

VISIBLE FEMALE POWER STRUCTURES IN NINETEENTH CENTURY ALGERIA

by

Lanna Lastiwka

B.A., Concordia University of Edmonton, 2012

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
(Art History and Theory)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

August 2020

© Lanna Lastiwka, 2020

The following individuals certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for acceptance, thesis entitled:

Visible Female Power Structures in Nineteenth Century Algeria

submitted by Lanna Lastiwka in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

in Art History and Theory

Examining Committee:

Dr. Saygin Salgirli, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Art History, Visual Art & Theory

Supervisor

Dr. Nuno Porto, Sessional Instructor, Dept. of Art History, Visual Art & Theory. Curator,
Africa and Latin America, Museum of Anthropology

Supervisory Committee Member

Abstract

In 1856 French photographer Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin traveled to Algeria to photograph “types” and “personalities.” He documented a unique female relationship based on sociopolitical hierarchies labeling it “Moor and Her Slave.” Other French photographers such as Alary & Geiser, Claude-Joseph Portier, and Alexandre Leroux copied this female archetype in their photographic collections. This female pairing explores how gender, class, and race are constructed in a non-colonial and colonial landscape through the modalities of visibility. Being seen or seeing is signalled by the veil—which also denotes class and gender. The veil as a sign of visibility is first investigated in the intimate space of the household, and then to the public space of the Islamic slave trade. Within these two zones, the veil, through visibility, constructs personhood as captured by photography. However, since the photographs are all staged, French influences and ideology alter and change the visualization of female relationships.

This thesis considers not only the differences between women pictured as “Moor and Her Slave” but the similarities that drive a mutual fear of visibility. Through a close reading of racializing assemblage, I will consider how race, specifically flesh, is assembled alongside gender and class in French photography.

Focusing on Algerian Arab and black African female couples, the new medium of photography was able to represent the cultural implications of visibility and invisibility within female hierarchies and French perceptions; consequently, revealing the political dynamics mapped onto female bodies.

Lay Summary

This thesis considers the work of 19th century French photographers Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, Alary & Geiser, Claude-Joseph Portier, and Alexandre Leroux, as representing the archetype “Moor and Her Slave.” I focus on the sociopolitical relationship between the women photographed. Through the concept of visibility as articulated by the veil, I consider how gender, class, and race inform previous and future conceptions of women’s private relationships. I also explore how these conceptions alter and change with the influence of French ideology.

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Lanna Lastiwka.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Lay Summary	iv
Preface.....	v
Table of Contents	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Dedication	ix
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: Visibility and Power Structures in the Algerian Household	8
Chapter 2: Flesh and the Veil: The Islamic Slave Trade and the Construction of Identity	18
Chapter 3: The Female Body as a Site of Colonial Catastrophe	27
Chapter 4: Conclusion.....	34
Figures.....	36
Bibliography	48

List of Figures

Figure 1. <i>Mauresque et Mulatresse (Moorish Woman and Black Woman)</i> , 1895, postcard	1
Figure 2. Robert Jungmann, <i>Moorish Women Outside Their Home</i> in Jungmann's <i>Costumes, moeurs et usages</i> , 1837, coloured lithograph.....	1
Figure 3. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, <i>Mauresque et négresse d'Alger (costume de ville)</i> , in his collection <i>L'Algérie photographiée : Province d'Alger</i> , 1856-7, negative on a collodion glass plate, the Bibliothèque nationale de France	2
Figure 4. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, <i>Mauresque et négresse d'Alger</i> , in his collection <i>Vues d'Algérie, portraits d'Algériens et de personnalités françaises en Algérie</i> , 1856-7, negative on a collodion glass plate, the Bibliothèque nationale de France	17
Figure 5. Alary & Geiser, <i>Groupes Mauresque</i> , 1865, in their album <i>Algerian cartes-de-visite</i> , cartes-de-visite, The Getty Museum	17
Figure 6. Alary & Geiser, <i>Unknown</i> , 1867-68, the Vanersborg Museum	17
Figure 7. Claude-Joseph Portier, <i>Moorish Woman and Her Servant</i> , 1868	32
Figure 8. Alexandre Leroux, <i>Unknown</i> , c. 1870, postcard	33
Figure 9. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, <i>Négresses. Marchandes de kak (petits pains) (Alger)</i> , in his album <i>L'Algérie photographiée : Province d'Alger</i> , 1856-57, negative on a collodion glass plate, the Bibliothèque nationale de France	36
Figure 10. Alary & Geiser, <i>Unknown</i> , 1865, in their album <i>Algerian cartes-de-visite</i> , cartes-de-visite, The Getty Museum.....	36
Figure 11. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, <i>Unknown</i> , 1853, in his album <i>Etudes Photographiques</i> , photograph.....	40
Figure 12. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, <i>A Moorish Woman with Her Maid</i> , 1856, Albumen silver print, The Getty Museum	41

Acknowledgements

My gratitude and thanks to Dr. Saygin Salgirli, whose vital insight and critique has pushed me to develop this thesis from a short paper in his seminar. I would also like to thank my second reader Nuno Porto for his time and thoughtful conversation in developing this project.

I would not be completing my masters if it were not for Dr. Ryan's unwavering support and ferocity over the past five years. I am also profoundly grateful to Dr. Jillian Lerner for her intellect and creativity in showing me how to pursue my dreams fearlessly. I am forever grateful to you both.

I offer my deepest gratitude to my student colleagues and friends, Emily Cadger, Adrian Deveau, and Kristina Parzen, for their thoughtful insights and coffee chats.

Special thanks to my parents Nancy (Athansia) and Jeff Lastiwka, who have always believed in me. To my sister Kristen Lastiwka, for the long and fruitful conversations of feminist and race theory, and my brother Michael Lastiwka for easing my anxiety with laughter and joy.

To my partner, Tea Jay Macalanda-Ung: I am thankful for your love, your endless encouragement, and your deep curiosity.

Dedication

For my parents, Nancy (Athanasia) and Jeff

Introduction

In the center of the photograph, we see two intimately coupled women, their fabric covered arms brushing against each other. Yet, despite their proximity to one another the space they share is paradoxically divided. The exposure of bright white stockings and *kassaka* (harem pants) of the woman on the right, leads the viewer's eye up her body which is fully cocooned by the white and blue patterned *haik* (floor-length veil made of wool, silk, or cotton with a piece of fabric to cover the face), even draping her hands completely. The small triangular space where her dark eyes fully engage the gaze of the viewer is the only exposed skin of her person. Next to her, the woman partially clothed in a checker-patterned *haik*, her black face, hand, and legs fully exposed, stares grimly and fearfully at the viewer. The photograph, *Mauresque et Mulatresse* (*Moorish Woman and Black Woman*, 1895, Algeria) (Fig. 1), reveals the fluctuating power dynamic of class and race between the two women as it depicts the archetype of a “Moor and Her Slave.”¹ This archetype, which commonly portrays a social and political hierarchy between the women, had been circulating in visual imagery since the late 1830’s despite this photograph being taken near the end of the 19th century. This is due, in part, to images of this female coupling not being a popular subject matter for photographers in Algeria. Polish refugee and artist Robert Jungmann was the first to picture this female relationship in his coloured lithograph *Moorish Women Outside Their Home* (1837) (Fig. 2). Influenced by Thomas Shaw’s 1738 book

¹ While *Mulatresse* is directly translated to a woman of mixed race / mulatto, I have referred to her as a black woman.

Travels or Observations Relating to Several Parts of Barbary and the Levant, Jungmann took the image, or type, of the Mauresque, but added the black African slave.² It was only after French invasion that this archetype became more pronounced in the form of Algerian photography, since they were able to capture indigenous social power structures between women. Later, this initial dynamic was engineered as a form of visual control.

Popular photographs of Algeria that circulated in France were taken by photographer Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin; a notorious Parisian artist most known for his erotic nude photos. Dedicated to his craft, he was jailed in 1851 for lewd photography.³ In 1856, “with a letter of recommendation from the French Minister of War, Marshall Vaillant” he was granted permission to enter Algeria and photograph France’s new colony.⁴ For the next eighteen months, Moulin traveled around Algeria, and photographed hundreds of peoples in his make-shift studios. While a majority of photographs taken by Moulin “produce the first extensive series of Orientalist groups ever made in North Africa,” a handful of his images do not fit this pattern and instead represent the power structure between women.⁵ *Mauresque et Nègresse d'Alger (costume de ville)* (Fig. 3) from his collection *L'Algérie photographiée: Province d'Alger (1856-57)* is one such photograph that fits into the “Moor and Her Slave” typology. The photograph is a full-length portrait of two women standing beside each other on a crooked decorated carpet. One woman is covered in a white *haik* showing only her dark eyes, and the other, an unveiled black

² Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, “Exoticism, Erasures, And Absence: The Peopling of Algiers, 1830-1900,” ed. Çelik, Zeynep, et al (Getty Research Institute, 2009), 35.

