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Muslims, Trust and Multiculturalism

New Directions



Edited by Amina Yaqin,
Peter Morey and Asmaa Soliman



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“Trust forms the basis of all productive human engagement in our society; distrust gnaws at its foundation. The carefully curated essays collected in *Muslims, Trust and Multiculturalism: New Directions* forcefully demonstrate the inner dynamics of the ways in which trust and the destruction of trust operate at the centre of contemporary social and political issues bearing on Muslims in British society today. This book not only articulates the problems, but more importantly thinks through new ways of going beyond them in order to build trust that is reciprocal, strong and secure. The future starts here.”

—Robert JC Young, *Julius Silver Professor of English and Comparative Literature, New York University*

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Foreword

No political community, certainly not a multicultural one, can be stable and last long without a shared sense of community or common belonging among its citizens and their concomitant commitment to its well-being. Belonging involves mutuality in the sense that I cannot belong to a community unless it accepts me as one of its own and in that sense belongs to me. A political community should value and cherish its members equally and reflect this in its structure, policies, conduct and public affairs and self-definition.

Although equal citizenship is essential to fostering a common sense of belonging, it is not enough. Citizenship is about status and rights; belonging is about acceptance, feeling welcome, a sense of identification. One might enjoy all the rights of citizenship yet feel that one does not quite belong to the political community and is a relative outsider. This feeling of being a citizen and yet an outsider is difficult to explain, but it can be deep and real and seriously damage the quality of one's citizenship. It is caused by, among other things, the manner in which the wider society defines itself, the demeaning ways in which the rest of its members talk about the stigmatised individuals or groups and the dismissive or patronising ways in which they treat them. Although members of stigmatised groups are in principle free to participate in its public life, they often stay away for fear of rejection and ridicule or out of a deep sense of alienation.

It is against this background that we can best understand the Muslim understanding of their place in today's Britain. They have made various demands for the accommodation of their differences as they are entitled to do, and these have been met reluctantly and after considerable resistance. The demands are widely seen as expressing the desire to retain their identity unchanged and to refuse to integrate. This has spawned a deep fear of Muslims, even a moral panic, and prompted the perplexed society to ask how it can counter the 'Muslim threat' and cope with their 'unassimilable' cultural presence. It relies on strategies such as greater surveillance of Muslims, a better network of informers, increasingly stronger anti-terrorist laws, monitoring mosques, banning Imams from abroad, greater supervision of their sermons, denying dual nationality and imposing stringent conditions of citizenship. Singling out Muslims in this way and their discriminatory and demeaning treatment alienates them yet further, generates a pool of ill will and, sometimes, leads to violent actions. These in turn provoke a further tightening of the disciplinary regime and generate a vicious cycle of recrimination and violence to which there appears to be no end.

Much of the fear and distrust of Muslims is unjustified. Their demands for halal meat, time off for Friday prayer, modification of dress, and so on are all fair and violate no moral principle. Barely a few Muslims press for polygamy and many of them have agreed with the government's ban on female genital mutilation. As several British surveys show, a large proportion of Muslims is patriotic and owes their loyalty primarily to Britain. They do press the case of the Islamic Umma, but that is little different from the diasporic Jews pressing the case of Israel. Many of them were bitterly opposed to the war on Iraq and could have done much to sabotage the war effort, but remained content to join peaceful protests. They have no difficulty with the ideas of human dignity, equality of races, and so on.

Some of them are opposed to gender equality, but their resistance is weakening and Muslim women are visible in almost all area of life. Free speech is no longer a controversial issue except when it affects religious sensibilities. In short there are no deep and irreconcilable differences between the majority of the Muslims and the British society.

Why then the resistance to Muslim demands and the general lack of trust? Several factors are responsible for it. There is a common tendency to equate unity with uniformity and to see deviation from the prevailing practice as a threat to the social order. It is also seen as a demand for favoured treatment, for a privilege, and hence unacceptable. There is also a common assumption that conceding one demand whets the appetite for another and that it is best not to encourage expectations.

There is a far more important factor at work, and that has to do with the Muslim youth. Although they have grown up in Britain, many of them lack roots in it. Residential segregation in some parts of the country means that they lead parallel lives, go to the predominantly Muslim schools and have limited contact with their white counterparts. Large-scale unemployment denies them the opportunity to get to know and become integrated into British society. Those who manage to break into the main stream find that the wider society takes a demeaning view of them and that its conception of its identity has no respectable place for them. Alienated from the British society and from their own community, the angry youth forms a world of their own based on an Islamic counter identity, which is a readily available recruiting ground for militant groups.

Terror destroys trust and creates mistrust. After all, nothing generates fear of and mistrust against a group more than the belief that it hates me and others like me and wants us dead. Since some young Muslims are prominent among those involved in terror at home and abroad, their actions fuel the mistrust. Their terrorist acts however are not conceived and executed in a political vacuum. They presuppose men and women enraged enough to throw away their lives for what they regard as a worthy cause and a broadly supportive environment. Wittingly and unwittingly, the British society's role in creating these conditions is considerable. It needs to create a climate in which all its minorities including the Muslims feel integrated, valued and trusted enough not to turn to violence to assert their presence. The Muslim community too needs to take a hard and a critical look itself and put its house in order. Rather than wallow in victimhood and self-pity, it needs to repair its social fabric, take greater interest in and responsibility for its youth, and assert its sense of agency.

How to build trust between Muslims and the British society is one of the major concerns of this excellent collection of essays. Addressing this

concern from different angles, disciplinary perspectives, and at different levels of generality, the authors offer fascinating and complementary insights. In their own different ways they argue that the 'other' becoming a part of 'us' and enjoying the same rights and courtesies as the rest is the basis of trust, that trust requires sustained efforts on both sides, and that it needs constant nurturing and cannot be taken for granted. I welcome this volume and commend it to others interested in building a harmonious and humane Britain.

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Bhikhu Parekh

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Introduction: Muslims, Trust and Multiculturalism

Peter Morey

Among the many and varied delights of YouTube, there appeared, in the summer of 2017, a video purporting to show a Muslim man, on his way to Friday prayers at Regent's Park mosque in London, being detained and searched in the street by Metropolitan police officers.¹ He had aroused suspicion by wearing more layers of clothing than might be expected on such an unusually warm English summer's day. A passer-by filmed the incident on a mobile phone and the nonplussed suspect can be seen patiently enduring as much of a full body search as propriety and the outdoor location allow, while the police defensively explain the nature of their concerns. The incident passed off peacefully enough. Its rather flimsy rationale was testimony to a city on edge after a series of terror attacks across the summer months. However, in the use of police powers to stop and search a member of an ethnic minority without any evidence, the incident recalled one of the more controversial tactics of a previous era, when black and Afro-Caribbean youths were regularly detained under the so-called Sus law.² Nowadays, those under the spotlight are more likely to be 'visibly Muslim', but the principle remains the same. As

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such, this vignette tells us something about the continuities between historical and contemporary anxieties associated with ethnic minorities who may notionally be accepted as British but who are, nonetheless, not trusted to behave in the same way as their supposedly law-abiding fellow citizens. Many of the anxieties around the evolution of British—and by extension Western—accommodation of new migrants in the years following the end of the European imperial phase are, likewise, bound up in the incident. This question of trust and multiculturalism—trust *in* multiculturalism, we might say—is at the heart of this book.

All successful relationships are built on trust, as all successful societies must also be. Trust offers an important lens through which one can understand relations between Muslim and non-Muslim at this fraught moment in history. Trust also yields to study through a number of paradigms: psychological, philosophical, political, phenomenological and so on. In this volume are a collection of chapters from a variety of disciplines, brought together with the aim of providing a more wide-ranging view of the operation and frustration of trust. In multicultural societies particular historical pressures come to bear on social trust, and there has arisen a range of views on how best to organise society and relations within it. At the present moment, if we seek to build a more trusting society then one of our most urgent tasks is to address the breakdown of trust between Muslims and others.

Not all of the many definitions of trust available to us capture its essentially dialogic nature. For example, the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, quoted by Marek Kohn, defines trust as ‘confidence in or reliance on some quality or attribute of a person or thing, or the truth of a statement’ (Kohn 2008: 9). This is too broad, since it tends to conflate the confidence one might have in a ‘thing’—possibly an inanimate object such as a car—with the trust one might actively place in a person or persons. In the former case, we may have *confidence* that the car will function well, which might *in turn* be based on trust in its human designers, mechanics or even the driver. However, this is different from trust placed in other people directly. Moreover, the *OED* definition implies trust is a one-way street. We are doing the trusting and the definition says nothing about what might come the other way in the arrangement, which puts the one in whom trust is placed in a passive position: something that is not often

the case with this most interdependent of acts. Instead, if we venture our own definition of trust as *an investment of belief in reciprocal socially oriented intentions and actions in another (or others)*, we see more clearly that there is an implied mutuality involved in placing trust. We also see that what applies to individual interactions is also true of bonds between different constituent parts of a group or nation. We place trust in our leaders to govern us, but more insistently, we place trust in others in our day-to-day interactions with them. Onora O'Neill makes the point that we supposedly live in a world where trust is breaking down all around us: surveys repeatedly show low levels of trust in politicians, the police, the health service, the legal system and (especially) journalists. Despite this generalised mistrust, she points out, we still 'constantly place active trust in many others' every day (O'Neill 2002: 12).

Trust depends on the assumption that an other's best interests will be compatible with ours. Marek Kohn cites Russell Hardin's 'encapsulated interest' model where, in order to trust, we must believe that others' interests incorporate our own (Kohn 2008: 10). It is this mutual reliance—and what happens when it breaks down or is eroded—that makes the question of trust so compelling for the field of intercultural relations. It is central to overcoming the distance between people and therefore at the heart of what multiculturalism has been about. Yet, within modern multicultural societies, the glue of historical fellow feeling often taken to be central to social and cultural trust is sometimes felt to be absent. In the same way, can we always be sure that the vision of society projected by elites on behalf of the majority will always encompass the good society as envisioned by minorities? In Europe, the tensions that have come to exist, at least at the level of political rhetoric, between established populations and those migrants whose numbers have swelled in the last 60 or so years are in part due to the collision of Enlightenment traditions of political philosophy and the inequitable legacies of the empire.

Multiculturalism is broadly understood to reflect an acknowledgement of the fact that modern Western nations are composed of diverse ethnic and cultural groups. In some cases—such as the so-called settler nations of the United States, Canada and Australia—immigration is perforce part of the national narrative. However, the countries of Europe have been slower to embrace diversity, at least as a political challenge, in spite of

their own long histories of imperial contact and conquest. For example, despite the fact that Britain is itself composed of different cultural and even national communities—in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland—the concept of ‘multiculturalism’ comes only to have meaning when applied to (generally) non-white arrivants from the former colonies in the post-Second World War period. In political science, this is seen mainly through the lens of legislation: governmental intervention to safeguard or allow for cultural practices different from those of the majority. In his book, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, Tariq Modood defines multiculturalism quite specifically as ‘the political accommodation of minorities formed by immigration to western countries from outside the prosperous West’ (Modood 2007: 5). This definition helps capture something of the way in which the present multiculturalism debate follows certain lines of logic and argument familiar from the earlier discourses of race and racism.

Yet, there is a difference between multiculturalism as a political ideal or legislative programme—so-called state multiculturalism—and multiculturalism as the lived experience of many, especially in urban areas. Bhikhu Parekh usefully distinguishes between the two when he says that ‘The term “multicultural” refers to the fact of cultural diversity, the term “Multiculturalism” to a normative reply to that fact’ (Parekh 2006: 6). Yet, it is precisely the elision between these two very different phenomena that gives the current debate its divisive and sometimes even poisonous quality. At the present time, much vitriol—as well as more reasoned concern—is aimed at Muslims as a fractious minority whose activities are often supposed to point up the folly of a too generous accommodation of difference. The slippage from criticism of an allegedly misguided set of policies prioritising minority interests to a hostile repudiation of difference tout court could be seen in the 2016 British ‘Brexit’ debate and made itself felt physically in the upsurge of racist and Islamophobic attacks that followed Britain’s vote to leave the EU.³ Suddenly, what were taken to be specific grievances about sovereignty and bureaucracy splayed out into a generalised hostility to foreigners, indicating the proximity of that resurgent populist nationalism that has arisen across Western Europe and beyond in recent years and old-style racism.

But, even if we restrict ourselves to multiculturalism as accommodative state practices, we are still, in the case of Britain, dealing with something slightly chimerical in nature. Britain has seen no equivalent of Canada's 1988 Multiculturalism Act, enshrining the recognition of different religions, cultural practices and languages within the nation. Strictly speaking, to talk of anything as coherent as a set of multicultural policies is also inaccurate, since those accommodations with minority representative groups that were enacted tended to happen at civic level in areas with a high-minority ethnic concentration, such as Bradford and Birmingham. While the various countries of Europe have found different ways to incorporate (or deny) diversity, in Britain it is hard to call the series of hesitant moves and recommendations—beginning in education provision but spreading to other walks of life—a 'multicultural policy', despite the insistence of some of its critics. For such critics, multiculturalism appears to be everything from a conspiracy, or a brazen movement designed to destroy British values, to a generalised set of (usually mythical) concessions to minorities, or an all-purpose bogeyman to be trotted out when there is nothing else to hand on which to blame the state of the nation. Indeed, multiculturalism has come under attack in recent years from foes on both the right *and* the left: the former attacking it for weakening assumed cultural-national bonds and the latter—operating from a secularist perspective—criticising its schismatic tendencies and its potential for manipulation by the late capitalist market system (West 2013; Malik 2009; Zizek 1997).

When we are tempted by politicians and the media to see multiculturalism as being about a dilution of Britishness brought on by the claims of fractious immigrants, we would do well to remember Bhikhu Parekh's rather different inflection: 'Multiculturalism is not about minorities ... [It is] about the proper terms of relationship between different cultural communities' (Parekh 2006: 13). Hence, our interest here is in whether multiculturalism as it is currently understood can help build trust between communities or whether it must inevitably lead to withdrawal, special pleading and mistrust.

Most of all, in the political realm, multiculturalism is experienced as a challenge to Western secular democracy's liberal roots. Laden and Owen have described how:

Reflection on the rights of peoples is contemporaneous with the emergence and development of modern Western political thought. While the issue of religious toleration was brought acutely to the fore as a topic for philosophical and political reflection by the confessional conflicts that ravaged Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it is equally true that, at the same time, the European encounter in the New World and in the colonial empires that emerged from this encounter raised the issue of the rights of peoples. (Laden and Owen 2007: 2)

Over time, rights came to be afforded primarily through national, rather than religious or ethnic, groupings, a state of affairs enshrined at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, which heralded the age of the nineteenth-century nation-states. The liberal nationalist view which emerged as the mainstay of nineteenth-century political thought advocated stability through what John Stuart Mill later called “common sympathies” brought about by shared language, culture and history; in other words, “cultural homogeneity” (2007: 3). Laden and Owen remark that the rights of minorities tended to be subsumed within the national framework, a trend that continued into the twentieth century in organisations such as the League of Nations, and in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which emphasised ‘universal rights and human dignity’ (2007: 4). It was only with the uprisings of anti-colonialism and the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s that the rights of minorities to equal citizenship were placed centre stage, and it took a further two decades—and the rise of race, gender and sexual politics—for the rights of minorities to become a pressing policy issue with accompanying scholarly interest.

In academic criticism, what we see now is a divide between those direct inheritors of the liberal position, such as John Rawls, who work through an abstract, idealised notion of a level-playing field—or ‘equal footing’—on which groups in society meet to reconcile their interests, disregarding the disequilibrium of economic and cultural capital that divides these groups in the first place, and thinkers, such as Will Kymlicka, Charles Taylor and Tariq Modood, who are keen to foreground the rights and interests of minority groups *as* minorities (which is to say, not simply numerically fewer but socially disadvantaged by comparison with majori-

ties) (Rawls 1971; Kymlicka 1995; Taylor 1994; Modood 2007). Although this latter group of critics vary in their respective diagnoses, they nonetheless share an understanding of the historically limited nature of the main features of the liberal tradition—the separation of church and state; protection of individual liberties, especially freedom of speech and conscience; and an underlying human equality and similarity which makes state neutrality and the same treatment for all ideal goals (Laden and Owen 2007: 8). The requirements of statecraft and social cohesion are understood in these terms by liberals, where difference is to be subsumed rather than encouraged.

