‘She took a veil and covered herself’: Women and their veils in the Hebrew Bible

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Abstract

This study examines the practice of veiling women as it occurred in the Ancient Near East (ANE) as a prism which can provide us with a fuller picture of the construction and display of social identities of ancient women – especially those portrayed as veiled in the Hebrew Bible (HB). Different societies and cultures have utilised the practice of veiling women for a diverse range of reasons for millennia, as a part of the continuum of veiling evident from ancient to contemporary times. Veils and veiling cannot and should not be viewed homogenously. Veil-garments in the ANE and HB were diverse, idiosyncratic dress items, with evidence showing a veiled-vocabulary in multiple languages from across the region – thus indicating numerous types and styles of veil-garments, coded with identity information. Putting on a specific type of veil, and wearing it in a particular style, constructed and displayed the identity of the wearer, or allowed the wearer to transition between identities. While the practice of veiling in the ancient world in part stems from patriarchal social structures which organise and control access to a woman's body based on her social and sexual status, the act of veiling from a woman's perspective tells readers a different story. Women negotiate their identity display for their own purposes by utilising personal veil garments in deliberate, active dress choices – even when dress is prescribed for them.

By considering dressed Biblical characters – in particular, veiled women mentioned in Genesis 24, Genesis 38 and The Book of Ruth, and, how these women personally utilised their veils, this study examines the role of perspective and personal agency in the dressed experience of veiled women. More broadly, Biblical women's dressed experiences are contextualised within the ANE context of veiling practice from across the region, where evidence of thematic use and etymological or synonymous veil terminology (indicating the presence of many veil-garments) can be found.

In order to privilege women's own lived experiences of dress and dressing as reflected in textual records, a feminist literary criticism is utilised to both examine and analyse textual features such as the veiled-vocabulary present in text, and women's own motivation and perspective of the dressing experience. Further, this study is embedded in contemporary dress theory, which considers dress to be a lived experience, and dressed individuals to be active social participants who negotiate identities through the habitual actions of dressing.

The action of veiling is a deliberate and purposeful construction and display of social identity. It is also an act of self-identification, where the agency and subjectivity in the choice making process of Biblical women, to wear these specific dress items at deliberate points within their narratives, is instrumental in the construction and display their own veiled identities. The women who veil – Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth, are social, dressed participants, and the agents of their own lived, dressed experience and help to show us what lived, dressed experiences may have been like for women of the ANE.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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These projects are not completed in isolation, as isolating as writing a PhD is.

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Contents

Introduction

The clothing, adornment and other modifications we wear on the surface of our bodies – our dress – are powerful indicators of our identities.[1] This is true both in our real, lived experiences and in the literary records we create such as narratives, plays and poems. In the classic play 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' set in 1950s Melbourne Australia for example, Pearl Cunningham, a middle aged widow of limited means, wears what she herself refers to as her 'good black'.[2] She is a barmaid, having lost much of her earning power and associated social status through being widowed. She is performing one of the limited occupational tasks which are available to her, though as noted by the narrator, '…she would infinitely prefer something more classy…'.[3] We know from the narrator's description that the style of Pearl's garments is 'heavily corseted'.[4] Given her age and the social restrictions which are placed on the way women publicly display their bodies, where accentuating shape of hip and curve of waist can be limited to young women, and those who are deemed to be sexually desirable by their culture, the reader can imply from her 'heavily corseted' state that Pearl is telling us both what she wants us to think of her, and what she thinks of herself. She may be a widowed, middle aged barmaid, but Pearl's dress choices project to onlookers a high social status and a desirable body.[5] An identity which - from Pearl's perspective - is much 'more classy' than her

[1]Dress was formatively defined by Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne Eicher as '…an assemblage of modifications to the body and/or supplements to the body…dress, so defined includes a long list of possible direct modifications of the body such as coiffed hair, coloured skin, pierced ears, and scented breath, as well as an equally long list of garments, jewellery, accessories, and other categories of items added to the body as supplements.' Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne B Eicher, "Dress and Identity", in *Dress and Identity*, Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, Joanne B Eicher and Kim P Johnson, ed., (New York: Fairchild Publications, 1995), 7. The study of dress and the way it is used by people (and literary figures) to articulate their identities, is a central theoretical basis of this study. As such, it will be explored in depth in Chapter Three.

[2]Ray Lawler, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, (Sydney: Currency Press), 1978.

[3]Lawler, *The Doll*, 5. The Doll was originally published in 1955, and the dress described resonates as being synonymous with 1950s Melbourne Australia.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Pearl's desire centres on the status of marriage. She does not wish to be a widow and she does not wish to be a barmaid. She wants to find a new husband to provide her with a life that does not require her to work in a pub.

current reality, and one which mirrors her sense of self identity as it is or as she wishes it could be.

The meaning coded into Pearl's dress, however, is by no means straightforward. Understanding exactly which garments Pearl is wearing, as well as the social meanings which are sewn into the threads of her clothing requires further questioning, if the connotations of her dress cues are to be understood. From the reader's point of view, multiple questions can be asked in connection with both Pearl's corset and with the act of being 'corseted'. For one, what is a corset? Does 'corset' always mean the same thing and is it always the same garment? What does it mean to be 'heavily corseted'? Can one be 'lightly corseted'? Does that make a difference to the type of garment being described or, does it tell us more about the identity and role of the person who wears it? The adjective 'corseted' and the garment 'corset' then, could elicit many possible meanings.

The meaning of 'corset' and the dress cues associated with the item could vary according to social, geographical and temporal context. If 'The Doll' was set 50 years earlier, Pearl's corseted state could mean that she was simply adhering to rigid Victorian social dress requirements, and not that she was making a pointed or particular statement in her social context about her desired role and social status.[6] If it were set anywhere other than Melbourne Australia, regardless of time period, the terminology of the dress item, the textile from which it was made, or the style of the dress item itself could differ, and the meaning elicited by its mention could therefore vary. If Pearl's play was set in Queensland Australia during summer for example, a corset would likely be prohibitively restrictive due to the tropical heat of the

[6]The corset was originally invented much earlier than the Victorian Era - in 1500s France. However, the corset in the Victorian Era was intertwined with status, especially the construction and display of high social status for women; exactly what Pearl is aiming to display with her dress usage. For more on the corset, see Valerie Steele, *The Corset: A Cultural History*, (New York: Yale University Press, 2003).

landscape in the north, and further questions would need to be asked as to why she was wearing a corset in such an environment.

Equally, a 'corset' in Queensland may have similarities to a 'corset' in Melbourne, but they may not be exactly the same garment, even if they share the same name and the same Victorian origins. Slight variations between garments can occur to account for social, geographical and temporal variance, even if the name of a garment is shared. 'Jeans', for example – a common and well known garment in many of our contemporary cultures – does not mean the same now as it did when miners first began wearing the utility trousers in the 1870s United States.[7] The name 'jeans' itself originates from the Italian city where the cotton used for the garments was first manufactured, Genoa, and stylistically, 'jeans' have varied extensively since their initial use, depending on the fashions and tastes of the time.[8] A pair of women's 'jeans' in 2020 would likely be unrecognisable as 'jeans' to 19th Century American miners – even though they share many of the same features, including their name. Pearl's corset then, may have evolved as dress items do, to reflect her social, cultural and temporal milieu. The simple yet layered description of both a garment and the way the garment is worn, reveals a wealth of identity information about Pearl which could, depending on numerous factors, elicit various meanings. Much is indirectly portrayed about Pearl through the simple mention of her dress, how she wears it and the context in which it is worn.

These explications of Pearl's dress are all made from the perspective of an external onlooker; and they do provide us with a wealth of information and interpretative possibilities about both dress type and dress meaning. While the narrator's description of Pearl infinitely preferring something '…more classy…' does give us important information about her and her dress, when we view Pearl's dress specifically from her perspective, much more essential

[7] Alice Harris, *The Blue Jean,* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002), 9.
[8] "History of Jeans and Denim", www.historyofjeans.com, accessed 2nd August 2019; Harris, *The Blue Jean,* 9.

identity information can be gleaned about both Pearl and her corseted 'good black'. Contemporary dress theory clearly signals the importance of viewing dress and dressing as a personal, lived and habitual experience of the person wearing the garments.[9] The wearer's perspective then, is an essential interpretive element in understanding both items of dress and dress choices. When a person or character shows the subjectivity to choose or manipulate their dress, and when we consider their choice making from their perspective, it gives us an insight into the agency of the wearer, who they are, and how they wish to be perceived. When we view Pearl and her corset from her perspective, privileging her actively engaging in the construction of her own identity through her dress choices, we begin to understand much more about the way her dress indicates her identities, and, the power she has in choosing her own garments. She does not wish to be either a barmaid or widowed, but she is both. In wearing black she is adhering to the social requirements of mourning. Yet, by wearing the best and fitted version of this that she can both afford and get away with, Pearl tells us who she wants to be and who she wishes she still was.

From the wearer's perspective in this context, the choice to wear a heavily corseted garment is therefore also quite separate to a social requirement to wear such clothing. Dressing in specific styles of garment can be a socially required action, with multitudes of cultural variance in dress to indicate group inclusivity, social and personal identity and, to organise, distinguish between and control social participants through dress conventions. Historically, the corset was used to bind and warp women's bodies, to create an idealised if unnatural form, contorted for the gaze of onlookers. A corseted, binding dress limits movement and restricts the wearer, thus as well as indicating aspects of social identity to onlookers, the act of

[9]Joanne Entwhistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body: Dress as Embodied Practice", *Fashion Theory* 4 Issue 3, (2000), BERG, 323-348; Joanne Entwhistle, *The Fashioned Body: Fashion, Dress and Modern Social Theory*, (Cambridge: Polity Press), 2000.

'corseting' can and has been a form of bodily control. But, in this context, the choice to wear the corseted 'good black' is Pearl's alone. For Pearl, it signifies something other than social and bodily organisation; it is also a personal garment which can be and in this context is, specifically manipulated by the wearer. Pearl's desire to project an identity that the corset was associated with in her cultural and social context, as well as the control of her own body and identity through her purposeful dressing, is a powerful construction and display of her identity. It is indicative of Pearl's agency to articulate her own identity – as someone much 'more classy' – through active dress choices. Thus, with one description of Pearl's dress, the reader can learn a great deal about Pearl. In choosing to wear her 'heavily corseted good black', Pearl also tells us and her onlookers a great deal about herself. In choosing to question and view Pearl's dressing experience from her perspective, we as interpreters can therefore learn even more significant identity information about Pearl and her role as an active agent of her own dressing experience.

In literature, the use of dress to construct and display the identity of characters, and the subjectivity of characters to choose their own dress to embody identities which this dress reflects, is not a new phenomenon. It is clearly present in both ancient and contemporary textual records. In the Hebrew Bible (hereafter HB), one of the most well-known pieces of ancient literature, dress is referred to routinely. There is a wide catalogue of dress items and the mention of dress in the HB, like the mention of Pearl's corseted body in good black, opens a window into the identities, lives and experiences of both HB characters and the people for whom these texts were written. The practice of veiling and, specifically for our purposes, the practice of veiling women, is an example of dress and dressing, where significant identity information is coded into the fabric of women's veils; and the HB has many references to a variety of idiosyncratic veil-garments worn by women. By exploring the veils they wear, how they wear them and their agency and subjectivity in the choice making process to both wear these dress

items, and, to embody the identities constructed and displayed by the item itself, it is the intention of this study to explore the practice of veiling as a prism, which can provide us with a fuller picture of women in the HB and their identities. Further, it is also the intention of this study to explore the real-life implications of veil use for ancient women who participated and were expected to participate in, the practice of veiling in the context of the broader Ancient Near East (hereafter ANE).

Veils in the HB are analysed as distinct and idiosyncratic dress items, each with its own terminology, type and style. The practice of veiling in the HB is examined for how it can be understood and identified as part of the spectrum of social veiling practices, in the broader ANE context, and, how it was possibly used within that spectrum. Further, given that contemporary approaches to the reading of dress consider dress to be an embodied practice demonstrative of an active engagement between the personal and the social, questions of the agency of the wearer in terms of their own relationship with veil-garments beyond the patriarchal requirement to veil for modesty – often deemed an essential tell all indicator of meaning behind HB veiling – will be privileged. This study will try to answer what veiled women such as Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth – whose veils and veiling practices are analysed – can tell us about the construction and display of veiled identities, from their perspective. Though Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth are literary gendered archetypes, the veil-garments named in their narratives and the veiling actions they perform are reflective of real-life veiling practice as it occurred in the ANE. As such, this study also hopes that the HB practices and experiences of veiled women will throw light on the broader ANE social practice of veiling.

Scope and delimitation of research

Delimitation of Methodology

This study approaches the texts of the HB as literary cultural products, and veils as dress items which are socio-cultural tools of identity construction and display. Spiritual and religious

significance of the text, both in past and contemporary societies, does not assist much with this interpretation and thus, veils and veiling as they relate to the theological discourse will not be addressed in this study. Instead, this study provides an interpretation that privileges the role of the HB as a text, which reflects both literary features and socio-cultural ideas and practices. Examining and interpreting these literary examples is undertaken through a feminist lens, which makes women's experiences, perspectives and voices the focal point of exegesis and textual analysis.

Delimitation of Terminology

The issue of terminology is of key importance to this study. 'Veil' as a garment defining term is only appropriate to use in a general sense, to broadly categorise all of the idiosyncratic dress items which are the focus of this study. Therefore, 'veil' will be used as an umbrella term referencing the general 'veil' category. In order to preserve the differences between the functionalities of individual veiling garments, physically and in terms of type and style, their original names such as ANE's *pišannu, šugurra, kulūlu, sissiktu, kusîtu, kusisi, paršigu, kuttumu, kureššar, ṣā'îp, miṭpaḥat, kānāp, radîd, ṣammâ, ra'ālâ, sādîn, šābîs, qîšŭr, p'ēr, ṣānîp,* and *ma'ăṭāpâ,* will be used.[10] They will be examined in their own right and within the context in which they appear, with a specific focus on *ṣā'îp, miṭpaḥat* and *kānāp*, the veils worn by Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth.

Given that specific women and their use of veils are the focus of this study, it would be inappropriate to discuss their agency without referring to them by their personal names. The power of naming in the Bible, particularly of naming women, as an indicator of subjectivity,

[10]Transliteration of Hebrew follows Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Style Guide, Patrick H Alexander, John F Kutsko, James D Ernest, Shirley Decker-Lucke and David L Peterson ed., *The SBL Handbook of Style For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Christian Studies* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999). Unless otherwise stated, transliteration of other ANE terminology follows Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD), Ignace J Gelb et al. 1956-2010. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. 21 vols. (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago).

agency and identity has been well demonstrated by feminist biblical scholars.[11] The use of a personal name in particular biblical settings indicates subjectivity; therefore women who are named are not simply contingencies propelling a male character's story. They are active participants in their own right.[12] In order to bring forward that implied subjectivity, the veiled women of the HB will be referred to by their personal names and not simply by their relationship with male characters in their stories. Ruth will not only be referred to as 'the wife of Boaz' or 'Naomi's daughter in law'. Tamar will not only be referred to as 'Judah's daughter in law', 'the wife' or 'the woman'. Rebekah will not only be called 'Laban's sister' or 'Isaac's wife'. These important social and familial identity markers are also examined, but given that the focus will be on analysis of *their* stories, Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth will be referred to by their own names, as central and key protagonists.

Delimitation of Sources

In referring to the broader ANE, this study relies on sources which come from a wide spread of time and geographical location. They include Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian and Hittite visual sources as well as letters, legal documents and literary records such as hymns, narratives and myths. Where it is deemed important to do so, particularly in the context of the discussing different terminology in textual records, the specific time periods, cultures and languages to which the terms belong are identified.[13]

When it comes to HB texts, the primary focus is on Genesis 24, Genesis 38 and the Book of Ruth which feature the veils and veiling actions of Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth. These

[11] See for example the work of Athalya Brenner, *I Am: Biblical Women Tell Their Own Stories*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press) 2005, 164-165; Adele Berlin, *Poetics and the Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, (Sheffield: The Almond Press), 1983, 59-61; Karla G Bombach, "Names and Naming in the Biblical World", in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament,* ed. Carol Meyers, Toni Craven and Ross S Kraemer, (NY: Houghton Mifflin Company), 2000, 33-40.

[12] Indeed, even the unnamed women of the HB are participants – even if their stories are overshadowed by the male record and their names are lost to time.

[13] Sources include Old Babylonian (OB), Middle Babylonian (MB), Neo Babylonian, (NB), Old Assyrian (OA), as well as Sumerian and Hittite sources.

three examples do not equate to the entirety of terminology for different veil-garments used for and by women in the HB; nor are they the only texts in which women's veils and women wearing veils are mentioned in the corpus. But, they do provide a snapshot of cultural practice, especially concerning the ways women themselves used veils and participated in the practice of veiling. In other words, they are demonstrative of women's agency through veiling, rather than of simply the patriarchal expectations which are found in other examples.

In addition to these texts, other veiling texts as well as unveiling texts are also discussed, in particular Isaiah 3:18-23, Isaiah 47:3, Numbers 5:18 and Song of Songs – which has no less than five literal references to the use of women's veil-garments in 1:7, 4:1, 4:3, 5:7 and 6:7 as well as five allusions to veiling in 4:12, 6:8, 7:13, 8:9 and 8:10.[14] All of these references where women are both veiled and unveiled are important in their own right, and contribute substantially to an informed picture of the depth and scope of the veiling practice both in the HB and the broader ANE.

Chapter Overview

This study is organised into nine chapters. The first chapter, titled Opening Remarks, defines the term 'veil' for the purposes of this study, discusses the challenges of using the word 'veil' to describe a complex variety of dress items, the problems with translatability of words from veiled-vocabularies to English and various Western discursive biases related to the concept of 'veil'. The Opening Remarks indicate where and why this study uses the term veil by way of exploring use, misuse and translatability.

[14]The woman in Song of Songs 'the Shulamite', whose use of veils will be explored in chapter five, will not be referred to by her first name – because we do not what it is. In saying this, this study acknowledges the work of Athalya Brenner who calls the Shulamite by the modern name 'Shulammit' to move away from the un-naming objectification of Biblical women. In many ways within her poem/s, the Shulamite/Shulammit is the embodiment of agency, subjectivity and voice. We don't know her name, but Shulammit seems a fitting one; indeed, Brenner herself suggests that Shulammit would have chosen this name for herself. See Brenner, *I Am*, 163-190, esp. 164-165.

Chapter two undertakes a literature review of secondary sources which explore the practice of women's veiling in the HB. The chapter also critiques how scholarship has approached the question of veils, their type, their use, and, their significance. This includes scholarship which dismisses the presence of veils in the HB, objectifies the wearer, assumes modesty as the sole purpose for veiling, and engages in imprecise translation of dress terminology and categorisation of veils as another type of garment, such as 'cloak'.

Chapter three then turns to the examination of contemporary dress theory, which asks what dress is and what dress does, and considers how dress operates as a language to articulate aspects of identity including gender, social role and social status. It considers the intimate relationship between the body and dress, and the act of dressing as a habitual, embodied, lived experience, where dress is '…the meeting place of the private and the public…'. [15]

Chapter three also provides the methodological framework for this study, with a particular focus on the usefulness of utilising a feminist literary criticism to identify veil type and veil use, as tools of identity display within the text. Finally, chapter three also looks at how a feminist literary critical approach seeks to recognise the agency of women in the HB, through privileging the reading of women's voices, actions to veil themselves and their perspectives within their stories.

Chapter four offers a broader geographical and cultural contextualisation of the HB veiling examples, by considering dress and the veil in the ANE in textual and visual sources. It begins by providing an overview of how dress was used and operated in a broader ANE context in the identification of gender, social status and identity of the wearer.

[15] Entwhistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body", 323-348; Entwhistle, *The Fashioned Body*, passim, esp. 6-40.

Next, chapter four glances at extant material culture which shows veiled women. This discussion of visual mediums will not undertake an analysis of objects, nor will it seek to identify the type or style of individual veil-garments. Rather, this section will act as a point of broader comparison, allowing for a depth of understanding of the latitudinous representation of women's veils from across the ANE, with text and visual mediums providing '…a *mutual* witness…' for one another.[16]

Next, the textual record of veiling is considered, where the determinations of meaning and use set out by Karel Van der Toorn in his formative work on veiling in the ANE are explored.[17] The presence of a veiled-vocabulary within multiple ANE languages is established, where a linguistic examination of multiple veil nouns - *pišannu, šugurra, kulūlu, sissiktu, kusîtu, kusisi, paršigu, kuttumu* and *kureššar*, and verbs which show the action of veiling, *pasānu* and *katāmu* – many of which connect etymologically or synonymously with Hebrew veil terminology will be undertaken. Chapter four therefore highlights the presence of nuanced veil-vocabularies, arguing that this linguistic feature in multiple ANE languages is indicative of a widespread practice of veiling women.

The presence of a paradigm of seclusion, bodily control and identification through dress present in ANE veiling sources, and thus ANE societies, is also illuminated in this chapter, where examples of veiling used as a tool of organisation and control of women's bodies, due to their sexual identity and social and familial relationships with men is established. Some examples of self-beautification through veiling from the wearer's perspective are also explored. Though sporadic – with most examples of women's beautification being from an external

[16] H Gressmann, *Alterorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament*, 2nd ed, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1927), viii, cited in Izaak J De Hulster and Joel M Le Mon "Introduction: The Interpretive Nexus of Image and Text", in *Image, Text and Exegesis: Iconographic Interpretation and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Izaak J De Hulster and Joel L Le Mon, (Bloomsbury, London 2014), ixx. Translation and emphasis by De Hulster and Le Mon.

[17] Karel Van der Toorn, "The Significance of the Veil in the Ancient Near East", in *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom*, ed. David P Wright, David Noel Freedman, Avi Hurvitz, (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 327-340.

onlooker's perspective – some accounts of women's perspectives while veiled are present in extant literary records from the broader ANE, in particular hymns featuring the Goddess Inanna. In these scant records, we are given a glimpse into the self-beautification that women could deliberately undertake, to utilise their veil-garments for more than the prescribed social and bodily organisation and categorisation.

Chapter five explores the extensive mention of dress in the HB and asks how dress operates in terms of gender, identity, and status and role articulation in the context of this corpus. It explores the variety of dress possibilities described in the HB, as well as specific mention of dress requirements related to social identities, and rules which concern dress, such as *ša'atnēz*, which governs the mixing of textile types to make dress items. Chapter five also introduces veil as a type of Biblical dress and acts as a preface for chapters six, seven and eight, which focus on the specific mention of certain veils in the HB. In chapter five, some of the women's veils discussed in these later chapters are mentioned, though women's veils other than those which are the focus of chapters six through eight will also be presented and explored as examples of the broader practice of veiling as it is represented in the HB. Importantly, the primary difference between the veiling examples in this chapter and those in later ones is context. Chapter five is focused on examples of veils which are difficult to define and which are not mentioned in contexts indicating the agency of dress choices by women. While some of these difficult to define veils still provide information about the identity of the wearer due to contextual and intertextual use, they are either removed from the women or the text provides only solely the perspective of onlookers.

Chapter six is the first of three chapters which constitute the primary chapters of analysis in this thesis. Chapter six '*She took ṣā'îp and cāsâ herself':* Rebekah in *Genesis 24* explores Rebekah's use of her veil *ṣā'îp*. Here, Rebekah's transition to a veiled identity is

analysed, so too is the nature of her identity while veiled with *ṣā'îp* and the way in which she acts as agent of her own self-veiling.

Chapter seven, *"She took off her widows garments, cāsâ with ṣā'îp and ālap herself":* Tamar in *Genesis* 38 explores Tamar's use of her veil *ṣā'îp* to both *cāsâ* (cover) and *ālap* (wrap) herself. The construction of Tamar's identity through her choice of veil (the same as Rebekah's) is explored, so too is the casting of Tamar as veiled prostitute; an identity which is not supported by her choice to veil with *ṣā'îp* (and which she never defines herself as). Her real and desired identities, as well as her transition between identities – made clear to readers through the changing of clothes – are established. The manipulation of power positions Tamar initiates through using her veil in self-definition to achieve her goals, is also focus of chapter seven.

In Chapter eight, "*She said "I Am Ruth, your servant. Spread your kānāp over me":* Ruth in the Book of *Ruth*, Ruth's use of multiple veils is investigated. *Miṭpaḥat*, the veil she is dressed in by her mother in law Naomi is defined and explored for its role in identity articulation. Familial ties expressed through the use of cloth and specific dress items (in Ruth's case, *miṭpaḥat*) are also explored. Further, Ruth's agency and expression of power in requesting *kānāp,* a marriage veil, from a drunken Boaz (after going to the threshing floor where he slept in the middle of the night and making the request), is also examined.

Finally, the last chapter presents the findings of the analysis arguing that – like Pearl, who shows us through her choice to wear corseted good black who she was and who she wishes to be seen as, the women who veil in the HB are also telling us who they are and who they wish to be through the use of their veils. The veiled women of the HB could be read as passive objects under patriarchal control, subject to the bodily organisation elicited by the use of a veil. Yet, when veiling is considered from their point of view, paying attention to their motivation

to veil and their voices and actions within HB stories, their veils are not simply hung on them as expressions of patriarchal constraints. It is in actuality the women who construct and display their own identities, who embody the act of veiling, utilising a variety of idiosyncratic veil-garments coded with identity information for their own purposes, thus demonstrating that even within the strictures of patriarchy, the women of ANE could have a control over their bodies, their lives and their personal expressions of identity through dress.

1 Opening Remarks

Before this study embarks on an exploration and interpretation of veiling women in the HB, clarity will be provided in these opening remarks on what a veil is and how veiling as a custom has been used for women. Some of the issues that surround the categorisation and translation of veil-words, specifically overuse of the word veil to describe many garments from veiled-vocabularies, as well as the avoidance of veil as a possible translation term in scholarship will also be considered.[18] Finally, how this study intends to use veil to describe various garments will be established in light of these issues.

The custom of veiling '…is a tradition that has existed for thousands of years… throughout history and around the world…'.[19] Though most commonly associated with women's dress – which is the focus of this study – veiling is not limited to this application and also includes the covering of 'men, and, sacred places, and objects'.[20] The veiling of women is broadly defined as covering a woman's head and hair with a garment or a piece of fabric.[21] It can also include covering a woman's face or entire body; though it is often considered most important that her hair and head be covered.[22] The veil itself can be many things and can '…range from just… a headscarf to fully covering the body…' with a large, purpose designed dress item.[23]

The practice of veiling and the dress items used as veils vary significantly by region, culture and time period and are considered to be, as Fadwa El Guindi has concluded,

[18]The phrasing 'a veiled-vocabulary' was coined by Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones. See Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise: The Veiled Women of Ancient Greece*, (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2003), 23.
[19]Sahar Amer, *What is Veiling?*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 1.
[20]Jennifer Heath ed., *The Veil: Women Writers on Its History, Lore and Politics*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 2008), 1 cited in ibid.
[21]Amer, *What is Veiling?*, 1.
[22]Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, *For Modesty's Sake?*, (Rotterdam: Syntax Publishers, 1996), 13.
[23]Banu Gökariksel and Anna Secor, "The Veil, Desire, and the Gaze: Turning the Inside Out", *Signs 40* No.1, (Autumn 2014): 178, https://doi.org/10.1086/676897

widespread multiple phenomena.[24] As a social custom, veiling did not spread through different societies 'relay style', that is, passing simply from one culture to another, from a single origin point, or, a single garment.[25] Rather, '…processes of independent innovation…' as well as '…assimilation and syncretism…' are responsible for the widespread practices and ideologies of veiling women.[26] In defining veil as a garment and veiling as a practice, it should therefore be understood that these dress items are part of this broader continuum of multiple phenomena, which has '…layers of meaning and diverse contexts…' where '…each cultural region in the different eras used the same or similar elements in a different way and gave veiling a different meaning.'[27]

The complexity of veiling as a socio-cultural custom is clearly evident in comparative traditions of the practice. While it seems at times that these uses and displays of veiling are incongruous when they are compared, there are noticeable patterns evident throughout the historical use of veils. These patterns, brought to our attention by El Guindi, are historically dependant; particular ideological uses of veiling occurred at different times in different societies. But, they also blend with each other, and just as the transference of the practice was one of syncretism and assimilation, so too are these personal and social uses indicative of blended patterns with, at times, shared features.

Veiling has been used as a signal indicating complimentary of gendered roles and power over domestic space. El Guindi notes that when men are out for work, women's veils indicate a woman's de facto dominion over their domestic space.[28] In contemporary rural Bahrain – though El Guindi indicates this is by no means a novel or singularly recent usage – the keys to

[24]El Guindi, *Veil*, 3
[25] Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 17-18; El Guindi, *Veil*, 3.
[26]El Guindi, *Veil*, 3.
[27]Ibid, 4.
[28] El Guindi, *Veil*, 13.

the house are worn attached to a woman's veil when she is in public as a clear indicator of this 'de facto dominion'.[29] Power and ownership can therefore be signified with a veil. The veil has been an exclusionary garment indicating privilege and used as a class based social status symbol. A veil can indicate that the woman is married, of high social rank or both.[30] Veiling has symbolised hierarchy, or a stratified social system.[31] Where men are considered socially superior to women, women have been veiled as a symbol of subordination to men. In such contexts, veils can be used to both indicate and physically enforce silence and submission of women.[32] The veil has been used as a tool by women to express personal emotions; the twist and turn of a woman's veil can indicate an array of emotions, from anger and sadness to joy and elation.[33] Even within stratified societies, women can, at times, have a great deal of licence to express personal identity, desires and needs with the use of their veil – such is the intimate nature of this type of garment.[34] The veil has been used as a boundary marker of a private space, a symbol of celibacy and seclusion signalling that sexual contact and intrusion into this personal space was not allowed.[35] The veil has also been an expression of religiosity and faith, where veiling indicates membership to one's religion and adherence to the faith based organisation which governs it. These patterns of historical use are emblematic of the variety of meanings constructed and displayed with a veil; and the extreme variance of these uses indicates that in societies where the ideology of veiling women is present, it can and has be utilised for a complex variety of reasons, dependant on an array of social, cultural, religious and temporal factors.

[29] El Guindi, *Veil*, 13.
[30]Ibid.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Ibid.
[33] Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, esp. 1; 173; 177-180. Also see Mohja Kahf, "From Her Royal Body the Robe Was Removed: The Blessings of the Veil and the Trauma of Forced Unveilings in the Middle East", in *The Veil*, ed. Heath, 28-31.
[34]Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 1.
[35]El Guindi, *Veil*, 13.

This complexity of veil use is also evident in the language of veiling. In a contemporary example this is found in Arabic, where there is a diverse and complex assortment of words which indicate the variety of idiosyncratic garments used as a veil. The same linguistic diversity in relation to veil and veiling is also found in ancient languages.[36] Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones notes that cultures and societies which utilise veils also utilise a wide selection of veil-garments, evident in the language as a 'veiled-vocabulary'.[37] In Arabic, the 'veiled-vocabulary' conveys this variety of types, styles and uses of veils. Sahar Amer cites no less than 54 possible veils – which she herself notes is an extensive, but not comprehensive list – used in a variety of social, cultural, religious and geographical contexts.[38] These include *burqu', gargush, habarah, yashmik, hijab, burnus, 'abayah, khimar, 'immah, tarhah, jilbab, sitara, mungub, jellabub, hayik, gallabiyah, milayah, dishdasha, gina', lithma, izar, qina,* and *niqab*.[39] The differences between these garments are evident with even a cursory comparison of two. *Sitara* for example, is a large piece of rectangular cotton sheet dyed blue and red, and is specifically worn by Yemeni women to run short errands around their neighbourhoods.[40] It is manufactured exclusively in India and exported to Yemen – such is the specificity of fabric needed to manufacture veils correctly.[41] A woman does not wear *sitara* inside her house but rather, when the need to leave arises, she can quickly wrap and cover herself.[42] *Sitara* is '…considered convenient because it can be quickly thrown over indoor clothes…' when needed.[43] *Khimar* however, which is widely used across Islamic countries, '…is the preferred form of veiling for

[36] Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 23.
[37]Ibid.
[38]Amer, *What is Veiling?*,201-209
[39]El Guindi, *Veil*, 7.
[40]Amer, *What is Veiling?*, 208.
[41] Ibid.
[42]Ibid.
[43]Ibid.

women who play a more public role' due to its ability to be tied on and thus stay in place for longer.[44]

Within different Arabic speaking cultures which use veil-garments, words within veiled-vocabularies do not necessarily refer to the same dress item, even when the same word is used. *Lithma* for example, is a gender neutral face veil used by both men and women.[45] When used by women as it is in Yemen, it is associated with 'femaleness'.[46] When worn by men, as it is in some Bedouin societies as well as by Berber men, it is a symbol of '…virility and maleness…'.[47] The intricate variety of types, styles and uses of veils is clearly evident in the veiled-vocabulary of Arabic.

English, however, unlike Arabic or other veiled-languages, does not have a cache of words or a '…richly nuanced veil-vocabulary…' to describe and define the complex tapestry of possible veil dress items.[48] *Sitara* and *khimar*, although vastly different garments both stylistically and in terms of use, would both be identified as *veil*. In English, veil is simply defined as

1. 'a piece of linen or other fabric forming part of a nun's head-dress, and worn so as to drape the head and shoulders',
2. 'a piece of thin, light or transparent fabric (now usually attached to a hat or other head-dress) worn, esp. by women, over the head or face for concealment or to protect the face from the sun, dust, etc…'[49]

In these quite Christian and Eurocentric definitions, none of the complexity of veiled-vocabularies is found.[50] Veil as a word does not tell us enough information about specific, unique and idiosyncratic dress items, and therefore cannot be used as an easy and direct

[44]Ibid, 205.
[45] El Guindi, *Veil*, 7.
[46]Ibid.
[47]Ibid. See also Amer, *What is Veiling?*, 206.
[48] Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 23.
[49]*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol 2 N-Z (5th ed), (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3512.
[50] Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 9.

translation term. For example, *hijab* is, as Katherine Bullock notes, what English speakers generally mean when veil from another culture is referred to, as opposed to any number of other possible veil-garments.[51] *Hijab* can be a garment which covers the head, but it is in reality '…a complex notion encompassing action and apparel'.[52] When *hijab* refers to a garment, the meaning of the word varies through geographical and cultural use and does not automatically refer to one specific garment style or type.[53] The concept from which the term *hijab* stems, *hajaba*, means a great deal more than the simple act of covering one's head.[54] *Hajaba* means to conceal, cover and hide and it can also mean '…covering the face, or not…lowering the gaze with the opposite sex, and applies to men as well.'[55] Organisation, respect and creation of space are elicited through *hijab* and *hajaba*; thus, using veil to '…convey the notion of *hijab* is totally inadequate.'[56]

Nonetheless, the word veil is often used without distinction to designate all head and face covering garments that have been and are worn by women, and little effort is afforded to identify subtle variations between garments, which point to differences between veil types, styles, uses and their socio-cultural significance.[57] Bullock has observed that using veil as a simple translation term implies that '…there is only one kind of 'veil'…that women have ever worn' and also, that veils have been classified, understood and critiqued in very narrow terms that fit within the framework of English definition.[58] Such '…indiscriminate, monolithic, and ambiguous…' use of the word veil reduces the complex historical tapestry of dress, losing in the process 'the nuanced differences in meaning and associated cultural behaviours.'[59] Using

[51]Katherine Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil: Challenging Historical and Modern Stereotypes*, 2nded, (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought), 2002, L-LI.
[52]Ibid., LI
[53]Ibid.
[54]Amer, *What is Veiling?*, 204.
[55]Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 23
[58] Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim Women and the Veil*, L.
[59]El Guindi, *Veil*, 7.

just the term veil to refer to garments from a veiled-vocabulary without any additional identifiers is therefore highly problematic.

Equally, veil is underused as a term to describe women's garments which cover the head, and this is particularly evident in assessments of ancient veils; though, the reasoning behind this reluctance stems from more recent biases. Llewellyn-Jones has noted that in identifying and defining ancient veils, '…very few contemporary scholars seem interested in using the terms 'veil' or 'veiling' at all. Those who acknowledge that women covered their heads…with a garment, that is to say a 'veil', prefer to call it a 'mantle', 'kerchief', 'drape', or 'cloak'…'.[60] He further observes that

> '… scholarship wishes to distance itself (whether knowingly or subconsciously) from the political and social ramifications that the veil has in the 'liberated' West and…scholarship is reluctant to connect itself to a garment that, to a great extent, is intimately and fundamentally associated with the subjugation of women and with the notion of Oriental 'Otherness'.[61]

This resistance to using veil in scholarly critiques of ancient customs and garments is directly linked to assumptions about the garment and its wearers, in both contemporary and historical contexts; and this is a '…travesty that augments the problem of the negative stereotype'.[62]

The pervasive lingering of 19th century Orientalism and the erotic and Othered sexuality of veiled women, where the veil is viewed as an 'exotic' garment, is the basis for this issue. More recently, the veil has also become a symbol of extremism, oppression and Islamophobia in the Western world.[63] Fatima Mernissi has noted that, 'It is a well-established tradition to discuss Muslim [veiled] women by comparing them, implicitly or explicitly, to Western women. This tradition reflects the general pattern that prevails in both East and West

[60] Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 5.
[61]Ibid; See also El Guindi, *Veil,* xi.
[62]Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim Women and The Veil,* L.
[63]Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 5.

when the issue is 'who is more civilized than whom.'[64] The veil and by association women are viewed dichotomously. If a woman is veiled she is viewed as oppressed, uncivilised and voiceless, in comparison to unveiled women who are perceived as civilised, westernised (idealised) liberated and accessible. Such dichotomous thinking is readily seen in secular societies such as France which ban and force women to remove their veils in public spaces, all in the name of 'liberation'.[65]

El Guindi specifically warns that viewing and critiquing the veil from this dichotomous perspective is a '…uni-dimensional…' approach which '…narrows the study of veil to a single context analysis and leads to a distorted view of a complex cultural phenomenon.'[66] When it comes to ancient cultures and classification and translation of their veiled-vocabularies, the refusal to acknowledge these deep-seated assumptions and biases and the avoidance to use 'veil' in favour of non-threatening Westernised garments such as cloak or shawl, or, viewing women's veils as being only representative of patriarchal control, has led to quite reductionist interpretations of the ancient veiling garments.

How then, do we navigate the language of the veil and the dress items themselves, particularly for this study, in sources referring to the veiling of women from the ancient world? Should the term 'veil' be used to describe individual and idiosyncratic garments, or should it be avoided to limit indiscriminately ascribing unidimensional meaning that does not equate with actual, multidimensional practices?[67] As mentioned, the English 'veil' is woefully inadequate to convey the multiplicities of meanings present in other languages and experiences

[64]Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society*, (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987),7.
[65]The removal of veils from women in France is, like many aspects of veiling practice, complex and multifaceted. See Amer, *What is Veiling?*, 94-111; see also Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil*, 7; Sandra Hochel, "To Veil or Not to Veil: Voices of Malaysian Muslim Women", *Intercultural Communication Studies XXII: 2* (2013): 40. https://web.uri.edu/iaics/files/Sandra-Hochel.pdf.
[66]El Guindi, *Veil*, 3.
[67]Hochel, "To Veil or Not to Veil", 40-49.

of veiling. Nevertheless, it is still useful as a general category, which encompasses a whole variety of individual dress items and actions related to a woman's body. As El Guindi notes, using 'veil' as a category and not as an expression denoting something similar to hats or cloaks which just happen to be worn on the head, '…embeds [veil] in a larger framework of the anthropology of dress'.[68] Using 'veil' in such a manner allows for comparative cross-cultural analysis, better culturally specific social analysis and ultimately, to disassociating the practice from the negative connotations and Western biases. [69]

As already mentioned in the Introduction, in this study, veil will be used as an umbrella term for the variety of veil-garments. Using veil as a category, however, does not mean that discrete and unique terminology and use will be ignored or subsumed. Nor will this category be used to homogenize the practice. Rather, considering veil in neutral terms as dress, instead of as an '…emotionally charged object… means that insight… [will] be gained around the functionality, use and meaning of veils'.[70] In order to recognise the diversity found both in the language of veiled-vocabularies and in the societies which utilised the practice of veiling, individual veils will be referred to by their original language name and, where possible, in context. By using untranslated terminology and contextualising their use, this study hopes to achieve two goals. One is to provide better understanding of this complex social dress practice in ancient extant records; the second, to stay away from implied modern, Western, assumptions and biases that are at the forefront of existing analyses and translations, and allow for the meaning and the significance of veils to emerge from the context itself, from the lived experiences of the women who wore them.[71]

[68]El Guindi, *The Veil,* xii.
[69]Ibid.
[70]Nancy J Hirshmann, "Western Feminism, Eastern Veiling & the Question of Free Agency", in *Constellations* 5, No. 3 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 346, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.00100.
[71]El Guindi, *Veil,* xii-xiii; Hirshmann, "Western Feminism, Eastern Veiling", 346; Hochel, "To Veil or Not to Veil", 40.

2 Veiling in the Hebrew Bible: Literature Review

> 'In Genesis 24, Rebekah put on a veil to 'cover herself' upon meeting Isaac, her future husband. But why? Did Rebekah do so as a feminine greeting? Was an unveiled appearance undignified (e.g. Song of Songs 5:7)? Did the veil, as Isaiah 47:1-3 implies, symbolically protect virginity? Or signal wealth and prominence (Isaiah 3:23)? We can discern no plain or stable answer.'[72]

In his summation of the cultural history of Jewish dress, Eric Silverman notes some of the ways in which women are depicted as wearing veils in the HB.[73] Women's veils, which are mentioned in a variety of contexts, for a variety of seemingly incongruous reasons, belong to, Silverman states, a complex '…wardrobe of uncertainty...'.[74] In the HB, there are multiple accounts of women undertaking the practice of veiling; even more than Silverman notes. There are at least four individually named garments, *ṣā'îp*, *miṭpaḥat*, *ṣammâ* and *radîd* used specifically as veils, as well as another, *kānāp*, the hem of a man's garment, which can be used to veil a woman. There are also numerous garments named throughout the HB which are worn by women on their heads, in contexts which appear to denote the practice of veiling. These include *ra'ālâ, sādîn, šābîs, qĭšŭr, p'ēr, ṣānîp, and ma'ăṭāpâ.* There are also no less than five verbs, *cāsâ, 'ālap, 'āṭâ, 'āṭap* and *pāras* used to indicate how a woman would wear these veils.[75] But, what these garments were and why they were worn, are '…debated issues…' in Biblical scholarship,[76] and Silverman's recent determination concerning the lack of a plain and stable answer which explains the presence of veils in the HB is indicative of these debated issues.

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[72] Eric Silverman, *A Cultural History of Jewish Dress*, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 6.
[73]Silverman, *Jewish Dress*, 6. Veil as a dress item in this context refers to the specific use of garment to cover women for social purposes. It does not extend to veiling men or sacred objects, such as the veil of the Tabernacle and Moses' 'covering' of his face.
[74]Ibid.
[75] *Pāras* denotes the spreading of a garment and of other objects. In the Book of Ruth it denotes the 'spreading' of a veil over the head. BDB, s.v. "pāras".
[76] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328. A recent volume is not included in this study as it was not available for consideration in time: Antonios Finitsis ed., *Dress and Clothing in the HB: 'For All Her Household are Clothed in Crimson',* (New York: T&T Clark, 2019).

It should initially be noted that many exegeses, particularly commentaries, ignore the mention of veiling in the HB altogether.[77] There could be a number of reasons for this omission. Some could be related to the already discussed problems with translation of highly specific veiling-vocabulary, but it is also often the case that commentaries which focus on exegetical methods outside of socio-cultural analysis have no need to purposefully mention or explore the use of a veil in the texts under consideration. The silence that surrounds HB veiling, however, does not stop with such exegetical commentaries. Some scholars, whose works focus on identity and literary or narrative criticism of women in HB texts, provide excellent gynocentric readings of HB texts, but, have also omitted mention of women's veils in their volumes.[78]

Others yet, while not completely omitting veils from their analysis, do not explore them in much detail, and are by implication dismissive of the garments. For this group of scholars, veils are deemed either to not be present in HB texts, or, to be too obscure to tell us anything about ancient socio-cultural veiling practices in both the ANE context, or more broadly in other cultural practices which are part of the veiling continuum. For example, Robert Davidson asserted that '…There is no evidence for veils in Old Testament times like those of Moslem women in recent centuries'.[79] What Davidson means by veils like those of Moslem women, how he reaches this conclusion and why he argues for a lack of evidence in the HB, however, is left unanswered.[80] Similarly, Derek Kidner, while contending that veils are mentioned in the HB, notes that Hebrew veils were not like Muslim women's veils, and that they were '…used altogether more freely than in modern Islam.'[81] In this bold and unsupported assessment Kidner

[77]Some notable commentators which omit mention of veiling include Gerhardt Von Rad, Claus Westermann, John D Watts, Peter D Miscall, Franz Delitzsch, and John N Oswalt; though, those that completely ignore veiling are too numerous to mention in full.
[78]For example, the important gynocentric readings of: Claudia V Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine Book of Proverbs*, (Wiltshire: JSOT Press, 1985); Sharon Pace Jeansomme, *The Women of Genesis: From Sarah to Potiphar's Wife*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1990).
[79]Robert Davidson, *Genesis 12 – 50*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 114.
[80]Ibid.
[81]Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, (London: Tyndale Press, 1967), 38.

is dismissive of both Hebrew veils and Islamic veils, and is enforcing the false dichotomy built around Western stereotypical understandings of Muslim veil use. What he effectively suggests is that nothing can be learned from the mention of veils in the HB, except that Biblical women are veiled but still liberated (with their 'freer' use of veils), in distinction to modern Muslim women who are oppressed through veiling, and should be therefore viewed as quite separate to Biblical women.

In his analysis, Kidner overlooks both the broader and the more culturally specific contexts, that is, the widespread multiplicity and variety of veil types found throughout the historical continuum of women's veiling, as well as the multiple mentions of such a practice in the HB. By doing this he overlooks broader and thematic uses within this continuum, all of which contribute to the deconstruction of the veiled/unveiled, oppressed/liberated dichotomy, as well as the purpose and meaning of veiling in the HB. There are massive cultural variances between contemporary Muslim veiling and Biblical veiling, to be sure; however, even a brief examination of HB veils, such as Silverman's, shows that Biblical veil use is purposeful and meaningful even when its purpose and meaning appear to be obscure. Further, broader historical contextualisation indicates that the veils in the HB belong to the discussion of cultural veiling, as much as Islamic veiling practices, and as such, the two should not be viewed through the binarism of 'us and them', implying that Muslim women are voiceless and oppressed, while Biblical women are liberated because of their 'free' use of veils.

Other scholars question whether veils are even mentioned in the HB, suggesting instead that veiling is a relatively new practice. John H Hayes and Stuart A Irvine, for example, doubt the presence of veils in the HB. In their view, covering a woman's head '…may not be as old as Isaiah' and only date back to the Middle Ages and the Mishnah.[82] This position ignores

[82]John H Hayes and Stuart A Irvine, *Isaiah: The Eighth Century Prophet His Times and His Preaching,* (Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1987), 94.

important HB texts which mention veiling, and in doing so, ignores the relationship between veiling practice in ancient Israel and other ANE cultures in which the practice of veiling is also found.

In addition to commentaries, works which specifically address the practice of veiling such as Alvin John Schmidt's *Veiled and Silenced* are also often dismissive of HB veiling. Schmidt argues that '…Old Testament references that mention the practice [do so] only a few times, and then without details.'[83] However, Schmidt overlooks the intricate details of the HB veils – such as the specific mention of variously named garments all with different styles and uses – and in doing so he essentially casts the HB veils as irrelevant. It is puzzling that he argues that there is a lack of detail regarding HB veiling, because in his broader argument concerning the practice beyond the HB, he makes astute observations surrounding veiling. These, however, do not filter into his assessment of the HB.

Despite these dismissive assessments, there is no compelling reason to determine that the practice of veiling women is absent from the HB, or that the references are too obscure to make any assessments about the custom overall. There is also no reason to suggest that Biblical references to veiling should be categorised separately to other practices of veiling – other than to acknowledge the inevitable cultural variance between different manifestations of this practice. By dismissing or ignoring veiling in the context of the HB, the possibility of a richer analysis of ancient dress practices that can be gained from analysing these references, and any possible engagement with the veiled women themselves, is also dismissed.

Other scholars, however, make significant observations about the practice, especially in connection to identifying and translating veil terminology. The complexity of veiling

[83]Alvin John Schmidt, *Veiled and Silenced: How Cultures Shaped Sexist Theology*, (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1989), 131.

references is abundantly evident in the multiple words used to indicate veil-garments, but, classifying which terms should belong to the particular category of veil can be a problematic task. The identification and translation of Hebrew dress terms in general is a murky issue, as words may only occur once or twice, and may have unclear verbal roots or etymologies, all of which makes categorisation of type and style, and, analysis of meaning and use, difficult.[84] *Ra'ālâ* for example, which is most likely a type of veil – with Van der Toorn's formative assessment indicating this status – occurs in Isaiah 3:18-23 with several other veils which are removed from the daughters of Zion.[85] But with no verbal root and only one mention in the HB, there is not enough context or linguistic foundation from which to conclusively classify this garment type. Thus, no more can be immediately determined about *ra'ālâ*, or similar garments which likewise lack context and/or verbal root, but which may indeed be classifiable as veil. This situation is a clear barrier to identifying, translating and interpreting veils in the HB. Ross E Winkle, whose dissertation focuses on High Priestly dress in Revelations, notes of this issue more broadly, that for dress identification in Biblical texts, '…the polysemous and potentially ambiguous reality of…dress information provides a cautionary note for interpreters.'[86]

Part of this ongoing exegesis is the debate concerning translation of veil words, in particular *radîd*, *ṣammâ* and *miṭpaḥat* and the veiling verb *'āṭâ*, with some claiming that these words should be classified and translated as veil/veiled and others disputing that conclusion. In support of translating *radîd* and *ṣammâ* as veils, Marvin Pope's thorough exegesis of Song of Songs provides an important basis for etymological identification of these garments. He links *radîd* and *ṣammâ* to *ṣā'îp*, the veil worn in Genesis 24 and Genesis 38, and argues that

[84]Van der Toorn, "Significance", 330.
[85] Ibid.
[86]Ross E Winkle, "Clothes Make the (One like a Son of) Man": Dress Imagery in Revelation 1 as an Indicator of High Priestly Status, (PhD thesis, Andrews University, 2012), 83, https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dissertations/168.

all of these dress items are types of veil.[87] Also, he identifies the etymological relationship and probable linguistic and functional links to ANE veil terminology, bolstering the claim that *ṣammâ* and *radîd* should be categorised as veils.[88] Michael V Fox specifically argues that *ṣammâ* should be classified as a 'veil' and not 'hair', as others have rendered the term.[89] Fox also argues that *radîd* is a veil, and, he further observes elements of its style, noting that it appears to be an ornamental light garment, given the contextual description in Songs 5:7, where it is referred to as being easily ripped from the Shulamite.[90] Duane Garrett and Paul R House also strongly contend that *ṣammâ* should be classified as 'veil'; as does M P Weitzman.[91] Weitzman observes that while LXX and Peshitta both render *ṣammâ* as *ṣammat,* meaning 'behind your silence' and not 'behind your veil', he argues that this is the result of a scribal error on the part of LXX, which was continued by Peshitta.[92] Van der Toorn, in his targeted analysis of veils in the ANE, specifically names *ṣammâ* as one of the '…principal Hebrew terms that refer to the veil…' with Gianni Barbiero recently describing *ṣammâ* as '…not disputed…'[93] as a veil and equally categorising *radîd* as 'mantle' or 'veil'.[94] Thus good corroboration exists to categorise *ṣammâ* and *radîd* as veils.