³ Ken Jacobson, *Odalisques & Arabesques: Orientalist Photography 1839-1925* (London: Quaritch, 2007) 254.

⁴ Ibid, 254.

⁵ Ibid, 254.

African woman, holds her torso and exposes her bare arm. The black African woman turns her head in profile, averting the stare of the photographer and viewer, while the Algerian woman looks forward, almost beyond the camera's glaring gaze. This photograph in the album is unique since it represents the sociopolitical relationship between women briefly discussed above.

Overall, Moulin's album *L'Algérie photographiée: Province d'Alger (1856-57)* becomes "another vessel dedicated to spreading colonial ideology" by framing an apparatus of power between the French, and indigenous peoples, customs, culture, and religion in Algeria.⁶ While the power dynamics between men – Algerian and French, Algerian and Algerian – are depicted in Moulin's album and will be used as examples to demonstrate the universal messages of power and control France wanted to implement in their new colony, it is the staged photographs of women in Algeria and the sociopolitical relationships these images capture that are of the most interest to me. In the following chapters, I will demonstrate how the relationship between upper-class Algerian women and their black slaves in staged studio photography is specifically unique to the Algerian context under French occupation.

Most of the photographs of Algerian life were artificially constructed to show passivity and difference of Algerians. This is seen in Moulin's album through group shots of local Muslim lawmakers and court officials seated in open tents on the ground and on sofas. All the men are clothed in "traditional" robes and turbans, and they support long beards. These men are in direct opposition to the clean, well-dressed, and stiff French officials. As the album continues, Moulin swiftly moves past these images to photographs of buildings renamed with French titles and

⁶ Patricia Goldsworthy, "Images, Ideologies, and Commodities: The French Colonial Postcard Industry in Morocco," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 8, no. 2 (2010): 148.

empty street scenes, and continues with “types” and “personalities.” Group scenes of women lounging in a mix of white European styled dresses and *haïks*, either dancing, smoking, or chatting represent the elusive harem. Other images show men posed in street scenes carrying water, playing instruments, or women posed at the marketplace selling bread. However, the couple’s portrait of *Mauresque et Nègresse d’Alger (costume de ville)*, which is included among these photographs in the album, offers something different: a real and complicated relationship between two women that is not exaggerated with costumes, props, or actions. Why are these pairings, while staged, so different from their counterparts?

This pairing was not secluded to Moulin’s work. The female couple portraits of Algerian women alongside black African women had analogous images created by photographers such as Alary & Geiser, and Claude-Joseph Portier in the 1860s, and Alexandre Leroux in the 1870s, continuing to the first example discussed from the 1890’s.⁷ How do these photographs and this pairing articulate female relationships? In what ways does photography expose sociopolitical dynamics at the time and play a role in representing the power structure between women? Can these specific photographs be read as non-orientalist images, reflecting the sociopolitical dynamic between women in Algeria? My thesis takes up these questions among others to discuss the important nuances of this pairing in relation to the history of photography in Algeria and the representation of women.

To begin answering these questions, I argue that these specific photographs from various artists can be understood through a racializing assemblage. As first discussed by Alexander

⁷ Alary & Geiser was first created when Julie Geiser and her family moved to Algeria in 1850. After the death of her husband, she met Jean-Baptiste Antoine Alary and formed Alary & Gesier, 1862.

Weheliye in his book *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*, racializing assemblage is “an assemblage of forces that must continuously articulate nonwhite subjects as not-quite-human”⁸ and “construes race not as a biological or cultural classification but as a set of sociopolitical processes that discipline humanity into full humans, not- quite- humans, and nonhumans.”⁹ As represented in Moulin’s first image *Mauresque et Nègresse d’Alger (costume de ville)*, one woman is veiled, while the other is unveiled, suggesting a hierarchization between them. With this in mind, what this thesis will do is visualize, through specific photographs, the 19th century French Algerian racializing assemblage, and explore the relationships between French colonialism, Islamic Law, slavery, abolition, and gender in relation to perceptions of race.

For Weheliye, modern racializing assemblage is “habeas viscus” a concept adopted and expanded from black feminist Hortense Spiller. Spiller defines flesh as the embodiment of captivity¹⁰ or “the embodiment of those banished to the zone of indistinction” versus a legal body maintaining recognized personhood.¹¹ Habeas viscus, as defined by Weheliye, is “an idea, networks bodies, forces, velocities, intensities, institutions, interests, ideologies, and desires in racializing assemblages, which are simultaneously territorializing and deterritorializing.”¹² In other words, the flesh (habeas viscus) is an articulation within racializing assemblage that seeks to find the moments (corporeal and incorporeal) between those who have been violently abused

⁸ Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014) 3.

⁹ Ibid, 19.

¹⁰ Hortense J Spillers, “Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” *Culture and Countermemory: The "American" Connection* 17, no 2 (Summer 1987): 67.

¹¹ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 38.

¹² Ibid, 12.

and the various ways the law decides who deserves personhood and who does not. But what are these forces or articulations in the images between female “Moors” and “Slaves”? And how is the concept of flesh defined in the photographs?

I propose that a new female archetype and a new form of relation materialize through the visualization and the visibility of the veil. Through modalities of sight (being seen and/ or invisible) as captured by French photographers, a mutual fear of visibility emerges between the couple. In *Mauresque et Nègresse d'Alger (costume de ville)* (Fig. 3), the Algerian woman is safely invisible behind her veil masking her body; whereas, the black African woman's face is on view, along with her body delineated by her arm wrapped around her waist, open for public viewing. Both women are constructed by the French photographer in relation to visibility, and thus, a mutuality of fear of being visible to the French becomes shared between the two women. Consequently, the veil becomes the site for being seen or unseen. The mutuality of fear is another articulation alongside the flesh, and as part of the Algerian racializing assemblages. Rather than viewing these photographs from orientalist methodology or Hegelian dialectics (ie. master-slave), the mutual fear of visibility is in constant motion between the “spheres of interconnected existences” or assemblages.¹³ Relationality is the key here, since it allows potential movement or forms of becoming on one hand, while still maintaining a fixed point of political violence and potential freedom on the other.¹⁴ Moreover, relationality addresses the sociopolitical hierarchies that produce violence on the oppressed, while revealing new forms and perspectives outside the realm of the Liberal Man--“the western configuration of the human as

¹³ Ibid, 12.

¹⁴ Ibid, 12.

synonymous with the heteromasculine, white, propertied, and liberal subject that renders all those who do not conform to these characteristics as exploitable nonhumans, literal legal no-bodies.”¹⁵ This project will explore the relationship between the 19th century Algerian racializing assemblage and the articulations of the mutual fear of visibility and flesh as visualized between women in French photography (as seen in the body position in Fig. 1).

In Chapter One I interrogate the representation of the domestic household and the visibly shifting dynamic between wealthy women and their slaves. Specifically, I will explore how colonialism influenced these changes and visualized them in different pairings of women and children. Chapter Two will argue for how the concept of the flesh is made visible in particular images as part of the French and Islamic law in racializing assemblages. The veil and its ability to shift visibility and how it altered in an indigenous power structure to a new authoritative formation will be discussed here. The final chapter will explore how French photographers exploited and controlled female bodies through forms of visibility by photographing black African’s as bread sellers and Algerian women as overtly sexualized beings. Through this construction of visibility, a new relationality develops that is coercively shared between the women. I want to emphasize in this thesis that all of these photographs, while constructed by a French photographer, they do reveal a truthfulness between women, which is documented by the French men. They do not construct this relationship but simply reflect it.¹⁶

¹⁵ Ibid, 135.

¹⁶ Gen Doy, "More than Meets the Eye ... Representations of Black Women in Mid-19th-Century French Photography," *Women's Studies International Forum* 21, no. 3 (1998): 305.

Chapter 1: Visibility and Power Structures in the Algerian Household

In his photographic collection *Vues d'Algérie, portraits d'Algériens et de personnalités françaises en Algérie*, Moulin captures “types” and “personalities” of Algerians and French Algerians. One particular photograph *Mauresque et négresse d' Alger*, 1856-57, (Fig. 4) portrays a young Algerian woman seated next to her standing black African slave.¹⁷ The power dynamic shown through pose and composition in this image may seem inverted, however, the “differentiation and hierarchization” between them comes more into focus as a common domestic relationship when considering the scene, clothing, and composition of bodies.¹⁸ Two other photographs, one by Alary & Geiser, entitled *Groupe de Mauresque* (1865) (Fig. 5) and from the *Algerian cartes-de-visite* collection, and the other, a stand-alone, retrospectively entitled *Unknown* (1867-68) (Fig. 6), similarly focus on indigenous social hierarchies between women in the home. How these power structures were built and visualized between the women is captured by Moulin and Alary & Geiser. I’d like to point out that these staged photographs use (potentially) prostitutes and slaves to depict this relationship.¹⁹ While this is incredibly problematic, it does not take away from the idea that a power dynamic of class and race occurred between women in 19th century Algeria. This common dynamic, which was already being

¹⁷ Sarah Ghabrial in her chapter “The “Slave Wife” Between Private Household and Public Order in Colonial Algeria (1848–1906)” states that “Haratin were often grouped as “noirs” in colonial records, while the word “nègre” usually indicated slave and the word “esclave,” if not otherwise qualified, almost always meant Black,” from Mary Ann Fay, *Slavery in the Islamic World Its Characteristics and Commonality*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

¹⁸ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 5.