The classic statements in the British political tradition come, of course from Thomas Hobbes and John Locke in the seventeenth century: with Hobbes emphasising the authoritarian prompt to trust—a strong state—and Locke the rule of morals as a law of nature. It has often been remarked that individualism is deeply entrenched in this Enlightenment tradition. It places the emphasis on reconciling the interests of each with the rights of all to create a good society by appealing to enlightened self-interest (Hollis 1998: 14). Yet, as scholars such as Bhikhu Parekh have pointed out, the tradition emanating from Hobbes, Locke and Hume works with a model of human nature as universal, fixed and essential. It is the same in all places and at all times. This is clearly a problematic model for multicultural societies because it ignores the fact that—beyond the level of immediate bodily needs—humans are ‘culturally embedded’ and that cultures differ significantly (Parekh 2006: 9).

In political theory, the ‘naturalist’ strand is that which has come down to us and tends to be inscribed in legislation and models of governance. It assumes that all human activity is the same everywhere while also ignoring the *internal* diversity and dynamism of cultures. At the same time, it is predicated on experiential and economic individualism. It is this combination of individualism *and* universalism which gives succour to the familiar mindset in which Western cultures are seen as healthy and evolving, while other more collectivist cultures (particularly Islamic ones) are taken to be atrophying and backward. This, in turn, has allowed for the growth of that ‘culture talk’ about Muslims and Islam identified by critics such as Mahmood Mamdani and Steven Salaita and the static and simplifying Huntington ‘clash of civilisations’ model, which likewise

takes cultures to be separate and impermeable (Mamdani 2004; Salaita 2008; Huntington 1996).

Political liberalism, then, is imbued with this Enlightenment tradition of naturalism. Parekh has traced the historical trajectory of what he calls 'liberal monism', in his book *Rethinking Multiculturalism*. He defines 'monism' as the view that there is only one way to be fully human, one route to salvation or the good society and so on. Post-Enlightenment liberal monism draws on classical and Christian precursors to claim that 'Human history ... [is] a struggle between good and evil represented respectively by liberty, individuality and rationality on the one hand and despotism, collectivism, blind customs and social conformity on the other' (Parekh 2006: 33). Since, as we have seen, liberalism is instrumental in the rise of the modern nation-state, informing its institutions and aspirations, it identifies individuals as the sole bearers of rights, and this partly explains the challenge to the liberal consensus posed by contemporary forms of collective identity politics. Parekh notes in passing the proximity between this monist Enlightenment national project and the imperial civilising mission. Liberal individualism was crucial to the justification of conquest across less 'developed' parts of the globe (Parekh 2006: 37).

In contemporary Europe, those Muslim communities who have become objects of suspicion are a product of this imperial legacy. Much effort is devoted to debating and trying to fix their place within modern nations and what, if any, concessions should be made to their cultural traditions and practices. The answers to such questions vary from nation to nation (see, *inter alia*, Haddad 2002; Ghorashi 2005; Malik 2004; Amiraux 2004). For example, in Germany, although the national response to the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015 was the most robust and generous in Europe, perhaps symbolising the nation's ability to respond to a humanitarian crisis in ways which are 'multicultural' in the broadest sense, there is still a reluctance to accommodate minority difference politically. Indeed, efforts at promoting multiculturalism have been repeatedly counteracted by politicians and public actors who have raised concerns about the perceived threat to Germany's national culture. Critics of multiculturalism call for a German *Leitkultur* (leading culture), which should be followed by minorities. This polemical concept is problematic, as it

privileges one majority culture over others, thereby contradicting the very meaning of multiculturalism. While the concept has been contested, the ‘*Leitkultur*’ debate continues to play an important role in Germany’s public discourses, and it was, famously, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel who issued one of the most strident repudiations of multiculturalism as a political concept, claiming in 2010 that it had ‘utterly failed’ (Weaver 2010).⁴

In keeping with Angela Merkel’s hostility to multiculturalism, successive British politicians have, since 9/11, rowed back on the multicultural commitments of the previous generation. Preeminent among them was David Cameron who sought to resuscitate the liberal tradition in a speech in Munich in February 2011, with its call for a ‘muscular liberalism’ to set against the weakening effects of so-called state multiculturalism (Wintour 2011). The effective message was that we have a monopoly on the right way to organise a good society and we should expect other groups in our midst to sign up to it. Yet in modern plural cultures the liberal historical consensus underpinning such confident statements of first principles is not readily available. We seem much more now to be in the presence of what we might call *conditional* reciprocal relationships of trust: something that applies not only to minorities, when we consider the numerous scandals over such things as MP’s expenses, the behaviour of the press and the recent preponderance of internet- and social media-driven so-called fake news making it harder than ever to place trust in public information.

For minorities—and especially nowadays Muslims—what exists is at best a culturally circumscribed stand-off, wherein aspects of Muslim practice—such as sharia—are deemed a challenge to the rights of all. As the liberal consensus grows less persuasive, so arises the need for enforcement, and a ‘procedural’ liberalism of the kind that legislates to include is challenged by the assertive, muscular liberalism of Cameron and co. We should be clear about the nature of this stand-off. In place of the good society, it settles for a *quasi-moral in-group communitarianism* against which all others are judged and found wanting. This happens when the different sides in a dispute retrench and cut off most contact with each other, relying on reductive, conservative projections of their own values, articulated in moral terms, which are then set against equally caricatural

views of others. In contemporary Britain, the proposal that ‘fundamental British values’ be advanced as a benchmark against which Muslim minority integration should be measured has resulted in a strikingly broad series of abstractions—having to do with fairness, tolerance and respect (and which are part of the *international* armoury of liberalism)—being co-opted by the nation. In turn, we have the operation of ‘honour codes’ in some traditionalist parts of Muslim society, regulating transactions and human relationships in repressive ways according to an internally defined set of categories which is enforced and not trust based and which takes no account of the world beyond the in-group (Hollis 1998: 122–123; Kohn 2008: 15). Ranged against this kind of communitarianism is a purportedly universal (but actually quite narrow) *communitarian humanism* which has come, in the twenty-first century, to allow for the discriminatory treatment of non-Western peoples through paralegal categories such as ‘Enemy Combatant’; stripped them of their rights as national citizens for sometimes minor infractions; and in some Muslim nations where the War on Terror has been pursued most vigorously, subjected them to attack by unmanned drones (Ahmed 2013).⁵ If we can agree with Onora O’Neill and Marek Kohn that terrorism damages trust, since ‘[F]ear and intimidation corrode and undermine our ability to place trust’, and that terrorist acts violate the Kantian notion of principles that all can share ‘because their perpetrators know *from the start* that their ways of acting are not open to their victims’, then the same must be true of the disproportionate military might deployed by Western powers against recalcitrant Muslims in Eastern lands, where ‘collateral damage’ is considered a price worth paying for the elimination of a small number of miscreants (O’Neill 2002: 25, 34. See also Kohn 2008: 129). All this has had a disastrous impact on intercultural trust.

In modern, plural societies, if the old liberal consensus is no longer available without the presence of repressive powers to enforce it, we need to consider other ways to build trust between groups. The challenge then, for a multicultural society, is well articulated by Hollis: how to find ‘a form of association strong enough to secure trust but without requiring a local monopoly on what counts as good reasons for acting in a trustworthy manner’ (Hollis 1998: 153). Put another way, in the terms coined by Robert Putnam, in his famous work on trust in the United States, how

can we build bridging social capital between communities? How do we develop that so-called thin trust that binds us to those we do not know and with whom we have limited first-hand dealings, to go along with the 'thick trust' that develops from personal familiarity? (Putnam 2000: 136). Some research has suggested that the more ethnically diverse a society is, the harder it is to build social trust (Delhey and Newton 2005: 311–327). Marek Kohn gloomily remarks: 'deep trust between groups with antagonistic histories may be impossible if the beliefs by which each interprets the world contradict each other' (Kohn 2008: 93). However, other studies have suggested that economic inequality and deprivation are a greater hindrance to trust than is diversity; conversely, greater economic equality leads to greater trust because it reduces the causes of conflict arising from the unequal distribution of resources (Letki 2007; Urslaner 2002).

These last findings are less likely to be welcomed in societies based on neoliberal economics, where self-interest and competition are taken to be beneficial in their own right. It is much easier to blame society's ills on 'foreigners' with disreputable values. Even so, if we return to Parekh's distinction between multicultural as lived experience and multiculturalism as political theory, we will see that the daily life of diverse communities, in urban areas especially, often operates through thick trust—as people live together side by side developing bonds over a number of years—whereas politically multiculturalism is understood as the problem of creating thin trust between sullen, uncooperative, self-segregating in-groups.

In fact, the concept of thin trust does offer a useful clue to one way in which intercultural relations actually work based, as all relations are to some extent, on what Marek Kohn calls 'signals such as appearance or demeanour' (Kohn 2008: 89). We are social beings whose acts require recognition by other, differently positioned social actors. A number of thinkers have argued for the a priori existence of recognised rules that make us, first and foremost, social beings. As Hollis puts it: 'I as an individual cannot mean anything by my action unless there is something which my action means and other people to recognise that this is what it does mean' (Hollis 1998: 115). To that extent, all interaction is dialogic: aimed at a presumed interlocutor. Indeed, cultural diversity requires, in fact presupposes, the possibility of dialogue—something that Taylor's

‘Politics of Recognition’ model depends on by definition (Taylor 1994). Symbols form an important part of this process, as do the narratives that people tell—and need to have heard—about themselves and others. (Stereotypes are dangerous and demeaning as they do not respect these narratives nor the dialogue of which they are a part.) Towards the end of his book, *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*, Tariq Modood proposes a reinvigoration of British national symbolism to take account of a ‘plural, dispersed, and dialogical’ Britishness which, nonetheless, sits within ‘a framework of vibrant, dynamic national narratives and the ceremonies and rituals which give expression to a national identity’ (Modood 2007: 146, 149). Bearing in mind the previous point about inequality undermining trust, a sceptic might point to the diminution of public service provision under neoliberalism—pre-eminently, in Britain, the public education system and National Health Service—and wonder what exactly these stirring national symbols might be. (The reinvigoration of military patriotism suggested in such recent innovations as National Armed Forces Day point up for commemoration historical and ongoing interventions which are very unlikely to work as a social glue in a diverse society.)

Nonetheless, an interest in such symbols and narratives as key to trust and mistrust lies behind the present volume. Sociologists, political scientists, legal scholars and educationalists have had, to date, most to say about multiculturalism. The idea of this volume is not simply to introduce a greater emphasis on the question of trust. It also seeks to introduce a dialogue between these disciplines and the humanities. After all, it would seem unduly limiting to have a discourse of multiculturalism that paid scant attention to culture, not least because, as we have seen, generalisations about it are at the heart of antagonistic claims. Culture is already co-opted into the multiculturalism debate. Yet, when it is, it is often in a highly reductive and instrumental way. To take only the best-known examples: the *Satanic Verses* affair of 1989 supposedly ‘proves’ that Muslims are intolerant of free speech; the Mohammad cartoon controversy of 2006 ‘proves’ that Muslims have no sense of humour; and crude agitprop like the deliberately insulting films *Fitna* and *Innocence of Muslims* ‘prove’ Islam to be brutal, barbaric and unable to take criticism. Here we see cultural texts—of hugely varying quality, it must be said—being used as piledrivers against a whole religion and its adherents. Much

of this, however, is to do with expedient and simplistic readings of how culture works in relation to the political. Among our contributors here are scholars who have worked on inequalities in material and cultural capital and the crucial role of class in shaping narratives; the ethics of intercultural artistic exchange, requiring of artists and audiences a more circumspect sense of their respective contexts; the predicament of gendered and sexual minorities within communities that are, themselves, marginalised; and the broader cultural expectation of Muslim minority writers to provide insights into radicalisation, with the generically slippery nature of texts that purport to do so. Uniting writers from the literary/cultural and sociological sides of the academic fence has the aim of forging a more holistic view that helps us understand how cultural difference and minority culture has been imagined—and imagines itself—rather than simply being the object of policy anxieties.

The chapters in this book address a number of headline themes. For instance, the paradoxes of a liberalism that is conflicted and which often seeks to enforce itself in illiberal ways is a central theme in the first part on ‘Scrutinising and Securitising Muslims’. Anshuman Mondal identifies particular recurring features in the image of the threatening, untrustworthy Muslim, as deployed in press and popular discourse. He sees this figure as an instance of the ‘cryptic’: a totalising construction in which Muslims are understood always to possess the lurking qualities of extremism, even when they are ostensibly passing as integrated, Westernised subjects. Mondal describes the features of the cryptic as having to do with visibility and concealment: the same sort of perceived duplicity that associates Muslim practices like veiling with having something to hide. The chapter shows how a double discourse which distinguishes between the visible/invisible, and the outside/inside, in its reading of the Other, works to fix Muslims (like Jews and Communists before them) as threatening outsiders: moreover, outsiders who may never be assimilated no matter how ‘Westernised’ they may appear. Mondal is alert to the inconsistencies within liberal utterances about Muslims that utilise the cryptic figure. Using insights from Zygmunt Bauman and Homi Bhabha, he explores contradictions in this racial imaginary and its rhetorical constructions—circulated almost daily in the framings of press, media and politicians—

that illustrate how Muslims can be pinned down, like butterflies, for essentialist and exclusionary purposes.

In the British university sector, much debate has been generated by a clause in the 2015 Security and Counter-Terrorism Act, requiring staff to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. In a forensic consideration of the implications of the so-called Prevent Duty, Alison Scott-Baumann suggests that the Act and its accompanying guidance further erode social trust at the same time as they infantilise those who are expected to carry out this 'duty'. This leads to a 'diminished self' where lecturers—along with other public servants in professions such as medicine, social work and policing—are encouraged to surrender trust in their own judgements in favour of trust in the prognoses of government and accept that they have a responsibility for safeguarding their 'clients' from being 'radicalised'. In an age where slivers of data about individuals and groups are marketable commodities, the incommensurate focus on Islamic extremism works to diminish Muslims, restricting their identity as British citizens to a homogeneous body ripe for radicalisation, and also diminishes the rest of us, who become complicit in this view. In addition, it produces a distortion of trust's reciprocity: paradoxically, Muslims are being 'trusted' to behave according to type and succumb to radicalisation, even as mechanisms such as the Prevent Duty supposedly exist to discourage this result.

This all underlines the importance of symbolism in current critiques of multiculturalism: the desire to 'read into' the attitudes, behaviour and dress of an Other who is taken to be opaque or evasive. In the questions of trust that circulate around the Muslim subject in today's multicultural societies, the burden of signification falls disproportionately on women. The Muslim woman is often read through her choice of dress, public visibility (or otherwise) and degree of subservience to what is deemed the fiercely patriarchal Muslim culture of which she is part. In her chapter on the imagery of the Muslim woman, Alaya Forte examines the resonances of one particular image used in an anti-radicalisation campaign by the counter-extremism group *Inspire*, featuring a woman posed in profile against a plain grey background and wearing a hijab fashioned from a Union Jack. Forte deconstructs the ideological resonances of this image, using Roland Barthes' idea of myth as her template. The *Inspire* image,

supposed to accompany invocations to women not to join Islamic State, in fact dehistoricises and obscures the loaded and problematic use of the Union Jack—an imperial symbol—at the same time as it enshrouds the young woman, posed here in the manner of a police mugshot. Far from symbolising female agency in the fight against radicalisation, Forte claims that the image freezes time, ironically imbuing a supposed message of peace with the violence of colonial history.

Nasar Meer leads the second part on ‘Islamophobia and Racism’, with a consideration of claims about a collective European Muslim self that emerges from subjective features and internal differences. Meer argues that at least three prevailing interpretations of this notion of a unified Muslim subjectivity have developed, reflecting supportive and antagonistic political perspectives. The first maintains that Europe’s Muslims are redefining Islam in the context of their identities as European Muslims and that the result is a ‘Euro-Islam’, illustrated by how Muslims view Europe as their home while being guided by a renewed Islamic doctrine. A second interpretation can be described as the ‘Eurabia’ trajectory. This predicts the numerical and cultural domination of Europe by Muslims and Islam and is popular amongst critics of multiculturalism and hardcore Islamophobes. The third employs a methodology of political claims-making to suggest that Muslims in Europe are exceptional in not following path-dependent institutional opportunity structures of minority integration. Meer argues that each formulation is open to the charge that it places the burden of adaptation upon Muslim minorities. As such each displays a normative position that misrecognises dynamic components of what may be termed ‘Muslim-consciousness’. Instead, the author maintains that compelling evidence exists that Muslims in Europe are meeting standards of reasonableness in their political claims-making, often from contexts in which they face profound social and political adversity.