However, the categorisation and translation of these dress items are not without contention. For *radîd*, Pope still notes the possibility that the word may have been the result of a scribal corruption, and could be referring to the Akkadian ornamental necklace *dudittu*;

[87]Marvin H Pope, *The Anchor Bible Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, (NY: Doubleday & Co, 1977), 527.
[88]Ibid.
[89]Michael V Fox, *Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Love Songs,* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin, 1985), 129.
[90]Fox, *Song of Songs,* 146.
[91]Duane Garrett and Paul R House, *Song of Songs/Lamentations,* Word Biblical Commentary 23B, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), 188; M P Weitzman, *The Syriac version of the Old Testament: An Introduction*, Oriental Publications 56, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1999), 7; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328.
[92] Pope, *Song of Songs,* 457.
[93] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328.
[94] Gianni Barbiero (trans. Michael Tait), *Song of Songs: A Close Reading*, Supplement to Vestus Testamentum 144, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 177; 276.

though, he himself notes that this determination is not conclusive.[95] Michael D Goulder agrees with Fox, and argues that *radîd* was probably quite light, but he, unlike Fox, further finds that *radîd* was not a veil and was instead a delicate night dress.[96] Wesley J Fuerst focuses on both the Book of Ruth and Song of Songs in his commentary, but he only briefly mentions *radîd* worn by the Shulamite in Songs 5:7, where he suggests that the Shulamite is mistaken for a prostitute when she has her *radîd* stripped from her.[97] There is nothing to indicate that this was so. For *ṣammâ,* Ariel and Chana Bloch argue in favour of translating the noun as 'hair'[98] because the verbs which are used to indicate the removal of *ṣammâ* (in Isaiah 47) are different than those which usually denote the removal of clothing.[99] Nonetheless, they also indicate that '…this information still does not tell us what the *ṣammâ* really is…'.[100]

Reinhart Ceulemans & Dries De Crom's analysis explores the ancient translation of *ṣammâ* from Hebrew to Greek in LXX, as well as other Greek renderings of the word.[101] They also do not arrive at the conclusion that *ṣammâ* is a veil. Rather, they claim that *ṣammâ* is the more figurative 'silence'; a translation ruled out by Weitzman.[102] Their analysis is especially significant though, because it highlights a major issue in veil translation – correspondence between veil words and garment types. While they present an overall compelling and well considered argument, one of the foundations on which they built their conclusion hinges on '…the extent of literalness generally assumed for the LXX translation of Canticles.'[103] *Ṣammâ* is not a veil, they argue, because if a material garment was being referred to, in the literalness

[95]Pope, *Song of Songs*, 527.
[96]M D Goulder, *The Song of Fourteen Songs*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament supplement series.36, (Michigan: Continuum, 1986), 42.
[97]Wesley J Fuerst, *The Books of Ruth, Esther, Ecc., Song of Songs and Lamentations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 188.
[98]Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation with an Introduction and a Commentary*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1998), 166-167.
[99]Ibid., 167.
[100] Ibid.
[101]Reinhart Ceulemans & Dries De Crom, "Greek Renderings of the Hebrew Lexeme צמה in LXX Canticles and Isaiah", *Vestus Testamentus* 57, (2007): 511-523.
[102]Ibid., 522-523; Weitzman, *The Syriac version of the Old Testament*, 7.
[103]Ceulemans & De Crom, "Greek Renderings of the Hebrew Lexeme צמה", 512-513.

of LXX translation, *kalumma,* used elsewhere and often to denote a woman's veil, would have been used in all renderings of the word in Song of Songs and intertextually in Isaiah.[104] However, this reading does not take into account the many types and specificity of women's veils from the ancient world, nor the way that the function of dress items can shift over time. Llewellyn-Jones clearly shows the multiplicity of veils present in the Ancient Greek lexicon, including *kalumma*; and while *kalumma* may have been a commonly worn veil, it was certainly not the only veil.[105] Llewellyn-Jones also argues that in Homeric usage, *kalumma* was likely a veil worn in mourning and was probably different (certainly in colour – Homer describes *kalumma* as black) than other commonly referred to Greek veils such as *kredemnon* and *kaluptre.*[106] Later attestations appear to reference *kalumma* with bridal use – suggesting, as Llewellyn-Jones argues, that *kalumma* did not necessarily retain its original Homeric function or usage as time progressed, to the point that in later attestations, we do not have enough details left for interpreters to confidently differentiate between these three veils.[107] *Kalumma* then, was not necessarily an easy, literal translation term for *ṣammâ. Ṣammâ* is not referred to in any HB contexts as being a veil worn in mourning and, in the HB when mourning or the throes of grief are mentioned, clothes other than veils are specifically described as being rend and torn.[108] Where *ṣammâ* is mentioned in the HB, it is also not the only exclusively used bridal veil – if indeed that is its intended purpose. *Ṣammâ* and *kalumma* then, may be different types of veil; as different as the contemporary Arabic *hijab* and *niqab.* The two are not substitutable, which

[104]Ibid., 513; 519.
[105]Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 32-33.
[106]Ibid.
[107]Ibid, 33.
[108]See Genesis 37:29, Genesis 44:13, 1Samuel 4:12, 1Samuel 15:27, 2 Samuel 13:31, 2 Samuel 15:32, 2 Kings 18:37, Isaiah 36:22 and Jeremiah 41:2.

also makes the determination that *ṣammâ* is not a veil based on literal correspondence between these veil types, unsupportable.[109]

The issue of translation is also evident in analyses of *miṭpaḥat*. *Miṭpaḥat*, one of veils in the Book of Ruth and in Isaiah 3:23, is at times translated to English in terms such as mantle, robe, cloak or shawl. For example, Fuerst translates Ruth's *miṭpaḥat* as 'cloak', and along similar lines, Jack M Sasson argues that *miṭpaḥat* was a shawl, or '…an added garment that may or may not have been used by Ruth in order to avoid recognition. That it also served to warm her against the coolness of Bethlehem's nights is also possible.'[110] E F Campbell argues of Ruth's *miṭpaḥat* that '…it is difficult to say what the article of clothing is here…' and, while he linguistically connects *miṭpaḥat* to its intertextual mention on Isaiah 3's list of garments - all of which are women's garments, several of which veil the daughters of Zion - he suggests that there is no significance to the garment itself, or that Isaiah is of any assistance for the classification or contextualisation of *miṭpaḥat*.[111] Rather, he argues that '…our storyteller enjoys using synonyms for the same entity…', and, as such, he determines '…the 'wrap' is more likely the same 'cape' in 3:3'.[112] The 'cape' in Ruth 3:3 he refers to is *simlâ*, a generic garment worn by both men and women, generally considered to be a tunic.[113] While Campbell's observation that *miṭpaḥat* is difficult to translate is important and founded, there is nothing to suggest that *miṭpaḥat* is the same garment as *simlâ*, or that the two share the same function or use. To be sure, Ruth's use of *miṭpaḥat* and the garment itself are enigmatic – all

[109]The use of different terms in the intertextual examples of *ṣammâ* in Ancient Greek translations observed by De Crom and Ceulemans, further shows the complexity and problematic nature of translating ancient dress terminology.
[110] Fuerst, *The Book of Ruth*, 188; Jack M Sasson, *Ruth: A New Translation: With a Philological Commentary and a Folkloristic-Formalist Interpretation*, (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1989), 68.
[111]E F Campbell, *Ruth: A New Translation, Notes with Introduction and Commentary*, (NY: Doubleday, 1975), 101.
[112]Ibid.
[113] BDB, s.v. "simlâ".

the more reason, then, to more thoroughly consider etymological and intertextual clues which could help decode this garment, and equally, Biblical veils in a more general sense.

For *miṭpaḥat*, its references in both Ruth *and* Isaiah 3 are important for understanding the garment and the identity construction and display indicated by its use. Though the uses vary – in the Book of Ruth, she puts on the garment while in Isaiah 3 it is removed from the daughters of Zion – the clear identity information indicated by *miṭpaḥat* in Isaiah offers essential clues to its use and meaning in Ruth – particularly in a familial sense. Victor Matthews argues, as part of a larger discussion on the various identities formed throughout the Book of Ruth, that when Naomi dresses Ruth to send her to the threshing floor to seduce Boaz, she should '…dress so that she will be recognised as a member of the household of Elimelech.'[114] Though he does not name the item of dress used here by Ruth - in the text it is the *miṭpaḥat* veil - the connection between family and garments noticed by Matthews is an important detail in establishing what *miṭpaḥat* was and how it was used by Ruth. So too, the daughters of Zion are veiled with several veil-garments which indicate social and sexual status as well as possibly familial status. Through an intertextual analysis, these important aspects of veiling become apparent; and not just in these examples of *miṭpaḥat*, but with other HB veils in other verses as well.

Veiling verbs *cāsâ*, *'ālap*, and *pāras* are not heavily debated.[115] They have clear etymologies and thus the actions they indicate – covering, wrapping or surrounding – are

[114]Victor H Matthews, "The Determination of Social Identity in the Story of Ruth," *Biblical Theology Bulletin 36 (A Journal of Bible & Theology)*, (2006), 53 https://doi.org/10.1177%2F01461079060360020101

[115]Though, '*ālap* certainly requires more consideration. '*ālāp* will be analysed in the context of Genesis 38 in Chapter Eight of this study. The hem *kānāp* is also not debated as term, and its significance has been well commented on. See for example, Jacob Milgrom, "Of Hem and Tassels: Rank, Authority and Holiness", *BAR 9:03*, May/June (1983): 63, https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/9/3/3; Paul A Kruger, "The Hem of the Garment in Marriage: The Meaning of the Symbolic Gesture in Ruth 3:9 and Ezekiel 16:8" *JNSL12*, (1986), 79-86; Paul A Kruger, "The Symbolic Significance of the Hem (*kānāp*) in 1 Samuel 15:27"; *Text and Context: Old Testament Semitic Studies for F C Fensham* ed. Walter T Classen, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988) 105-116; Paul A Kruger, "Rites of Passage Relating to Marriage and Divorce in the Hebrew Bible" *JNSWL 21* (1995), 61-81.

generally taken as being clearly decipherable. This is not the case for the verb *ʿāṭâ* which describes the action of veiling in Song of Songs 1:7. It has been approached in a similar way to the nouns *radîd*, *ṣammâ* and *miṭpaḥat*, and there is no scholarly consensus about its meaning. Pope, for example, rendered *ʿāṭâ* as 'veiled', indicating not only that LXX rendered the term as such, but further arguing that '…the word has cognates in Akkadian, Syriac and Arabic and is used more than a score of times in the Bible, always of a person wrapping or concealing oneself in a garment.'[116] More contemporary scholars, such as Luis Stadelmann, Garret, House and Barbiero continue to render the verb *ʿāṭâ* as 'veiled'.[117] *ʿāṭâ* also has several cousins, including *ʿāṭap* and *ālap* – both of which firmly place this verb in the category of 'veiled'.[118]

Others, however, argue that *ʿāṭâ* is a verb that indicates 'picking lice off oneself'[119] or 'wandering in search of a lover'.[120] For example, J A Emerton – who does provides an extremely thorough overview of *ʿāṭâ* in Song 1:7 – argues that the Shulamite does not wear a veil and that the verb *ʿāṭâ* should be rendered as 'standing around picking lice from herself'; an ancient equivalent of twiddling the thumbs while waiting.[121] Emerton also argues that a garment cannot be used with the action of *ʿāṭâ* because garments cannot be both wrapped and wound at the same time.[122] This explanation, however, is not readily supported by the context of broader veiling practices; many types of veils are worn wound and wrapped around the wearer simultaneously, and not just simplistically worn in one way as Emerton's argument

[116]Pope, *Song of Songs*, 1; 330-332.
[117]Luis Stadelmann, *Love and Politics: A New Commentary on Song of Songs*, (NY: Paulist Press, 1992), 38-41; Garrett and House, *Song of Songs/Lamentations*, 188. Barbiero, Song of Songs, 66. Barbeiro also categorises the Shulamite as a veiled prostitute here – and points out that this veil is not to be confused with Tamar and Rebekah's veil.
[118] See chapters five and eight of this study for an in depth discussion of these veiled verbs.
[119] J A Emerton, "Lice or Veil in the Song of Songs 1:7?", in *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honour of George Wishart Anderson, JSOT Supplementary 152*, ed. A Graeme Auld, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 137-138.
[120] Edmée Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs and the Eros of God*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 230; J Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 99; 107.
[121]Emerton, "Lice or Veil?", 138-139.
[122] Ibid, 132-134.

implies.[123] J Cheryl Exum indicates that *ʿāṭâ* can be considered 'like one wrapped up, covered', but assuming scribal error (reversing the consonants) nonetheless translates it as 'one who wanders', determining that being veiled in this context makes no sense, whereas wandering seems more contextually appropriate.[124] Edmée Kingsmill also reaches the conclusion that *ʿāṭâ* should be rendered as 'wander' not 'wound', and thus the Shulamite is 'one who wanders', not one who is veiled.[125] Of this, she notes, that it is unlikely that she would be wearing a veil in this context because veils are disguises and the woman had no need for a disguise in the context of Songs 1:7.[126] *ʿāṭâ* then, as with veil-nouns and other veiled-verbs, is not necessarily an easily decipherable term, as these attempts show. These attempts also show however, that the conversation surrounding translation and categorisation of veil and veiling words are an ongoing issue in Biblical scholarship.

As well as terminological and translation issues, scholarship has also been concerned with the socio-cultural reasons behind women veiling in the HB, and, the social functions of veiling. One significant observation is the probable relationship between modesty and veiling. Namely, it is assumed that covering or concealing a woman's head, hair and sometimes her whole body in public spaces demonstrates modesty.[127] Modesty or *tzniut* extends from the creation of privacy and concealment of the body through dress and actions to modesty of thought; and this connection between modesty through dress is clearly evident in Jewish social customs.[128] Rabbinic commentaries do not specify a legal requirement for women to veil for

[123]In chapters four and five, this study will explore multiple veils worn 'wound around' the wearer.
[124]Exum, *Song of Songs*, 99; 107.
[125]Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs*, 230.
[126]Kingsmill does however classify *ṣammâ* in 4:3 as 'veil' and translates it as such. Ibid., 230; 252.
[127]Veiling can and does demonstrates modesty – in some applications of the practice. But not in all and not automatically. Barbara Goldman Carrel, "Shattered Vessels That Contain Divine Sparks: Unveiling Hasidic Women's Dress Code", in *The Veil*, ed. Heath, 46; Alicia J Batten, "Clothing and Adornment", in *Biblical Theology Bulletin 40*, Number 3, (2010): 153, https://doi.org/10.1177/0146107910375547.
[128] "Modesty (Tzniut)" Rabbi Maurice Lamm, www.myjewishlearning.com/article/modesty-tznuit/, accessed 12th March 2013. For a contemporary feminist reading of *tzniut* see Tova Hartman, *Feminism Encounters Traditional Judaism: Resistance and Accommodation*, (Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press, 2007), esp. Chapter 3 'Modesty and the Religious Male Gaze'; Ilan Fuchs, "Hair Covering for Single Women: A New Reading of

modesty, but, they do stipulate that it is a customary requirement for women to be physically modest in public spaces through discreet clothing; and they note, that the HB reflects this social practice.[129] Ketubot 7:6 and Ketubot 72a for example, state that if a woman leaves her house with her head and hair uncovered, she is in breach of the requirement for her to maintain her bodily modesty.[130] Talmud Yoma 47a:13 further describes the positive results for a woman who maintains modesty by veiling. Here, a woman with seven sons has undertaken 'good deeds' to achieve high priestly status for her children. One of these good deeds was that she covered her hair and head. This veiling took place not just in public, where it was expected, but also while inside her home - such was the level of her modesty.[131]

Contemporary orthodox Jewish customs also indicate the continued use of a veil for modesty in socio-cultural and religious practice.[132] Barbara Goldman Carrell has noted for example, that Hasidic modest dress, which often includes a veil or wig, '…operates as a culturally distinct method of covering as well as a veil of sanctification.'[133] She further notes, that bodily modesty through dress is '…interpreted and overwhelmingly celebrated as being "concealed" or "hidden"…'; and the hair and top of the head are included in this modest covered display.[134]

Mizrahi Halakhic Rulings", *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues 23* (2012): 35-59, https://doi.org/10.2979/nashim.23.35.

[129]"Mishnah Ketubot 7:6; Talmud Ketubot 72a; Talmud Berakhot 24a; Talmud Yoma 47a:13", www.sefaria.org, accessed 12th March 2014; "Jewish Practices and Rituals: Covering the Head", Jewish Virtual Library: A Project of AICE, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/covering-of-the-head, accessed 12th March 2014; John R Huddlestun, "Unveiling the Versions: The Tactics of Tamar in Genesis 38:15," *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures 3*, art. 7, (2001): 47-62, esp. 62, https://doi.org/10.5508/jhs.2001.v3.a7

[130]"Ket7:6", Mishnah Ketubot, Sefaria, accessed 12th March 2014, www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Ketubot.7?lang=bi; "Ket 72a", Mishnah Ketubot, Sefaria, accessed 12th March 2013, https://www.sefaria.org/Ketubot.72a?lang=bi.

[131] "Yoma 47a:13", Talmud Yoma, Sefaria, https://www.sefaria.org/Yoma.47a.13?lang=bi, accessed 12th March 2014.

[132]Mayer Schiller, "The Obligation of Married Women to Cover their Hair", *Journal of Halacha and Cultural Studies 30*, (1995): 81-108; Goldman Carrel, "Shattered Vessels That Contain Divine Spark", 44-59; Batten, "Clothing and Adornment", 153.

[133]Goldman Carrel, "Shattered Vessels That Contain Divine Spark", 46.

[134]Ibid.

Veiling in service of modesty is not specifically mandated anywhere in the HB, nor is there anywhere in the HB that women are depicted as veiled because of modesty.[135] Nonetheless some scholars propose that the connection between modesty and veiling is indicated in the HB as the prime reason for the use of veils. Stephen and Shirley Ricks, who focus their study entirely on veiling in antiquity, argue that in the HB veiling was used as a modesty device in order to prevent women distracting men with their beauty.[136] Being modest through veiling, in their view, was also an example of the correct social order, where men were superior to women and thus, women had to cover their heads to supplicate to men.[137] This determination which equates HB veiling with modesty and patriarchal social hierarchy relies on models of veiling from other cultural uses.[138] While veiling has certainly been used in cultural applications - especially the Greek and Assyrian - to indicate hierarchy, and later Jewish applications to indicate modesty, there is no evidence in the HB that indicates that these are the *sole* applications of veils in this context. In the case of Ricks and Ricks, they equate HB veiling to New Testament (NT) veiling and while both certainly belong under the same broad umbrella of veiling and of the patriarchal undertones of bodily display for and by women, they are different with respect to motivation and context. In the NT there *is* a mandate for Christian women to veil in the context of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16.[139] Here, Paul instructs the women of Corinth to cover their heads in prayer. This directive to veil is situational and specific to Corinth and Paul's mission, and indicates that God is the head of man and man the head of woman;

[135]Batten, "Clothing and Adornment", 153; L L Bronner, "From Veil to Wig: Jewish Women's Hair Covering", *Judaism 42*, (1993), 465.
[136]Stephen D Ricks and Shirley S Ricks, '"With Her Gauzy Veil before Her Face": The Veiling of Women in Antiquity,' in *Bountiful Harvest: Essays in Honor of S. Kent Brown*, ed. Andrew C Skinner, D Morgan Davis and Carl Griffin, (Utah: Brigham Young University, 2011), 356.
[137]Ricks and Ricks, "With Her Gauzy Veil before Her Face", 356.
[138] El Guindi, *Veil*, 16-18; See also Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 28-29.
[139] Much has been written on this passage, but for a good summation on Pauline veiling, see J B Hurley, "Did Paul Require Veils or the Silence of Women? A Consideration of 1 Cor.11:2-16 and 1 Cor.14:33b-36", *WTJ* 35 (1973): 193-204 and Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, "The Non-Pauline Character of 1 Cor.11:2-16?", *JBL*, Vol.95, No.4, (Dec 1976): 615-621.

thus a woman must supplicate to both higher powers and cover her head in worship. As mentioned before, such requirement, whether explicit or implicit, cannot be found in the HB.

HB veiling is certainly underpinned by social institutions and power relationships in which women are subjected to patriarchal conditions which require modesty *and* which display bodily ownership and control over them.[140] However, the way HB women used their veils involved more than a mere display of modesty. The assumption that women were in all ways complicit in patriarchal power structures and were veiling purely out of a desire to adhere to social expectations, overlooks not only HB examples of veiling in which women disregard or even go against patriarchal social expectations and structures, but also the reality of women as active subjects, where veiling is part of the subjective experience of a woman's life. As Susan Weiss notes, privileging a woman's desire to be modest as the primary reason behind her adherence to social practices which control her body, obscures '…the underlying power relations that head-covering signifies…'; but, it also overlooks a woman's agency.[141] A woman may be required to wear a garment or garments within the societal structure to which she belongs, but this by no means indicates the lived experience of veiling in reality. The complexity of power relations, particularly in relation to instances involving sexual encounters and women's responses to them, is evident when examples of HB veiling are considered. The veil is also worn for seduction, as a prelude to a sexual encounter and to enact deception; and these uses do not align with the explanation of veiling for modesty seeking.[142] In Genesis 38, where *ṣā'îp* is used by Tamar to prevent Judah from recognising her, desire for modesty as a

[140] Especially given the patriarchal framework of the Biblical world, as well discussed by Meyers and Brenner. See Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), passim esp. 24; Athalya Brenner, *The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative*, (Sheffield: JSOT, 1985), passim.

[141] Susan Weiss, "Under Cover: Demystification of Women's Head Covering in Jewish Law", *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues 17* (2009): 89-115, esp. 89. https://doi.org10.2979/nas.2009.-.17.89. Women, of course, can and do veil because of modesty and because of a desire for, and adherence to modesty. Whether for modesty or not, a woman's own perspective, motivation and agency to veil, *must* be considered in order to fully understand any practices of veiling.

[142] See Genesis 38; Ruth 3:3.

sign of compliance with the patriarchal rules is outperformed by the woman's own desire to deceive through a manipulation of perceived identity.[143] Even when seduction occurs within the confines of marriage (or, as a prelude to marriage) like it does in the Book of Ruth, the use of the veil in this way suggests a subversion of normative practice which certainly requires further analysis.

In order to question these challenges to normative practice, veiling must be viewed through the relationship between personal agency, identity construction and possible disguise to subvert normative practice. Scholars have certainly touched on aspects of this in veiling texts, such as Athalya Brenner, Marcia Falk, Andre Le Coque and Susan Niditch.[144] But Rachel Adelman provides two particularly compelling observations on this issue that are worth noting here, regarding the connection between veiled HB women, recognition of identity and the active use of identity subterfuge with garments.[145] Adelman acknowledges the links of veil with modesty, but she also focuses on the use of deception through dress and veiling in Genesis and Ruth and thus shifts the perspective of veiling rightly into the realm of agency driven choice

[143]James Black, "Ruth in the Dark: Folktale, Law and Creative Ambiguity in the Old Testament", *Literature & Theology 5*, No.1 (March 1991): 20-36, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23926645?seq=1; Nelly Furman, "His Story Versus Her Story: Male Genealogy and Female Strategy in the Jacob Cycle", in, *Semeia 46: Narrative Research on the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Miri Amihai, George W Coats and Anne M Solomon (Boston: SBL, 1989), 147; Victor Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear: Discovery of the Hidden Contexts of Old Testament Conversations*, (Michigan: William B Eerdmans, 2008); Anthony J Lambe, "Genesis 38: Structure and Literary Design", in *The World of Genesis*, ed. Philip K Davies and David J A Clines, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 113; Danna Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 87-89; Roland Murphy, *Proverbs, Word Biblical Commentary 22* (Nashville: Nelson, 1998), 43; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, "Tamar 1" in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books and the New Testament*, ed., Carol Meyers, Toni Craven and Ross S Kraemer, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 162.

[144]Niditch makes significant observations more broadly concerning the connections between identity and hair – which also involves covering the hair and head. Susan Niditch, *"My Brother Esau is a Hairy Man": Hair and Identity in Ancient Israel*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

[145]Athalya Brenner, "Naomi and Ruth", *Vestus Testamentum* 33, 4 (1983): 385-397 – this article is also published in Athalya Brenner ed. *A Feminist Companion to Ruth*, (Sheffield Academic Press: Sheffield, 1993), 70 -84; Athalya Brenner, *Ruth and Naomi: Literary, Stylistic and Linguistic Studies in the Book of Ruth,* (Hebrew: Tel Aviv: Afik Sifrat Paolim/Hakibbutz Hamenchad, 1988), 40-42; Athalya Brenner, "On Feminist Criticism of the Song of Songs", in *A Feminist Companion to The Song of Songs,* ed. Athalya Brenner, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 28-37; Athalya Brenner and Fokkelien Van Dijk-Hemmes, *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male in the Hebrew Bible,* (Leiden: Brill, 1993); Athalya Brenner, "Gazing Back at the Shulammite, Yet Again," *Biblical Interpretation*, Vol 11 (3), (2003): 295-300; Marcia Falk, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation and Interpretation*, (San Francisco: Harper, 1990), 117; Andre La Cocque, *Romance She Wrote: A Hermeneutical Essay on Song of Songs*, (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 1998), 120.

making by the women themselves.[146] Rather than simply submitting to the modesty requirements, the active use of veil by Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth makes them an active subjects 'pivotal' to their stories. Further, she notes that for Rebekah, the choice to veil herself shows'…murmurs of Rebekah's independence'.[147] Adelman also saliently observes the transitional nature of a woman taking off garments to veil, then unveiling and redressing in her original garments, as seen in Genesis 38, where *re*-cognition is made of true identity with garments which hide and conceal and the changing between one set of garments (including the veil) to another allows for the transition between seemingly disparate identities or as Adelman describes it '…from mis-recognition to public disclosure…'.[148]

Identity specific and transitional use of veils is not limited to Genesis 38.[149] Erin K Vearncombe has argued the same, positing that choice making through subversion of normative dress practice, was specifically used as a tool of gendered identity construction in the Bible.[150] The active choice making in removing clothes and re-dressing, helps to frame HB veiling as more than a passive event that simply happens to women. Manipulation of her dress items suggests active engagement with her own construction of identity, and this is an important observation which – in conjunction with the multiple uses of a veil by women for disguise and subversion of normative practice – requires further analysis, if we are to understand the

[146] Rachel Adelman, "From Veils to Goat Skins: The Female Ruse in Genesis", *The Journal of Textual Reasoning 6*, No. 2, (March 2011), http://jtr.shanti.virginia.edu/volume-6-number-2/from-veils-to-goatskins-the-female-ruse-in-genesis/, Section: "The Veiling of Rebekah"; Rachel Adelman, "Seduction and Recognition in the Story of Judah and Tamar and the Book of Ruth", *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues 23*, The Jewish Woman and her Body (Spring-Fall 2012): 94, https://doi.org/10.2979/nashim.23.87

[147] Adelman, "From Veils to Goatskins", Section: "The Veiling of Rebekah". See also Jennifer L Koosed, *Gleaning Ruth: A Biblical Heroine and her Afterlives*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2012), esp. 72-93;

[148] Adelman, "Seduction and Recognition", 94.

[149] Ibid., 87-109.

[150] Erin K Vearncombe, "Adorning The Protagonist: the Use of Dress in the Book of Judith", in *Dressing Judeans and Christians in Antiquity*, ed. Kristi Upson-Saia, Carly Daniel-Hughes, Alicia J Batten, (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2014), 119.

women's involvement with their own dress items beyond the patriarchal requirements to veil.[151]

The veiling texts of Genesis 24, Genesis 38 and Ruth are all, in one way or another, concerned with weddings and marriage – and this has been well studied in scholarship.[152] However, the underlying aspects of bodily organisation created by veiling women in marriage and the uses of a veil for personal, sexual and identity expression and disguise are not always noticed. This is especially evident in analyses of Genesis 24 and Rebekah's veiling with *ṣā'îp* in her marriage to Isaac. The wedding ceremony itself is not described in Genesis 24. However, Gen 24:67 describes Rebekah becoming Isaac's wife through the act of sexual intercourse in his mother's tent after she veils. Rebekah has been viewed as a silent, modest, covered object without any personal control in this exchange. Marriage required veiling so, her veiling, despite the fact that she is the initiator of the action, has been understood as a passive reaction – an example of compliance to Ricks and Ricks' 'natural order' of society and social practice. The possibility that Rebekah's self-veiling is a multi-dimensional act, in which she complies, but also makes active choices through initiating self-veiling, has most often been overlooked. As Van der Toorn rightly observes of the veil's relationship to marriage and scholarly acknowledgement of this aspect of veiling, '…many studies dwell only on the veil as a symbol of chastity or virginity…'.[153]

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[151]Several scholars explore this issue, especially Heather A McKay, Jopie Siebert Hommes and Victor H Matthews. See Heather A McKay, "Gendering the Discourse of Display in the Hebrew Bible", in *On Reading Prophetic Texts: Gender-Specific and Related Studies in Memory of Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes*, ed. Bob Becking and Meindert Dijkstra, (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 169-199; Heather A McKay, "Gendering the Body: Clothes maketh the (wo)man," in *Theology and the Body: Gender, Text and Identity*, ed. Robert Hannaford and J'annine Jobling, (London: Gracewing, 1999); Jopie Siebert-Hommes, "'On the Third Day Esther Put on Her Queen's Robes' (Esther 5:1): The Symbolic Function of Clothing in the Book of Esther." *Lectio Difficilior European Electronic Journal for Feminist Exegesis 3,* No. 1 (2002) http://www.lectio.unibe.ch/02_1/siebert.htm; Victor H Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative", *Journal of the Study Old Testament 20,* (March 1995), 36; Matthews, "The Determination of Social Identity in the Story of Ruth," 49-54; Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear,* passim.

[152]Some contention exists over Song of Songs as a reflection of weddings. This present study concurs with Falk and Fox, amongst others, that it is collection of waṣfs or wedding songs and poems.

[153] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 331.

For example, for S R Driver, Rebekah's self-veiling simply reflects the position of women in the east: '…a woman in any position in the East still appears veiled before her betrothed until the ceremony of marriage is completed.'[154] Similarly, Derek Kidner observes that '…the veil was a badge of betrothal and marriage…'.[155] E A Speiser notes a cross contextual and situational similarity between HB marriage texts which include a veil and Hurrian marriage practices present in the Haran region, but does not further analyse the veil in this cultural comparison, simply observing that Rebekah, too, is getting married in Genesis 24.[156] Davidson notes that the veil is just connected to '…the coming wedding ceremony…'.[157] For Hermann Gunkel, Rebekah's self-veiling in the presence of her future husband Isaac is nothing more than 'a courteous greeting for one's superior…'.[158] He refers to her simply as 'the woman', and notes that she '…observes the details of customs at all times…' because '…only veiled does she wish to meet her bridegroom…'.[159] Gunkel argues that to not veil in Isaac's presence would be an act of immodesty by Rebekah, despite previously noting that it is she who jumps from the camel and that it is she who veils and initiates conversation with Isaac. All of these acts of agency, subjectivity and initiative which certainly speak against the idea that Rebekah is only a voiceless, covered individual in the presence of her superior are ignored. More recent commentators mirror Gunkel's assertion. Diane Bergant, for example, claims that Rebekah's behaviour in conjunction with her veiling, '…conform[s] to traditional practice. She quickly dismounts, lest her prospective husband be forced to look up at her as she sits on a camel.'[160] Megan McKenna similarly observes that 'Rebekah veils herself, as was customary for a bride…'; but she does not extrapolate this further.[161] Bill T Arnold argues the

[154]S R Driver, *Westminster Commentaries: The Book of Genesis*, 6th Ed, (London: Methuen & Co, 1907), 277.
[155]Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*, (London: Tyndale Press, 1967), 38.
[156]E A Speiser, *Genesis*: *Anchor Bible Commentaries*, (Yale: Yale University Press, 1964), 64.
[157]Davidson, *Genesis 12 – 50*, 114.
[158]Hermann Gunkel, (trans. by Mark E, Biddle), *Genesis*, (Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1997), 252.
[159]Ibid.
[160]Diane Bergant, *Genesis: In The Beginning*, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2013), 100.
[161]Megan McKenna, *Leave Her Alone*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2000), 166.

same, questioning the symbolism behind a woman '…covering herself with a veil…', but not attempting to answer the question.[162] He simply observes

> '…It seems best to allow the narrator to leave these gaps unfilled, and to accept the gist of the conclusion of the act of marriage. This is certainly the intent of the clause 'he took Rebekah and she became his wife', the customary idiom for marriage. And this was most likely the meaning behind the veiled covering, which was probably an ancient symbol of betrothal'.[163]

Conversely, Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher observes that in veiling, Rebekah in Genesis 24 '…withdraws herself from the immediate grasp of others.'[164] The use of a veil to cover her is not an action which happens to her, but rather, to veil is an active choice on her part. The veil defines her personal space and thus functions more than simply being an object which indicates both her marital status and her personal desires. Veiling for Rebekah is not, as Jack M Sasson notes '…an act of modesty'. [165] Her self-veiling in this passage is an indication of one woman's agency to self-define through decision making and taking control of her own dress choices and identity construction and display. While it is *essential* to acknowledge veil use in wedding texts, in particular the way in which these dress items are connected to a woman's identity display as wife, if interpretation of the wedding veil ends at this conclusion with no further analysis of the veil itself or an acknowledgement that there is a woman and not just an object, who is veiled or who veils herself, then such determinations are problematically limited for interpretation.

This limited interpretation in which a woman is simply an object stripped of any agency whatsoever, is also apparent when the type of veil worn by Rebekah is not considered in its own right as a type of dress, especially in terms of its articulation of identity. *Ṣā'îp*, used by

[162]Bill T Arnold, *Genesis: The New Cambridge Bible Commentary*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 224.
[163]Ibid.
[164]Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher, "The Woman of their Dreams: The Image of Rebekah in Genesis 24", in *The World of Genesis: Persons, Places, Perspectives*, ed. Philip R Davies and David J A Clines, (Bath: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 90 – 101.
[165]Jack M Sasson, "The Servant's Tale: How Rebekah Found a Spouse", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies 65*, No. 4 (October 2006): 241.

Rebekah in Genesis 24 as a sign of marriage *and* Tamar in Genesis 38 to trick Judah, is generally identified as a veil (and not another type of garment, such as a cloak). However, when Tamar wears *ṣā'îp,* she is almost without exception identified as a veiled prostitute, while Rebekah's veil – as we have just seen – is universally considered to be the mark of a bride.

The determination that Tamar's *ṣā'îp* is the veil of a prostitute has been well discussed in scholarship – and it has also been widely questioned. Some interpreters assert that *ṣā'îp* can identify the wearer as either a prostitute or a bride – two quite disparate identities in the ancient world. For example, Karen Armstrong parallels Rebekah and Tamar and their use of *ṣā'îp,* acknowledging that both women wear the same type of veil, yet she claims that Tamar used *ṣā'îp* to disguise herself as a prostitute, where Rebekah did not.[166] No explanation, however, is given as to how the same veil could be worn to signal one woman as a prostitute and the other as a bride.[167] Douglas R Edwards argues this too, noting that 'Women used veils…to cover their faces on wedding days or if they were prostitutes.'[168] How could one type of veil, *ṣā'îp,* indicate to onlookers that the woman wearing the garment was either a prostitute or a bride, however, is not explained. If both of these identities could be constructed and displayed through the same veil, how was a person expected to tell the difference? Clearly, something is amiss in this interpretation and the traditional understanding of both *ṣā'îp* and its use by HB women need to be reconsidered.

Casting Tamar as a prostitute because of her use of *ṣā'îp* is a well-established tradition and there is an endless list of scholars who subscribe to the view deriving various conclusions regarding the reality behind the story. Driver for example, argued that Tamar's veiling was an

[166]Karen Armstrong, *In the beginning: A New Reading of the Book of Genesis*, (London: Harper Collins, 1996), 103.
[167]Ibid.
[168] Douglas R Edwards, "Dress and Ornamentation", in *Anchor Bible Dictionary Vol. 2,* ed. David N Freedman, (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 235.

'…allusion to a singular and repulsive custom, common in heathen Semitic antiquity…'.[169] Skinner also considered her role to be a veiled prostitute which '…rests on a primitive sexual taboo…'.[170] For Vawter, the veiled Tamar was a representation of prostitutes who were '…a routine fixture of the Near Eastern fertility cults…' while Bruggemann claimed that Tamar as a veiled prostitute '…serves to introduce moral connotations which are essential to the plot of the story…'.[171] Calum Carmichael, in referring to Tamar's sexual encounter with Judah while she is veiled, states that '…Judah had ploughed such a woman…' referring to Tamar's foreign ethnicity.[172] He mentions Judah's dress, incidentally, the symbols which indicate his identity and high social status, but not Tamar's, other than to classify her as a 'veiled whore'.[173] Westermann noted that Tamar is dressed as a prostitute, with Jon L Berquist, also arguing that 'Tamar dressed as a prostitute, covered herself with a veil…'.[174] Jan William Tarlin also suggests this, noting that by veiling, Tamar is made a 'spectre harlot' and that her veil signifies that role.[175] Athalya Brenner has also identified Tamar as a prostitute based on her veil, so too Susan Ackerman, who observes Tamar's change in clothing, where 'she trades her prostitute's veil for her widow's garb.'[176] Michael V Fox also categorises *ṣā'îp* as a prostitute's veil, noting that 'the only item of clothing that seems to have marked the prostitute was a heavy veil', with J P Fokkelman observing the same, categorising *ṣā'îp* as a 'sign of the profession.'[177] Indeed,

[169]Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, 330.
[170]John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963), 454.
[171] Bruce Vawter, *On Genesis: A New Reading*, (NY: Double Day, 1970), 398; Walter Brueggermann, *Genesis: A Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, (Georgia: John Knox Press, 1982), 308.
[172]Calum M Carmichael, "Forbidden Mixtures", *Vestus Testamentum 32*, Fasc. 4 (Oct., 1982): 405.
[173]Ibid.
[174] Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37-50: A Continental Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1986), 155; Miguel A De La Torre, *Genesis*, (Kentucky: John Westminster Press, 2001), 309.
[175] Jan William Tarlin, "Tamar's Veil: Ideology at the Entrance to Enaim", in *Entertainment, Culture and The Bible*, ed. George Aichele, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 174-181.
[176]Brenner, *The Israelite Woman*, 82; Susan Ackerman, *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel*, (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 229. In Brenner's later works, she varies from this definition. See Brenner, *I Am*, 134-137.
[177] Michael V Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*: *The Anchor Bible Commentary 18A* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 243; J P Fokkelman, "Genesis 37 and 38 at the Interface of Structural Analysis and Hermeneutics", in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. L J de Regt, J de Waard and J P Fokkelman, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996), 152-187, esp. 170.

this idea of Tamar as a veiled prostitute has been so pervasive that even contemporary dress scholar Alicia J Batten notes that Tamar's *ṣā'îp* is a prostitute's veil, and feminist scholar Esther Fuchs has recently categorised Tamar as a prostitute based on her choice of dress.[178]

Challenges to this automatic casting of Tamar as a prostitute mostly come from feminist scholarship. Some writers observe that Tamar and Rebekah wear the same type of veil, *ṣā'îp*, and thus rightly question the validity of assuming that the same veil could be used to indicate both a married woman and a prostitute. Tammi J Schneider for example, points out that 'The text never states what Tamar's goal is in putting on the veil or that her intention is to be viewed as a prostitute'.[179] She concludes that '…Tamar's reference to veiling as a mark of the prostitute is not supported by evidence…' in either biblical or extra-biblical sources observing that 'Rebekah veils before seeing Isaac (24:65)' and asks 'If one veils before marriage, how can one differentiate between a bride and a prostitute? If royalty veil, are they too prostitutes?'[180]

The proposition that Tamar is not a veiled prostitute and that *ṣā'îp* is likely not a marker of prostitution, has raised important discussions about the identities of veiled women. In the context of Tamar's story these discussions focus on questioning who women were in their social contexts and, what the role of *qadēšâ* (the type of prostitute Tamar is labelled by Judah's friend) and the act of *zānâ* (the type prostitution Tamar is accused of by Judah himself) actually entailed in the ANE. For example, *zonâ*, one who practices *zānâ*, instead of a prostitute may have been a kind of legal outlaw, as Phyllis Bird and others have argued.[181] Bird further notes that the term in no other place in the HB refers to the practice of prostitution and rather, it refers

[178]Batten, "Clothing and Adornment", 148-159; Esther Fuchs, *Sexual Politics on the Biblical Narrative: Reading the Hebrew Bible as a Woman*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), 78.
[179]Tammi J Schneider, *Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis*, (Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008), 154.
[180]Ibid., 154- 155.
[181]Phyllis Bird, "Prostitution in the Social World and the Religious Rhetoric of Ancient Israel", in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, ed. Christopher A Faraone & Laura K McClure, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 43; Phyllis Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities: Women and Gender in Ancient Israel*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 1997, 202-208.

to sins against the covenant – which Tamar is not guilty of.[182] Others, such as I M Diakonoff, Joan Goodnick Westenholtz, Tikva Frymer – Kensky, Kristel Nyberg, Martha T Roth, Stephanie Budin, Athalya Brenner, Daniel Bodi, and Karel Van der Toorn amongst others have all convincingly argued that *qadēšâ* and the Assyrian equivalent *qadištu* mean 'unencumbered woman'; that is, a woman who was not – in her social role as *qadištu*/ *qadēšâ* – directly under the control of a man (as daughter or wife) and whose work may have involved working with the temple (though, not all unencumbered women worked with the temple), but not as a prostitute.[183] Van der Toorn points out, as others have too, a significant reason behind the continued characterisation of Tamar as a veiled prostitute. He notes that much of the basis for our assumptions surrounding prostitutes and sacred prostitution in the HB are dependent on both Herodotus' version of events and James Frazer's outdated view of it.[184] As noted in his article on prostitution in Ancient Israel,

> 'The idea of sexual rites designed to maintain the mysterious force of life, still current in handbooks on Israelite religion, relies heavily, I believe, on the uncritically borrowed theories about the magical worldview of the ancients. In this respect, the ghost of Sir James Frazer is still among us. It is time that OT scholars adopt a less biased view and update their anthropological premises.'[185]

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[182] Ibid.

[183]I M Diakonoff, "Women in Old Babylonia Not under Patriarchal Authority", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 29*, No 3 (October 1986), 225-238; Joan Goodnick Westenholtz, "Tamar, Qedesa, Qadistu and Sacred Prostitution in Mesopotamia", *The Harvard Theological Review 82*, No.3, (July 1989): 245 – 265, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1510077; Phyllis Bird, "The Harlot as Heroine: Narrative Art and Social Presupposition in Three Old Testament Texts", *Semeia 46: Narrative Research on the Hebrew Bible*, (1989): 123; Bird, *Missing Persons, Mistaken Identities*,197 – 218; Tikva Frymer- Kensky, *In The Wake of the Goddesses: Women, Culture, and Biblical Transformation in Pagan Myth*, (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 257, no.38; Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of their Stories*, (New York: Random House, 2002), 271; Kristel Nyberg, "Sacred Prostitution in the Biblical World?" in *Sacred Marriages: The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, ed. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro, (Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 305 – 320; Bird, "Prostitution in the Social World", 40 – 58; Martha T Roth, "Marriage, Divorce, and the Prostitute in Ancient Mesopotamia", in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, ed. Faraone & McClure, 21 – 39; Stephanie Budin, "Sacred Prostitution in the First Person", *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, ed. Faraone & McClure, 77 – 92; Daniel Bodi, "The Encounter with a Courtesan in the Gilgamesh Epic and with Rahab in Joshua 2", in *Interested Readers: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David J A Clines*, ed. James K Aitken, Jeremy M S Clines & Christl M Maier, (Atlanta: SBL, 2013), 3-18, esp. 14-15.

[184]See also Nyberg, "Sacred Prostitution in the Biblical World?", 305 – 320.

[185]Karel Van der Toorn, "Female Prostitution in Payment of Vows in Ancient Israel", *Journal of Biblical Literature 108*, No.2 (Summer 1989): 204, https://doi.org/10.2307/3267293

John R Huddlestun's recent rejection of this assumption is particularly noteworthy, based on the 'absence of a link historically between the veil and prostitute…'.[186] Huddlestun provides a thorough analysis of veils in broader tradition beyond the HB, finds connections with Tamar's veil, concealment of identity, but he also clearly establishes a deeper historical lineage of the veil to show both that Tamar is not a prostitute, that her *ṣā'îp* does not indicate prostitution and, further, that Tamar never intended to be recognised as a prostitute in her actions.[187] Thus, there is more to learn about Tamar's use of *ṣā'îp* and the identity construction and display she undertakes while she is veiled. If she is not a veiled prostitute, what is her *ṣā'îp* telling us about her identity?

While there has been no specific, focused analysis of HB veiling accounts from Genesis 24, Genesis 38 and The Book of Ruth in terms of dress, identity and agency, one particularly significant contribution to this scholarship of HB dress which specifically concerns these veils, is another piece by Karel Van der Toorn, 'The Significance of Veiling in the ANE'.[188] While Van der Toorn does not indicate the utilisation of dress theory in his analysis, he nonetheless reaches conclusions which mirror the application of contemporary dress theory. Firstly, Van der Toorn determines that veils are certainly present in both the HB and the broader ANE and that the veil is not one garment, but many garments, which differ in terminology and style. Secondly, a veil indicates social status and identity, in particular, as extant records indicate, high or elite status, as well as marital status.[189] Thirdly, the veil could symbolise or signify the chastity of a woman – though he observes that scholarship tends to focus too much on this application of veiling, rather than the other utilisations. Next, veil can be used to accent a

[186]Huddlestun, "Unveiling the Versions", point 12 and 14.
[187]Ibid. See also Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative", 36.
[188]Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327-340. See also Karel Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life*. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 42-47.
[189]Ibid., 339. This is certainly evident in the HB in particular in Ezekiel 13:18 where the 'prophesying women' are scorned for veiling 'women of every stature'.

woman's physical beauty. While it covers or conceals the wearer, it also highlights them. He notes specifically of this application of veil use, that '…though such was not the overt purpose of the veil, women presumably did not ignore it…'.[190] Finally, veil is used as a tool signifying appurtenance or, in other words, belonging – that a woman belonged to a social class or, that a woman belonged to a man.[191] Van der Toorn places great emphasis on the veil as a symbol of appurtenance as '…first and foremost…' use.[192] According to Van der Toorn, these dimensions of veils and veiling practice are not mutually exclusive, and can and do overlap, highlighting the complexity of the use and meaning of veil in the HB.[193] The appurtenance or 'belonging' component identified by Van der Toorn highlights is a particular key to understanding the veil and the practice of veiling in the HB and ANE. The veil could indicate that a woman *belonged* to a high social status. Equally, in socially displaying 'chasteness', the veil indicated that a woman's body *belonged* to her husband or father. However, in having the capacity to exaggerate her form and her seductiveness as a dressed individual, the veil also, perhaps less overtly than other aspects of appurtenance related to the garment, could indicate that a woman's mind and choices *belonged* to herself even within the confines of other more obvious appurtenances. Though he does not specifically deal with the agency of women to self-veil, Van der Toorn's important observations of the relationship between identity and the complexity of veil use are a significant and essential contribution to the analysis of HB veils; and, his observation that women did not ignore aspects of their own veils, does shine a light on the possibility of agency being present in veil use in the HB.

As is clear from this review, veiling in the HB, rather than being a simple expression of patriarchal demands, expression of modesty or normative custom is actually a very rich

[190]Ibid.
[191]Ibid.
[192]Ibid. 338.
[193]Ibid.

tapestry in which there are many additional strands that can be discerned and which can help us in understanding both the practice of veiling and the veiled women from the HB. Thus, while there is not necessarily a 'plain and stable' answer to the question of veiling in the HB, a perspective shift which bears in mind the complexity of types of veil and the meaning of the practice whereby women themselves manipulate their own dress items for identity expression, is needed to interpret veiling as it occurs in the HB.

3 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

3.1 Dress Theory

'If clothes are the image of self, then what kind of self is mapped upon the veiled surface?'[194]

The way we dress presents to the world a visual display of who we are and who we would like to be seen as. Dress is, as Banu Gökariksel and Anna Secor observe, the image of self; and thus, in order to reveal what kind of self is mapped upon the veiled surface of women in the HB, we must position veil within the study of dress. The veil, in its material form, is first and foremost an item of dress which has layers of social and personal meaning applied to it.[195] It is therefore necessary to define dress, overview the ways in which dress is used to construct and display identity, explore the relationship between the body and dress and finally, examine dress as an embodied social practice, where meaning is made and boundaries are pushed through the habitual putting on of dress by social participants and through the wearer's own agency to make choices about their dress.[196]

Dress was formatively defined by Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne Eicher in the 1990s, where they posited that dress is '…an assemblage of modifications of the body and/or supplements to the body.'[197] It is '…broadly interchangeable with other terms…' including '…appearance, clothing, ornament, adornment, and cosmetics…'.[198] Dress so defined, can be many things, a long list of '…possible direct modifications of the body such as coiffured hair, colored skin, pierced ears, and scented breath, as well as an equally long list of garments,

[194]Gökariksel and Secor, "The Veil, Desire, and the Gaze", 178
[195] El Guindi, *Veil,* 5.
[196]Entwhistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body", 327.
[197]Roach-Higgins and Eicher, "Dress and Identity", in *Dress and Identity*, ed. Roach-Higgins, Eicher and Johnson, 7. See also Joanne B Eicher and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, "Dress and Identity", *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal 10, No.4,* (1992): 1-8, https://doi.org/10.1177/0887302X9201000401.
[198] Ibid. BERG have an excellent online library of dress terminology and categorisations, which are an indispensable tool for those interested in dress theory and the application of dress theory to ancient and modern sources alike. See "Bloomsbury Fashion Central", www.bloomsburyfashioncentral.com/, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, accessed January 3 2017.

jewellery, accessories and other categories of items added to the body as supplements.'[199] The word dress therefore acts as an umbrella of possible terminology for modifications to the surface of the body, in a way that the terms such as appearance, apparel, costume or fashion cannot.[200] As such, dress is something which goes on the surface of the body, modifies it, adds to it or changes it.

