

***The Light in Her Eyes* – A film by Julie Meltzer and Laura Nix**

Homework Questions:

What did you learn from this film? What questions do you still have? (List at least one question)

Describe a moment or scene in the film that you found particularly moving or disturbing. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling to you?

The Light in Her Eyes – A film by Julie Meltzer and Laura Nix

Group Discussion Questions:

1. One way Houda justifies teaching women and girls and encouraging them to seek education in the mosque and beyond is by saying, “If a mother never learns, how can she teach the next generation? A woman is a school. If you teach her, you teach an entire generation.” What are the potential dangers and benefits of justifying learning for girls by saying they need it in order to be good mothers?

2. In the film, we see television footage of traditional clerics describing their understanding of what Islam requires:
 - Saad Al-Khathlan: *Regarding women’s prayer – praying at home is better than in the mosque. The Prophet said “Their homes are better for them.”*
 - Wagdy Ghoneim: *Our Lord created 4 duties for women that no one can argue with: 1. Reproduce. 2. Raise the children. 3. Take care of her husband. 4. The house.*

How would Houda hope that her students would respond to such declarations? What would she want them to say or do? How might the clerics respond to Houda’s declaration that, “Muslims themselves have deprived women of everything, even the right to learn, teach, and enter the mosque. This is ignorance which has nothing to do with religion.”?

3. Houda’s daughter, Enas, says, “The tradition of memorizing Quran is not an obligation, but I believe that it’s a way of protecting yourself...For girls, it’s very important to learn what is in the Quran because, if you don’t really know what is the true thing, you are going to be misled.” How does knowledge of the Quran offer protection? In what ways does studying Quran in Houda’s school give women a voice or empower them? In what ways might it constrain women’s voices or limit their power?

Quran Excerpts on Women in Islam

Although it is a part of Islamic tradition, hijab is not strictly defined in the Quran. It is often a personal and cultural notion, not a religious one. Expression of hijab varies within the Muslim world according to interpretation. The following URLs will show verses of the Quran that offer insight into hijab and relevant ideas about respect, modesty, and privacy.

Read and listen to text from the Quran excerpts online using the URLs below. Discuss your observations with your group and develop two compelling level B questions, (specific to the subject but with an arguable response), and decide on two conclusions you can take away from these translations.

<http://www.islamawakened.com/quran/33/33/default.htm>

<http://www.islamawakened.com/quran/24/31/default.htm>

<http://www.islamawakened.com/quran/24/30/default.htm>

Conclusion 1:

Conclusion 2:

Question 1:

Question 2:

National Geographic Images of Women in Islam

Observe the images on the slide show on the URL below, making sure to read the captions that accompany each image. Also look at and discuss the printed pictures.

http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/media/hijab/?ar_a=1

Discuss your observations with your group and develop two compelling level B questions, (specific to the subject but with an arguable response), and decide on two conclusions you can take away from these images and their captions.

Conclusion 1:

Conclusion 2:

Question 1:

Question 2:

Inside Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think – Unity Productions Foundation

The tragedy on Sept. 11, 2001 led many in Western society to questions what had led to so much perceived anger in the Muslim world towards the United States. In an effort to unveil what perceptions existed between the Muslim and the Western world, (as well as what misunderstandings were prevalent), pollsters set to work creating a questionnaire that would address a whole range of beliefs, (some that were not related to 9/11 but that shed light on other beliefs and influences in people's lives in the Muslim world). Polling was done face to face by polling directors on a mission to inform the world and avoid political bias or media spin. The documentary analyzes the expertly gathered opinions of Muslims around the globe as revealed in the world's first major Muslim opinion poll, conducted by Gallup, the foremost polling organization. The film was broadcast on select PBS stations during 2008 and 2009 and still has implications today.

The section we will be watching highlights the data collected on gender issues between Islam and Western society. Take notes below as we watch the 8 minute segment. Are there any connections that you see between the data and what you discussed in your groups?

Miss Undastood – *Hijab is the One Thing*

Directions: Using the link below, listen to the song *Hijab is the One Thing* by Miss Undastood. Read the lyrics as you listen and make annotations of things that surprise you, make you laugh, make you mad, or make you think. Discuss your observations with your group and develop two compelling level B questions, (specific to the subject but with an arguable response), and decide on two conclusions you can take away from this song.

Defining Middle Ground: The Next Generation of Muslim New
Yorkers <http://web.jrn.columbia.edu/newmedia/2007/Masters/Islam/NewFinal.swf>

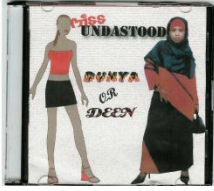
Annotations:

Conclusion 1:

Conclusion 2:

Question 1:

Question 2:



“Hijab is the One Thing”

All my sisters still rocking hijab at their job,
You a mujahidah because hijab’s a jihad
[struggle].
I’m not new to this, I’m true to this just like
that,
Besides, Jesus’ mother didn’t dress like that.
Believing women don’t one-two step like that
I’m not harassed by men with their lust,
They don’t be sizin’ me up by my hair, clothes
and makeup.
I’m liberated, educated, making a statement,
And your self-hate is blatant – implants,
contacts, weave,
Now we know you’re fakin’ it.
I’m not thinking about the French ban,
And no I’m not married,
I’m not wearin’ this for no man.
French President said head-scarves gotta go!
Democracy is hypocrisy,
And we gotta look at it
From a bigger perspective.
Take away our freedom,
What’s the objective?

Consider our duty,
Beliefs are in the mind,
That’s why I don’t strip,
That’s why I rhyme.
Consider outer beauty,
Release the inner mind.

Hijab’s that one thing that gots us deenin’
Hijab’s that one thing that got brothers fiendin’
Hijab’s that one thing with so much meanin’.
Take it off, No! (2x)

Hijab’s in the Quran,
I’m just keepin it real.
But I emphasize still,
We all have free will.
No compulsion in religion,
Shouldn’t judge,
Don’t know intensions.
We all imperfect,
And we all worship,
We all put here for that one purpose,
We all gone’ be buried under the surface.

Just because I cover,
Don’t mean I’m more righteous.

Just because you don't,
It don't mean you're less pious,
It means we're on different levels.

And I quote as I write this:

Next time he asks you if you hot?

You tell him you're not, cause the sun's not
hittin your skin.

Do it for Allah,

We don't fear no men.

Why they think we oppressed?

I'm like hold on.

You're underdressed Ma, put some clothes on.

Every women deserves to be a star.

A bunch of sweet sisters,

But keep them goodies in a jar.

Hijab's that one thing that gots us deenin'
Hijab's that one thing that got brothers fiendin'
Hijab's that one thing with so much meanin.
Take it off, No! (2x)