can be said about clothing then? Admitting that the body is always a blurred object of investigation, putting the clothes on can be considered as nothing more than further complicating the issue. It is even not clear whether we should take dress as a part of the body or as a supplement of it, in Derridean sense. An unclothed body is regarded as lacking, or rather; dress is something that completes the body in a sense. It frames the boundaries of the body and thus has a definitive role for the self. But at the same time it is also one of the things that forms a connection between a subject and a collectivity. So our clothes both delimit us and unbound us.

Clothing can represent the projection of an ideal that one identifies with. Yet it can also represent the introjection of traditional codes and

conventions that one complies with. It cannot be seen as simply disciplining the body or as simply providing means of transgression. With all these potentials dress can be regarded as a deconstructive category that may help us in subverting the binary oppositions. It is both a part of the material being and has an independent character from it. Thus, it carries the potential of regulation and subversion too. Dress constructs a representation of subjectivity. If we take clothing as a supplement of the body, an investigation of how these representations are constructed and de-constructed may expose that there is no natural body. Since the corporeality is traditionally taken as a natural category this exposition may also expose that being natural, real or being complete are illusionary states that bear political implications.

In the light of the discussions above, which will be dealt with in more detail in the following chapters, I want to particularly focus on the headscarf controversy in Turkey.

When we consider the discussion above, it can be thought that the headscarf is putting on another layer of complication because it is a symbolically over-loaded piece of clothing in this context. Religious, political and personal implications of it bind up to construct a huge burden of meanings which make it difficult to deal with. Yet, this burden turns out to be carried only by the women who wear it rather than a mass of the population who produces it.

What do I mean by “symbolically overloaded”? What does it mean to wear a symbolized piece of dress? A particular way of covering the head has a long history of political struggle in Turkey. Nearly since the last decades of Ottoman Empire and from the beginning of the Turkish Republic to this day it has been forbidden either legally or implicitly to wear the turban or the headscarf in public space. A more detailed history of the headscarf controversy in Turkey will be given in following chapters. But what is important for my discussion here is that there is no voice in this debate but the two poles, “Islamist” and “Secularist”, both of which fostering the opposition and silencing the female voice.

Moreover, the division among women with regard to covering the head or not, makes their word disappear in this context of a double-edged sword. It seems that rather than accepting the division between modern and traditional women, devout and secular women, virtuous and non-virtuous women; realizing the different, localized and multiple forms of regulation determined by male-dominated ideologies and constructing a female solidarity that both encompasses and respects those determinations is the key to open the door for a more feminine voice.

In brief, putting the headscarf on turns the female body into an object of political resistance, creating further complexity for the discussions about body and clothing. However, investigating the process of how a piece of clothing carrying a burden of symbolic attributions transform the

perception of entire bodies in public space, may help us well in understanding the reason why “dress” or “clothing” is sometimes a discursive category integrated in the material being of the body and sometimes presented as independent from it. I hopefully suppose that my efforts will shed a modest light on the prevailing theories of body in feminist thought by analysing a specific case of how female bodies are divided and re-united over clothing issues.

Chapter-1: How bodies come to matter

It has been a while since the tendency to ignore the body or to render it subordinate has become weaker in social sciences. Since the challenge of Cartesian mind/body dualism by deconstructionist critique has reached its pinnacle in the last decades, we are faced with a novel conception of body and bodily being. Now, the issue of “body”, its supposed distinction from the mind, the relation of gender and bodily performances moved to a more central position in humanities as a field of inquiry. However, while the corporeality is gaining the urgency it deserved, it still maintains its conflictual character, formed between various approaches attempting to construe the concept.

What I mean by conflictual character is mainly the difficulty of handling the body resulting from both having one and being one. The body emerges as both a producer and a product, as both a space and the vehicle to transform that space, as both a saying and the site. It simultaneously produces and transmits meaning. Thus it always remains blurred as an object of investigation and attempts to clarify the debate prove to be lacking one dimension in some way.

The main challenge to the traditional mind/body dualism can be considered as coming from feminism in both theoretical and political senses. Feminist criticism, aiming first at the binarism of male and female, consequently comes to question the irreducible fact of bodily being. Feminist theoreticians and writers have been criticizing western metaphysics for years

as a sexed system of thought. Different points of criticism with similar bases coming from different disciplines like philosophy, sociology, political science, psychoanalysis etc. were developed. A considerable amount of those challenges are focused on the issue of body. The history of western thought shaped by Cartesian dualism, place the body as inferior to mind and thus identifying it with “nature”, natural difference, unreason and femininity, allowing the male reason to define itself as superior. Obviously, it is not a coincidental allocation of concepts but the sexist characteristic of Western reason that positions one of the terms in a supposed binary opposition as the negation of the other. The primary term, the “mind” in this context, can only define itself in opposition to, or by elimination of the second one, which is the “body”. Thus, rationality establishes itself through an exclusion of body which is considered as exceptional, dependent, and disruptive, in need of direction and control. This opposition in correlation with many other binary pairs operates in a way that degrades femininity and associates it negative values and connotations. Coupling of the male with the mind and the female with the body problematizes women as knowable objects of inquiry, offsetting the male as the knowing subject.

This distinction separates the private and public roles of both sexes, differentiates their cultural capacities and determines their social and economic powers while shaping the perception of the potentials of different bodies. A culturally shaped discourse on “natural differences” also shape the perspectives on capacities and potentials of male and female bodies,

excluding the ones that are not compliant with either of the forms and place themselves in a spectrum in between.

It is the challenge of feminist thought, as mentioned above, that scratches out these distinctions and the whole system of thought, by both its existence and its content. Through the agency of feminist thought and criticism, we can luckily voice that the discourse and the perception of bodies in general and specific bodies in particular are shaped by and inside a setup that is determined socially, economically and culturally. The idea that the limits of the body is designated within a discursive construction and it is “real”ized as far as it is practiced, reminds us that these discourses are not stable and absolute.

Yet there are also different approaches to body within the feminist camp of thought as well. As stated by Elizabeth Grosz in the first chapter of her *Volatile Bodies; Feminists have exhibited a wide range of attitudes and reactions to conceptions of the body and attempts to position it at the center of political action and theoretical production.* (Grosz, 1994)

Feminist reconfigurations of the body depart from a position of acknowledgement rather than a disregard, dominant in mainstream and male-stream configurations. Some of them take into consideration the centrality of the materiality while others posit a textual corporeality, questioning its given “natural”ness. Thus, the post-Cartesian context that takes body as a fixed biological entity, a well-ordered and functional machine, is deprived of its

grounds by deconstructing the mind-body split, which associates the devalued term with the feminine.

Where the body is viewed through conventional biological and racial taxonomies that make appeal to a given nature, it is taken for granted that sexual and racial difference are inherent qualities of the corporeal, and, moreover, that male and female bodies, black and white bodies, may each respectively fit a universal category. In terms of sex, the actual occurrence of bodily forms that are not self-evidently of either sex is conveniently overlooked in the interests of establishing a set of powerful gendered norms to which all bodies are supposed to approximate without substantial variation. ... Thus women themselves are, in the conventional masculinist imagination, not simply inferior beings whose civil and social subordination is both inevitable and justified, but objects of fear and repulsion. Coincident with its marginalisation, the devalued body is capable of generating deep ontological anxiety.(Price & Shildrick, 1999)

Price & Shildrick, in the introductory chapter to their co-edited reader on feminist theory and body, clearly and briefly define the characteristics of these various approaches in the history of feminism as varying from biologism to feminist postmodernism.

In consequence, feminism has from the start been deeply concerned with the body either as something to be rejected in the pursuit of intellectual equality according to a masculinist standard, or as something to be reclaimed as the very essence of the female. A third, more recent alternative, largely associated with feminist postmodernism, seeks to emphasize the importance and inescapability of embodiment as a differential and fluid construct, the site of potential, rather than as a fixed given.(Price & Shildrick, 1999)

The beginning of the second wave feminism was characterised by a kind of idea that implicitly accepts the superiority of a “disembodied” subject by claiming that it was as attainable to women as to men, if women could free

themselves from the oppressive conditionings of their biology, such as menstruation, reproductory functions, nursing, etc. That is why a great deal of discussions is hold around female sexuality and reproductive technologies.

Such somataphobia, which to an extent mimics the masculinist fear and rejection of the body, is widely evident in emergent feminist theory, but at the same time the body became a central focus of more practical concerns, which in turn led to a more positive theorization. (Price & Shildrick, 1999)

Writers such as bell hooks, Angela Davis, Patricia Hill Collins opened the way for “*a theory of embodiment that could take account not simply of sexual difference but of racial difference, class difference, and differences due to disability; in short the specific contextual materiality of the body.*”(Price & Shildrick, 1999). Those were also the ones who threw the seeds for developing critical views of the second wave, in the sense that it originated from the concerns of upper-middle class, white, western women. This in turn brings up the excluded bodies to the foreground.

When the focus on discursivity arises, Luce Irigaray should be mentioned as the foremost representative of post-structuralist feminism. Although she is harshly criticized for reiterating the discourse of heteronormative anatomical differences between sexes while trying to revalue femininity, her efforts to redefine the femininity in a culture where a masculinist disembodiment is in charge is meaningful and influential.

For many critics, such as Moi (1985) and Weedon (1987), Irigaray's own method is uncomfortably essentialist and ahistorical, appearing to play into the hands of those for whom

existing social relations are determined by a fixed and differential biology. But hers is not a 'real' biology, so much as the discursive reconfiguring of a contested terrain that takes on board the force of psychic investments, notably that of desire. (Price & Shildrick, 1999)

Putting psychoanalysis into play is another element in feminist theories of the body that further complicates the interplay between text and materiality. This is especially more obvious in the writings of Elizabeth Grosz and Judith Butler, who contemplate the body as an active process, never fixed, stable and solid.