Dress as a theoretical framework emerges from sociological and anthropological theory, and has been well considered in these disciplines since Roach-Higgins and Eicher's work.[201] It is applied predominantly to living communities,[202] nonetheless as Mirielle M Lee notes '…it can be fruitfully applied to the ancient evidence…' as well, '…allowing us to recover the social significance of dress practices that would otherwise be lost to us.'[203] Historical practices of dressing and the dress items used by people of the past have often been critiqued as 'costume', a term which tends to imply an 'out-of-everyday' experience, such as theatre or folk performance rather than a cultural expression of the lived experience of ancient people.[204] However, focus on dress from the past has shifted, due in large part to the work of Joanne Entwhistle.[205] Entwhistle's work focuses on dress as an embodied, habitually performed, lived experience for contemporary and ancient people alike; therefore contemporary analysis of dress, for both ancient and modern acts of dressing, is best viewed

[199] Ibid.
[200] Roach-Higgins and Eicher, "Dress and Identity", 9-10.
[201] Roach-Higgins and Eicher's 1995 definition is based on their work from 1965 and 1992. See Roach-Higgins and Eicher, "Definition and classification of dress", in *Dress and Gender: Making meaning in cultural context*, ed. Ruth Barnes and Joanne B Eicher, (Oxford: BERG, 1992); Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne B Eicher, *Dress, Adornment and the Social Order,* (New York: John Wiley, 1965).
[202] Mirielle M Lee, *Body, Dress and Identity in Ancient Greece*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 37.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Roach-Higgins and Eicher, "Dress and Identity", 10.
[205] Entwhistle, *The Fashioned Body*; Entwhistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body", 323-348. Some early work prior to Entwhistle attempted to view dress in terms of its relationship with the wearer and not simply as costume. See for example JC Flugel, *The Psychology of Clothes,* (New York: International Universities Press, 1971) and Quentin Bell, *On Human Finery,* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1976).

through Entwhistle's lens.[206] Dress, the wearer, their body and the social world are in communication with each other, and dress should not be viewed as a costume, but rather as a lived, personal, social and habitual experience – for both living and ancient communities.

Dress in its many forms has several functions. In simple terms, it serves to protect the wearer '…from exposure to the elements and the view of other persons.'[207] But, as well as providing this physical protection, dress also acts as '…a media of communication…'.[208] It transforms '…flesh into something recognizable and meaningful to a culture…' by '…adding a whole array of meanings to the body that would otherwise not be there.'[209] If one is naked or nude, meaning is also made and thus the act of dress and undress are both encoded with social messages.[210] A dressed body then, is a body which is communicating.

In point of fact, dress is our first form of communication before verbal or physical interaction even takes place. Alison Lurie, who likens dress to a form of language, observes that dress is used as the first language of communication between people; and this has occurred for as long as we have been dressing ourselves.[211] Who we are, who we wish to be perceived as, as well as our social position within our socio-cultural contexts, is evident in our dress long before we are close enough to exchange words or any other form of bodily or verbal

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[206] Several volumes in recent years all seek to position ancient dress within the context of dress theory. See *The Clothed Body in the Ancient World*, ed. Liza Cleland, Mary Harlow & Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, (Oxford: Oxbow, 2005); *Dress and Identity*, ed. Mary Harlow, BAR International Series Vol 2356, (Birmingham: Archaeopress, 2012); *Greek and Roman Textiles and Dress: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. Mary Harlow and Marie-Louise Nosch, (Oxford: Oxbow, 2014); *Dressing the Judeans and Christians in Antiquity*, ed. Carly Daniel-Hughes, Kristi Upson-Saia, and Alicia J Batten, (London: Routledge, 2014); Lee, *Body, Dress and Identity in Ancient Greece*.

[207] Roy R Jeal, "Clothes Make the (Wo)man", *Scriptura 90*, (2005): 685. https://doi.org/10.7833/90-0-1059;

[208]Mary Harlow and Marie-Louise Nosch, "Weaving the Threads: Methodologies in Textile and Dress" in *Greek and Roman Textiles*, ed. Harlow and Nosch, 3.

[209] Entwhistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body", 324; also see Entwhistle, *The Fashioned Body*, esp. 6-39.

[210] For more on the visual representation and social difference between naked and nude, see Julia Asher-Greve and D Sweeney, "On Nakedness, Nudity and Gender", in *Images and Gender: Contributions to the Hermeneutics of Reading Ancient Art*, ed. S Schroer, (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprect, 2006), 125-176; also Amy Rebecca Gansell, "The Iconography of Ideal Feminine Beauty Represented in the Hebrew Bible and Iron Age Levantine Ivory Sculpture", in *Image, Text and Exegesis: Iconographic Interpretation and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Izaak J de Hulster & Joel M LeMon, (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 46-70, esp. 61-65.

[211] Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes*, (NY: Random House, 1981), 3.

language.[212] Through dress, Lurie notes, '…by the time we meet and converse we have already spoken to each other in an older and more universal tongue.'[213] Within cultures and societies, with your dress, Lurie observes

> '…you announce your sex, age, and class to me…and very possibly give me important information (or misinformation) as to your occupation, origin, personality, opinions, tastes, sexual desires and current mood. I may not be able to put what I observe into words, but I register the information unconsciously; and you simultaneously do the same for me.'[214]

The language of dress is a 'complex intentional system' which is '…learned by all members of any culture at an early age'. [215]

The collection of signs and symbols used to articulate the intentional system of dress language is extraordinarily complex. Nathan Joseph has surmised that dress assemblage functions as both a simplistic 'signal' and a more complex 'symbol'.[216] Signal in dress indicates the obvious, '…a simple cognitive link between things.'[217] A redcoat for example, signals membership in the British army.[218] Symbol through dress however, is more complex. It is an '…abstract sign that conveys information about values, beliefs and emotions.'[219] The line between signal and symbol is not always a clear one; rather the context is often integral to understanding it.[220] For example, a signal of party membership in Nazi Germany was the swastika. In our contemporary world, this symbol is of Nazi Germany as a whole and conveys the values and deeds of the tyrannical and fascist regime.[221]

The concept of identity is essential to the study of dress, given that the signals and symbols of dress articulate a broad yet complex display of identity information. In broadest

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[212]Ibid.
[213]Ibid.
[214]Ibid.
[215]Ibid.
[216]Nathan Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms: Communication Through Clothing*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 9.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Ibid.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Ibid, 10.

terms, identity can be differentiated into personal or social identity. Personal identity or the self '…is a very complex whole…the multidimensional, integrated human personality, and cannot be reduced to a series of separate roles which an individual plays in various social groups and situations'.[222] It '…includes a subjective sense of continuous existence and a coherent memory.'[223] Personal identity is thus an individual's understanding and sense of their own personal self, of being an individual which is a separate entity to the rest of humanity. Paul Giddens has argued that the sense of self and personal identity is 'reflexively made' through a thoughtful internal construction by an individual.[224] In contemporary society, this is most readily displayed, perhaps almost paradoxically, in online social media, where individual self is reflexively constructed then curated and displayed as a beacon of individualism. For dress, this can be seen in fashion choices we make which display our personal tastes and sense of self. In the ancient world, indications of personal identity can also be found. For example, Hebrew sources with the presence of multiple terms for 'I' and 'self' and 'one' indicate a complex understanding of the personal self.[225] For dress, this therefore implies that choices of dress options in the HB, even if not as broad as contemporary ones, can reflect personal identity of the characters, and how they perceived themselves.[226]

Social identity is a projection of belonging to 'we', as opposed to personal identity which is the 'I'; thus, where personal identity is internally and reflexively made, social identities are externally constructed.[227] Dress also plays a significant role in signalling and

[222]Erik Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, (London: Faber & Faber, 1968), 61.
[223]Ibid; Zdizislaw Mach, *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*: *Essays in Political Anthropology*, (New York: SUNY Press, 1993), 3. Mach draws extensively on Erikson's definition of identity in his discussion.
[224]Paul Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), 106 – 109.
[225]Peter H W Lau, *Identity and Ethics in the Book of Ruth: A Social Identity Approach*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 29-32.
[226]Tamar Hodos, "Local and Global Perspectives in the Study of Social and Cultural Identities", in *Material Culture and Social Identities in the Ancient World*, ed. Shelly Hales and Tamar Hodos, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3 – 31, esp. 4.
[227] Mary Harlow, "Dress and Identity: An Introduction", in *Dress and Identity*, ed. Harlow, 1.

sharing a group identity; a police officer in their uniform shares that role-related social identity with other police officers.[228] According to Roach-Higgins and Eicher dress both '…confers identities on individuals as it communicates positions…' within social structures.[229] The complex system of communication through the signs and symbols of dress, are used to visualise and establish multiple aspects involved in social identities such as hierarchical position, gender, ethnic and political belonging, social status and role.[230]

Social identities are constructed and displayed through an array of variation to dress. Gender, as a social construction, is displayed on the body through dress by both subtle and overt differences in dress items. For example, in a modern Western context, the neck tie is a dress item which is gendered to masculine wear. The thin strip of clothe itself carries no gender; but the gender of the wearer is expressed through wearing the tie. As well as being a gendered garment, the neck tie also displays the gendered traits which are socially equated with masculinity; the tie means being a professional, powerful male. Equally, high heel shoes are a feminine gendered dress item in a modern Western context. These, too, display gendered traits traditionally associated with femininity – high heels extend the calf muscles, making the leg look slender and thus attractive – both being Western idealised physical traits of femininity. Dress items are so integrally linked with gendered displays that their use can be subverted to show a heightened display of gendering. High heels are so integrally linked with the construction of femininity, that they are used as one of the tools in Drag culture to show a heightened display of femininity.[231]

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[228] Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms*, 9

[229] Roach-Higgins and Eicher, "Dress and Identity", 13.

[230] Angelika Berlejung, "Clothing and Vestments: Religious Studies," in *Religion Past & Present: Encyclopaedia of Theology and Religion*, ed. Hans Dieter Betz, Don S Browning, Bernd Janowski and Eberhard Jüngel (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 252 – 253.

[231] Megan Cleary, "The history of the high heel – and what it says about women today", *Boston Globe*, 27 June 2015,www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2015/06/27/highheelssymbolmisogyny/wGGdJ1R5kNxw0QRtHEE7UL/story.html; See also Omri Gilliath, Angela J Bahns, Fiona Ge and Christian S Crandall, "Shoes as a Source of First Impressions", *Journal of Research in Personality 46*, (2012): 423-430.

Some dress items which are not gender specific also construct and display gender through subtle variation. For example, blue jeans, though originally gendered to masculine wear from their origins as mining trousers, are now worn by both men and women.[232] However, men's jeans and women's jeans are not the same garment. The cut is reflective of physical differences between men and women. Women's jeans are shapelier and roomier around the hips and thighs, whereas men's jeans are straighter in general from hip to ankle. This is a distinct gendered variation of a non-gendered garment. Other subtle variations to distinguish between men's and women's jeans are also present. The zipper fly in men's jeans is longer than that of women's jeans. A subtle variation, but one that is gender specific and differs between these otherwise ungendered garments.

Pockets in garments are another example of this gendered differentiation. While the pocket itself is not a gendered sartorial feature, women's garments tend to lack pockets or feature pockets which are too small to carry much – especially in the modern world of mobile devices.[233] Men's garments however, feature deep pockets; and often many of them. This gendered variation in garments remains in fashion production today, though carries over from a time when women were forbidden from having hidden, secret places in garments, in case they carried and thus distributed salacious or seditious materials.[234] Incidentally, the handbag, another gendered dress item emerged at the same point in history out of necessity. Women had the need to carry items in public spaces – but, limiting pockets and pocket size and providing her with a visible vessel for carrying items meant she was less able to carry – or disseminate – secret, personal things that were outside of the control of her male counterparts.

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[232]Harris, *The Blue Jean*, 9-10.
[233]Ritu Prasad, "Eight Ways the world is not designed for women", *BBC News US and Canada*, 5 June 2019, www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-47725946,
[234] Much has been written on the political nature of women's pockets. See for example Chelsea G Summers, "The Politics of Pockets", 19 September 2016, *Vox.com*, www.vox.com/2016/9/19/12865560/politics-of-pockets-suffragettes-women.

Colour is also used to construct a gendered display for the wearer. For example, in the context of contemporary Australia and other parts of the Western world, blue dress for boys and pink for girls project a constructed gender identity of children. This gendered distinction between boys and girls is a contemporary Western-centric gendering of children through dress, and other cultures have and do use different colours to gender their babies and toddlers. Historically, the reverse ordering of colour designation is also more readily found.[235] But, in our social and cultural context, these colour signs show the social world and members of the culture into which the child is born, that the child is one thing over another. The society into which the child is born applies gendered meaning to the dress of the baby as an outward visual distinction of gender, and this not only socially identifies the child, but it also has consequences for expectations of behaviour. In a study conducted by Caroline Smith and Barbara Lloyd, where a 6 month old boy was dressed firstly in blue and then in pink and given to 11 adults to play with, clear gender bias based entirely on the baby's dress was identified.[236] When dressed in blue, the adults all chose toys such as trucks to entertain the baby, which are traditionally considered to reflect active and hands-on masculine roles. When wearing pink, toys which reflect traditional feminine gendered roles – softer, caring and passive toys such as dolls – were chosen.[237] While the child's sex and identity did not change throughout the exercise, gendered cultural expectations were applied to the baby due entirely to the gendered display created by its dress. As Winkle notes 'Dress has such a powerful communicative effect that it can alter or completely change the observer's perception of another's identity from what it really is.'[238]

[235]J B Paoletti, "The Gendering of Infants' and Toddlers' Clothing in America", in *The Material Culture of Gender and the Gendering of Material Culture*, ed. K A Martine and K L Ames, (Hanover: University of New England Press, 1997), 57.
[236]Caroline Smith and Barbara Lloyd, "Maternal Behaviour and Perceived Sex of Infant: Revisited", *Child Development 49*, No 4, (December 1978): 1263-1265.
[237] Ibid.
[238]Winkle, "Clothes Maketh One (Like) The Son of Man," 52.

Social status is also constructed and displayed through dress. For example, the wearing of brand name dress items in contemporary societies can indicate high social status. Attaining certain brands of dress can be expensive, and thus wearing these items indicates to onlookers one's high social status or one's desired high social status. Fendi handbags, for example, are worn by women as not only gendered items, but items which indicate high social status and wealth. At an average of $4,000 a bag, with at times limited numbers of bags in style and colour available upon release, only those with the means to acquire these bags will be able to have them.[239] Quality of make and expense of purchase immediately indicate to onlookers that the wearer of the bag has the means and therefore high social status by which to firstly obtain and secondly display the bag. Subtle variation of bags by year/season of release exist as well, and thus to those who use or wish to use the bags as a display of status and wealth have a further system of identity interpretation to play with.[240]

Another such dress item, and one which has been used by many cultures in one form or another to indicate high social status, is the crown. The crown as an item of dress has also indicated that the wearer is the head of a kingdom – so much so, that the crown itself as an item of dress becomes the symbol of both the monarch and their seat of power. Such dress items are rightly referred to as 'status symbols' and display complex information about the status and social power of the wearer.

Dress also articulates role-related aspects of identity. For example, married individuals are recognizable by their wedding ring; a small dress item, yet one laden with symbolic value.[241] The wedding ring indicates the wearer's marital status and role as husband or wife, yet also signifies that the wearer is unavailable for sexual advances from others who are not

[239]"Women's Fendi Handbags and Wallets", Nordstrom, 2020, https://www.nordstrom.com/browse/women/handbags/filter/fendi~brand_998?breadcrumb=Home%2FWomen%2FHandbags&origin=topnav&brand=998.
[240]Ibid.
[241]Roach-Higgins and Eicher, "Dress and Identity", 13.

their spouse. Doctors, too, are recognizable by their dress. The signs and symbols of stethoscope and white coat immediately indicate to onlookers that the wearer is a doctor.[242] Further, the character attributes of that role are assumed to belong to the person wearing the dress associated with that social role. Doctors are expected to be pillars of the community, upholding the character values socially deemed to belong to a doctor, such as respectability and compassion. Social role and associated or expected social behaviour are both constructed and displayed through the wearing of specific dress items.

Different cultures establish their own language of dress, specific to the needs, desires and requirements of that culture. In order to understand the nuances of the display of dress, one must generally be within the social boundaries of the group to which the form of dress belongs.[243] A variety of information about cultural participants is therefore encoded into their dress language – and this includes information about identity, but it also determines whether a person is socially appropriate and adhering to the standards of their culture. Social participants can be required to dress in a prescribed way, in order to project the identities present in a society, and members of a society are therefore often expected and required to wear types of dress which indicate multiple aspects of their identities within that culture.[244] Within this, whether an individual is deemed approachable or socially and culturally appropriate by social standards is also built into their dress. Susan Kaiser notes that

> 'A person may be evaluated as basically good or bad on the basis of appearance. Adjective scales such as sloppy – neat or trustworthy – untrustworthy are included in this subcategory under evaluation.

[242]As a primary school teacher, it should be noted that the author has been recognised as such on the street on multiple occasions. Having spent years dressing a certain way to accommodate the teaching of small children, this role is reflected in my 'uniform' of stylish scarf, cardigan and skirt/dress. This translates across cultures too, as in the US the question has been asked of me by strangers 'are you an elementary school teacher, by chance? You just…look like one!'

[243]Diane Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 100.

[244]Dietmar Neufeld, "The Rhetoric of the Body, Clothing and Identity in Vita and Genesis", *Scriptura 90*, (2005): 679-684, esp. 680, http://doi.org/10.7833/90-0-1058.

> Females dressed in conservative or casual styles are judged as more sincere, trustful, and reliable than those wearing dressy or 'daring' (more sexually provocative) styles'.[245]

The relationship between dress and the body is significant for understanding how dress operates as a social tool. Dress, then, is not an arbitrary collection of things we wear on our bodies; it is an expression of the intimate relationship between the wearer and society, where identities are constructed and displayed on the surface of the body.[246] Boyton Arthur notes that

> 'Dress and, by extension, the body are sites where different symbolic meanings are constructed and contested... the human body is a symbol for the social body, that is, a persons' bodies represent the values of the culture to which they belong…'[247]

Consequently, '…neither the body nor dress can be understood in isolation; each derives its meaning from the other…'.[248] Through dress, '…the individual, biological body becomes a social body.'[249] Entwhistle notes that the repeated action of dressing is a participatory experience for the wearer, an active exchange between the personal and the social, where dress is an '…intimate experience of the body and a public presentation of it…' because, dress is operates at '…the meeting place of the private and the public.'[250] Further, dress is a habitually performed act which creates and displays identities on the body and thus, it is, as Entwhistle posits, an embodied practice – identities are embodied by the wearer and then socially presented by the wearer in the repeated, habitual act of dressing.[251] The act of dressing is thus a lived experience which occurs on the surface of the body; in viewing how people dress, we cannot separate the person from the dress item. The personal act of dressing creates meaning for the dress.[252]

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[245]Susan B Kaiser, *The Social Psychology of Clothing: Symbolic Appearances in Context*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1990), 265.
[246]Lee, *Body, Dress and Identity in Ancient Greece,* 230.
[247]Linda Boynton Arthur, "Clothing, Control, and Women's Agency: The Mitigation of Patriarchal Power", in *Negotiating at the margins: The gendered discourses of power and resistance*, ed. Sue Fisher and Kathy Davis, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 67.
[248] Ibid
[249] Ibid
[250] Entwhistle, *The Fashioned Body*, 7.
[251] Ibid.
[252]Entwhistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body", 327.

The body acts as a medium of culture, and the requirements of the culture are expressed directly through the body, in dress, in actions, in daily life.[253] This can and does relate to social identity, where dress which articulates social identity within a culture is worn by members of that social group.[254] Dressing the body of a cultural participant also displays the body as the bearer of a system of signs. Neufeld notes that individuals, groups, cultures and societies '…presuppose a number of bodily identities…' and these identities are '…all constructed through the experience of the body.'[255] In both the ancient world and the modern world, '…the human body 'is a cultural costume; it is decorated from birth to death by diverse cultural traditions and is therefore at all times a medium of cultural communication'.[256]

Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* provides an important basis for understanding the intimate relationship between dress and the body.[257] Bourdieu established through *habitus* '…how social structure and individual agency can be reconciled, and… how the "outer" social, and the "inner" self, help to shape each other.'[258] Practices such as dressing, which are habitual, '…contribute to the development of many of our social identities…since all require social interaction for their development, representation and reflection.'[259] Dress then, as the layer between the two worlds, acts as a barrier and mediator between the private and the social; and the surface of the body is the interface between the physical, biological self and the social self, which is both perceived by, and interacts with, society.[260] But, there is an exchange between internal desire to display identity and external stimulus to construct identity – and the two work

[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid. See also Mary Douglas, *Cultural Bias*, (London: Royal Anthropological Institute, 1978), 15.
[255] Neufeld, "The Rhetoric of the Body, Clothing and Identity", 680.
[256] Ibid. See also Dietmar Neufeld, "Body, Clothing and Identity – Clay Cunningly Compounded" in *And So They Went Out: The Lives of Adam and Eve as Cultural Transformative Story*, ed. Daphna Arbel, Robert J Cousland and Dietmar Neufeld, (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 43.
[257]Karl Maton, "Habitus", in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Stockfields: Acumen Publishing, 2008), 50.
[258] Maton, "Habitus", 50.
[259]Tamar Hodos, "Local and Global Perspectives", 15-16.
[260]Terrence Turner, "The Social Skin", in *Reading the Social Body*, ed. C Burroughs and J Ehrenreich, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 15-39, esp. 15. See also Terri-lynn Wai Ping Hong Tanaka, "Dress and Identity in Old Babylonian Texts", (PhD diss., University of California Berkeley, 2013), 8.

in tandem. Entwhistle posits that dress is thus a '…situated bodily practice…', that is, the wearers of dress are not merely actors, but the 'embodiers' of culture through their dress and further, they are agents in the process of dressing and identity construction.[261] Individuals or subjects of society actively engage with the social, and as such, dress is '…actively produced through routine practices directed towards the body.'[262]

While a person, in the habitual act of dressing, is complicit in social identity creation in their cultural context, individuals do not however, necessarily need to adhere to the expectations of dress in their societies. Types of dress can be required by society to designate, organise and even control its members; but the regulation of a person, their body and their dress, do not tell the whole story of the use of the garment by the wearer themselves. Therefore, in order for social messages about one's role and identity to be perpetuated through dress, the wearer must be complicit in the act.[263] If adherence is unavoidable, individuals still have the power to act with their own agency to alter and adapt their dress within prescribed boundaries to better reflect their own sense of identity or, to display how they themselves choose to define their identity. Consequently, the agency of individuals to dress and make choices about their dress is fundamental to understanding how identities are constructed on the body.

Agency can be defined as '…the capacity of individuals to act independently and make their own free choices.'[264] Therefore, relying on Bourdieu's theory of structure and agency, agency is directly related to the relationship between social structures and the individuals within social structures, where individuals, or '…agents act, and agency is the capability, the power, to be the source and originator of acts; agents are the subjects of agency.'[265] Individuals

[261]Entwhistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body", 325.
[262]Ibid.
[263]Ibid.
[264]Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*. (London: Sage, 2005), 448.
[265]Nigel Rapport and Joanna Overling, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 1.

within social structures therefore negotiate power through choice. Social and cultural structures and constraints on the actions of individuals such as dressing exist; agency is the individual response to these structures and constraints, in either adhering to or challenging them.[266]

Accordingly, dress and agency are intimately linked. Karen Tranberg Hansen suggests that dress is so closely related to one's ability to respond with their own agency because one's most intimate physical self, their body, comes into direct contact with dress.[267] It '…both touches the body and faces outward towards others…'.[268] A person may therefore be required to display, through a specific item of dress, a social identity which their society deems them to belong to. But, the choice to wear the dress item – or to wear an item of dress which displays their own sense of their identity that does not necessarily align with societies requirements of dress – is subjective.

In societies with rigid social expectations of dress, expectation and desire do not necessarily align. The subjective and social experiences of dress '…are not always mutually supportive but may contradict one another or collide'.[269] Within patriarchal social structures, women are subject to the power enforced on them by the patriarchal order to which they are subject. A key aspect of this is the organisation and control of women's sexuality, body and social position through mandate of the way they can and must dress. As such the '…body is a system of signs that stand for and express relations of power. Control is limited or accessed via the body'.[270] Regulation of dress can constitute regulation of the body; and many examples of this can be found throughout history. For example, in a study undertaken by Linda Boynton

[266] Rapport and Overling, *Social and Cultural Anthropology,* 1.
[267] Karen Tranberg Hansen, "The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture," *Annual Review of Anthropology 33* (2004): 372. Tranberg Hansen draws extensively from Turner's theory of social skin – See also Turner, "The Social Skin", 15-39.
[268] Tranberg Hansen, "The World in Dress", 372.
[269] Ibid.
[270]Neufeld, "The Rhetoric of the Body, Clothing and Identity", 680; B Turner, "Recent Developments in the Theory of the Body", in *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, ed. M Featherstone, M Hepworth, and B Turner, (London: Sage, 1991), 25-27.

Arthur on the tightly regulated dress of Holdemann Mennonite women, '…men exercise control, with ministers having the most power.'[271] In this community, women's dress is seen as an external display of their religiosity and as such is regulated and prescribed by church ministers. To remain part of the community, women must adhere to the dress prescribed by their church fathers.[272] Here, women are threatened with excommunication and isolation if their dress is deemed immodest or outside of rigid requirements set by the church. Women's bodies and their dress are thus the objects of social structure, where, through the requirements of modest and prescribed dress, women's sexuality and their place within the community is heavily regulated.

However, a social requirement for modest and controlled dress does not necessarily equate to the lived experience of dressing. While women's bodies can be regulated in the public sphere, women's agency and women as agents still operate within the confines of regulated and controlled dress.[273] As Read and Bartkowski note '…culture is not simply produced from 'above' through the rhetoric of elites to be consumed untransformed by social actors who are little more than judgemental dopes…'.[274] Though the act of dressing in a specific garment or style may be dictated from above and may be part of a social mandate, ideology or expectation to define individuals, the way in which dress items are chosen, handled and manipulated in daily use, shows an altered and personal relationship between the wearer, their body and their dress.

For the Holdemann Mennonite women, subtle changes and variations to prescribed dress such as added pleats, allowed them to articulate their own identities and personalities

[271] Boynton Arthur, "Clothing, Control, and Women's Agency", 67.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas*, 100.
[274]Jen'Nan Ghazal Read and John P Bartkowski, "To Veil or Not to Veil? A Case Study of Identity Negotiation among Muslim Women in Austin", *Gender and Society 14*, No. 3 (Jun., 2000): 412-413.

within the confines of the social structure and requirement to wear particular dress items.[275] They are required to wear particular kinds of dress as part of the social order, but subtle changes that still align with social requirements give women some control and ability to act as agents over their own dress and thus express their own identities. Adding pleats to prescribed dresses allowed for a subtle expression of femininity and the women's own understanding of their identities. Indeed, these subtle changes were themselves an act of agency; the effect of the action being a freedom of personal identity projection not found in any other part of the rigid society.[276] It was through the most personal of exchanges between public and private, a woman's personal dress items, that such agency could be manifested.

Another example of this is the use of the hijab by Islamic women in the contemporary US, where Islamic women can negotiate their own identities within social environments through hijab. Jen'Nan Ghazal Read and John P Bartkowski, in their case study of identity negotiation amongst Muslim women in contemporary Texas, where the majority of women are non-Muslim Americans and therefore do not veil, see the veil as a tool of purposeful identity expression.[277] For Muslim American women, choosing to wear a veil or choosing not to veil are both acts of agency to identify oneself as belonging. The women that chose to veil were able to identify themselves within the Muslim community and thus be recognised by other Muslims as part of that community, in a social environment where being Muslim was not the norm. It therefore allowed these women to be greeted accordingly and to be immediately identifiable as Muslim by other members of the community as well as the broader public.[278] It also allowed veiled women to form social groups with other veiled women and thus formalise

[275] Boynton Arthur, "Clothing, Control, and Women's Agency", 67.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Read and Bartkowski, "To Veil or Not to Veil?", 395-417.
[278]Ibid, esp. 403-404. Katherine Bullock has observed similar in Canada, with Canadian Muslim women negotiating social and personal identities as Muslims, Canadians and as women. See Bullock, *Rethinking Muslim Women*, 35-84.

their own social groups where none specifically existed before. The women who chose not to veil wished to identify with the broader cultural experience and not be immediately recognisable as part of the Muslim community.[279] Both groups of women, however, reflected that their internal personal identity as Muslim was unchanged by the outward display; and both groups understood why the other group would want to choose to either veil or not veil.[280]

Formally identifying types of dress items and assigning social meaning to dress as an ensemble on the body can however, pose several issues for those outside the socio-cultural sphere of the wearer. While dress clearly articulates various identities, including social status, social role and gender, a cautious approach must be taken in formal dress identification, especially when done so through historical analysis. For the analysis of dress in historical sources, and dress identification more broadly, Winkle succinctly catalogues multiple distinct and specific difficulties which must be taken into account.[281] While these obstacles are at times unavoidable, awareness of them is an essential measure to take in order to avoid falling into these pitfalls. As Winkle deduces '…these potential obstacles underscore the need for caution and balance in the formal interpretation of dress.'[282]

Firstly, in identifying individual elements of dress on a dressed person, it is possible that one dress item is not the central articulator of the wearer's identity.[283] Rather, all the components of dress are necessarily interpreted together to define both the identity of the wearer and the type of dress item being worn by them. Depending on the context, an item of dress may become ambiguous depending on what else the wearer is wearing. Thus Winkle

[279] Read and Bartkowski, "To Veil or Not to Veil?", 403-404.
[280] Ibid.
[281] Winkle, "One Like the Son of Man," 63-75. Winkle shows in his excellent overview, that there are many obstacles to dress identification. Awareness of these obstacles is essential for contemporary dress analysis.
[282] Ibid., 63-65.
[283] Ibid.

questions, is the sum up of meaning greater than its parts?[284] For example, a white coat can indicate that the wearer is a doctor; but a white coat can also indicate that the wearer is a beautician.[285] Other dress items such as a stethoscope can help differentiate – and thus the sum of the parts is essential to disambiguate between social identities. Sometimes, particularly in historical literature, it is not possible to find or identify other dress items. Often only one dress item is referred to in order to identify the wearer and other means of interpretation are thus necessary to counteract ambiguity. As Barthes notes '…The central thrust of a 'system' is to carefully sort out the differential components of fashion and see how 'the complex network of relationships' can join together these different dimensions into a dynamic whole.'[286] To confront this issue, dress analysis and identification must do several things. Firstly, where possible, take apart the dress of a person into its parts and analyse the meaning of each.[287] Secondly, identify how different elements of dress associate with each other and finally, compare the meaning of the 'whole' with the other 'wholes.'[288]

Related to the issue of ambiguity, is the issue of contextual disintegration.[289] In order to interpret dress, the context in which it occurs must, wherever possible, be taken into account. Joseph provides an example of the importance of context with jeans.

> '…'What do jeans mean?' or, 'How do you interpret the color blue?' My usual response is to indicate the ambiguity of the questions by pointing out that jeans have variously meant membership in such groups or statuses as agricultural laborers, civil rights movements, youth subcultures, or foreign communist elites with access to Western consumer goods. Similarly, blue has denoted English domestics, inmates of English philanthropic institutions, artillery officers in most eighteenth-century English armies – or police.'[290]

[284]Ibid; Mary Lynn Damhorst, "In Search of a Common Thread: Classification of Information Communicated Through Dress", *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, (1990): 2 cited in ibid; Joanne Bulbolz Eicher, Sandra Lee Evenson and Hazel A Lutz, *The Visible Self: Global Perspectives on Dress, Culture and Society* 4th Ed, (London: Bloomsbury Academic Press, 2014), 28 cited in ibid.
[285]Joseph, *Uniforms and Non-Uniforms*, 147; Winkle, "One Like the Son of Man," 67.
[286]Michael Carter, *Fashion Classics From Carlyle to Barthes*, (London: BERG, 2003), 144 – 145.
[287]Kaiser, *The Social Psychology of Clothing*, 217-218 cited in Winkle, "One Like the Son of Man," 65.
[288]Ibid.
[289] Winkle, "One Like the Son of Man," 66-67.
[290]Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms*, 1.

In a contemporary example, when a foreigner visits the US and sees airport workers dressed as cowboys, context is essential to understanding the meaning of the dress and the identity of the wearers. The airport employees are not cowboys as their name tags indicate employment with an airline – and thus dress does not match context. Thus, the context of the time of year, Halloween, is essential in identifying the distinct dress as a costume once the cultural context is determined. To contend with this aspect of dress identification, Winkle argues '…one must consequently be cognizant of a variety of contextual indicators in relation to the observed dress, such as occasion and place of the dress' appearance and the wearer's age, culture, gender, spatial surroundings and even moods, else one risks contextual disintegration and resultant sartorial misunderstanding.'[291] In ancient sources, though context can be difficult to establish, where possible, context must be taken into account for formal dress analysis.

Next, the issue of foreground and background confusion must be considered.[292] Just as individual dress items may not indicate enough about the wearer's identity for the analyser, they can sometimes override the whole and in fact reveal identity. As Winkle observes, '…one salient element may well be the key to identity instead of the other dress components.'[293] For example, a plain clothes police officer can instantly identify themselves by revealing their badge. Their dress ensemble otherwise obscures their identity, with their badge overriding and revealing their plain clothes ruse. Or, when identity is constructed as part of a dress ensemble, one item can override all others revealing the wearer's identity. Eicher, Evenson and Lutz observe such an example in the ties of UK businessmen, where the wearing of an 'old school'

[291] Winkle, "One (Like) the Son of Man", 67; Fred Davis *Fashion, Culture and Identity*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 8.
[292] Winkle, "One (Like) the Son of Man", 68-69; Eicher et al, *The Visible Self*, 28.
[293] Winkle, "One (Like) the Son of Man", 69.

tie identifies the wearer as part of the cultural establishment more than any other part of his ensemble.[294]

Equally, identity can be mistaken when 'background' dress overrides 'foreground'.[295] Incorrect expectations of dress can influence interpretation of dress cues. In a case in the US state of Florida in 2015, a teenager deceived medical professionals for over a month that he was a doctor, simply by wearing a white lab coat, stethoscope around his neck and a face mask. While his identity was eventually revealed when a patient raised concern that 'a child is dressed as a doctor', senior medical staff reflected later '…he was wearing a lab coat, a white coat very similar to a doctor's coat…Initially and certainly looking back retrospectively, I thought you know this person looks so young. … And I just [thought]: 'Boy, they're getting out of med school really quickly now."[296] This is not the only example. In Adelaide, Australia in 2012, a teenager wearing only a name badge and a stethoscope deceived multiple hospitals into thinking he was a practicing doctor over numerous months. In response, the hospital implemented new identification measures including having a photograph of the teenager up for reference and creating new policies and procedures in training staff for identity recognition, beyond background cues.[297]

Temporal and locative instability or, the incorrect assumption that items of dress 'mean' the same thing in every context and all the time, is also a barrier to dress identification.[298] As Winkle observes '…The continuing passage of time consequently makes the process of

[294] Eicher et al, *The Visible Self*, 28.
[295] Winkle, "One (Like) the Son of Man", 68-71.
[296]Enjoli Francis, "No Charges Against Teen who Pretended to be Florida Doctor, Police Say", *ABC World News*, 16 January 2015, http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2015/01/no-charges-against-teen-who-pretended-to-be-florida-doctor-police-say/.
[297] David Jean, "Catch Me If You Can! Adelaide teenager impersonates doctor at RAH, Flinders Medical Centre", *The Advertiser: Adelaide Now*, 14 December 2015, https://www.adelaidenow.com.au/news/south-australia/catch-me-if-you-can-adelaide-teenager-impersonates-doctor-in-rah-flinders-medical-centre/news-story/8a48f94f56627c278e2d372e80c12d86.
[298] Winkle, "One (Like) the Son of Man", 71-72.

unravelling the meaning of dress…more difficult.'[299] In the introduction to this study, Pearl in her corseted good black showed us that understanding an individual garment is highly dependent on both temporal and locative knowledge. Damhorst notes that dress '…tends to change slowly over time and may incorporate long-used symbols that are steeped with meanings.'[300] In the context of 1950s Melbourne Australia, Pearl's corset did not signify exactly the same identity information as if she had been wearing it 50 years earlier. Nor was her corset the exact same type of garment as was worn by women in the early 1900s. Simply assuming that Pearl's corset signified her membership to elite social status overlooks the temporal and locative instability of dress items.

From temporal and locative instability, comes the possibility of anachronistic misinterpretations[301] - if interpreters assume that the present day type, use and meaning of individual dress items can be projected onto past societies. Islamic veils, for example, *could* be compared to ancient veils, but suggesting that the *niqab* is the same garment as the Assyrian *kuttumu* veil is anachronistic and highly problematic. Just because a similar form of dress exists in a contemporary setting it does not mean that it can be used as evidence about that same form of dress occurring in past societies. It is thus essential to understand dress in thematic terms as well – social structures present in societies and the specificity of temporal meaning must be applied.

Finally, the issue of duo directional communication through dress, or, dress that highlights the identity of a wearer can also conceal aspects of identity. Dress has the dual possibilities to both reveal and conceal, and thus to interpret the communicative possibilities of dress items, an interpreter must be cognizant of this significant duality of dress.[302] Winkle thus asks '…Does an article of dress – or the composite dress ensemble as a whole – reveal the

[299] Ibid, 72
[300] Damhorst, "In Search of a Common Thread", 2; Winkle, "One (Like) the Son of Man", 72.
[301] Winkle, "One (Like) the Son of Man", 72-74.
[302] Ibid.

identity of the one so dressed? Or does it mask and camouflage the identity of the one wearing it? While misreading a masking purpose for a revelatory one will not distort the intended message(s) being sent, it will nevertheless bring one to a mistaken understanding of the real identity of the one so dressed.'[303] To understand dress, the interpreter must question each item and ensemble both for what it may reveal and for what it may conceal. One must ask, what other cues indicate the identity of the wearer? And how do we know? Is there identity information outside of their dress which can assist in our reading of individual dress items or dress ensemble, such as other identity markers, and the broader context of the wearer and their dress choices?

This study is informed by many of these insights coming from dress theory, but most importantly, it is informed by the understanding that the act of dressing is a lived experience and that dress and dressing are multidimensional cultural phenomena. In this study, veils and veiling will be considered as a multi-faceted display of identity information representative of lived, embodied negotiations between the social and the personal. Veils and veiling will be considered as expressions of conformity with the expectations of the socio-cultural environment, but also dress items as capable of subverting such expectations and of expressing agency to self-define within the cultural context.

3.2 Methodology

This study is not simply concerned with ascribing meaning to the dress worn by Biblical women. Nor is it concerned with, as Susan Ackerman argues, '…the tendency only to 'look at women'… [of the bible]…from the male perspective, rather than 'to stand with women' and consider their point of view as well…'; a problem all too common in some arenas of Biblical scholarship, and one clearly seen in some existing critiques of veiling in the HB.[304] Rather, it

[303] Ibid, 74.
[304] Susan Ackerman "Digging Up Deborah: Recent Hebrew Bible Scholarship on Gender and the Contribution of Archaeology," *Journal of Near Eastern Archaeology 66*, Issue 4, (Dec., 2003): 172.

aims to explore the practice of veiling as a prism which can provide us with a fuller picture of the identities and dress of ancient women, by considering dressed Biblical characters. By exploring the veils worn by the women of the HB as material dress items, how they wear them, and their agency and subjectivity in the choice making process to wear these dress items, this study aims to interpret the act of veiling specifically from the perspectives of the women who veil. With this aim in mind, how can we best decipher the types, styles and uses of women's veils *and* read the agency and lived experience of women, as they are represented in a literary product from an ancient culture?

An appropriate approach for this study comes in reading the Bible from a feminist literary critical perspective, embedded in the theory of dress.[305] This method enables meaning to emerge both from listening to the text and from interpreting it as a reader, all the while privileging and reconstructing the voices and choices of the women of the Bible as literary figures, indicative of real, dressed, ancient women.[306] Where historical documents such as inventories, letters and other bureaucratic correspondence provide an invaluable resource, showing us that an array of tangible material dress items were present in society, fictive literature shows us 'dress in action' on moving, breathing depictions of women.[307] Examining and interpreting this material specifically with the critical tools of a feminist literary method embedded in dress theory, allows us to more richly examine the texts as literature, while also exploring and establishing representations of the social customs and likely experiences of real women from the ancient world as dressed social participants.[308]

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[305] In using the term 'literary', this study is not concerned with authorship of the texts, as some literary critics of the Bible are. Rather, it is concerned with interpreting the text as literature in its final form. In this way, aspects of rhetorical criticism filter into interpretation, especially Phyllis Bird's model of reading the text, which will be attended to presently.

[306] Carole Fontaine, "Reading the Bible: Preface", in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies,* ed. Athalya Brenner & Carole Fontaine, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press), 1997, 12.

[307] Anne Buck, "Clothes in Fact and Fiction 1825-1865", *Costume 17*, (1983): 89.

[308]Entwhistle, *The Fashioned Body,* 325.

Literary sources such as poems, plays and narratives - Lou Taylor argues in his study of dress history - provide '…a special form of emotional insight into behaviour patterns…' concerning the real life use of dress; which more formal documents such as legal codes do not always provide.[309] This makes literature an excellent source for considering dress practices as they would have occurred in the context of the culture which produced the text. Building on Anne Buck's assertion that dress in fictive literature can show 'dress in action' or an intimate view of the real world and the lived usage of dress, Taylor further notes that '…subtle textual nuances of how each stratum and member of society…enjoys, flaunts, defies or denies their social place through dress…' is found in the pages of literature.[310] Dress in literature can thus be read in terms of the embodied act of dressing; it can '…breathe body movement back into the dead bundles of clothes…' left to us by the historical record, therefore providing us a unique window into understanding how dress operated within a society.[311]

This applies to both contemporary and ancient literary texts. With respect to the HB, Heather McKay argues that the dress information contained within its texts is so rich, that these descriptions of Biblical clothing and adornment should be understood as reflections of the real, lived dress experiences of ancient people.[312] Characters in HB literature are, she posits '…readerly constructs…' which exist '…at the nexus of author, narrator and active reader…'.[313] But, the detailed variety of dress described in text, she further argues, is '…learned in real life…' and therefore, when it is transported into literature, '…the meanings ascribed to different styles...' in real life also move to the page.[314] As such, a '…hermetic separation…' between the dress of HB characters and the dress of the ancient people described

[309] Lou Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 105.
[310] Ibid., 92; Buck, "Clothes in Fact and Fiction", 89.
[311] Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*, 105.
[312] McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man,", 84-104.
[313] Ibid; 101. See also Heather A McKay, "Only a Remnant of Them will be Saved: New Testament Images of Hebrew Women," in *The Hebrew Bible in the New Testament, A Feminist Companion to the Bible* 10, ed. Athalya Brenner, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 32-61.
[314] Mc Kay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man", 101.

in text is unnecessary.[315] In a nutshell, the HB provides us with a unique snapshot of the real experience of dressing and real examples of material dress items from the time and culture which produced the text.

In reading women's dress in the HB, a feminist lens provides an invaluable viewpoint. Each feminist scholar's perspective, and the way we read and interpret Biblical texts is but one of many; there is not one feminism in contemporary readings, but a multitude of Feminisms.[316] Nonetheless, some important patterns in the history of feminist readings of Biblical texts from the last 40 years – still relevant to contemporary readings – form a basis from which to interpret HB stories about women's dress.[317] These approaches are not necessarily at odds, given that they all promote a disruptive reading of Biblical texts from perspectives which are broader than the 'traditional' reading from a single, dominant, often male perspective.[318] Some feminist critics have approached the Bible as a genuine reflection of women's historical experiences, considering it to be a literary expression of women's authentic cultures, voices and traditions.

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[315] Ibid., 85.

[316] In 21st century contemporary Feminist interpretation, acknowledgment of this is essential. A key element of contemporary feminist Biblical criticism, is that feminism cannot be viewed as a single entity, approach, perspective or idea. Rather 21st Century Feminisms rightly call for an intersectional reading of the Bible from multiple perspectives including gender, sexuality, race, class and post-colonial and de-colonised perspectives. For interpretation of the HB, utilising this contemporary lens is to critically understand one's own innate biases, perspectives and privilege as an interpreter, and reflect constantly on the fact that many distinct and diverse feminist voices create a choir of perspectives. For an interesting recent 'roundtable' discussion of this issue, see Dora Mbuwayesango and Susanne Scholz, "Dialogical Beginnings: A Conversation on the Future of Feminist Biblical Studies", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion 25.2,* (2009), 93-143. Here, Mbuwayesango and Scholz pose questions and briefly examine some of the challenges facing contemporary Biblical Feminisms, how to progress into the future of this field with intersectionality and how to contend with the issue of 'co-optation' and kyriarchal academia. See also the work of Nyasha Junior, *An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation,* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015).

[317] The patterns as described here are drawn from Esther Fuchs' recent overview of feminist criticism of the Bible. See Fuchs, "Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible", in *The Hebrew Bible,* ed. Frederick E Greenspahn, 76-95. See also Adele Berlin, "Literary Approaches to Biblical Literature: General Observations and a Case Study of Genesis 34", in The Hebrew Bible, ed. Greenspahn, 45-76: Alice Ogden Bellis, "Feminist Biblical Scholarship", in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, The Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament,* ed. Carol Meyers, Toni Craven and Ross S Kramer, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 24-32; Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza's most recent volume also broaches the variance of contemporary feminist criticism from multiple perspectives and is a significant addition to discourse, especially in terms of examination of kyriarchal systems and androcentric exegesis. See Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Feminist Biblical Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement,* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014).

[318] Ackerman "Digging Up Deborah", 172

This approach often extends to finding '…textual evidence for the historical equality and power of women…' through a focus on female activity in the ANE.[319] Some interpreters who approach the HB in this way, also argue that some parts of the Bible were composed by women, and that aspects of the text are '…distinctly feminine…'.[320] This perspective requires some reconstructive work of women's lives, experiences or histories.[321]

Other critics, however, have viewed the Bible purely as composition by men, but one which still offers '…a diverse and complex representation of ancient women's lives.'[322] When the Bible is critiqued through this approach, women are simultaneously '…central and marginal…' and '…venerated and denigrated…'.[323] In this approach, both male and female voices can be heard from the texts and thus multiple layers of meaning can be made from interpreting the text.[324] Importantly, in reading the HB with this approach, interpreting women as either male textual constructs or as glimmers of real life women, must transcend stereotypes of women.[325]

Finally, some critique the Bible as purely a patriarchal compilation '…composed, edited, transmitted and canonised by men…' which constructs and enforces a culture entirely based on the marginalisation of women.[326] This approach is primarily one of scepticism, where the Bible is viewed not only as patriarchal creation, but one which continues to actively enforce patriarchal ideas of gender norms.[327]

[319] Fuchs, "Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible", 78.
[320]Ibid., 77.
[321] Ibid. Fuchs identifies the work of Phyllis Trible, Carol Meyers, Ilana Pardes and Tikva Frymer-Kensky as being representative of this approach.
[322] Fuchs, "Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible", 78.
[323] Ibid.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid
[326] Ibid., 78-80.
[327] Ibid.

While predominately being informed and influenced by the first and second approach, this study also straddles all three. It acknowledges that the Bible is a literary product written and edited by men, complete with historically entrenched patriarchal structures. Yet it also posits that the HB reflects women's voices and choices, particularly in terms of dress.[328] In other words, this study positions the veiled women of the HB as patriarchal literary archetypes but, with elements reflective of the genuine social experience of dress and dressing for women present in the texts, and thus accessible if the appropriate literary tools are utilised.

The intention behind combining a feminist approach and literary tools (vocabulary, identification of voice, subjectivity, and perspective) is therefore to identify and analyse the practice of veiling *and* demonstrate the agency of veiled women in the HB. Veils are personal items for the women who wear them, and while there may be a social demand for women to wear these garments, they are not communal items.[329] Their intimate and personal dimension makes them a suitable medium through which we can look for HB women's subjectivity, agency and self-articulation of identity.[330]

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[328] The possibility of some female texts lingering within the HB canon, argued by Athalya Brenner and Fokkelien van Dijk-Hemmes, remains a compelling possibility and one which is not ruled out from this study. See Brenner and Van Dijk-Hemmes, *On Gendering Texts.*

[329]Entwhistle, *The Fashioned Body*, 238 – 239.

[330] The ultimate quest of literary criticism is to ask questions of the text in regards to how it functions as literature in its final form. While literary criticism, rhetorical criticism and structuralism converge, a purely rhetorical criticism does not take into account the cultural context of the literature – and for the study of dress, this is problematic. Thus, literary criticism is appropriate in this study. A literary critical methodology does not counteract or ignore other critical methods of Biblical exegesis; rather it builds on them and relies on them for a solid historical foundation. Literary criticism undertaken from a secular perspective does not seek to supersede the work of other traditional historical scholarship, but rather to provide an interpretative method which allows for the reading and exegesis of the texts in light of its place in secularised culture. For more on the relationship between literary criticism and other higher criticisms such as source and form, which focus on issues of authorship and transmission, see Alter and Kermode, "General Introduction" in *A Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Alter and Kermode, 1-8, in particular 2; Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, (Berkeley: Basic Books, 1975), 188-189. See also J P Fokkelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis: Specimens of Stylistic and Structural Analysis*, (Oregon: Wifp & Stock, 1975); Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts*, (Michigan: Schocken Books, 1979); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); George Aichele, *Sign, Text, Scripture: Semiotics and the Bible*, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Aichele not only examines the relationship between literary theory and linguistic theory, but also useable applicability of such disciplines in terms of Biblical exegesis. Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985).

Before a reader of Biblical text can apply other interpretive methods, such as Feminist gynocentric reading of the text, meaning must be made from the text itself utilising literary critical techniques. According to Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, '… literary analysis must come first, for unless we have a sound understanding of what the text is doing and saying, it will not be of much value in other respects.'[331] Phyllis Trible, in her feminist literary and rhetorical critique of the Bible, called for an essential 'close reading' of the text with a focus on an engagement with the Hebrew, where, an 'intrinsic reading' of the individual words (in context), and the context of the text (intertextually), provide meaning.[332] Trible's work is by no means alone in this textual and intertextual reading of the Bible and much work in the area has been done since her book was published. Indeed, a key feature of contemporary literary feminist readings of the HB building on Trible's approach is '….a concern with the received text of the HB… a focus on women as characters…and often an attempt to interpret the women characters of the text as we have received it through the analysis of literary structure, grammar, syntax, vocabulary…'.[333] Her framework then, which focuses on literary features of the text, and that of the feminist literary critics who privilege gynocentric reading of the text, are integral for a textual and intertextual reading of Biblical women and, for the purposes of this study, Biblical women's dress.