¹⁹ Malek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) 17.

complicated by having prostitutes and slaves step into these roles, was further muddled by the conflation of the two categories, portraits and types, that were most generally staged.²⁰ Based on the title of Moulin's collection it is possible to conflate the "types" with "portraits of Algerians" to discern the sociopolitical process of hierarchization, and therefore the racializing assemblages visualized between the female coupling. However, this power structure alters and transforms with the change of French government and new laws implemented against Algerians, specifically Arabs. Essentially, the wealthy Algerian women in both photographs now fears being associated with the black African body and its association with low class, just as the slave or black African woman fears being visible to the French like the Algerian women. All women mutually fear visibility because of the multiple, shifting identities being forced upon their personhood.

Mauresque et négresse d' Alger (Fig. 4), represents two women interacting in a domestic space showing the hierarchization of class and gender alongside race. The woman on the ground sits with her legs crossed and tucked up to her chest, her bright white stockings accentuating her lower body. Her lightly patterned *kassaka* (pants) blends into her white shirt and heavily decorative *frimla* (brassiere). Around her neck is a thick, ornate multi strand necklace that covers her throat. She tilts her head away from the camera, exposing a large chandelier earring. In direct contrast, the black African woman stands in a three-quarter pose, barefoot on the embellished rug. Her striped *fouta* (long skirt) is loosely knotted at the side of her hip, and her white blouse reveals her dark skin. The composition of female bodies suggests that the black woman has recently served drinks and food and is retrieving the empty silver jugs and platter placed beside

²⁰ Michèle Hannoosh, "Practices of Photography: Circulation and Mobility in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean," *History of Photography* 40, no. 1 (2016): 19.

the seated woman. It is clear here that the female power structure is one of identity construction and control expressed through the positioning of the bodies, but most directly through dress.

Clothing was typically “used as a form of social control; or as a symbol of national identity” and extended outside the home to the public sphere.²¹ As seen in the photograph, the black slave’s attire is plain and simple without any embellishments – her identity and subjectivity are lost in the comparison built between her and the wealthy woman. Moreover, the position of their bodies in the composition alludes to slave labour and Algerian elite luxury with one woman sitting, waiting to be served and cared for, while the other woman stands ready for any command. The urban elite heavily relied on slaves and servants to supplant the domestic labour in the household,²² even at times acting as ‘co-heads’ of the household or mothers.²³ Regardless, the majority of lower-class women or slaves held little to no power due to their age, status, and race.²⁴ Furthermore, the wives of wealthy households were able to purchase or gift slaves to different households thereby exerting their power over the disposed black female body.²⁵ The wealthy woman in the image does not want to associate herself with the slave, her seated position exerting control and power as it makes the slave have to constantly be aware of the

²¹ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950* (London: Quartet Books, 1988) 118.

²² Terence Walz and Kenneth M. Cuno, “Introduction: The Study of Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Egypt, Sudan and the Ottoman Mediterranean,” in *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: Histories of Trans-Saharan Africans in Nineteenth-Century Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Mediterranean*, ed. Terence Walz and Kenneth M. Cuno (New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2010): 6.

²³ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁴ Graham-Brown, *Images of Women*, 80.

²⁵ Ann E. McDougall, ““What Is Islamic About Slavery in Muslim Societies?” Cooper, Concubinage and Contemporary Legacies of ‘Islamic Slavery’ in North, West and East Africa,” in *Slavery in the Islamic World Its Characteristics and Commonality*, ed. Mary Ann Fay, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) 12.

others locality and move her own body around the space deliberately occupied. In this context the fear of being associated with the slave is accentuated through forms of visibility, since, control over another's person leads to subordination and dispossession of visibility, and, therefore agency. Essentially, the two women relate to each other through a specific dynamic through an assertion of power and status over the black slave.

Further to the body positions, the wealthy woman has a blanched lace *chechia* (cap) draping over her chestnut hair leaving it exposed. But, like her fabric adorned legs, her arms are covered in loose material, and her hands are hidden, lost in the cavernous folds of cloth. She is completely covered, concealed, and obscured, except for her head. She looks down gazing at her soft black shoes, her stiff face nearly expressionless. She avoids the camera's lens and the viewer's gaze out of modesty since she is unveiled. "Honor for women was defined as modesty and chastity and was tied to strict observance of rules" in clothing most commonly associated with the veil.²⁶ Since the woman is modeling indoor Algerian attire, she is unveiled but denies the viewer her visibility by suppressing her gaze, much like the veil or *haik*. Her downcast face simply adds to her differentiation between the other woman. In contrast, the slave's hair is tied back in a black *khiterrouh* (hair covering scarf) blending in with her dark skin. She too, is covered except for her dark naked hands resting against the bleach white shirt pronouncing their visibility. She looks side-eye directly at the viewer defiant, challenging, and almost dominating them through the frame. She is fully visible and engaging the gaze of any stranger who views her. Thus, the wealthy Arab woman is unengaged and invisible while the black African woman

²⁶ Leslie Peirce, "Seniority, Sexuality, And Social Order: The Vocabulary of Gender In Early Modern Ottoman Society," in *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Madeline Zilfi (New York: Brill, 1997), 184.

is fully revealed creating a mutual fear of visibility demarcated in the gaze from the seated woman towards the standing slave.

This photograph is a representation of female power structures between Algerian women. Gen Doy explains in her article “More Than Meets The Eye” that it “is important to remember when we are discussing images that represent “race” and women because on one level they do actually represent real women and the way these women looked at a particular time, but at the same time they construct and frame the woman from a position of gender and racial difference that tells us almost nothing about the woman herself as the subject of the image.”²⁷ While her argument does shed light on the lack of subjectivity of the models within the image, Moulin does observe a real dynamic between women and represents it within the studio space. At the same time, it is key to recognize that with French colonialism the depiction of female identities and power structures sheds light on a new relationality, a mutual fear of visibility, within the class and gender racializing assemblage in the medium of photography. In other words, French photographers were able to observe a pre-colonial social hierarchy between women, which they manipulated and modified as a form of visual control. Under colonial rule, fear of being visible to the French was eventually shared between the two women, which made the veil the site for being seen or unseen.

Older household structures, and tribal households changed due to political and economic pressures from colonialism.²⁸ After Charles X was deposed, he was quickly replaced by his cousin Louis-Philippe, the “Citizen King” (1830-1848). Louis-Philippe continued the military

²⁷ Doy Gen, "More than Meets the Eye," 307.

²⁸ Graham-Brown, *Images of Women*, 17.

campaign into Algeria hoping to legitimize the July Monarchy.²⁹ Like his cousin, in 1848, Louis-Philippe was also overthrown and succeeded by Charles-Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1828-52). Despite Louis-Philippe being overthrown, “France’s presence in Algeria was permanently solidified” due to extreme military missions (now described as genocidal acts).³⁰ Consequently, “war and economic disruption had reduced Algerian population to almost half its precolonial size from about 4 million to 2.3 million.”³¹ The 1848 Revolution dissolved the French monarchy and pushed military leadership in Algeria until the creation of the Third Republic (1870-1950). General Thomas-Robert Bugeaud led the French military campaign until his death in 1849. While Moulin’s photographic archive was created in 1856-57, he witnessed the legacy of Bugeaud’s “total war” and the social impact it had on Algerians,³² especially women who “had to fend for themselves” by finding work.³³ This was often visualized by European photographers as prostitution. Women and “gender relations indicated colonial difference” which allowed new forms of visible power structures to be invented and executed.³⁴

The “Algerian home represented a microcosm of the moral ordering of society” and while pre-1830 Algerian society practiced and participated in forms of social hierarchies like the slave trade, and ranked slaves lower than free elite individuals, this dynamic fluctuated during

²⁹ Jennifer E Sessions, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2011) 69.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 1.

³¹ *Ibid*, 162.

³² *Ibid*, 163.

³³ Marnia Lazreg, *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question* (New York: Routledge, 2014) 45.

³⁴ George R Trumbull, *An Empire of Facts: Colonial Power, Cultural Knowledge, and Islam in Algeria, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 183.