I will try to focus more on the ideas of Grosz and Butler in the following lines since I believe that their theories are more effective in the sense that the way they approach the body enables also the questioning of the other discursive and cultural constructions. Butler is more specifically criticized in terms of focusing too much on discourse, resulting in an abstraction of and a distance from materiality of the body. But as it is stated by Price & Shildrick again:

To say that the body is a discursive construction is not to deny a substantial corpus, but to insist that our apprehension of it, our understanding of it, is necessarily mediated by the *contexts* in which we speak. As Judith Butler succinctly puts it: 'there is no reference to a pure body which is not at the same time a further formation of that body' (1993: 10). It is then the forms of materialisation of the body, rather than the material itself, which is the concern of a feminism that must ask always what purpose and whose interests do particular constructions serve. And what that question entails is the recognition that if the body itself is not a determinate given, then the political and social structures that take it as such are equally open to transformation. Moreover, it is not simply that we can vary the

meaning and significance of the body, but that the very notion of 'the' body is untenable. (Price & Shildrick, 1999)

I agree with the idea that looking at the context and the process of materialisation, rather than the material itself is more fundamental, when this process is considered as shaping our views of the material.

Grosz' main aim in her *Volatile Bodies* is to refigure the body in order to place it at the center of analysis "*as the very "stuff" of subjectivity.*"

The wager is that all the effects of subjectivity, all the significant facets and complexities of subjects, can be as adequately explained using the subject's corporeality as a framework as it would be using consciousness or the unconscious.(Grosz, 1994)

She clearly states that she denies there is a "real" body on one hand and its representations as the effects of cultural and historical context on the other. What she claims is that those representations literally constitute bodies. Bodies are also not passive, inert surfaces; they interact productively. This ability of bodies to extend the framework by producing what is unpredictable also enables us to interrogate sexual difference. Since this question of sexual difference infects all knowledge and practices, by asking *the* question, it becomes possible to problematize "*the universalist and universalizing assumptions of humanism, through which women's -and all other groups'-specificities, positions and histories are rendered irrelevant or redundant.*"

Grosz gives a brief but very useful analysis of traditional understandings of the body in philosophy and then adds upon this the

discussions in feminist thought. For her the uncritical adoption of the assumptions of Western reason on the role of the body is a complicity in misogyny. Thus she not only criticizes western philosophy but also feminist versions of dualism as well. The dualism of mind and body in correlation with many other binary pairs subordinates one of the terms as the negation of the other.

These terms function implicitly to define body in nonhistorical, naturalistic, organicist, passive, inert terms, seeing it as an intrusion on or interference with the operation of mind, a brute givenness which requires overcoming, a connection with animality and nature that needs transcendence. Through these associations, the body is coded in terms that are themselves traditionally devalued.(Grosz, 1994)

This is of course associated with sexual difference and accounts for the refusal and exclusion of femininity in philosophy as a discipline as well. Grosz dwells upon the “somatophobia” in philosophy since ancient Greece and expressly states a brief sketch of its key features. The “unabridgeable gulf between mind and matter” established by Cartesian dualism can be held responsible for “the modern forms of elevation of consciousness” according to Grosz. She defines three different ways of considering the body as the heirs of Cartesianism and as “*the kinds of conceptions that feminist theory needs to move beyond in order to challenge its own investments in the history of philosophy*” (Grosz, 1994). The first one is the body regarded as an object for natural sciences, understood in terms of organic functioning and posited as merely physical to the opposite of humanities that reduce the body to an

inorganic matter. Grosz emphasizes their common refusal to acknowledge complexities of a body that both constructs and is constructed. The second perspective is regarding the body as a tool controlled by consciousness, as a possession of will, requiring discipline and conditioning. And in the third place, she also criticizes the consideration of the body as a medium, a vehicle of expression. This view regards body as passive and transparent carrier, a threshold between social and natural that is knowable and non-constitutive. These three views need to be transgressed by feminist theory in order not to participate in the devaluing of the body.

To bypass the Cartesian tradition of dualism Grosz proposes to bring Spinoza's monism to the foreground. Spinoza's basic assumption is that there is an absolute singular substance that is infinite and nondivisible. Thus the body and mind become the different aspects of one and the same substance, equally dependent and complementary. This monist account of Spinoza is considered to be more compatible with a feminist apprehension and carries the potential of resolving the difficulties between dominant theory and feminist theory. After a discussion on Spinoza's relevant notions, Grosz concludes that non-Cartesian accounts by Spinoza, Foucault, Deleuze and some others may indicate a more useful ground for feminist purposes and she herself prefers to follow that path.

Grosz makes an efficient attempt to discuss the range of feminist attitudes and reactions to the conceptions of the body. Her categories are not

fixed and solid, yet she still tries to clarify the differing views. The first category of egalitarian feminism, including de Beauvoir, Firestone, Wollstonecraft and some other liberal feminists, see the particularities of the female body as a limitation for women's access to rights or as a unique means of access to knowledge. But both sides seem to admit the patriarchal assumptions about the female body implicitly; biology requires transformation. The second category she cites is social constructionism. Feminists in this group do not see the body as an obstacle as a biological entity but emphasize ideological factors that shape social views of the biological. Grosz claims that:

For constructionists, the sex/gender opposition, which is a recasting of the distinction between the body, or what is biological and natural, and the mind, or what is social and ideological, is still operative. (Grosz, 1994)

Thus for them biology or sex is a fixed category and transformations can occur at the level of gender. Change in attitudes and beliefs can provide equality.

Grosz's third category is feminists who defend sexual difference, such as Irigaray, Cixous, Gatens, Butler, Wittig and many others. They no longer hold the view that body is an ahistorical, acultural object. They are more concerned with the *lived body* and its representations. They refuse dualism and are suspicious of the sex/gender distinction.

The body is regarded as the political, social and cultural object par excellence, not a product of a raw, passive nature that is

civilized, overlaid, polished by culture. The body is a cultural interweaving and production of nature.(Grosz, 1994)

What she herself proposes after discussing a whole variety of views of the body is that there is always particularities, only specific types and no generalizations can be made. If any“body” becomes the ideal model for all other types then this domination can be overcome by defending the multiplicity of bodies and subjectivities. It is almost impossible to disagree with Grosz when she underlines the importance of a retheorization of the relation between body and mind so that its contributions to the knowledge systems and cultural production could be understood. She very clearly puts that:

Bodies are always irreducibly sexually specific, necessarily interlocked with racial, cultural and class particularities. This interlocking, though, can not occur by way of intersection (the gridlike model presumed by structural analysis, in which the axes of class, race and sex are conceived as autonomous structures which then require external connections with the other structures) but by way of mutual constitution.(Grosz, 1994)

For a different analysis of the body that a feminist philosophy would ideally take into consideration, for the criteria that should govern a feminist theoretical approach Grosz has six propositions. Obviously the first one is to avoid dichotomous accounts of the person which divide the subject into mutually exclusive categories of body and mind, refusing reductionism and resisting dualism. Second is the association of corporeality with not just one sex so that sex is not reduced to a trivial and minor variation. Third is refusing singular models based on one type of body as the norm, excluding and

judging all the others. Fourth is avoiding essentialism just as dualism and reading body as a product of social, political and geographical traces, as a cultural product. Fifth; demonstrating the interaction between the biological and the psychological and giving the psychical and social dimensions their place in a reconceptualization. And the last one is that rather than participating in one side or the other of a binary pair, problematizing them. The body is both private and public, self and other, natural and cultural, psychical and social.

Another proponent of similar views on body, whom we can not proceed without mentioning is, of course, Judith Butler. In her famous work, *Bodies That Matter* Butler asks crucial questions about the materiality of the body, sex and gender. Her main question is “Which bodies come to matter—and why?” She regards the notion of construction as a “constitutive constraint” that produces the domain of intelligible bodies as well as unthinkable, unlivable, abject bodies. These are not the opposites but rather the latter is an excluded and illegible domain that founds the limits of the intelligibility; it is the former’s “constitutive outside”. Through rendering unthinkable domains of bodies “*those that do not matter in the same way*”, the terms that constitute the necessary domain of bodies are defined.

In the first place Butler brings forth the question of the materiality of “sex”.

The category of "sex" is, from the start, normative; it is what Foucault has called a "regulatory ideal." In this sense, then, "sex" not only functions as a norm, but is part of a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs, that is, whose regulatory force is made clear as a kind of productive power, the power to produce—demarcate, circulate, differentiate—the bodies it controls. Thus, "sex" is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled, and this materialization takes place (or fails to take place) through certain highly regulated practices. In other words, "sex" is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time. (Butler, 1993)

For Butler, this forcible reiteration of norms, through which materialization is achieved, shows that this materialization is never complete. Instead, this process comes to question that regulatory law since those instabilities, what she calls “the possibilities for rematerialization” are opened up, that turn the force of the law against itself. This view incorporates the notion of “performativity” as a citational practice. Performance of those regulatory norms of sex constitutes the materiality of bodies as the effect of power.

"Sex" is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the "one" becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility.(Butler, 1993)

This reformulation enables considering bodies as dynamic and sex as a non-given but a cultural norm. Thus the subject can be said to be formed by going through a process of assuming sex, rather than appropriating a bodily norm. As the result of a link found between this process of assuming a sex and the question of identification (mainly, certain sex identifications enabled by heterosexual imperative) other identifications come to be disavowed.

Subjects are formed by an exclusionary matrix and the excluded “abject” forms the constitutive outside for the subject. This abjected outside is indeed “*inside*” the subject as its own founding repudiation”.