Meaning can thus be made from the language of the text, through terminology and descriptions of the use of veils.[334] As such, a discussion of HB veiling vocabulary or, an

[331]Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, "General Introduction" in *A Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 2.
[332] Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1978).
[333]Ackerman "Digging Up Deborah," 173. As noted by Susan Ackerman, literary criticism of the HB that occurred in the 1970s and 80s "…had a significant impact on the emerging discipline of feminist Hebrew Bible scholarship and its tendency to embrace literary-critical strategies and approaches…', 173-174. This continued to be the favourite of feminist critics in 1990s and is still an essential tool of feminist biblical criticism today. See also David J A Clines and J Cheryl Exum, "The New Literary Criticism" in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. J Cheryl Exum and David J A Clines, JSOT Supplement Series 143, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), 11-25, and more recently Berlin, "Literary Approaches to Biblical Literature", in *The Hebrew Bible*, ed. Greenspahn, 45-76.
[334] Sternberg, *Poetics*, 475-481; Berlin, "Literary Approaches to Biblical Literature", 53.

'intrinsic reading' of HB veiled-vocabulary is the first step in this project. To isolate the intended dress code meaning of veil-garments within their literary context, HB styles of individual dress items and their use is established. This means engagement in an analysis of Hebrew veiling terminology (both nouns and verbs), with a focus on semantics, syntax and etymology of words. In order to identify individual veil terms, this study relies on Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones' and Fadwa El Guindi's veil definitions. Based on research of veiling practices of women in classical and Hellenistic Greece Llewellyn-Jones argues that societies which practice concealment of women have 'veiled-vocabularies', that is, multiple terms for what are multiple garments falling broadly under the categorical umbrella of 'veil'.[335] This observation is essential for understanding HB veiled-vocabulary and identifying various veiling items.[336] El Guindi on the other hand, argues for a multi-dimensional understanding of veil and such definition is necessary within the context of HB in order to acknowledge and better understand the versatility of HB veils and veiling practices.[337] The recurrence of veil terms is also intertextually analysed within the HB. The same term for either garment type or the action of veiling can be found in multiple texts, and it is important to analyse their use in each particular literary context in order to have a clear definition of the veil type and its function. Analysing these occurrences can show us the similarities between these dress items and how they were worn, even when the contexts they are found in do not always appear to be similar.[338]

In order not to isolate women of the HB from the wider context, a cross cultural investigation of veil-garments from across the ANE is also an essential element of this study.

[335] Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,* 23.
[336]Van der Toorn also clearly signposts a vocabulary of multiple veil terms in "Significance", 328.
[337] El Guindi, *Veil,* 7-13.
[338]Ellen Van Wolde, "Intertextuality: Ruth in dialogue with Tamar", in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole Fontaine, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 427; Berlin, "Literary Approaches to Biblical Literature", 45-76.

Adele Berlin notes that contextuality – that is, reading Biblical texts not in isolation, but as part of broader contexts – is an important tool of the contemporary literary critic. [339] Analysing veil words and extant textual examples of veil practices in the ANE helps with both illuminating ANE veiling practices in general, and with understanding the etymology and meaning of HB veil words. The ANE had a rich veiled-vocabulary and for the purposes of this study ANE veil words with an etymological link to the Hebrew veils are analysed; examples of veils which show more broadly the diversity of how these dress items were worn on the body are also presented. This includes veil nouns as well as verbs indicating the action of veiling, and verbal roots which connect with Akkadian terms. For example, the Akkadian *kusû* a verb related to veiling, is etymologically related to the Hebrew *cāsâ,* meaning 'to cover'. So too are the garment *kusîtu* – derived from *kusû* and the veiling verb *katāmu. Cāsâ* is present in Genesis 24 and 38 describing the use of *ṣā'îp* and is related to the noun *kānāp,* the hem of a men's garment used to cover the head of his wife, used in the Book of Ruth. ANE textual sources to be analysed which mention gendered head covering garments must also adhere to El Guindi's multidimensional model of definition in order to be considered as veil terminology, and, where applicable or possible, given the routine lack of context for ANE veil terminology, they are also analysed for agency or voice of the female wearers. As El Guindi suggests, comparative analysis of veils in this way allows us to '…discern some patterns among...' uses and types of veil-garments, thus assisting an interpreter of veil with definition.[340]

In understanding women's relationship with their veil-garments, direct speech of the characters and active verbs are significant features to observe, as it indicates agency and highlights identity from the perspective of the character themselves. Alice Bach, in her reading of Biblical texts for women's inclusion, argued that a woman's '…determination is reflected

[339] Berlin, "Literary Approaches to Biblical Literature", 58.
[340] El Guindi, *Veil*, 189. Winkle, "Clothes Make the (One like a Son of) Man", passim.

in…active verbs… where her speech is central.'[341] With the literary device of voice and/or active and subjective verbs for female characters, the reader can understand the motivation of the characters through their dialogue and direct speech. Inner voice, desired action and motivation can also be conveyed in this way. As Bach notes, through direct speech '…even though the story appears to be about male authority, female presence shines through.'[342] Peter H W Lau has recently also argued that identity and a sense of self can be seen in HB narratives through voice. In his view, the presence of self-reflection in narratives coveys '…narratorial expressions of autonomous thought…' and, '…aspects of 'the individuality, subjectivity and uniqueness of the particular persons behind the voices.'[343] Danna Nolan Fewell has also observed that when seemingly 'unrehearsed' speech occurs, (as it is does in Ruth), it is indicative of personal introspection and agency on the part of the speaker.[344] Thus, in order to establish and discuss HB women's agency, autonomous thought and subjectivity in relation to HB veiling practice the texts are also analysed in terms of use of direct speech where possible, as well as the actions of veiled women as agents of their own narrative.

If we are to understand motivation and action through veiling, we must also privilege the perspective and point of view of the character. Boris Uspensky surmises, that '…in respect to literature…the use of several different points of view in narration may be noted even in…ancient texts'.[345] Recognising and privileging point of view and perspective of female characters is an essential tool in a feminist literary reading, and assists in identifying motivation

[341]Alice Bach, "The Pleasure of Her Text" in *The Pleasure of Her Text: Feminist Readings of Biblical and Historical Texts*, ed. Alice Bach, (Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1990), 25-44, esp. 26.
[342] Ibid. See also, Alice Bach, "Good to the Last Drop: Viewing the Sotah (Numbers 5:11-31) as the Glass is Half Empty and Wondering How to View it Half Full" in *The New Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. J Cheryl Exum and David J A Clines, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 26-55. In a broader Biblical literary critical approach, and not specifically from a feminist perspective, Robert Alter, whose work the Art of Biblical Narrative in many ways set the stage for a literary reading of the Bible using literary critical methods, also argues for the significance in reading Biblical texts for the identification of voice and dialogue. See Robert Alter, The *Art of Biblical Narrative*, esp. 63-88.
[343] Lau, *Identity and Ethics in the Book of Ruth,* 21-22.
[344]Danna Nolan Fewell, "Space for Moral Agency in the Book of Ruth", *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament 40*, Issue 1, (2015), 91.
[345]Boris Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1973), 171.

and agency to act.[346] If we are able to see a character's point of view, we are better able to determine why they act the way they do; thus, we are able to understand the motivation with which they embark on the action.[347]

With different perspectives and points of view, the subjectivity of characters can also be identified.[348] Adele Berlin, who was the first to deal with the idea of point of view in any depth, and certainly the first to read point of view from a feminist literary perspective, expanded on the significance of point of view surmising that we can understand the inner lives of the characters when we see the world from their point of view. Berlin argues that different points of view of characters can be noted in ancient literature if we step aside from the intrusion of the narrator and consider the characters directly as independent beings. Berlin notes that Biblical narrative '…lends itself to a discussion of point of view…the Bible uses point of view frequently and effectively as a vehicle for conveying its narratives in a way which is not far different from modern prose.'[349] Johanna W H Bos also argued that by observing the perspective and choices of women, even when women are subsumed by the patriarchal flow of the narrative, we can see that women '…reason with the foxes…', that is, in choice making, they indicate intelligence, motivation and the agency to act for their own purposes.[350] Deception, for example, is not a masculine construct or stereotype; rather it is indicative of a woman's power to manipulate aspects of the social structures to which she belongs. Fontaine

[346]Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 43. See also Meir Sternberg's work on this concept in, Sternberg, *Poetics*, 475-81. Sternberg preposes the idea of point of view but in relation to narrator persuading the reader with plot hints.
[347] Trevor Dennis, *Sarah Laughed: Women's Voices in the Old Testament,* (London: SPCK, 1994), 178.
[348] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 43. Mieke Bal also contributes to this approach in her literary reading, which are applicable (and routinely applied) to reading the Bible. See Bal, *Narratology*, especially 25-36 and 119-142; Mieke Bal, *Lethal Love: Feminist Literary Readings of Biblical Love Stories,* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), especially 28-35.
[349] Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 43.
[350] Johanna H W Bos, "Out of the Shadows: Genesis 38; Judges 4:17-22; Ruth 3", in *Reasoning with the Foxes: Female Wit in a World of Male Power, Semeia 42*, ed. J Cheryl Exum and Johanna W H Bos, (Atlanta: SBL Press, 1988), 37-68. In this influential volume of Semeia, multiple feminist literary critics built a base from which to interpret trickery, deception and motivation from women's perspectives. Of note are Esther Fuchs, "'For I Have The Way of Women'": Deception, Gender, and Ideology in Biblical Narrative", 68-84 and Carole Fontaine, "The Deceptive Goddess in Ancient Near Eastern Myth: Inanna and Inaras", 84-102.

notes, for example, that '…where women are debarred by status from direct action to achieve their goals without fear of reprisal, they resort to indirect strategies such as deception, gossip, and counselling…'.[351] Heather McKay had previously noted the same, further arguing that privileging of women's perspectives in the HB allows for an insight into their private lives.[352] Indeed, Gary Yamasaki has most recently argued that point of view of Biblical characters is a powerful, mostly untapped source of literary information, and that by considering character point of view we can engage directly with the characters inner worlds and motivations.[353] Rather than being left to '…fend for ourselves…' in terms of establishing the motivations for the actions of characters, we are able to step into their shoes when we consider their point of view.[354]

In her recent summation of the current state of literary criticism of the Bible, Adele Berlin argues that contemporary literary criticism is '…new and ever changing…'.[355] It is an amalgam of modern readings (where meaning is found in text, as a reflection of authorial intent) and post-modern readings (where meaning is made by the reader).[356] While analysing literary features of text is essential, reading the veiled texts of the HB must go beyond just reading for literary features. As readers, we make meaning which is separate to authorial intent. Therefore, a contemporary feminist literary reading, as it is applied in this study, combines an analysis of literary features such as vocabulary, syntax and perspective, *and* situates the women of the HB as dressed social participants recorded in textual record, by privileging women's voices, perspectives, motivations and agency in the choice making process as key to interpreting the dressed, lived experiences of ancient women.

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[351]Fontaine, "The Deceptive Goddess", 85.
[352] McKay, "'Only a Remnant of Them Shall Be Saved'" in *A Feminist Companion to the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament*, ed. Brenner, 32-62.
[353] Gary Yamasaki, *Perspective Criticism: Point of View and Evaluative Guidance in Biblical Narrative*, (Cambridge: James Clark & Co, 2013), 6-8.
[354] Ibid. Also see Gary Yamasaki, *Watching a Biblical Narrative: Point of View in Biblical Exegesis*, (NY: T&T Clark, 2007).
[355] Berlin, "Literary Approaches to Biblical Literature", 45.
[356] Ibid.

4 Dress and veil in the Ancient Near East

Dress of incredible variety was worn by people from the ANE. Dressing was a performative, habitual action, where a range of dress items were used by people to construct and display social identities including gender, status, and role-related identity, as part of their engagement with their society.[357] As Winkle succinctly explains, 'Dress communicated diverse kinds of personal, social and role-related identity to in-text observers as well as readers and auditors of those texts'.[358] Thus, unpacking dress as it is mentioned in ANE textual records reveals the variety of dress possibilities used for identity display; both as they are recorded in textual records and as they occurred in the wardrobe and lived experience of ancient people of ANE.

In the first part of this chapter, an overview of dress from the ANE will be provided, focusing in particular on references to the use of textile dress items in textual records such as inventories, letters and other bureaucratic correspondence, as well as fictive texts such as myths. Here, the variety of dress found in the ANE and how dress was utilised to construct and display the identities of ancient people is considered.

Next, examples of veiled women as depicted in visual sources from across the ANE are presented. In this section, extant visual material will not be analysed for the identification of individual or idiosyncratic veil-garments. Rather, this section acts as a point of broader comparison, where these visual examples demonstrate the extent to which veiling was widely present across the ANE. These visual records provide '…a *mutual* witness…' in conjunction with the textual records which are explored and analysed throughout this chapter.[359]

[357]Entwhistle, "Fashion and the Fleshy Body", 348; Vearncombe, "Adorning The Protagonist", 119.
[358] Winkle, "Clothes make the (one like the son of) man", 116.
[359]H Gressmann, *Alterorientalische Texte* viii, cited in De Hulster and Le Mon "Introduction" ixx. Translation and emphasis by De Hulster and Le Mon.

In the second part of this chapter, the practice of veiling and veils as material dress items in the ANE, from the textual record will be specifically explored. This section will focus on identifying and defining a sample of the veiled-vocabulary from the region. This includes shared etymology and synonymous use of this veiled-vocabulary, found both with veil nouns and the verbs which describe the action of veiling, indicating cross-cultural connections between styles of veils and their use – including Hebrew veil terminology. Creation of a comprehensive list of veil words in ANE is a difficult if not impossible task; due to the already mentioned issues with identification, definition and translation. Many words which may or may not be veils are present in texts, but are by no means simple to identify, translate and define. Therefore, this analysis will not include all extant veiling sources. Rather, it will focus on a snapshot of veil-garments which demonstrate the breadth of the veiled-vocabularies of the ANE.[360] As well as looking at the veiled-vocabulary of the ANE, the practice of veiling in other textual records will also be explored in the second half of this chapter. Thematic uses of veils as they are recorded in the textual record will be considered, guided by Van der Toorn's assertions about the significance and use of veiling in the ANE, as outlined in Chapter Two.[361]

4.1 Dress in the Ancient Near East

In ANE textual records such as bureaucratic correspondence, legal documents and letters, as well as fictive texts such hymns, myths, and narratives, dress is referred to routinely. Dress terminology has unique and specific linguistic features which identify type, style, composition and use of dress items – and this is present across ANE languages. For example, in Sumerian records, garments are identified by the determinative *túg* which acts as an indicator to disambiguate interpretation and identify a semantic category; i.e. the noun which follows

[360] Amer, *What is Veiling?*,1. It is hoped that future work on this topic will result in the continued growing of a broader list of definably veil terms.
[361] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 339.

túg was made of cloth and was definitively a garment.[362] We find similar textile and dress determinatives in Semitic languages, although the Sumerian logogram *túg* continued to be used to indicate the presence of a textile dress item in Akkadian and Babylonian sources.[363] For example, the generic term *ṣubātum* or 'clothing' was used as a synonym of *túg*.[364] In NB texts, *lubāru* or the ideogram *túg-kur-ra* were also sometimes used as generic terms for 'clothing' in the same way as *ṣubātum*.[365] In Akkadian, the qualifier *ša* was used in conjunction with *túg* to identify the type of fabric used to make the dress item, where the logogram *ša ba*, meaning 'among which' or 'of which' further indicated that the named garment belonged to a broader group of textiles.[366] For example, an inventory from the Assyrian Trade Colony period, roughly 1950-1750 BCE, (which provides us with a wealth of records concerning textiles and dress) mentions '94 *textiles* among which (*túg ša ba*) there are 5 *kabūtum* textiles, 15 *tardiūtum* textiles, 30 *kusiātum* textiles, 1 *šulupkum* textile, 1 *lubušum*, 2 *nibrarān.*'[367] All of these listed items are textile dress items, but they vary by type and style.

Whether or not a textile was just a piece of fabric or a sartorially fashioned garment, is also evident in textual records and is generally dependant on the context in which it is mentioned.[368] For example, in inventory and correspondence records, again from the Assyrian Trade Colony period, whether the textile is described as being worn or simply present is a reasonable indicator of whether or not the fabric has been altered to create a wearable

[362]Dietz Otto Edzard, *Sumerian Grammar*, (Boston: Brill, 2003), 9
[363]John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian (3rd Edition)*, Harvard Semitic Studies 45, (Harvard: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 111-112; Cecile Michel and Klaas R Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians in Anatolia (19th - 18th Centuries BC)", in *Textile Terminologies in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean from the Third to the First Millennium BC*, ed. Cecile Michel and M L Nosch, (Oxbow: Oxford, 2010), 256 – 257; 260 – 261.
[364] Michel and Veenhof, "Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 256.
[365] Stefan Zawadzki, "Garments in Non-Cultic Context (Neo-Babylonian Period)", in *Textile Terminologies*, 412-413; Martha T Roth, "The Material Composition of the Neo-Babylonian Dowry", *Archiv für Orientforschung*, 36./37. Bd. (1989/1990): 1-55.
[366] Michel and Veenhof, "Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 256 – 257. The composition of fabric, such as wool or linen could also be identified via semantic and philological cues which specifically indicate that they are textiles made of these materials. See Edzard, *Sumerian Grammar*, 9.
[367] Michel and Veenhof, "Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 256-257; 260-261.
[368] Ibid, 261-262.

garment.[369] The determinative *ša* is also used in this context to indicate 'made of', and is thus also indicative of a wearable garment.[370] Unique textile specific adjectives, such as *raqqum/qatnum* (thin) and *kabtum, kabrum, šapium* (thick or heavy), and *narbum* (soft), were also used to qualify textile varieties; so too were an extensive range of colour descriptors.[371] The density of the weave of the threads, as well as thickness and the amount of fabric or wool used to make the textile, and, the specific colours for distinct garments could thus be specifically conveyed, contributing to the unique language of textiles, all of which indicated a variety of idiosyncratic garments and dress information.[372]

This variety of words specifically related to textiles and garments, indicates that the people of ANE had a quite extensive wardrobe, and therefore also the means of bodily display to construct identities such as social status, gender and role-related identity through dress.[373] Subtle variation of type, style, fabric, quality and colour of dress items was used to signify a variety of status and role-related identity information about the wearer. For example, cloth referred to in Ur III texts, roughly dating to late 3rd and early 2nd millennium BCE, was qualified by type, quality and use and this information is integrally wound up in the language of status display, both for elite status and low status individuals.[374] Types of cloth were classified as 'royal, top quality', 'top, first quality', 'good quality', 'next, secondary quality', 'current quality', 'medium quality' and 'inferior quality'.[375] For the garments of kings and the

[369] Ibid.
[370] Ibid, 255-256.
[371] Colours such as *warqum/erqum* (a yellow or green colour), *paṣium* (white), *samum* (red), *ṣalmum*, (black), and *šinitum* (dyed), as well as purple and blue from the much sought after Murex sea snail, are all named as colours of ancient fabrics. See ibid, 252-253; Hartmut Waetzoldt, "The Colours of Textiles and Variety of Fabrics from Mesopotamia during the Ur III Period (2050 BC)", in *Textile Terminologies*, ed. Michel and Nosch, 201 – 203. Athalya Brenner also extensively explores colour usage in the ancient world. See Athalya Brenner, *Colour Terms in the Old Testament*, (Wiltshire: JSOT Press, 1982), 143-150
[372] Ibid.
[373] Lee, *Body, Dress and Identity in Ancient Greece*, 230.
[374] Albrecht Goetze, "The Priestly Dress of the Hittite Kings", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies 1*, No. 2 (1947): 178; Klaas Roelof Veenhof, *Aspects of Old Assyrian Trade and its Terminology*, (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 203 – 208.
[375] A Leo Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol 8. No 3 Jul (1949); Veenhof, *Aspects of Assyrian Trade*, 203 – 212, esp. 203.

most elite members of society only *lugal* or 'royal, top quality' fabric was used.[376] In point of fact, the language of status display and dress was so integrally connected, that the Sumerian words for 'king' and 'royal, top quality' fabric were one and the same, *lugal*, showing the clear connection this fabric had with royal use and display of high status.[377] Equally, dress items such as rags and sackcloth of the lowest quality were worn by members with the lowest social status.[378]

The wide selection of colours available for dress items was also a key part in the display of social status.[379] The use of specific coloured fabric of the best quality wool was reserved for high social status individuals, and individuals displayed their social rank through extravagant and expensive dress.[380] The dress items of elite members of society or socially significant individuals could be coloured with Murex/Tyrian purple, a scarlet red or even gold; extremely costly dyes which were only used for garments of the highest quality for wearers of the highest status and for special circumstances.[381] Throughout the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary (CAD) the presence of many garments which were coloured with these dyes is found; and they are always associated with high status individuals due to the costly nature of the dye.[382]

The construction and display of status also extended to the physical positioning of dress items on the body. For example, some dress items which were worn on the head were so

[376]Ibid.
[377]Francesco Pomponio, "New Texts Regarding the Neo-Sumerian Textiles", in Michel and Nosch, *Textile Terminologies*, 192; *Lugal*, The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary, The Babylonian Section of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/nepsd-frame.html, accessed 15 May 2018.
[378]Veenhof, *Aspects of Old Assyrian Trade*, 203 – 208; A R George, *The Babylonian Gilgameš Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts Vol. 1,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 498; See also Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327.
[379] Waetzoldt, "The Colours and Variety of Fabrics", 201 – 202.
[380] Ibid.
[381]Waetzoldt, "The Colours and Variety of Fabrics", 201 – 202. Blue and purple could be derived from the same source, the murex sea snail. Depending on saturation, the garment can be dyed a variety of blue and purple hues, commonly known as Tyrian purple. This dye is synonymous with royalty and divinity, as it is extremely costly and difficult to produce.
[382]Athalya Brenner also discusses this dying process in Hebrew terms from the HB in Brenner, *Colour Terms in the Old Testament*, 143-153.

synonymous with high status that the word used for 'head', *saĝ*, became the descriptor for the quality of the fabric used to fashion the dress item - 'top, first quality'.[383] According to some scholars, '*saĝ* in its earliest usage is not an adjective denoting 'top, first quality' but rather an adjective describing the use of a garment and how a garment is positioned on the body. [384] *Saĝ*, thus, was a complex term, so intertwined with status and the display of status through physical positioning of dress, that its use and meaning as a descriptor of dress changed over time to reflect this significance and lived usage.[385]

Inevitably, dress was also utilised to construct and display gender. In point of fact, in the ANE dress was '…one of the most significant markers of gender identity…'.[386] Gendered dress was used as '… a visual means of representing the position of the individual along the gender spectrum and, accordingly, the position of the individual in the social world'[387] and '…was essential in instilling the norms of gender into bodily practice through the repeated actions of dress…'.[388] For women, this gendered display was often linked with their private sexual status, where dress changed '…according to their lifestyle stages (young girl, bride, married, widow)…'.[389] For men, however, dress displayed a public status or 'civic role'. [390]

[383]A Leo Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol 8. No 3 Jul (1949): 206.
[384]Veenhof, *Aspects of Assyrian Trade*, 206 – 207; Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods", 203; Maria Giovanna Biga, "Textiles in the Administrative Texts of the Royal Archives of Ebla (Syria, 24th Century BC) with particular emphasis on coloured textiles," in *Textile Terminologies,* ed. Michel and Nosch, 154-163.
[385] When it is used to describe Ur III garments, we can see *túg.huz.za.sag* refers to a garment *(túg)* to be on the head *(saĝ)* and, in contrast, *túg.huz.za.gu* refers to a garment to be worn on the neck *(gu),* see Veenhof, *Aspects of Assyrian Trade,* 207. Other *saĝ* garments present in Ebla in 24th century, such as *nig-a-saĝ*, a headband worn on journeys, are also widely attested to, see Pomponio, "New Texts Regarding the Neo-Sumerian Textiles," 186 – 200. *Saĝ* is also used routinely in Sumerian texts to literally mean 'head', but in later Akkadian texts, *saĝ* indicates that the dress item is both worn on the head and indicative of high status, see Biga, "Textiles in Administrative Texts", 159.
[386]Barnes and Eicher, eds, *Dress and Gender*, back cover cited in McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man", 86.
[387] Vearncombe, "Adorning The Protagonist", 119; McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man," 99-100.
[388] Vearncombe, "Adorning The Protagonist", 119.
[389] Ibid.
[390] Ibid; McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man," 100.

Gender and social role were so intimately linked, that some gender specific dress items were given in order to aid transitioning from one to another social role. For example, in the compositions of Neo-Babylonian dowries, garments which were only worn by women were listed as part of the bride price.[391] These items uniquely signalled the feminine gender of the wearer, but would also have assisted in the social construction of the woman's new role as wife. [392] Gender norms and social roles, as a person transitioned through their life, were thus created and displayed through specific dress items.

Some dress items, however, were not gender specific and were worn by both men and women.[393] The Akkadian *ṣubātu* (the singular of *ṣubātum*) which as previously noted was used to broadly refer to clothing, and its Hebrew equivalent *simlâ,* also translated simply as 'clothing', or, sometimes 'tunic', were worn by both men and women and gender was not specifically constructed or displayed with these garments.[394] But, at times, even these items could be altered for gendered wear with the physical positioning of the dress item constructing a gendered appearance. For example, in Sargonic Mesopotamia, a skirt or kilt like garment, made of a single piece of rectangular cloth wrapped around the waist, was worn by both men and women,[395] but only men could wear the garment with the exposed seam to the right hand side; the right side positioning of the garment constructing a uniquely masculine display.[396] A non-gendered garment could therefore still be used as a gendered garment if positioned on the

[391]Roth, "The Material Composition of the Neo-Babylonian Dowry", 124.
[392]Vearncombe, "Adorning The Protagonist", 119; Marten Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 38*, No. 2, Women's History, (1995), 124; McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man," 95-96; Eicher and Roach-Higgins , "Definition and Classification of Dress", in *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning,* ed. Ruth Barnes and Joanne B Eicher, (New York: Berg, 1992), 8 – 28.
[393]Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 124.
[394]Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 256.
[395]Benjamin R Foster, "Clothing in Sargonic Mesopotamia: Visual and written evidence", in *Textile Terminologies,* ed. Michel and Nosch, 110 –145, esp. 124-125.
[396]Ibid.

body in a specific way – such was the significance of dress in constructing and displaying gendered social roles in the ANE.

As it can be seen from this very limited look at the dress language in ANE, there was a bounty of dress possibilities for the people of the region. The linguistic tapestry of dress related determinatives and descriptors distinguished between the variety of dress items that were present in the daily lives and lived experiences of ancient people.[397] Dress was also an essential component of identity construction and display, and, as we shall see in the next section, the practice of veiling women was a significant part of this rich tapestry of dress possibilities.

4.2 Veil in the Ancient Near East

4.2.1 Visual Sources depicting the practice of veiling in the Ancient Near East

From across the ANE, we find an extensive variety of visual examples depicting veil-garments, with dress items worn by women on their heads being frequently displayed in stylistic detail. In point of fact, as Amy Rebecca Gansell has recently observed, '…in ancient Near Eastern art the female head is displayed more frequently and in more detail than any other part of the body'.[398]

Dress identification is an indispensable tool in deciphering identities in ancient art.[399] However, text and image describing and depicting ancient dress practices are not immediately

[397]E Vogelzang & W J van Bekkum, "Meaning and Symbolism of Clothing in Ancient Near Eastern Texts," in *Scripta Signa Vocis. Studies about Scripts, Scriptures and Scribes, and Languages in the Ancient Near East. Presented to J H Hospers by His Pupils, Colleagues and Friends*, ed. H L J Vanstiphout and E Forsten, (Groningen: E Forsten, 1986), 265-284.

[398]Gansell, "The Iconography of Ideal Feminine Beauty", 51.

[399]Identity through dress practice in ancient art is displayed, as Susan Niditch observes '…purposefully, conventionally, and frequently…'. Niditch, *My Brother Esau*, 27. Ethnicity, social status, social role, and gender are all presented and decipherable in the visual medium. In fact, dress does more to indicate gender, for example, that physiological representation in art. Brought to our attention by Julia Asher-Greve, for example, a statue of an Urnanse, a singer from Mari '…wears a type of skirt…' which is a masculine marker.' The statue also has physiological '…features primarily coded as feminine, such as an effeminate face and bulging breasts.' Asher Greve surmises that '…these features may reflect castration.' As such, the masculine skirt is a key signifier of gendered status, where otherwise ambiguous physiological cues indicate femininity or castration. See Julia M Asher – Greve, "'Golden Age of Women'? Status and Gender in Third Millennium Sumerian and Akkadian Art",

equitable for the identification of individual and idiosyncratic garments; it can be highly problematic to attempt to apply meaning from one source type to the other.[400] An item of dress in textual sources is identifiable through an analysis of vocabulary, etymology, context and cross-contextual comparison, but these methods are not appropriate for the identification of dress in visual images.[401] Text and image *may* reference and depict the same type and style of specific garments, but they cannot be compared by the same methods.[402] Mary Harlow rightly points out that

> 'Text and image rarely operate in tandem in the ancient world and herein lies a problem. Dress as written, dress as illustrated, and surviving textile remains, cannot transmit similar messages; art, literature and material culture do not speak the same language.'[403]

Nonetheless, text and image '…are *equally* indispensable for a historian…'; even if issues in cross comparative identification exist.[404] De Hulster and Le Mon observe that in the

in *Images and Gender: Contributions to the Hermeneutics of Reading Ancient Art*, Orbis Bibilicus et Orientalis 220, ed. Silvia Schroer, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 51.

[400] Intersource comparative cross-analysis of dress which seeks to define and make meaning from dress examples cannot, therefore, always accurately occur through an analysis of visual sources, as '…ancient illustrations are 'not always reliable' in historical terms…'. Karl Köhler and Emma von Sichart, *Praktische Kostümkunde*, (London: G G Harrap, 1928), 49 cited in Alicia J Batten, Carly Daniel-Hughes and Kristi Upson-Saia, "What Shall We Wear?", in *Dressing Judeans and Christians*, ed. Alicia J Batten, Carly Daniel-Hughes and Kristi Upson-Saia, (Taylor & Francis: London, 2014), 3. See also Larissa Bonfante Warren, "Etruscan Dress as Historical Source: Some Problems and Examples", *American Journal of Archaeology 75*, No. 3, (Jul 1971), 277-284.

[401] Much has been written on analysis of visual source material from the ANE. For contemporary methodological approaches to visual interpretations from the ancient world as well as a contemporary intersource analysis of visual and textual depictions of dress, focusing on the HB, see Gansell, "The Iconography of Ideal Feminine Beauty", 46-70.

[402] Batten, Daniel-Hughes and Upson-Saia, "What Shall We Wear?", 3. In identifying this problem specifically as it relates to veils in the ANE, Joan Goodnick Westenholtz observed the perceived lack of evidence for veiling in visual sources, and thus the seeming discrepancy between textual and material records of the practice. While Goodnick Westenholtz rightly notes that textual records do indicate that married women were veiled, she argues that '...if the married woman wore a veil, why does the visual evidence show none from any period or region of Mesopotamia? The female – worshipper figures, female statues, votive plaques, terracotta reliefs and stele clearly show their faces and coiffures. The problem is complicated and deserves more attention...'. Joan Goodnick Westenholtz, "Towards a New Conceptualisation of the Female Role in Mesopotamian Society", *Journal of American Oriental Society 110*, No. 3 (Jul – Sep., 1990): 515. The problem raised by Westenholtz highlights both the broader issue of academic definition of veils in ancient sources – a problem previously identified in the Opening Remarks of this study - and of the lack of immediate concordance between the two different languages of text and image. Misidentification or lack of identification is possible when visual and textual sources of veiling are assumed to mirror each other. Mary Harlow, "Dress in Historia Augusta: the role of dress in historical narrative" in *The Clothed Body in the Ancient World*, ed. Liza Cleland, Mary Harlow and Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, (London; Oxbow Books, 2005), 143.

[403] Harlow, "Dress in Historia Augusta", 143.

[404] Ibid.

identification of dress in ancient sources, text and image '…presuppose one another, complement one another, assay one another, and provide for one another a *mutual* witness.'[405] With this in mind, the following section will therefore glance at the variety of veils worn by women in the ANE, including large, wrapping dress items, small headbands and turban-like garments. These visual sources will act as a form of complimentary 'mutual witness' to the practice of veiling as it is depicted in textual sources from across the region.[406]

Long, full body veils of various types are readily seen in ancient art. From the Imperial Hittite Period (1480 – 1190 BCE), the first example – an orthostat relief – depicts a King and Queen standing before of an altar.[407] The Queen – to the left of the composition – wears a floor length veil that covers her head and runs the length of her back, but is completely open at the front. Her face and other adornment such as large hoop earrings are also visible.[408] From the Neo-Hittite period (1200 – 600BCE),[409] another orthostat relief depicts a woman veiled from head to ankle, with only her left arm, shoulder, face and right hand revealed. Her veil is worn directly on her head and appears to be tightly wrapped. She holds a spindle – a symbol of femininity.[410] Standing in front of her is a naked and winged goddess with a horned hat. The inscription names the woman as 'Lord Suhis's wife.'.'[411]

[405]Gressmann, *Alterorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament*, viii, cited in De Hulster and le Mon, "Introduction", ix.
[406]Ibid.
[407]"King and Queen Standing Before Alter", Imperial Hittite Orthostat Relief, Alaca Çorum. The Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, Ankara Turkey.
[408] The male figure holds *kalmus littus* a staff denoting kingship.
[409]"Orthostat, Limestone, Carchemish Gazinatep. Neo-Hittites". The Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, Ankara Turkey. This representation is roughly contemporaneously with the promulgation of the Middle Assyrian Law Code (1075BCE). The Middle Assyrian Law Code is of particular significance to the practice of veiling in the ANE, and will be explored presently in this chapter.
[410]Jak Yakar, "Presumed Social Identity of the Occupants of Late Third Millennium BC Alacahoyuk and Horoztepe 'Royal Tombs'", *Journal of Archaeomythology 7*: 1–8, esp 3-4, https://www.academia.edu/9686868.
[411] John David Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions, Vol 1: Inscriptions of the Iron Age, Part 1: Text,* (NY: De Gruyter, 2000), 80; John David Hawkins, *Corpus of Hieroglyphic Luwian Inscriptions, Vol 1: Inscriptions of the Iron Age, Part 3: Plates,* (NY: De Gruyter, 2000), 91.

Contemporaneous with the preceding example, two Luwian reliefs show long veils covering the head of the wearer. An orthostat – 'Libation for God' – shows a woman identified as 'Tuwaitis the princess' or 'King Tuwaitis' child'.[412] Tuwaitis faces a goddess with the horned hat of divinity, and pours a water libation to the goddess. Tuwaitis's veil is a long dress item which runs from forehead to floor and covers a polos on her head. There are two headbands at the forehead of her veil, and Tuwaitis's face and ears are visible. In another early Luwian relief, a scene depicts two people sitting at a table laden with food.[413] The woman wears a long, floor length veil, with two distinct headbands running across her forehead, worn in conjunction with the longer veil.[414]

From 8th century Nineveh, a relief carved to show the fall of the city of Lachish to Sennacherib's Assyrian forces, depicts a variety of dress worn by both the Assyrians and Judeans.[415] Judean women and younger girls are depicted as wearing long veils which flow down to the floor, completely covering their hair. Niditch notes that the portrayal of women and girls with their heads covered in this relief, was likely a depiction of real-life dress. Judeans would have seen this relief and may have '…recognised the way the wives covered their hair for the journey…'.[416] As Niditch further notes '…The women and girls in the Lachish reliefs are pictured as deportees on the road, so it is possible that these scarf-like coverings are outdoors travel headgear for women. The full, simple covering allows for modesty but is also stripped of the ornamentation connoting possible former wealth or status.'[417] In juxtaposition

[412] "Libation for God", Limestone Orthostat, Aslantepe Malatya. The Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, Ankara Turkey; Ibid.
[413] "Fragment, Limestone, Aslantepe, Malatye. Neo-Hittites". The Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, Ankara Turkey.
[414] Ibid.
[415] "Sennacherib's Siege on Lachish Relief", BM 124907; BM 124908, The British Museum.
[416] Niditch, *My Brother Esau*, 61.
[417] Niditch, *My Brother Esau*, 51-53; Megan Cifarelli, "Gesture and Alterity in the Art of Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria", *The Art Bulletin 80*, Issue 2, 220-221.

to the Judean women, the Assyrian Queen is depicted as ornately dressed, indicating her superior status.[418]

Veils which cover the head but do not extend the full length of the body like the previous examples, are also evident. Dating to approximately 3000BCE, the Warka Vase is one of the oldest known extant examples of visual representation of veiling, which depicts the goddess Inanna receiving gifts in a ritual procession.[419] The procession of worshippers includes naked men and a male figure generally identified as either a high priest or the king.[420] Inanna is depicted in a veil which covers her head in its entirety and flows down to her mid-back. She is formally and fully dressed, whereas her worshippers are nude, which indicates her status as the most significant figure in the composition. [421]

From 11th century Megiddo, Ivory 173 is a furniture inlay from a bed and was discovered as part of a hoard in the sacked city.[422] The origins of this ivory are difficult to place culturally, with some scholars suggesting the ivory is stylistically reminiscent of Egyptian, Phoenician and Canaanite motifs.[423] Whatever her origins, the ivory depicts a woman wearing a long fringed garment, with her head and hair completely covered with a shoulder length veil.

There are also many extant examples of women wearing thinner, smaller veils, which are placed on the head or wrap around the head. Dating to between 2600-2500BCE, 'Female Worshipper with Tufted Dress and Wrapped Headdress' depicts a woman with a thin ribbon-

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[418] Ibid.
[419]"Warka Vase", IM124908, National Museum of Iraq, Baghdad.
[420] Lloyd Liang and Jennifer Liang, *Ancient Art: A Challenge to Modern Thought*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993), 126.
[421]Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 142.
[422] "Ivory 173", Megiddo Ivories, OIM No. A 22258; b2079, The Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.
[423]Gordon Loud, *The Megiddo Ivories*, Ivory 173, Plate 38, OIM No. A 22258; b2079, Oriental Institute Publications (OIP) 52, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 32; 86-87. See also R D Barnett, *Ancient Ivories in the Middle East*, (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University, 1982); Marian Feldman, "Hoarded Treasures: The Megiddo Ivories and the End of the Late Bronze Age", *UC Berkeley Department of Near Eastern Studies 41,* (Berkeley 2009). https://doi.org. 10.1179/007589109X12484491671130.

like veil which is tightly and securely wrapped around her head, with her hair completely concealed.[424] From around 2500BCE, Limestone Statue of Woman depicts a woman with a thin headband like veil wrapped around her head.[425] Most of her hair is clearly visible, with a long plait running down the length of her back. From 2400BCE, Gypsum Statue of a Woman has a thin veil binding her head.[426] Here, her hair has been fashioned into buns on the side of her head, with her thin veil wrapped around the circumference of her head.

Some visual examples show the variety of veil garments side by side with one another. The Hittite Inandik vase, for example, dating to around 1600BCE, shows four friezes, each representing in a stage of the procession of the sacred marriage (hieros gamos) ritual, the consummation of which can be seen in the final frame of frieze four.[427] The vase shows numerous dress items. Women wear long garments, some of which are cream coloured, and envelop the whole body, including '…arms and head like a mantle shawl…', leaving only the face exposed.[428] Others, such as the dress of the woman on the bed in the final frieze depict a long, cream coloured, floor length garment similar to those in the precession, however this woman also wears another black veil which fully covers her back, shoulders and head, with only her face being visible.[429] Most scholars agree that this final scene depicts a husband lifting his wife's veil for the first time after they are married; this scene is also found in other polychromatic relief vases, including The Bitik Vase – contemporaneous with The Indandik

[424]"Female Worshipper with Tufted Dress and Wrapped Headdress", A11441, The Oriental Institute at The University of Chicago.
[425] "Limestone Statue of Woman", ME90929, The British Museum.
[426] "Gypsum Statue of Woman", ME11666, Presented by The Art Fund to The British Museum.
[427]"The Inandik Vase", Museum of Ancient Civilisations, Ankara, Turkey; Tahsin Özgüç, *Inandiktepe: An Important Cult Center in the Old Hittite Period*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basim Evi, 1988), 70.
[428] Ibid., 85-86. The colour variation (cream and black) may show garments or may show hair. See Thomas Moore, "Old Hittite Polychrome Relief Vases and the Assertion of Kingship in 16th Century BCE Anatolia", Masters Thesis (unpublished), Dept of Archaeology, İhsan Doğramaci Bilkent University Ankara July 2015 at www.thesis.bilkent.edu.tr accessed on 29 Oct 2019, 76.
[429]Ibid., 89; 91.

Vase – where the woman in the final scene wears only a cream coloured veil instead of the black found in the Inandik Vase.[430]

Finally, in the Kubaba Procession, dating to 1st millennium BCE Neo-Hittite Period, there are 15 veiled women proceeding to the veiled Goddess Kubaba, seated at the start of the procession.[431] Throughout the procession, the women's veils vary in style, though all have two parts, one covering the forehead and the other long enough to extend from the top of the head to the ankle. The women hold various objects, including a small animal, a goblet, ears of grain, as well as another unidentifiable object carried in the left hand. The last three women carry nothing in their right hands and the unidentified object in their left.

The preceding examples of visual material depicting veiled women from across the ANE, show the variance between veils and between cultural uses of veils of idiosyncratic type and style. In the next section, the textual record of the practice of veiling women will be explored in detail, where types, styles, individual names and thematic uses of these dress items are investigated.

4.2.2 Textual Sources referencing the practice of veiling in the Ancient Near East

Textual sources which mention ancient veiling practices are '… incomplete and imperfect; they are often widely scattered and fragmentary and sometimes they…lack a

[430]"Bitik Vase", The Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, Ankara, Turkey. Özgüç, *Inandiktepe*, 89. Newly discovered examples of this type of vase also depict veiled women with similar and identical veils. See Tayfun Yildrum, "New scenes on the second relief vase from Hüseyindede and their interpretation in the light of Hittite representative art," in *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*, Vol L (2008), VI Congresso Internazionale di Ittitologia Roma, 5-9 settembre 2005, ed. Alfonso Archi and Rita Francis, (Roma: CNR Istituto di Studi sulle Civiltàdell'egeo e del vicino oriente, 2008), 837-850. H A Hoffner, "Daily Life Among the Hittites", in, *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East,* ed. R Averbeck, M Chavalas and D B Weissberg, (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2003), 109; Kurt Bittel, *Die Hethiter. Die Kunst Anatoliens vom Ende des 3. Bis zum Anfnag des. 1 Jahrtausends vor Christus*, (Munchen:Verlag C H Beck,1976) 143 and 145, figures 140 and 144.

[431]"A Religious Ceremony". Orthostat, Limestone, Carcemish, Gaziantep. Museum of Ancient Civilisations, Ankara Turkey; David Ussishkin, "On The Dating of Some Groups of Reliefs From Carchemish and Til Barsib", *Anatolian Studies 17* (1967): 182-184.

context…'.[432] However, E J W Barber proposes that '…words survive better than cloth…';[433] so, in order to analyse and interpret material dress items from the ancient world, specifically women's veils, '…we very much need to improve the data base on which we stand…' and '…reap the harvest of additional information on ancient textiles available from an organised study of…vocabulary…';[434] even if the sources are fragmentary. Barber's assessment of ancient textiles is particularly astute, because the variety of extant textual records containing details of ancient dress practices which we do have, indicate that the practice of veiling was a widespread, multi-faceted component of women's dress ensemble used to construct and display identities for women throughout the various stages of their lives. While we do not always have specific details which mention colour, type, fabric, style, or use of every veil, nor every context in which these garments are worn, we do have a huge vocabulary of veil-words and extant textual records with which to better understand this multifaceted practice.

As suggested by Van der Toorn and mentioned in Chapter Two of this study, the veil in ANE was not one garment but many, and the languages of these ancient societies reflected that multiplicity through their veiled-vocabularies – a complex system of words describing a variety of women's idiosyncratic veil types and styles, as well as veiling actions.[435] When necessary, the use of dress items which fulfilled the task of covering the heads of women could be described in generic terms, as is the case with the Sumerian text which '… contains what is apparently an inventory of veils (*túg saĝ -ush-bar*)'[436] – a list of different women's textile dress

[432] Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,* 2.
[433] E J W Barber, *Prehistoric Textiles: The Development of Cloth in Neolithic and Bronze Ages with special reference to the Aegean*, (NY: Princeton University Press, 1991), 260.
[434] Ibid.
[435] Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 23; Van Der Toorn "Significance", 331.
[436]George Wolz, "Pan-Sumerianism and the Veil Motif", *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 5*, No.4, (Oct 1943): 408-429, esp. 409; Charles-François Jean, *La religion Sumérienne: d'apres les documents Sumériens antéreurs á la Dynastie d'Isin*, (Paris: Paul Geunter, 1931): 111. See also Alfred Jeremias, "De Schleier Von Sumer Bis Heute", *Der Alte Orient*, (1931), 1 – 70 and in response, Edward H Heffner and Elizabeth Pierce Blegen, "Archaeological Discussions", *American Journal of Archaeology 36*, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1932). Jeremias provides an interesting and notable summary of the concept of veiling from Sumer through to the 1930s, with specific identification of many different types and terms for women's veils used over millennia throughout the ANE. Wolz disagreed with Jeremias concerning the veil as a motif of spiritual and esoteric symbolism, but concurred with

items which were all worn on the head – indicated by the unspoken determinative *túg* which precedes *saĝ*, 'head'.[437] More often, however, veil terminology was extremely specific and different words were used to distinguish between veil types, the styles in which the veil was worn, and the purpose they served. While not extensive, the following list of veil dress items all emphasise the myriad of types and styles of veils present in the ANE – including some which are linguistically synonymous with Hebrew veil types and styles, are etymologically related to Hebrew veils, or share thematic use with Hebrew veils.

Defined by CAD as '...a mantle or similar garment, to which metal appliques could be attached…' *pišannu* is widely attested to from OA through to NB sources.[438] As a veil, *pišannu* may have been embellished with gold and purple (the expensive blue/purple Murex dye) to show high status and social significance.[439] In NB sources, the fabric of *pišannu* is described as being fine quality wool or linen, and wearing the veil is limited to 'the temple'.[440] Earlier attestations indicate however, that the display and construction of high social status for elite women more generally was indicated through the wearing of *pišannu,* and that its usage was not limited to the temple.[441] *Pišannu* then, was likely a large veil which could

Jeremias' findings in terms of veiling as a social practice with material dress items. Veil as esoteric motif is an important discussion, though it is outside of the focus of this study and thus will not be addressed here.

[437]Edzard, *Sumerian Grammar*, 9.

[438] *CAD* 12, s.v. "*pišannu"*. See Introduction for abbreviations, p.15.

[439]Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods", 179; *CAD* 12, s.v. "*pišannu"*. For more on dying textiles, see Waetzoldt, "The Colours and Variety of Fabrics" 201-209. Goetze also notes that the attachment of gold and other precious metals to clothing were intended for ritual use and the dressing and adornment of statues of goddesses was common place across the ANE. Goetze, *Pišannu* is also attested to in sources which describe its use for wrapping statues of goddesses and as of the wardrobe of the goddesses, as cited in CAD. In fact, in Hittite sources, red and blue garments were embellished with gold and are then wrapped around or used to cover statues of deities. The attachment of metal appliques could indicate embellishment of *pišannu* with precious metals; though it could also indicate that other veils or garments were attached to *pišannu* via some form of hook and eye (given reference to metal appliques is present) and worn in conjunction with it as part of a woman's veiled ensemble. See Goetze, "The Priestly Dress of the Hittite Kings", 178. This and *pišannu* more broadly, requires further consideration outside the scope of this study.

[440]*CAD* 12, s.v. "*pišannu"*. Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods", 179. For an important discussion on the difference between divine and human wearing of a veil in visual representations and how himation (a type of Greek veil) may signify heroism, see Larissa Bonfante Warren, "Etruscan Dress", 283.

[441] *CAD* 12, s.v. "*pišannu"*.

cover the head of a woman (or goddess), and was used to construct and display the highest of elite social status, and, in later attestations, was used in the context of the temple as well.[442]

The *pusummu* veil is well attested to, especially in OB textual sources.[443] The adjectival form *pussumtu* meaning 'veiled' is synonymously connected with other veil types such as *kulūlu* – a veil which will be considered in its own right presently.[444] The verbal root of *pusummu, pasānu/pasāmu* is well attested to throughout the ANE, and provides much more information about veiling as a practice more broadly.[445] The verb can refer to various types of 'covering' for both men and women and it is the commonly accepted generic term meaning 'to veil', but, is also rendered with more contextual specificity as 'to cover', 'to hide', 'to veil, hide the face', and 'to veil oneself or cover oneself'.[446]

Etymologically, *pasānu* links to various types of veil across the ANE, including attestations in the HB with the veil *ṣānîp*, semantically similar to *ṣā'îp*, found in Genesis 24 and Genesis 38 as well as other synonymous links with Hebrew words such as *sātar* 'to cover' – which contextually occurs as being covered with garments.[447] One of the best ANE attestations of *pasānu* is found in the Middle Assyrian Law Code (MAL), which will be discussed in depth presently, as it provides a wealth of information on the ideology and practice of veiling in the ANE.

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[442] *CAD* 12, s.v. "*pišannu"*.
[443]Ibid. *Pišannu* is a complicated textile. It may be related to the lining of a wooden chest, or as the cover to a chest. John Huehnergard, *A Grammar of Akkadian*, 3rd ed. (Harvard: Harvard Semitic Studies, 2011), 513. Yet there are also attestations of it, as seen here, for use as a cover for women and goddesses. For more, see Stefan Zawadzki, *Garments of the Gods: Vol 2. Texts. Studies on the Textile Industry and the Pantheon of Sippar According to the Texts from the Ebabbar Archive*. Orbis biblicus et orientalis. Cambridge: Academic Press. 2013. See also John Andrew George, "Babylonian Texts from the Folios of Sidney Smith, Part Three", in *If a Man Builds a Joyful House: Assyriological Studies in Honor of Erle Verdun Leichty* (CM 31), ed. A Guinan, M deJ Ellis Ferrara, S Freedman, M Rutz, L Sassmannshausen, S Tinney and M W Waters, (Leiden: Brill), 173-186.
[444]Van der Toorn, "Significance", 331; Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 177.
[445] *CAD* 12, s.v. "*pišannu"*.
[446]Ibid., Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327.
[447]*CAD* 17, part II, s.v. "*šitrum"*; Veenhof, *Aspects of Assyrian Trade*, 174; Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 243. Chapters six and seven of this study will more thoroughly consider the important etymological links between *pasānu* and HB veils.