Bugeaud's reign of terror and thereafter.³⁵ The relationship between women represented by Moulin and other artists does show a very real power structure within indigenous Algerian society, but at the same time the photographs display a new connection between women as the relationality between them began to shift and alter through the perspective of French officials. Alary & Geiser, a photography studio based out of Algiers, pictured this fluctuating relationship between women in *Groupe de Mauresque*, from the album *Algerian cartes-de-visite* (1865) (Fig. 5). Two women stand on either side of the seated black woman in a man-made outdoor scene, the scenic backdrop and trees compress the three women into the space, squeezing them together. The woman standing on the left wears a large white *haik* that covers her face and body, while the woman standing on the right wears shalwar pants and a *melehfa* (robe). Her neck dons a simple necklace and her head a jewelry studded *chechia* (cap). She is unveiled. Sitting on a ledge the last woman wears an all-white ensemble with a loose veil draped over the back of her head. All three women look at the camera but reveal different levels of visibility based on class and race, even though all three have been labeled as "Moors." The French conflated the heterogeneous elements of Algerian society to create a typology of "Moorish women" who were "distinguished mainly by social class and profession" known only by "the costume serving as a critical marker" for both (as typified by the description of "Moorish" women in Robert Jungmann's lithograph).³⁶ Both women standing allude to their upper-class status either by veiling or jewelry, whereas, the black Algerian woman sits with her legs splayed cradling a plant, tying her to the land, and her past as a slave. Her unadorned body re-enforces her low-class status, pushing her visibility

³⁵ Ibid, 205.

³⁶ Smith, "Exoticism," 35.

forward, in comparison to the other two women. The two women standing then share a fear of being visibly portrayed with a lack of control over their bodies signalling their public status, or as similar to the seated black Algerian woman.

As the 19th century continued, gradually “Moor” became Arab transforming the racial categories “Moors, Turks, Kulughlis, Berbers, Arabs, and sub-Saharan peoples into indigenes... a category structured by legal and social inequality.”³⁷ In *Mauresque et négresse d' Alger* (Fig. 4) the Algerian woman lounges in the household, her body covered in a wealth of fabric. The French viewed this type of elite as “indolent in body and spirit” since she was an Algerian not labouring like her counterpart.³⁸ Thus, the mutual fear of visibility is noticeable in both *Mauresque et négresse d' Alger* (Fig. 4) and *Groupe de Mauresque* (Fig. 5) through the slow reconstruction of becoming invisible to visible. While the original hierarchies between class and gender reside in the images, the new articulation of mutual fear between the women stems from French perspective that is placed upon the women and their relationship.

For example, Swiss and French duo Alary & Geiser re-created a domestic scene between a young Algerian girl and her black child slave in the 1860s *Unknown* (Fig. 6). The Algerian girl stands to the right of the seated black child, holding her gaze as she looks down at her. Similar to the Algerian in *Mauresque et négresse d' Alger* (Fig. 4) the girl is wearing rich and fashionable clothing with jewelry. Her brightly patterned *kassaka* (pants) matches the delicate white tunic and bejeweled *chechia* (cap). She leans onto a plinth with flowers atop dominating the young black child below. She, the black child, sits cross legged in a torn blanched robe. Surrounded by

³⁷ Ibid, 23.

³⁸ Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 193.

plants on the ground that block parts of her hands and face and pull her into the environment suggesting a naturalness in the hierarchy between the two girls. Again, both girls are unveiled, but despite “concealment [being] tied to the social class” and status, it was different for youth or single women in elite households since they could grow into their invisibility once married.³⁹ Yet still in this differentiation, the young Algerian child recreates the female hierarchical relationship in the household based on class, gender, and race.

Within the household, “the hierarchy of females, the mother of the male provider of the house had the highest status as a matriarchal figure, after which came the wife or wives...often, race or color did figure into the positions, tasks, and status of servants and female slaves.”⁴⁰ Therefore, the first boundaries between women were formed through familial relationships during life-cycles. As children progressed through the life-cycle, different social responsibilities were expected breaking old barriers and re-creating new ones.⁴¹ For instance, “daughters served their apprenticeship to mothers and other senior women, who taught them particular domestic modes of their class and environment” such as how to veil their bodies and move through public spaces.⁴² Hence, the “life-cycle stage correlated with the degree to which an individual either exerted or was the object of social control.”⁴³ The matriarch teaches the child, through an element of control and power, how to disassociate herself from the other – in this case different children or women. Even between slaves and servants a classification existed with: “Light

³⁹ Smith, “Exoticism,” 40.

⁴⁰ Chouki El Hamel, “Surviving Slavery: Sexuality and Female Agency in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Morocco,” *Historical Reflections* 34, no. 1 (2008): 78.

⁴¹ Peirce, “Seniority,” 184.

⁴² Madeline Zilfi, “Servants, Slaves, and the Domestic Order in the Ottoman Middle East,” *Hawwa* 2, no. 1 (2004): 11.

⁴³ Peirce, “Seniority,” 185.

skinned Circassian⁴⁴ women were generally thought to be beautiful and were highly valued and ranked, but their numbers were few...while domestic slaves in the harem were usually blacks from Sub-Saharan Africa, they performed domestic duties and other menial tasks.”⁴⁵

Before the invasion of the French, under Ottoman rule, in the 18th century Galata Court in Istanbul, the narrative of lower-class women and slaves consisted of criminal activity and divorce, whereas records on Imperial or upper-class women were concerned with piety, and charity work.⁴⁶ So, “the poor were the objects of such manipulation of social hierarchies.”⁴⁷ In Algeria, after colonialism, female power structures between slaves, servants, lower class women and wealthy women, on the one hand remained the same, while on the other, transformed, or deterritorialized, through a mutual fear of visibility. More pointedly, while female hierarchies defined by class and gender existed in other places like the Ottoman Empire, it was in the Algerian context that female relationships visualized a fear of visibility due to French occupation. How the mutual fear of visibility moves in the racializing assemblages becomes more pronounced in French photography of Arab Algerians and the Islamic slave trade, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

⁴⁴ A Caucasian ethnic group from Circassia. Circassia women were highly expensive slaves due to their pale skin.

⁴⁵ Hamel, Chouki El. "Surviving Slavery," 78.

⁴⁶ Fatma Gocek and Marc Baer, "Social Boundaries of Ottoman Women's Experience in Eighteenth-Century Galata Court Records," in *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Madeline Zilfi (New York: Brill, 1997), 48.

⁴⁷ Peirce, "Seniority," 194.

Chapter 2: Flesh and the Veil: The Islamic Slave Trade and the Construction of Identity

In the 19th century racializing assemblage, class and gender are visualized by female hierarchies within a dawning colonial era. With the continuation of French invasion, French colonialism and Islamic law become the new appendages in this transformative ameba of racializing assemblages. The mutual fear of visibility established between the different classes of women remains, but also connects with a new articulation: the flesh. As I previously mentioned in my Introduction, flesh is the “captive...subject position” whereas the body is the “liberated...subject position.”⁴⁸ Flesh “represents both a temporal and conceptual antecedent to the body, it is not a biological occurrence seeing that its creation requires an elaborate apparatus consisting of the calculated work of iron, whips, chains, knives, the canine patrol, the bullet” among many other factors, including courts of law.⁴⁹ The mutual fear of being made visible by French photographers between the different women remains, while another connection is built in the new articulation of the flesh. French photographers captured these temporal and conceptual ideas of the flesh in the female power structures between black and Algerian women in Algeria during their visits throughout the 19th century.

In the early 1860s, Claude-Joseph Portier established his studio in Algiers, and was labeled a “veritable artist” by contemporary writer Charles Desprez.⁵⁰ He remained in Algeria

⁴⁸ Spillers, “Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe,” 67.

⁴⁹ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 39.

⁵⁰ Jacobson, *Odaliques & Arabesques*, 261.

photographing all genres and subjects until the 1880s, when he sold his studio to fellow photographer Alexandre Leroux.⁵¹ Leroux was “interested in photo-mechanical reproduction” and he was well-known for selling prints to tourists.⁵² Both men depicted the burgeoning female archetype laid out by Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin and Alary & Geiser. It is impossible to know if Portier and Leroux saw any of the images mentioned in previous chapters, however, the photographers were aware of each other. So much so, that Leroux and Alary & Geiser had competed against one another in photography competitions.⁵³ Regardless, all four artists depicted the unique Algerian relationship between women outlined in the previous chapter, while both Portier and Leroux went a step further and captured the flesh in the female power structure in their work. Before discussing how this was done in their photographs, it is important to understand how bodies, especially female bodies, were governed and subjugated in Algeria at this time.

French colonialism and Islamic law were intertwined in one of Algeria’s main exports since the early Middle Ages: the slave trade.⁵⁴ Slaves were kidnapped from Sudan and forced to walk across the Saharan desert to the oases where they were auctioned off into slavery.⁵⁵ In 1848, with pressure from the British, the French legally abolished slavery in all of their colonies – except in Algeria where it “was kept alive by a variety of forces, including the resilience of pre-colonial institutions, clandestine practices adopted by slave traders and owners (especially

⁵¹ Ibid, 251.