The abject designates here precisely those "unlivable" and "uninhabitable" zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject, but whose living under the sign of the "unlivable" is required to circumscribe the domain of the subject.(Butler, 1993)

Parallel to this argumentation, Butler claims that a persistence of critical *disidentification* is crucial to the “*rearticulation of democratic contestation*” since the regulatory norms materialize themselves through a disavowal of disidentifications.

She criticizes the Lacanian parlance in the sense that it creates an expectation of a subject before its sex. Butler, to the contrary, claims that the assumption of sex is constrained from the beginning and the agency is to be found in and by that constrained appropriation. A set of appropriated actions that cites the hetero-normative regulatory laws produces the material effect. Thus performativity is a reiteration of a set of *historically revisable* norms that conceals itself as a repetition of conventions.

Indeed, could it be that the production of the subject as originator of his/her effects is precisely a consequence of this dissimulated citationality? Further, if a subject comes to be through a subjection to the norms of sex, a subjection which requires an assumption of the norms of sex, can we read that "assumption" as precisely a modality of this kind of citationality? (Butler, 1993)

The law of sex can be idealized as law only to the extent that it is reiterated; it is produced and reproduced through citation. Thus Lacan's concept of assumption can be exposed to a critical reading as attributing *a priori* power to an ideal and power derives from the attribution itself. Butler calls this a constitutive constraint, a paradox that the "*subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms*".

If we admit such a reformulation of performativity, then we can conclude that the discourse in which the materiality of sex is delimited produces a domain of excluded bodies. Thus, as well as how and to what extent bodies are constructed we also have to think how and to what extent bodies are not constructed. And Butler states:

Here, two concerns of social and political significance emerge: (1) if identificatory projections are regulated by social norms, and if those norms are construed as heterosexual imperatives, then it appears that normative heterosexuality is partially responsible for the kind of form that contours the bodily matter of sex; and (2) given that normative heterosexuality is clearly not the only regulatory regime operative in the production of bodily contours or setting the limits to bodily intelligibility, it makes sense to ask what other regimes of regulatory production contour the materiality of bodies. (Butler, 1993)

Butler asks how and why this materiality is perceived as a sign of irreducibility. The materiality of sex is understood as something that cannot be a construction but how and why it is excluded from the process of construction is one of the main questions of Butler throughout her whole work.

In an interview, with the effort to clarify the status of Butler's work and its claims, Meijer and Prins reveal that "*her prime concerns are not those of the "conceptually pure" philosopher but of a theorist in a much more political and strategic vein.*" (Meijer & Prins, 1998:2) Butler admits this kind of definition that her work can be read as a political fiction. She emphasizes that reformulating bodies differently is a part of the conceptual and philosophical struggle that feminism involves and it is also related to questions of survival since she herself tries to imagine against the legitimation of certain ontological claims.

Meijer and Prins capture the argument of the book as showing the constitutive character of discursive constructions and the conditions under which material bodies come into being. As a response, Butler suggests that the book seeks to understand "*why the essentialism/constructivism debate founders on a paradox that is not easily or, indeed, not ever overcome*", which is no prior materiality is accessible without the means of discourse, as well as no discourse can ever capture that prior materiality. During the conversation Butler also underscores that those grammars can only be countered through inhabiting them in a dissonant way. By repetition and resignification, by exploiting and restaging them, opposition can be worked from within the terms themselves. Consonant with her notion of performativity, she performs a performative contradiction on purpose, that is "*to confound the conceptually proper philosopher and to pose a question about the secondary and derivative status of ontology.*"

She resists giving concrete examples of her idea of “abject bodies” since she believes that abjection is conferred through typologies, yet still states that it cannot be limited to sex and heteronormativity. Whenever there is a differential production or materialization of the human, there is also a production of the abject. So the abject is not unintelligible, unlivable, unthinkable; it does have a discursive life as a shadowy figure. But if concrete examples are given, then they become fixed and normative and begin to produce their own exclusions. Abjection is a discursive process. However, putting the discursive construction on the one hand and the lived body on the other is not the thing Butler fancies. She thinks that discourses actually live in bodies and no body can survive without being carried by discourse.

So, if you were to say to me, "the veiled woman," do we mean in Iran? Do we mean a woman of a certain class? In what context, for what purpose? What is the action, what is the practice that we are thinking about? In what context are we trying to decide whether or not the veiled woman is an example of the abject? What I worry about is that, in certain cases, we would see that as an abjection: in the sense that this woman is literally not allowed to show her face and hence enter into the public domain of faced humans. On another level, however, we might say that we as Westerners are misrecognizing a certain cultural artifact, a certain cultural and religious instrument that has been a traditional way for women to exert power. This particular debate over the veil has plagued feminist debates. (Meijer & Prins, 1998:2)

This example explains her resistance to concrete examples and her clinging to the theory. She clearly stresses the importance of the context when appropriating an abstract idea to a concrete situation. But apart from that and more importantly upon the example of the debate over Islamic veil she calls

normativity in general into question. In the light of this discussion then it becomes possible to ask which bodies count as proper and which ones do not. Which ones are classified and named and which ones are unclassifiable as improper? Abjection appears again. Butler also cites it as an interesting problem for an historian “*to do a history of that which was never supposed to be possible*”.

* * *

As for our focus and concern, why were all those theoretical discussions of proficient thinkers revised here? What do they tell us resultantly? What lies beneath such a selection and ordering of all those argumentations?

The resulting framework provides a meaningful ground for our discussion. The proposals of Grosz about resisting dualism and essentialism, her emphasize on multiplicity and variety against norms, Butler’s focus on the limits of an unconstructed materiality, her notion of a constitutive outside, her idea of performativity that disrupts the regulatory norms from within and her idea of abject bodies that live within discourse as the unlivable, unintelligible in order to found the limits of the intelligible, leave us a fertile land to grow our thoughts on. What all this has to do with our main subject, clothing, will make its appearance as we move on through the discussions in the following chapters.

What I particularly want to raise here is a question about whether the bodies mentioned in those discussions are naked bodies. The “body” that we conceive of in daily life is not naked. Though it can be literally naked occasionally, those can be considered as exceptional moments in a discursive conceptualization. Moreover, our clothes fundamentally make our sexual identification, or disidentification, visible to public before the biological materiality of our bodies. Of course, those extensive theories comprehend a broader area and clothing is just one emphasis that would demarcate a narrower part of it. But still, I believe it is one of the most important blind-spots that we have to shed more light on since a discussion on clothing would reveal all the blurred boundaries defined by dualism one more time in a deconstructive manner. That is what I will try to do in the next chapter.

As a conclusion, it can be easily stated that the approach to the body reveals much more than its own content. It takes on an important role in disclosing the different facets of a sexed system of thought. Thus the potential limit of this discussion is wider than it seems. Notions like difference, equality, identity, democracy, violence and many others that we can think of can be traced upon the debates about body. In the light of Grosz and Butler, I believe that we have the main directions towards the revelation of different modes of possibility that transgress the conventional lines. But still, we have to reconsider and appropriate our direction in the crossroads.

Chapter-2: How clothes come to matter

“CLOTH is a social tissue. By means of its convenient sheathing we move among one another freely, smoothly, and in peace, when without it such association would be impossible. The more solitary we live, the less we think of clothing; the more we crowd and mingle in “society,” the more we think of it.”¹

Although the challenging critique of feminism to traditional western thought has a comprehensive scope, very few of those works focus on dress

¹ Gilman, Chorlotte Perkins. “Prefatory note”, The dress of women : a critical introduction to the symbolism and sociology of clothing, ed. Michael R. Hill and Mary Jo Deegan. Greenwood Press, 2002. Westport, CT. p.3

and clothing the body. Clothing, especially customs and traditions about dress, is usually the subject of anthropological field works. Or it is rather the studies on fashion theory that take dress itself as an object of study.

The study of dress in context of fashion studies seem to be gradually becoming a more interdisciplinary space, incorporating sociology, history, psychology or cultural studies; whereas anthropological accounts focus usually on non-western societies. Very few among them, consider dress from a perspective in relation to the theories of body. A huge collection of discussions on body rarely ever consider clothing directly as a separate issue even though they make indirect implications on clothing practices. Dress or fashion studies does not stem from feminist considerations of body too. In brief, theories of body and discussions of dress are rarely interconnected.

However, vestimentary codes and regulations have a strong connection to bodily practices and gender identities. Contrary to the existent aspect of the theoretical situation, this relation between body and dress is a powerful and self-evident one. Apart from a few specific contexts, the body, when contemplated, is rarely considered as naked. When we talk or write about body in daily life we usually mean the “clothed” body. Thus, as well as the body itself, the clothes we put on it deserve a much deeper reflection and elaboration. An account of the body without dress will always be an insufficient one.

We know that clothes have the potential either to represent or deny a position with regard to social roles. Clothing can operate as a controlling force on the body that represses it, such as uniforms, or they may help to claim the freedom of body, such as the act of bra-burning of 1960s. It can both divide and unite bodies in order to construct or deconstruct a collectivity. While they are thought to be defining the individual's individuality, separating it from a collectivity, they also make one an integrated part of the same collectivity at the same time by creating a representation of the self. If the process that defines a "self" can be said to be "abjection" in a sense, then clothes have a particular characteristic of both excluding and calling on that abject other. Hence clothing implicitly supports the idea that self is constructed simultaneously with its "other" as a constitutive outside. This characteristic of dress that infringes the boundaries of definitions emphasizes the ambiguity of discussions on body. While the body is both the producer and the product of 'sense', dress works as a dominant contributor and challenger in this process either by determining, supporting or disrupting it.