Another type of veil, *kuttumu*, is well attested to across the ANE. [448] The verbal root *katāmu* meaning 'to cover', etymologically precedes *pasānu.*[449] In its earliest usage, *katāmu* seemed to also have had the same meaning as the Sumerian *dul,* 'to cover', and *túg.bar.dul,* 'textile garment which covers'.[450] As a verb, *dul* carries connotations referencing large expansive veils which were intended 'to overwhelm, to constrict…to conceal…'.[451] It is likely that the *kuttumu* veil was an expansive, large dress item, capable of wrapping and surrounding the wearer.

The best literary example[452] of *kuttumu* is from the Epic of Gilgameš, where the innkeeper/goddess of wisdom Šiduri is '*ku-tu-um-mi kut-tu-mat-ma*' 'covered with a shawl'[453], or 'covered (*kuttumtu*) with a (*kuttumu*) veil'.[454] Šiduri's veil is, George argues, '…a civilised garment…' and was thus a marker of high status and social significance.[455] George further points out that Šiduri's veil appears to be an 'incongruous feature' for an innkeeper – a woman often considered to be lower social status – to be wearing, thus it must indicate her status as Goddess rather than innkeeper.[456] However, *kuttumu* is an interesting veil. Being worn by a goddess may well indicate the veil as a signifier of a high social status, but at the same time it

[448] *CAD* 8, s.v. "*katāmu": "kuttumu",* 298.
[449] Ibid; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328. It also has multiple synonyms including *šaktumu, šuktumu* and the adjectival *šiktumu* – all of which mean 'to cover' or 'to veil'. *CAD* 17 Part II, s.v. "*šaktumu", "šuktumu" "šiktumu"*; Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 243; Veenhof, *Aspects of Assyrian Trade,* 174.
[450] *Dul* as a textile is attested to in 10 cases between 2500 – 2000 BCE. As a verb "to cover", attestations are 230. "Dul", The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary, last modified 26 June 2006, http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/nepsd-frame.html.
[451] *CAD* 8, s.v. "*katāmu": "kuttumu"*; Richard E Averbeck, '"Enki and the World Order" and Other Sumerian Literary Compositions', in *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Averbeck, Chavalas, Weissberg, 26-30.
[452] KAR 94:5 also records a veiled bride compared to the goddess Gula -*'kal-la-tú kut-tùm-tú Gula ša mamma la uṣabs bûši' – 'The veiled bride is the goddess Gula whom nobody may look upon (even) from afar, the expression alludes to the sunset.' CAD* 8, s.v. "*katāmu": "kuttumu"*; Jean-Jacque Glassner "Women, Hospitality, and Honor of the Family", in *Women's Earliest Records from Ancient Egypt and Western Asia*, ed. Barbara S Lesko, Proceedings of the Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, Brown University, providence Rhode Island, November 5-7, 1987, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 76; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328.
[453] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327; George*, The Gilgameš Epic: Vol. 1,* 498.
[454] *CAD* 8, s.v. "*katāmu": "kuttumu".* Stephanie Dalley translates this as '...covered with a covering...' – though *kuttumtu* is accepted as 'veiled'. Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 99.
[455] George*, The Gilgameš Epic: Vol. 1,* 498.
[456] Ibid.

might point to her social and sexual status. According to Daniel Bodi, female innkeepers fell into a separate category of 'unencumbered women' – women of status who were not under the control of a husband or father, and enjoyed full control of their own sexuality.[457] As an 'unencumbered woman', Šiduri existed outside of the familial structure and was freer to engage in unregulated sexual activity, as well as provide comfort to travellers in her tavern. *Kuttumu,* therefore, likely signified high social status in combination with a woman's social role as innkeeper or 'unencumbered woman' – a role well attested to across the ANE in various capacities and one which would have given Šiduri social and sexual freedoms.[458] The verb *katāmu*, and its cousin *pasānu*, also share important etymological links with women's veils mentioned in the HB, in Genesis 24 and 38, as well as the Book of Ruth.[459]

Šugurra was another style of ANE veil defined as a '…length of cloth that was wrapped around the head…'.[460] It is feminine gendered dress item, is generally associated with goddesses, routinely worn by the goddess Inanna and also displayed high, elite or queenly status.[461] This veil is best attested to in mythological narratives of Inanna and Enki and Inanna's Descent to the Underworld.[462] In Inanna and Enki, it states 'She put the desert crown (*túg-šu-gur-ra*), on her head **(***saĝ*) …'.[463] Though translated here as 'crown', the

[457]Bodi, "The Encounter with a Courtesan", 3-18, esp. 14-15. See also Phyllis Bird, "Prostitution in the Social World", 43; Phyllis Bird, *Missing Persons and Mistaken Identities*, 202-208.

[458] Other examples of 'unencumbered women' include *qadištu /qadēšâ* named in MAL, and *zonāh*, the woman traditionally classified as a 'prostitute' in the HB. This social role will be further explored in Chapter Seven of this study. Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328; George, *The Babylonian Gilgameš Epic,* 498; Bodi, "The Encounter with a Courtesan", 3-18, esp. 14-15.

[459] Chapters six, seven and eight of this study will more thoroughly consider the important etymological links between *katāmu* and HB veils.

[460]Tanaka, "Dress and Identity in Old Babylonian Texts", 24 - 25

[461]Tanaka provides an excellent analysis of *šugurra*, in relation to quality of cloth. See Tanaka, "Dress and Identity in Old Babylonian Texts", 27-29.

[462]"Inanna and Enki (Inanna and Enki c.1.3.1)", The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature: The ETCSL Project Oxford, last updated 9 March 2005, https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.3.1&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc#; "Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld", (c.1.4.1) in Faculty of Oriental Studies Oxford University", The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature: The ETCSL Project Oxford, last updated 9 March 2005, https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.4.1&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc#.

[463] Inanna and Enki (Inanna and Enki c.1.3.1)", The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature: The ETCSL Project Oxford, last updated 9 March 2005, https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.3.1&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc#.

determinative *túg* denotes *šugurra* as a textile dress item.[464] In Inanna's Descent, *šugurra* is translated as 'turban' which the goddess puts on her head *(saĝ).*[465] While the size of *šugurra* is not indicated in extant records given its use, it is comparable to a turban like veils, which wrap and bind the head of the wearer.

Another veil, generally considered to be a small veil, is *kulūlu.* CAD defines the noun *kulūlu* as '...part of a headdress (a kind of turban, worn mainly by deities or … queens), headband...'.[466] Similarly, Beaulieu translates *kulūlu* as 'headscarf'.[467] Most recently, Cohen has defined and further translated *kulūlu* in the broad category of 'headgear/wear' within the specific subcategory of 'headscarf'.[468] With a subtle yet noteworthy variation, Van der Toorn classifies *kulūlu* as not specifically 'veil', but rather as 'headband' arguing that a headband or, indeed, the hem of a larger garment, may have been sufficient to wear with a veil in the ANE. He posits

> 'The word kulūlu sometimes rendered 'veil' refers in fact to the headband used to dress up the hair and to keep the veil in place. Instead of a separate piece of clothing, such as a multi-coloured sash, the common garment (ṣubātu) or its hem (sissiktu) might do duty as well'.[469]

While Van der Toorn accurately observes that *kulūlu* is likely a small veil similar to a headband, examination of the verbal root of *kulūlu*, later translations and further contextualization indicate that *kulūlu* as a dress item firmly belongs under the categorical umbrella of veil.

The verbal form of *kulūlu*, *kalâlu*, is defined as '…to crown, to adorn, to veil, to cover

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[464]"Túg" The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary, The Babylonian Section of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, last modified 26 June 2006, http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/nepsd-frame.html.

[465]"Inanna's Descent to the Netherworld", (c.1.4.1) in Faculty of Oriental Studies Oxford University, The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature: The ETCSL Project Oxford, last updated 9 March 2005, https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=c.1.4.1&display=Crit&charenc=gcirc#.

[466] *CAD* 8, s.v. "*kulūlu"*.

[467]Paul-Alain Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk during the Neo-Babylonian Period*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 151.

[468] Mark E Cohen, *An English to Akkadian Companion to the Assyrian Dictionaries*, (Potomac: CDL Press, 2011), 99.

[469]Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328.

(the face or head) with the *kulūlu*-cloth…'.[470] Extant examples of contextual use, in almost all examples except for one, show women being veiled with *kulūlu.*[471] The masculine use of *kulūlu* identified here requires further attention outside of the focus of this study – though a relationship to high status could well be indicated by *kulūlu.*[472] In its adjectival form, *kullulu,* is defined by CAD as 'veiled' and possibly also 'linteled'.[473] Meek also points out that *kalâlu* means 'to complete, finish off' both in relation to a head-garment and where it relates to the lintel of a doorway.[474]

The connection between *kulūlu* and 'building' terminology – 'linteled', is indicative of veil's function as a 'little house' and the understanding that in ancient ANE societies it was often an extension of domestic space which allowed women of certain statuses to move about in public space, yet still be perceived to be within a private (domestic space).[475] Jean –Jacques Glassner notes that to veil with a 'little house' was specifically connected to marriage.[476] The adjective *kullulu* is also etymologically connected to the Akkadian *kallātu* and its Hebrew equivalent *kallâ* (both meaning bride/daughter in law/not yet a mother) which indicates the veil's relationship to the articulation of marital and familial status.[477] According to Glassner, '…The veil wraps up [a woman]… It protects her as do the walls of the house.'[478] In other words, 'little house', 'little roof', 'little lintel' veils such as *kulūlu,* extended the domestic

[470]*CAD* 8, s.v. "*kulūlu"*; "*kalâlu".*
[471] Ibid.
[472] The King is 'crowned' with this garment in the presence of the god Aššur. See ibid.
[473] *CAD* 8, s.v. "*kullulu*". Cohen, *Companion to the Assyrian Dictionaries*, 99; 225.
[474]Theophile J Meek, "Babyloniaca", *Journal of American Oriental Society 43,* (1923), 355; Lloyd Llewellyn – Jones, "House and Veil in Ancient Greece", *British School at Athens Studies, Vol. 15, Building Communities: House, Settlement and Society in the Aegean and Beyond,* British School at Athens, (2007): 252-253.
[475]Llewellyn – Jones has further argued that '…there is clearly a subconscious connection between the protective elements that help to create a civilised life: housing and clothing… this connection is particularly evident in regard to women's domestic space and to female clothing...'. Llewellyn – Jones, "House and Veil", 251; See also Van der Toorn, "Significance", 331-332; Niditch, *My Brother Esau*, 59; Leonie Archer, *Her Price is Beyond Rubies: The Jewish Woman in Graeco-Roman Palestine,* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990), 212.
[476] Glassner "Women, Hospitality, and Honor of the Family", 17.
[477]Glassner, "Women, Hospitality, and Honor of the Family", 17; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 330-331; Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 177. See also Asher-Greve and Goodnick Westernholz, *Goddesses in Context,* 259 for their discussion of *kallātu* as 'the veiled one' in the context of the Goddess.
[478] Glassner, "Women, Hospitality, and Honor of the Family", 71-95.

space of private women, such as wives, daughters and *kallâ*/*kallātu*, creating a private, personal space for women in public spaces.[479]

Examples of *kulūlu* in textual attestations provide more detail about this small veil. *Kulūlu* is described as being purple and gold or in some cases red, all colours relating to the display of high social status.[480] How *kulūlu* would have been worn by itself is also described in several extant examples, including Akkadian texts KAR 423 and Maqlu V. In these examples, *kulūlu* is mentioned as '...a kind of shawl wound around the head ...' and in some cases, *erru* 'to bind' is used in relation to *kulūlu*.[481] The action of 'head binding' with veil-garments was known throughout the ANE and is shown in examples other than those which mention *kulūlu*.[482] In the Sumerian hymn "The exaltation to Inana (Inana B)" for example, in lines 1 -12, other words for 'head binding' the goddess Inanna are seen. Inana B states 'Mistress of heaven, with the great diadem, who loves the good headdress (*saĝ keše*) befitting the office of an *en* priestess.'[483] Though no specific veil noun is present, the action *keše* (to bind) with the noun *saĝ* head, informs us that Inanna's head is being bound.[484] Similarly, *kulūlu* bound the head, and was likely a small sash-like or headband veil, which, given its small size, may have been worn with other, larger veils, to form a complete ensemble display – a little house.

[479] Llewellyn – Jones, "House and Veil in Ancient Greece", 258.
[480] Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods", 175.
[481] *CAD* 8, s.v. "*kulūlu"*; Oppenheim, "The Golden Garments of the Gods", 175.
[482] "The Exaltation of Inanna (Inanna B) 4.07.2" last updated 9 March 2005, The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature: The ETCSL Project Oxford, http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.4.07.2#.
[483] Ibid.
[484] Ibid; Mary K Wakeman, "Sumer and the Women's Movement: The Process of Reaching behind, Encompassing and Going Beyond", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 1, No.2. (Fall 1985), 10. An example from Classical Greece, even though it is from millennia later, may further illuminate this binding of the head as a form of veiling. This is brought to our attention by Llewellyn-Jones, who notes the occurrence of no less than 8 veil words which are defined as 'binding the head', such as the "*...kredemnon...*constructed from *kare,* 'head' and *deo* 'to bind'…". Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,* 28. Of this, Martin previously identified *kredemnon* as a multivalent word which can mean 'closed', such as the closed cloth on a bound head. See Dale B Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, (New Haven: Yale Uni Press, 1995), 234.

Paršigū is another small veil defined by CAD as '…a sash, often used as a headdress', which is similar to the *kulūlu* veil. In fact, in one example where *kulūlu* is described, it is used in conjunction with the *paršigu.*[485] When *paršigū* was worn, the verb *aparum* at times showed how the garment was used.[486] *Aparum* is defined by CAD as 'to provide with a headdress, to put a covering on someone's head…to be covered or coated…'.[487] *Paršigū* is described as being made of goat hair and is for private and personal use, and is most attested to in OA texts; though it is also found in OB sources[488] *Paršigū* also occurs in numerous Mari texts, including ARM 22 167, document 56 and ARM 22 326 where it is described as being used for prophetesses.[489]

In Babylon, *túg-bar-si* (Babylonian equivalent to *paršigū*) was used as an emblem of the goddess Inanna and is sometimes referred to with the term *lugal* – king. [490] However, nothing suggests that it was used by men; in point of fact, it appears to be strongly related to female use and rather, as Tanaka notes, the positioning of *túg-bar –si* with *lugal* is indicative of the high status of the female wearer and not that it worn by men.[491] As previously noted with Veenhof's determination of quality of fabric, *lugal* is both the best quality fabric and the term for 'king' – and in this case, it is used to denote quality of cloth and thus elite status of the wearer not gendered masculine dress.[492] Examples of the Goddess Ishtar and the Goddess

[485]In this reference it states that Gula, a goddess of healing, should have '…a *kulūlu* headdress and *paršigu* of red wool...'. *CAD 12*, s.v. "*paršigu"*. See also Asher Greve and Goodnick Westenholz, *Goddesses in Context*, 56*;* 259.
[486] Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians" 238.
[487]*CAD* 1 Part II, s.v. "*aparum".*
[488] Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 238; Tanaka, "Dress and Identity in Old Babylonian Texts".
[489]Martti Nissinen with contributions by C L Seow and Robert K Ritner, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East*, (Atlanta: SBL, 2003), 86 - 87. ARM 22 326 describes the garment as follows: '…one utublum garment of second quality and two *paršigū* for Annu-tabi, prophetess of Annunitum.' Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy,* 87.
[490] Tanaka, "Dress and Identity in Old Babylonian Texts", 27-29.
[491] Ibid.
[492]Veenhof, *Aspects of Assyrian Trade*, 174.

Nanaya wearing both *paršigū* and *kulūlu* together as part of their veiling are also found in extant texts.[493]

In letters from Mari, where *paršigū* and *kulūlu* are also described synonymously or as being worn together, these small veils combined constructed different aspects of gendered social identity for the wearer – and these examples are particularly noteworthy.[494] Elite women specifically request the delivery of new *kulūlu* and *paršigū* together - '…may one thousand sashes (*paršigūm*) in bundles, five thousand headbands (*kulūlu*)…reach me at Mari promptly'; alluding to the importance of these veils as part of everyday dress for some women – and that the veils are connected for use in a woman's ensemble.[495] *Paršigū* also occurs in association with marriage, dowries and other property settlements. From an OB dowry, a request is made for '…two sashes (*paršigū*) in addition to the one she is wearing on her head (are given as part of the bridal gift)'.[496] In a property settlement, 'I gave two of my own *paršigū* to my sister.'[497] The specific mention of *paršigū* in dowries and marriage, further indicates the significance of veil-garments as part of a woman's wardrobe ensemble.

Another important dress item related to the practice of veiling is *kusîtu. Kusû*, the verbal root of *kusîtu*, is equivalent to the Hebrew *cāsâ*, meaning 'to cover'.[498] *Cāsâ* is found in Genesis 24 and 38 and Song of Songs, where it is used to describe how a veil is worn.[499] CAD cites numerous references to *kusîtu*, from as early as OA through to NB.[500] In OA and OB sources *kusîtu* corresponds to the Sumerian logogram *túg bar dul*, also used of the veiling verb

[493] See Beaulieu, *The Pantheon of Uruk*, 200.
[494] *CAD*, 12, s.v. "*paršigū*".
[495]Ibid.
[496]Ibid.
[497]Ibid.
[498] BDB, s.v. "cāsâ". See also Michel and Veenhof, "Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 226-227 for further discussion on etymology and the possible relationship between the *kusîtu* garment and the root *kasûm* "to bind".
[499] It is also found in the context of veiling in Song of Songs. The verb *cāsâ*, will be further considered in context in chapters five-eight of this study.
[500]Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language*, (Jerusalem: Carta, 1987), 281. The greatest frequency occurs in OA references.

katāmu and is described as an ordinary garment; in Hittite sources it is synonymous with the *kusisi* garment, with its ornate and identity laden hem, *kureššar*.[501] In Assyrian Trade Colony records it is a woollen cloth, occasionally qualified as being 'thin', as in 'good quality' and sometimes 'white'.[502] Extant records indicate that *kusîtu* was by no means an inexpensive garment.[503]

In NA records, the wearing of *kusîtu* is gendered to men only, as it is associated with men of high rank, including kings and high ranking officials.[504] In NB however, the opposite appears true; here, the *kusîtu* is a female garment, described as being 'destined for goddesses'.[505] In another reference the use of the decorative hem of *kusîtu* to veil a woman is mentioned: '…give a *kusîtu* garment with *šikkatu* for veiling her'.[506] As well as connections

[501] A Hittite synonym of *kusîtu* is the *kusisi* and the garment's hem *kureššar,* a synonym of *sissiktu*, is also well attested to in Hittite sources. Sturtevant defined *kureššar* as 'a cutting' and 'a strip of cloth used as a table cover or as an article of clothing', see Edgar H Sturtevant, *A Hittite Glossary* (2nd ed), (Philadelphia: The Linguistic Society of America University of Pennsylvania Press, 1936), 84. Goetze argued that the *kusisi* was specifically a Hittite masculine garment whose hem is used to cover the heads of women, mainly at weddings and cut the in the act of divorce. Goetze observes that it is the same garment as *kusîtu*, see Goetze, "The Priestly Dress of the Hittite Kings", 178-179. Puhvel defines *kureššar* as a woman's headdress and a strip of cloth, see Jaan Puhvel, *Hittite Etymological Dictionary, Vol 4: Words Beginning with K,* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997), 262. Hoffner has specifically categorised *kureššar* as a 'kind of scarf' further observing that 'gender-specificity was especially true of headwear' in the Hittite world, see H Hoffner, "Daily Life Among the Hittites", in, *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East,* ed. Averbeck, Chavalas and Weissberg, 104. *Kureššar* was worn by women as, amongst other uses, a sartorial identifier of gender. In 'Establishing a New Temple for the Goddess of the Night' dating to approximately C14th BCE, *kureššar* is also described as being used in relation to the establishment of a satellite temple for the Goddess of the Night, whose name remains ambiguous, though Unal argues that the unambiguously female deity is most likely related to Ishtar. William Hallo, *Context of Scripture Vol I: Canonical Compositions (Hittite) 1.70 'Establishing a New Temple for the Goddess of the Night',* (NY: Brill, 1997), 173 – 177; 177. Here, *kureššar*, or 'red scarf' as Unal translates it, is used to 'bind the head': '…they bind … the red [s]carf (*kureššar*) of the new deity...', Hallo, *Context of Scripture* Vol 1, 176. *Kureššar* is later described in this translation as 'a woman's headdress or scarf', not only showing evidence that the deity was indeed female, but further showing that her head is bound with a red hem or veil. *Kureššar* is but one example of the variety of Hittite women's veils worn in the Hittite world.

[502] *CAD 8*, s.v. "*kusîtu*"; Michel and Veenhof, "Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 234.

[503]Ibid.

[504]*CAD 8*, s.v. "*kusîtu*".

[505]Ibid. In one reference, a new *kusîtu* is being requested for The Lady of Larsa, as her current garment is '…threadbare…', *CAD 8*, s.v. "*kusîtu*". From this same period, requests for new *kusîtu* (with *paršigū*) to be sent for the Goddess Gula occur. *Kusîtu* is also described as having gold ornaments attached to it and that it is made of red or purple wool. Orders for the 'sacred' garments as they are described are further referenced, where the request to have them send from Eanna occurs and further, that 'fine oil' be sent on the same boat that annually delivers the *kusîtu* garments. In MB occurrences, a 'good' *kusîtu* has been requested by a high status woman as '…the *kusîtu* you gave me has no replacement.' In El-Amarna Letters, *kusîtu* is described as having '…coloured decorations of a *kusîtu* garment in *tabarru*-purple…'. In Nuzi, reference to style and fabric are made, where the *kusîtu* is described in relation to 'various kinds of coloured wool'. See *CAD* 8, s.v. "*kusîtu".*

[506] *CAD* 17, s.v. "*šikkatu b".*

with the Hebrew *cāsâ* and other veiled-vocabulary, the hem of a man's garment - including the *kusîtu*, is particularly significant.

Another garment, or, more specifically part of a garment, *sissiktu,* occurs routinely in ANE sources in relation to the practice of veiling.[507] CAD defines as *sissiktu* '... fringe, edge, hem (of a garment)…' – and, it has many synonyms - including *qarnu*, *qannu*, *birmu, kappu,* the Hittite *kureššar* and the Hebrew *kānāp.*[508] The *kusîtu* garment is also paralleled with one such synonym, *birmu A*, or 'trim woven of several colours (used to decorate garments)'. [509]

Extant records indicate that *sissiktu* could be interchangeable with the *kulūlu* and *paršigū.*[510] For example, in one of the extant records it is stated that '…the face of the daughter of Larak is veiled with the edge of her garment (*sissiktisu*) as with a *kulūlu*–headdress…'.[511] In another reference, the *kusîtu* (shown in this reference as the logogram *túg-bar-dul*) and its hem is described as having a direct positional relationship with *parsīgū* '*TÚG.BAR.DUL si-ka-ti-im* (beside *parsīgū*)'.[512] *Sissiktu,* the hem of garment could serve as a small veil like *kulūlu* and *paršigū.*[513]

Although not strictly a garment in and of itself, *sissiktu* played an important role in expressing a variety of social identities, power dynamics and transactions.[514] The hem was 'a

[507] *CAD* 15, s.v. "*sissiktu*".
[508] *CAD* 15, s.v. "*sissiktu*".
[509]*CAD* 2, s.v. "*birmu A*".
[510] Ibid.
[511]*CAD* 8, s.v. "*kulūlu"*.
[512]*CAD* 8, s.v. "*kusîtu*".
[513]Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327. Presumably, the hem of a man's garment was still attached to the main body of the garment when it was used to cover a woman's head. Thus, while the hem itself is a thin strip, the act of veiling involved the garment which was attached to the hem covering the woman, with the hem carrying the symbolic value of the garment.
[514] Breniquet notes the well documented and extensive use of *sissktu* in the Paleo-Babylonian period which '…involves applying the border or edge of the piece of clothing to a clay tablet at the moment a transaction takes place…The ritual nature of this act was 'to materialize the presence of the contracting party(ies) and to guarantee the permanence of the act, as an extension of the individual person concerned, transmitted by the mediation of the clothing, to the possession acquired'. Catherine Breniquet, "Functions and Uses of Textiles in the Ancient Near East: Summary and Perspectives", in Marie-Louise Nosch, Henriette Koefoed and Eva Andersson Strand, (eds), *Textile Production and Consumption in the Ancient Near East: Archaeology, Epigraphy, Iconography*, (Oxford: Oxbow, 2013), 13-14.

symbolic extension of the owner himself and more specifically of his rank and authority'.[515] The literal and symbolic 'ceasing to grasp' one king's *sissiktu* and/or taking hold of another's was tantamount to defection and a change in social allegiance.[516] In other cases, it was a sign of 'supplication and submission.'[517] *Sissiktu* could also act as a proxy for the wearer or as a confirmation of person's identity,[518] and '…because of its intimate association with the wearer, was symbolic of personality.'[519]

Manipulations of the hem of a garment were part of the marriage ritual; and this aspect of hem use is particularly important in relation to the practice of veiling.[520] The hem of a man's garment was used to cover the head of a woman at the moment of marriage as a symbol of her bond with the husband's family, her new status as wife[521] and, as Wiseman argues, her submission to the authority of her husband.[522] Equally, the hem or veil was also used to symbolically finalise a divorce. Breneman notes that '…in all Nuzi divorce documents …' for example, the terms *sissiktu batâqu* 'I have torn off her veil' are used to describe the ritual end

[515]Ibid; Jacob Milgrom, "Of Hem and Tassels: Rank, Authority and Holiness", *BAR 9:03*, May/June (1983): 63, https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/9/3/3. In Numbers 5:37-41 aspects of social and personal identity are displayed with through *kānāp*. Here, Moses is commanded to instruct the Israelites to hang tassels from the corners of their garments and attach blue cord to the hem. The tassels were an extension of the man's hem and this sartorial feature acted as a reminder to observe the commandments, and, due to the makeup of the tassels as a mix of flax and wool (a mix reserved for high priest garments only which was forbidden in every other context), also allowed every man to have a connection to the temple. It further denoted a clear display of belonging at the meeting point of social and personal identity for men, the hem. For more, see Milgrom, "Of Hem and Tassels: Rank, Authority and Holiness", 61-65. See also Paul A Kruger, "The Hem of the Garment in Marriage: The Meaning of the Symbolic Gesture in Ruth 3:9 and Ezekiel 16:8" *JNSL12*, (1986), 79-86; Paul A Kruger, "The Symbolic Significance of the Hem (*kānāp*) in 1 Samuel 15:27"; *Text and Context: Old Testament Semitic Studies for F C Fensham* ed. Walter T Classen, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988) 105-116; Paul A Kruger, "Rites of Passage Relating to Marriage and Divorce in the Hebrew Bible" *JNSWL 21* (1995), 61-81.

[516]Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327.

[517] Edward L Greenstein, "'To Grasp the Hem' in Ugaritic Literature", *Vetus Testamentum 32*, Fsc. 2, April (1982): 217 – 218.

[518] J Mervin Breneman, *Nuzi Marriage Tablets*, (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1971), 259. The garment and/or hem could also act as proxy for the owner, as in the case of the Assyrian king who sent his cloak in lieu of himself '…when he was indisposed'. Breniquet, "Function and Use of Textiles", 14.

[519]J M Munn-Rankin, "Diplomacy in Western Asia in the Second Millennium BCE", *Iraq* 18, No.1, Spring (1956), 92.

[520]Breniquet, "Functions and Uses of Textiles in the Ancient Near East", 14.

[521] *Sissiktu* could also be tied to create a marriage – a literal tying of the knot. *CAD* 15, s.v. "*sissiktu*".

[522]A Viberg, *Symbols of Law: A Contextual Analysis of Legal Symbolic Acts in the Old Testament*, (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell International, 1992), 138-144; Donald J Wiseman, "Abban and Alalaḫ", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies 12*, No 4, (1958), 129.

of the divorce act.[523] In Hittite records we find a similar example, where *kusisi* (a garment synonymous with the *kusîtu*) with the hem *kureššar* (synonymous with *sissiktu* and other hems), is well attested, with the same purpose of expressing marital relations.[524] The relationship between covering a woman with a man's *sissiktu* is so entrenched in social practice, that *sissiktu* can be translated simply as 'veil' in contexts where a woman is wearing the hem or having the hem removed (i.e: divorce).[525] The transition between social and sexual identities experienced by women as they are veiled with a man's hem, is a significant element of the practice of veiling. Moreover, the multiple synonyms and widespread usage of hems as symbolic sartorial elements, all testify that the hem served as an important dress indicator of identity and power relations.[526]

Two other veils, *nahlaptum* and *šitrum* both also occur in relation to *paršigū* and *kusîtu*.[527] *Nahlaptum* is referred to in OA texts with the logogram *túg-bar-dul*, just like *kusîtu* and *paršigū.*[528] *Nahlaptum* and *šitrum* also appear to be synonymous and are both used together and interchangeably in OA trade sources.[529] *Nahlaptum* occurs frequently as personal property and occasionally as part of trade. The garment is part of a full set of women's clothes – but is not the dress item she wears to fully cover her body, or her 'clothes', as *ṣubātum*, the generic term for clothes is mentioned in conjunction with *nahlaptum*, thus the two are worn together.[530] Further, *nahlaptum* is attested to in a marriage contract, where if the wife, 'misbehaves', she is stripped of her *ṣubātum* and her *nahlaptum.*[531] This mirrors the

[523]*CAD* 15, s.v. "*sissiktu*"; J Mervin Breneman, *Nuzi Marriage Tablets*, (PhD diss., Brandeis University, 1971).
[524]*CAD* 15, s.v. "*sissiktu*"; Goetze, "The Priestly Dress of the Hittite Kings", 178-179.
[525]Breneman, *Nuzi Marriage Tablets*, 259; Breniquet, "Functions and Uses of Textiles in the Ancient Near East", 14.
[526]Ibid. More recently, Terri-lynn Tanaka has further extended this discussion on hem types, including many of those listed here, with a particular focus on social identification through hem use. See Tanaka, "Dress and Identity in Old Babylonian Texts", passim.
[527]*CAD* 11, part I, s.v. "*nahlaptum"*; *CAD* 17, part II, s.v. *šitrum.*
[528]Ibid.
[529]Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 228-229; 236-237; 243.
[530] Ibid., 236-237.
[531] Ibid.

punishment found in law codes from the ANE for married women who are, depending on the cultural context, either accused or found guilty of adultery.[532]

Šitrum is sometimes taken to be a woman's undergarment.[533] However, it has also been identified as likely being a woman's veil - and contextually, in Assyrian documents, it certainly appears to be an external veil-garment.[534] *Šitrum* was made of wool, though there is no indication that *šitrum* was exclusively made of excellent quality wool, and appears instead to be sometimes made of high quality cloth and other times made of cheaper cloth, with cost of purchase reflecting this.[535] *Šitrum* appears to be daily wear that serves the purpose of covering or, is used to cover when travelling.[536] Michel and Veenhof note that *šitrum* could, given the variance in be purchased relatively cheaply if needed and further, that in one text attests to *šitrum* is attested to as being tied to a woman's slave –girl.[537] Though the exact reason for this is not clear, given the nature of *šitrum* as a garment denoting ownership, this act was perhaps as a signal that the girl was owned by the owner of the *šitrum*.[538] Related to the Hebrew *sātar*, a verb meaning 'to cover', *šitrum* occurs similarly to *nahlaptum* in context with *ṣubātum* as the full attire of a woman. For example, Michel and Veenhof note that a woman is given *šitrum* as a gift, 'I invited S and his wife and I gave him a fine *kutānum* and his wife a fine *šitrum* of *kutānu*-cloth.'[539] In another attestation, brothers gave their sister a *šitrum* with a *ṣubātum* - a

[532] Such as Hittite Nesilim Laws and MAL which will be examined presently. Veenhof and Michel note that while *šitrum* is a gendered garment, there is some evidence that *nahlaptum* could be worn by men. Given the attestations listed here, it is still reasonable to determine that *nahlaptum* made up part of a woman's dress; one can suppose that the use of part of a man's garment to veil a (for example *sissiktu*) to denote appurtenance may well extend to *nahlaptum.* This requires further research and is supposition. Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 262-263.
[533] *CAD* 11, part I, s.v. "*nahlaptum".*
[534]HUCA 27 (1956) cited in Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 243.
[535] Comparable costs of barley to textiles indicate that *šitrum* was sometimes expensive and sometimes less costly, likely due to the weave and quality of the cloth used to produce it. Frederick M Fales, "Prices in Neo-Assyrian Sources", *State Archives of Assyria Bulletin X*, 1 (1996), http://www.helsinki.fi/science/saa/10.1%2003%20Fales.pdf. See for comparison to barley through shekels. Comparatively, 1 shekel would buy 1 *sutu* of barley. A *sutu* was a standard vessel for carrying barley.
[536] Michel and Veenhof, "The Textiles Traded by the Assyrians", 243.
[537] Ibid.
[538]Ibid.
[539]Ibid.

full set of clothing.[540] *Šitrum* is also mentioned in context with both *nahlaptum* and *paršigū*, where 4 shekels would buy you both *šitrum* and *nahlaptum*, and *šitrum* and *paršigū* are referred to as interchangeable.[541]

From the preceding list, it is clear there were numerous idiosyncratic veil-garments which varied in size and shape and are indicative of a widespread veiling practice.[542] There were many variations between these veil types; and in the social and cultural milieu in which they were worn, people would have been able to differentiate between, for example, the *paršigū* and *kulūlu.* There are also in some cases, clear indications of similar usage or similar design between these veils. With this in mind, in the next section, the ideological undercurrents of patriarchal bodily control behind the practice of veiling, the identity information coded into the veil, veiling as a form of beautification and veiling as a lived experience by the women will be expanded on and investigated.

The basis of veiling in the ANE is patriarchal bodily control and organisation of women based on their social and sexual status. While El Guindi rightly cautions against sweeping categorisation of veiling as an example of patriarchal oppression in all incarnations of the practice,[543] veiling in the ANE was nonetheless an 'imposition of male dominance' and infringement of women's freedom of movement.[544] This is evident in legislated records, in particular the MAL, which provides a wealth of information about veiling as a patriarchal practice regulating women's bodies and the construction, display of and transition between women's social roles and identities.

[540]Ibid.
[541]Ibid.
[542] El Guindi, *Veil,* 3.
[543] Ibid.
[544] Philip Nel, "The Sexual Politics of the Head: The Legal History of the Veil", *Acta Academia Supplementum 1* (2002): 39-62, esp. 40; Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 122.

Dating to approximately 1250 BCE, MAL is a '…a mixed collection of Old Babylonian, Amorite customary law, and decrees of Assyrian kings' which contains '…commentary on, additions to, and amendments of earlier laws about various subjects, written and collected by jurists and legal scholars, edited and promulgated by the King.'[545] As Van der Toorn observes, although some commentators have indicated that the practice of Assyrian veiling as it is described in MAL was '…a local and temporary ordinance with no general applicability…nothing indicates that this was so.'[546] The extent to which the regulations on veiling were implemented and practiced in daily life most likely varied throughout the Empire. However, the very need to have laws about veiling demonstrates that social and bodily control of women was an important aspect of Assyrian society.

The MAL has two laws defining which women must and must not veil when in public spaces, 'the street' and 'the mountains'.[547] In laws 40 – 41 'Wives of *Assyrian men*…[widows]…[Assyrian women]…' must not go into the street with their heads uncovered.[548] Also, 'The daughters of *Assyrian men*…whether it is a shawl or a robe or [a mantle], must veil themselves…'.[549] As well as these women, 'a concubine who goes out onto the street with her mistress must veil herself. A *qadištu* whom a man married must veil herself on the street…'.[550] There is also a clear stipulation that allows a man to choose to veil a woman

[545]Elisabeth Meier Tetlow, *Women, Crime and Punishment in Ancient Law and Society: Volume 1 The Ancient Near East,* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 126; Theophile J Meek (trans.), "The Middle Assyrian Laws", in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (ANET),* ed. James B Pritchard, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969), 180-188.

[546] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 329. Some commentators specifically argue that Babylonian uses of veiling were directly inherited from Assyrian practice. See Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,*148; P J Watson, *Costume of Old Testament Peoples* (London: Batsford, 1987), 47. See also Elisabeth Meier Tetlow, *Women, Crime and Punishment in Ancient Law and Society: Volume 1 The Ancient Near East,* (New York: Continuum, 2004); Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy,* 134; 140. Llewellyn – Jones also argues this of Classical and Hellenistic veiling – though the similarities between ANE veiling and Greek veiling cannot be overlooked: 'Sexual segregation and veiling were ways in which female respectability and male honour could be preserved, since, when women emerged from their homes, they were more often than not circumspectly veiled in an attempt to render them socially, and consequently, sexually, invisible.' See Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,* 122.

[547]Meek, "The Middle Assyrian Laws", 180-188, esp. 183.

[548] Ibid.

[549] Ibid.

[550] Ibid.

who could not, in other circumstances, be veiled – for the specific purposes of transitioning her to be his wife. 'If an *Assyrian man* wishes to veil his concubine, he shall have five (or) six of his neighbours present (and) veil her in their presence (and) say, 'She is my wife', (and) so she becomes his wife.' [551] Certain women, however, were clearly ordered not to be veiled. A *qadištu* that was not married '…must have her head uncovered on the street; she must not veil herself.' Also, 'A *harimtu* (prostitute) must not veil herself; her head must be uncovered,' and 'female slaves must not veil themselves…'.[552] Further, 'A concubine who was not veiled in the presence of the men, whose husband did not say, "she is my wife"; she is still a concubine…', must not be veiled.[553]

Several key pieces of information about the practice of veiling in the ANE are evident from MAL, particularly in terms of identity construction and display, and the regulation of women's bodies through dress. Firstly, to be veiled, a woman's head must be covered. This is evident from the description of the action of veiling – *kakkad* (head) and *pasānu* (veiled) – the verb connected to many veil nouns and verbs, and well entrenched in the veiled-vocabulary of the ANE. To perform the act of veiling, a veil did not have to be one specific garment; in point of fact, three separate garments are named '…whether it is a shawl or a robe or [a mantle]...'.[554] Secondly, the social and sexual identities and statuses of women were constructed and displayed through a veil – specifically for women who were under the direct authority of a man and thus not available for sexual advances.[555] Women who were deemed to be socially lower than those under the familial protection of an Assyrian man must be unveiled.[556] Leonie Archer

[551] Ibid.
[552] Ibid.
[553] Ibid.
[554] Ibid.
[555] Archer, *Her Price is Beyond Rubies*, 212.
[556]Qadēšâ is referred to in Genesis 38. See chapter seven of this study for an in depth discussion on her role in the ANE.

notes that '…apart from signalling to other men that she was a married woman and therefore unapproachable, the veil signified the authority which society vested in the husband.'[557]

The ability to make a visual distinction of women's statuses in public spaces based on their veiled/unveiled heads was so important that misrepresentations in this respect resulted in violent physical punishment or social isolation. Punitive measures for a woman who was not allowed to be veiled and was caught veiled in a public space, included pouring pitch on her head and removing her clothing or having her clothes taken away and her ears cut off.[558] Equally, if a woman who was expected to be veiled was not veiled on the street and was physically and sexually attacked, the blame belonged to her and not to her attacker, as he had no way to distinguish between her and a woman whose body in some way, be it as daughter or wife, belonged to a specific man.[559] Moreover, unless her husband or father intervened and redeemed her by claiming her, the woman could be given to her attacker as he had sexually harmed her.[560]

The MAL clause of redemption by a father or husband is also present in another law code, indicating just how widespread the bodily organization, control and regulation through veiling was in the ancient world.[561] In the Hittite Nesilim Laws, with the earliest copies dating to 1650BCE, a woman accused of adultery could escape the death penalty if her husband publicly reconfirmed her status as wife by covered her head.[562] Laws 197- 198 states

[557] Archer, *Her Price is Beyond Rubies*, 214. See also Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 123-141.
[558] MAL 141 in Meek, "The Middle Assyrian Laws", 183; Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 135.
[559] MAL 141 in Meek, "The Middle Assyrian Laws", 183.
[560] Ibid.
[561] Gwendolyn Leick, *Sex and Eroticism in Mesopotamian Literature*, (Taylor & Francis: London, 2003), 93. Punishment of a similar type is also found in the HB. Numbers 5:18 recounts the trial of a woman accused of adultery. Here, the woman's head is 'uncovered' or 'unbound' and pitch is poured on her head as punishment for is present in a ritual accusation of a woman accused of adultery. See chapter five of this study for more on this 'unveiling'. Also, Martha Roth, "Reading Mesopotamian Law cases PBS5 100: A Question of Filiation," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 44*, No.3 (2001), 247.
[562]Matitiahu Tsevat, "The Husband Veils A Wife (Hittite Laws, Section 197 – 198)", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies 27*, No. 4, Oct., (1975), 235 – 240; E Neufeld, *The Hittite Laws*, (London: Luzac & Co Ltd, 1951), 194; H Hoffner,

> 'If he brings them to the gate of the palace and says, 'My wife shall not die', he does thereby spare his wife's life, but he must also spare the life of her paramour. **Then …having complied with this requirement… he may veil his wife.'**[563]

In this law, the public veiling and declaration by a man re-elevates a woman to the protected status of wife. Unlike MAL, the Hittite Laws go no further into the minutia of veil use, but the use of a veil by a man to reconfirm a woman's status of wife, clearly demonstrates that the veiling was a symbol of appurtenance and a display of social identity, signifying a husband's complete ownership over his wife. Whether she lives or dies relies entirely on his decision; by veiling her he controls her identity, access to her body and her life. She and her body are his accessories and can exist only in relation to him.[564] While the rigid rules evident in MAL and the Hittite laws may not have extended in full to other locales where veiling was practiced, the understanding of women as male appurtenance, control of their bodies and differentiation between them based on their social and sexual status which underpinned veiling certainly did.[565]

The differentiation between women based on their marital, familial and elite social statuses, as well as their transition between these statuses with the use of a veil is a very old and well documented ANE custom. In Sumerian texts, 'covering' (*dul/katāmu*) a woman with

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"The Hittite Laws", in *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor (2nd ed)*, ed. Martha T Roth, (Atlanta: SBL, 1997), 237.

[563] Tsevat, "The Husband Veils A Wife", 235 – 240.

[564] Codex Hammurabi has a similar clause in CH 130 – albeit veiling is not mentioned. If a woman is raped in public, the onus is on her to prove she screamed and resisted. Otherwise, she is herself blamed for the rape. These kinds of cases are settled as property disputes – if it is proved that a man knew a woman belonged to another man, must pay for the woman, to compensate the man for his loss and the damage of his property. See Theophile J Meek, "The Code of Hammurabi", in *ANET*, 3rd Ed, ed. James B Pritchard, (New Jersey: Princeton, 1969), 163-180. In Susanna in the Apocrypha, we find another similar example, with the onus being on Susanna to prove that she resisted her attackers. Here, it is specifically stated that she was not covered and did not cry out, and was thus available for attack. See Susanna, The Apocrypha (NRSV), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[565] Leila Ahmed observes that '…veiling and the confinement of women spread throughout the region and became ordinary social practices, as did the attitudes to women and the human body (shamefulness of body and sexuality) that accompanied such practices'. Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, 17. See also Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 134; 140.

a piece of cloth was a sign of confirming or reconfirming marital relations.[566] Marriage contracts from the OB Period also show numerous examples of veil use for marriage rituals and ceremonies to 'cover the bride'.[567] OB sources also refer to veils in extant records such as dowry/bridal gift records, as well as property settlements, textiles orders for the women of Mari – as we saw in the preceding examples of the veiled-vocabulary, where women requested specific veils required for daily use.[568] In one OB letter from Mari for example, a married woman is instructed to cover her head and leave – showing that married and/or elite women, as MAL indicates, were required to wear veils in public spaces in Western Mesopotamia.[569]

Literary records also provide examples of the relationship between veiling and marriage.[570] In the Epic of Gilgameš, a bride is covered by the 'people's net' or 'family's net' (*pug nisi*) which A R George argues is a reference to a wedding veil.[571] The veil was intrinsically linked with marriage display and many types of veils - including the hem of man's garment and 'little house' veils like *kulūlu* - were used to construct and display a woman's identity as bride and wife.

The veil as a fulcrum of transition between statuses, is also well recorded. Stol points out that before the wedding, a '…girl was covered by her father with a veil which was taken off later by her husband. She is now 'the bride' (*kallātum*) [the Hebrew *kallâ*] and she seems

[566] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328.

[567] S Greengus, "Old Babylonian Marriage Ceremonies and Rites", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies 20*, No. 2, (1966), 55-72; Tsevat, "The Husband Veils A Wife", 237-239.

[568] Tanaka, "Dress and Identity in Old Babylonian Texts", 27-29 and 66-105.

[569]ARM(T) 10 (1978) no. 76: 7-9 in W G Lambert, "A Middle Assyrian Medical Text", *Iraq 31* (1969), 37-39; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328; Niditch also observes that women likely had to wear veils in Western Mesopotamia, but differs from Van der Toorn (who observes this phenomena with more certainty) in that she argues veiling may not have been a widespread practice. Niditch, *My Brother Esau,* 124-129.

[570] Huddlestun specifically notes that the prolific dissemination of veiling practice in literary sources indicates the widespread nature of the practice. Huddleston, "Unveiling the Versions", 47-62.

[571]George notes: '…The only person entitled to unveil the new bride is her bridegroom. The verb *petum* seems eminently suited to such an action…I strongly suspect that the expression *pug nisi* 'people's net' or 'family's net', is a term for the veil itself and that this line refers to the initiation of intimacy by the act of parting the bride's veil.' George, *The Babylonian Gilgameš Vol 1,* 188.

to keep this title until her first child is born…'.[572] The status of *kallātu* (bride/wife/not yet mother) and its Hebrew equivalent *kallâ* (bride/wife/not yet mother but also daughter in law) are also etymologically related to the little house veil *kulūlu*, as well as being linked to other veiling verbs; further indicating the important relationship between being veiled and transitioning between social statuses.[573]

The act of veiling the woman was enough to enact the transition from daughter to wife and from being a member of father's house to a member of husband's household. In another letter from Mari for example, a bride marrying into the royal family of Zimri-Lim is covered in veils, an act which transitions her into the family – no other ceremony is mentioned.[574] Being married was a desired condition for women in ANE. With marriage came the protection and security of family, especially for women from low economic strata. Wearing a veil was a public declaration of that protected status.[575]

The veil in the ANE was also used as a tool of beautification. Although Van der Toorn argues that this aspect of dress usage was not necessarily the express purpose of veils,

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[572] Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 128; Jack Sasson, "Biographical Notices on Some Royal Ladies from Mari", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies 25*, No. 2 (Apr., 1973), 59-78 esp.65.

[573] Van der Toorn , "Significance", 327: Barbeiro, *Song of Songs*, 177.

[574] ARM 26:10 in J N Postgate "On Some Assyrian Ladies", *Iraq 41*, (1979), 89-103, esp. 93-95 cited in Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 127 – 128. Sasson observes that in Assyria the head of a girl was also sometimes anointed with oil before her marriage '...indicating that she has entered a new status...'. Evidence for this also occurs in 1st millennia Ebla and earlier in Amarna, where texts on the marriage of princesses provide the main source material. Sasson notes of the Amarna period, that Egyptian envoys poured oil on the heads of 'destined brides' from Babylon, Arzawa, and Hatti, indicating her change in status. See Sasson, "How Rebekah Found A Spouse", 244-245; Samual A Meier, "Diplomacy and International Marriages," in *Amarna Diplomacy: The Beginnings of International Relations*, ed. Raymond Cohen and Raymond Westbrook, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University, 2000) 168–69; Marten Stol, *Women in the Ancient Near East*, (Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 22 – 28.

[575]For example, in promising to marry a girl from a fatherless family, the groom promises to cover her with 'cloth and hat', and the groom provides this simple dowry himself.' Stol "Women in Mesopotamia", 127. Given the expense of cloth, the groom's promise to 'hat and clothe her' is also a promise to keep her in a protected life, and to maintain her in this role. Postgate and later Stol have noted that the marriage of poor girls were '... to a large extent purchases of poor girls...'. Postgate, "On Some Assyrian Ladies", 94 in Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 127.) A girl of very low status, as Leick notes, '…cannot wear the veil and her vulva is worth nothing.' Leick, *Sex and Eroticism*, 93. Therefore, '…the giving of a dowry was there a luxury of the wealthy…'and providing a dowry which included veils, as seen with records concerning the *paršigū* and *kulūlu* (a veil that a woman would need for the duration of her married life) equated to an elevation in status which was publicly constructed displayed on the surface of the body. Postgate "On Some Assyrian Ladies", 93-95 in Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 127 – 128.

'…women seemingly did not ignore it…'[576] and, while we do not have many extant examples indicating this usage from the wearer's perspective, some extant examples exist of women utilising their veils with the specific intention of beautification. McKay argues that, '…beauty is considered to be considerably enhanced by scent, fine clothes and well-dressed hair and by the effects on both parties of the beholding transaction'.[577] Significantly, she further observes, that the display and construction of beauty included '…cocktail of garments or veils…', which enhanced the beautification of the wearer.[578] The best examples of women's deliberate use of veils as tools of beautification are found in ANE myths and love lyrics related to the goddess Inanna.

In 'The Courtship of Inanna and Dummuzi' for example, in readying herself for marriage, the goddess engages in a number of beautifying acts, such as bathing, oiling and eye painting.[579] The final act of this process is a veil that is thrown over her head.[580] We find a similar beautification procedure, with veiling being the last act, in another Inanna text. In this case, the process is aimed at reconfirming her status as the wife of Dumuzi, and in this act of veiling, Inanna herself places the veil on her own head.[581] In another poem, 'Unfaithfulness', after a period of anger and grief following Dumuzi's unfaithfulness, Inanna returns to her role as wife.[582] She bathes, re-dresses and veils, her veil acting as both as transitional garment between statuses of mourning and wife, but also as part of her re-beautification once her grief

[576] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327.
[577] McKay, "Gendering the Discourse", 193.
[578] Ibid.
[579] Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once… Sumerian Poetry in Translation*, (Yale University Press: London, 1987), 27.
[579] Ibid
[580] In the Courtship of Inanna and Dummuzi, it states: 'I bathed for the wild bull/I bathed for the Sheppard Dummuzi/I perfumed my sides with ointment/...I painted my eyes with kohl...She is clothed with pleasure and love, she is laden with vitality, charm and voluptuousness...At her appearance rejoicing becomes full. She is glorious. Veils are thrown over her head.' Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once*, 27.
[581] Ibid.
[582] Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once*, 27.

has ended.[583] The description of Inanna redressing and beautifying herself in her veil as she transitions back to her previous status, implies Inanna's ownership of the action of beautification through dress. In veiling and re-dressing, Inanna shows cognizant engagement with her veil as a tool of personal beautification and status display.[584] Veils, thus, from a woman's perspective, were also personal beautifying tools endowed with seductive and transitional powers.