The terms of such ‘reasonableness’, along with the nature of the social and political adversity Muslims face, change dramatically each time a major terrorist incident takes place. Recent years have seen a spate of atrocities: the murder of the Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in 2004; the Madrid train bombings of the same year; the attack on the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris and also on the city’s Bataclan concert hall (2015); the 2016 attack on a Christmas market in Berlin; the

July 2005 transport system attacks in London; and 2017 summer attacks on two of London's bridges. So-called retaliatory attacks by right-wing extremists—the most infamous being Anders Behring Breivik's massacre of attendees at a youth training camp in Norway in 2011—are further designed to sew mistrust and division. The understandable revulsion against such slaughter is often channelled via gestures of solidarity with victims, expressed through omnipresent social media platforms. Along with statements in favour of multicultural coexistence, liberal responses sometimes find themselves directed into approved, nationalist or even xenophobic channels, where solidarity is invited with values Muslims are presumed not to share. In Chap. 6, Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley show how, in the aftermath of the 2015 attack that killed 12 people at the offices of *Charlie Hebdo*, a seemingly spontaneous movement grew demanding that people identify with the slain victims in the name of freedom of speech. This identification was invited through the phrase, 'Je Suis Charlie', which was emblazoned on banners, posters, t-shirts and the internet. However, the dangers of conflating the killings and the broader threat to free expression was exposed as it quickly became apparent that those who did not see themselves as 'Charlie' were not afforded the same right to express their opposition. Any refusal to identify with what some might consider a racist, Islamophobic publication was considered almost as a form of treachery. Lentin and Titley examine how forces on the so-called progressive side of French politics were presented as representative of a homogeneous view of French attitudes to secularism and religion embodied by the concept of *laïcité*. These voices, purporting to historicise themes such as French satire and anti-clericalism, in fact denied the inter-relationship of that narrative with France's colonial past and multiracial present. As such, a one-sided, white account of France, presented as totalising reality, silenced the voices of those who could never be Charlie.

The theme of xenophobia in Europe is picked up in Chap. 7 'Transparency, Trust, and Multiculturalism in Cosy Copenhagen' by Tabish Khair and Isabelle Petiot who interrogate the notion of trust in Danish society as it is embedded in the transparency and fairness of the law. Since the Mohammad cartoon controversy, Denmark's Muslims are perceived as the enemy within whose visibly different religious practices make them stand out as a separate group and who symbolise the failure

of multiculturalism. Petiot and Khair argue that the legislation around multiculturalism is such that it requires the assimilation of minorities. In their view, this shows that Danish society is risk averse and trust in migrants is historically low. They offer a case study of new marriage laws in Denmark to show how a particular type of xenophobia is embedded in the legislature, marking out the immigrant as the stranger and the other. Muslim immigrants are shown to be particularly vulnerable to the new laws that favour long-term residents of the country. Petiot and Khair suggest that the rule of transparency and global neoliberalism obscures accountability and allows the state to blame minorities as untrustworthy and uncooperative in matters of intercommunity relations. This in turn means that minorities have less faith in the law of the country and the law itself becomes a site of distrust.

One of the issues used to justify xenophobic attitudes towards Muslims and repeatedly identified as undermining majority Western society's trust in Muslims is their supposed treatment of women and sexual minorities. This is also an area that has been fruitfully explored in literary fiction. In the third part on 'Gender, Multiculturalism and the Limits of Trust', Stephen Morton and Amina Yaqin explore two texts which foreground the trustworthiness (or otherwise) of Muslims in Western society and which have been seen (and perhaps even claim) to have a degree of representative accuracy. Monica Ali's bestselling 2003 novel *Brick Lane* provides Stephen Morton with an opportunity to explore the way in which a notion of economic self-determination comes to stand in for freedom as a whole, as the novel's female Bangladeshi protagonist makes her way through life in London's Tower Hamlets at the turn of the millennium. Morton contrasts Nazneen's fate in becoming economically active with that of her sister Haseena who still lives in Bangladesh and whose story—told in a letter form—indicates her disempowerment and the imbalance between the economic core and peripheries of global capitalism. Through a comparative analysis of the system of microfinance for South Asian female would-be entrepreneurs by the Grameen Bank, Morton shows how the novel can be seen to raise questions about the way in which neoliberal discourses of economic autonomy and entrepreneurship cut across the gendered international division of labour. Nazneen's thralldom to, and eventual escape from, the greedy moneylender Mrs Islam, along with

Grameen's services to 'bankable' rural Bangladeshi women, emphasise the way in which 'good' neoliberal subjectivity is bound up in relationships of debt. These Muslim women become trustworthy insofar as they can be co-opted as agents of global capitalism's debt culture.

A certain set of expectations appears to follow Muslim heritage writers when they describe their experiences, prompted by a contemporary curiosity about a community around which so many current concerns seem to swirl. In Chap. 9, Amina Yaqin analyses the Pakistani-American writer Ali Eteraz's 2009 memoir, *Children of Dust*, as a hybrid text that both challenges the conventional expectations of the memoir form through its use of novelistic devices and works to satirically question the 'authentic Muslim subjectivity' of the narrator. The protagonist undertakes a journey from early expressions of zealous piety to his later development of a Sufi-inspired liberal Muslim persona. Eteraz's memoirist is caught in the triple bind of familial and spiritual duty and free will as he tries to construct a persona that is both modern and authentically Muslim. With wry humour, the memoir mimics the condition of post-9/11 melancholia for the diasporic Muslim subject in which multicultural positivism is overtaken by the neo-imperial politics of the War on Terror. At the same time, the idea of knowing or not knowing the self is constantly at play in the memoir, unsettling the reading experience. The narrator's transformations have the effect of calling into question the very idea that there is a definitive Muslim subjectivity which can be captured and rendered, disrupting the certainties sought by an anthropological readerly interest and forcing us into an active reading to unpack the text's contradictions.

Sexuality is a fraught area for the political accommodation of religious identity politics. It is sometimes suggested that multiculturalism, with its characteristic engagement with self-appointed representative bodies, often concedes too much to the repressively conservative identity positions that may emerge. One way to understand that the longer story of the relationship between multiculturalism and queer sexuality is not necessarily antagonistic is offered by Alberto Fernandez Cabrajal. He offers a queer micropolitical reading of Hanif Kureishi and Stephen Frear's seminal 1980s film *My Beautiful Laundrette*, suggesting an intersectional approach to understanding the body politics of multiculturalism, race and trust between communities. Controversial at the time for its depic-

tion of an interracial homosexual relationship, the film is now seen as marking a foundational moment in the narration of British Asian diasporic and queer experience. Cabrajal makes a case for diaspora as a queer space, employing Sara Ahmed's model of queer phenomenology to emphasise the disorientation that diasporic bodies feel in relation to their surroundings. He argues that this disorientation has political resonances, an idea developed in his close reading of the film's protagonists Omar and Johnny and its performative representation of bodies and spaces. He highlights the significance of visual culture and a micropolitical resistance narrative that challenges dominant ideologies about race, class and diaspora pervasive in the Thatcher era. His chapter adds a historic resonance and reminds us of the complexity of lived multicultural narratives of Muslims living in Britain.

The discourse of liberal secularism explored in the final part makes certain claims to include minorities, but its offer is not always made with equal vigour to Muslims. This is illustrated here in Asmaa Soliman's chapter on youth Muslim identity in Germany. She argues that there is a huge gap between Muslim and non-Muslim identities and how they are viewed. Relations between Muslim communities and wider German society are still characterised by a lack of trust. Building on existing scholarship, Soliman's ethnographic research shows that although her participants strongly identify as German Muslims, they do not see themselves as equal parts of German society. They still perceive an 'us versus them' distinction whereby their loyalty is perpetually called into question. Young German Muslims criticise narrow concepts such as *Leitkultur*, seeing them as based on ethnicity, and thus a form of exclusionary discrimination. They share their frustration about the constant need to justify themselves which often puts them on the defensive. Although this sentiment is common to both males and females, Muslim women tend to bear the brunt of discrimination, since their headscarves mark them out as not properly belonging in Germany.

One of the problems with treating cultures and communities as homogeneous is that insufficient attention is then paid to the striations and fissures within groups. What about those who constitute a minority within a minority? In the case of Islam, the status of the Ahmadi community offers a telling example. Farrah Sheikh's chapter explores the posi-

tion of the Ahmadi Muslim community in Britain and how their own particular claims to follow ‘true’ Islam’ sets them at odds with more doctrinally orthodox variants of Islam. Here, the question of trust plays out in conflicting ways: the Ahmadis are viewed with suspicion and sometimes subject to discrimination by other Muslims who see them as apostates for their allegiance to their nineteenth-century founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, with his prophetic claims. Yet, partly for this reason, Ahmadis—with their motto, ‘Love for All, Hatred for None’—have been able to situate themselves as ‘good Muslims’ within the current political discourse which paints most of Islam and its adherents as a threat. In her sketch, Sheikh delineates the distinctive claims of the Ahmadis which allow them to garner greater favour with liberal multiculturalism. She shows how the Ahmadi’s discourse of accommodation—although carefully controlled by hierarchical structures—mirrors the ideals of multiculturalism, using their own interpretation of ‘true Islam’ to emphasise the compatibility.

The author of our Afterword, Tariq Modood, is one of the foremost figures to have charted the history and distinctive features of multiculturalism. He is also one of the most significant interpreters of its possible futures. In an earlier work, he has provided a succinct description of our present situation, while insisting that we ought not to retreat from a multicultural vision; ‘The emergence of Muslim political agency has thrown multiculturalism into theoretical and practical disarray. The fear of it has grown and led to policy reversals [...] and has strengthened intolerant, exclusive nationalism across Europe. We should in fact be moving the other way’ (Modood 2007: 85). We argue that the entire gamut of cultural activity needs to be drawn into debates on the way forward. In this context, art and culture become more than simply subsidised entities enjoyed by the middle classes, as they are often seen to be in the West. They are ways to dream and imagine that ‘good society’, also the concern of political scientists and policymakers of course. One of the things art and politics have in common is a criticism of the here and now and an inherent utopianism: subject to distortion and corruption along the way but a utopianism nonetheless. What all our chapters share, regardless of disciplinary origins, is a concern with narrative and the need to tell a convincing story: whether those are stories of Muslim experience ren-

dered as fiction or narratives of the best way to shape a plural society for the good of all its members. As Hollis reminds us, our starting point might be ‘to regard the social world as an intersubjective fabric spun from shared meanings which persist or change as we negotiate their interpretation among ourselves’ (Hollis 1998: 156). The present volume hopes simply to weave a few more threads into this rich, growing and evermore important fabric.

Notes

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/muslim-man-stop-search-mosque-wear-too-many-clothes-regent-s-park-mosque-muhammad-chamoune-police-a7837126.html> (Accessed 19 July 2017).
2. The ‘Sus’—or ‘suspected persons’—clause was part of the 1824 Vagrancy Act. It was controversially re-invoked to deal with the supposedly criminal tendencies of black youth in Britain in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The law became synonymous with racial profiling and its blanket application contributed to the 1981 riots in London and Liverpool, after which the law was repealed. Its replacement, The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, requires ‘reasonable grounds for suspicion’, a somewhat elastic phrase opening up multiple possibilities for targeting, especially when bolstered by post-9/11 anti-terror legislation.
3. ‘Race and religious hate crimes rose 41% after EU vote’, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-37640982> (Accessed 21 July 2017).
4. Indeed, Merkel even seemed to qualify Germany’s comparatively generous policy towards Syrian refugees in a 2015 speech in which she demanded their integration and warned against faith in the ‘sham’ of multiculturalism (Noack 2015).
5. In fact, in a 2013 speech about drones, President Barack Obama was willing to concede that, while they were weapons with obvious morale-boosting qualities at home, deployed as part of a ‘just war [...] waged proportionately’, ‘To say a military tactic is legal, or even effective, is not to say it is wise or moral in every instance.’ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-us-canada-22646077/obama-defends-just-drones-war> [Accessed 20 July 2017].

This seems like an acknowledgement that drones lead to an undermining of trust in the United States to act morally and in accordance with

international standards, observing the sovereignty of other nations and so on: trust in the United States already being threadbare in some quarters. (In his dealings with the rest of the world, Obama's successor, Donald Trump, shows little awareness of this and appears to care about it even less.)

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Part I

Scrutinising and Securitising Muslims



2

The Trace of the Cryptic in Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and Anticommunism: A Genealogy of the Rhetoric on Hidden Enemies and Unseen Threats

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On 7 March 2014, Birmingham City Council disclosed that it was investigating a number of schools in the city because it had received a copy of a document exposing a conspiracy to ‘Islamize’ local state schools. This document, entitled ‘Operation Trojan Horse’ purported to demonstrate how it was possible to infiltrate and transform some Birmingham schools by installing Muslim governors who subscribed to a highly conservative and Islamist interpretation of the faith. The disclosure by the council set off a chain of events that has come to be known as the ‘Trojan Horse’ plot, and it led to a number of official enquiries, investigations, reports, disciplinary procedures, and overhauls of school governance in the UK—all accompanied by extensive media coverage and comment. I am not interested here in the claims and counter-claims involved, or indeed whether there was in fact a plot at all; rather, my interest is in the emergence during this episode of a particular rhetorical figure, manifest in this instance in the signifier ‘Trojan Horse’ but which, in many other guises

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and in many other contexts, plays a key role in the social narratives and enunciations that constitute contemporary anti-Muslim racism or Islamophobia.

Interestingly, one of the subsequent principal protagonists in the ‘Trojan Horse’ episode, the then Education Secretary, Michael Gove, had himself used the term ‘Trojan Horse’ as the title of one chapter in his book *Celsius 7/7*, in which he argued that ‘multiculturalism’ was enabling an environment in which Islamism—or Islamic ‘totalitarianism’ as he calls it—could thrive in Britain by protecting it with a ‘politically correct’ cloak of silence about the Islamist threat to ‘British’ (i.e. liberal) values (Gove 2006). Writing about this book in the wake of the Trojan Horse episode, and noting the title of this chapter, Alan Travis acknowledges that this may be ‘coincidence rather than conspiracy’, and that the chapter heading ‘is just a familiar literary trope’, but it is precisely this familiarity that is worthy of investigation (Travis 2014). For the ‘Trojan Horse’ is perhaps the archetype in what has come to be known as the ‘western tradition’ of a rhetorical figure that I here call the ‘the cryptic’, a figure that has circulated through many social imaginaries over many centuries and in various contexts, manifestations, and articulations. In the alleged ‘Trojan Horse’ conspiracy, it surfaced in the form of a particular figure that we might call ‘crypto-Islamism’. This figure is, as I argue, one iteration of a more general figuration that has emerged to play a key if, nevertheless, obscure role in the formation of modern racialized social imaginaries.

In pursuing the figure of the cryptic as it circulates through both contemporary and historical social imaginaries in the ‘west’, initially in the form of crypto-Islamism and thence more generally, this chapter attempts to contribute to the still unsettled debates about what constitutes ‘Islamophobia’, the conceptual indeterminacy of which appears to be a consequence of the unsettled and somewhat diffuse nature of anti-Muslim racism itself. As Sayyid notes, ‘Islamophobia, both as a term and a concept is widely used, hotly disputed and frequently disavowed’ (Sayyid and Vakil 2010: 1), but rather than attempting to contribute to this field by offering a sharper definition of the concept, it tries to account for this unsettling elusiveness by shifting the problematic from definition to genealogy, by tracing the career of the cryptic figure. In so doing, it will

also try to account for the *relation* of Islamophobia to other racist and exclusionary imaginaries in which the figure of the cryptic plays a significant rhetorical role (most notably antisemitism), which in turn illuminates why this figure is so useful a trope within modern *liberal* social imaginaries as well as conservative and more obtrusively racist ones.

The Trojan horse archetype contains the constitutive element of the cryptic figure in all its various manifestations and articulations: the discrepancy between a surface appearance and a hidden reality. This structuring principle is the foundation that anchors a cluster of associations and connotations that are bound together in each particular instance of enunciation—conspiracy, dissimulation and duplicity, cunning, a will to power and domination, violence, barbarism, backwardness, rootlessness, modernism, cosmopolitanism, state within a state or nation within a nation, enemy within, fifth column—that in various and sometimes contradictory combinations and compounds constitute the imagined threat to a racialized social order. It is precisely the vaporous diffusiveness of these associations that accounts for both the trope's obscurity and its effectiveness, for it enables a certain mobility and flexibility that allows it to operate through displacements and re-inscriptions in what would otherwise appear to be different and unrelated contexts.