In many of the discussions the division between body and clothing is constructed in a similar way with regard to the binarism of nature and culture. The relation of clothing to the body is taken to be similar to the relation of culture to nature. Dress, which can obviously be considered as a cultural fact indeed, is completely identified with what is cultural. This turns out to be a reiteration of the age-old binary opposition of nature/culture. However, it becomes possible for us to reconsider this kind of divisions in a

deconstructive manner one more time when we take into account that these oppositions that are constructed with a similar logic and taken for granted, have a contradictory overlap. The Cartesian logic behind the division of nature and culture divides the concepts of femininity and masculinity in the same way, giving “femininity” its place on the side of ‘nature’ whereas masculinity is written on the side of ‘culture’. But it is the obvious contradiction of this same Cartesian logic that stands out when body/dress division operates in a different way. It is the female body and thus ‘natural femininity’ that has to be dressed in order to count as ‘cultural’. Thus dress, or rather the dressed body, which counts as ‘cultural’ in one of the oppositions is at the same time the ‘natural’ of the other opposition. This contradictory overlap opens the way for a careful reconsideration of those binary oppositions. What enables this kind of an interrogation is the inevitable relation of dress to the body. When discussions of dress are separated from the body and taken solely as an outer form it becomes easy to make distinctions and draw concrete lines. But once we consider clothing as a bodily practice in relation to the presentation and representation of a subject’s self, complexities and complications begin to arise, the strict lines begin to blur, and the ground we stand on begins to shake. Since we both have bodies and we are bodies as Turner has stated (1985: 1), and since we always appear to be dressed bodies in daily life (though what counts as dress varies according to contexts) dress has to be reconsidered as a bodily practice situated in actual daily practices.

A similar view can be traced in Jacques Derrida's talk at the third Cerisy-la-Salle conference in July 1997; titled "The animal that therefore I am (More to follow)". Derrida dwells upon the strict limits drawn between humanity and animality and relates this to a violent conception of a "wholly other". He mentions that the feeling of nudity is peculiar to human beings and animals cannot be naked as they are always already naked "... *without the slightest inkling of being so.*"

There is no nudity "in nature." There is only the sentiment, the affect, the (conscious or unconscious) experience of existing in nakedness. Because it is naked, without existing in nakedness, the animal neither feels nor sees itself naked. And it therefore is not naked. At least that is what is thought. (Derrida, 2002)

What is shame if one can be modest only by remaining immodest, and vice versa. Man could never become naked again because he has the sense of nakedness, that is to say of modesty or shame. The animal would be in non-nudity because it is nude, and man in nudity to the extent that he is no longer nude. There we encounter a difference, a time or contretemps between two nudities without nudity. This contretemps has only just begun doing us harm [mal], in the area of the science of good and evil. (Derrida, 2002)

In this talk Derrida specifically criticizes the immanent violence of drawing concrete lines between culture and nature out of the distinction between human and animal and one of the buttresses of this critique is the definition of nudity and feeling of modesty or shame. The implications of this definition, or rather the act of defining concrete limits (between what is "animal" and what is "human") give us clues about the process of defining

“self” upon the “other”. Is it the sense of modesty and shame of nudity that separates human from animal, thus culture from nature? If clothing forms a hierarchical prerogative then the different ways of clothing may also form a parallel hierarchization, containing in itself the violence that Derrida mentions.

Below I will try to handle a discussion on dress as a bodily practice that has a corrosive effect on the effort of defining the limits. It both defines the body by sexing, classifying, ordering it and also extends its limits by referring to the collective other, taking this “other” into account, carrying it on the body itself. By reflecting upon the potentials and confines of the discourse of dress, I will try to develop a new perspective on the idea of “clothed body”. I believe that the interaction between the discourses of body and the discourses on dress will provide a more extended space for us to reconsider the existing apprehensions of body. It has to be reminded here that when I use the words “dress”, “dressing”, “clothing”, “clothes” I will be referring to the mundane, ordinary practices of clothing that encompass any kind of individual activity which involves putting something on the body, either a pair of well-worn pants or a pair of Calvin Klein jeans. Fashion system, fashionable items etc, are not out of question here, but it should be noted that there is a serious distinction between the focus of this chapter and the idea of fashion which has always something to do with trends, consumption, lifestyles etc. What I try to do is rather take clothing as a bodily act that further complicates the limits and potentials of the body because it is

situated in a system of culture which also shapes the body. As discussed in the preceding chapter, after revealing the heteronormatively sexed character of this system, defining dress in a particular way creates ideal types, models that are taken as norms that define itself through a “constitutive outside” that is excluded. Taken as a bodily act, dress has the potential to reveal those discursive constructions built especially upon the female body. I will try to review various writers’ discussions on the subject by focusing on their implications in that sense.

The quote at the beginning from Gilman’s “The dress of women: a critical introduction to the symbolism and sociology of clothing” which was originally published as a series of articles in 1915 and was edited as a book in 2002, summarizes the main idea quite simply but deeply at the same time. Those lines above are the opening sentences of the book which goes on to discuss the matter in a rather simplistic but detailed way. As can be understood from the titles of the chapters, such as “Primary Motives in Clothing”, “Physical Health and Beauty”, “Beauty versus Sex Distinction”, “Larger Economic Considerations”, “The Force Called Fashion” obviously handle the main aspects of the issue. As a text written in the beginning of the 20th century, one of the first to bring up the discussion as a separate title, it makes reductions to some extent and fails to give a comprehensive account at some points. However, as a point of departure, Gilman can be considered as giving the primary clues. She takes protection and warmth as the origin behind the clothing motives. Then comes, decoration, modesty and

symbolism in order of appearance, according to her. Upon a comparison with animals, she claims that protection and warmth is the nearly same in both animals and humans. Decoration also has a similarity with the “nature”. But modesty and symbolism are complete human inventions. Modesty is a concept she uses for women’s concern of dress.

We mean by modesty a form of sex-consciousness, especially peculiar to woman. For a maiden to blush and cast down her eyes when a man approaches her is an instance of this “modesty.” It shows that she knows he is a male and she is a female, and her manner calls attention to the fact. If she met him clear-eyed and indifferent, as if she was a boy, or he was a woman, this serene indifference is not at all “modest.”

So “modesty” in dress, as applied to that of women, consists in giving the most conspicuous prominence of femininity. (Gilman, 2002)

She makes a clear distinction between clothes of men and women as the former is designed more symbolically, whereas the latter mostly takes modesty; “*a form of sex-consciousness*” as the primary motive. The parts of the body that is included in a discourse of modesty may vary according to different societies and cultures, but whatever those parts are; the rules apply to women and not men. The examples she uses for supporting her idea is from the housewives clothing of cotton since it is a flammable item not suitable for their work in kitchen, which is the place women spend most of their time in the house. She degrades the long riding skirts on the basis of hiding women’s body and sex distinction.

That baseless, brainless, useless, deadly idiocy, the long riding skirt and side saddle for women, is well on the road to

extinction. To acknowledge the fact that women have two legs is no longer considered an indecency, and as they are set wider on the pelvis it is recognized that they are even better adapted for riding cross-saddle than are the narrowerhipped other sex. (Gilman, 2002)

From many examples like the one above, it is clear that Gilman criticizes a presumed sex distinction and the regulations of clothing according to a presumption like that. The examples she uses may seem outdated for us today. Her compartmentalization of the issue into titles such as “Beauty versus Sex Distinction”, “The Force Called Fashion”, “Economic Considerations” etc may sound insufficient for us after nearly one century. Nevertheless, the main idea behind her critique may still count as useful. A presumed sex distinction and a consideration of clothes from that kind of conscious still seem to be valid today.

In fact, it would not be improper to argue that dress determines our perception of sex before the sexual organs. It is the first thing that one is able to perceive in terms of distinguishing sexual orientation. Butler’s notion of performativity as a citational practice, as described in previous chapter, can be helpful to understand the fundamentality and the potential of dress in this sense. The notion of performativity is the key for questioning the regulatory law by showing the possibilities of a re-materialization. As such, dressing can be considered as a form of performance that can potentially contribute to this process of re-materialization. Choices of dress may either conform to or diverge from the beaten track. The simplest example can be the color choice in baby’s clothing. Cross-dressing or the clothing of a transsexual or a

transvestite can be mentioned as more complicated examples of how dress constitutes a fundamental reframing.

As stated in the beginning of this chapter, what we have today is a consideration of clothing issues from the perspective of fashion studies or from anthropological or historical accounts. While the anthropological field studies may provide useful accounts of practical issues from different parts of the world, they rather focus on specific contexts and practices which usually arrive at conclusions specific to that particular context, some of them related to more generalized, more comprehensive analyses, but mostly carrying the risk of taking the “Western style” as the norm. For the purpose of limiting my discussion I prefer not to indulge in those detailed accounts of specific cases. On the other hand, studies on fashion theory which rarely incorporate theories of body since they stem from a different kernel of considerations provide a better foundation plate to build a discussion on.

Patrizia Calefato, in her book “The Clothed Body” (2004) defines her aim as exploring a phenomenology of dress in contemporary reality. She takes clothes as transformers of the body’s “natural”ness, which contrasts with what is emphasized in Derrida’s talk mentioned above.

A garment exposes the body to a continuous transformation, organizing in signs – that is, in culture – what the natural world possesses as mere potential, as the tendency of the sensible to become significant. Even though we may not often think about it, dressing has to do with feeling pleasure and with recognizing that such pleasure consists in transforming nature, in ‘working’ it semiotically. (Calefato, 2004)

Dress disrupts the norms of nature by “‘writing’ *the body and writing on the body*”. This idea of “writing” obviously relates the issue to a kind of language metaphor which she deals with in more detail.

Though Calefato seems willing to consider the issue from a perspective that assumes a strict distinction between what is natural and what is cultural, hers is still a unique and useful effort to comprehend dress as a distinct (but still a dependant) subject matter.