From this review of veiling across the ANE, it is evident that the act of veiling was a widespread practice, which related to multiple veil-garments with a diversity of style and type. Veils were used to construct and display women's identities, enforce patriarchal social and sexual roles and bodily organisation of women, allow women to transition between statuses, publicly display their statuses and, finally, also be used as beatification tools reflective of the lived experience of veiling.

[583] The hymn states 'When she had showered in water, [rubbed herself with soap], [When she had showered] in the water of the bright copper ewer, [had rubbed herself] with soap of the shiny stone jar, [had anointed herself] with the stone jar's sweet oil, she clothed herself in the queenly robe, [the robe of the queen]ship [of heaven], her turban cloth [she wound around her head], [put] kohl on her eyes [took] her bright sceptre [in hand]…'. Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once*, 27.

[584]In Classical and Hellenistic Greece, records also indicate that women manipulated their veils for personal expression of emotion, desire, wants and needs. Veiled women articulated and defined their own identities and displayed complex sexual and emotional information, through subtle manipulation of her veil. While veils were prescribed dress in the context of Classical and Hellenistic Greece, how they were used by the wearer was open to some personal interpretation. Llewellyn – Jones observes that '…while working within the confines of this philosophy though, the veiled woman was granted some independence and was allowed a degree of freedom of movement and self-expression, since the veil enabled the woman to comment on her social standing, on her emotions (such as anger and grief and shame) and on her own sexuality.' Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise*, 1. See also D L Cairns, "Anger and the veil in Ancient Greek Culture", *Greece and Rome*, Second Series, Vol 48, No.1, (Apr. 2001): 18 – 31.

5 Dress and veil in the Hebrew Bible

5.1 Dress in the Hebrew Bible

The HB contains references to multiple dress items. These items of dress are mentioned with deliberate specificity, and are used as literary devices that can aid in understanding the identity of the HB characters and the social environment in which the corpus was written. In this chapter, dress as it occurs in the HB will be overviewed, with a particular focus on how the variety of dress is used to construct and display the identities of HB characters and the people they represent. This chapter will also explore the presence of women's veils in the HB, as a prelude to the analysis on their use by Rebekah in Genesis 24, Tamar in Genesis 38 and finally, Ruth in the Book of Ruth.

As demonstrated in the previous chapters, dress as it is referred to in the HB had a lived cultural presence in the real world of the ANE – and it concurs with how it was used in that wider context. Biblical dress imagery can be stylised and embellished for the exaggeration of character traits, to indicate symbolic and figurative meaning as well as to show the construction and display of identity. While biblical dress is a literary construct, it nevertheless provides the reader with a snapshot of the lived experiences of dressing. As Heather McKay argues, there is no need for a separation between real life dress and Biblical reference to dress, as the '…objects described in texts have effects on readers in similar ways to the effects exerted by the same items in real life, because the meanings ascribed to different styles and grades of opulence of clothing have been learned in real life.' [585] What a Biblical character is depicted as wearing and the markers of identity coded in their clothing thus reflect real dress practice.[586]

[585] McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man", 85.
[586]Some biblical dress may have also had purely semiotic value; though, in order to be an understand symbol or imagery of an abstract idea or concept, these dress items would still have had a lived currency for real life people. See Winkle, "Clothes Make the (One like a Son of) Man", 80; Tanaka, "Dress and Identity in Old Babylonian Texts", 27-29.

Specific types of dress, the fabric used to make dress items, as well as the colours, styles and uses of these many forms of dress, are all referred to frequently and deliberately in the HB. Categorical terms such as *beged,* often translated simply as 'clothing' are mentioned throughout the corpus; so too the more specific but still generic 'clothes' such as the non-gendered *simlâ,* 'a tunic' worn by men and women, synonymous with the Akkadian *ṣubātu.*[587] Intricately fashioned garments such as *ketulâ,* the hem of which (*kānāp*) – as previously discussed in Chapter Four of this study in the context of *sissiktu* hem – indicated multitudes of personal and social identity information about the wearer, are also referred to.[588] There are other garments with specified uses such as *ketonet*, a form of under garment and *me'il*, an 'over-tunic'.[589] As with other textual examples from the broader ANE, there is also a wide selection of colour terms for textiles and dying found throughout the HB – greens, reds, whites, browns and blues – all used for specific types of dress.[590] Strict rules, the laws of *ša'atnēz* concerning fabric type are also referred to, with Leviticus 19:19 mentioning that two kinds of material should not be used to weave thread to make garments, and Deuteronomy 22:11 specifically stating that textiles of mixed variety (linen and wool), should not be used to make the dress of the Israelites.[591] These classifiers in conjunction with the multiplicity of dress items indicate that the wardrobe of the ancient Israelites was varietal and multifaceted.

[587]Batten, "Clothing and Adornment", 150-153; *BDB,* s.v. "beged". Beged is found in 217 contexts. *Beged*, when used to describe women's clothes can have connotations of treachery and betrayal, which is not found with men's usage. Women, it seems, are assumed to behave treacherously, or to metaphorically 'be clothed' in deceit; McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man", 94. *BDB,* s.v. "simlâ", (8071).
[588]Milgrom, "Of Hem and Tassels" 63. .
[589] McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man", 94.
[590]For a thorough catalogue of HB textiles colour terms, see Brenner, *Colour Terms in the Old Testament*, 143-150; See also Athalya Brenner, "On Color and the Sacred in the Hebrew Bible," in *The Language of Colour in the Mediterranean: An Anthology on Linguistic and Ethnographic Aspects of Colour Terms*, ed. Alexander Borg, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis: Stockholm Oriental Studies 16 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1999), 204.
[591] Leviticus 19:19 and Deuteronomy 22:11. See Orit Shamir, "Two Special Traditions in Jewish Garments and the Rarity of Mixing Wool and Linen Threads in the Land of Israel", in *Prehistoric, Ancient Near Eastern and Aegean Textiles and Dress: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. Mary Harlow, Cecile Michel and M L Nosch, (Oxford: Oxbow, 2014), 297.

Dress is also responsible for delivering important social and cultural information about HB characters; and this is deliberate and intentional.[592] Both Jopie Siebert-Hommes and McKay have argued that multitudes of identity information is conveyed about a character in Biblical texts with the mention of their dress items, in order to add meaning and emphasis to the text itself. [593] Gender, social status and role-related identity are all indicated, as well as personal and group identity; all with the mention of a specific item worn by the character. Gendered dress, for example, is so significant, that it is explicitly listed as a distinct requirement for both men and women. In Deuteronomy 22:5 we find that

> A woman shall not wear a man's apparel, nor shall a man put on women's garments, for whoever does such things is abhorrent to the LORD your God (Deut 22:5 NRSV)

Klî-geber is named here as men's clothing, describing a sartorially fashioned gendered garment and *simlâ 'išâ* describing women's dress in generic terms. Thus, these garments place the wearer into one or the other gendered category. What we can also learn from this verse is that men are privileged over women. *Klî-geber,* with its specific cut, occurs first in the verse, while women's clothes come second and are just generic.

Though women's dress in Deuteronomy uses generic terms for woman (*'išâ*) and dress (*simlâ*), the HB also mentions a wide variety of women's clothing worn to indicate specifically female social roles and identities. Widow, harlot, wife and daughter, which are indicative of social and sexual statuses, are all, as McKay argues, '…distinguished in HB texts by means of clothing,'[594] Widows, for example, are referred to as wearing *'alamānâ beged,* 'widow's clothing' which signifies the wearer as belonging to this role.[595]

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[592]Swartz previously noted this, arguing that dress as a material object, more than any other, is highly significant in delivering social and cultural information about HB characters within the contexts of their stories. RA Schwartz, "Uncovering the Secret Vice: Toward an Anthology of Clothing," in *The Fabrics of Culture: The Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, J M Cordwell and R A Schwartz, (The Hague: Mouton, 1979), 24-25 cited in Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing", 25.

[593]Siebert-Hommes, "'On the Third Day Esther Put on Her Queen's Robes", Introductory paragraph; McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man", 93.

[594] McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man," 100.

[595] Reference to widow's garments - *'alamānâ beged* – occurs in several verses in the HB, including Genesis 38:14; 19. For more on this reference see Chapter Seven of this study.

Men's gendered roles are not as rigidly based on their sexual statuses, as it is the case with women; but they are also distinguishable via dress. Masculine dress is associated with public roles, with, for example, the High Priest wearing gender specific garments which both gender the wearer and indicate that role.[596] Specific garments '…of glory and beauty…' were worn, such as girdles, ephods, robes, and turbans.[597] Such garments had the duel effect of role-related identity display, and the construction of 'maleness'.[598] Differentiation concerning social status and role-related identity are also conveyed through dress in the HB. For example, the wearing of sackcloth, a gender-neutral garment of low quality, displays low status. Overall, as Winkle notes, '…one cannot completely understand the character, status, and overall identity of an ancient individual if one purposefully downplays or excludes references to that individual's dress.'[599] Dress is mentioned with specificity, at length and with detail – indicating the intentional importance to identity construction dress has in the HB.[600]

The dress of HB characters is also a literary plot device into which issues of lineage and power are '…woven into clothing.'[601] Through dress language, identities are negotiated and asserted and power struggles are navigated within the context of the story. In point of fact, Roy R Jeal argues that HB dress specifically functions as a symbolic language, a 'rhetoric of clothing' where identity information is symbolically negotiated and constructed as a form of propaganda in order to force change by the characters for themselves and for Israelite history, but also to conform to a particular ideology.[602] Changes in clothing and dress items '…function to bring about intellectual and social change. Body and clothing together become a symbolic

[596]Vearncombe, "Adorning the Protagonist",121; Winkle describes these garments of the High Priest in Revelations, though it is conceptually relevant to dress in the HB. He argues that Jesus is dressed as a High Priest in Revelations, in a specific and intentional link to High Priestly dress and identity as it is described in the HB.
[597] Winkle, "Clothes Make the (One like a Son of) Man", 89; Mc Kay "Clothes maketh the (wo)man," 100.
[598] Ibid.
[599] Ibid.
[600]Siebert-Hommes, "'On the Third Day Esther Put on Her Queen's Robes'", Introductory paragraph; McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man," 94-99.
[601]Silverman, *Jewish Dress*, 1.
[602] Jeal, "Clothes Make the (Wo)man", 686.

system by means of which life becomes reconfigured and culture becomes altered. The goal of this rhetoric is…to bring about change that leads, eventually, to conformity to a particular ideology and way of life.'[603] For example, in the story of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 27 Jacob impersonates his brother by wearing his clothes, thus fooling their blind father Isaac into giving Jacob the gift of the firstborn. This event changes the course of Israelite lineage and history, and occurs through the use of dress as a device enabling identity theft.[604] In Genesis 37, Joseph's technicolour coat, a symbol of his father's love for him (and a symbol of Joseph himself), is soaked with goat's blood by his jealous brothers.[605] Coat and man are synonymous, thus Joseph is believed dead with the presentation of his bloody coat. This again changes the course of Israelite history.[606]

In conclusion, dress is referred to frequently and purposefully in the HB. It is integral to the narrative and it is a crucial and indispensable element of plot which often subtly indicates construction, articulation and changes of identity. [607]

5.2 Veil in the Hebrew Bible

In the HB, there are numerous references to veils worn by women including *ṣā'îp*, *miṭpaḥat*, *ṣammâ and radîd*, and *kānāp*. There are also many verbs which describe the action of veiling, including '*ālap 'āṭâ 'ātap, cāsâ*, and *pāras,* all of which illustrate how these and other veils would have been worn. There are also types of veil which are harder to define and classify – such as *ra'ālâ, sādîn, šābîs, qĭšŭr, p'ēr, ṣānîp,* and *ma'ăṭāpâ.* These veils, are often

[603] Ibid., 686; See also Neufeld, "The Rhetoric of the Body, Clothing and Identity" 679-684; Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing", 36.
[604]Susan Niditch has written extensively on this story, in particular about the role of hair and dress in identity portrayal. See Niditch, *My Brother Esau*, passim.
[605] Genesis 37:31
[606] In the Book of Judith 10:3 in LXX, Judith, through her strategic dressing alters and propels the outcome of her story and of Israelite history. She is presented as wearing widow's dress, and only changes to 'her festive attire' in aid of her people, when she seduces (and murders) the leader of the Assyrian army. In this case dress served as an identity changer, from being a widow to a maiden. See Vearncombe, "Adorning the Protagonist", 121.
[607] McKay, "Gendering the Discourse of Display", 179-183; McKay, "Clothes maketh the (wo)man", 84.

mentioned just once, are from unused verbal roots or their meaning is disputed by scholars for a variety of reasons. In this section, we will consider references to veils and veiling in the HB, many of which are not the focus of our three analytical chapters. Nevertheless, how these veils are used within their contexts can still help us to better understand the way veils in general were utilised in real life and thus, better inform a reading of our focal texts. Significantly, what separates the following examples of veiling from Genesis 24, Genesis 38 and Ruth is not necessarily the types of veil they use or how they use them; Ruth, for example, wears the same type of veil of the Daughters of Zion in Isaiah 3's list. Rather, the difference is that the women in the following texts are described as veiled from the perspective of an external onlooker. As it shall be seen, that perspective is different for Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth.

We begin this exploration with Song of Songs (hereafter SoS).[608] Generally considered to be a collection of poems, waṣf or wedding songs, the central female figure in this HB book, the Shulamite, is described as veiled at various points throughout the collection.[609] As SoS is made up of a collection of verse, Brenner posits that the very nature of such a collection shows us as readers a variety of different perspectives.[610] We therefore catch fleeting details about the characters – and their dress - that are designed to evoke emotion but not necessarily to give a clear, clinical picture of the person and what they look like. She argues that

> 'No realistic picture is actually obtained through the description: by the poem's end we still have no idea what the loved person looks like, in the sense that no coherent… image is communicated…the details given are primarily designed not to supply a snapshot… but to involve the listener or reader's senses and emotions…those details presumably reflect the heightened emotional state of the assumed speaker.'[611]

Further, while women's voices are heard more often in SoS than men's voices, we do not have a clear example of the Shulamite's engagement in her own choice making in terms of

[608] This abbreviation follows Brenner. See, Brenner, *I Am,* 163.
[609] Fox, *Song of Songs,* 5; Falk, *The Song of Songs,* 4.
[610] Brenner, *I Am,* 166.
[611] Ibid.

her dress, even though she is also described as veiled more times than any other Biblical woman.[612] When it comes to her veiling, we only catch glimpses of the Shulamite and her veiled experience from the perspective of onlookers and not from her perspective as an active, dressed social participant. Nevertheless, SoS still provides a valuable source from which to learn about individual veils as part of the broader HB veiled-vocabulary and the practice of veiling and unveiling more broadly.

There are five literal references to veiling and five other references which use metaphoric or abstract language which allude to the Shulamite being veiled. Of the literal references, three (SoS 4:1, 4:3 and 6:7) refer to the same veil *ṣammâ* being worn by the Shulamite, SoS 1:7 mentions the verb *ʿāṭâ* to describe the action of veiling and 5:7 mentions another type of veil, *radîd*. The five allusions to veiling occur in 4:12, 6:8, 7:13 8:9 and 8:10, where the Shulamite is described as 'walled' (4:12) and her beauty is 'a garden concealed' (6:8). In 7:13 she is 'covering for him' and in 8:9 the chorus of women describes a betrothed or married Shulamite as 'constricted'. Finally, in 8:10, the Shulamite is again described as being 'walled'. Since no specific veil type can be determined from these verses these allusions will not be explored further. The focus will be on the direct veiling references.

The most commonly referred to veil in SoS is *ṣammâ* which occurs in 4:1, 4:3, 6:7, and intertextually in Isaiah 47:2. Brown Driver and Briggs (hereafter BDB) and Strong define *ṣammâ* as 'a woman's veil' with Strong further observing that the noun originates from an unused verbal root meaning 'to fasten on'[613] and BDB identifying the verbal root of *ṣammâ* as *ṣammam*, equivalent to the Arabic 'draw together' or 'bandage'[614] The Dictionary of Classical

[612] Ibid.
[613]James Strong, *Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), s.v. "ṣammâ".
[614] BDB, s.v. "ṣammâ".

Hebrew Dictionary (DCH) also defines *ṣammâ* as 'veil'[615] and Van der Toorn specifically categorises *ṣammâ* as 'one of the principal Hebrew terms which refers to the veil' - the other being *ṣā'îp* in Genesis 24 and 38.[616]

Translators and commentators alike have had difficulty rendering and defining *ṣammâ,* and this noun is a clear example of the broader issue of classifying, identifying and translating veil terms as items of dress which was discussed in Chapter Two of this study.[617] Scholars including Ariel and Chana Bloch, as well as Reinhart Ceulemans and Dries De Crom, for example, classify *ṣammâ* as something other than veil – either hair or 'silence'.[618] Ceulemans and De Crom observe that *ṣammâ* was taken by the LXX to be 'silence' or 'without thy silence', with the similar Arabic word meaning 'besides the beauty of thy silence' also being used for *ṣammâ* – hence their assertion that *ṣammâ* must not be a literal garment.[619] They note that in LXX's literalness of translation, the Greek word *kalumma* would have been used for *ṣammâ* if the term denoted a literal veil-garment.[620] *Kalumma* was a common veil in Hellenistic Greece and is derived from the verb *kalupto* 'to cover'.[621] However, *kalumma* is not an easy and literal translation for *ṣammāh*. [622] Homeric usage shows us that the *kalumma* veil was black in colour and likely used for mourning – and, in the context of SoS, *ṣammâ* is certainly not a mourning veil.[623] In later attestations *kalumma* may have been a bridal veil, however, not enough details remain about this veil for interpreters to confidently differentiate it from other, similar

[615] *DCH* 7, s.v. "ṣammâ".
[616] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328.
[617] Pope, *Song of Songs,* 457.
[618] Bloch and Bloch, *The Song of Songs,* 166-167; Ceulemans & De Crom, "Greek Renderings of the Hebrew Lexeme צמה," 515.
[619] Ceulemans & De Crom, "Greek Renderings of the Hebrew Lexeme צמה," 515.
[620] Ibid.
[621] Llewellyn - Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,*.28
[622] Ibid. Note also that this term also relates to the word 'apocalypse' or 'revelation' = 'unveiling'. In Isaiah 47:2, this connection does not go unnoticed and the 'revelation' of Babylon personified as an unfaithful woman, as her head is stripped and made bare.
[623] Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,* 32-33.

garments.[624] That *kalumma* and *ṣammâ* are not automatically synonymous, however, does not mean that *ṣammâ* is not a veil garment.

Other commentators, especially Weitzman, observe that while the Peshitta, like LXX, also renders the word *ṣammâ* as 'behind your silence' rather than 'veil' or 'behind your veil', Midrash uses the Aramaic *ṣĕmam* and *ṣamṣēm* for *ṣammâ* both occurring in relation to veiling the face.[625] Indeed, Pope and later Weitzman convincingly argue that the Peshitta translator simply continued the error of translation made by the LXX, and that the correct reading of the Hebrew should be *ṣammâ* (veil) and not *ṣammāt* (to be silent).[626] More recently, commentators such as Van der Toorn, Garrett, House and Barbiero have clearly classified *ṣammâ* as a '…not disputed…' type of veil.[627] *Ṣammâ,* thus, though a difficult term to translate and classify, can be considered a specific type of veil.

The contexts in which *ṣammâ* occurs in SoS tell us more about the type and style of this veil. SoS 4:1, 3 and 6:7 all suggest that parts of a woman's body would still have been visible – and describable – to onlookers, even though she is veiled. In SoS 4:1, 3 *ṣammâ* is part of the description of the woman's beauty by her future husband. 4:1 states:

> How beautiful you are, my love, how very beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your **veil** ***(ṣammāh)***. Your hair is like a flock of goats moving down the slopes of Gilead (SoS 4:1 NRSV)

4:3 states

> Your lips are like a crimson thread, and your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your **veil (*ṣammâ)*** (SoS 4:3 NRSV).

In 6:7, *ṣammâ* is used in a similar descriptive tone, and in part mirrors the waṣf containing 4:1,3.[628] SoS 6:7 states:

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[624] Ibid.
[625] Pope, *Song of Songs,* 457.
[626] Weitzman, *The Syriac version of the Old Testament,* 7, 76; Pope, *Song of Songs,* 457.
[627]Barbiero, *Song of Songs,*177; 276; Garrett and House, *Song of Songs/Lamentations,* 188; Weitzman, *The Syriac version of the Old Testament,* 7; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328.
[628] Brenner and van Dijk-Hemmes, *On Gendering Texts,* 81.

Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil **(*ṣammâ*)** (SoS 6:7 NRSV)

These references tell us a lot about what *ṣammâ* may have been designed, and how women would have worn it. The verbal root indicates that *ṣammâ* was a large, encompassing veil capable of surrounding the wearer, but we see from SoS 4:1, 3 and 6:7 that the Shulamite's physical features are visible enough to be highlighted and described while she is veiled. Therefore, *ṣammâ* may have been a large veil, but could have been made of very fine, light material, possible near translucent – as noted by some commentators such as Fox.[629] We also know that the Shulamite dances while she wears *ṣammâ* and as such, *ṣammâ* may have completely surrounded the Shulamite, but was not worn so tightly worn against her body that it restricted her movement. [630]

Moreover, *ṣammâ* in SoS is also connected to the construction and display of the Shulamite's identity. In 4:10 she is described as *kallâ* while veiled. *Kallâ* or bride-daughter in law (not yet a mother) is well attested to across the ANE and being veiled displays this identity. In Genesis 38, for example, Tamar veils herself as *kallâ,* which we will see in Chapter Seven of this study.[631] Intertextually, the only other reference to *ṣammâ* is in Isaiah 47:2-3 which also indicates that wearing *ṣammâ* is a marker of high status. In Isaiah 47, *ṣammâ* is described as being removed from the personification of Babylon as the Queen of Kingdoms (the goddess Ishtar) and the city's fall from grace. Here, Babylon is recast as the unveiled, stripped naked prostitute no longer allowed to wear *ṣammâ* as her status does not mirrors that of a woman of significance. *Ṣammâ* was a veil which indicated the high social status of the wearer – so much so that just as the Shulamite is described as resplendent and is glorified under her *ṣammâ*, Babylon is shamed by removing this status symbol.

[629] Fox, *Song of Songs*, 146.
[630] Brenner *I Am*, 165.
[631] See Chapter Four, Six, Seven and Eight of this study.

Thus, from SoS we can decipher much about the veil *ṣammâ* and about how it would have been worn. In SoS 4:1, 4:3 and 6:7, we glimpse examples of Van der Toorn's assertion that veiling was utilised as a tool of beautification and of seduction.[632] The Shulamite is viewed from the perspective of her lover's gaze and is described as a celebration of both physical beauty and seduction – designed in the context of this literary genre, to spark an emotive response in the reader. While we do not have information describing the Shulamite's perspective of this seductive veil use, we nonetheless find parallels with HB veiling texts where the veil is used for seduction and beautification. For example, in Genesis 38, as we will see, Tamar is veiled in a seductive manner which highlights her body and obscures her personal identity.

In Songs 1:7, we find another reference to veiling. While there is no specific veil-garment named in this verse, the verb *'āṭâ* describes the wearing of a veil.[633] SoS 1:7 states:

> Tell me, you whom my soul loves, where you pasture your flock, where you make it lie down at noon; for why should I be like one who is **veiled** (***'āṭâ***) beside the flocks of your companions? (SoS 1:7 NRSV)

The word *'āṭâ* is defined by BDB as 'wrap oneself, enwrap or envelop oneself' and Strong defines *'āṭâ* as 'to wrap, cover, veil or clothe'.[634] BDB compares *'āṭâ* to the Arabic 'cover, conceal' or Aramaic 'extinguish, destroy' – with the implication being that the woman who is *'āṭâ* is utterly concealed.[635] The Assyrian *eṭû* 'be dark' and *eṭûtu* 'darkness' are related to *'āṭâ* and occur in the context of describing literal night time or figurative emotional darkness.[636]

There is, as with many veil terms, some contention surrounding the definition of *'āṭâ*. Emerton for example, does not classify *'āṭâ* as 'veiled' with a garment, as in his view, garments

[632] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 339.
[633] BDB, s.v. "'āṭâ".
[634] Strong's, s.v. "'āṭâ".
[635] BDB, s.v. "'āṭâ".
[636] *CAD* 4, s.v. "eṭû"; *CAD* 4, s.v. "eṭûtu".

cannot be both wrapped and wound at the same time.[637] He further argues that instead of a veil, 'picking lice from a cloak' can be meant by *'āṭâ*.[638] Driver had earlier posited the same, noting that picking lice was a common activity and that if the Shulamite was not told where her lover was, she would be standing like one 'picking lice' - that is, she will be left twiddling her thumbs or idling away her time, waiting for her lover's return.[639] Exum rejects Emerton's interpretation of *'āṭâ* as 'picking lice' noting that if lice are present, surely the lover of the woman is unkempt and thus undesirable[640] – a problematic interpretation which suggests that lice were not a common problem for the kempt and unkempt alike in the ancient world. Exum translates *'āṭâ* as 'one who wanders' in line with the Vulgate, Syriac and Symmuchus.[641] Kingsmill concurs with Exum and further argues that the term is unlikely to indicate a veil as the woman would have no need for a disguise, further noting that the veil is the dress of a prostitute.[642] Conversely, Pope and more contemporary scholars including Stadelmann, Garett and House and Barbiero all render *'āṭâ* as 'veiled.[643]

Despite the quite interesting debate about the Shulamite and *'āṭâ*, other uses of *'āṭâ* in the HB all point to a translation of the verb as 'veiled'. For example, some refer to the specific wrapping and covering with a garment, such as 1Samuel 28:14 where a man is 'wrapped with a robe' and Jeremiah 43:12 where it occurs as 'wrapped with garments'.[644] Further, *'āṭâ* is similar to other verbs which mean 'to cover, veil', including *ālap* and *'ātap;*[645] *ālap* is used in Genesis 38 to indicate one of the ways Tamar veils with her veil *ṣā'îp*, while *'āṭap* is found in Psalms 73:6, and describes a woman (sometimes taken as a prostitute, but more likely to be

[637] Emerton, "Lice or Veil?", 137-138.
[638] Ibid.
[639] Driver, *The Book of Genesis,* 277.
[640] Exum, *Song of Songs,* 99; 107.
[641] Ibid.
[642] Kingsmill, *The Song of Songs,* 230
[643] Stadlemann, *Love and Politics,* 38- 41; Garrett and House, *Song of Songs/Lamentations*, 188; Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 66.
[644] 1 Samuel 28:14 (NRSV).
[645] BDB, s.v. "'āṭap".

woman that had more liberty with regards to sex).[646] Here, she is covered or veiled *(ʻāṭap*) with the garment *šît*.[647] The noun which is derived from *ʻātap, maʻăṭāpâ* is defined as 'a garment' and occurs on Isaiah 3's list of finery for women – which includes numerous veil-garments.[648] In point of fact, *maʻăṭāpâ* occurs in the same verse (Isaiah 3:22) as another veil-garment *miṭpaḥat*. In the Book of Ruth, Ruth brings her *miṭpaḥat* to the threshing floor and wears the veil home once it has been filled with the bride price of barley from Boaz. These contextual links to other feminine veils, such as *maʻăṭāpâ* is a more than clear indication that the Shulamite is veiled (*ʻāṭâ)* in Songs 1:7.

Finally, in SoS 5:7 there is also *radîd* which the Shulamite says was forcibly removed from her while she searched for her lover.[649] This veil is defined by BDB as 'wide wrapper, large veil', with Strong further defining the garment as 'an expanding veil'. [650] The verbal root of *radîd* is *radad* means 'to subdue, to overlay,' suggesting that this veil was capable of completely surrounding and covering the wearer. [651] The *radîd* is also mentioned in Isaiah 3 and again in the context of removal. Yet while no one disputes that Isaiah's *radîd* was a veil, the mention of *radîd* in SoS 5:7 is a point of contention for interpreters.

Commentators suggest that the forced removal of *radîd* could be a literal stripping of a garment not necessarily a veil garment (because the Shulamite was out of doors late at night without a chaperone) or that is figurative speech designating loss of virginity.[652] Given the other attestation in Isaiah 3's list, where literal garments are stripped from the

[646]Chapter seven of this study further addresses *ʻāṭap* and the classification of women with freer access to sexual encounters outside of marriage, who were unencumbered by men.
[647] Psalms 73:6; Murphy, *Proverbs*, 43;
[648] BDB, s.v. "maʻăṭāpâ".
[649] 'I sought him, but did not find him. I called him, but he gave no answer. Making their rounds in the city the sentinels found me; they beat me, they wounded me, they took away my ***radîd***, those sentinels of the walls.' (SoS 5:7 NRSV).
[650] BDB, s.v. "radîd"; *Strong's*, s.v. "radîd".
[651] *Strong's*, s.v. "radad".
[652] Goulder, *The Song of Fourteen Songs*, 42; Fuerst, *The Books of Ruth,* 188.

Daughters of Zion, it is likely that *radîd* generally referred to a literal veil-garment. Pope suggests that *radîd* should be viewed in relation to *ṣā'îp* and *ṣammāh,* and he further points out that LXX translates *ṣā'îp* and *radîd* with the same Greek term, *theriston,* 'a light mantle worn in summer' – with Fox later arguing from this that *radîd* was a 'light, ornamental veil'.[653] Most recently, commentators continue to classify *radîd* as a literal veil, with Barbiero for example noting that *radîd* (and *ṣammâ*) are both definitively veil-garments.[654]

As much as the wearing of a veil constructs and displays identity, it is removal in the HB denotes a loss of status and identity – and the HB has several examples of women being unveiled, the stripping of the aforementioned *radîd,* being one of them. In the broader ANE, the removal of a veil as punishment to women who transgressed social and sexual boundaries or to enact and signify a change in status such as divorce is well attested to. For example, in Chapter Four of this study, several examples of this well-established custom were examined, including Nuzi documents mentioning the *sissiktu* ritual, where the hem of a man's garment (previously used to enact a marriage by covering a woman's head) was cut, torn or removed from the head of the woman to enact a divorce.[655] In some cases, '*sissiktu batâqu'* 'I have torn off her veil' was shouted, the woman's veil was removed and the divorce was complete.[656] The Hittite Nesilim Laws also mention a woman accused of adultery that must be publicly re-veiled by her husband in order to regain her status as wife and ultimately to have her life spared. In the MAL as well, a woman could be stripped of her veil as punishment for sexual transgression. Also, if a woman of low social status, such as a slave, impersonated a woman of high status by wearing a veil, the veil was removed from her and harsh physical punishments for this type of social transgression were performed on the woman.[657] In the HB, veils are also referred to in

[653] Pope, *Song of Songs,* 127. Fox, *Song of Songs*, 129.
[654] Barbiero, *Song of Songs*, 66.
[655] See chapter four for this detailed discussion.
[656] *CAD* 15, s.v. "*sissiktu"*; Breneman, *Nuzi Marriage Tablets*, 259.
[657] MAL 141 in Meek, "The Middle Assyrian Laws".

the context of removal of veil to indicate a loss or stripping a woman of her social identity – particularly if she is deemed to have transgressed social and sexual boundaries and requirements.

In Isaiah 3:18-23, young elite women - the Daughters of Zion – are described as having many garments worn together as an ensemble. The women are deliberately described in terms of dress, with many layers of finery which construct and display their status including *ra'ālâ, sādîn, šābîs, qĭšŭr, p'ēr, ṣānîp, and ma'ăṭāpâ* – all of which are removed from the women systematically and thoroughly, in what Brenner describes as '…a savage attack…against manners perceived as peculiarly feminine.'[658] The Daughters of Zion are deemed guilty of sexually provocative behaviour, where their eyes are 'wanton' and their behaviour is deemed to be 'haughty'.[659] They are obviously elite, dressed in the finest clothing, which, however, as the list progresses, they are forbidden from wearing and is forcibly removed from them – as their behaviour does not match the status displayed by their garments. Though some contention exists over when the list was added to Isaiah – there is the possibility it is later gloss – the list nonetheless depicts the dress of ancient, elite women.[660]

Several of the veils on Isaiah's list are simpler to define than others primarily because they occur intertextually in other HB veiling texts. These include the *radîd,* the veil removed from the Shulamite in SoS 5:7, *miṭpaḥat* , one of the veils worn by Ruth in Ruth 3:15 and *ṣānîp,* the cousin to the *ṣā'îp,* the veil worn by Rebekah and Tamar in Genesis. The list also includes

[658] Athalya Brenner, "Identifying the Speaker-in-Text and the Reader's Location in Prophetic Texts: The Case of Isaiah 50", in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods and Strategies*, ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole R Fontaine (London: Taylor & Francis, 2001), 137.
[659] Isaiah 3:18 (NRSV).
[660] Siebert-Hommes, "'On the Third Day Esther Put on Her Queen's Robes'", Introductory paragraph; Brenner, "Identifying the Speaker-in-Text", 137.

ma'ăṭāpâ, the noun derived from the verb *'āṭap* found in Psalms 73:6, which has links to several types of veiling for women, including *ālap* in Genesis 38.

We begin with *miṭpaḥat* in Isaiah 3:22, the same type of veil worn by Ruth. [661] *Miṭpaḥat* is defined by BDB as 'cloak, shawl', [662] with Strong further defining the veil as 'a wide cloak, a veil or wimple' always worn by women.[663] From the verbal root *ṭāpaḥ*, this veil is an expansive, all-encompassing veil, used to construct and display the familial identity of the wearer, which is a feature that will be in more detail discussed in Chapter Eight.[664] Next, in Isaiah 3:23 we have the *ṣānîp* veil.[665] BDB defines this veil as 'turban', with Waetzoldt and Van der Toorn defining it as 'scarf wrapped around the head.'[666] This veil occurs as both male and female garment in the HB and is very similar to the *ṣā'îp* veil worn by Rebekah and Tamar in Genesis 24 and 38. In fact, as observed by Van der Toorn, *ṣā'îp* and *ṣānîp*, while derived from different verbal roots, are still linked – and have semantic overlap.[667] The verbal root of *ṣānîp, ṣānp,* meaning 'to wrap, wind up, together', tells us that this veil was able to be wound and wrapped around the head.[668] This veil was used as part of the display of high social status, as it also occurs in Isaiah 62:3 to describe a turban worn by royalty.[669]

In Isaiah 3:23 we also have *ma'ăṭāpâ,* defined by BDB as 'a cloak'.[670] The verbal root *'āṭap* means to 'envelop oneself' and is similar to several other terms for veiling and covering including *'āṭâ* 'to veil' found in Sos 1:7 and *ālap* found in Genesis 38.[671] The words *'āṭâ* and

[661]BDB, s.v. "miṭpaḥat".
[662]Ibid.
[663]Strong's, s.v. "miṭpaḥat".
[664]BDB, s.v. "ṭāpaḥ". See Chapter Eight Ruth for discussion of miṭpaḥat as a familial garment.
[665]BDB, s.v. "ṣānîp".
[666]Waetzoldt, "Kopfbedeckung", 202; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327-328.
[667] Ibid.
[668] BDB, s.v. "ṣānp".
[669] Isaiah 62:3. See Chapters 5 and 6 of this study for further analysis of *ṣānîp* in light of its cousin *ṣā'îp* occurring in Genesis 24 and 38.
[670] BDB, s.v. "ma'ăṭāpâ"; BDB, s.v. "'ātap".
[671] BDB, s.v. "'āṭap"; BDB, s.v. "'āṭâ".

ʻāṭap are very similar in meaning and derivation and, they are both also very similar to *ālap* in Genesis 38 which specifically indicates how Tamar wears her veil *ṣāʻîp* (ʻ*ālap*) in Genesis 38.[672] *ʻāṭap* type is also mentioned in Psalms 73:6; *ʻāṭap* with *šît*, in connection with a woman with fewer social restrictions regarding her choice of sexual encounters, an 'unencumbered woman'.[673] What the removal of this particular veil in Isaiah really signifies is hard to ascertain given that there is very little other information about it. Overall, while each of these garments can be classified as veil-garments, little more can be understood about their exact type, style and meaning.

There are also at least five other veil-garments named as part of the ensemble of the Daughters of Zion – *šābîs, raʻālâ, sādîn, pʼēr* and *qîšŭr.* These veils are particularly obscure; we may only have one example of their use, they may be from an unused verbal root or both. *Šābîs,* for example, is found in verse 3:18.[674] This word is from an unused verbal root meaning 'to interweave' and is defined by Strong as 'netting for the hair'.[675] BDB further defines the term as 'a head band'.[676] With no other attestations in the HB, there is not much that can be said about this netted veil. Another obscure veil, *raʻālâ*, occurs in Isaiah 3:19. BDB defines the dress item as 'probably a veil', with Strong definitively classifying the term as 'a long, fluttering veil'.[677] The unused verbal root of *raʻālâ, raʼal* means 'to reel, shake terribly' giving the impression that this was a veil that moved and fluttered, unlike the smaller netted *šābîs* of 3:18.[678] Like *šābîs*, with no other attestations, nothing more can be said about *raʻālâ.* The *sādîn* from Isaiah 3:23 is defined by BDB as 'fine, linen wrapper' or 'a rectangular piece of fine

[672] ʻāṭâ and ʻāṭap are very similar, and maʻăṭāpâ is a veil. BDB specifically equates ālap in Genesis 38, where Tamar veils with ṣāʻîp, with ʻāṭâ and SoS 1:7. See BDB, s.v. "maʻăṭāpâ".
[673] This type of covering requires further work outside of the direct focus of this study.
[674] BDB, s.v. "šābîs".
[675] Strong's, s.v. "šābîs".
[676] BDB, s.v. "šābîs".
[677] BDB, s.v. "raʻālâ"; Strong's, s.v. "raʻālâ".
[678] BDB, s.v. "raʼal".

linen.[679] Worn as an outer shell or at night as a sole garment' this veil may be a loan word or it might indicate a foreign garment.[680] It comes from an unused root, and other attestations, especially Proverbs 31:24 tell us that this veil was 'made and sold by capable women and wives'. Little more can be learnt about the *sādîn* veil though Proverbs certainly indicates that this veil might be more elaborate than being just a piece of linen and might have required particular skills for its production.

In Isaiah 3:20 we have another veil, *p'ēr,* This veil is attested to elsewhere in the HB, so something can be learnt about the type, style and use of this garment. Defined by BDB as 'headdress, turban' *p'ēr* is both a masculine and feminine garment, being worn by both men and women. In Isaiah 61:10 *p'ēr* describes a garment worn in weddings as part of the groom's wedding attire.[681]

> I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has clothed me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland (*p'ēr*), and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. (Isa 61:10 NRSV)

The verbal root *p'r* means 'to beautify and glorify', and BDB specifically notes that this veil is the opposite of a mourning veil – it is worn as a sign of joy or, when worn by men, as a signal of authority.[682] When worn by women, as it occurs in Isaiah 3:20 this veil might have signified high social position as well, but was undoubtedly also used as an embellishment and a beautification tool. It is unclear, however, whether the fabric of *p'ēr* or the way it was worn made it a beatifying garment.

[679] BDB, s.v. "sādîn".
[680] Strong's s.v. "sādîn".
[681] BDB, s.v. "p'ēr"; Strong's, s.v. "p'ēr". This veil is worn as a sign of joy (Isaiah 61:3; 10) as part of exquisite dress (Exodus 39.28) and in redressing after great sorrow (Ezekiel 24:17; 23) and as part of the dress of Levitical priests (Ezekiel 44:18).
[682] BDB, s.v. "p'r".

In Isaiah 3:20 we also find the *qĭšŭrim*, plural form of the veil *qĭšŭr.* Defined by BDB as 'headband, band, sash,' the verbal root of the word means 'to bind'.[683] The *qĭšŭr* is also attested to in Jeremiah 2:32 as 'bride's attire'. Given the other attestation of this noun, *qĭšŭr* 'binds the head' and is used as part of the bride's ensemble, perhaps as a feminine counterpart of the bridegroom's *p'ēr* turban. Finally, there is also *radîd* which we already discussed in relation to the Shulamite. In Isaiah 3, *radîd is* mentioned as part of the ensemble of the Daughters of Zion, while in SoS 5:7 it is a garment on its own. In both cases we have their forced removal from the women who wear it refers to a public shaming.

In the final example of unveiling in the HB, we turn to Numbers 5:18. Although there is no explicit law ordering women to wear a veil, Numbers 5:18 demonstrates that forced removal of a veil when a wife is accused of adultery, might have been practiced. Numbers 5:11-22 describes a test to confirm if the wife is guilty or innocent of the accusation, as well as the punishment if she is found guilty. The test involves forced consumption of 'bitter waters'. Before she consumes those waters, the women is subjected to *per'*.[684] According to some commentators *per'* means loosening her hair.[685] For others, it means 'uncovering her head' or 'unbinding her head'.[686] BDB defines *per'* as 'to unbind' or 'uncover'. We find the same meaning in with the Syriac, while in the Arabic it is 'to be empty, vacant or unoccupied.'[687]

Numbers 5:11-22 presents that the veil was a symbol of appurtenance and an indicator of marital status; and it clearly demonstrates that these two aspects were very much interconnected. The husband does not have to have proof of infidelity to enact the ritual – 5:12-14 states that he can accuse her if she has been unfaithful, even if there are no witnesses to the

[683] BDB, s.v. "qĭšŭr"; BDB, s.v. "qāšar".
[684] Numbers 5:11-22
[685] Niditch, *My Brother Esau*, 77
[686] Roth, "Reading Mesopotamian Law Cases", 247, Roth considers how the stripping of the head was punishment for alleged adultery in the ANE – like in Numbers 5:18.
[687] BDB, s.v. "per'".

infidelity, or, if he simply feels jealousy even if no infidelity has taken place. The test is there to ensure that justice is done – from the husband's perspective. If the woman is innocent no harm will come to her, if she committed an adultery the 'bitter water' will make her abdomen to swell and thighs rot – taken by some commentators to mean miscarriage of a pregnancy. The removal of her veil prior to the test, is there to signify that she is between statuses. As a wife accused of adultery, she is forbidden from wearing her veil, which is the symbol of her marital status until her innocence is proven. This use of the veil is reminiscent of other ANE 'unveiling' laws, especially the Hittite Nesilim Laws which only allow a wife's head to be re-covered once she is proven innocent of adultery and her husband declares her to be his wife again.[688] Though no specific veil is named in Numbers 5:18, the implication is devastating clear. It is a woman's husband who decides if she is allowed to hold the status of wife and display it by wearing her veil – even when no evidence for adultery exists. He controls both her body and her identity.

The removal of veils from women in the HB shows the broader practice of veiling from another angle in juxtaposition to the action of veiling. While veils are mentioned as celebrations of identity and, as we shall see in the following chapters of this study, they are an instrument used by women to enact their own agency in order to embody and display desired identities, their forced removal constitutes an elimination of woman's identity, dignity and personal autonomy. To strip a person and make them bare is to shame them; and that is quite a variance from the *choice* to remove a veil-garment, as will be discussed about Genesis 38 and Ruth in particular. Schroer and Staubli argue that making the face or head bare, with the purposeful absence of a garment which would have indicated social status is a deliberate act that alters the status of the individual.[689] Niditch argues the same point, additionally noting that stripping,

[688]Tsevat, "The Husband Veils A Wife", 240; Neufeld, *The Hittite Laws,* 194; Hoffner, "The Hittite Laws", 237.
[689]Silvia Schroer and Thomas Staubli, *Body Symbolism in the Bible*, (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2001), 87.

making bare, exposing genitals and head, are all shaming actions.[690] The removal of veils in SoS 5:7, Isaiah 3, Isaiah 47 and Numbers 5:18-22, thus represents both shaming and eliminating the various social roles, identities and statuses that the worn veils articulate. The veil in HB is a double-edged sword. Its presence can be a blessing by bestowing certain statuses and identities; its absence, especially if not removed by the woman herself, is a curse leaving her without any social function or personal autonomy and the worst punishment a woman can receive.

The preceding examples of veil terminology mirrors the variety of veil type and style found in the broader ANE. The HB veils range from small head band-like veils, long, fluttering veils, to veils which completely wrap around and conceal the wearer, from simple, everyday veils to ornate and beautifying veils. HB veils also show the negative consequences of forced removal of the veil. In the next three chapters, three of these veils, namely, *ṣā'îp*, *miṭpaḥat* , and *kānāp* will be examined in more depth within the specific contexts of Genesis 24, Genesis 38 and the Book of Ruth. In these instances, the veils and their use will be examined stylistically in terms of their physical appearance and what they represent, but also in terms of their utilisation by the women themselves and the agency they express through it.

[690] Niditch, *My Brother Esau*, 121-132.

6 'She took ṣā'îp and cāsâ herself': Rebekah in Genesis 24

In this chapter, the first of our three analytical chapters, we explore Genesis 24 and Rebekah's use of the veil *ṣā'îp*. The story is an integral part of the broader patriarchal narrative of Abrahamic lineage, recounting the meeting and marriage of Rebekah and Isaac; but this chapter will not focus solely on the patriarchal values expressed by Rebekah's veil and veiling. Rather, it will look at Rebekah's *ṣā'îp* and how she wears it (*cāsâ)* as ways of revealing the identities coded into the fabric of veil, illuminating the social practice of veiling itself and what the literary record of Rebekah's story can tell us about the lived experience of this custom for ancient Israelite women.

This chapter will first provide an overview of Rebekah's narrative. Then, it will explore the terminology of veiling, *ṣā'îp* as a material dress item and *cāsâ*, that is, the way *ṣā'îp* is worn. Etymological analyses of both words and their synonymous connections with other veiling terminology from the veiled-vocabularies of the broader ANE will be undertaken, in order to correctly identify the meaning of these words. Next, the analysis will move to the construction and display of identity performed by Rebekah when she wears *ṣā'îp*, the social identities coded into *ṣā'îp* and the way in which the *ṣā'îp* functions in this narrative as a signal of Rebekah's identities. Finally, this chapter will argue that elements related to bodily control and social organisation of women coupled with aspects of appurtenance and ownership exhibited through veiling are found in Rebekah's story, but, that the moment when she veils herself with her *ṣā'îp* is a moment which discloses that women could, to some extent, direct and construct their identities through what they chose to do with their veils. *Ṣā'îp* in Genesis 24 therefore shows us a woman's agency and forthrightness to self-veil, and, the relationship between women's personal dress items and their capacity to utilise these garments to self-define.

Genesis 24 tells the story of Rebekah and Isaac. The patriarch Abraham, Isaac's father, sends his servant back to his family homeland in Haran to find a wife for his son.[691] Rebekah, the girl the servant finds by the well, is the perfect woman – she is from Abraham's tribe, she is gracious and hospitable and she is physically beautiful.[692] She is of exceptionally good character, evident in her hospitality towards the servant when she provides water for both him and his camels. She is also, the narrator tells us, a 'girl of marriageable age'.[693] From a literary perspective, finding her at the well further sets the scene of a marriage to come; 'the girl at the well' is a classic marriage motif found in the betrothal type-scene in the HB.[694] Therefore, as Robert Alter notes of this initial introduction, '…She is immediately identified with unconventional explicitness as the suitable bride…'.[695]

Discussions about possible marriage are held between all interested parties, and permission is sought from both Rebekah's family and Rebekah herself for the marriage to proceed. In Genesis 24:58, she is asked 'Will you go with this man?' and, Rebekah, having already been involved in the organisation of the marriage, agrees.[696] With arrangements in place, Rebekah and the servant set off for Canaan and it is at the moment when they arrive that Rebekah's *ṣā'îp* is mentioned and her veiling takes place. When she sees Isaac, her betrothed, walking towards her and the servant in order to greet them, Rebekah dismounts from her camel and enquires about the identity of the approaching man.[697]

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[691]Genesis 24:2-4; 10.
[692]Genesis 24:16.
[693]Gordon J Wenham, "Betulâ 'A Girl of Marriageable Age'", *Vestus Testamentus 27* Fasc 3 Jul (1972), 326 – 348; Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in The Book of Judges,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 46-52; Schneider, *Mothers of Promise,* 46.
[694]Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 55-56; Black, "Ruth in the Dark", 20-36.
[695]Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 55-56.
[696]Susan Niditch, *"Gayle Rubin Meets the Women of Genesis"*, filmed June 2014, Bar Ilan University Conference, https://biblicalstudiesonline.wordpress.com/2014/10/27/a-literary-creation-literary-approaches-to-the-book-of-genesis/. This differs to other marriages in the HB, including those initiated by men through rape and adultery – see Sasson, "How Rebekah Found a Spouse", 243.
[697]Genesis 24: 59; 64.

> And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel, and said to the servant, 'Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?' The servant said, 'It is my master.'(Gen 24:64; 65 NRSV)

Wasting no time, Rebekah, now aware of Isaac's identity, responds by veiling herself.

> So she took her ***ṣā'îp*** (veil) and ***cāsâ*** (covered) herself. (Gen 24:65 NRSV)

After Rebekah veils herself, the narrative provides no further description of the wedding ceremony. The narrator tells us that Rebekah went back to Isaac's family tent, specifically his mother's tent, and that 'she became his wife'– a euphemism often used in the HB for consummation of marriage through sexual intercourse.[698] Her story progresses past this moment into later chapters where she is a wife, mother and matriarch, but at the close of Genesis 24, when she veiled herself at the sight of Isaac, she stands at the crossroads between girlhood and womanhood – with her self-veiling in *ṣā'îp* being the fulcrum of this identity transition.[699]

The *ṣā'îp* occurs three times in the HB. We find it in Genesis 24:65, 38:14 and 38:19, and it is defined by BDB as 'wrapper, shawl or veil'.[700] LXX renders *ṣā'îp* as *theriston*, 'a light veil worn in summer' and always by women.[701] The gendered use of *ṣā'îp* is mirrored in all three HB references. The unused verbal root *ṣā'p* from which *ṣā'îp* derives, is defined by BDB as 'a double or folded thing', equivalent to the Arabic 'make double' or 'double', the Ethiopian 'fold, double', and the Aramaic 'double'.[702] Strong further defines *ṣā'p* as 'to wrap over'.[703]

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[698]Genesis 24:67. The tent is the heart of domestic space in HB, and there are times when the relationship between the tent and the veil and the way space is created and used by women share similarities. This requires further work, though Don Seeman's article is an excellent start to noting the similarities between how these spaces are used and the creation of gendered spaces in the HB more generally. See Don Seeman, "'Where Is Sarah Your Wife?' Cultural Poetics of Gender and Nationhood in the Hebrew Bible", *The Harvard Theological Review 91*, No.2, (Apr.1998), 103-125.

[699] Rebekah as a character belongs to the literary paradigm of matriarch. She shares this title with other women of Genesis, including Tamar, who is the focus of Chapter Seven. For more on female literary paradigms and the matriarchal literary type, see Brenner, *The Israelite Woman*, 88-105.