I would concur, therefore, with Pnina Werbner that critical analyses of the operative force and flexibility of contemporary racisms need to account for their 'extreme fluidity', and that this in turn requires a revision of Foucault's notion of discourse as 'a body of unified, coherent practices of knowledge/power' (Werbner 2013: 451). Thus, we must principally consider racisms as social imaginaries rather than discourses. Yet I would argue that the signifiers of racist imaginaries cannot, even for heuristic purposes, be condensed into typologies no matter how rich the analysis that ensues from such a move. Racist imaginaries are assemblages or ensembles of various signifiers and rhetorical tropes and figures that are highly volatile and dynamic, and can be displaced, dismantled, and re-assembled in surprising, often highly unpredictable and sometimes deeply contradictory ways. Nevertheless, it is precisely this mobility that gives racial imaginaries their flexibility and durability. As contexts and situations change, the rhetorical figures and signifiers that do the semantic and connotative work within such assemblages can be re-assembled so

as to speak to those changes. We may therefore speak of the ways in which racist imaginaries are subject to what Derrida calls ‘play’ within a broader and more rigid discursive structure (in the Foucauldian sense) that provides the structural frame and parameters within which these re-inscriptions and displacements are possible (Derrida and Bass 2001). That is, whilst the positioning of Islam as a threatening civilizational ‘other,’ and the view that all Muslims are the same and therefore all ‘other,’ are foundational principles that establish anti-Muslim racism as a discourse, within this frame it is the play of signifiers, their fluid displacements and re-inscriptions, that constitute the rather more nebulous Islamophobic *imaginary*.

Tracing the Figure of the Crypto-Islamist

One reason, then, that I have chosen to focus on the figure of the cryptic and the ‘crypto-Islamist’ is because we are able to follow its re-inscriptions and therefore account for the ‘extreme fluidity’ of the racial imaginings that it is able to mobilize. Thus, one can note that its emergences are more or less visible depending on context. In relation to the Trojan Horse episode, for example, one can easily see the crypto-Islamist figure at work because of the conspiratorial element, whereas it is a little harder to see precisely how it lurks behind the fears and fantasies conjured up by Muslim women that wear the *burqa*, *niqab*, or *hijab*. Martha Nussbaum has suggested that ‘fear is nourished by the idea of a disguised enemy’, and ‘[t]he obsessive focus on removing the veil follows a long tradition (in fairy tales, in films, and in real life) of imagining the existence of a secret conspiracy that will pop out of hiding to kill us when its time is ripe’ (Nussbaum 2013: 23, 24). It is arguable, however, that the conspiratorial element is somewhat muted in this instance because of the sheer *visibility* of such women. Nevertheless, Nussbaum does correctly touch on the valence of ‘exposure’ as an animating principle at work here, and even if one does not imagine that these visibly Muslim women are secreting bombs and weapons among their persons, the idea of ‘secreting’—of removing from visibility the body, the face, or whatever—may indeed conjure certain fears in social orders that imagine themselves to be based

upon transparency and openness. From here, the chain of signifiers can run to the Muslim domestic space—the *harem*—and its gendered sequestrations, and thence to the ‘enclave’, the deeply segregated ‘no-go’ areas, the ghetto—those private and social spaces that are opaque and inadequately legible to the state and the secular-liberal imagination: all of this is invoked in an enunciation as pithy as Jack Straw’s interpretation of the full face veil as a ‘visible statement of separation and difference’ (Straw 2006).

Sometimes, however, the figure of the crypto-Islamist might be operating deep ‘under cover’ so to speak. Here is Boris Johnson, then merely a highly paid journalist for *The Daily Telegraph*, writing in 2006 about the Sabina Begum case in which the plaintiff unsuccessfully petitioned the High Court to be allowed to wear the *jilbab* to her local comprehensive school: ‘This case wasn’t even about religion, or conscience, or the dictates of faith. At least it wasn’t primarily about those things. It was about power. It was about who really runs the schools in this country, and about how far militant Islam could go in bullying the poor, cowed, gelatinous and mentally spongiform apparatus of the British state’ (cited in Meer and Noorani 2008: 210). Meer and Noorani interpret this as a way of simplifying and reducing a complex debate involving a variety of views among Muslims and non-Muslims ‘to demands made by “militant Islam”’ (ibid.). Likewise, they also cite the following passage from an article by Johnson’s colleague at the *Telegraph*, Charles Moore, and interpret it as an essentializing gesture in which a putative ‘incompatibility between Islamic and British civil law...pertains to all Muslims’: ‘If Judaism were an aggressive religion, seeking to lay down its law for all mankind, then this supremely learned old gentleman could acquire menacing power. Like the Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran after 1979, Dayan Ehrentreu [Chief Justice to the Chief Rabbi’s Court] could tell people to kill in the name of God. Instead, his effect is the opposite’ (ibid.). Both these interpretations have a degree of validity; but we can also see the figure of the crypto-Islamist animating these powerful editorial pieces, albeit in highly concealed ways. Johnson’s piece, insofar as it invokes a ‘takeover’ of British educational establishments by ‘militant Islam’ anticipates by several years the Trojan Horse episode but quite apart from that Johnson’s claim here also evokes the figure of the cryptic by stating that

the case was *really* about something underlying the apparent issues at stake. It is important to be careful here; otherwise, we might unwittingly implicate *every* critique, every ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’, but given the context, the address, the nature of the argument, and given that it does anticipate one of the key instances when the figure of the crypto-Islamist, in its conspiratorial guise, was rather more clearly invoked, we can indeed say that this is another example in which the spectral figure of the crypto-Islamist is rhetorically conjured in order to mobilize a particular perceived threat.

In Moore’s argument, the crypto-Islamist is galvanized in yet more complex ways because the reader is sold a rhetorical ‘dummy’ in the figure of an explicitly invoked Islamist, Ayatollah Khomeini. The Islamist presence in this chapter therefore does not appear to be cryptic at all. Nevertheless, the ‘crypto-Islamist’ also lurks here in the implied contrast between Judaism as a non-aggressive religion and Islam as an aggressive one, and only with this implied assumption does the rhetorical force of ‘menace’ become operational: any Muslim equivalent to the Chief Justice of the Chief Rabbi’s court could never be simply a ‘supremely learned old gentleman’ but must perforce be a crypto-Islamist. The point is then reinforced by the explicit comparison with the archetypal but, nevertheless, highly visible Islamist ‘old man’, Ayatollah Khomeini. Thus, even as Moore urges British Muslims to emulate their Jewish counterparts, the figure of the cryptic displaces that comparison because the argument surreptitiously inserts a rider: Islam, unlike Judaism, is *inherently* ‘aggressive’, and thus any such emulation would, in fact, be impossible and any equivalent of the Chief Justice of the Chief Rabbi’s court would therefore be bound to be more a Khomeini *in disguise* than an Ehrentreu. Moore deploys a two-card trick here that is, as we shall see, typical of liberal techniques of tolerance: to acquire equal rights, you need to do something that is impossible for you to do.

In both these examples, the cryptic figure is not visible on the discursive surface but is occluded—rendered cryptic, as it were—deep within the rhetorical structure, at the level of precept and presupposition, or, in other words, at the foundational level of anti-Muslim racist discourse. The crypto-Islamist figure, whilst not in itself foundational nevertheless does at times lead us, like Virgil leading Dante to the eighth circle of

Hell, deep into the subterranea of anti-Muslim imaginaries. Moreover, we can see that the figure of the crypto-Islamist, and of the cryptic, more generally, works not simply by cloaking the essentializing gesture that is foundational to racist discourse. Like Moore's article, *Charlie Hebdo's* now infamous editorial following the terrorist attacks in Brussels in March 2016, 'How did we end up here?' performs several essentializing manoeuvres in order to implicate all Muslims in Islamist terrorism:

Tariq Ramadan has done nothing wrong... Take this veiled woman... She harms no-one... Take the local baker... He's likeable and always has a ready smile for all his customers. He's completely integrated into the neighbourhood already. Neither his long beard nor the little prayer-bruise on his forehead (indicative of his great piety) bother his clientele... Take this young delinquent... This lad and a couple of his buddies order a taxi... The taxi heads for Brussels airport. And still, in this precise moment, no one has done anything wrong. Not Tariq Ramadan, nor the ladies in burqas, not the baker and not even these idle young scamps. And yet, none of what is about to happen in the airport or metro of Brussels can really happen without everyone's contribution. (Editorial 2016)

But again, as with Moore, the cryptic figure can be disentangled from this essentialization even though the essentialization is precisely what is effected by the cryptic figure's deployment. Here, the cryptic figure is located in the trope of the iceberg, which appears early in the piece, 'the attacks are merely the visible part of a very large iceberg indeed' and later is the heading of a sub-section (ibid.). Tariq Ramadan, the Muslim baker and the veiled woman, all highly visible or high-profile Muslims in themselves, appear here, on the one hand, as *metonyms* for all Muslims. At the same time, as a *metaphor*, the iceberg speaks to a hidden reality behind the visible 'ordinariness' of such Muslims, a reality that implicates them all in the actions of Islamist terrorists even though it acknowledges that these figures are not, in themselves, Islamists. Hence, the crypto-Islamist figure emerges through this double move, one that replicates the move from inductive to deductive reasoning that Klug sees as characteristic of the logic of antisemitism, 'the logic of antisemitism in its formative stages might well be inductive, going from "J, who is Jewish, is powerful and wealthy" to "hence,

Jews in general are”, and ending up being deductive: “Jews are powerful and wealthy, just look at J” (Klug 2014: 449). This logic, Klug argues, makes the figure of ‘the Jew’—‘a figment, a figure of fantasy or myth’—‘a priori’ which means it always-already projects the stereotype of ‘the Jew’ ‘onto the screen of a living person’. In this instance, the metonymic move is analogous to the inductive reasoning and the metaphoric move (which mobilizes the crypto-Islamist figure) corresponds to the deductive. The former suggests the following: “These Muslims are nice and have done nothing wrong, therefore we should not fear them or other Muslims’ until the point the metonymic extension is arrested by the bomb at Brussels airport. At this point, the cryptic metaphor turns the metonymic logic entirely on its head, ‘The terrorist was a Muslim, therefore all Muslims are terrorists.’ In going both ways, the rhetoric of this editorial appears at first to be disarmingly ‘liberal’ and open-minded, but, at a given point, it induces a radical switchback that advances a vehemently racist argument.

In this instance, the figure of the crypto-Islamist that is animated by the metaphor of the iceberg also mobilizes and magnifies what Arjun Appadurai calls the ‘fear of small numbers’ by suggesting that behind or beneath the outward appearance lie much greater numbers (Appadurai 2006). In this way, small threats can be magnified into much larger ones. The reporting of polling evidence on Muslims habitually performs this manoeuvre. Take, for instance, the report that accompanied a poll of British Muslims by Survation for *The Sun* in November 2014, which ran under the headline, ‘1 in 5 Brit Muslims’ Sympathy for Jihadis’ and the sub-heading, ‘Exclusive: Shock Poll’, which brings into play the logics of exposure and revelation. Taken together with a rather creative—and entirely misleading¹—interpretation of the polling numbers that inflated a very small minority into a much larger one, we can see the cryptic motif being mobilized in order to make a claim that the number of British Muslims who support or have ‘some sympathy’ with the Islamic State organization and militant Islamism is, in fact, much higher than previously thought. This connotes a ‘hidden’ or concealed truth to the nature and scope of the Islamist ‘threat’.

This particular way of deploying the crypto-Islamist figure is also at work within what has become known as ‘Eurabian’ discourse, albeit with something of a distinctive inflection and twist that is peculiar to this particularly paranoid anti-Muslim imaginary. Although there are some conspiratorial elements within the Eurabian discourse, the emphasis is on a highly visible, completely transparent and not-at-all-secret overwhelming of Europe by Muslims. Indeed, the Eurabian concern does not appear to be so much with invisibility as with blindness—the inability of a decadent and exhausted Europe enervated by liberalism, multiculturalism, and political correctness to see what is happening right before its eyes. Rather, the principal preoccupation of the Eurabian imagination is with demographics, and this is where the cryptic figure enters the scene, for the demographic transformation of Europe into a Muslim-majority province of Eurabia is characterized as a ‘stealth jihad’ (Carr 2011: 15). Moreover, for this stealth jihad to work, democracy—which for liberal Islamophobes is the very thing that distinguishes western civilization from its Islamic antithesis—must be implicated insofar as it becomes the unwitting bearer of its own obsolescence in the ‘totalitarian’ Eurabian future—that is, democracy becomes a Trojan Horse. We can see here how the extreme fluidity of the Eurabian imaginary enacts a displacement and re-inscription that brings ‘into play’ a signifier—democracy—that is ordinarily not implicated in anti-Muslim racism other than as a contrasting device against which to measure Muslims as ‘other’. This conversion of democracy from being something that belongs to ‘us’ to something that works for ‘them’ is how the cryptic figure works in these right-wing (often extreme right-wing) critiques of European *liberalism*, which is itself now implicated in the Eurabianization of Europe—a move rehearsed almost precisely by Michel Houellebecq’s celebrated (and Eurabia-inspired) novel *Submission* (2015).

All the examples I have discussed thus far have deployed the crypto-Islamist motif in relation to visible Muslims, that is, those who display signifiers of their Muslimness, such as beards, or ‘veils’ or are publicly associated with Islam, such as Tariq Ramadan, or are self-professed or practising Muslims (as in the opinion polls). Morey and Yaqin have,

however, noted the emergence—especially in very prominent television series aired throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century, such as *24*, *Sleeper Cell*, *Spooks*, *The Grid*, *Dirty War*, *The Hamburg Cell*—of what they call ‘a post-Huntington stereotype’ in which threatening Muslims are ‘depicted as “Westernized” in outward appearance. As such they are difficult to identify, thereby constituting an even more menacing “enemy within”’ (Morey and Yaqin 2011: 115). The menace of these crypto-Islamist figures has been further amplified by the more recent series *Homeland*, which, in going beyond the idea that ‘they’ can look just like ‘us’ to the idea that one of ‘us’ can become one of ‘them’—and still look like one of ‘us’—reprises the classic Cold War imaginary as articulated in films such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Although the crypto-Islamist figure, as I conceive it, is distinct from and not reducible to the ‘enemy within’ because both ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ groups—such as Muslims, indeed—can be classified as enemies within, nevertheless, they are adjacent figures in the Islamophobic ensemble and each figure (the crypto-Islamist and the enemy within) does connote the other.

It is fairly obvious that the crypto-Islamist figure is at work (or play) in these examples. Nevertheless, there is something about the *way* in which it is mobilized in relation to ‘invisible’ Muslims that is worth dwelling on. Morey and Yaqin argue that these figures call to mind what Zygmunt Bauman has called ‘the stranger’, ‘that paradigmatic yet disturbing figure of the margins created by the modern nation in its desperate but always unfulfillable craving for order...[who] flourishes beyond the ordering categories of insider/outsider, friend/enemy, with their totalizing drives’ (ibid.: 164). In Bauman’s words, ‘the stranger is neither friend nor enemy...because he may be both. And...we do not know, and have no way of knowing which is the case’ (cited in ibid.). The status of the ‘stranger’ is therefore undecidable and this is a key point, but Bauman’s stranger appears to be a highly *visible* figure, whereas these crypto-Islamists are invisible. The indeterminacy they provoke is therefore perhaps better explored using the concept of mimicry as theorized by Homi Bhabha. For Bhabha, colonial discourse is menaced by the colonial mimic because his mimicry is both vital to the operational effectiveness of colonial rule and yet, at the same time, undermines the categorical identities on which the colonial hierarchy depends because, in performing an

identity that such categories would assert he should not be able to perform—that is, in becoming Anglicized, for instance—mimicry reveals there is no categorical or essential difference between such identities, thereby dissolving the grounds on which the colonial ideology rests. Likewise, the assimilated Muslim other, in mimicking the, say, American self, destabilizes the distinction between self and other. In both cases, the intolerable destabilization of ‘identity’ requires the constant holding at bay of the mimic (‘almost the same but not quite’) through forms of stereotyping (exaggerating difference in order to re-emphasize the ‘essence’ on which that difference is supposed to exist: ‘almost the same but not *white*’), and the accompanying desire to ‘unmask’ the assimilated other/mimic to reveal the (essential) otherness that lies hidden beneath. With regard to assimilated Muslims, of course, it is Islam that is posited as the essential residue that Muslims cannot overcome, and thus Islam needs to be invested with all the markers required of an essential otherness; it is a boon that there is a deep historical well of metaphors and images on which to draw for this purpose, and the essentialized association of Islam with violence and fanaticism means that it is not too difficult to conjure the shadow figure of the fanatically violent and intolerant fundamentalist (i.e. crypto-Islamist) that can be imagined to be lurking behind every Muslim despite any and all *appearances* to the contrary.