In her effort to examine dress in relation to language and communication, she departs from a quote from Wittgenstein:

Language disguises the thought, so that from the external form of the clothes one cannot infer the form of the thought they clothe, because the external form of the clothes is constructed with quite another object than to let the form of the body be recognized (Wittgenstein, 1922: Proposition 4.002) (Calefato, 2004)

Dress forms a surface that clothes the depths of thought. If language can be considered as a sign system rather than a verbal one, clothing functions in just the same way, “*as a kind of ‘syntax’, according to a set of more or less constant rules*”. (Calefato, 2004) They create and convey social meaning as being the signs in a particular system of rules and regulations. Thus being a subject requires recognizing the specific function of clothes to convey a specific meaning. Though this can be admitted, what is lacking in Calefato’s analysis can be considered as the interrogation of the subject’s free will to

choose the clothes. We can easily state that it involves a much more complicated process for the subject to construct “subjectivity”.

Examining dress as a kind of language gives us a wider perspective to reflect upon. Clothes as signs that convey a particular meaning in particular contexts may indeed provide a meaningful analysis. However, we have to take into account some other consequences that language metaphor entails. If we admit that clothes operate in a similar system with regard to language, we also have to acknowledge that the body then becomes the terrain upon which a system of references is built. The meaning of a sign-image is always determined by its position in relation to other sign-images, with its difference from the others. Thus this difference which produces meaning is always relational in a system of references; and this results in an impossible effort to fix it. So, what do we get if the same process is viable for dress in a metaphor of language and communication? To what extent can we interpret clothes as sign images that *have* a meaning? Is it ever possible to fix their symbolic meaning? While the body, as the very ground for the syntax of the clothes’ language in this analysis, is itself a complicated subject matter for the language to define, never having a fixed meaning, how can we build one more stratum upon it? If the relationality of the language system can be replaced with the clothes relation to body, then where do we locate in this analysis the social and cultural context in which the body constructs its subjective identity?

Calefato's main concern is with the theory of fashion. Thus she mainly reflects upon contemporary fashion and incorporates Barthes, Lotman and some other theorists who wrote mainly on the fashion system. As mentioned at the beginning, my own focus is rather the ordinary practices of dressing up the body. Therefore I will not indulge in her discussion any further. The possibilities and restraints of using the language metaphor arises when we take it out of the context of fashion theory and try to interpret dress from a daily perspective, as a mundane bodily practice.

A more comprehensive approach to daily clothing, apart from the fashion theories' discussion comes from Joanne Entwistle in the book "Body Dressing" (2001) which she co-edited with Elizabeth Wilson. In her own chapter, "The Dressed Body", Entwistle indulges in a thorough analysis. She claims to sketch out:

... a theoretical framework which takes as its starting point the idea that dress is an embodied practice, a situated bodily practice which is embedded within the social world and fundamental to micro social order. While emphasizing the social nature of dress, this framework also asserts the idea that individuals/subjects are active in their engagement with the social and that dress is thus actively produced through routine practices directed towards the body." (Entwistle, 2001)

Departing from a comparison of various discussions of body and relating them to clothing issues, she forms an introductory framework to the subject, parallel to the aims of this study. By using both structuralist and post-structuralist approaches to the body Entwistle tries to develop a perspective that acknowledges dress as an *embodied practice*.

Dress, as both a social and personal experience, is a discursive and practical phenomenon. A study of the dressed body thus requires understanding of both the socially processed body which discourses on dress and fashion shape, as well as the experiential dimensions of embodiment wherein dress is translated into actual bodily presentation. (Entwistle, 2001)

By making the emphasis that “dress” lies in between the social and the individual, combining them in analysis as the integrated parts of a whole rather than two separate entities, Entwistle’s interpretation opens the way for infringing the strict boundaries in between. After taking on Mary Douglas’ analysis that two types of bodies, physical and social, that constantly exchange meaning and cross-feed each other, becoming the symbol of cultural status by this way; Entwistle adds on that;

“The dressed body is always situated within a particular context which often sets constraints as to what is, and what is not, appropriate to wear. The degree to which the dressed body can express itself can therefore be symbolic of this location. (Entwistle, 2001)

Her detailed arguments run on the insufficiencies of the theories of Douglas, Mauss and Foucault and the possibilities of Merlau-Ponty’s phenomenology. It is also a meaningful effort to relate this discussion to Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus* since it creates a bigger potential for understanding the dressed body as a practical rather than a discursive issue. Goffman’s theory on “the presentation of self” also enables bringing embodiment and actual bodily practices into the frame.

In considering the body as central to interaction, his [Goffman’s] analysis also lends itself to the understanding of the dressed body and thus an account of dress in terms of

situated bodily practice. Not only does dress form the key link between individual identity and the body, providing the means, or 'raw material' for performing identity, dress is fundamentally an inter-subjective and social phenomenon, an important link between individual identity and social belonging. (Entwistle, 2001)

She argues that it is strictly necessary to develop an approach that acknowledges the body as a social entity and dress as the outcome of both social factors and individual actions in order to understand dress in everyday life.

Understanding dress in everyday life requires understanding not just how the body is represented within the fashion system and its discourses on dress, but also how the body is experienced and lived and the role dress plays in the presentation of the body/self. A sociological account of dress as an embodied and situated practice needs to acknowledge the ways in which both the experience of the body and the various practices of dress are socially structured. (Entwistle, 2001)

Thus dress is located both spatially and temporally. The dressed body is actively produced through routine performances and reiterations rather than being a passive object that is determined by social and cultural forces. It is the crucial site of articulation of the self in the sense that being the most visible aspect of the body.

Carrying on from this point, I believe that resorting to the book "Fashioning The Frame" by Alexandra Warwick and Dani Cavallaro (2001) will make more sense. Beginning with the main question that whether dress should be regarded as a part of the body or merely as an extension of, or supplement to it, they build their discussion on a Derridean analysis of

supplementarity. Using the Lacanian terms like the “rim” and the “abject”, they define dress as a frontier between the self and the non-self, rather than a boundary or a margin.

It frames the body and insulates private fantasies from the Other, yet it simultaneously connects the individual self to the collective Other and fashions those fantasies on the model of a public spectacle, thus questioning the myth of a self contained identity. The integrity of the body as a personal possession is questioned and the vulnerability of all liminal states is accordingly exposed. (Warwick & Cavallaro, 2001)

Discussing dress at the levels of imaginary and symbolic, they come to express that it both represents a projection of the ideal egos and is also symptomatic of introjection of codes and conventions. Thus whilst the body is already uncertainly defined, dress reinforces the fluidity of this frame by dividing and framing while also blurring the same distinctions and frontiers. From this perspective it becomes possible to treat dress as a deconstructive instrument.

By inviting a shift from an analysis of the signified to an analysis of the signifier, through its emphasis on the superficial, rather than deep, character of all process of signification, the language of dress may help in questioning of time-honoured metaphysical categories (origin, truth, presence) and hence in the subversion of all binary mythologies. (Warwick & Cavallaro, 2001)

They criticize the conception of the body as a hanger for clothing and dress as transforming the incomplete body into a cultural package. Instead, they claim that while the discourse of dress points to the ability to fulfill the “lack”ing body, it also exposes the body’s ultimate resistance to

completing strategies, foregrounding the difficulty of establishing bodies' boundaries. The relation between body and dress is one that we can not separately investigate by detaching them from each other.

The ambiguous alliance between body and dress could be seen as one of the most inveterate incarnations of the fusion of the natural and the constructed. (Warwick & Cavallaro, 2001)

Dress stresses the precarious location of the body between natural and cultural. It emphasizes the uncertainty of the limits of the space that body inhabits. Upon a Lacanian analysis of the relation of dress and body Warwick & Cavallaro happen to express that items of clothing are objects of desire that promise to complete but always fail to close the gap, thus lingering at the border of selfhood as both a unifying and a dissolving system. This brings us back to the point that trying to define concrete limits and build binary accounts will prove to be an ineffectual effort each time.

Chapter-3: How the headscarf comes to matter

After having discussed bodies and clothes in the previous chapters, in this chapter I will focus on a series of solidarity campaigns in 2008's Turkey led by a group of women who wear headscarves and supported with more than a thousand signatures by women of various beliefs, ideologies and backgrounds. The point that these campaigns were based upon a claim for bodily rights of women will form the connection between these discussions. Departing from this relatively narrow focus, I will also try to discuss the implications of this movement from a wider point of view which includes the position of feminism in Turkey.

This chapter will not be about the debates based upon the headscarf conflict in real political arena. Though I will refer to the debates as a means of describing the current situation, my actual intention is to reveal the dichotomous ground that these debates rest upon. To do that, in the light of previous chapter's discussions I will try to re-approach the issue from the perspective of women's bodily rights and my emphasis will be on the need for a redefinition of feminism in order to claim those rights and indulge diversity.

The issue of turban, or headscarf, or whatever it has been named in different contexts, is not a brand new title of debate and controversy in Turkey's history. It has always been a hot issue from the very beginning of the modernization and westernization process. The demand of women to take place in the public space, their struggle to put themselves on the map, dates far back to late Ottoman period. From the early republican era ahead, the appearance or the style of clothing of women has always been a point of refraction among different currents of ideologies. However, what makes it different to discuss it *today, here and now*, in this particular context, is the recent extraordinary developments that make us reconsider the situation of feminism in Turkey. Besides that, an approach that takes this issue from a perspective of body and clothing rights of women is what I want to develop here apart from a dichotomous interpretation formed between republican and Islamist poles. Thus rather than focusing on the refractions, I will try to look at the intersection and cooperation points by way of analyzing what those solidarity campaigns raise as a discourse. My aim is to find and reveal the regions where the clear-cut lines between the poles become broken lines or the limits get merged into each other.