[700]BDB, s.v. "ṣā'îp". The use of *ṣā'îp* in Genesis 38:14;19 is the focus of Chapter Seven of this study.

[701]Pope, *Song of Songs*, 527.

[702]BDB, s.v. "ṣā'p".

[703]Strong's, s.v. "ṣā'p".

No examples of the use of this verb are found in HB, however, the implications of its meaning are that the noun derived from it, *ṣā'îp*, was a garment of some size or length, with the capacity to wrap, be doubled over and folded around its wearer.[704]

Ṣānîp, another head covering garment, which was mentioned in previous chapters, helps to shed more light on the characteristics of *ṣā'îp* as a veil.[705] While *ṣā'îp* and *ṣānîp* are not etymologically linked, the two are physically very similar, especially in terms of how they are worn and, regarding the identity information that is coded into the garments. As mentioned in Chapters Four and Five, BDB defines *ṣānîp* as 'turban', with Waetzoldt and Van der Toorn concurring and further classifying the term as 'scarf wrapped around the head'.[706] Unlike *ṣā'îp*, which is a dress item gendered exclusively to women, *ṣānîp* is not a gendered garment, and is worn by both men and women.[707] As a material dress item worn by women, *ṣānîp* occurs in a plural form in Isaiah 3:23 as 'the veils' in the context of a long list of dress items, several of which are types of veils which make up the ensemble of the elite daughters of Zion.[708] In masculine uses, such as Zechariah 3:5 and Leviticus 16:4, it appears as 'turban ', while in Isaiah 62:3 the term is related to a crown. We also find it used as a metaphor. In Job 29:14 'putting on one's righteousness' is compared to 'being clothed with a robe and a *ṣānîp*'. In Zechariah 3:5, in addition to the mentioned 'turban', it is also figuratively used as being clothed in righteousness.[709] This veil was used for the construction and display of elite status and as a symbol of righteousness; and like *ṣā'îp*, it was a dress item which was worn wrapped around a head.

[704]Van der Toorn, "Significance", 328.
[705]BDB, s.v. "ṣānîp".
[706]Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327.
[707]Given the contexts of both masculine and feminine use, it is likely *ṣānîp* was an indicator of high status, rather than specifically linked with bodily control as with other gendered veils.
[708]Isaiah 3:23. The full list of the dress items removed from the Daughters of Zion occurs in Isaiah 3:18-23. See Chapter Five for further overview of Isaiah's list and the veil-garments contained therein.
[709] Job 29:14.

It is in exploring the verbal root of *ṣānîp* and synonyms of this head covering garment, that we can identify distinct connections between the function and significance of *ṣā'îp* and *ṣānîp,* especially in terms of their links to the broader terminological tapestry of the ancient veiled-vocabulary from the ANE. The verbal root of *ṣānîp*, *ṣānp,* occurs three times in HB and it gives us further insight into how the veil *ṣānîp* would have been worn, with *ṣānp* being defined by BDB as 'to wrap, wind up, together' and with Strong also defining the verb as 'to wrap, roll'.[710] In reference to using material dress items including *ṣānîp,* the verb *ṣānp* occurs in Leviticus 16:4 as 'he shall *wind* (*ṣānp*) his head with a turban (*ṣānîp)*' in relation to the high priest's dress,[711] in Isaiah 22:18 where it says that 'he will *wind* (*ṣānp)* you entirely' and in Isaiah 62:3 where it is coupled with *ṣānîp* in the description of winding a turban of royalty.[712]

Strong also links and compares *ṣānp* and the Arabic term for hem, *ṣanifatun*, which makes it possible to conclude that in terms dress items, *ṣānîp* and the Hebrew *kānāp* 'hem' share a very close relationship.[713] This close connection between *ṣānp*, *ṣānîp* and *kānāp* is of particular importance for understanding the *ṣā'îp,* how it would have been used as a material dress item and the identity information constructed and displayed by its use. In Chapter Four of this study, we saw that hems of garments were used to veil women, with men using the hem of their own garments to veil a woman in order to claim marriage, and to signify that the woman was wife and that, as such, she belonged to her husband from that moment.[714] As we saw in that discussion, the *kānāp* shares multiple semantic links with other ANE hems used to identify the wearer and to veil women in marriage – such as the *katāmu,* the Akkadian word for 'to veil', which has already been discussed in Chapter Four.[715] It is further important to note the

[710]BDB, s.v. "ṣānp".
[711]Ibid.
[712]Isaiah 62:3. Isaiah 22:8 describes a violent winding and wrapping.
[713]BDB, s.v. "ṣānp". Ṣānp – in Targum, equiv. with Arabic hem, *ṣanifatun.*
[714] See chapter four for this detailed discussion.
[715]BDB, s.v. "kānāp"; see chapter four.

link between *kappu*, another Akkadian term for 'hem' related to *katāmu* and *pusummu,* the Babylonian noun meaning 'veil', which is derived from the verb *pasānu.*[716] As discussed in Chapter Four, *pasānu* in its various incarnations means 'to cover, to conceal, hide, to veil, hide the face, veil oneself, and cover oneself'.[717] It is widely attested to across the ANE and, it is recognised to be a generic term meaning 'to veil'; especially to veil women.[718] Significantly, *pasānu* is the verb used in MAL to designate a woman/girl as wife or daughter of an Assyrian man when she was in a public space, and to describe the transitioning of women who were concubines to the status of wife in a public ceremony of veiling.[719] Waetzoldt and Van der Toorn both etymologically link the Akkadian *pasānu* with *ṣānîp* and its verbal root *ṣānp*; and this etymology builds a multi-layered picture of the type, use and meaning of *ṣā'îp,* with Van der Toorn specifically noting that the *ṣānîp* was a veil that was 'wrapped around the head' while *ṣā'îp* was a veil that was 'wrapped around the face'.[720]

It seems difficult to completely connect *pasānu, katāmu*, *ṣānp, ṣānîp*, *ṣā'îp* and *kānāp,* particularly as the words generally sound so dissimilar. Further, while *ṣā'îp* and *ṣānîp* are connected, they do originate from different verbal roots. However, given the extensive semantic connections between *ṣā'îp* and other veil terminology, it is arguable that the words are connected by the way they are used – with verbs indicating the action taking place, and nouns showing the garment being used to perform the action. It can thus be concluded that *ṣā'îp* is intimately linked linguistically, functionally and socially to the covering of a woman's head in the construction and display of her identity as wife. As such, *ṣā'îp* should be understood as a material dress item – specifically a woman's veil – part of the social fabric and language

[716] *CAD* 12, s.v. "pasānu".
[717] Ibid.
[718]Ibid.
[719] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327; Vearncombe, "Adorning the Protagonist", 119.
[720]H Waetzoldt, "Kopfbedeckung", *RLA 6* (1980 – 83), 202; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327-328. This aspect of concealment with *ṣā'îp* will be explored in chapter seven of this study, when Tamar wears the veil.

of the practice of veiling in the broader ANE, which was used to construct and display a woman's identity as wife.

The verb *cāsâ* - used to describe the action of veiling with *ṣā'îp* in Genesis 24, tells us even more about the social significance and identity display constructed with Rebekah's use of *ṣā'îp*. *Cāsâ* is also laden with symbolic information and it is used in both of the HB accounts of veiling with *ṣā'îp* – here with Genesis 24 and also in Genesis 38, Tamar's story which will be the focus of our next chapter. The use of *cāsâ,* however, is not limited to Genesis. It occurs 148 times in the HB in the verbal form, and means 'to cover' while in the 24 attestations as a noun, it means 'a covering'.[721] *Cāsâ,* 'to cover', like *ṣā'îp,* is also linked to ANE veiled-vocabularies and in its various forms is found in most Semitic languages – in Ugaritic, for example, its equivalent occurs routinely as 'cover' and always in the context of specifically covering a person with clothing.[722] In point of fact, *cāsâ* and *kānāp*, the hem garment connected to *ṣā'îp* and the part of the garment used to cover a woman's head in the marriage ritual, are etymologically related.[723] Further, *cāsâ* is equivalent to the Akkadian verb *kusû* 'to cover' and its noun derivative *kusîtu,* which is best translated as 'garment' or 'tunic'.[724] As explored in Chapter Four of this study, the hem of *kusîtu,* was used to cover a woman's head in the ritual that serves as a public declaration of her as wife.[725]

Cāsâ, ṣā'îp, and their web of etymological and synonymous relationships leave little doubt as to the material dress item being used in Genesis 24 and the nature of the action taking place when Rebekah meets Isaac; both are intimately woven into the language of marriage and the ritual of publically covering a woman's head as she transitions to the status of wife.

[721]BDB, s.v. "cāsâ".
[722]*TDOT* 7, s.v. "cāsâ".
[723]BDB, s.v. "cāsâ".
[724]Ibid.
[725] See chapter four for this discussion.

Rebekah's marriage does not begin with intercourse, as one would tend to think from the phrase 'she became his wife', mentioned after she puts on her veil. In actuality, it begins when she puts on her *ṣā'îp* at the sight of Isaac. The act of veiling (*cāsâ*) with *ṣā'îp* therefore represents a transitional action, a deeply symbolic albeit brief rite of passage, signifying the transition of woman's identity from daughter to bride/wife/not yet a mother (*kallâ).*[726]

Rebekah's *ṣā'îp* may have also been coded with other identity information, specifically familial details. In terms of dress, familial identity can be directly woven into cloth itself; and according to Breniquet, '… fabrics involved in rites of passage are often passed down from generation to generation, thus materializing kin relationships and are a direct link with the ancestors'.[727] Familial relationship or clan could be shown through the weave, style, colour and type of fabric, with Matthews further noting, that these distinctions would have been obvious to social participants.[728] Dress items used to cover a woman's head as a sign of marriage were '…the gift par excellence between blood relations…', evident in many extant records which reference veils and the giving of veil-garments as part of a bride's dowry in the ANE.[729] Thus, family and cloth were integrally tied, with family identity woven into the strands of the fabric itself.[730] In Rebekah's narrative, the *ṣā'îp* that she uses could have carried physical

[726] In her narrative, Rebekah is not referred to as *kallâ,* the designation of a woman who was bride/wife/not yet a mother. However, her *ṣā'îp* does likely indicate this status. In Chapter Seven, the role of *kallâ* is explored in the context of Tamar and her dressing in *ṣā'îp.* In Genesis 38, Tamar is clearly designated as *kallâ* while veiled in *ṣā'îp* – and in this context, the significance of the relationship between *kallâ* and *ṣā'îp* is of fundamental importance to understanding how Tamar manipulates dress cues for her own needs.

[727]Breniquet, "Functions and Uses of Textiles in the Ancient Near East", 14. P Bogatyerev has also shown that subtle distinctions in women's dress are capable of showing various statuses within the overarching role of 'womanhood'; and that this is encoded into the fabric by women as the makers of cloth. See P Bogatyerev, "Costume as Sign", in *Semiotics of Art: Prague School Contributors,* ed. L Matejka and I R Titunik, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1976), 17; also Kaiser, *The Social Psychology of Clothing,* 21.

[728]Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative", 26.

[729] Breniquet, "Functions and Uses of Textiles in the Ancient Near East", 14. Examples of this were discussed in Chapter Four of this study, where women are gifted veil-garments at their wedding and make specific requests for specific types of veils for their married life in their new family. Sasson also notes that Rebekah's involvement in the decision making process, mirrors extant records of elite and high status marriages in the ANE. See Sasson, "How Rebekah Found A Spouse", 244-248.

[730]Menahem Perry, 'Counter-Stories in the Bible: Rebekah and her Bridegroom, Abraham's Servant', *Prooftexts,* Vol. 27, No.2, Special Issue: Before and After The Art of Biblical Narrative (Spring 2007), 275-323; esp. 283. 278.

characteristics displaying her kinship belonging. Given the importance of finding a non-Canaanite bride for Isaac, specifically mentioning that she puts on her *ṣā'îp* in front of Isaac could be an indication by the Biblical authors to point out that she is indeed who his father was looking for, namely, a non-Canaanite, wearing a veil typical for women from Haran. *Ṣā'îp* is also not mentioned prior to being worn by Rebekah and apart from the servant, Rebekah has not yet met anyone else from her Isaac's family. Isaac has not yet reached them to greet them; and he is not described as veiling Rebekah or giving her *ṣā'îp* so that she can veil herself. The veil is obviously her possession coming with her as an inherited item or part of her dowry for the express purpose of displaying her familial continuity and regional specificity essential to her marriage.[731]

As well as being coded with specific identity information, *ṣā'îp* also functions as part of the symbolic imagery of patriarchal control. With its many links to marriage, *ṣā'îp* is symbolic of bodily control and organisation of women as wives and mothers. The veil represents an extension of the private domestic space, in which the women belonging to the social and sexual identity of wife belonged.[732] The delineation between private, covered space created by a veil, and public, uncovered space is, as Weiss has noted, symbolic of the 'unilateral property rights' of the husband.[733] In her veiled, married space, Rebekah becomes untouchable by anyone other than Isaac and the appurtenant aspects of the role of wife are displayed through the creation of a concealed space for Rebekah. By veiling, Rebekah is therefore immediately secluded in a symbolic private space created by her *ṣā'îp* even before she moves to the physical domestic space of Isaac's mother's tent; in other words, once she puts on *ṣā'îp* she is both married and symbolically and literally removed from public view.[734] The wrapping and expansive nature of

[731]Breniquet, "Functions and Uses of Textiles in the Ancient Near East", 14.
[732]Vearncombe, "Adorning the Protagonist", 119.
[733] Weiss, "Under cover", 89.
[734] Archer argues that while daughters were subordinate to their fathers, rather than wearing a veil to signify this in public, as with married women, daughters were instead mostly confined to the home, and thus secreted away

ṣā'îp, a large, double, or folded thing, capable of wrapping and concealing, *ṣā'îp* subsumes and covers Rebekah completely in her new social identity. In covering and veiling she is made submissive and voiceless; in point of fact, after she veils, her voice is not heard again in Genesis 24 – she is simply described and classified as wife and later a mother.[735]

Rebekah's veiling, however, does not solely indicate a submissive, subsuming patriarchal action. Rather, as Carol Meyers has noted, Rebekah is one of the most prominent of Biblical women, '…in terms of her active role and her control of events…Genesis 24 is a woman's story…' that '…showcases the matriarch who dominates'.[736] Rebekah's forthrightness and agency are evident in her active role in negotiations for marriage and the descriptions of her prior to her marriage. More than anything, however, her forthrightness and agency are evident in Rebekah's use of her voice and the act of her self-veiling.[737]

In HB narratives, negotiations of family ties and allegiances were often 'driven by women';[738] and Rebekah's presence and involvement in the negotiations for her marriage is no exception. In Rebekah's story, it is she and the servant who negotiate the boundaries of their new familial alliance. She is both complicit and intimately involved in the creation of this new family bond; the negotiations are the beginning of this familial link.[739] She is forthright in declaring that she will marry Isaac and that she will leave her home to travel with the servant to Canaan. The decision to accept this marriage is hers – in agreeing to go with the servant, Rebekah clearly speaks. Genesis 24:57; 58 states.

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from the public eye. Hence there was no need to veil them in public, as they would have seldom been in this sphere, Archer, *Her Price is More Precious Than Rubies,* 212. Llewellyn – Jones indicates the same kind of social isolation, however he also argues for the use of a veil by daughters when they are in the public space in some cultural contexts. See Llewellyn – Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,* 121-153.

[735] Genesis 24:66-67.

[736] Meyers, "Rebekah", 143.

[737] Schneider, Mothers of Promise, 53-55.

[738] Sasson, "How Rebekah Found A Spouse", 241.

[739] Even Rebekah's name is etymologically derived from the term 'knot' or 'to tie fast' – a symbol also used in *sissiktu* ritual and with *kānāp* the hem as part of marriage. Meyers, "Rebekah", in *Women of Scripture,* 143.

> They said, 'We will call the girl, and ask her.' And they called Rebekah, and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' She said, 'I will.' (Gen 24:57; 58 NRSV)

Descriptions of Rebekah's identity before the act of veiling, during her negotiations, also clearly show that she is a young woman, ready for marriage - but they also show aspects of Rebekah's forthrightness and motivation. Before her veiling, the story establishes quite clearly that she was a girl of marriageable age which in ancient cultures always meant being physically mature to become pregnant.[740] At the start of her story in Genesis 24:16, Rebekah is referred to as *betulâ*, *na'arâ,* and *'îš lō' yāda'â. Betulâ* means a 'girl of marriageable age' and the addition of *'îš lō' yāda'â* 'no man had had her' after it further clarifies that she is also a virgin.[741] According to Perry, that 'untouched by men' sexual physical status of *betulâ* is also indicated by the well, the place where the servant finds Rebekah, which is a literary feature in a betrothal type-scenes, specifically symbolic of virginity.[742]

The term *na'arâ* is slightly more ambiguous, but it still indicates that Rebekah was of an age where she had reached physical maturity to become a wife and bear children. But *na'arâ* also tells us more about Rebekah's motivation.[743] Tammi J Schneider suggests that Rebekah is referred to as *na'arâ* because she is'…a young woman of ambiguous status…' but that as with *betulâ* and *'îš lō' yāda'â* she is a girl '…of marriageable age who has not known a man.'[744] For Carolyn S Leeb, Rebekah is described as *na'arâ* because she is in a public space outside of her

[740]Wenham, "Betulâ 'A Girl of Marriageable Age'", 326 – 348; Diane Bergant suggests that Rebekah's clothes or, the lack of some items of dress when she is *betulâ*, indicates her unmarried status. Specifically, Bergant argues that married women were subject to compulsory veiling whereas unmarried women/daughters were not. Bergant, *Genesis,* 97. Bronner and Van der Toorn have observed the same, both noting that across the ANE, women were veiled as they transitioned from the status of being a daughter to being wife at their wedding. Bronner, "From Veil to Wig", 465; Van der Toorn, "Significance", 327.
[741]Perry, "Counter-Stories in the Bible", 283; BDB, s.v. "betulâ"; Wenham, "Betulâ 'A Girl of Marriageable Age'", 326 – 348; Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry*, 46-52.
[742]Ibid.
[743]BDB, s.v. "na'arâ"; BDB, s.v. "na'ar".
[744] Schneider, *Mothers of Promise*, 46.

family home,[745] where she is assuming duties usually reserved for males, such as assisting the servant on his journey and with his enquiries.[746] Schneider also observes that referring to her as *na'arâ* , in conjunction with her being described only in relation to her mother and brother, and not her father, places Rebekah in an unsupported position.[747] Thus, she performs these actions independently and without any support from her family – hence the use of *na'arâ*.[748] The independence and forthrightness exhibited by Rebekah throughout her story and ultimately when she veils herself is made abundantly clear in the choice by the Biblical authors to refer to her as *na'arâ* . Within patriarchal societies, as in the one portrayed in the HB, boys and men have more freedom to be forthright in action and choice making than girls – especially girls of 'marriageable age'. Rebekah, *betulâ* and *'îš lō' yāda'â* and at the same time *na'arâ*, is portrayed as a young woman, but one which, unlike the majority of her female peers is not afraid to show forthrightness of initiative and independence in shaping her destiny, which she indeed shows when she veils herself in front of Isaac.

Rebekah's motivation is also clearly shown in the presence of her voice prior to her veiling. In approaching Isaac, it is Rebekah who initiates the dialogue and it is her who asks about his identity, rather than Isaac or his servant initiating this interaction. Alter considers Rebekah's voice in this exchange as an indicator of '…her sense of quiet self-possession…', but it is certainly much more than this.[749] The dialogue between Rebekah and the servant is explicit and driven by Rebekah; she is not engaging in 'quiet self-possession' of the role *ṣā'îp* will eventually place her in, nor is she in any way directed by the servant. Rather, she initiates the conversation with the express purpose of finding out Isaac's identity, by asking 'Who is this

[745]Carolyn S Leeb, "Away from the Father's House: The Social Location of *na'ar* and *na'arâ* in Ancient Israel", *JSOT Supplement 301* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 125.
[746] Ibid.
[747] Schneider, Mothers of Promise, 45-47.
[748] The question of *na'arâ* in Genesis 24 is one which needs further exploration in future work.
[749] Alter, *Art of Biblical Narrative*, 55-56.

man walking in the field to meet us?' In the exchange that follows it is Rebekah, rather than the male servant, that is the agent who drives the dialogue, to whom the servant replies and who, upon learning that the person approaching them is the man who was promised to her, decides to veil. Rebekah speaks in the first person – and her speech indicates that she is the active agent in the depicted event.[750] The result of this *'na'arâ'* like forwardness and independent thinking, is that her new identity is not placed on her. Rather, it is her, Rebekah, who takes control of the situation and who participates in the act of self-veiling and self-identification, veils herself - announcing to everyone present that she has become a wife.[751]

Rebekah's veiling with *ṣā'îp* is in a sense the greatest act of agency and self-definition in her narrative. In using *ṣā'îp* her new social identity is outwardly displayed. But the act of self-covering is also a deeply personal experience because the physical experience of wrapping and covering with the *ṣā'îp*, is an intimate and personal action.[752] When Rebekah wraps herself in *ṣā'îp*, she enters a private space created by her veil which is completely hers and which she use to define and construct her personal identity as Isaac's wife.[753] In this sense, by using the veil she embodies her social identity of a married woman, and from Rebekah's perspective, the act of self-veiling is an act of personal definition.

The terminology of Rebekah's veiling experience in Genesis 24 reveals much about the use of veils and the personal experience of veiled and veiling women of ancient Israel. The veil itself, *ṣā'îp* describes an expansive veil which is connected with other veil terminology, in particular the verb *pasānu* used in the MAL to describe the action of veiling women. *Cāsâ*, too,

[750]Genesis 24:65.
[751]There is evidence of a subversion of the patriarchal power structures of bodily control here, evident in Rebekah's direct action to self-veil. This subversion moves outside the scope of this thesis – however, its possible presence here certainly suggests that a reading and analysis of Rebekah's motives as subversive should be a focus of future work.
[752] Rebekah '…withdraws herself from the immediate grasp of others.' Gillmayr-Bucher, *The Woman of their Dreams*, 90.
[753]Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation*, 43

the verb used to indicate how *ṣā'îp* is worn, has etymological links with multiple veil terms, including *katāmu,* the generic term for veiling related to *kuttumu* and *kānāp*, the hem of a garment used in veiling women in marriage. Veils functioned as signal and symbol of the patriarchal bodily and social control over women, yet, at the same time, the veil was not simply an instrument of male power and control. It could be used by women as well to achieve their own ends. Rebekah wants to become Isaac's wife - her voice is heard in the negotiations, she travels with the servant to meet Isaac and it is her who constructs and displays the identity of wife with her own *ṣā'îp* through the act of self-veiling. In choosing to *cāsâ* with *ṣā'îp*, Rebekah further embodies the social identity which the veil displays, exhibits her willingness to take that identity within her new familial group and finally, transitions to the status of wife with the self-defining action of veiling with *ṣā'îp*. It is through Rebekah's choice making that we see the practice of veiling as a personal experience for women, where the power to self-veil as a form of identity construction and display is quite separate to the requirement to wear a veil found in other examples of the practice from the HB and broader ANE.

7 'She took off her widows garments, cāsâ with ṣā'îp and 'ālap herself': Tamar in Genesis 38

The story of Tamar and Judah in Genesis 38 is an important novella in the broader patriarchal narrative, providing details of Abrahamic and Davidic lineage. Considered to be a one chapter interpolation in the otherwise continuous Joseph cycle (Genesis 37-50), Genesis 38 and the Joseph cycle share an important feature – both include a detailed mention of dress items which deliver essential identity information about the characters of the stories.[754] Of particular significance to this study is the veil worn by Tamar (*ṣā'îp*), the manner in which she wears it (*cāsâ* and *'ālap*) and the specific context in which she chooses to wear her veil. All of these elements provide an array of identity information about who Tamar is and who she wants others to think she is.

Ṣā'îp is a personal and multifunctional dress item. Depending on the style in which it is worn it can conceal or reveal identities, as well as present misinformation about identity, as the wearer chooses. Worn one way (*cāsâ*) and the wearer can embody an identity which is intimately connected to the information coded into the fabric of the veil itself. Worn another way (*'ālap*) and the wearer can present misinformation about her identity and provide deceptive dress cues long enough for subversion to take place. With this duality of use in mind, this chapter will argue that when Tamar puts on her *ṣā'îp* she does so to purposefully embody the specific social role and familial identity to which she is entitled to according to the Levirate law, but which is denied to her by her father in law. In order to embody this identity, Tamar utilises known dress cues to purposefully distract and deceive onlookers in order to suggest that she is a woman who belongs to a much less regulated social and sexual role. In this guise,

[754]Matthews, "Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative", 29; Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear,* 41-43.

Tamar can achieve her goal and fully realise the identity of a wife and daughter in law to which she is entitled according to Levirate law. All of the elements of identity construction and display involved in this complex story are achieved through deliberate dress choices made by Tamar herself. Her veiling is a performative action. It is intentional, calculated and meaningful; her *ṣā'îp* is a tool that is used to impose her will on the male protagonists and achieve her aims.

There are three elements that must be examined in order to consider Tamar's veiling in this narrative. First, there is the veil itself and the identity information coded into the garment and thus, the identity which Tamar constructs, displays and embodies when she specifically wears *ṣā'îp*. Related to this point are the other identity markers and designations mentioned in the text while Tamar is veiled or before and after she veils. All of them relate to her veiled identity – either as indicators of her true identity or as part of her identity deception. The second element is the way Tamar wears her veil (*cāsâ* and *ālap*) and the meaning of these actions as they relate to identity construction and embodiment. The two distinct ways in which Tamar wears her *ṣā'îp* present varied identity information about her and it is with this choice to wear her veil in different ways that she utilises and manipulates known dress cues and the associated identity information for her own purposes. Finally, there is the duality of identity display as it relates to Tamar's agency, where she makes active dress choices as an individual. Through the act of veiling Tamar exhibits an empowered choice as a woman using one of the very few avenues of power available to her in an otherwise subjugating and restrictive patriarchal environment; an environment in which she is voiceless and unable to act with her own volition. By simultaneously embodying and manipulating dress cues with the same personal veil-garment, Tamar reveals herself as an insightful social participant, acutely aware of the power and possibilities present in the threads of her own item of dress.

Tamar is a woman who is married to Judah's eldest son Er. As the son of Jacob and Leah, Judah is the grandson of Abraham and as such is one of the patriarchs. Unlike Rebekah

in Genesis 24, who was actively engaged in the process of arranging her marriage, Tamar's voice is absent from any marriage negotiations; she is simply referred to as 'the woman' that Judah arranged for his son to marry.[755] Once Tamar and Er are married, Er transgresses and God kills him, leaving Tamar a childless widow.[756] She is then married to Er's younger brother Onan, which according to Levirate marriage law required the widow of a man to be passed onto his brother or close male relative. The purpose of the Levirate marriage was continuation of the dead man's name through children born from the union of the brother and the wife.[757] Tamar's voice is again unheard in the negotiations and the decision making process. Judah refers to her simply as 'the wife', instructing Onan to marry her and provide Er with heirs.[758] Though Onan complies with Judah's wishes and marries Tamar, in performing his conjugal duties he engages in *coitus interruptus,* knowing that any child she conceives with him would be considered his brother's rather than his own. The wasted semen offends God and Onan, like his brother Er before him, is killed.[759]

Tamar is now promised to Judah's youngest son Shelah, but Shelah is too young and Judah tells her to return to her father's house and 'remain a widow' until Shelah is old enough for marriage.[760] Tamar obeys Judah and returns to her father's house to wait for Shelah and the marriage and children she was promised. Judah's excuse for sending Tamar away, however, is disingenuous, driven by his fear that his last son will fall victim to the same fate as Er and Onan.[761]

Time passes, Shelah grows up, but Tamar's status as childless widow forced on her by Judah remains unchanged – and it seems that Judah has no intention of fulfilling his obligation

[755]Genesis 38:6.
[756]Genesis 38:7
[757]Deuteronomy 25:5 – 6; Genesis 38:9.
[758]Genesis 38:8-9
[759] Genesis 38:10.
[760]Genesis 38:11
[761]Ibid.

to her.[762] She is stuck in limbo; tied to Judah's family but childless and unable to act until Judah confirms Shelah's readiness. This role, however, is unacceptable to Tamar, and she makes a plan that will lead to her being recognised as a wife and, ultimately, a mother belonging to Judah's family. She returns from her father's house, removes her widow's clothes, then she wraps and covers herself in *ṣā'îp* and positions herself on the side of the road on the way to Timnath, where she knows Judah will be passing for the sheep shearing festival. Her intent is deception; she does not want Judah to know that she is the veiled woman, so she removes the widow's garments he would have expected Tamar to be wearing and dresses herself instead in *ṣā'îp*. Judah, now a widower himself, propositions Tamar for sex, possibly assuming that she was a prostitute, or, in the very least, a woman available for sexual solicitation – *zānâ/zonâ*.[763] What he does not know at the time is that the woman on the side of the road is his daughter in law. Genesis 38:14-16 states

> She put off her widows garments, ***cāsâ*** with ***ṣā'îp*** and ***ālap*** herself, and sat at the entrance which was on the way to Enaim, which was on the road to Timnah. She saw Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a ***zānâ***, because she had ***cāsâ*** her face. He went over to her at the road side, and said, "Come, let me I pray thee let me come in to you" for he knew not that she was his ***kallâ***. She said 'What will you give me, that you may come in to me? (Gen 38:14-16 NRSV).

After Tamar asks what the payment will be for her sexual services, she is offered a kid goat which Judah will send on to her later. She agrees, but requests an assurance until she receives the goat - his ring, rod and bracelet/thread.[764] Following this transaction and the intercourse, Tamar leaves. It is at this point that her veil is again mentioned. Genesis 38:19 states

> Then she got up and went away, and taking off (***soor***) her ***ṣā'îp*** from her she put on the garments of her widowhood (***beged 'alamānâ***) (Gen 38:19 NRSV)

[762]Genesis 38:14.
[763]Genesis 38:15; Schneider, *Mothers of Promise*, 43.
[764]Genesis 38:18.

Later, Judah sends his servant Hirah to find the woman and give her the kid as payment; Judah still does not know that it is Tamar they are looking for.[765] Assuming that 'the woman' is a 'sacred prostitute', Hirah refers to her as *qadēšâ,* not *zānâ* as Judah assumed her to be. However, the men he asked about the *qadēšâ* reply that there is no such woman in the area and as a result Hirah cannot find her.[766] In the meantime, Tamar has fallen pregnant from the brief encounter with her father in law, so when Judah learns about this, he assumes she had sex with a man outside of the family. He directly accuses Tamar of the sin of *zānâ* 'fornication or breach of covenant' and condemns her to death for this.[767] Tamar, however, reveals that Judah is responsible for her pregnancy and that it was she who was veiled on the side of the road; and she has his ring, rod and bracelet/thread to prove it.[768] Judah concedes and declares Tamar to be faultless and more righteous than he is, and she goes on to give birth to twin boys who continue Judah's family line.[769] Here Tamar's story abruptly ends, though in the book of Ruth she is acknowledged as a mother of tribes, a matriarch of the family.[770] Her decision to deceive Judah by veiling with *ṣā'îp* had its desired result – children that would continue her dead husband's name and confirmation of her status of a Levirate wife and mother.

While the context of her veiling does not appear to indicate this, Tamar's *ṣā'îp* is a veil which strongly signifies her familial and marital status in Judah's family as *kallâ* - wife, daughter in law and not yet a mother.[771] For Rebekah in Genesis 24, putting on her *ṣā'îp* showed her betrothed Isaac both that she was the bride he was expecting and that she was a

[765]Genesis 38:20
[766]Genesis 38:21
[767]Genesis 38:24
[768]Genesis 38:25
[769] Genesis 38:26-30.
[770]Book of Ruth 4:12; Brenner, *The Israelite Woman*, 106-108.
[771] Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 128; Jack M Sasson, "Biographical Notices on Some Royal Ladies from Mari", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies 25*, No. 2 (Apr., 1973), 59-78, especially 65.

member of his broader familial unit.[772] Tamar's use of *ṣā'îp* mirrors Rebekah's and indicates her familial and marital identity as *kallâ* belonging to Judah's family.

The relationship between the status of *kallâ* (and its Akkadian equivalent *kallātu*) and the use of a veil to publicly identify women belonging to this status, has a long history in the broader ANE.[773] So much so, that *kallâ/kallātu* and the veil are etymologically interconnected. In Chapter Four of this study, the verbal root of *kallâ, kall,* 'to complete', 'to finish', equivalent to the Assyrian *kalâlu,* 'to complete' was previously explored as the verbal root of the veil *kulūlu*.[774] *Kulūlu* was a small veil coded with marital identity information and is a type of 'little house' veil, extending the domestic space of the wearer by covering her when she is outside the home.[775] As seen with ANE dowry records, *kulūlu* and other veils such as *paršigū* were veils a woman would need during her married life, to publicly signify her social status.[776] *Kulūlu* is further related to the veil verb *katāmu,* and the veil *kuttumu* which is derived from this verbal root. It is also related to the veiling verb *pasānu,* found in the context of veiling specific classifications of women in the MAL and synonymous with *katāmu. Pasānu* is related to the Hebrew veil *ṣānîp* – a veil, as explored throughout Chapters Four, Five and Six, which is similar to *ṣā'îp*.[777]

All of these interconnections between the veiled-vocabulary of the ANE and the status of *kallâ/kallātu* strongly indicates that women were veiled while they belonged to this role. In both Biblical and extra Biblical sources, the widespread use of a veil as a designator of this status is also clearly evident; so too is the way in which the veil of the *kallâ/kallātu* would have been worn. For example, as noted in Chapter Four of this study, in extra Biblical texts as early

[772]Furman, "His Story Versus Her Story", 147; Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear,* 41-43.
[773] BDB, s.v. "kallâ".
[774] See chapter four of this study; Van Der Toorn, "Significance", 330-331.
[775] See chapter four of this study; Llewellyn – Jones, "House and Veil in Ancient Greece", 251-258.
[776]See chapter four of this study; J N Postgate "On Some Assyrian Ladies", *Iraq 41,* (1979), 89-103, esp. 93-95 cited in Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 127.
[777] See chapter four of this study; Van Der Toorn, "Significance", 330.

as the end of the 3rd millennium, *kallātum* were '…commonly veiled…' prior to the wedding ceremony.[778] In some examples observed by Stol '…the girl was covered by her father with a veil which was taken off later by her husband. She is now 'the bride' (*kallātum*) and she seems to keep this title until her first child is born.'[779] In other examples, the context in which *kallātum* are veiled is not described, but the way in which the veil was worn is. While veiled, the *kallâ* was both concealed and highlighted by her veil. For example, Glassner and Van Der Toorn both observe a poem describing the veiled *kallātu* being personally obfuscated by her veil, where she is described as '*mušîtu kallātu kuttumtum'* 'night, the veiled *kallātu*…'.[780] While veiled, no one can look at her '…even from afar…'.[781] Thus, as Van Der Toorn points out '…in its effect, the veil could suggest invisibility.'[782] However, he further observes the seemingly paradoxical nature of the veil in this description – it can at once conceal a woman's personal identity and '…intensify the impression of gracefulness and beauty made by women…'.[783] The veil of a *kallātu* was expansive enough to completely obscure her personal identity while being worn, yet simultaneously exhibit a display that accentuated her beauty for onlookers – both because of the veil itself and, most significantly, because of the way that it was worn to highlight the shape of the wearer, by wrapping and surrounding the woman's body. The veil of the *kallâ/kallātu* was a multifaceted sartorial signifier. It functionally enhanced a woman's shape and obscured her personal identity while signalling to the onlookers that the woman was a bride/wife/daughter in law, although not yet a mother.[784]

Biblical sources further indicate the connectivity between the status of *kallâ*, the wearing of a veil, and the specific ways the veil was worn. In Ruth 1:6,7,8,22; 2:20,22 and

[778] Van Der Toorn, "Significance", 330; Glassner, "The Honor of the Family", 76. *Kallātum* is the plural of *kallātu*.
[779]Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 128; Sasson, "Biographical Notices on Some Royal Ladies from Mari", 65.
[780] Glassner, "The Honor of the Family", 76; Van Der Toorn, "Significance" 330-331.
[781] Ibid.
[782] Van Der Toorn, "Significance", 328.
[783] Ibid., 329.
[784]Glassner, "The Honor of the Family", 76; Van Der Toorn, "Significance", 330.

4:15, and in Song of Songs 4:10, Ruth and the Shulamite are referred to as veiled *kallâ*. In The Book of Ruth, Ruth is described as *kallâ* in relation to Naomi and Elimelech, thus providing the basis for her kin relationship to Boaz in 4:15, where she becomes his wife and is veiled in that status through Levirate marriage. While Ruth is *kallâ* she goes veiled to Boaz on the threshing floor – where her personal identity is hidden by her veil until she chooses to reveal it.[785] In Song of Songs 4:10, 12, the Shulamite is described as a beautiful *kallâ*. Metaphoric allusions to veiling present in this verse describe the Shulamite as 'a garden enclosed' – beautiful, but hidden and contained.[786] Another example from Biblical sources seems to indicate the same. In this case the *kallâ* and her veil are not specifically named, but the context is suggestive of a veiled *kallâ.* In Genesis 29, Leah is substituted for her sister Rachel on her wedding night. Completely obscured, presumably by a wedding veil, Leah is sent by her father to Jacob's tent as the promised wife. Leah is also *kallâ* whose personal identity is obscured by the wedding veil yet her shape exaggerated enough for Jacob to unquestioningly make her his wife. In these examples, the duality of personal obfuscation/beautification of the veiled *kallâ* is acutely apparent; so too is the relationship between the status of *kallâ* and the use of a veil to designate this status in public spaces for onlookers.[787]

In Genesis 38, Tamar, veiled with *ṣā'îp*, mirrors other Biblical and extra Biblical examples of the veiled *kallâ/kallātu*. Tamar is referred to as *kallâ* in verses 38:11 and 38:16, before she engages in sexual intercourse with Judah and in 38:24 when Judah still does not know that it was he who fathered her children.[788] She is veiled with *ṣā'îp* while she is *kallâ* –

[785]See chapter eight of this study for more on Ruth's veils.
[786]See chapter five of this study for more on the Shulamite's veils.
[787]Rebekah too, as discussed in chapter six, is not named as *kallâ* but is veiled with *ṣā'îp* in a context which mirrors these accounts. Further, the 'bride in the dark' archetype of which some of these examples belong, has been well considered in Biblical literary scholarship. For more on this topic, see for example Black, "Ruth in the Dark", 20-36.
[788]Jeansonne, *The Women of Genesis,*103. See also Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, 365 – 370.

as 38:16 clearly tells us, even if Judah is unaware of her status at this point in the narrative.[789] Genesis 38:15-16 states

> When Judah saw her he thought her to be a ***zonâ*** because she had covered her face. And he turned into her by the way and said 'Go, I pray thee, let me come into you (for he knew not that she was his ***kallâ***). And she said 'what will you give me, that you may come into me?'[790]

The connection between the status of *kallâ* and the use of a veil to construct and display this status is well represented throughout ANE including in the HB. Tamar, veiled with *ṣā'îp* as *kallâ* is another clear example of this.

When compared to other dress items juxtaposed to it, *ṣā'îp* as an indicator of Tamar's status as *kallâ* becomes further apparent. Earlier in her story, Judah specifically instructs Tamar to return to her father's house and 'remain a widow'.[791] She dresses accordingly and is described as wearing widow's clothes (*beged 'alamānâ).*[792] However, Tamar is also described in 38:14 as removing her *beged 'alamānâ* before she veils with *ṣā'îp* and subsequently, removing her *ṣā'îp* and redressing in *beged 'alamānâ* after her sexual encounter with Judah. Consequently, the identity which is constructed and displayed with *ṣā'îp* is not the same as that which is indicated with *beged 'alamānâ*.[793] Identity, values and social norms are so ingrained in dress display, that changes in dress '…require concomitant changes in the accompanying norms and values.'[794] Tamar's *ṣā'îp* indicates distinctly different identity information about her when it is compared to *beged 'alamānâ*.[795] In changing clothes before her encounter with Judah, Tamar enacts a change in status display between her expected role of widow and the status of *kallâ*, and, as Bird observes, although she has been '…widowed and sent home to her

[789]In Tamar's context *kallâ* functions as both a marker of identity and as a literary double entendre - she is not only Judah's daughter in law and wife to his family, she will also be his sexual partner. See Pace Jeansonne, *The Women of Genesis,* 103.
[790]Genesis 38:15-16
[791] Genesis 38:11.
[792]Van Der Toorn, "Significance", 330; Genesis 38:14.
[793]BDB, s.v. "beged"; BDB, s.v. "'alamānâ"; Nolan Fewell, *Narrative in the Hebrew Bible*, 87-89; Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear,* 34.
[794]Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms,* 2.
[795]BDB, s.v. "beged"; BDB, s.v. "'alamānâ".

father's house, Tamar has been promised to her husband's brother and thus has the status of a married or betrothed woman.'[796] Her *ṣā'îp* therefore specifically identifies her as belonging to the status of *kallâ*.

Despite *ṣā'îp* being a veil which is clearly indicative of the status of *kallâ,* and despite Tamar's change of dress from widow's clothes to the veil of a *kallâ* in order to trick Judah, the context in which Tamar veils does not immediately appear to indicate her status as *kallâ.* This is especially so when *kallâ* is compared to other identity markers used to describe her in the story. *Qadēšâ*, traditionally categorised as 'sacred prostitute' (equivalent to the Akkadian *qadištu,* a role referred to in the MAL) and *zānâ,* a verb traditionally translated as 'to fornicate' (with the noun derived from this verb *zonâ*, 'fornicator'), are both used to describe Tamar.[797] The noun *qadēšâ* occurs three times in the narrative and is used within the context of Judah's servant Hirah unsuccessful search for the 'prostitute'.[798] The verb *zānâ* occurs twice; initially, when Judah sees Tamar covered by *ṣā'îp* sitting on the side of the road (38:15) and then when he discovers that she is pregnant and assumes that she had sexual relations outside of marriage, as she is still a childless widow waiting for realisation of a Levirate marriage with his son Shelah (38:24).[799] While Hirah's assumption about 'the woman' being *qadēšâ* is based on his own ideas, Judah's assumption about her *zonâ* identity is based specifically on the presence of her veil.[800] The question that needs to be answered at this point is why Judah mistook the 'woman' veiled in *ṣā'îp* for a *zonâ*. In order to answer that we first need to clarify the roles *qadēšâ* and *zonâ* played in ANE and their social status.

[796] Bird, "Prostitution in the Social World", in Faraone and McClure (eds), *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, 56, note 4; Lambe, "Genesis 38: Structure and Literary Design", 113; Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear*, 41-45; McKay, "Gendering the Discourse", 171.
[797]BDB, s.v. "qadēšâ"; *DCH*, s.v. "zonâ".
[798] Genesis 38:20-23.
[799]BDB, s.v., "qadēšâ"; *DCH*, s.v. "zonâ".
[800]Genesis 38:16.

The traditional translation of these words has led many commentators to define Tamar's status in Genesis 38 not as *kallâ*, but as a 'prostitute' – with her *ṣā'îp* subsequently being defined as the veil of a prostitute. As saliently observed by Nancy J Schneider however, '…Tamar's reference to veiling as a mark of the prostitute is not supported by evidence…', especially considering the abundance of marital identity information coded in her veil.[801] Schneider also questions Tamar's veiling as an act associated with prostitution because '…if one veils before marriage, how can one differentiate between a bride and a prostitute? If royalty veil, are they too prostitutes?'[802] Huddlestun too observes that '…a clear or decisive link between the veil and the prostitute…' is lacking from historical evidence.[803] Reconsideration of the words *qadēšâ* and *zonâ* indicate that these women actually had much more complex social roles which went beyond mere 'prostitution' – with evidence to indicate that their veiling was suggestive of these other social roles.

Many traditional definitions and interpretations of *qadēšâ/qadištu* are based on Herodotus' account of Babylonian practices, where he claims young women must sit by the temple of Ishtar and 'play the harlot' as *qadištu* by having sex with a stranger once in their life in praise of the goddess.[804] Herodotus' account has been extremely influential and his classification of *qadištu/qadēšâ* as 'sacred prostitute' lingers in interpretations of Tamar's story.[805] Many today, however, admit that Herodotus' story was either a misunderstanding of what he was observing in a foreign culture or a fabrication to defame the Babylonians.[806] As

[801] Schneider, *Mothers of Promise,* 154
[802]Ibid., 154- 155.
[803] Huddlestun, "Unveiling the Versions", point 17.
[804] HWF Saggs, *The Greatness that was Babylon: A Survey of the Ancient Civilisation of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley,* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1969), 350.
[805] Nyberg, "Sacred Prostitution in the Biblical World?", 315-316.
[806]Ibid., 315. In terms of what Herodotus saw, it is also worth noting that although it was likely a cultural misinterpretation, there is nothing to suggest historically that Herodotus was a fool. Something was taking place in the temple, and it is particularly relevant that other sources indicate that girls who did not want to 'prostitute' themselves, had the option to shave their heads. The links between a shaved head and an unveiled head in terms of shame, punishment and paying a price with one's sexual attractiveness is an important tangent to explore in another capacity outside the scope of this thesis. See Susan Niditch for her important work on the relationship between hair and identity in the ancient world for an insight into this issue – Niditch, *My Brother Esau*, 3-25.

attested by MAL, *qadištu,* the Assyrian equivalent of the *qadēšâ,* engaged in many important social activities beyond the scope of their domestic space, most often in the context of the temple.[807] They could be married, but their role as *qadēšâ/qadištu* was separate to this status.[808] If married, *qadēšâ/qadištu* were expected to be veiled in public, but this veiling was related to their marital status and not to their social role as *qadēšâ/qadištu*.[809] According to Tikva Frymer-Kensky biblical *qadištu/qadēšâ*, were also engaged in weaving '…garments for Asherah…' and were '…involved in childbirth and probably other matters relating to female biology.'[810] Being *qadēšâ* was therefore a multifaceted role, concerned with various aspects of the temple and aspects of women's health. *Qadištu* and *qadēšâ* may have also been available for sex, but as Bird has argued, they were '…regarded as more respectable…' than a street prostitute (*harimtu).*[811] *Qadēšâ* did not have the negative social connotations of a prostitute.[812] Rather, women in this role, or at least some of them, seem to have been outside of normal social boundaries which allowed them a certain level of control over their own sexuality.[813] Hirah's assumption that 'the woman' Judah sent him to find was *qadēšâ* is understandable given this context, and given that the narrative suggests Hirah only knows he is going to pay a woman that Judah lawfully had sex with. He has no apprehension in asking the men of the town where the *qadēšâ* was, because it seems that there was no issue with legality or social taboo in seeking out the sexual favours of *qadēšâ*.

Like *qadištu/qadēšâ*, the act of *zānâ* and the women who performed this act (*zonâ*) should not be understood in negative connotations, along the lines of to 'prostitute oneself' as

[807] Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible: A New Interpretation of their Stories*, (NY: Random House, 2002), 271.
[808] MAL 140, 141 in Meek, "The Middle Assyrian Laws", 183.
[809] Ibid.
[810]Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible,* 271; 2 Kings 23:7.
[811]Bird, "Prostitution in the Social World", in *Prostitutes and Courtesans in the Ancient World*, Faraone and McClure eds, 56, note 4.
[812] Frymer-Kensky, *Reading the Women of the Bible,* 271.
[813]Ibid.

the moralistic undertones of the English translation suggest.[814] The use of the English terms 'prostitute', 'harlot' or 'whore' do not give enough information to accurately describe the status of these women in an early Israelite context. Other examples of the act of *zānâ* in the HB, where punishment for the act is referred to, all relate to metaphoric uses for men who breach the covenant.[815] A woman's 'breach of covenant' or *zānâ* happens only when she has extra or pre-marital sex.[816] The act of *zānâ* thus relates to the breach of the patriarchal norms and a husband or father's ownership of sexual access to a woman's body. *Zānâ*, though a verb denoting sexual acts, is a quite different action to *na'af,* which is the more common verb signifying serious sexual offenses by women, particularly married women.[817] In non-marital contexts, such as professional 'fornicators' who were unattached to a husband or father, there was no punishment for sexual acts and women engaging in they were not held to account for this action.[818] According to Bird, *zānâ* when used in relation to a woman, had broader connotations and was used to describe sexual acts by women who were outside of the traditional family structure.[819] Such women were free 'to engage in extramarital sexual relations'[820] and were not punished for *zānâ* as was the case of women belonging to a husband or father. According to Daniel Bodi they were 'unencumbered women' – women who had more control over their sexual lives than wives and daughters, who were neither under the control of one man nor streetwalkers selling sex.[821] Thus, as Bird notes there was a '…great similarity between *qadēšâ* and the *zonâ* (at least in male eyes)…' in that that they were both '…outside

[814]Bird, "Prostitution in Ancient Israel", 42-43.
[815]Ibid.
[816]Ibid, 42.
[817]Ibid.
[818]Ibid.
[819]Ibid, 43.
[820]Ibid.
[821]Goodnick Westenholtz, "Tamar, Qedesa, Qadistu", 245 – 265. Bodi's recent reading of this role agrees with Frymer-Kensky's interpretation where he suggests that HB women previously deemed prostitutes by scholarship, should be referred to as 'unencumbered women'. Bodi, "The Encounter with a Courtesan", 14-15. See also I M Diakonoff, "Women in Old Babylonia Not under Patriarchal Authority", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 29*, No 3 (October 1986), 225-238.

the family system and thereby approachable for sexual encounter on arrangement';[822] but none of them were simply selling sex.

We have many examples of this type of 'unencumbered' women from across the ANE indicating that these women could be veiled as a signifier of their particular status and role. From the HB, Rahab in Joshua 2: 1-24 is called *zonâ,* and is an example par excellence of a woman of 'unencumbered' status. Rahab, hailed as a hero in Israelite history for assisting Joshua's men to hide and then escape, is an alehouse or tavern hostess. Her profession obviously puts her outside of patriarchal family structures, while the designation *zonâ* indicates that she might have been also offering sex services to guests at the tavern, which, however, were not perceived as prostitution.[823] Rahab the *zonâ* is paralleled to Šiduri, the alehouse mistress in the *Epic of Gilgameš*; and while Rahab is not described as veiled in Joshua 2, Šiduri is described as veiled with *kuttumu* veil in her role as 'innkeeper'.[824]

The *hetaira* of Ancient Greece provides another example of the complexity of 'unencumbered' women. While the social role of *zonâ* is certainly not equitably transferrable to that of *hetaira,* there are some notable aspects of *hetaira* that are of significance for this discussion. These women were also not 'prostitutes', though, like *zonâ,* they were approachable for sexual activities. In Llewellyn-Jones's description of Theodote the *hetaira,* mentioned in Xenophon's *Memorabilia,* she is

> '… not associated with a male guardian, but she does not work as a *pornē* either; nor does she sell herself for money. Instead, she is cast in the role of a truly grand *hetaira* who needs to be persuaded to offer her services. Like a noblewoman, she only displays of herself what it is fitting and proper to display.'[825]

[822]Bird, "Prostitution in Ancient Israel", 43.
[823] Aramaic Targum. It serves men in rigid societies to have women they could 'access' for sex and entertainment without fear of retribution. If all extra-marital sex was forbidden in EI, then men would have no way to access that service. Incidentally, only women are criticised for being *zonāh* in regards to sexual activity. When men are *zonāh*, they are all breaches of covenant.
[824] Bodi, "The Encounter with a Courtesan", 10-14, esp 13 and 14.
[825] Llewellyn-Jones, *Aphrodite's Tortoise,* 142-143.