Another advantage to using the concept of mimicry here is that it opens up a distinction between different kinds of ‘assimilation’ that might be performed by the crypto-Islamist. This is because Bhabha’s theorization of mimicry speaks to the unnerving agency of the mimic’s ‘camouflage’ in a way that Bauman’s more ontological category of the ‘stranger’ does not: the stranger places the distinctions of inside/outside and friend/enemy into question simply by being who he or she is, whereas the mimic enacts or performs a particular role the consequences of which are destabilizing to the categories that uphold racialized identities. There is a difference, for example, between the Islamist who simply hides beneath the veneer or mask of westernization and the hybrid Muslim who is both a devout Muslim and also ‘westernized’ for while the former admits the essential ‘otherness’ behind the mask of his/her performance, the latter occupies the hybrid ‘third space’ of identity that reveals there is, in fact, no essence behind the mask, that all identities are, in fact, masks. Indeed,

the latter is all the more unnerving and menacing to racist imaginaries precisely because of the indeterminacy or undecidability that this provokes: is this person a Muslim or a westerner or both? How can it be possible to be both? What constitutes 'westernness' and 'Muslimness' then if it is possible to be both? This is precisely where the figure of the cryptic goes to work, in order to reassure the racial imaginary that it is *not* possible to be both, that deep beneath the surface lurks the essential 'other'. In so doing, of course, it displaces the deeper ontological hybridity with the superficial, 'tactical' mimicry that is no more than a cunning disguise, and the former always connotes the latter.

The figure of the cryptic therefore speaks to a paradox within racial imaginaries which turns on an acknowledgment and denial of *resemblance*, on the one hand, and an insistence upon as well as doubt over *difference*, on the other, and this precipitates an epistemological crisis that introduces a certain volatility within such imaginaries such that its signifiers are rendered vulnerable to re-inscription, especially those that 'position' the other within the libidinal economy of desire and denial, sameness and difference. David Tyrer, for example, has argued persuasively that:

the 'moderate' is also always used as a way of inscribing harder forms of Muslim alterity even if s/he is represented in terms of indeterminacy. This central tension in representations of moderacy is one reason why those represented as moderates not only still experience Islamophobia but also find themselves de- and re-classified in alternative terms (usually, 'extremist') with relative ease. Such subjects are not represented as 'moderate' once-and-for-all, but momentarily, and remain open to re-signification as 'extremist' whether by the state, by racists, or even by other Muslims. (Tyrer 2010: 98)

The same holds true for the related but slightly distinct good/bad Muslim binary, which is destabilized by the possibility that lurking within every 'good' Muslim is a 'bad' one. 'Good' and 'bad' are therefore mutually substitutable.

The indeterminacy induced by the crypto-Islamist figure also involves a logic of extension as well as substitution. I have noted elsewhere that the deployment of the crypto-Islamist trope in Ed Husain's best-selling

memoir *The Islamist* suggests that virtually every Muslim organization in the UK is a 'front' organization for Islamists (Mondal 2012: 39–40). This, of course, is an effect of the epistemological crisis provoked by the figure of the cryptic itself: it becomes impossible to distinguish between the crypto-Islamist organizations and the non-crypto-Islamist ones, just as it becomes difficult to tell individual 'invisible' Muslims apart from crypto-Islamists. This echoes the paranoid extensions of McCarthyism, which likewise responded to the cryptic threat of communism in the United States by implicating *everybody* and *everything*. As Ellen Schrecker notes, American anticommunists believed that:

Communists must be forced into the open...because they were so hard to find...Their invisibility increased their menace. "They are everywhere," one of [President Eisenhower's Attorney General's] predecessors told a group of advertising men in 1950, "in factories, offices, butcher stores, on street corners, in private businesses"... Anyone can be a Communist. Anyone can suddenly appear in a meeting as a Communist party member—close friend, brother, employee or even employer, leading citizen, trusted public servant... Though unions were recognized to be the party's main targets, almost any kind of organization could be infiltrated and subverted by the [Communist Party]. Churches, civic groups, even the Boy Scouts were at risk. (Schrecker 1999: 141–143)

The same kind of logic, underwritten by the same kind of anxieties precipitated by the same kind of crisis of legibility is at work in the UK government's preventing violent extremism strategy, known as Prevent. Just as American anticommunists saw 'reds' lurking 'everywhere' so too does Prevent see every Muslim as a crypto-Islamist and for the same reasons: the anxieties brought about by the radical indeterminacy of the crypto-Islamist figure itself. Commenting on the front cover of the 2008 Government report, *Preventing Violent Extremism: Next Steps for Communities*, which shows two smiling, dark-skinned young women who may or may not be Muslim—but presumably are—M.G. Khan asks, 'What is the picture supposed to be saying, and to whom, in the context of this document?... They don't look like they are thinking about violent extremism. Or are they?' (Khan 2010: 90).

Prevent represents the institutionalization of the crypto-Islamist figure deep within the logics of the security-state. There are two ways in which the figure of the cryptic circulates within the post-2015 Prevent strategy in particular, but even the old one as well: first, structurally speaking, it extends the scope of surveillance beyond 'violent' extremism to encompass non-violent extremism, which implicitly rests on an 'escalator' or 'conveyor belt' model that has been largely discredited within and by the security apparatus itself (Travis 2008). In so doing, it mobilizes the figure of the cryptic within civil society by suggesting that in subscribing to any version of the faith that is at odds with 'fundamental British values' every such Muslim harbours, potentially, an Islamist within. Second, in delegating the responsibility to unmask the crypto-Islamist lurking onto civil society—onto schools, universities, hospitals, and other public organizations—at an operational level, Prevent encourages individuals and agencies to look out for signs of radicalization. Given the lack of expertise or familiarity with Islam and Muslim traditions of these interpreters, these signs are necessarily encountered as free-floating signifiers without context, such that all Muslim signifiers potentially become signs of radicalization: beards, skullcaps, hijabs/niqabs, praying, reading the *Qur'an*, wearing t-shirts with Arabic script on it, speaking Arabic or anything that sounds like a Muslim language, saying 'Allahu Akbar', displaying increased piety, converting to Islam—the list is potentially limitless.² All this seems to rest on either a theory of liberal expressionism (you cannot help it, you just have to express what you think or feel) or Freudian parapraxis—the eruption of the repressed. The latter intersects with the trope of the cryptic in interesting ways: the parapraxis is either the unintended expression of a conscious repression (signifying Muslim duplicity) or the unintended expression of the Muslim *id* (signifying that all Muslims are secretly, unconsciously violent extremists). Either way, the trope of crypto-Islamism is at work.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the underlying logic of Prevent is that Islamists are always-already 'hiding in plain sight'. This phrase was used recently by Chief of Defence Staff Air Chief Marshall Sir Stuart Peach who warned that Islamic State terrorists were 'moving in migrant flows, hiding in plain sight' (*Sky News*, 15 December 2016), and it is also the anxiety underlying President Trump's executive order banning

Muslims from seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States. 'Hiding in plain sight' mobilizes the figure of the cryptic in a way that simply stating that 'terrorists are hiding among the migrants' does not because, firstly, the latter acknowledges a distinction between the terrorists and the migrants among whom they hide whereas the former does not and, secondly, the 'in plain sight' supplement draws attention to the very thing that distinguishes the figure of the cryptic from adjacent tropes such as 'enemy within' or 'state within a state', namely, the discrepancy between an outward appearance that is 'plain' and not at all noteworthy or different, and an inner reality that is both 'different' and more authentic which in turn constitutes the real threat. It is this structure, this constitutive disjuncture that enables the trope to slide, as we shall see, from signifier to signifier, and from Jew to Communist to Muslim, despite the very different ways in which each of these relate to notions of visibility and invisibility as such.

A Genealogy of the Cryptic: Antisemitism and Anticommunism

The crypto-Islamist figure is, however, but one avatar of the wider figure of cryptic, and tracing the ways in which this figure works in other racial and political imaginaries allows us to undertake a genealogy that lays bare the conditions of its emergence within a certain historical juncture, and its operation within a certain socio-political configuration. This allows us to avoid seeing it as being particular to anti-Muslim racism on the one hand, or as simply a general trans-historical trope about hidden enemies and unseen threats on the other. Indeed, the disjuncture between a surface appearance and a hidden reality permeates so many cultures so thoroughly that we must be precise and vigilant about how we define and then trace the figure of the cryptic lest it lose analytical force and weight of purpose due to over-extension. So although the Trojan Horse archetype suggests that its deployment in relation to hidden enemies and threats has a very long pedigree, I limit the provenance of my genealogy of the cryptic figure to its emergence in relation to modern, racialized imaginaries. In this respect, I explore how the operation of the cryptic

figure in relation to anticommunism and antisemitism goes far deeper than simply surface parallels or analogies with Islamophobia; indeed, the manner in which this figure relationally binds the rhetoric of these three imaginaries together is what illuminates those conditions of emergence.

We have already seen how the anticommunist deployment of the cryptic figure during the McCarthyite period precipitated the same kinds of epistemological crises and the same kinds of affective consequences within the respective security-based contexts; but there are some other ways in which the figure of the cryptic was put to work in American anti-communism that are pertinent to our tracing of the genealogical links between anticommunism then and Islamophobia now. First, and most obviously, there is the conspiratorial element. Above and beyond everything else, American anti-communism in the mid-twentieth century imagined communism to be not so much simply an alternative political ideology but a conspiracy to undermine and overthrow the American 'way of life'. The nature of the conspiracy was, however, imagined differently; American anti-communists believed the conspiracy had infiltrated the highest echelons of government, whereas even the most ardent Islamophobes do not go so far (Heale 1990; Schrecker 1999).³

Second, there was a racialization at work in American anti-communism, but racialization appeared in ways that were not overtly or obviously racially inflected (Heale 1990: xii). Communists were, for instance, characterized principally as 'puppets' of Moscow and as 'automatons'. For Ellen Schrecker, '[p]ortraying party members as mindless automatons transformed them into strange beings who were, it seemed, something other than human or... "*almost a separate species of mankind*"' (Schrecker 1999: 135; emphasis added). There is, moreover, an essentialization at work in both the 'puppet' and 'automaton' metaphors: while the automaton evokes homogeneity, the puppet evokes the idea that communists were so ideologically 'chained' that they could never leave the Party (ibid.: 132–133). A political choice or persuasion thus becomes something like an ontological identity, an 'involuntary' identity just like race (Meer 2008).

The third continuity between anti-communist and Islamophobic imaginaries involves the pathologization of communists and Muslims as fanatics. Within anti-communism, pathologization rhetorically works towards

denying individual will and choice, and foreclosing the possibility that becoming a communist could be a matter of reasoned moral choice. To not do so would allow communism to enter the arena of liberty (of conscience, of free speech) and the battle of ideas on which liberal democracy grounds itself. In a society that defines politics as a matter of rational debate and individual moral choice, removing reason and will from the scenario enabled anticommunism to position its antagonist beyond the threshold of political tolerability.

The same elements associated with the figure of the cryptic in Islamophobic and anticommunist imaginaries are also operative within antisemitism, although once more with different emphases. What Steven Beller (2015) calls 'Judeo-Bolshevism' provides a particularly obvious hinge around which the relationality of all three imaginaries can be articulated, since the Judeo-Bolshevist is, as Maleiha Malik (2007) has noted, the most apparent pre-incarnation of the crypto-Islamist, but we can see even deeper continuities that shed considerable light on how and why the figure of the cryptic emerged as a crucial rhetorical figure within racialized imaginaries when it did.

With regard to antisemitism, the conspiratorial element is very pronounced (Linehan 2012). Antisemitic conspiratorial imaginings encompassed both the 'top down' infiltration of the centres of power associated with communist conspiracy theories—with the additional inflection, specific to antisemitism, of the Jewish 'capture' of the world financial system—and fears of infiltration 'from below', as with Muslims, which was mobilized by the cryptic figure of the Judeo-Bolshevist. The second element is the way in which the cryptic Jewish threat is figured through the rootless, cosmopolitan 'Jew' with transnational links across several countries, living in but not part of any of them. This transnational element is also apparent in the notion of 'international communism' (again, cosmopolitanism is implicated here) and in the suspicion of the Muslim *umma*, both as a particular signifier relating to Islamism and as a general concept that connotes Muslim loyalty to other Muslims over and above any professions of national loyalty and belonging. The transnational motif, perhaps unsurprisingly, emerges only after the Westphalian state model becomes established as a political norm, especially after the advent of the nation-state in the late eighteenth century. This is precisely the

moment when the figure of the Jew becomes displaced and re-inscribed in racial as opposed (or in addition) to religious terms. And it is at this moment, I would argue, that the figure of the cryptic comes into its own as a specifically *post-Enlightenment* contribution to the development of racist imaginaries.

Liberal Tolerance and the Trace of the Cryptic

Wendy Brown's analysis of the emergence of liberal tolerance as a technique of governance in emergent nation-states begins by noting a curious disjuncture between the ideological resolutions of the 'Woman Question' and the 'Jewish Question'. Why, asks Brown, was the emancipation of the former pursued in terms of political equality and the latter in terms of 'tolerance', which granted Jews civil and political rights only on condition that they 'assimilate', that is, 'by giving up their "Jewish" ways' (Brown 2006: 49–50; Beller 2015: 33)? The price of tolerance, then, was the dissolution of Jewish identity. If this provoked, as Shlomo Sand has suggested, the compensatory 'invention' of the Jewish people as a 'race', on the one hand, the displacement of Jewishness from 'belief to onto', as Brown puts it, was, on the other hand, exactly what liberal discourses of tolerance wanted: in order to be tolerated, Jews had to become assimilated and yet still marked as 'different'. Liberal discourses of tolerance, which incorporated the 'historically excluded through a discourse of abstract citizenship' also simultaneously 'provoked intensified forms of marking and regulation' precisely because that inclusion 'threatened to erase the subnormative status of the excluded' (ibid.: 70). Thus, for Brown, liberal techniques of tolerance to this day involve, simultaneously, the 'triple forces of recognition, remaking, and marking—of emancipation, assimilation, and subjection', that are uncannily reproduced almost precisely in the liberal discourse of colonial mimicry, except in the latter there was no corresponding offer of inclusion or emancipation (ibid.: 53). And, as we have seen, just as the problematic of mimicry discloses the figure of the cryptic, so too does it emerge in the context of Jewish emancipation because it does the rhetorical work through which Jews could be both included and still excluded at the same time, could be

both same and (perpetually, irredeemably) different, almost the same but not quite. Likewise, within American anticommunism, the figure of the cryptic enabled communism to be placed outside the limit of political tolerability whilst observing the letter, if not spirit, of the First Amendment; contemporary Muslims will, of course, recognize all too well the discourse of conditionality that marks their acceptance into the national community within liberal-democratic social orders. Furthermore, liberal discourses of tolerance are particularly hospitable to the figuration of others as hidden enemies because the disjuncture between public and private selves on which it is founded replicates the constitutive disjuncture of the cryptic figure. If the conditionality that marks liberal tolerance 'is triggered when subordination at the site of a difference cannot be maintained through privatization of that difference', this is because that privatization must be rendered always-already and always-inevitably incomplete. It is this incomplete assimilation that the cryptic figure helps to achieve, rhetorically speaking, by marking it with the suspicion that such 'deracinated' public attachments are inauthentic, and that the 'real' attachments are to some transnational collectivity that continues, as Brown suggests, to haunt the national imaginary (Brown 2006: 76).

In other words, the figure of the cryptic is a more useful rhetorical resolution for liberal ideologies and imaginaries than overtly racist ones such as Eurabianism or far-right white supremacism. This is because liberal discourses have a problem with difference but are, at the same time, based on the claim that difference should not and must not be a problem: that beneath all surface distinctions human beings are 'equal', by which is meant 'the same' in a formally legal and ontological if not social sense. And again, at the non-philosophical level, within the social imaginaries of the liberal order, this is articulated in the popular liberal humanist trope, reproduced endlessly in contemporary culture, that beneath all the surface differences 'we are all the same' whilst at the same time, within those same imaginaries, the figure of the cryptic goes to work in order to ensure that the idea that we are *not* all the same underneath also circulates.