I will begin by giving a very brief history of the headscarf controversy in Turkey. After this very condensed chronicle, I will go on by discussing what the solidarity campaigns named "We did not become free, yet!" and "We are holding each other!" are highlighting, what they are implying, and what kind of expansions they are offering. What kind of

transitions they correspond to in the sense that they extend the limits of feminist conceptions in the particular geography of Turkey? It stands out clearly that the need for a feminist politics is urgent and the prevailing limits of what is called feminism in Turkey require expansion in order to embrace diversity and indulge difference.

As stated in the introduction above, the conflict about women's clothing and the headscarf is not a debate of today. Thousands of articles and books by writers from various disciplines and backgrounds are available on bookstores, libraries and on the internet. By now, we are already aware that the female body has been implicitly accepted as an indicator of difference. We can easily say that the appearance, or the visibility, of the women's body in public space has always been a space of politics upon which the transformation is traced, contentions are enforced. But I believe that to understand what makes it still a hot potato today; we have to overview the history of the headscarf conflict in Turkey one more time. While doing this, I will try to examine how the issue speaks to us differently today, while still being unresolved.

The clothing of women has been a point of discrepancy between different currents of ideologies in Ottoman period too, such as Islamism, Westernism or Turkism. The establishment of the republic brings reforms and revolutions in various fields of public space such as education, civil code and etc. With a change in constitution and the civil codes, all kinds of religious

forms of dress in public space were banned. However, these laws were binding for men. There were no official statements that forbid the veil or the headscarf of women. Since the majority was living in rural areas then, they rather clung to traditional clothing practices and thus banning the veil of women carried a risk of serious opposition. However, the changing appearance of the women in the cities towards a “modernized” image made people perceive it like forbidden. According to Cihan Aktaş, a Muslim women writer, the new republican women had taken over the most insistent opposition to the various practices of covering and the covered women in order to confirm her existence and make herself significant.²

To further her analysis, it is possible to state that the existence of a strongly established state-feminism in Turkey, deeply affected the views of women who were uncovered. By opening their heads for modernity, they had identified themselves strongly with the ideology of the state and they had become representative of their nation with an early celebration of women’s freedom and with a feeling of indebtedness to new republic. Thus according to them the women who still wear the headscarf should be illiterate, lower class, uneducated, oppressed and inferior. (This rupture goes so deep that it still exists after the 85th year of the republic.) The way of covering the body was the most *ostensible* sign of Islamic practices which was denied in order to be more modern, western and thus the veil became an annoying symbol in

² For a more detailed discussion on the westernization process in dress and the responses of women see Aktaş, C. (2006) Kılık Kıyafette Batılılaşma Politikası & Görüntüde Batılılaşmada Hayal Kırıklığı: Ulusal Türk Kadını Modeli in *Tanzimattan 12 Marta Kılık Kıyafet ve İktidar* (pp 153-231). İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları.

public space like a disgrace that has to be cleared off. The headscarf, as if there was no woman subject or no-body in it, was seen as something from the past that has to be fought against in the name of civilization and modernity. This was the semi-official way of representing the women who wear headscarves in different ways and styles. However, at the same time, particularly in some parts of the country where traditional values are overwhelmingly powerful, not wearing headscarves and wearing new and modern clothes according to new values of the republic were somehow interpreted as an absence of morality, the disappearance of traditional values, even as a degeneration. This reveals how this model of representation created a fear and fury in both camps and how this conflict is enforced through the female body and dress.

However, in 1968 a women student in the Faculty of Theology in the University of Ankara was dismissed from class for wearing a headscarf. Since she resisted leaving the class because of her religious beliefs, she was also dismissed from the faculty. This formed a crucial turning point in the history of the discussion. This brought to light that those women who were always seen as inferior could, and did indeed, speak out. Nineteen seventies were the years that those devout women began to demand more space in the university, official services and the more they demand, the more they were countered with restrictions. The widespread idea was that they had to be educated to internalize western norms. What was dismissed is that they were getting the same education with everybody else but this had nothing to do with

abandoning their religious beliefs. 1970s was also the period when organizations and institutions of various scale were formed, which took the issue of restricted civil rights of the women with the headscarf as their main agenda. They were giving support to women who were fighting against restrictions in schools, occupational organizations, they were publishing magazines or fanzines, they later began to organize demonstrations and take action for the legal changes about clothing regulations. At this point, it should be reminded that those groups of Islamist women usually did not get engaged in feminism or with feminist movement with very rare exceptions. After another decade, towards the end of 1980s, the issue had already turned into a bigger problematic and so-called “turban” was added to Kurds and communists in being an oppositional ideology. As the result of a particular historical context, women found themselves next to other oppressed groups.

The history of the issue is determined by trials to set free and efforts to prohibit. It can be defined as Joan Scott has done for the situation in France:

The law insisted on the unacceptable difference (the “otherness”) of those whose personal/religious identity was achieved by wearing the hijab, even though these girls did not seek to impose their beliefs on their schoolmates but simply insisted that they themselves could not dress in any other way without a loss of their sense of identity (Scott, 2007)

There is no voice heard other than the secularist and Islamist poles, both of which bolstering the dichotomy and silencing the women,

encapsulating the issue in the realm of macro-politics in which women are always marginal.

This increasing line of demand, to take place in public space without leaving the necessities of religious practices aside especially from 70s on, can also be interpreted as going parallel with a transformation of traditional definitions of classes in Turkey. Efforts towards the formation of a national bourgeoisie in early republican period were pushing the upper-class, educated, urban women to a western norm of appearance. The clothing of the rural women was never an important issue. But today what we are witnessing is, urban and rural populations are not that sharply distinguished and thus the traditional class profiles are changing. Now, the norms of Muslim majority is adapting to what is called “modern” and Muslim women request legitimacy in this “modern” public space. This, in turn, proves to create a great tension in public space between the laicists and the Islamists. What can be called the former bourgeois class, the republicans who consider themselves as the real owners of the country, resist hard to this transformation. For them, Islam and Islamic practices connotes backwardness, darkness, an uncivilized age that is left behind and rejected. Women who wear headscarves became a widely used symbol of this backwardness and were obviously instrumentalized to provoke the unending paranoia of counter-revolution. The newly rising Islamist bourgeoisie thus provokes a great fear, in the sense that they will force the government to an Islamic revolution, they will call for Islamic law and they will force all of women to cover their heads. It is of no significance

for me to discuss the reality level of these scenarios here. What is more important for us here is the growing hysteria that pumps polarization, fuels dichotomy and draws strict lines, obstructing any cooperation between the sides, thus dividing women. Just as Joan Scott has mentioned about France again;

There seems to be a consensus about the meaning of the headscarf and the challenge to secular democracy that it represents, even though the girls and the adult women who wear them are decidedly a minority within diasporic Muslim populations. (Scott, 2007)

Of course we are not talking about a diasporic community or a minority when Turkey is considered but the consequences are rather similar. This view bringing out a homogenization makes any kind of scarf or veil to be seen as the ultimate symbol of Islam's resistance to modernity. Thus all the women who use them are labeled as resistant. Covering a part of your body because of a feeling of seclusion based on religious belief, turns into a symbol of resistance.

It is the beginning of 2000s, with the rise of Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the change in the focus of politics that the context began to change. The struggle of Islamists was calmed down in the name of not fraying the new "moderate Islamist" government.

After the lost hopes of 1990s, the new government had promised to solve the conflict. However, there were oppositions to AKP's so-called "conservatist democracy" and "moderate Islam" politics within the Islamist

part of the population as well. This triggered the coming together of other oppositional groups, leftists, social democrats, or individuals without an organizational background with Muslims who do not support AKP's policies. An Islamist group could be joining the demonstration of socialist organization or as we will see below, devout women and feminists could get closer unlike some marginal efforts in the past.

In early 2008 the government took a step and prepared a proposal for a change in constitution which involved the liberation of the headscarf in higher education institutions. The national assembly admitted and the proposal was given to Supreme Court. Of course there were innumerable debates and controversies in public. All newspapers, magazines, web sites, TV programs created countless utterance that took the issue on the basis of the famous dichotomy between secular and religious ideologies. Almost none of the discussions gave women a hearing. Writers, journalists, politicians, academicians were producing too much noise but the women, with or without her head covered, were never heard.

The women who wore the headscarf, was considered or at least expected, to be content about the proposal for new regulations about the headscarf. Then in February 2008, a responsive declaration titled "We did not become free yet!" was opened for signature by a group of women who wore headscarves. Just after the proposal for the constitutional change was given to Supreme Court, this declaration clearly states that the real problem is the

mentality that assumes it is competent of intervening people's lives, appearances, words and thoughts. By listing different violation of rights and discriminations alongside in a single text, and stating that they would not be happy to enter the university with their headscarf until all those different facets of oppression disappears, they reveal a quite new point of view on this everlasting conflict. The declaration ends with stating that; *Until this mentality of prohibition, making us enemies by spreading the fear that one is dangerous for the other and maintaining the injustice, completely disappears, no freedom is a complete one.*³

For the first time so strongly women's voice was raised and it clearly stated that the issue of freedom is not only about the headscarf in this country and the real problem is the freedom of expression. By way of identifying commonness between different problems and different discriminations, they happen to express that it is the politics that creates this mass of excluded. This kind of a meta-narrative for all the limitations of freedom was appealing for many people. It was an encompassing discourse and one that fomented solidarity between different groups of oppressed or excluded. As they wrote in their text, if freedom is in question then nothing can be considered as a detail.