Hetaira were also unmarried, sexually 'unencumbered', and they, like *zonâ*, also wore veils. In their case the veil acted as a signal of the woman's identity and a tool she herself used to construct that identity. They were available for sex, but their social standing in public more closely mirrors the wife than the prostitute – all of which is distinguishable by the presence and use of their veil. When in the context of the symposia, the *hetaira* and other symposiasts appear equal through dress, and in this context, *hetaira* are not veiled.[826] However, when in public spaces, they appear more like veiled wives and noblewomen than 'prostitutes', who are naked or semi-naked and readily available for sex.[827] The veil is simultaneously used to shape her body in an alluring fashion *and* to conceal other aspects of herself, signalling to onlookers that she is not immediately sexually accessible, but can be if she so chooses.[828] The fluidity of social status presented by the *hetaira* offered an important 'distortion of social boundaries' in relation to sex.[829] *Hetaira* did not sell sex; the transaction was part of '…the economy of aristocratic gift exchange.'[830] One cannot help but observe similarities between these 'unencumbered women' and those in the broader ANE and early Israelite contexts, especially in terms of the use of a veil.

In HB contexts, 'unencumbered women' also had the capacity to wrap, cover and conceal their personal identities with their dress and veils while simultaneously utilising their veils as a designator of status. Proverbs 7:10 and Psalms 73:6 tell us that *zonâ* and other 'unencumbered' women wore *šît.*[831] A 'garment', different to other 'clothes' such as *beged,* and the *simlâ*, which were the common non-gendered tunics worn by many members of society, wearers of *šît* were distinguishable from other people through this dress.[832] While Proverbs

[826] Ibid.
[827] Ibid.
[828] Ibid.
[829] Ibid.
[830] Ibid, 143.
[831]Murphy, *Proverbs*, 43; Brenner, *The Israelite Woman*, 82-83 defines the women of these verses and also in Ezekiel 16:8 as 'prostitutes' or those with sexual freedom.
[832]Strong's, s.v. "šît".

7:10 only tells us that *zonâ* wore *šît*, but no further information is given on how it was worn, Psalms 73:6 tells us that these women *'āṭap* their *šît.*[833] The verb *'āṭap* means 'to envelop oneself' and is similar to *'āṭâ*, the verb used in Song of Songs 1:7 to describe a veiled woman and *'ālap* , the verb used to show how Tamar covers with *ṣā'îp*.[834] The duality of the social necessity to be personally unrecognisable if desired and the capacity to highlight one's body shape for seductive purposes with covering garments, meant that 'unencumbered women' such as *zonâ* and other women outside of the control of men or familial unit, could wrap themselves up to conceal and protect their personal identity with a veil while highlighting their physical shape in a seductive fashion. Their veil would have also highlighted their special social status, neither readily available prostitutes (who were uncovered), nor untouchable wives.

When this social lens is cast on Tamar and the use of her veil (*cāsâ* and *'ālap*), it becomes clear that the trickery she plays on Judah is based on the fluidity of the social status of 'unencumbered women' such as *qadēšâ* and *zonâ*. Like Rebekah in Genesis 24, Tamar initially wears her *ṣā'îp* in the style of *cāsâ*, the verb meaning 'to cover', explored in Chapter Six of this study.[835] The verb *cāsâ* is related to marriage veils, including *kānāp*, the identity coded hem of a man's garment used to veil a woman as confirmation of marriage, and cut/torn or stripped from a woman to enact a divorce.[836] The use of *ṣā'îp* in the style of *cāsâ*, as in Rebekah's case, is an act that displays identity information – her status as *kallâ*, a bride and wife with familial allegiance to her husband. Initially, Tamar constructs her identity as *kallâ*, a bride/wife/not yet a mother. That, however, changes once she '*ālap* the veil. The verb '*ālap* is defined by BDB as 'cover, faint' and is synonymous with the Assyrian *elpitu* meaning 'pining,

[833]Psalms 73:6. There is no mention of the specific type of 'prostitute' that covers herself with *šît,* and the woman is only referred to as 'she'. However, this Psalm is considered to be about prostitutes and those that commit fornication.
[834]BDB, s.v, "'āṭap"; BDB s.v "'ālap"; BDB, s.v. "''āṭâ"; See chapter five of this study.
[835]See chapters four and six of this study.
[836]Ibid.

exhaustion'.[837] In other references in the HB, *ālap* describes a person being overcome, surrounded, faint and subsumed.[838] Its use to describe how *ṣā'îp* was worn by Tamar further suggests that this veil was capable of completely surrounding the wearer; which we already know from the noun's unused verbal root of *ṣā'îp, ṣā'p,* 'to wrap over' and 'double or fold'.[839] Most significantly however, *ālap* is the verb related to *'āṭap* and *'āṭâ* - the ways in which 'unencumbered women' such as *zonâ* could veil. Tamar's choice to '*ālap* with her *ṣā'îp* provides a pivotal piece of identity information within the unique context of her story. Her *ṣā'îp* '…is not the mark of a prostitute…';[840] but the way she wore it, '*ālap* , certainly parallels with the way sexually available 'unencumbered women' wore their veils.

Tamar's use of her *ṣā'îp* therefore shows a duality of dress and identity display.[841] She uses her *ṣā'îp* to *cāsâ*, and then to '*ālap.* By changing the styles in which her personal veil is worn she both conceals and reveals her identities. [842] Veiling in the style *cāsâ*, with the veil of a *kallâ*, *ṣā'îp*, she declares herself as a belonging to this status and rejects the status of widow cast on her by Judah. When she further envelops herself ('*ālap*), she does not use a veil of an 'unencumbered woman' to do so – but she does wrap herself in the style suggestive of women who are outside of family structure and potentially available for sex. Using *ṣā'îp* to '*ālap* , she changes her identity display, presenting herself as *zonâ* and creating just enough dress confusion to allow the deception of Judah to take place. Instead of being constricted in her sexual freedoms as a *kallâ* who is covered in *cāsâ* style and therefore unable to act in order to get out of imposed widowhood and reclaim her status in Judah's family according to Levirate

[837]BDB, s.v., "'ālap".
[838]Ibid; Strong's, s.v. "'ālap".
[839]BDB, s.v. "ṣā'p"; Strong's, s.v. "ṣā'p".
[840] Schneider, *Mothers of Promise*, 154 -155.
[841] Furman, "His Story Versus Her Story", 147; Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear*, 41-43.
[842]Genesis 38:14.

law, when wrapped like a *zonâ* Tamar can use sex to force Judah to recognise her status of a wife and mother belonging to his family.

Mistaken identity can occur when a person is not wearing what they are expected to wear in the context in which they are found. As Winkle observes '…misleading, unrealistic…expectations can precipitate dress identity misperceptions'.[843] This is precisely what happens with Tamar and her veiling to '*ālap* herself in the marital veil. [844] Judah does not notice the type of veil Tamar is wearing and sees only a woman wrapped '*ālap* style, and that she sits by the side of the road; all of which are part of Tamar's deceptive signalling that she belongs to a social category that allows freer access to her body. In verse 38:15 Judah 'thinks' 'the woman' he propositions for sex is a *zonâ* because she is covered.[845] The root of the word *ḥāšaḇ,* used to describe Judah's thoughts in this situation, is defined by Strong as 'think, account', 'to devise, plot, plan, impute, reckon.'[846] This word can also mean 'to weave, to fabricate, to plot, to contrive'.[847] In other HB references it occurs in the context of a deception or falsehood.[848] Judah's assumption about the covered women sitting on the side of the road carries a level of self-deception betraying a wishful thinking by a widower who is searching to satisfy his sexual needs in a socially accepted way. The veil of Tamar was wrapped '*ālap* style which is enough information for the deception to occur and for Judah to assume that she is an 'unencumbered woman' available for sex.[849]

[843] Winkle, "One Like The Son of Man," 69.
[844] Joseph, *Uniforms and Nonuniforms,* 10.
[845]Brenner, *I Am,* 136.
[846]BDB, s.v., "ḥāšaḇ".
[847]Ibid.
[848]Ibid.
[849] Furman, "His Story Versus Her Story", 147; Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear,* 34; 49; Schneider, *Mothers of Promise,* 154-155.

Tamar's use of her veil is a good example illustrating Van Der Toorn's claim that veiling in ANE, in addition to being a way of patriarchal control, was also a tool of seduction.[850] In Tamar's case the sexual allure of veiling is both clearly known to her and overtly utilised by her when she '*ālap* with her *ṣā'îp*. [851] Wrapped and concealed, Tamar utilises the seductive nature of the textile - nothing of her can be physically seen, personal identity is obscured, yet the curve and shape of her body is deliberately accentuated for sexual appeal, subtly trapping Judah into thinking that she is might be available for sex.

From a literary perspective, Tamar's use of *ṣā'îp* for deception and embodiment of identities are clear demonstrations of her agency. Fuchs argues that, '…manipulation carried out by active, resourceful women…' is '…the best response of the powerless when trapped within a dominant and dominating system.' [852] This is precisely what Tamar's trickery is about. Disempowered and trapped in a personally unacceptable position, she uses her veil, the very instrument of patriarchal domination and control which when used by men depersonalises women, to assert her personal identity and achieve the rightful familial role that was denied to her.[853]

Tamar's dressing, undressing and re-dressing are all written entirely from her perspective; she is the subject of all three dressing verbs (*soor* – removed, '*ālap* –wrap, *cāsâ* – cover)[854] when she wears *ṣā'îp*.[855] During the marriage negotiations, when Er dies and she must

[850] Brenner, *I Am,* 136. While there are hints of patriarchal bodily control throughout Genesis 38 for Tamar, *ṣā'îp* is a garment of social power and is a liberating and protective dress item. Tamar's *ṣā'îp* defines and protects her personal space during the deception. If Judah discovered 'the unencumbered woman' was her before they engaged in sexual conduct, she would have been punished – as we see at the end of her narrative before he learns that he is the father of her children. It is not safe to become known to him on the side of the road – thus *ṣā'îp,* as well as deceiving Judah through identity misinformation, also protects her.
[851]Ibid; Van Der Toorn, "Significance", 339.
[852]Esther Fuchs "Who is Hiding the Truth? Deceptive Women and Biblical Androcentrism", in *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship,* ed. Adela Yarbro Collins, (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985), 117-136; McKay, "'Only a Remnant of Them Will be Saved'", 32-61
[853] Fontaine, "The Deceptive Goddess", 85.
[854] BDB, s.v. "soor"; BDB, s.v. "'ālap"; BDB s.v. "cāsâ".
[855]Schneider, *Mothers of Promise,* 153; Adelman, "Seduction and Recognition", 93.

marry Onan and then again when she is forced to wait as a widow at her father's house, she is treated as an object and she passively submits to the patriarchal rules. As Alter observes, '…up to this point, she has been a 'passive object, acted upon-or not acted upon – by Judah and his sons'.[856] That passive acceptance, however, changes when her right to be a wife and mother according to the same patriarchal rules is denied. At that moment she becomes a creator of her own destiny and the veil becomes the main tool allowing her to achieve the desired goal. During the encounter with Judah, Tamar's voice is also commanding the decision making process – another example of her forthrightness and control of her own choice making.[857] In Genesis 38:17-18, Judah advises Tamar that he will pay for their encounter with a kid goat – which Tamar accepts; but only if Judah also leaves items of identity significance as collateral until the payment is made.

When viewed through the lens of personal agency, Tamar's choice to manipulatively veil with *ṣā'îp* shows her to be an insightful social participant. Once she set the trap, she demands Judah acknowledge her and her pregnancy as that of a *kallâ* belonging to his family. In doing this she is vocal and she is active. Tamar's veiled actions illustrate Swartz and McKay's argument that 'some items of dress enable and empower the person wearing them to carry out difficult or complex social roles'.[858] The *ṣā'îp* gave Tamar both the defence and offense needed to reinstate herself as part of Judah's family and assume the rightful role of wife and mother according to the Levirate law. Wrapping herself in *ṣā'îp* like a *zonâ*, a woman able to move with more freedom between the lines of wife and sexually available woman, Tamar goes unnoticed for who she really is. She is the only person that is aware of her actual identity and she knows that wearing this particular veil indicates her rightful status – but Tamar also knows that the only way to reclaim of her rightful social identity in the face of Judah's

[856] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 20.
[857] Matthews, *More Than Meets the Ear*, 34; 40-41.
[858]Schwartz, "Uncovering the Secret Vice", 28; McKay, "Gendering the Discourse of Display", 173.

power is to manipulate his perception of her.[859] Tamar's deception through her dress display shows an embodied performance of identity by a woman who knows who she is, does not submit blindly to male domination and is resourceful and ingenious enough to fight for her rightful social and familial role, even in the face of systematic subjugation and the denial of her *kallâ* identity.

[859] Adelman, "Seduction and Recognition", 93.

8 'She said "I Am Ruth, your servant. Spread your kānāp over me': Ruth in The Book of Ruth

From the outset the book of Ruth is unique in many ways. Unlike other HB texts, the book is named after its central female protagonist and it is driven by female characters and their decisions and choices. Women's voices are clearly heard throughout the narrative expressing identity, emotion, and self-understanding as they progress through the trials and tribulations of their journey.[860] Generally speaking, the Book of Ruth is a story about the forthrightness and resilience of women; but it is also about personal, social and familial identity.[861] In this novella, identity markers which position characters within their social and familial structures are referred to routinely – and the characters' relationship bonds with each other form the core of the story. Dress, and the choice by characters to wear specific dress items, also plays a significant part in constructing and displaying these kinship bonds – especially Ruth's identities and her position within social and familial structures.

The Book of Ruth presents us with a story of two veils, one male and one female. The first veil *kānāp*, is the hem of a man's garment used to cover women as a sign of marriage; which Ruth requests and is given.[862] The other veil is *miṭpaḥat*, a female veil, which she agrees to wear prior to requesting *kānāp*.[863] The two are used by Ruth as an act of coaction – the wearing of one achieves the wearing of the other, and the identity transition which cements

[860]Tod Linafelt, "Narrative and Poetic Art in the Book of Ruth", *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 64*, Issue 2 (2010): 117-129, https://doi.org/10.1177/002096431006400202; Adelman, *"Seduction and Recognition",* 88; Lau, *Identity and Ethics in the Book of Ruth,* 29-32.

[861] There has been an abundance written, particularly in recent scholarship, on identity in the book of Ruth. Most now acknowledge the significance of identity and/or agency in this narrative, especially of its female characters Ruth and Naomi. For some excellent recent discussions, see for example George Savran, "The Time of Her Life: Ruth and Naomi", *Nashim 30*, (Fall 5777/2016): 7-23, www.muse.jhu.edu/article.640280; Matthews, "The Determination of Social Identity in the Story of Ruth", 49-54; Nolan Fewell, "Space for Moral Agency", 91.

[862] The hem of a man's garment has been well discussed throughout this study, as a sartorial feature heavily woven with identity information.

[863] As we shall see, *miṭpaḥat* is mentioned *after* Ruth wears *kānāp.* However, the use of *kānāp* is dependent on the wearing of *miṭpaḥat.*

Ruth's familial relationship embodied through *kānāp* is made possible only because she presented herself at the right place and the right time, veiled in *miṭpaḥat.* As with Rebekah and Tamar, Ruth also positions herself as an active social participant of identity construction, using her veil to signal her intent to embody her desired social and personal identities.

The Book of Ruth tells the story of Ruth, her mother in law Naomi and her kinsman Boaz. After the death of Naomi's husband and her two sons, Naomi informs her two daughters in law Ruth and Orpah that she will be returning to Judah, the land which she and her husband originally came from. Ruth and Orpah are both from Moab, the region where the women currently reside and Naomi instructs them to return to their mothers' houses. She also explains that she is too old to be married again and have children, and thus cannot ever give the two women Levirate husbands to marry in the future.[864] Orpah chooses to return to her mother's house, but Ruth decides to stay with Naomi, saying that Naomi's people will be her people, that she will go where Naomi goes and further telling her mother in law not to insist that she leave her.[865] Naomi protests, but eventually concedes to Ruth.[866]

The mother and daughter in law arrive during the time of harvest in Bethlehem, the region where Boaz resides – Naomi's kinsman on her husband's side. Ruth suggests that she should go and glean the fields after people who will be kind enough to let her; she happens to try her luck in Boaz's field. [867] When Boaz sees Ruth, he asks who she is and learns that she is a Moabite that has returned with Naomi. The two engage in a conversation, and Ruth asks Boaz to let her continue working in his field.[868] Boaz complies, and tells her that he appreciates everything that she has done for Naomi and that she should stay and glean only in his field.[869]

[864] Ruth1:11-13
[865] Ruth 1:15
[866] Ruth 1:9. For a reconstruction of Orpah and her fate, see Brenner, *I Am,* 108-112.
[867] Ruth 2:2
[868] Ruth 2:2; 2:9-11.
[869] Ruth 2:11

He also adds that she is under his protection and as such, young men will not bother her. Ruth continues to glean his field, and when she returns home, she tells Naomi about meeting Boaz and learns that they are related. Ruth's gleaning of Boaz's fields continues. With the approaching end to the harvest season, presumably because the two women will find themselves in a precarious position, Naomi suggests that Ruth should alter her relationship with Boaz and become his wife.[870] Her plan for Ruth is to get her dressed in her best clothes, anoint herself, go to the threshing floor where Boaz would sleep after winnowing the wheat, 'uncover his feet and lie down' and wait for Boaz to tell her what to do.[871] Ruth obliges:

> So she went down to the threshing floor and did as her mother – in – law had instructed her. When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and he was in a contented mood, he went to lie down at the end of a heap of grain. Then she came stealthily, uncovered his feet and lay down (Ruth 3:6 – 7 NRSV)

When Boaz wakes to find a woman laying at his feet, he is startled and does not recognise her. His question about her identity is followed by an answer – and a request – from Ruth.

> At midnight the man was startled, and turned over, and there, lying at his feet was a woman! He said "Who are you?" And she answered "I am Ruth, your servant; spread your ***kānāp*** over your servant, for you are next-of-kin." (Ruth 3:8-9 NRSV)

Boaz agrees to spread his *kānāp* over her, asking her to stay the night with him and telling her that he will do right by her even though there is a closer relative who has the priority in becoming her Levirate husband. The following morning, as she is leaving, Boaz instructs her to bring the *miṭpaḥat* she is wearing, so he can give her barley to take home to Naomi.[872]

Ruth returns to Naomi and informs her of the night's proceedings. Naomi then tells her to rest and assures her that Boaz will find a way to enact the marriage. [873] Meanwhile, Boaz

[870]Ruth 3:1; Ilana Rashkow, "Ruth: The Discourse of Power", in *A Feminist Companion the Ruth*, ed. Athalya Brenner, 2nd ed, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 38.
[871]Ruth 3:4
[872]Ruth 3:15.
[873]Much has been written on this question by Naomi. See for example Jon. L Berquist, "Role Dedifferentiation in the Book of Ruth", *JSOT 57* (1993) 23-37; Phyllis Trible, "Ruth", in *Women of Scripture*, ed. Meyers, Craven and Kramer, 147; Alice L Laffey and Mahri Leonard-Fleckman, *Ruth*, Wisdom Commentaries Volume 8, (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2017), 125.

goes to the men of the town and uses a kind of a ruse to have Ruth as his wife. He says that Naomi is selling her dead husband's land and invites the closest relative to buy it. When the closest relative accepts the offer, Boaz informs him that the purchase comes with an obligation to engage in Levirate marriage with Ruth in order for the dead man's name to continue.[874] This dampens the enthusiasm of the closest relative and the path is open for Boaz to claim the land and Ruth. He publicly declares her as his wife and the marriage is sealed.[875]

Throughout the Book of Ruth there is an abundance of '…focalising identity markers…' used to define and redefine the personal, social and familial identities of Ruth, Boaz and Naomi.[876] As the story progresses, Ruth, Naomi and Boaz all undergo what Danna Nolan Fewell describes as 'the accrual of labels' relating to their identities, making identity in its many forms an essential element of this text.[877] Naomi is, for example, 'Elimelech's wife', 'a kinsman of Boaz by marriage' and she also requests that she be referred to as '*Mara*' or 'bitter' and not 'Naomi' when she returns to her homeland after a long absence filled with grief and loss (Ruth 1:20). Boaz is 'Naomi's 'kinsman, on her husband's side', 'from a family in Elimelech' 'a redeemer'.[878] As the central protagonist, Ruth's identities are in particular at the forefront of the story.

Ruth is constantly defined by personal, social and familial identity markers.[879] She is 'Naomi and Elimelech's daughter in law', Naomi's self-described 'daughter', 'Mahlon's wife', 'Mahlon's widow' or 'dead man's wife' 'Boaz's wife' and 'the Moabite'.[880] In Ruth 2:6 she is also *na'arâ* similar to Rebekah in Genesis 24 - a young woman ready for marriage. In verses 1:6, 7, 8, 22 and 2:20, 22 and 4:15 she is *kallâ* 'daughter in law/bride/not yet a mother' like

[874]Ruth 4:1-6.
[875]Ruth 4: 9-11.
[876] Nolan Fewell, "Space for Moral Agency", 86; also 83-84; Lau, *Identity and Ethics in the Book of Ruth*, 29-32.
[877] Nolan Fewell, "Space for Moral Agency", 86.
[878] Ibid.
[879] Matthews, "The Determination of Social Identity in Ruth", 49-54; Laffey and Leonard-Fleckman, *Ruth*, 125.
[880] Trible, "Ruth", 146.

Tamar in Genesis 38. Ruth is at once daughter, young woman, wife, widow and daughter in law, traversing all of these social roles while simultaneously embodying them all.

In this sea of identity designations, the veils that are mentioned in relation to Ruth are important indicators of her identities and her transitioning and negotiating between them. *Miṭpaḥat* and *kānāp* are integral in signifying who Ruth is and, who she wants to be. While the two veils do not seem to be immediately connected – one is given to her by Boaz during the night on the threshing floor, the other used to carry barley the next day – they are used in synergy in order to construct and display Ruth's identities and firmly situate her within the familial structure. As with every other veil, they are coded with social information.

Kānāp, which Boaz covered Ruth with on the threshing floor, is the hem of his garment. Defined by BDB as 'wing, extremity' *kānāp* is a significant sartorial element, synonymous with *sissiktu* and *kureššar* the Akkadian and Hittite terms for hem, as well as numerous other hem synonyms (for example *birmu A* and *kappu*) explored in Chapter Four of this study. These dress elements were coded with identity information and were so symbolic of the wearer's identity, that they could be used as proxy for the person in business affairs.[881] Rank, status and personal identity were all sewn into the hem of a man's garment, to the point that the hem '…was considered a symbolic extension of the owner himself and more specifically of his rank and authority.'[882] When a man's hem was used to veil a woman, as it was routinely in the ANE, the action carried significant meaning. As discussed in Chapter Four and Five of this study, extant records clearly indicate a long lineage of hem-veiling to publicly enact a marriage, with the act of veiling with a hem signifying a woman's transition to the status of wife. Divorce was

[881] Breniquet, "Functions and Uses of Textiles in the Ancient Near East", 14; Breneman, *Nuzi Marriage Tablets*, 259.
[882]Milgrom, "Of Hem and Tassels: Rank, Authority and Holiness", 61-65.

also often performed as an inversion of this marriage veiling, where the hem-veil was cut, torn or removed from the woman's head.[883]

The verb *pāras*, used by Ruth when asking Boaz to cover her with his *kānāp,* also tells us more about the *kānāp* itself. BDB defines *pāras* as 'to spread or spread out' and the verb occurs in many verses in the HB.[884] From the root meaning 'to break, disperse lay open or scatter', *pāras* is equivalent to Akkadian *parašu,* fly or to spread out like a wing.[885] There are many other examples of *pāras* being used to describe the wearing of dress items, including Lamentations 4:4, Exodus 9:29 and 3:3; 37:9 and 40:19, Numbers 4:6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14 and Judges 8:25. Not all references to *pāras* mention veiling, in fact, most simply mention the 'spreading' of clothing over oneself. However, one reference in Ezekiel 16:8-10, describes the 'spreading' of a hem as a symbol of marriage and familial protection, with this usage also found in the Book of Ruth.[886]

Boaz's *kānāp,* which is used to veil Ruth on the threshing floor and *pāras* the way it veiled her, are both indicative of the marriage that is taking place between Ruth and Boaz, as well as signifying protection and familial joining.[887] Veiling Ruth with *kānāp* is enough for the marriage to occur – with the more formal, public proceedings taking place the next day when Boaz goes to the elders and declares that he has married Ruth. By agreeing to Ruth's request to cover her with *kānāp,* Boaz signals her symbolic transition from a relative to a wife and in doing so, he literally and figuratively takes Ruth under his wing.[888] This transition, however, would not have been possible without Ruth wearing the *miṭpaḥat,* the other veil named in her story. While this veil is mentioned the following morning as she goes to leave the

[883] See chapter four of this study for more on this discussion.
[884] BDB, s.v. "pāras".
[885] Ibid.
[886] Ezekiel 16:8-10**;** Sasson, *Ruth,* 66; Tamara Cohn Eskenazi and Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Ruth,* JPS Bible Commentary, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2011), 51.
[887] Van der Toorn, "Significance", 334.
[888] Ibid.

threshing floor with her bride price of barley, its presence in the story is a precursor to Ruth's *kānāp* marriage veil.[889]

Miṭpaḥat is defined by BDB as 'cloak, shawl' [890] with Strong further defining the veil as 'a wide cloak, a veil or wimple' always worn by women.[891] Sometimes classified by commentators as a cloak, shawl or robe, *miṭpaḥat* is better defined as 'veil' and belongs within the broader veil continuum.[892] It is quite a different veil-garment than *kānāp,* and is referred to in Ruth 3:15 the morning after Boaz and Ruth marry on the threshing floor. Its only other biblical mention is in Isaiah's list 3:22. As discussed in Chapter Five of this study, the dress items on Isaiah's list are generally considered to be high quality dress items worn by elite women to indicate social status as well as familial status.[893] They are stripped from the Daughters of Zion in response to their social and sexual misdemeanours – their 'haughty' behaviour – suggesting that the unacceptable behaviour meant that the women could no longer wear garments which signified high status, or belonging to their male relatives.[894]

Ṭāpaḥ, the verbal form of *miṭpaḥat,* gives further clues as to the style of the dress item itself. [895] In BDB it is translated as 'extend, spread', by Strong as 'to flatten out, extend' and by DCH as 'to be broad'. [896] *Ṭāpaḥ* occurs in two other references in the HB, in Isaiah 48:3 and in Lamentations 2:22, and both uses suggest 'surround', 'stretch' or 'spread out'.[897] In Isaiah 48:13 *ṭāpaḥ* is 'spread out'

[889] Roth, "The Material Composition of the Neo-Babylonian Dowry", 124.
[890] *BDB*, s.v. "miṭpaḥat".
[891] Strong's, s.v. "miṭpaḥat".
[892]*Miṭpaḥat* is an example of a veil which has been routinely translated as 'cloak', 'scarf' or another English word which avoids the use of the term 'veil'. Nonetheless, *miṭpaḥat* belongs under the umbrella of veil, and should be translated as such.
[893] See chapter five of this study.
[894] See chapters four and five for more about the broader significance of uncovering/stripping women in the ANE. See also Niditch, *My Brother Esau,* 122.
[895] BDB, s.v., "ṭāpaḥ".
[896] BDB, s.v., "ṭāpaḥ"; *DCH* 5, s.v. "tāpaḥ"; Strong's, s.v. "ṭāpaḥ".
[897] Ibid.

> My hand laid the foundation of the Earth, and my right hand ***ṭāpaḥ*** (spread out) the heavens…' (Isa 48:13 NRSV).

In Lamentations 2:22 *ṭāpaḥ* occurs as 'surround'

> You invited my enemies that ***ṭāpaḥ*** (surround) me, as if for a day of festival (Lam 2:22 NRSV)

Both references describe an enveloping, concealing, stretching and surrounding action. *Miṭpaḥat* was obviously a large and expansive garment, capable of wrapping or covering the wearer. *Miṭpaḥat* likely had the capacity to be worn for warmth as well, as Sasson has argued,[898] and it may have been made of thicker, more tightly woven material, large and heavy enough to carry the barley the following morning.[899] Taking all these elements into consideration, *miṭpaḥat* seems to have been a very large and heavy veil, which as well as having the capacity to wrap the wearer, also kept the wearer warm and could be used to carry heavy objects – though this was likely not its express purpose. Most importantly, it also displayed identity information about the wearer – specifically familial identity information.

In the Book of Ruth *miṭpaḥat* most likely indicated Ruth's familial status as belonging to Elimelech's family; with Matthews arguing that Ruth is deliberately dressed, '…so that she will be recognised as a member of the household of Elimelech…'. [900] Though it is mentioned only in the aftermath of the veiling with *kānāp,* Boaz refers to it as the veil that is already in Ruth's possession. (Ruth 3:15). Ruth's *miṭpaḥat* which she wore to the threshing floor, was thus part of the particular ensemble of her finest adornment, which Naomi dressed her in with the explicit purpose of seeking marriage with Boaz as a levir capable of marrying her.

Familial relationship or clan belonging were also coded into and displayed via the weave, style, colour and type of fabric of garments and cloth. Ruth's *miṭpaḥat* may have been woven in such a way that it was recognisable as a familial cloth. Matthews notes that

[898] Sasson, *Ruth*, 68.
[899] Ibid., Frederic W Bush, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ruth, Esther: 9*, (Michigan: Zondervan, 1996), 178.
[900] Matthews, "The Determination of Social Identity in the Story of Ruth," 53.

distinctions in cloth which indicated different identities would have been clear to social participants; and, in other veiling examples we see the familial link through dress.[901] For example, in Genesis 24, Rebekah's use of *ṣā'îp* likely identifies her as the bride Isaac was expecting from his father's homeland. In the broader ANE, such familial designating veils were part of the dowry or bride price.[902] In Ruth's story, *miṭpaḥat* might not be part of her dowry, but it is an indicator of her close familial relationship to Boaz.[903]

The giving and receiving of dress items in the HB is also indicative of familial links and a change in status.[904] Breniquet notes that 'the fabrics involved in rites of passage are often passed down from generation to generation, thus materializing kin relationships and are a direct link with the ancestors'.[905] Given to her by her mother in law the night before the meeting on the threshing floor, *miṭpaḥat* signifies that when Ruth goes to the threshing floor, she will request to transition from kinswoman to wife. As Adelman observes, the meeting on the threshing floor '…is the moment of transformation…',[906] thus, when *miṭpaḥat* is named by Boaz in the morning, the transition to wife has already taken place for Ruth. She spent a night with Boaz, uncovered his feet and laid next to his feet – most likely euphemisms for having sex.[907] In the morning, Boaz gives Ruth '…six ephahs of barley…'(3:15)[908] so as not to '…go empty – handed to your mother – in – law' (3:17),[909] which is an act that is generally interpreted

[901] Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative", 26.
[902] See chapter four of this study.
[903] Matthews, "The Determination of Social Identity in the Story of Ruth," 53.
[904] Matthews, "The Anthropology of Clothing in the Joseph Narrative", 26.
[905]Breniquet, "Functions and Uses of Textiles in the Ancient Near East", 14; Bogatyerev has also shown that subtle distinctions in women's dress are capable of showing various statuses within the overarching role of 'womanhood'; and that this is encoded into the fabric by women as the makers of cloth. See Bogatyerev, "Costume as Sign", 21.
[906] Adelman, *"Seduction and Recognition",* 100.
[907] 'Uncovering the feet' is generally taken to be a euphemism for 'uncovering the genitals', with scholars who observe this being too numerous to mention.
[908] Ruth 3:15 (NRSV); Carol Meyers, "Everyday Life in Biblical Israel: Women's Social Networks", in Averbeck et al, *Life and Culture of the ANE*, 192-193.
[909] Ruth 3:17 (NRSV).

to be a bride price.[910] Ruth gives Boaz her *miṭpaḥat* to fill with grain, which she then carries home to her mother. Thus, the same veil which she used to indicate familial identity, capacity and eligibility to transition to Boaz's wife is used to carry home to her mother in law, the bounty of her transition and the evidence that the transition has occurred.[911]

Naomi's role in readying Ruth to go to the threshing floor wearing the familial *miṭpaḥat* is of huge significance to Ruth's transition to Boaz's wife – and commentators often take Naomi's involvement as being a sign that it is Naomi that is the key decision maker in the narrative.[912] However, the choice to wear both veils in this narrative, is Ruth's. Ruth is at the centre of this dressed transition, as the social participant who embodies her desired identities, expresses her perspective and personal identity, and makes choices throughout her story.

Ruth's agency as the dressed social participant, is evident in her choice making throughout her narrative – through her direct actions as well as her voice and her point of view. At the beginning of her story, the decision to leave Moab with Naomi and regard herself as part of Naomi's people is the first of many clear choices by Ruth; everything that happens once the women reach Judah comes as a consequence of this initial decision to construct her social identity as part of Naomi's kinship structure.[913] When Ruth finds herself gleaning in Boaz's field, and when he learns who she is and tells her that he ordered young men not to harass her and that she should not glean in other fields, he calls her 'daughter' (Ruth 2:8-9) – a clear indication that she has been accepted within the protective kinship structure.

[910]For further discussion on the nature of "bride price" see Roth, "The Material Composition of the Neo-Babylonian Dowry", 1-55; Stol, "Women in Mesopotamia", 124; Meier Tetlow, *Women, Crime and Punishment,* 127.
[911] Adelman, *"Seduction and Recognition",* 100.
[912] Brenner, *Ruth and Naomi*, 40-42; Phyllis Trible, "Naomi" in *Women in Scripture*, ed. Carol Meyers, Toni Craven and Ross S Kraemer, 130-131.
[913] Matthews, "The Determination of Social Identity in the Story of Ruth," 53.

Being accepted as a daughter, however, is not the same as being a wife. The suggestion to make this transition between the two identities comes from Naomi, but Ruth's compliance should not be regarded as passive acceptance. Rather, it is a continuation of her identity self-construction – indicated in the story by Ruth's own voice, and her direct actions which follow. Ruth's voice prior to her direct actions in this encounter clearly indicate that it is she who is demanding that her veiled identities be recognised and actualised. In Ruth 3:8, Ruth says when asked by Boaz who she is:

> I am Ruth, your servant; spread your *kānāp* over me, for you are next of kin. (Ruth 3:18 NRSV).

Here, veiled in the *miṭpaḥat* she speaks clearly and decisively to indicate her agency for self-identification.

After verbalising her identity and her intent, the experience on the threshing floor which culminates in her being veiled with *kānāp* and transitioning to wife, is led entirely by Ruth – a clear indication of her capacity to act as an agent of her own choices, with her own motivation to do so. As Laffey and Leonard Fleckman observe, her '…agency is a crucial factor…' [914] in what happens on the threshing floor, where '…her own independence in determining her marriage partner...'[915] is at the forefront of the interaction. When she asks Boaz to cover her with his *kānāp*, Ruth's '…executive self…' acts '…deliberately and in a coordinated way', [916] where she clearly declares who she is and what she wants, while veiled in the *miṭpaḥat*. She uncovers and lays next to Boaz's feet, initiating a sexual encounter, with her actions causing the unsuspecting Boaz to tremble uncontrollably and grasp towards her.[917] Boaz's reaction to Ruth in 3:8 is often translated as 'being afraid and turning', but his *châraḏ* (trembling) and *lâphaṯ* (grasping with a twisting motion) need to be considered in the context of Ruth's

[914] Laffey and Leonard Fleckman, *Ruth,* 115.
[915] Ibid.
[916] Ibid.
[917] Ibid.

'uncovering his feet'. The basic meaning of the verb *gâlâ* (uncover) is to denude, especially in a sexual way. Lifting Boaz's tunic to uncover his feet thus means that she also exposed his genitals. The significance of this moment is that it is precisely after Boaz wakes up naked that Ruth asks to be covered with his *kānāp*, the traditional sign of a women becoming a wife. By doing this, she is appropriating the traditional patriarchal marriage procedure by subverting it. Instead of Boaz asking her to become his wife, it is Ruth asking for the *kānāp* – acting as the agent of her own self-identification.[918]

Ruth's veils are utilised by her as a deliberate act of coaction, where she, as a dressed social participant, acts with specific intent to transition to the status of Boaz's wife. In wearing *miṭpaḥat* she indicates that she is kin and available for Levirate marriage with Boaz, and in requesting to be covered by Boaz's *kānāp*, she becomes a Levirate wife. The veils are therefore utilised by Ruth to construct, display and establish her desired identities. The interplay between agency and identity in the Book of Ruth, gives an insight into the capacity of individual women to manipulate their dress and to embody desired social identities which are constructed and displayed by their veil-garments, and by veil garments which they know will signify a new status, once they are dressed in them.

[918] Ibid. Laffey and Leonard Fleckman describe this as Ruth 'proposing' to Boaz – though the veil signifies more than just a proposal.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Summary of research

In this study, I have attempted to explore the practice of veiling in order to provide a fuller and clearer picture of women in the HB and their identities, and the real-life implications of veil use for and by ancient women who participated in, and were expected to participate in the practice of veiling in the ANE. In particular, I have examined the veiled-vocabulary from the region, as well as examples of the practice in extant textual records which mention veiling – including lists, inventories, law codes, letters and fictive literature. I have shown the construction and display of identities through the action of dressing in specific styles and types of veil-garments, coded with identity information, and, examined the identity of women as dressed social participants, by considering dress as an embodied, lived experience, specifically from the perspective of the women who wore veils – with a particular focus on the identity coded veils, as well as the actions, and choices of Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth; three veiled women named in the HB and, the focus of this study. In doing so, I have shown that these literary examples are representative of the agency of women. The veil and the act of veiling, do not present us with simply a passive acceptance, but rather, with women who in certain circumstances could use their veils to challenge patriarchal norms to embody desired identities.

In Chapters One and Two, I examined the English word 'veil' as a translation term for the diverse variety of material dress items present in veiled-vocabularies, establishing from the beginning, how the word 'veil' would be used throughout this study. Here, the two primary issues surrounding the English word 'veil' and its use as a translation term were explored. Firstly, the avoidance of using the term 'veil' to classify and identify head-covering garments in favour of non-threatening words such as 'cloak' or 'scarf', and, the lingering biases and binarism of some scholars who avoid – whether consciously or subconsciously – utilising 'veil' as a categorical marker of dress type. The second issue that was discussed was the

indiscriminate use of the term veil to classify all head-covering garments worn by women and the limiting and homogenising effect such use has on the analysis of the practice. Both over and under use of the English word veil ignore and subsume the exquisite diversification of veil terminology used in languages which feature a veiled-vocabulary. In order to avoid the shortcomings of such use, it was decided to use 'veil' as an umbrella, categorical translation term, which neither subsumes nor excludes the diversity of these dress items, and which firmly embeds them in the study of dress, and recognises and honours the practice as being reflective of a continuum and the diversity of veil-garments from the ANE.

The necessity to clearly designate what is meant by the dress category 'veil', and how it was used in this study, was propelled by the examination surrounding the debated issue of veiling women in the HB as discussed in Chapter Two. Here, I examined the important scholarship surrounding the classification, translation and identification of the many types and socio-cultural uses of veils as they are recorded in the HB, as well as the issue of veiling having no 'clear and stable' answer, due to seemingly present incongruences between examples of the practice recorded in the HB.

In Chapter Three, the theoretical and methodological basis for this study was laid out – a feminist literary criticism embedded in the theory of dress. Scholars of contemporary dress theory have established how dress operates on our bodies as the barrier between the public and the private; and how we utilise dress to construct and display our social and personal identities, including gender, social role, and status. Specific dress can be and often is, prescribed by a culture or society; yet, individuals as dressed social participants and the embodiers of dressed identities do not necessarily need to adhere to dress requirements. Or, if adherence is unavoidable, dressed social participants can, at times, operate with their own agency to manipulate and choose their dress – and thus choose how they wish to position themselves within their socio-cultural context. The act of dressing, scholars observe, is a habitual, lived

experience in both the ancient and contemporary world. For women, whose identities are often strictly regulated within patriarchal social structures, having the capacity to engage, make choices, and manipulate dress to construct and display desired identities or variations to prescribed identity display, affords them some level of control of their bodily display. In this chapter, within this theoretical context, I established the many ways dress operates on the surface of the body to construct and display identities, and what this means for women as dressed social participants.

In Chapter Four, I outlined dress as it occurred in the ANE, with a particular focus on the incredible diversity of dress options for ancient people, and the ways in which dress records indicate identities. I surveyed the practice of veiling as it occurred in the ANE, by examining the veiled-vocabulary of ancient languages as well extant textual records which mention the practice of veiling, while also glancing briefly at visual sources which depict veiling. Veiled-vocabularies are certainly evident in the lexicons of ancient languages, such as Akkadian and Hebrew, and despite Eurocentric or biased and inadequate translations of 'veil' garments (as explored in Chapter One), utilising the term 'veil' in this study as a tool of dress theory has proven to be a useful and important 'umbrella' term to classify obscure and difficult terminology of the past. The examination of textual records undertaken in this chapter, from sources such as inventories, law codes, lists and letters, as well as fictive texts such as myths and hymns, indicates clear thematic uses underpinning the practice of veiling in the ANE. The veil was, in some applications, a tool of appurtenance. Systems of patriarchal bodily control and organisation of women were present in the ANE, evident in veil use. Veils were also used to construct and display the social status and role of women – often high/elite and marital and familial status. But, some veiling records also suggest that women embodied the act of veiling by wrapping and covering their own bodies, and not simply veiling out of a desire to maintain

modesty or fulfil male expectations of social dress requirements, but as a lived experience of dressing.

In Chapter Five, I examined dress and the veil specifically within the corpus of the HB. Dress types and styles, as well as their functionality and significance in the HB broadly was established, so too was the way dress operates in the corpus in the construction and display of identities. I also explored the bridge between real-life dressed experience and literary representations in this chapter, where I considered how dress codes named in literary records should be understood as representing dress items that would have been worn by real, living social participants. In terms of the practice of veiling, a distinction was made in this chapter between the experience of veiling in Genesis 24, 38 and the Book of Ruth (the focus of chapters Six – Eight), and other examples of veiling practice in the HB – specifically Numbers 5:18, Isaiah 47, Song of Songs and Isaiah 3's list of finery (with its many probable veil-garments). An important distinction between the use of veils in the HB (and broader ANE) was signalled in this chapter – many veils in the HB are described from the perspective of onlookers and in a fashion that does not highlight women's own perspectives and experiences of veiling. Veils stripped from HB women – the inversion of the act of covering a woman – were thus explored, so too were examples of veils which remain difficult to define in the veiled-vocabulary, or which only mention veiling from the perspective of onlookers, rather than from the woman's perspective as wearer.

In Chapter Six, Seven and Eight, I showed the embodiment of dressed identity as it is recorded in the HB, from the perspective of several women – as literary representations of women from the ANE. In Chapter Six, where Rebekah *cāsâ* herself with *ṣā'îp*, her willingness and agency to step into and transition to the role of wife, by purposefully veiling herself with the familial *ṣā'îp,* in a way (*cāsâ*) that would have indicated to onlookers (in particular Isaac) that she had assumed her new role. So too, was the power in choice making by Rebekah in her

story of self-veiling, as a dressed social participant utilising the personal dress item *ṣā'îp* in a way that was neither forced nor prescribed.

In Chapter Seven, I examined Tamar's manipulation of perceived identities through veiling. Tamar is an insightful and engaged social participant, veiling with her *ṣā'îp* in not one but two ways. Firstly, to declare herself as *kallâ* by using her *ṣā'îp* to *cāsâ*. Next, going further and '*ālap* her *ṣā'îp* in the style of an 'unencumbered woman' – the only avenue available to her to step into her rightful role as matriarch in Judah's family. Tamar's use of her *ṣā'îp* shows us an example of women veiling deliberately and in specific styles, utilising known dress cues to achieve desired identities – even in extremely precarious social situations, where subversion of power and identity must be utilised in order to achieve status.

Finally, in Chapter Eight I explored how Ruth is surrounded by identity markers which classify and designate her. Within this, however, in this chapter I showed how Ruth expertly dresses in not one but two veils, to firmly cement herself in familial identity and construct, display and transition into her desired identities. Ruth establishes her identities by using *miṭpaḥat* to indicate her readiness and capacity to be Boaz's wife, and, by directly requesting his *kānāp*, the veil which transitions her to that role when it covers her head. Ruth subverts traditional marriage and veiling practice, and with her own agency, makes choices with the veil to embody identities and achieve her goals.

For Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth, the identities constructed and displayed through their veiling deliver essential information about each woman, her social role and the broader social context in which her story is told. This is evident through each woman's deliberate choice of type, style and uses of their veils, where all three utilise veils for their own needs and requirements. My examination of their veils and veiling practice, present us with information about idiosyncratic veil-garments, how these veil-garments could be worn, ancient social

identities and, the agency of ancient women to utilise their own personal dress items as a tool of identity negotiation available to them as social participants within otherwise impenetrable patriarchal power structures.

9.2 Implications of research

In this study, I have confirmed and expanded on our understanding of the practice of veiling in the ANE, especially by demonstrating that veiling was a widespread, multifaceted and adaptive experience for women. Veiling in the ANE, and, specifically in the HB, should be understood as belonging to the continuum of multiple veiling phenomena, with a contextual diversification and layers and levels of meaning embedded within each socio-cultural utilisation of the practice. The notion that 'veil' in the HB was a singular garment, or, a type of garment which was too obscure to reveal much detail about the lived experiences of ancient women, is not sustainable given that it is not substantiated by the multitude of various textual evidence which clearly demonstrate the diversity of veils. In this study, I have shown more detail surrounding the variety of idiosyncratic veil-garments that are present in ancient lexicons, and which were present in the lived, dressed experiences of ancient women. The focused study of vocabulary has revealed more details about these veils in the context of the thematic and varietal social practices as they existed across multiple cultures and time periods. In the ANE, veil types and styles were idiosyncratic – in line with other manifestations of the practice, with an array of veiled-vocabulary used to identify each unique garment, as well as numerous verbs signalling the action used to physically wear the veil in certain definitive and differential styles. The examination of a varietal sample of veiled-vocabulary from the ANE undertaken and explored in this study, shows that the etymological, synonymous and/or

thematic relationships between different veil-garments indicate how well entrenched, vast and intricate this dress coding was in the ANE.

While I have shown in this study that the patriarchal systems of bodily control and organisation for women were present in manifestations of the practice of veiling from the ancient world, it is not possible to claim that the veil was used simply as a patriarchal tool to enforce and denote compliant modesty for voiceless and choice-less women, particularly when the act of veiling is viewed from the perspective of the wearer and not solely from the perspective of onlookers. In its many forms, the veil was used to construct and display identity; but it was also used to assert identity and to manipulate perceived and desired identities by women as dressed social participants, utilising a personal garment coded with layers of identity information. Most importantly, by viewing the practice of veiling from the perspective of the women who wore these garments, this study has shown that this multi-faceted display could be achieved utilising specific styles of wrapping, twisting, winding and turning of the veils by the women themselves as agents of self-identification.

In this study, I also revealed more about the characters in the HB - Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth. By examining their veils and their actions to self-veil, we better understand the capacity of female social participants to engage in the construction and display of their own identities, through deliberate use of personal garments. In turn, these literary archetypes tell us more about real women from the ANE who would have experienced the practice of veiling in a manner of Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth. As a result, this study provides clearer insight into the lives and probable experiences of ancient women, as dressed social participants – particularly in terms of their use of diverse and varied veil-garments and their capacity to be active social agents.

9.3 Suggestions for further research

This study is certainly not a definitive study of veiling in ANE or HB and there are many avenues available for future research. I list four here, where potentially rewarding research options remain. One concerns the veiled-vocabularies. The obscure and difficult terminology of dress from the ANE (especially the HB), shows an ongoing issue with identifying and translating veiled-vocabulary. While this study successfully avoided incorrectly naming veil-garments as 'cloak', 'shawl' or other non-veil classifiers, translation and categorisation of words which indicate material dress items in the HB, and more broadly in the ANE, is still a debated and challenging space. Contemporary dress theory provides an important and essential lens with which to analyse and critique dress terminology. There is certainly more work to be done here.

This study has confirmed and expanded on the important details we had from previous scholarship about the veil and its link to marriage, divorce and familial identity in the ANE. Nevertheless, further questions can still be asked as to the subtle differences between veil types which are used for the marriage ceremony as transitional garments, and to designate the wearer as belonging to the status of wife or *kallâ*. There are multiple veils which contextual use show the construction and display of women as belonging to these identities and statuses. Future research could reveal more details about these garments, with the aim of clearer differentiation and better understanding of social identities embodied by women in the ANE. Further to this, there are still questions surrounding veil use by other members of society – such as 'unencumbered women'. The type of veils worn by 'unencumbered women' would benefit from further attention and broader questioning - who else belonged to this category, and what kind of veils and other dress-items could women wear to designate this status?

Veils recorded as being utilised by both living women and goddesses pose another exciting avenue for veil identification in the future. In the lived experiences of ancient women, their veils constructed and displayed their identities. Veils worn by representations of goddesses also indicate identity; however, to what extent were these veils, when worn by goddesses, operating at a purely semiotic and symbolic level? What else can this tell us about veil-garments and their meaning and significance?

Finally, there is the issue of agency and women's perspectives. This study asked questions of the women of the Bible about their experiences of dress and dressing – from *their* perspectives. Going forward, expanding on this will be essential, in two primary ways. Firstly, the agency and perspectives of other Biblical women as dressed social participants should be considered to provide a fuller picture of the lived, dressed experience of ancient women. Secondly, moving into the realms of the contemporary lived experience of veiling, how do the experiences of veiled Biblical women coexist with contemporary women's experiences of veiling? How, in this continuum, do contemporary women connect with the insights into the dressed and veiled experience of Biblical women?

9.4 Conclusion

This study has attempted to clarify the lived experience of ancient, veiled women. Much like Pearl Cunningham, who chose to wear her 'heavily corseted good black' to show her onlookers who she was and who she wished she could be, the veiled women of the ANE and HB – in this study exemplified by Rebekah, Tamar and Ruth – could and did choose to wear socially recognised veil-garments coded with identity information to express and define themselves within their social context. They utilised known dress cues to construct, display and manipulate their identities on their own terms and for their own purposes.

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