The logic of substitutability enables this economy of inclusion and exclusion to encompass both visible and invisible differences. Unassimilated 'others', who are visibly different, can be seen as threat-

ening because, despite the façade of their ‘ordinariness’, they have not been remade like ‘us’. The paradoxical problematic is this: Islam (for example) is a threatening Other, but it cannot be openly proclaimed as a threatening Other, because liberalism cannot claim that difference in itself is threatening. The rhetorical resolution of this paradox involves the suggestion that there is, in fact, an antiliberal threat lurking behind the difference of the Muslim Other-figure, which is articulated in occluded, subterranean, highly coded registers: enter the figure of the crypto-Islamist. Conversely, however much assimilated ‘others’ look and act like ‘us’, they can never actually be like ‘us’ because the logic of racialization means that they must always be ‘different’. Within liberal discourses, these differences are threatening because they are ‘collectivist’, ‘organicist’, or ‘solidaristic’ as opposed to individualistic. Hence, Domenico Losurdo’s painstaking dissection of liberal thought demonstrates how arguments for ‘emancipation’ were always accompanied by exclusions principally based on race, class, and culture (encompassing non-Christian religions). For a social order founded on the abstract and neutral concept of the citizen, the problem of difference is particularly acute because the vexed question of the limits of citizenship always lurks in the background. Thus, within liberalism what Losurdo calls the ‘community of the free’—that is, of full rights-bearing citizens—is always wrestling with who is entitled to be part of that community, and its arguments for emancipation are always accompanied by arguments for ‘dis-emancipation’, sometimes explicitly as when advanced by slave-holding liberals, but more often than not surreptitiously or implicitly, that is, cryptically (Losurdo 2011). The answer to this question of who rightly belongs to the ‘community of the free’ has expanded over the years to include more of the formerly excluded, but it has also been accompanied by a highly mobile series of exclusions within civil society that intersect—mostly surreptitiously, but sometimes openly—with the formal inclusiveness of the state. The rise of President Donald Trump and the departure of the UK from the European Union are two such instances that have recently exposed this process.

It is not surprising then that the principal means by which liberalism regulates difference, namely tolerance, is haunted by the figure of the cryp-

tic. As the limits of tolerability have been displaced from Jews to communists and now to Muslims, so too has the rhetorical figure of the cryptic (which inscribes those limits through the marking of hidden enemies and unseen threats menacing the community) migrated across these different imaginaries. Tracing this vagrant rhetorical figure not only demonstrates how the relational iterations of this figure within antisemitism, anticommunism, and Islamophobia reveal the continuities in liberal discourses regulating difference (notably the mechanisms of ‘tolerance’ and ‘integration’ in western liberal democracies) but also how deeply implicated liberalism has been in the constitution of racist imaginaries. This involvement has been rendered obscure by layer upon layer liberal self-imaginings that have fingered the paranoid fantasies of the extreme right as being responsible for racisms then and now. In fact, the cryptic figure cryptically haunts liberal democracy itself, and liberalism’s professions of openness, transparency and visibility, producing and reproducing racial imaginaries within liberal-democratic social orders through a process of displacement, of reinscription with a difference. The object of attention shifts, but the underlying problematic of liberal social orders remains. The trope of the ‘cryptic’ therefore constitutes one of the most acutely problematic obstacles to the building of trust in contemporary multicultural societies, for its prevalence attests to the depth of mistrust in modern social imaginaries.

Notes

1. Corroborated by the ruling of the Independent Press Standards Organization (IPSO) on 26 March 2016. See BBC Online. 2016. ‘The Sun’s UK Muslim “jihadi sympathy” article “misleading”, Ipso rules’. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-35903066>. Accessed 1 February 2017.
2. The well-documented discrimination experienced by Muslims while flying is one such instance where such free-floating signifiers are signs taken for danger (Khaleeli 2016). Other instances include a Muslim child, aged 7, reported by his school to police under the Prevent obligation for bringing a piece of brass (believed to be bullet) into school (Pidd 2016); another, aged 8, for wearing a t-shirt on which was inscribed the name ‘Abu-Bakr al-Siddique’ (one of the four ‘rightly guided’ Caliphs revered by Sunni Muslims) because it was believed to be a reference to the Islamic State leader Abu-Bakr

al-Baghdadi; a child, aged 4, reported by his teacher because he drew a picture of a person holding a cucumber that his teacher misheard as “cooker bomb”; and a teenager questioned by police for borrowing a book on terrorism from his local public library: these and several other instances have been highlighted in a report on Prevent’s consequences by the Rights Watch UK organization (Bowcott and Adams 2016).

3. There is a difference between the idea that a government has been infiltrated at the highest level—Roosevelt’s wife, Eleanor, for instance, was seen to be a crypto-communist by some in the anticommunist movement—and the idea commonly put forward in relation to Muslims that western governments have, as a result of multiculturalism, relativism, political correctness and such like, become docile and supine in the face of Muslim interests.

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3

Trust Within Reason: How to Trump the Hermeneutics of Suspicion on Campus

Alison Scott-Baumann

There is a paradox at the heart of trust: we trust each other to behave predictably in a procedural sense (governments issue laws and guidance in order that citizens can follow them) and we also trust each other to behave normatively in a substantive sense (generally we trust that laws and guidance provide for the general good). Reciprocity is the key to trust and therein lies the paradox: how can we trust each other and those in power, given that reciprocity is often weakened by an imbalance of power in relationships? Moreover such imbalance can become entrenched in 'norms'. In Britain, we see the university sector being told that it cannot be trusted if it does not follow government guidance to 'safeguard' its students from being 'radicalised' into 'extremists' on campus. The guidance makes it the norm to suspect Muslims. In fact we should mistrust the guidance. Yet in this context, the opposite happens: many behave as if they are diminished and vulnerable and suspend their disbelief about recent counter-terrorist laws and guidance, telling themselves that the government knows best. This 'guidance' is in fact an artificially generated hermeneutics of suspicion that is racist, has no evidence base and is

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counter-productive. The task of research, faced with such an abuse of trust, is to establish an evidence base that measures up to scientific rationality and apply that evidence to the complexities of human experience. We must ensure that this happens, rather than research being hijacked by ideologies. I will argue therefore for the central importance of *co-production* of research and social order: we need others to tell us when we've made something up.

There are three parts to my proposition: first, I examine trust, then I consider the implications of reciprocity and finally offer ways of building trust within reason. I focus upon two major causes of the breakdown of trust. My first theme is the *hermeneutics of suspicion*, which then provides a helpful way of framing and understanding the second cause of loss of trust—the *diminished self and its Datafication*. The third element is the *hermeneutics of trust*, the trusting self, attesting to one's words while also using a reasonable, never excessive, degree of suspicion about the identities fashioned out of one's own and others' personal data. We must dismantle, modify and re-assemble the hermeneutics of suspicion, which is useful when based on reasonably accurate estimates of reality, if we want to create a hermeneutics of trust, a generalised reciprocity. I conclude by advocating research and specifically co-production as a form of research that provides a basis for trust. All research is embedded in the social environment that produces it, so values are at its core. We should therefore understand the need to challenge and, if necessary, unmask that relationship between research, values and environment when it risks distorting findings.

The Hermeneutics of Suspicion

Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005), the French hermeneutical philosopher, developed the term 'hermeneutic of suspicion' mainly in order to explain the erosion of trust in oneself by three thinkers who have taught us to be suspicious: Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. He understood them to have collectively and definitively destroyed the self-belief that Descartes gave us by asserting that we know who we are because we know that we think. Ricoeur saw how, through their analyses of secret motives regarding

money, power and sex, respectively, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud taught us to disbelieve our own thoughts. We do not know who we are, after all, because we do not know what we think. Consider, for example, Freud: he discovered that our subconscious mind has a separate and secret life of which our conscious mind is usually completely unaware. Our subconscious mind influences the way we behave and think, yet we do not even notice. For Marx it was the use of capital that distorted human relations and for Nietzsche it was the use of power. Sex, money and power dominate our lives to this day.

So the first thing we learn from Ricoeur's hermeneutics of suspicion is to mistrust our invincibility; we cannot assume that we know what we are thinking or that our predictions are right or that we understand normative trust. This is a development of the legacy of Kant, with his assertion that our sensory apparatuses will mislead us in our perception of the world and that we have to accept those limitations and keep trying to understand (1788: 5.99). Shall we believe Marx, Nietzsche and Freud in their treatment of Kant to herald postmodern thought that refuses to trust any cognitive structure? If we cannot trust ourselves to understand what we are thinking and what motivates us, then how can we trust others? The role suspicion plays in establishing normative trust can be seen in an example from legislation.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015

A special situation has arisen at British universities that encapsulates the hermeneutics of suspicion in such an extreme way that we will see the urgent need to dismantle, reshape and re-assemble our use of suspicion into a more reasonable form, if it is to be useful. In this endeavour, Giorgio Agamben's analysis of the 'state of exception' will help.

In 2015, as part of a long line of counter-terror legislation, the *Counter-Terrorism and Security Act* was passed. To help people interpret an Act, it is common practice to issue guidance, which is for clarification and is not legally binding. In the case of this counter-terror legislation, the guidance is extensive and I show how Agamben's theory helps us to understand the guidance. The 2015 Act places certain duties on higher education author-

ities and the Guidance is something to which the authorities must ‘have due regard’ when performing those duties. There is a significant difference between the 2015 Act, which is mandatory, and its Guidance, which is designed to provide direction. But, more importantly, in both cases, the duty is simply to ‘have regard to’ various matters: there is no requirement that anything be done in any particular way. This difference between *law* and *guidance* should be discussed in legal journals, and university legal teams should be clarifying this, but generally that is not happening and the silence around the subject suggests that the process of infantilisation is working extremely well; universities feel unable to refuse to comply with bureaucratic constraints because of dependence upon government and the risk of reputational damage. By this means, different normative expectations can be applied to minority groups than to the majority population. (In normative terms, we are invited to trust the inference that it is normal for a Muslim to have terrorist goals.) The topic therefore needs to be discussed in the context of the diminished self: the Muslim may feel diminished and so is the person who becomes suspicious without evidence.

This is the legal situation: Section 26(1) of the 2015 Act sets out the duty thus, ‘*A specified authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.*’

However, there is much public and media discussion that believes this places a statutory duty on universities to monitor or to record information on, mainly, Muslims, of whom we are told to be suspicious. The guidance itself is written in intimidating language about the obligation, the legal duty to use surveillance (Higher Education Funding Council for England [HEFCE]). It is a duty to ‘have due regard’ to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Think about it. Take it into account: no more, no less. The precise content of this duty always depends on all the circumstances of the situation.

Guidance accompanies the Act and provides the *application* of the *norms* set out in the Act. In his book, *State of Exception* (2005: 1–31), Agamben shows how laws can be subverted by pleading for an exception that will allow guidance on existing laws. In such a situation, these laws remain in place and appear to ensure that no illegality is committed. Yet Agamben locates ‘an empty space’, ‘the empty centre’ at the core of all

laws, because of a natural gap between laws and guidance about their implementation (Agamben 2005: 86). What I call elsewhere the ‘vacuum’ between law (*norm*) and guidance (*application*) is part of the juridical system and can be exploited and turned into a state of exception (Scott-Baumann 2017). We see this with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, which instructs us to ‘have due regard to’ the Prevent Guidance but has no power to control the Guidance. The Prevent Duty Guidance is based upon a fear of terrorist activity everywhere—in the context of my work, this relates to university campuses—and this creates the conditions for establishing a state of exception.

I believe that the relationship between the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and its Prevent Guidance exemplifies Agamben’s state of exception. Under the protection of the Act, the Guidance can throw its weight around and demand more than the law mandates. How can such a state of exception be created? It requires complicity from the silent majority. In 2016, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) carried out a survey of university students on free speech and on surveillance issues. As shown by this HEPI survey, 55% of the students in the survey believe that it is necessary for universities to work closely with the police to identify risk of terrorism and 58% believe that it is good to train staff to deal with the identification of such risk (HEPI Report 85 2016: 57). According to the way these students understand the situation, 55% of the same sample also want ‘safe spaces’ policies, establishing zones where unpleasant views cannot be expressed: by this policy it would also be more difficult to discuss any issues underlying the Prevent strategy. These forms of compliance authorise the state to fill the ‘vacuum’ that Agamben identifies at the heart of the juridical system, with exclusionary gestures that become norms because of the imbalance of power that weakens generalised reciprocity.

It can perhaps be inferred from these figures that over half the student body sees itself as vulnerable and in need of protection. The student population is also represented implicitly in this Guidance as being in great need of safeguarding. Ideas, ideologies and opinions are represented as incredibly dangerous and this situation can of course be interpreted purely politically: by suppressing the voices of those British Muslim students and others who do not agree with government policies, opinions

at variance with issues such as British foreign policy will also be suppressed. This represents a profound lack of trust in young adults to be autonomous and capable of decision-making. Moreover, shaky narratives are created to ensure compliance, of which ‘fundamental British values’ are one. ‘Fundamental British values’ are described in terms of *not being* extremist: ‘We define “extremism” as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs’ (Channel Guidance 2015: 3).

However unclear and reactive this is, it is certainly being simultaneously both *promoted* and *transgressed* by the government, through targeting students of certain beliefs, ethnicities or appearance. This creates an imbalanced relationship that threatens trust because it creates an imbalance of reciprocity. Yet before Prevent, the university sector delivered a perfectly adequate duty of care to staff and students. We can look at this compliant sector response to Prevent as another manifestation of the diminishment of the self.

The postulated danger that terrorism arises from thinking dangerous thoughts at university has been accepted by many British universities as real, even though there is no evidence and precautionary measures entail racial and ethnic stereotyping. So following the Guidance is clearly seen as the lesser of two evils—the perceived vulnerability of the student body and of the reputation of the university are more important than possible racist slurs on a minority. The diminished self can be seen here again: the student (whether Muslim or not) is perceived as incapable of protecting him/herself against evil, conveniently packaged in the perceived evils of Islam. The non-Muslim student is rendered passive, sensitised to ‘data’ about others: a beard, a headscarf, a view about the Middle East and a devout religious belief. When such ‘data’ is collated it becomes data as capital and it can be used for any purpose, which may involve matters beyond the intention of the original owner of the beard or headscarf. In this case it is collected, collated and used to sow and marketise fear. We see a clear example of fear being marketised, being made a commodity, with the British cultural imagination internalising the fear of clothing as data (the hijab being the most obvious) and pressing home the perceived danger of Islam in British civil life. Sectors of the media are guilty here.

Arthur Snell, former Head of the Prevent programme, comments on the provocative assertions of Anjem Choudary. His assertions and pictures of him were well publicised in Britain for some years and his 'main platform was given to him by the mainstream media' not by Muslim communities, who tended to dismiss him.¹

In such a situation, Foucault asks us to consider whether we can identify where the power resides. Currently we are told that it resides in radical Islam, yet as Debord demonstrates, stories about terrorism are written by the state, in whom the power resides. Terrorism is presented as worse than everything else and individual liberties must be given up voluntarily in order to combat terror. It would be unwise to exercise one's democratic right to seek evidence because fear is stronger: 'Such a perfect democracy constructs its own inconceivable foe, terrorism. Its wish is to be judged by its enemies rather than by its results' (Debord 1988: 24). University students are thus placed under pressure to accept contradictory messages. Students placed in this situation experience difficulty in finding a platform to express themselves, and this chronic state of enforced inarticulacy must have implications for their future identity as citizens (Scott-Baumann 2017).

The Diminished Self

In Britain, we see a politicised version of the diminished self, whereby the university sector is made to appear guilty of not safeguarding its students from being 'radicalised' into terrorists on campus. The propagandist privileging of terrorism over all other forms of danger diminishes Muslims because they are thereby given a restricted identity as British citizens who are radicalised or ripe for radicalisation, and this also diminishes the rest of us, who become complicit. We are made to feel and therefore can easily become infantilised and victimised. Here, I focus on one small aspect of this big picture: how data mining in the perceived interests of national security can contribute to diminishing the person.

Personal data is being taken constantly and fashioned into identities unintended by the owner. Data is being used to suppress the personal complexities of individuals by the harvesting of huge amounts of pri-

vate information that is used for other purposes than those intended by the original owner, whose identity is taken and turned into data for others to graze upon and enjoy. We see how the Western press and Daesh mutually nourish each other. This mutual nourishing works to boost social media profiles and sales for newspapers: in Britain, in November 2015, *The Sun* published a bold and exciting headline ‘1 in 5 Brit Muslims’ sympathy for jihadis’. This was based on a Survation poll, which did not mention ‘jihadis’ or ‘ISIS’ or ‘ISIS fighters’, and the poll asked whether British Muslims felt ‘sympathy with young Muslims who leave the UK to join fighters in Syria’. What happened next was a rare and gratifying concerted response with a positive outcome. The headline led to the largest number of complaints that the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)² had ever received. IPSO was set up in 2014 to be an independent regulator of the British press. IPSO chose the NGO MEND (Muslim Engagement and Development) as the lead complainant to challenge *The Sun*. It was argued that the operative words in the questionnaire were sympathy ‘with’ and not sympathy ‘for’. Some months later, IPSO concluded that *The Sun*, the biggest selling newspaper in the United Kingdom, had been responsible for coverage that was ‘significantly misleading’. In March 2016, *The Sun* newspaper was obliged to publish a correction to this headline. Yet the remnant of anti-Muslim thought is lodged in the reader’s mind and is much more nourishing to many than the truth.