Just after this declaration, in about two weeks time, the women who called themselves "feminist" published another declaration, clearly in support

³ See Appendix 1 for the whole text of this campaign

of the first one. This second one is titled “We look after each other!”⁴ and says that: *A “public sphere” that we cannot walk arm in arm is not our “public sphere”*. It directly underlines the supposed divisions between different women and the need for solidarity amongst them. It begins with defining a “we”. *“We, as those women, believers and non-believers, veiled or not-veiled, those who act within the frame of women's rights and liberties and thus who do not claim “If you're here, then I ain't” ...”* It emphasizes that by creating gaps between women, oppression and exploitation is facilitated. Stating definitively that they are against the control over women’s bodies in the name of not only religion tradition, custom, morality or honor but also in the name of modernism, secularism or republic; this declaration took the first one, a step ahead.

In a context which only men spoke out or only male utterances are floating around, those two successive declarations highlighted the female voice from both ends of the prevailing dichotomy, which was exactly the need. The fact that they more or less bring similar points in the foreground reveals that this fueled dichotomy is a constructed one. The women with the headscarves gave support to the feminists’ declaration and the women who call themselves feminists signed theirs too. This showed, at least in a discursive level, that something different happens when women do speak out. They could come together in the name of claiming the rights to their bodies and they could promise to act with solidarity with other oppressed groups.

⁴ See Appendix-2 for the whole text

This kind of solidarity act, especially between Islamists and non- Islamists in Turkey, in such an environment that the opposition is being fostered for nearly a century, is a novel phenomenon.

From the past experience we know that women who perpetuate a struggle on Islamic basis were standing off from feminism. There was never a strong Islamic feminism in Turkey. Muslim women had a different conception of women's rights and for them feminism was always a western secular ideology. Efforts to come together proved to be useless since feminists were also usually not open to the idea that Islam can comply with feminist ideology. Feminists, not necessarily the Kemalist ones, disparaged the women with the headscarf either explicitly or implicitly as being ignorant or oppressed. Covering one's head with her own will was not an option for them so they should be wearing it by male force, thus they were oppressed. For Muslim women, feminists were westernized elites that complied with degenerated and unchaste values. However, these two successive declarations show that the case has changed. Women now seem to be more open to solidarity and the routes to act together now seem to be clearer.

Whether these declarations are catalysers or the results of this environment is of course disputable. But what I want to underline here is that, it is an imposed model of secular nation state upon a traditionally religious society that creates controversies of this scale. Especially a strong history of state feminism, though harshly criticized after 1980s, fostered a division

between modern and traditional women. It had created a public space that a single model of woman is the norm or neutral, the other is charged with negative meanings. But by way of claiming a common excludedness, this dichotomy now comes to be deconstructed.

At this point it would be possible to suggest that this breaking point is based upon a claim for bodily rights. Before this conjuncture, there was an obvious dichotomy resting upon the polarized definitions of male dominated ideologies. What brings these two declarations to a common interface seems to be a compromise about a claim to the female body and the demand for the freedom of a bodily practice. I do not mean to reduce the issue into a simpler state. Of course, many other factors, on local or global scale, that make this encounter possible could be listed here. A much more detailed account could be given. However, my point is that, it is striking to note how a different approach to bodily rights that transgresses the current borders can bring the two poles to a meeting point. It provides a ground for avoiding exclusion on the basis of an ideal model taken as a norm. In Butler's terms we can state that the unlivable, unthinkable bodies that constitute the limits of the "thinkable" ones, come together to reveal that they exist in discourse as a shadowy figure. The discourse contained in these two declarations comes closer to problematizing the binary accounts rather than problematizing one side or the other.

It is the symbolically overloaded character of the headscarf that also makes it more complicated to reach a point like that. In this context where it is perceived definitely as a political symbol against the republic and where many political debates are traced upon it, it is practically not easy to avoid such a conceptualization. But it is possible at least to think of, thus to suggest, the scarf as an ordinary, daily piece of garment that functions in the same way as other clothes when we consider the framework discussed in the previous chapter. It seems like if there is a way to reconsider the scarf from a new perspective out of this vicious circle, it is to reconsider it as a bodily practice that complicates the borders of the female body. I do not mean to say it is not regulatory or it is not normative. It is just as regulatory and normative as the other feminine items of clothing. Shirazi's concept of semantic versatility can be helpful at this point.

The large number of books of which the titles or subtitles include "veil", "veiled", or "unveiled" testifies to the semantic versatility of the garment. Once the veil is no longer perceived as a mere piece of cloth, a cultural or religious artifact, it quickly takes on the semantic dimensions that can be fathomed only if we clearly define the parameters of our discourse. (Shirazi, 2001)

This idea of semantic versatility is compatible with what I call the symbolically overloaded character of the headscarf in Turkey's context. It is given a particular meaning and this comes to determine which bodies do matter and which bodies do not. To quote from Shirazi again:

Once the veil is assigned a certain meaning, the veil itself acquires the power to dictate certain outcomes—the garment

becomes a force in and of itself, and this force must be deferred to by many people. When the semantics of the veil are defined, they set a dynamics of the veil in motion that dictates context. The law of hijab that is enforced in the Islamic Republic of Iran provides a telling example. For the lawmakers in Iran, wearing the hijab is synonymous with obeying Islamic injunctions that define the proper behavior of the female believer. (Shirazi, 2001)

It is not assigned the same meaning as the Islamic Republic of Iran in Turkey, for sure; it depends on a different culture and history. But it is true that it becomes a force that must be deferred to.

When body is acknowledged as a social entity and dress is contemplated as a practice that is the outcome of both social factors and individual actions, when dress is taken as a notion that both limits and extends the individual, headscarf can be problematized in the same way that we can problematize all other clothing practices.

What is more remarkable than the meaning of the scarf as a political symbol is that the binary mythologies are all reproduced upon a conflict about the female body again. However, as of our preceding chapters, we can readily state that those binarisms are subjected to a serious criticism and deconstruction by the discussions of feminist theory on body/mind dualism and it is obvious that the real problem is those oppositions themselves and not either of the positions. It also becomes more obvious with a focus on the dress as a material, lived practice of the body. The operation of assigning an exclusive meaning to one of the terms and attributing it the function of the “constitutive outside” to be able to define the other as the norm is “up and

doing” here for the headscarf conflict again. That is why a deconstructive reconsideration founded upon a discussion on body and especially the body with its clothes on can be an avant-garde point to depart from.

Joan W. Scott’s account of the headscarf controversy in France is a cogent discussion of this kind. She carefully inquires the wording of the French law and dwells upon the chosen words such as *ostensible*, *conspicuous*, and *discreet*. These words used in relation to a display on or by a female body convey a sense of erotic provocation and according to Scott this proves that there was something sexually amiss about the girls in headscarves; “... *it was as if both too little and too much were being revealed.*”

Moving along from this point, Scott argues that it is the clash of what she calls “open” and “covered” gender systems that involves a *denial* of sexual difference on one hand and its *recognition* on the other.

The veil’s disturbing sexual connotation for French observers stemmed from its significance in a system of gender relations they took to be entirely different from their own. ... It is a recognition of the threat sex poses for society and politics. In contrast the French system celebrates sex and sexuality as free of social and political risk. ... Islam’s insistence on recognizing the difficulties posed by sexuality revealed more than republicans wanted to see about the limits of their own system. (Scott, 2007)

She insists that women are objectified in both systems by being reduced to a sexed body in different ways. Islam does not have a monopoly over patriarchy and uncovered bodies are no more a guarantee of equality

than covered ones. French system manages the issue by way of denying the sexual difference but the emphasis on the visibility and openness of the female body turns out to be a confirmation of the need for different treatment. Scott calls this a constitutive contradiction of republicanism *veiled* by the objectification of women's sexuality.

There are too many differences between the Turkish and the French cases indeed. First of all, Muslims do not form a minority in Turkey as they are in France. So, although the current context is not the same, Scott's argument about the clash of systems of sexual regulation in public space seems to be compatible with the Turkish case too. It is clear that her arguments are not on a local basis and allow us to question what kinds of conflicts and contradictions the secular republic is founded upon. It is almost impossible to disagree with Scott when she criticizes French feminists about complying and participating to these contradictions by way of approaching the headscarf as a source and vehicle of oppression and celebrating the "visibility" of their bodies as equality.

Until their ideological confrontation with Islam, many French feminists saw the sexual exhibitionism of their society – particularly as it is applied to women- as demeaning to women because it reduced them to a sexed body. But in the heat of headscarf controversy, those concerns were set aside and equality became synonymous with sexual emancipation, which in turn was equated with the visibility of the female body. (Scott, 2007)

A more comprehensive feminist criticism would take into account that there are multiple forms and variations of oppression. After all,

patriarchy does not have a unique and universal model. It blends into its ground and emerges in different forms. There are also differences within women as a category too. The task feminist theory and criticism should rather be acknowledging those differences than to rank them in a hierarchical order. Ebert's assumption about its reason seems quite true:

Thus, women in the First World can feel as though they have autonomy and agency in contrast to women in the Third World, at the same time that they feel victimized by men in the First, but will not conceptualize themselves to be agents of subordinating practices. This absolution of responsibility rests on the assumption that relations between women are presumed to be non-oppressive, whereas the bonds of race are presumed to oppress women of color. But this ignores the oppression of race and class among women. (Ebert, 1991)

I believe that the potential implications of those solidarity campaigns and declarations mentioned above in this chapter, by attracting our attention to the divisive effect of prevailing discussions, lead us to a redefinition of women's struggle and to a kind of comprehensive feminist politics. In this redefinition, considering Islam as the unique and essential source of oppression, or an oppositional force for the secularism of the nation state, is replaced by defending the freedom of belief and expression for women and the right to claim their own bodies.