⁵² Ibid, 251.

⁵³ Ibid, 251.

⁵⁴ John Ruedy, *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005) 30.

⁵⁵ Benjamin Claude Brower, "Rethinking Abolition in Algeria. Slavery and the "Indigenous Question,"" *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 49, no. 3 (2009): 813.

their ability to exploit ambiguities in the personal status of slaves), and, finally, a singular lack of will on the part of the colonial administration to enforce the full letter of the law.”⁵⁶ The French also wanted to control the trans-Saharan trade routes which could have led to “commercial and political dominion over the whole continent” thereby beating the British to resources in their competition to carve up Africa.⁵⁷ French officials ignored the moral problems of continuing slavery in Algeria in favour of practical and economic issues by “preferring to compromise the law in order to accommodate slaveholding elites and thereby achieve social order.”⁵⁸ This convoluted connection between French colonials and slaves is even further complicated when the religious and sociopolitical aspects of Algerian society are taken into consideration as well, and the prominence of Islamic law in the day-to-day lives of the women reflected in these photographs.

Under Islamic law a Muslim could purchase a female slave—either as his concubine or domestic helper—without penalty.⁵⁹ The slave could only obtain her freedom if she became an Umm al-walad (mother concubine) by having her master’s child, or if he granted her manumission.⁶⁰ The latter was less likely, whereas the former seemed to dominate in terms of reality. Luckily, the “children of concubinage [received] the same rights as legitimate free children” and the “Umm al-walad also [gained] some legal rights,” though she “didn’t have the same legal status as wives under Islamic law.”⁶¹ In particular, female slaves had a difficult time

⁵⁶ Ibid, 806.

⁵⁷ Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 7.

⁵⁸ Benjamin Claude Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009) 160.

⁵⁹ Hamel, Chouki El. "Surviving Slavery," 77.

⁶⁰ The personal act of an owner freeing his/ her slave.

⁶¹ Ibid, 77; 82.

seeking freedom from French authorities when oftentimes her master would claim her to be married to him (or another slave) and “Muslim law continued to sanction servitude.”⁶² Furthermore, an Islamic rule was that Muslims could not be enslaved so the slave trade was heavily focused on race and skin colour in this region. Benjamin Brower writes in his book *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902*, that in Muslim societies, “local forms of race thinking” such as “religious ethnography. . . equated skin color with unbelief, thereby deploying symbolic violence to legitimate the exploitation of people of color.”⁶³ So much so that black freeborn Muslims rights were ignored.⁶⁴ This is unsurprising since there are many accounts by black slaves as being born free Muslims who are sold into slavery.⁶⁵ The veil becomes of upmost importance here and central to the concept of visibility discussed in this thesis since it is the veil that could signal a visible Muslim follower. Therefore, withholding the veil as a form of religious cover for black African women is violence exacted on the body and exposes the flesh – the marker of her difference and as an individual who could be manipulated by the ambiguities of the legal systems. She is forcibly revealed outside of the protection of the veil and the legal system it represents, unlike her superior who remains safe and hidden beneath the veil and the law. Suffering then “becomes the defining feature of those subjects excluded from the law, the national community, humanity, and so on

⁶² Dennis D Cordell, "No Liberty, Not Much Equality, and very Little Fraternity: The Mirage of Manumission in the Algerian Sahara in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Slavery & Abolition: Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* 19, no. 2 (1998): 51. Escaped slaves continued to appeal to French officials for asylum or legal freedom after 1848 until World War I (Cordell, 46)

⁶³ Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 147.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 151.

⁶⁵ Benjamin Brower gives a detailed account of such an incidence in his book *A Desert Named Peace*.

due to the political violence inflicted upon them” which could all be viewed in the female population by the forceful withholding of the veil.⁶⁶ Interestingly, the movement of the mutual fear of visibility comes to head between the Algerian woman and the black African slave because both fear being stripped of their body for flesh under the law. In other words, the Algerian woman fears the same exposed flesh by the French that is being forced onto black African slaves.

This fear is realized in the early 1860s when in 1863 and 1865 the French government questioned indigenous citizenship and as a result proposed two *senatus-consultes*. The first argued “to protect native property from the colons” and the other “the desirability of introducing the Muslims to the benefit of a nineteenth century liberal order.”⁶⁷ The second *consultes* stated that “Algerians were French and...were ruled under Muslims law” but “they were not citizens of France”⁶⁸ and “in order to become citizens, they would have to renounce their Muslim civil status and agree to live under French law.”⁶⁹ The connection of mutual fear of visibility and flesh collides with the Algerian woman sliding from personhood to ethnic type and not-quite human. Both women share the spasmodic connection formed in the racializing assemblages, which is visualized in the composition of their bodies.

Thus, being made visible to the French simply perpetuated a continued violence of the flesh by elite Algerians and French officials to black Africans. The violation of flesh shown through French action (or lack thereof) is seen in the exposed faces of black slaves alongside

⁶⁶ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 75.

⁶⁷ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 74.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 75.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 76.

veiled Algerian women in French photography. In *Mauresque et Nègresse* (Fig. 7) the veil tightly tied around the body of the black woman exposes her face, neck and left ear. The implication is that the veil represents the non-legal body or the flesh; therefore, she is without personhood, or is forced into an identity constructed by Islamic and French law (both working in tandem). Essentially, she is deemed non-human based on her legal status shown through the interaction between visibility and the veil. For instance, in relation to the wealthy woman, the black flesh or veil is “borne of political violence” through hierarchization and through this differentiation. It shows the “ways the law pugnaciously adjudicates who is deserving of personhood and who is not.”⁷⁰ Since the black woman’s face is visible, it implies that she is not a middle or upper class or a Muslim woman, and therefore, lacks any markers towards her own personhood.

All of this is captured in Portier’s *Mauresque et Nègresse* (1868) (Fig.7) where two women stand shoulder to shoulder gazing in opposite directions. The Algerian woman on the left wears an all-white *kassaka* and *haik*, covering her face, her hands grasping the veil to keep it in place. Beside her, the black African woman (slave) stands wrapped in a checkered robe tied around the top of her head trailing down and around her body. Her face is revealed, and the tilt of her head exposes her neck. The fabric background shows ancient ruins and the white twirling pillars placed haphazardly beside each woman are used to imply an outdoor scene. In the criss-cross gazes of the two women in Portier’s full length studio portrait, neither of the women are looking at each other, but both bodies form a V-shape, mirroring each other’s stance. Moreover,

⁷⁰ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 11.

despite the gigantic studio space, the women are positioned tightly together in this mirroring stance—nearly overlapping their bodies and becoming one.

The veil in this scene is prevalent as a marker of indigenous hierarchies of class, gender, and the law discussed above. The literal veil is a sign of social class and profession as concealment indicated status while exposure inferiority.⁷¹ For the slave, the veil also becomes flesh since she is forcibly visible, not only through class and gender, but through legal status. While the Algerian woman maintains her power and status, new and dominating power structures (French colonialism on the one hand, and Islamic law on the other) still use the women's bodies as a site to implement their strength of forced subjectivity. Black African women, however, have no control over how their bodies are represented in the social, and for this reason, they are fully visible. The prohibition from covering their faces, and most importantly, their identities, states that they are dispossessed because they are forcibly revealed, and, simultaneously rejected. Unlike Moulin or Alary & Geiser's photographs, these two women are not wearing refined *haiks* or robes, but simple, almost ratty attire. Both have bare legs with the exact same black slipper simply re-enforcing their sliding perceived personhood.

Similarly, Alexandre Leroux's collotype *Mauresque, costume de ville et Negresse, sa servante*, c. 1870 (Fig. 8) represents the black servant "type" on the left and the Algerian woman on the right. True to the archetype I have discussed in this project, the slave is unveiled and slightly opens her checkered pattern *haik* to reveal her white robe underneath. Her partner is covered in a white *haik* that hides her face except for her dark eyes that engage with the viewer. The women are the centre of the photograph without any other cultural indicators. The fully dark

⁷¹ Smith, "Exoticism," 35; 40.

background and compact frame push the women into the viewer, intimately. On the surface this image may seem to “perpetuate and encode images of Africa” that greatly appeal to western imagination as well as “[reinforce]the viewers knowledge about Africa and its peoples.”⁷² But this image does not fit the sexualized orientalist figuration of exotic bodies. Rather, here, the women’s bodies have morphed into a covered fleshy mass, interchangeable with other fleshy bodies.⁷³ The Arab woman fears the mutuality of visibility and identification with the black African slave; thus, the shared fear peaks. Again, both women are tied together in this claustrophobic composition through the lack of care in signaling indigenous power dynamics between women, but rather a severely constructed identity based on French hierarchization and differentiation. Furthermore, postcards and carte-de-visite become literal signs of flesh consigning these women to a non-human status.