The Hermeneutics of Suspicion Enshrined in Data

Consciousness is a task, a work, a labour, not a given. We labour at our ‘self’, our identity and, according to many modern thinkers such as the teachers of suspicion—Marx, Freud and Nietzsche—at self-deception. Even if we shouldn’t trust our own self-constructs, developing and maintaining a personal identity is a form of labour, it is our personal project. My personal identity *becomes* valuable capital in the form of data. The way in which this is done partially resembles Marx’s analysis of labour

and capital, whereby capital creates markets and these markets are alien to the worker whose labour made the markets possible. Datafication can trigger a similar process of alienation. Labour becomes separated from the worker and turned into capital, and in a similar way personal data is taken from its owner and made immensely valuable and marketable. In classical Marxist terms, my labour becomes capital that is greater than the sum of its parts (its parts being my efforts), and the capital that emerges from my labour will therefore profit those in power more than it advantages me. In fact in the twenty-first century, *data* counts as capital much more than labour does.³ Data is capital, as we see from Facebook and other giant collectors of personal information. Personal data is taken from us and they can be used to market products and emotions, such as desire and fear.

Reducing a person to data can reduce the individual's trust in their own judgement and can even infantilise them. We see an example of this after the March 2017 Westminster Bridge tragedy, when a social media feeding frenzy erupted over the photograph of a young woman in a hijab walking past an injured person. Attention was focused upon the combination of her assumed indifference and her hijab, although at least two other people can be seen walking past in the photograph. Opprobrium was manifested in such an intense manner that she felt she had to respond to the mass defamation to reclaim her identity.⁴ She became data—the hijab—and was objectified as a subject of fear. In this way, attempts were made to estrange her from her personal identity.

One way of understanding how data can dominate public narratives is to consider a very different narrative to see if it can, at least, clarify a situation by offering contrast. Philosophy can help. With the Prevent duty agenda, it is possible that people may find it harder to use their own powers of judgement and observation to draw conclusions, relying instead upon government and media commentaries on suspect communities objectified as data. The self becomes data about the self, data that is worth more than the self.

Through technological rationality, data is manipulated to become interconnected in seductive ways that the diminished, one-dimensional self cannot easily resist. Elsewhere I have applied the linguistic analysis that Saussure developed to help us to understand how we come to certain

conclusions: Saussure developed his analysis of language through the use of the signifier, the signified and the referent. We can see how, in this way, for example, the hijab has been adopted by the Western press and media as a symbol for a lack of integration. The signifier is the term used and recognised (hijab), the signified is the preferred meaning of the term (agent of oppression) and the referent is the actual object (material used by people to cover their head) (Scott-Baumann 2011). It is dangerous to let the signifier and the signified become so interlocked that they have no need of a referent, that is, the hijabbed student on campus becomes something to add to a databank of visible features of Islam that, in turn, becomes a databank of fear. The commodity is then valuable in the lucrative Islamophobia industry. The individual whose identity data has been harvested in this way can become alienated from his or her own identity and cannot recover and reinterpret that data. They are no longer considered trustworthy to undertake such tasks as managing their own identity. As with Marx's original model in which a person's labour is taken, turned into capital and exploited by others, similarly, those from whom data is harvested lose control of the self as they've developed it.

Of course this isn't wholly true; despite huge pressure upon young British Muslims on campus to 'fulfil trust' in both a predictive and a normative expectation by becoming terrorists, they resist and insist upon developing their own path as British citizens. Yet it is partially true that they lose control over interpretation of the data stolen from them. Moreover, the lazy, unsubstantiated belief that hijabi women are dangerous, held by many, weakens the fabric of society by reducing trust in others, reducing trust in one's own judgement and pathologising diversity. This attitude is carefully orchestrated to divide society, to weaken trust on campus through surveillance under Prevent and to control student unions (now overseen by the Prevent-friendly Charity Commission).

Diminishing Trust

British public discourse and the language of the Prevent duty can evoke a self-fulfilling prophecy. Case Study 17 from the Open Society Justice Initiative *Eroding Trust* report shows how, by this means, Prevent can have a counter-productive effect. 'Nazia', a nurse, had no intention of

going to Syria but when questioned by Prevent officers she felt: 'The way they went about it, it could have made me do exactly what they told me not to do' (*Eroding Trust* 2016: 105). This is not what the majority of British Muslims want, yet they are being trusted to behave as expected: that is, to want to go to Syria. Here is the rupture of reciprocal trust. In the generalised reciprocity of citizenship, we trust each other to behave predictably in procedural ways (governments issue laws and guidance about Muslims and citizens follow them) and we also trust each other to behave normatively in a substantive sense (in this case, we trust that laws and guidance will provide for the general good by demonstrating the 'evil' of the minority). Both procedurally and normatively, some of her colleagues saw her as a threat. 'Nazia' was able to work out how unsound the data was that was collected on her and that led to her being questioned. This diminished identity is in the form of a self-fulfilling prophecy, which is often presented by government and media as if it is the ultimate Islamic self-realisation and made punishable by prosecution and imprisonment.

How can I find out if personal data is being collected on me without my permission? My legal advisors tell me that if I want to know, I must send a specially worded request and a £10.00 cheque to the Home Office and, if I wish, a copy of the same letter with another £10.00 cheque to the Henry Jackson Society, a charity. Why is this? The Extremism Analysis Unit (EAU) is a government group that collects material on individuals considered to be 'extremist' 'partly using work produced by researchers employed by the Henry Jackson Society' (Chahal CO/6361/2015: 12). The Henry Jackson Society has evoked strong reactions from commentators: in 2013, James Bloodworth expressed concern about their illiberal perspectives (Guardian 2013) and David Miller's Spinwatch has devoted considerable effort to analysing their actions. Until 2014, The Henry Jackson Society provided the secretariat for two All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs), one for Homeland Security and one for Transatlantic and International Security. The November 2010 Homeland Security launch was also the launch for the Centre for Social Cohesion's report, *Islamic Terrorism: The British Connections*, which asserted that radicalisation at universities is a major problem. This report influenced the revised Prevent strategy and in 2011, the Henry Jackson Society and the Centre for Social Cohesion merged.

Two years earlier, in 2009, Henry Jackson Society set up *Student Rights*, which acts upon this stated concern with and interest in the need for campus security. Taking all this into account, I would perhaps not want to draw attention to myself by asking the Henry Jackson Society if they were keeping a file on me. Their clear partisan interest in security issues indicates that data collection by such a group could easily be understood to see society (and university campuses) as defined by security problems and to see human beings as categorised by the level of risk that they pose. On the part of government, this seems to contribute to Agamben's state of exception, when government agencies invite a group with such strong views to collect data on a heavily securitised question. Such data collection, harvested without public knowledge, also presumably contravenes data protection principles and serves to diminish trust.

Attestation of the Self and a Hermeneutics of Trust

This spiralling down into self-doubt and lack of trust in others could be seen as the origin and destination of the diminished self. This is not necessarily the case, because a certain amount of self-doubt is useful and indeed necessary. Nor am I advocating at all that we follow the anti-cogito of the teachers of suspicion. On the contrary, if we accept our personal fallibility, we will be much closer to a better understanding of the conscious and *unconscious* complexities of our identity: this in turn should help us to be more trusting of our abilities to judge, because we will be more honest, more accurate and possibly more able to grasp the complexities in the personalities of others. Indeed in his book, *Oneself as Another*, Ricoeur argued that we can only learn about ourselves if we try to understand others, and this process includes accepting the negative, the emotions, desires and beliefs which we ourselves hold, while finding them embarrassing, shameful, thought provoking or unacceptable within ourselves—rather than projecting them onto others. I exist, here I stand and I am responsible for my actions. This is the approach of attestation, setting overbearing suspicion aside, believing and *trusting*, despite personal fallibility, that we can be useful (Ricoeur 1992: 300–2).

So what does a hermeneutics of trust look like? Hollis analyses the way in which generalised reciprocity leads us to make donations of blood or pick up student hitchhikers: we know we cannot guarantee that others will give blood for us or give lifts to our student children, but by doing so ourselves we make that more likely. Trusting or mistrusting others has the same effect. In the *Eroding Trust Report 2016*, Dr Clare Gerada points out that she can no longer assume that her General Practitioner (GP) relationship is based on trust with her Muslim patients; this is because her patients know that she has been instructed to report them if they speak in any way that suggests they are becoming radicalised (*Justice Initiative Eroding Trust Report 2016*: 49). Her point is valid: this is how the reciprocity that facilitates trust is eroded. However, that situation can also assume that a professional in that situation does in fact no longer trust Muslims—if the Muslim patient criticises the government, they are supposedly being more dangerous than other patients who do the same. I hope I can assume that she and others in the same position will indeed trust their own judgement and differentiate between terrorism and normal human criticism such as ‘the political situation for fellow Muslims, or Syria, or despair about drone attacks, or how Palestinians are being treated’ (*Eroding Trust 2016*: 50). This would be an example of trusting oneself to make sensible judgements: there is no evidence of more than the usual risks of criminal actions in doctors’ surgeries, in communities and on university campuses. The hermeneutics of trust requires self-belief, belief in human beings and rational risk assessment. In the current climate of suspicion, we are using a distorted sense of generalised reciprocity to assert that we need to report ‘terrorists’ in order to be trustworthy. Two sets of norms exist, a set for the majority and another for the minority.

Taking a very different view, Ricoeur, in *Oneself as Another*, presents the other person as the part of our existential experience that we cannot eliminate and, moreover, that other as the aspect of our own lives from whom we can learn most about ourselves. The ‘other’ may be the mind or the body, each of which can appear frightening in its demands; or the opposite sex, as understood by Plato to be impenetrable; or the antinomies that Kant identified, which (such as love and justice) are each necessary yet when combined become antithetical; or the Muslim who ‘looks

different' from the majority in Britain. Ricoeur adapts and warms up Kant's antinomies: we cannot find stable happiness, yet we can find some provisional personal comfort when we have faced these 'others' and seen them to be integral components of our lives, not as indicators of evil which we can negate and against whom we can legislate. In order to achieve this, we need to trust our own ability to make judgements about others and this is what the diminished self also lacks—even or especially when seeking research funding.

Academic Research on Campus: The Case for Co-production

A vigorous renewal of research intent is required, that demonstrates clearly to academic researchers that they themselves risk being manipulated by ideologies, unless they seek guidance from their own moral framework, information sources and academic disciplines that stand outside propaganda.

The hermeneutics of suspicion arises with regard to current ethical research concerns. Islam on campus is a difficult topic to research dispassionately: Muslims are being analysed in a politicised arena, where research agendas are influenced by fear and by both national and foreign interests. Those who impose securitisation procedures are also those who decide what the danger is. In such a situation, where exceptional action is deemed necessary for public order as if we are in a state of war and such action is therefore unimpeachable, errors can be made such as the inductive fallacy. This is a belief such as: 'some Muslims are terrorists, therefore all Muslims can become terrorists'. In this highly politicised research environment, undertaking balanced, dispassionate research becomes an assertion of generalised reciprocity. We need to recover the 'norm' of research based upon empirical research, not upon ideologies of suspicion.

Empirical research cannot begin from an inductive fallacy because there is no evidence to substantiate such a position. Yet, there is research funding available that invites such a premise, and this dilemma illuminates the importance of the General Will which was so important for Rousseau when he showed how the individual becomes a citizen. Rousseau's General Will

binds us as individuals into a bigger understanding of how we can function together in harmony, using generalised reciprocity to get on with each other. This reciprocity relies upon mutual trust: for such trust, a communal bond is required and a bond that we often appeal to in Western democracies is liberalism. A liberal vision is one that believes each individual can pursue their own interests while also subsuming them when necessary to the general good in the interests of generalised reciprocity: a naturalist will usually put clothes on to pop out and buy a pint of milk. This naïve yet valuable desire for an important balance between the individual and the group means that when democracy goes wrong and racism bubbles nearer to the surface of human thought and behaviours than usual—as now—then we *demand* that liberal values are imposed on society: which is an anti-liberal position to adopt. Yet good research can and must adopt this contradictory position by collecting data that is neither partisan to a particular view of humans nor biased in the questions it asks.

Given the paucity of evidence that the university campus is a dangerous place that radicalises Muslims, empirical researchers must seek to collect evidence of activities that actually take place on campus and ask a wide range of participants to describe what they experience. Researchers must also cultivate a reasonable degree of suspicion about the identities fashioned out of one's own and others' personal data. There is plenty of long-standing evidence to confirm that a person's character is not reflected in their skin colour any more than in their eye colour and we should assert that in the face of counter-terror measures. This approach requires great sensitivity to the double hermeneutic, which is characteristic of social sciences. With the double hermeneutic, social scientists have to understand both that those on campus will have certain understandings of their environment that shape their perceptions of their place in it *and* that social scientists themselves can influence the ways in which staff and students think. Liberal ideas are currently viewed by many as dangerous, but even in such a hostile environment there are ethical protocols that should help us to develop trust within reason, such as the 1964 *Declaration of Helsinki* that emphasised autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and distributive justice. Trust *can* be achieved by mutual respect and generalised reciprocity, grounded in an approach that is both predictive (most people follow rules) and normative (the rules contribute to the general

good). Yet this can only be achieved in the current climate if researchers become aware of rules that privilege some over others, as with the counter-terror initiatives.

Another way of challenging counter-terror initiatives is to understand them as an aspect of the debate about ‘multiculturalism’. This term was used for decades to suggest acceptance of differences brought about by immigration, until 2006, when the then Communities and Local Government Secretary Ruth Kelly gave a speech that seemed to signal the end of multiculturalism as government policy (Kelly 2006). In 2011, David Cameron, the then Prime Minister, underscored the end of multiculturalism and argued that Britain needed a stronger national identity in order to deter people from becoming radicalised extremists, although there is no proven connection between these elements (Kuenssberg 2011). The 2016 Casey Report picks this up and ridicules multiculturalism. After a year-long study of community cohesion in Britain, Dame Louise Casey, a senior civil servant in the government, described ministerial efforts to integrate ethnic minorities as amounting to little more than ‘saris, samosas and steel drums for the already well-intentioned’ (Casey 2016a, b). There may be some truth in this, but she offered nothing positively useful in its place. The only way for academic researchers to be able to develop a clearer, more positive picture with a real chance to improve the quality of such discussion and its attendant policies is to do research *with*, not *on* communities and individuals. This is only possible if researchers can free themselves from the prevalent rhetoric about extremism, terrorism and fundamental British values.

In this context, here are 3 of the 11 research guidelines that were formulated as a result of conducting 4 important and interrelated research projects regarding Islam and Muslims in Britain from 2008 to 2013 (Scott-Baumann and Cheruvallil-Contractor 2015: 167–9). These three sample guidelines are not based upon the risk aversion that increasingly characterises research ethics protocols, they are positive assertions:

- The researcher must interrogate their own value system and their own ethical literacy in research ethics in order to be able to undertake research.
- Any highly politicised research field is likely to suffer from adverse and destructive media coverage, and a high degree of care and prag-

matism is necessary to ensure that the reputations of others are not damaged.

- The use of collaborative research methodologies (including feminist methodologies) will allow the researcher and the researched to work together and give voice to all the diverse stakeholders. These include university students and staff, government, civil society, commercial interests such as social media, lawyers and activist groups of different ideological persuasions.

Conclusions

Our labour, in the Marxist interpretation, has become special and external to each of us and so has our view of ourselves: in the digital era of data harvesting, data about the self is priceless. Personal data is being harvested in the same way that labour used to be collected and sold on: personal information is being collected and aggregated to create and feed securitisation market places that create capital for others. Datasets are capital, they are worth money and also, like money they can be passed around as if they are currency and are in fact of more value than currency.

The data harvesting that atomises our identities, and particularly then steals parts of the identities of suspect communities, is a major source of suspicion that we must be aware of in seeking to establish trust. We inhabit a highly politicised atmosphere. This harvesting makes us feed upon ourselves and others by atomising us and giving or selling us back to ourselves like a contagion, a version of bovine TB. When a violent crime takes place, increasingly we are told that it is not terrorist related, even though the thought may not have occurred to most people in the first place. The unevidenced assumption is that terrorism is the greatest existential threat that faces us. The effective theft of the hijab from Muslim female identity, and its transformation into a sign of alienness and threat, is a particularly favoured instance of this distortion, partly because of the high visibility of the headscarf. If we can recognise harvesting the lives of others thus, we can lay the groundwork for accepting

personal fallibility, because we will never be able to stop ourselves going online to look, but we can reduce our infantile gorging and become aware of how we are manipulated into suspicion of others, as with the Westminster Bridge photograph.