I should also verbalize that I am not really concerned about whether Islamist women are or can be feminists, whether feminism can comply with Islam or not, etc. What I find more valuable to discuss is whether we call ourselves feminists or not, whether we cover or head or not, whether we refer

to religion in our struggle or not, to stand together in claiming the rights and freedom requires recognition of multiple practices and diversifications. Women should, and as we have seen in the example mentioned, they could, form an alliance without leaving their differences aside. This kind of alliance and solidarity does not necessarily define a universal form of oppression, a unique form of patriarchy or a single category of women. To the contrary, realizing the different, localized and multiple forms and policies determined by male-dominated ideologies and constructing a female solidarity that both encompasses and respects those determinations is the key to open the door for justice and freedom.

When the headscarf controversy is re-considered as not only a political conflict but also from a feminist point of view with a female voice, it becomes clear that there are more than just two poles, as positions to take. The binarism of secular and religious is like a booby trap that eliminates the voice of women from the field. Defining the scarf just as a political symbol representing one end in this dichotomy, does not help us in reclaiming our bodies from being objectified. When the women from the supposed counterparts raise their voice complementarily, the constructed-ness of the dichotomy can be exposed more clearly. This shows that the border lines between two regions are not crystal clear and there are intersecting domains where a certain kind of criticism could be applied to both positions.

Conclusion

Thus far, we have revised the ways in which feminist re-theorization of the body has come to deconstruct the sexed tradition of Western metaphysics, how a feminist critique of the body-mind dualism contributes to the subversion of all binary mythologies. Then we tried to highlight the alternative perspectives on the “clothed body” apart from anthropological accounts and fashion studies. This was a preliminary effort to understand the relation of the body and the clothes it wears from a perspective that focuses on their discursive connection.

The binarisms that proved to be ineffectual when exposed to deconstructionist critique, more obviously prove to be deficient when this relation of dress to the body is considered. The ambiguous character of dress that further complicates the boundaries of body becomes a unique way of analysis when defined as a material bodily performative reiteration that both encloses and discloses the representation of self. In this sense it is also inevitably associated with gender issues, being the fundamentally visible part.

Accompanied by all those above, approaching the headscarf conflict as a concrete case about clothing the female body, we can reach a useful oblique perspective that reveals the gendered character of the debate. Just as the feminisms’ critical account of the western philosophical tradition, a critique of male dominated real politics’ traditional instrumentalization of the

female body and clothing could be developed. What enables this critical perspective is an alternative point of view that focuses on the potentials that body and clothing reveals.

As emphasized above, as the debates on body affronts dualist accounts, a debate on clothing the body amply brings this potential further to the foreground. Thus, if an expansion about the conflict on a women's clothing is desired, I believe that a perspective founded on a deconstructionist feminist critique of the clothed body would provide an outstanding vision. It could *unclothe* the gendered character of the debate resting upon a sexualized image of the female body. In fact, it could reveal that any method of approach defined by male dominated ideologies would create a similar result.

Like Scott emphasizes, neither the unclothed body is the guarantee of equality, nor does Islam has a monopoly over patriarchy. When female body is considered, although the forms of objectification vary, the latent mental set sustains on similar viewpoints; to secure the visibility of sexual difference in order to legitimize unequal treatment. Either by recognizing the threats it poses in the public space or by denying it, sexual difference is equated with the female. In this sense the strict division between a secular and a religious public space proves useless.

In the Turkish case, what brought the two successive campaigns together from both ends is the revelation of this hidden alliance that Scott writes about. It is both the result and the indication of a possibility that arises

from the recognition and utterance of a commonality by the two supposed counterparts. It is true that those two campaigns had a limited scope and span of effect. But still, they can be considered as pointing to a potential that is raised by a feminist reconsideration of politics. It is by the help of this female voice that we come to recognize that the lines that are supposed to be straight are in fact dashed. This gives way to a novel understanding of the issue.

Quoting from Teresa Ebert, we can admit that;

Patriarchy, then, is a global relation of oppression based on a hierarchical organization of differences according to gender in which men as a group are privileged and women as a group are exploited. At the same time patriarchy is different from itself and different in history; in other words, the specific articulation of oppression is diverse and varied. Patriarchy, then, is continuous on the level of the structure or organization of oppression -the asymmetrical division of all differences according to gender- and discontinuous (that is, different from itself) on the level of the particular practices of oppression. In short, patriarchy is a differentiated, contradictory structure that produces identical effects differently. (Ebert, 1991)

The emphasis that she makes about differences within women as a category, mainly contextualism, is a useful one, though contradictory. Although this discourse of contextualism has its own problems such as failing to relate those specificities to larger global determinations, it is significant in the sense that acknowledging the diversity of particularities may help us to develop a transformative perspective, a transgression of fixed borders.

Thus the need to develop a feminist politics that challenges not only Islamic but also the secular orthodoxies, that acknowledges the “*differences within*” is urgent. The changing definition of a broader feminism that

indulges diversity and fosters solidarity is what we need to reformulate now. As we now know clearly, all political and cultural projects are gendered. However, since assuming a universal patriarchy will result in a discursive closure, what I propose is to minimize the definition of feminism so as to intervene into different particular hegemonic discourses and practices. Thus we are left with a feminism that is challenged by the serious task of facing and struggling its own exclusionary closures and turning them into new openings.

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Appendix-1

SÖZ KONUSU ÖZGÜRLÜKSE HİÇBİR ŞEY TEFERRUAT DEĞİLDİR

13 Şubat 2008 Çarşamba

BİZ HENÜZ ÖZGÜR OLMADIK...

Üniversite kapısı sert bir şekilde yüzümüze kapatıldığı günden bu yana yaşadığımız acılar bize bir şey öğretti: Gerçek sorunumuz insanların hayatlarına, görünüşlerine, sözlerine, düşüncelerine müdahale edebilme hakkını kendinde gören yasakçı zihniyettir.

Başını örttüğü için ayrımcılığa uğrayan kadınlar olarak tüm samimiyetimizle açıklıyoruz ki; üniversitelere başımızı örterek girmekle mutlu olmayacağız.

Ta ki:

Kürtlerin ve ötekileştirilenlerin kendilerini bu ülkenin asli unsuru hissetmesi için gereken hukuki ve psikolojik ortam oluşturulmadan,

Acımasızca işlenen cinayetlerin gerçek sorumlularına ulaşılmadan,

301 davalarını bitirecek düzenleme yapılmadan,

Azınlık vakıflarının üzerinde pişkince oturanların rahatı bozulmadan,

Alevilerin ibadetini kültürel aktivite, ibadet evlerini de kültür merkezi olarak görmekte ısrar etmekten vazgeçilmeden,

Üniversitelerden sudan sebeplerle atılan arkadaşlarımız geri dönmeden,

Yasakçı zihniyet bize ne zaman, nerelerde ve nasıl örtüneceğimizi dayatmaktan vazgeçmeden,

Üniversitelerin bilimsel özgürlüğünün önündeki en büyük engel YÖK kaldırılmadan...

Kısacası;

12 Eylül darbe anayasasını esamesi okunmayacak şekilde ortadan kaldırıp yeni, sivil bir anayasaya yapılmadan mutlu olamayacağız.

Birimizin diğerimiz için tehlike olduğu korkusunu yayıp bizi birbirimize düşürerek bu adaletsiz düzenini devam ettiren yasakçı zihniyet tamamen ortadan kalkmadan hiçbir özgürlük tam özgürlük değildir.

Özgürlüklerin kısıtlanmasının ne demek olduğunu bilen insanlar olarak, bundan sonra da her türlü ayrımcılığın, hak ihlalinin, baskının, dayatmanın karşısında olacağız.

Unutulmamalı ki;

“Gökler ve yer adaletle ayakta durur.” (Hz. Muhammed)

Appendix-2

Birbirimize Sahip Çıkıyoruz!

29 Şubat 2008 Cuma

Kol kola yürüyemediğimiz bir “kamusal alan”, bizim “kamusal alanımız” değildir!

Bizler inançlı- inançsız, örtünmeyen-örtünen, kadın hak ve özgürlükleri anlayışı içinde "sen varsan ben yokum" demeyen kadınlar olarak;

Başörtülü kadınların; cahil, yobaz, fesat, takiyyeci, fırsatçı, örümcek kafalı gibi sıfatlarla bir "islami robot" imajıyla değerlendirilerek, ırkçı yaklaşımlarla şiddete maruz bırakılmalarına karşı çıkıyoruz. Başörtüsüz kadınların; cinsel meta, teşhirci ya da bir tahrik mekanizması gibi cinsiyetçi yaklaşımlarla değerlendirilmesine karşı çıkıyoruz. Kadınlar arasında yaratılan uçurumların kadınların ezilmesini ve sömürülmesini kolaylaştırdığını biliyoruz. Ve kadınlara uygulanan baskıların üstesinden, ancak barış ortamında, hak ve özgürlüklerin uygulanmasıyla gelinebileceğini düşünüyoruz.

Biz her türlü ayrımcılığın ve adaletsizliğin karşısında olan kadınlar, “kadının yeri kocasının dizinin dibi” anlayışıyla bizleri yok sayan, “genel ahlak” düzenlemesiyle ayrımcılık yapan, kadın özgürlüğüne sınırlar getirmek isteyen bir "er meydanı" olarak devletin kadınlara yönelik her türlü yasağını ve baskısını reddediyoruz. Biz kadınlar; birilerinin bedenimizi modernite, laiklik, cumhuriyet, din, gelenek, görenek, ahlak, namus ya da özgürlük adına denetlemesini istemiyoruz.

"Herhangi birini yok saymak, onu kendi varlığından kuşku duymaya yöneltir"

Hannah Arendt

Biz kadınlar birbirimizden kuşku duymuyor; birbirimize sahip çıkıyoruz!

Çünkü biz kadınlar, farkında olduklarımızla yan yanayız!