Postcards and carte-de-visite “functioned more as a commodity designed to appeal to a broad consumer base” as a way to boost tourism to Algeria.⁷⁴ By 1870, Algeria was a country recovering from “four successive years of natural disasters, which had included drought, insect infestation, earthquake, and epidemics” that reduced native lives and “seriously affected economic stability.”⁷⁵ With a dwindling populace, France pushed French and European immigrants to Algeria in order to maintain the authority in North Africa. Creating images of

⁷² Christraud M Geary, “Different Visions? Postcards from Africa by European and African Photographers and Sponsors” in *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards*, ed. Christraud M Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 150.

⁷³ Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 39.

⁷⁴ Goldsworthy, “Images, Ideologies, and Commodities,” 164.

⁷⁵ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 77.

Algeria and Algerians, whether in a studio space, or documentary style, gave the foreign (European) buyer ease of accessibility to North African bodies. The photograph or postcard became a meaningful possession to its buyer where it became part of a personalized album. The market economy for these images meant that women's bodies were easily commodified and disseminated quickly around the globe. The commodification of women's bodies reduces their subjectivity: for the slaves, commodification is simply repeated, but for the Algerian (free) woman, she is both commodified and colonized. Both women, trapped together in the small space of a carte-de-visite or postcard, also became a new form of fast communication. The buyer of the image could write on the card itself further displacing the women's subjectivity. Therefore, the women become sites of circulation in a marketplace, like the bodies of slaves, marking their flesh. I continue exploring this slippage in Chapter 3 where I investigate how the French perceived each woman individually, and as a result, a new assemblage in the power dynamic between them and the French form.

Chapter 3: The Female Body as a Site of Colonial Catastrophe

Depicted by Moulin in 1856-57 in the album *L'Algérie photographiée: Province d'Alger, Négresses. Marchandes de kak (petits pains) (Alger)* (Fig. 9) shows two women selling bread in a man-made market. The woman on the left sits with one knee over the other, her barefoot resting on her black slipper. Wrapped in a light striped checkered veil and robe she stares directly into the camera lens. Standing beside her, another black African woman cocoons herself in a dark checkered veil, also engaging the stare of the lens. In between both women is a basket full of thin bread rings. Similarly, in the album *Algerian cartes-de-visite, Unknown, 1865*, (Fig. 10) by Alary & Geiser, a black African woman sits on a box offering thin bagel rings to the viewer. Like the other women in Moulin's photograph, she too wears a loose checkered veil around her body. The piles of bread in *Négresses. Marchandes de kak (petits pains) (Alger)* (Fig. 9) and *Unknown* (Fig.10) act as one of the focal points, drawing the viewer to the overflowing baskets. In the first photograph, the bread dominates the foreground, each ring carefully placed, and in the second image, the woman is surrounded by two bread baskets – one beside her and one in the centre.

These women with their bursting baskets of bread refer to one of the main narratives of agricultural fecundity constructed by the French to justify their actions in Algeria. The black female body of the bread seller became a highly visible motif in French visual culture surrounding their Algerian colony. This chapter will focus on the visibility of the body expressed through the staged photographs of the bread seller and how they tied into the manipulation of bodies and the land for French colonial interests in Algeria. The agricultural program of the French not only emphasised the natural resources of the geography but also the bodies that

populated it, tying black bodies to the land as resources to be utilized themselves. Following this I will examine how female bodies were eroticized in another form of commodification available to the French in the colony.

The French agricultural program became pivotal in colonizing North Africa and created a new form of visual imagery. During the invasion of Algeria in 1830, Charles X of France (1824-1830) part of the Bourbon Restoration, promoted a full seizure of the country's land. French military planners based their knowledge and expertise on Thomas Shaw's book *Travels, Or Observations Relating To Several Parts Of Barbary And The Levant*, 1793 where he describes in great detail the agriculture in Algeria:

“the soil is generally fertile...ranging from staples such as wheat, barley and rice giving higher yields than their European counterparts, to garden vegetables such as turnips, carrots, and cabbages of prodigious size, all of the fruit trees of Europe, and more exotic items such as date palms and the sidra tree.”⁷⁶

Using this description, the French based their military campaigns around a mirage of fertile landscapes ripe for the taking. French officials wanted to “construct a new colonial system” that viewed Algeria as an extension of France.⁷⁷ So much so, that this new colony became “a society of European farmers” rather than a commercial colonization with plantations like in the Caribbean.⁷⁸ Essentially, France wanted to have “settler colonialism replace the natives on their land.”⁷⁹ France attempted to create this new colony by “dismantling the tribal and legal

⁷⁶ Sessions, *By Sword and Plow*, 50.

⁷⁷ Ibid 179.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 179.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 180.

structures” that upheld Algerian society.⁸⁰ Met with resistance and horror by local Algerians, French officials fought back by “burning and scorching, seiz[ing] by force, confiscate[ing], appropriate[ing] and reallocate[ing].”⁸¹ After land seizures, the French insisted that local populations “store or sell their grains at the French controlled market towns of Laghouat, Djelfa, or el-Hamman” as a way to “force the submission of Saharans without engaging in costly battles,” making food insecurity the French weapon of choice.⁸² Met with even more local resistance and war after these actions, Thomas Robert Bugeaud, the Governor General of Algeria, began to argue for “extermination” of Arabs and Berbers, and in turn, “the possibility of using slaves to solve the indigenous question.”⁸³ In essence, Bugeaud authorized the plan to purchase “thousands of captives from Saharan slave traders, who would be brought from areas such as, the Sokoto Califate, Borno, and the Niger Bend region, to Algeria.”⁸⁴ Then, given minimal liberation, the slaves would work the land and/ or join the French military indentured to the French state since all slaves are “docile, hard working, and healthy... loyal to the French, [and] [who] would drive out the troublesome people of Algeria.”⁸⁵ The black female body, represented as a bread seller, becomes highly visible to French ideology at this time, closely tied to colonial land and the new agricultural program.

In Moulin’s photograph the woman standing is completely covered, except for her face and feet. She resembles the representation of an Algerian woman rather than the typical black

⁸⁰ Ruedy, *Modern Algeria*, 1.

⁸¹ Deborah Cherry, *Beyond the Frame Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850 -1900* (London: Routledge, 2000) 78.

⁸² Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 106; 69.

⁸³ Brower, "Rethinking Abolition," 811.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 807.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 807.

African slave as previously discussed in this thesis. Separated from the female power dynamic she becomes visibly regarded by the French as a body better than Arab Algerians since she is associated with grain and through that the benefit of the empire. Furthermore, all the women in the photographs stare at the camera with pleasant expressions. In Alary & Gesier's image, the woman's expression is warm, welcoming, and open, very similar to Moulin's models—the opposite of how they are represented alongside Algerian women. The change in expression is drastic and visibly shows the forced personhood violently applied on the site of black women's bodies in order to achieve full submission.⁸⁶ For example, in *Unknown* (Fig. 10) the bread seller hands a ring of baked dough to the viewer (buyer) from between her legs, thus, engaging in an intimate power dynamic with the photographer and viewer—the woman being inferior. Her body then becomes commodified and symbolized by the bread; first, to the viewer and then to the buyer of the image. After land seizures, the French insisted that local populations give their grain supply to French officials, so that they could control who could eat and who could starve.⁸⁷ The political violence towards Algerians transcends from cultural violence to the black female body in the form of photography and its open form of consumption and circulation. The consumption of bodies in Algeria by the French was not limited to the black body and the ideas of agriculture attached to it. It also included the Algerian body through the eroticization of the foreign. It is in this invisible relationship between the openness of the black African slave connected to Algerian resources, with the openness of the female Arab/ Algerian body connected to eroticism, that the act of viewing and becoming visible to the French becomes the most connected with brutality.

⁸⁶ Cherry, *Beyond the Frame*, 78.

⁸⁷ Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*, 106; 69.

Visibility oscillates from seen (unveiled) and unseen (veiled) to both women being coercively noticed. While the black woman becomes the political site of French ideology, the Algerian woman becomes forcibly sexualized. It is this relation in visibility—the “neatly ordered universe of African racial “types,” thereby achieving the visual control of the black body” and Arab body—where the mutual fear of visibility becomes a newly formed assemblage.⁸⁸ Flesh, then, is the main articulation moving between all of the racializing assemblages, including the new identity of the Algerian woman. In other words, for both women, forced self-hood is “an act of strife between being and non-being” through French perspective.⁸⁹ The veiled Algerian woman does not want to be associated with the working, laborious, black fleshy body linked to low status and a forced French identity. And yet, the cultural violence inflicted on the Algerian woman morphs into openness and accessibility alluding to prostitution. Therefore, their mutual fear of visibility heightens forming a new kind of mutual relation based on the flesh.

This change is best seen in Moulin’s soft pornographic representation of exotic women in his Paris based studio. In the album *Etudes Photographiques, Unknown* (1853) (Fig. 11) illustrates two women relaxing in a studio setting designed to replicate the imaginary harems of Orientalist paintings. As they sit and recline on a divan covered with a leopard print blanket, while thick curtains hang open behind them—alluding to sexual encounters with the two women. The light skinned woman on the right lays on her side, her body following the curvaceous contours of the sofa. Pearl beads hang around her thin neck and a white gauzy material drapes

⁸⁸ Christraud M Geary, “The Black Female Body, the Postcard, and the Archives,” in *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body*, ed. by Barbara Thompson, (Seattle: Hood Museum of Art, 2008) 151.

⁸⁹ Ranjana Khanna, *Dark Continent* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 4.

around her shoulders, framing her breasts and abdomen. With one finger in her mouth, she playfully stares at the camera. Beside her, a black woman sits on end of the prop in an awkward position; one leg slung over the white woman with fabric wrapped around her thigh covering her crouch, and the other leg behind her. She is wearing a head wrap and beads which ignites the “imaginary orient” in the viewer.⁹⁰ Unlike the other woman, she looks away from the camera, dismayed and uncomfortable: naked. In contrast to this image and the representation of exotic bodies is another photograph labeled “*A Moorish Woman with Her Maid*,” (1856) (Fig. 12), the woman on the right is dressed in traditional Ouled Nail costume but labeled a “Moor” by Moulin. Her head is covered with an elaborate headdress and a veil that falls behind her, and her body is covered with a white robe and a thick brown belt. The robe is hiked up to her pelvis exposing her long legs as they stretch across the makeshift pillow sofa. Holding her bangled covered feet is a black woman. She too wears a head covering and a white veil and robe with a checkered *haik* covering her legs but exposing her arms. Neither woman looks at the camera, and simply ignores the gaze of photographer and viewer.

What is fascinating about these two images is the shift of French perception of flesh and visibility. In the first image, *Unknown*, both women are sexualized, whereas in the second, only the Algerian woman implies desire. Therefore, flesh becomes the only and main articulation between the new assemblage of mutual fear of visibility since “Africa has often been equated metaphorically with a mysterious, sensual virgin to be conquered”⁹¹ leaving these “lacerations left on the captive body” as ones of desire, sexuality, and labour. Cultural and political violence

⁹⁰ Doy Gen, "More than Meets the Eye," 306.

⁹¹ Raymond Corbey, "Alterity: The Colonial Nude," *Critique of Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (1988): 6.

are “rooted in the visual truth-value accorded to quasi-biological distinctions between different human groupings” of the flesh.⁹²

The photographs of female couples reflecting multiple power dynamics and racializing assemblages leads to a new fissure of differentiation and hierarchization based on the centralizing factor of the French photographers. All the male French photographers discussed in this paper documented the shifting, moving boundaries of power as visualized in the female dynamic. The outcome of this constant transformation is porous boundaries of self-hood that leave permanent marks, traces, debris on the bodies of marginalized women.

⁹² Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 40.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The “Moor and Her Slave” pairing is unique to the Algerian context since it shows the relationship between the 19th century Algerian racializing assemblage and the articulations of the mutual fear of visibility and flesh in French photography. As I have explored in this thesis, the female couple’s relationality hinges on either being visible or invisible (through the veil), and thereby revealing the sociopolitical hierarchies. First, in the Algerian household, the power dynamic between black slaves, wealthy mistresses, and then children, while previously existing before the French invasion of 1830, the new medium of photography was able to represent the cultural implications of visibility and invisibility within female hierarchies, but also demonstrate the power and control France had over Algeria and its people. Photographer’s Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin and Alary & Geiser, clearly represent the power dynamic in the household through the veiling of wealthy woman and the unveiling of black African slaves and children. At the same time, both photographers implicate French ideology through the bodies of women. The articulation of the female dynamic evolved from the family and household, to the law and French perceptions. Claude-Joseph Portier, and Alexandre Leroux visualized the black female body as lawless during the Islamic slave trade by showing them as unveiled and open for public consumption. The black African woman’s identity is lost since French and Algerian perceptions conflate and construct a new personhood. The wealthy Algerian woman fears this new form of construction and attempts to remain veiled, and unseen. However, the construction of a new personhood exploited for market economy shatters previous female conceptions for a new visibility; despite being different social and economic levels, both women are subjected to bodily domination and control through masculine visibility. I investigate this further in the last chapter

which compares black African women as bread sellers in the marketplace, to naked, and sexualized Algerian women. The mutual fear of visibility peaks since both women are unveiled and therefore, fully visible and open to French manipulation. What is truly revealing is how the French political dynamics alongside indigenous female hierarchies were visualized and mapped onto the female body.

Visualizing women and women's relationships is a subject that needs to be explored more among feminists. My hope is that this paper is the beginning of such a process in a shifting and changing landscape of 19th century North Africa.

Figures



Figure 1. *Mauresque et Mulatresse (Moorish Woman and Black Woman)*, 1895. In Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950*, (London: Quartet Books, 1988), 79.

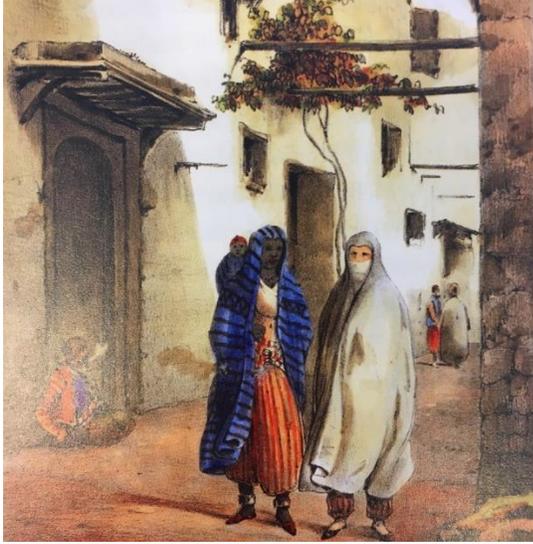


Figure 2. Robert Jungmann, *Moorish Women Outside Their Home* from Jungmann's *Costumes, moeurs et usages*, 1837. Coloured lithograph. In Julia Ann Clancy-Smith *Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City through Text and Image*, (Getty Research Institute, 2009), 36.



Figure 3. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, *Mauresque et négresse d'Alger (costume de ville)*. In his album *L'Algérie photographiée : Province d'Alger*, 1856-7. Negative on a collodion glass plate. Found at The Bibliothèque nationale de France. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10537612z/f185.item.r=algeria>



Figure 4. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, *Mauresque et négresse d' Alger*. In his album *Vues d'Algérie, portraits d'Algériens et de personnalités françaises en Algérie*, 1856-7. Negative on a collodion glass plate. Found at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8451497f/f33.item.r=algeria.zoom>.



The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. ID no. gfi_91_r_8_034. Digital images and files are provided for study purposes only. Copyright restrictions may apply to some images. For copyright information or higher resolution images visit: http://hdl.handle.net/10020/vpss_gern

Figure 5. Alary & Geiser, *Groupes Mauresque*. In their album *Algerian cartes-de-visite*. Cartes-de-visite, 1865. The Getty Museum.

https://rosettaapp.getty.edu/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE277607.



Foto: Alary & Geiser

Vänersborgs museum

Figure 6. Alary & Geiser, *Unknown*, Algiers, 1867-68. Cartes-de visite. The Vänersborg Museum. <https://digitaltmuseum.se/011015260060/kvinna>.

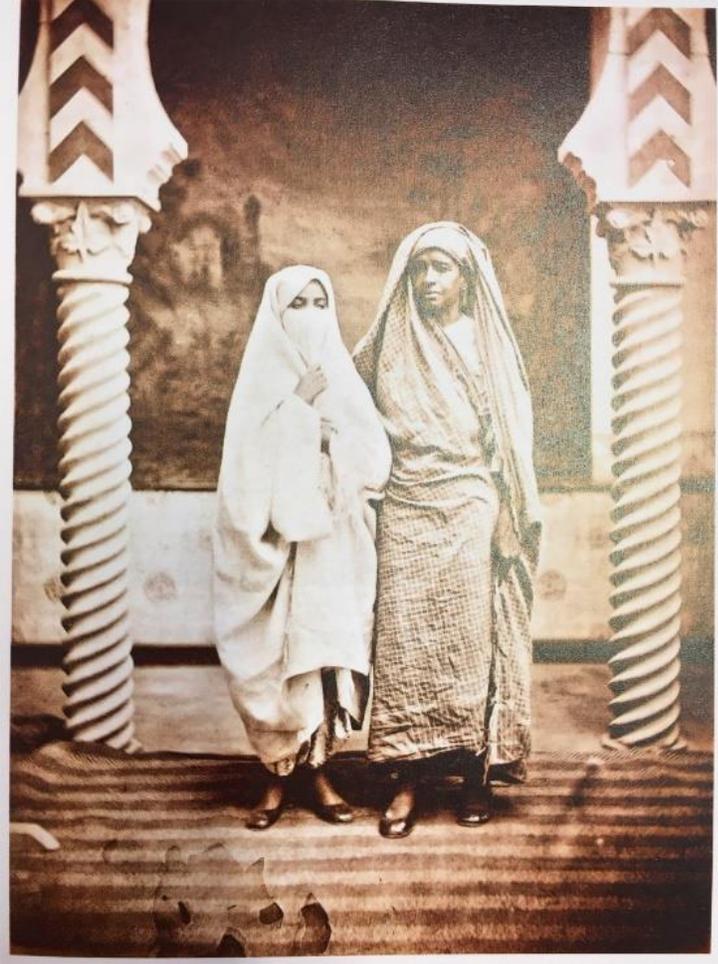


Figure 7. Claude-Joseph Portier, *Moorish Woman and Her Servant*, 1868. In Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, *Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City through Text and Image*, (Getty Research Institute, 2009) 41.

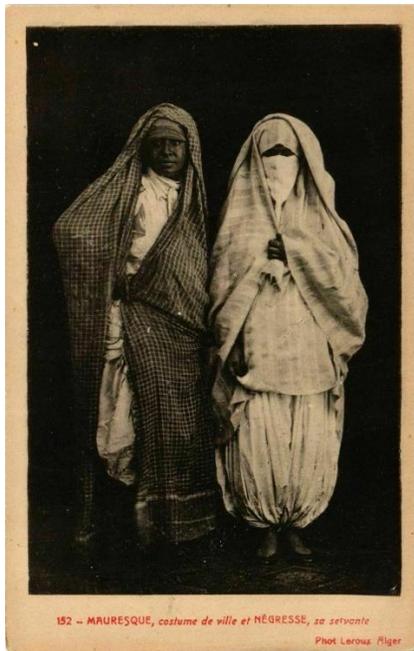
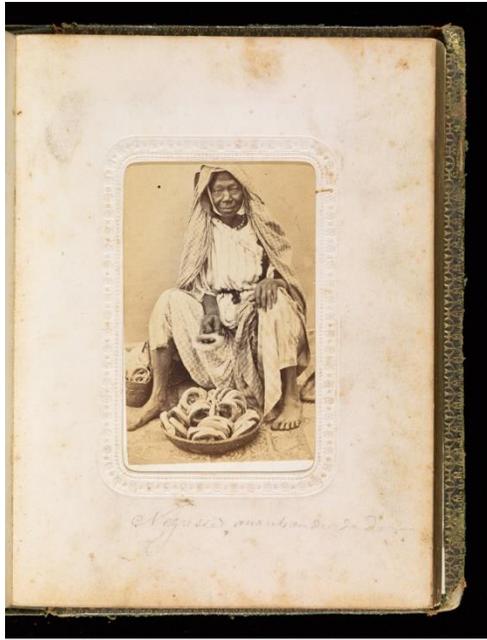


Figure 8. Alexandre Leroux, *Unknown*, c.1870. Postcard. Found at <https://picclick.fr/CPA-AK-Leroux-152-Mauresques-costume-de-ville-223503932472.html>



Figure 9. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, *Négresses. Marchandes de kak (petits pains) (Alger)*. In his album *L'Algérie photographiée : Province d'Alger*, 1856-57. Negative on a collodion glass plate. Found at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10537612z/f182.item.r=algeria>.



The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. ID no.: gr_91_r_6_033. Digital images and files are provided for study purposes only. Copyright restrictions may apply to some images. For copyright information or higher resolution images visit: http://hdl.handle.net/10020/vpro_perm

Figure 10. Alary & Geiser, *Unknown*, 1865. In their album *Algerian cartes-de-visite*. Cartes-de-visite. The Getty Museum.

https://rosettaapp.getty.edu/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE277607



Figure 11. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, *Unknown*, 1853. In his album *Etudes Photographiques*. Photograph. In Gen Doy "More than Meets the Eye ... Representations of Black Women in Mid-19th-Century French Photography" *Women's Studies International Forum* 21, no. 3 (1998), 308.



Figure 12. Félix Jacques-Antoine Moulin, *A Moorish Woman with Her Maid*, 1856. Albumen silver print. The Getty Museum. <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/98953/felix-jacques-moulin-a-moorish-woman-with-her-maid-french-about-1856/>.

Bibliography

- Alloula, Malek. *The Colonial Harem*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Brower, Benjamin Claude. *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Brower, Benjamin Claude. "Rethinking Abolition in Algeria. Slavery and the "Indigenous Question."" *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 49, no. 3 (2009): 805-828.
- Behdad, Ali. "Mediated Visions: Early Photography of the Middle East and Orientalist Network, History of Photography." *History of Photography* 41:4 (2017): 362-375.
- Cherry, Deborah. *Beyond the Frame Feminism and Visual Culture, Britain 1850 -1900*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Clancy-Smith Ann Julia. "Exoticism, Erasures, And Absence: The Peopling of Algiers, 1830-1900." In *Walls of Algiers: Narratives of the City through Text and Image*, edited by Çelik, Zeynep, Julia Ann Clancy-Smith, Frances Terpak, and Getty Research Institute, 19-62. Getty Research Institute, 2009.
- Corbey, Raymond. "Alterity: The Colonial Nude." *Critique of Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (1988): 75-92.
- Cordell, Dennis D. "No Liberty, Not Much Equality, and very Little Fraternity: The Mirage of Manumission in the Algerian Sahara in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century." *Slavery & Abolition: Slavery and Colonial Rule in Africa* 19, no. 2 (1998): 38-56.
- Doy, Gen. "More than Meets the Eye ... Representations of Black Women in Mid-19th-Century French Photography." *Women's Studies International Forum* 21, no. 3 (1998): 305-319.
- Geary, Christraud M. "Different Visions? Postcards from Africa by European and African Photographers and Sponsors." In *Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards*, edited by Christraud M Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, 147-78. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.
- Geary, Christraud M. "The Black Female Body, the Postcard, and the Archives." In *Black Womanhood: Images, Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body*, edited by Barbara Thompson, 143-62. Seattle: Hood Museum of Art, 2008.
- Ghabrial Sarah. "The "Slave Wife" Between Private Household and Public Order in Colonial Algeria (1848–1906)." In *Slavery in the Islamic World Its Characteristics and Commonality*, edited by Mary Ann Fay, 179-202. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

- Gocek, Fatma and Baer, Marc. "Social Boundaries of Ottoman Women's Experience in Eighteenth-Century Galata Court Records." In *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, edited by Madeline Zilfi, 48-65. New York: Brill, 1997.
- Goldsworthy, Patricia. "Images, Ideologies, and Commodities: The French Colonial Postcard Industry in Morocco." *Early Popular Visual Culture* 8, no. 2 (2010): 147-167.
- Graham-Brown, Sarah. *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950*. London: Quartet Books, 1988.
- Hamel, Chouki El. "Surviving Slavery: Sexuality and Female Agency in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Morocco." *Historical Reflections* 34, no. 1 (2008): 73-88.
- Hannoosh, Michèle. "Practices of Photography: Circulation and Mobility in the Nineteenth-Century Mediterranean." *History of Photography* 40, no. 1 (2016): 3-27.
- Jacobson, Ken. *Odaliques & Arabesques: Orientalist Photography 1839-1925*. London: Quaritch, 2007.
- Khanna, Ranjana. *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003.
- Lazreg, Marnia. *The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question*. New York: Routledge, 2014.
- McDougall, Ann E. "'What Is Islamic About Slavery in Muslim Societies?'" Cooper, Concubinage and Contemporary Legacies of 'Islamic Slavery' in North, West and East Africa." In *Slavery in the Islamic World Its Characteristics and Commonality*, edited by Mary Ann Fay, 7-36. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- Peirce, Leslie. "Seniority, Sexuality, And Social Order: The Vocabulary of Gender In Early Modern Ottoman Society." In *Women in the Ottoman Empire: Middle Eastern Women in the Early Modern Era*, edited by Madeline Zilfi, 169-196. New York: Brill, 1997.
- Ruedy, John. *Modern Algeria: The Origins and Development of a Nation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Sessions, Jennifer E. *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2011.
- Spillers, Hortense J. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Culture and Countermemory: The "American" Connection* 17, no 2 (Summer 1987): 64-81.
- Trumbull, George R. *An Empire of Facts: Colonial Power, Cultural Knowledge, and Islam in Algeria, 1870-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Walz, Terence and Cuno M. Kenneth. "Introduction: The Study of Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Egypt, Sudan and the Ottoman Mediterranean." In *Race and Slavery in the Middle East: Histories of Trans-Saharan Africans in Nineteenth-Century Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Mediterranean*, edited by Terence Walz and Kenneth M. Cuno, 1-17. New York: American University in Cairo Press, 2010.

Weheliye, Alexander G. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014.