We can look at the diminished self in this context, and such a broken anti-cogito also needs to be considered in terms of a bigger heuristic structure of possible empowerment, using research to challenge and then unify the fragmented yet repetitive patterns of modern life. The tragic paradox is that while we are apparently being encouraged to seek our rights to dignity and self-fulfilment by exercising choice, we are systematically being deprived of them through forced choice: we are told that we need to research radicalisation in order to secure protection from evil and become whole again, and so we will thereby remain diminished. Of course the diminished self never truly recognises itself as diminished, because that could lead to it seeking to free itself. Yet instead of ground-up online offal, academic research can collect and analyse empirical data without prejudice.

In conclusion then, there is a state of mind to which we all aspire. This state is one in which we know enough about ourselves to make reasoned decisions about how to develop our potential. We dream of how to exercise agency that enables us and others to live a better life, with and for each other and within just institutions, as Ricoeur explains it. This is a rich, deep and much desired state that may resemble Rousseau's General Will. I believe that we cannot attain a wonderful state of trust but that we can aspire to being better than we are, by using various approaches through generalised reciprocity. One approach that Ricoeur recommends is through religious faith, although he recognised that this was not a universal aspiration. Another approach is through attestation: being prepared to take full responsibility for one's own actions and believing that one can act ethically and usefully. He also advocated an approach that takes something from Kant's antinomies and accepts the contradictions that populate human existence: we have animal desires yet we wear clothes, walk on two legs and use language to create our realities and our moral positions. I recommend that the academic community reviews the research landscape critically to ensure that we cannot be bought for the purposes of researching with the securitisation bias. For this we need to

review our levels of ethical research literacy and challenge the creeping influence of securitisation into research ethics protocols. We can carry out trustworthy research by starting with a challenge: large British-funded research schemes such as Partnership for Conflict, Crime and Security Research (*PaCCS*) and Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats (*CREST*) provide research funding based on the assumption that there exists a problem with Islam more than with any other belief system, so we need to ensure that they also fund research which challenges the hegemonic discourse about Islam as a violent, evil religion, for example.

Academic research is not merely collection and analysis of data; it is a practical commitment to a way of thinking that should enhance one's life and the lives of those with whom one researches. New generations of young people should conceive of themselves as able to be part of a project that can alter events: ideologies can transform lives, they don't need to ruin lives. Good research will challenge whether there is evidence of radicalisation on campus, define what it means to be radical and seek to explore the issues that many staff and students now feel they cannot discuss. In order to trump the hermeneutics of suspicion that creates suspect communities, we need to use moderate and healthy suspicion to challenge these processes, doubt these securitisation narratives, challenge the Datafication of minorities and work in trust with voices that are usually *talked about* but not asked directly for their views. This is co-production of research and is only possible when we are critical of racist policies on campus. Dealing with what we may perceive as the negative aspects of others and of ourselves is one crucial aspect of reversing the diminishment of the self as currently experienced by university students and staff through campus securitisation. At the heart of trust lies an acceptance of the contradictory nature of our constant existential struggles with the notional other: the other as part of us.

Notes

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4

Constructing a New Imagery for the Muslim Woman: Symbolic Encounters and the Language of Radical Empowerment

Alaya Forte

In October 2014, the campaign ‘Making a Stand’ led by the organisation *We Will Inspire*—a British NGO focusing on counter-extremism and human rights—was endorsed by *The Sun* newspaper. This followed the campaign launch in September by the co-director of Inspire, Sara Khan, and the former Home Secretary (and later Prime Minister) Theresa May. *The Sun* devoted an exceptional seven-page spread to issues raised by the campaign, including a long statement by Sara Khan herself. Such intense exposure signalled the support of British media as a whole and ensured national coverage of a campaign whose aim was to place Muslim women at the forefront of the fight against Islamic State (IS), seen as particularly relevant at a time of increased reports concerning young men and women who were leaving the UK to join the so-called Islamic State in Syria. By taking the lead on this issue, those behind the campaign and its supporters declared that

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[a]s British Muslim women we believe in the principles of democracy, human rights, peaceful co-existence and respect for life. These are being daily undermined by extremists and terrorists who murder, rape and steal in the name of Islam. We declare that groups like Islamic State, Al Qaeda and Boko Haram do not represent our faith and pose a very real and dangerous threat to our communities and to women's rights and lives. (Inspire 2015a)

The text was accompanied by an 'eye-catching image' (Pathan 2014), which reinforced the message, functioning both as backdrop to the launch and as *The Sun's* front cover. It also circulated nationally and internationally via the internet and social media. The image showed the profile of a young woman, set against a metallic grey background, wearing the Union Jack flag as a hijab. The campaign claimed, 'Women now feel empowered to stand up and say: "No more. Enough is enough"' (Inspire 2015a).

In this chapter, I intend to focus on the relationship between the visual imagery utilised by the NGO Inspire and the nexus of trust that needs to be established between minority groups, those claiming to represent them, and the state. With this goal in mind, it is essential to understand why trust represents one of the central pillars for the construction of representation and how instances of trust are complicated by group identity and the subjective nature of these identifications. We also need to consider the political context in which Inspire is operating, situating the engagement of organisations by and for Muslim women within wider discourses on multiculturalism in Britain which are inherently linked to and shaped by developments in the global War on Terror. Lastly, through a reflection on symbolic representation, I offer a detailed analysis of the much-publicised image of a Muslim woman wearing the Union Jack hijab to demonstrate its readability as myth, and argue that it is not so much a presupposition of guilt suggested by the image, as some critics have suggested, but the inability (perhaps even unwillingness) to be recognised as a subject that is being promoted. My argument is that the recognition of subaltern subjects, who demand to have their voices heard and protest against such ahistorical and depoliticised myths, is being violated by claims of representation that symbolically, and uncritically, posi-

tion individuals and groups within pre-determined national discourses of belonging. Once again Muslim women's bodies are being peddled as silent symbols and representations to sustain newly re-crafted national mythologies.

The emergence of 'Muslim women' as homogeneous subjects of policy within the framework of the War on Terror (Brown 2013; Rashid 2014, 2016), their diverse activism and political engagement in a post-multicultural Britain (Ahmed 2012, 2015; Wadia 2015; Lewicki and O'Toole 2017) and the problematic intersections of gender, race and religion being played out in this charged political context have been amply discussed by critics. Taken together they reveal how the spaces on offer for action not only limit Muslim women's agency but are actually detrimental to it. At the same time, the porous lines of inclusion and exclusion of new subjects and citizens in Western liberal democracies, explored in feminist and queer scholarship, shows how the reproduction of power and hegemonic discourses about political identities and values hinge on the proximity and inclusion of 'others' (Ahmed 2000; Puar 2006). In addition to questioning the subject of speech (the 'who speaks') and its content (the 'what is allowed to be said'), it is important to consider how claims to empower some subjects are framed and presented, particularly when employing images—visual representations—which are aimed at public consumption. As Morey and Yaqin (2011) persuasively argue, representations of Muslims in politics, media and even among those who claim to speak on behalf of 'the community' are still framed as a political problem to be solved. The French sociologist Olivier Roy also observes that this is a 'virtual community' (2004) where Islam, as a religion, is objectified by Western governments and scholarship (Roy 2007).

Only through incorporating a reflection on 'how we speak' can the power of myth-making be grasped, together with an appreciation of the efficacy of framing practices and the strength of symbolic encounters which produce new dialogic forms of acceptable political subjectivity. The necessity to unpack such 'representations' emerges from the writing of Roland Barthes and the 'feeling of impatience at the sight of the "naturalness" with which newspapers, art and common sense constantly dress up a reality which, even though it is the one we live in, is undoubtedly determined by history' (Barthes 1972: 10). This process acquires addi-

tional urgency given the growing crisis of trust in Western societies (Hardin 2002; O'Neill 2002; Hosking 2014),¹ which in Britain impacts heavily on Muslim communities. Many scholars would maintain that this deterioration in community relations has accelerated since the implementation of the counter-extremism programme Prevent, a response at government level to the rising Islamist threat at home and abroad (Birt 2009; Thomas 2012; Morey and Alibhai-Brown 2017). The language of crisis and risk, therefore, has led to varied, sometimes incompatible, projects directed at community trust-building which also intersect with existing securitisation and surveillance programmes. This process of signification is distorted in gendered and racialised ways, enabling some subjects to be 'brought in' as subjects of a nation imagined in accordance with a pre-determined set of values, while others remain firmly on the outside. As such, it only serves to enhance and exasperate the lack of trust within and towards certain political and social communities.

The idea of a crisis in national ideology always carries with it a particular sense of the loss of 'what once was.' Its discursive terms demand an inferred acknowledgement and acceptance that things were better in 'our' collective past. The present is a cause of concern and requires of us some decisive course of action to change things for the future. It is only in a united 'we' that disaster is to be averted. This, in turn, seems to call for renewed national mythologies. This has already led to the reframing and in some quarters repudiation of multiculturalism (Joppke 2004; Kymlicka 2010; Vertovec and Wessendorf 2010; Lentin and Titley 2011; Kundnani 2012) with successive European leaders denouncing the self-segregation, refusal to assimilate and lack of cohesion between communities that multiculturalism supposedly spawned.² The muscular liberalism proposed by David Cameron in 2011 in effect condemned 'the nation' for ever having believed what Ahmed describes as multiculturalism's promise of happiness (2007).

But to acknowledge there is a crisis of trust and then proceed to operate within frames dictated by counter-extremism programmes and policies suggests an unwillingness to appreciate the fundamental ways in which dialogic relations are fostered within democracy. Once again, there is a clear tension in the language adopted when speaking of trust, often implying that it is measurable. Conditions that foster trust become know-

able and modes of trust classifiable, using terms such as weak and strong, thick and thin (Sztompka 1999; Seligman 2000; Hardin 2002). Trust can also be viewed as simply functional (Luhmann 1979). 'Lack' of trust is, thus, explained in rational terms, partly because of the tendency in Western thought to equate trust with power (Hosking 2014: 7). If you trust someone or something, that someone or something will ipso facto be given the space to exercise power over you. In this framework, trust becomes a conscious mindset, an attitude to be adopted or discarded as a response to specific 'push and pull' factors. As a result, policies and other top-down/bottom-up measures are seen as possible means to 'positively' affect and direct it.

The work of the American political scientist Francis Fukuyama is relevant here as it endorses this approach. Fukuyama (1996) argued that trust is a necessary and key component for economic prosperity and goes to great lengths to review 'high-trust' and 'low-trust' societies to tease out similarities and, ultimately, relate them to economic success. Interestingly, he also claimed that it is only through shared culture and values that these relations of 'spontaneous sociability' and trust are able to emerge: 'The ability to associate depends [...] on the degree to which communities share norms and values and are able to subordinate individual interests to those of larger groups. Out of such shared values comes trust [...]' (Fukuyama 1996: 10). The implication here is that only those who belong to the same culture and share the same value-system can develop reciprocal trust. Symbolic systems, therefore, become a crucial element in the study of trust. For Hosking, this social trust is mediated through symbolic systems, which are transformed by historical processes, and different cultures inform configurations of trust in the contemporary context (2014: 41–2). What is meant by symbolic systems in Hosking's account, however, remains rather ambiguous. Following Bourdieu and anthropologists Bronislaw Malinowski, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz, Hosking defines such systems as symbolic on account of their association with language and myth, organised on the basis of difference (Bourdieu 1989: 20). The unknown 'Other,' once again, becomes the axis around which trust and distrust emerge and, as Sara Ahmed's work on affective politics demonstrates (2004), individual and collective bodies are also affected by emotions. When referring to nations, symbolic systems pro-

duce ‘bodies out of place,’ bodies to be feared—bodies to be distrusted. Heightened securitisation, terrorism and surveillance play their part in spreading and strengthening such emotions.

Alongside these rational and measurable notions of trust, its intangible, unreflective and complex nature has also been widely examined (O’Hara 2004). The dialogic nature of trust must be taken on board, if its social, relational and interdependent nature is to be understood. In order to achieve this, contextual and historical considerations must be placed at the heart of any analysis. Who is to say what is or is not trust? Stories told within both small and large communities (religious, cultural, political and family groups) include trust as a subconscious part of their narrative. This is particularly true on the political and national level and, as a result, these narratives are just as blurred as the concept of trust itself. Finally, when considering the concept of trust and its role in symbolic representations, we must not neglect its affective dimension. Trust is a contingent feeling that encompasses imaginaries of self and others. Hence it is determined by the ‘imagined’ past and connected to an equally imagined future, engaging in a dialectic relation with space and time, in addition to other living beings. This is where claims to collective and shared stories are challenged by the multiplicity of experiences and conflicting interpretations that symbolic representations contain and convey.

Having discussed the many-layered aspects of trust, I will now turn to the current political context. To understand the confluence of politics, trust and mistrust, attention must be paid to the discourse of empowerment itself, one that feminist scholars and activists have long grappled with. The production of feminist political subjectivities, centred on historically and ideologically determined conceptualisations of freedom and agency, have been widely criticised among some postcolonial feminist scholars for their emphasis on universalised notions of culture, race, religion and sexual difference. These define the ‘other’ woman as one trapped within patriarchal regimes founded on unenlightened and pre-modern traditions and, therefore, in need of an emancipatory politics in order to be saved (Mohanty 1988; Spivak 1988; Abu-Lughod 2002). Recent interventions have sought to demonstrate how political and national discourses in the West, resulting in legal articulations such as the French

banning of the veil in public spaces, have relied on the hyper-visibility of Muslim women's bodies to define what are accepted and appropriate political subjectivities (Razack 2007; Scott 2007). Operating in such a charged climate, research on the activism and political engagement of Muslim women has been doubly careful: on the one hand, it has tried not to reify essentialist group categorisations of 'oppressed and victimised Muslim women'; on the other hand, it has tried to avoid being instrumentalised and co-opted by broader imperial projects, happily supported in their turn by some liberal feminists.

In Britain, an analysis of empowerment requires a deeper understanding of the way in which a growing multiethnic and plural society, particularly in the wake of World War Two, has been 'managed' through a set of public policies that eventually came to be defined as multicultural (Runnymede Trust Commission 2000). The multicultural label was ascribed because these policies purportedly accommodated diversity, always taking into account a particular gender (Dustin and Phillips 2008; Phillips and Saharso 2008) and, in the aftermath of the Rushdie affair, religious dimension. In 1997, however, the Labour government reached out to representative groups from the Muslim communities living in Britain, by setting up the umbrella organisation, The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). However, this focus on the largely patriarchal MCB tended to exclude the voices of Muslim women (Elshayyal 2014; Rashid 2014) and organisations led by Muslim and minority women working on issues such as gendered violence, forced marriage and female genital cutting/mutilation (FGC/FGM). The rights of women in these communities were later said to have been damaged by this marginalisation which led to a period of 'culture talk,' allowing more conservative approaches to influence policy-making and the promotion of a 'laissez-faire' attitude (Okin 1999; Gupta 2003). These government-led, top-down outreach strategies did not cease following the 'seismic shift' away from the language of multiculturalism to one of integration (Joppke 2004: 249), which emphasises 'core British values' under attack from Islamist fundamentalists and those intolerant of liberal freedoms. As formerly favoured organisations like the MCB were repudiated in favour of more 'moderate' interlocutors such as The Sufi Muslim Council, strategies promoting integration significantly changed direction making Muslim women

targets of policy, as they were finally viewed as ‘interested’ government allies and actively sought out.

In recent years, as Zareen Roohi Ahmed shows, ‘Muslim women took advantage of the opportunities offered to them by the British government as part of the Prevent strategy, not particularly with the intention of preventing violent extremism, but more because their progression was an assertion of their own human rights’ (2015). But evidence also shows how, over the past decade, several projects and organisations have already promoted Muslim women leaders outside government agendas (Jones et al. 2014).³ This inclusion, however, has narrowed the topics Muslim women can successfully engage with, often restricting the topics to religious affiliation alone (Rashid 2014). Government funding for non-security projects is only considered if the impact on counter-extremist measures can be demonstrated (Brown 2013: 41). Yet, when Shaista Gohir, one of the members of the National Muslim Women’s Advisory Group (NMWAG)—an organisation set up by the Department for Communities and Local Government in November 2007—resigned from her position because ‘women’s empowerment ends up becoming a tick-box exercise’ (Gohir 2010), these government strategies came to be seen as no more than ‘political fads’ (Allen and Guru 2012).

In this context, an analysis of the work of the counter-extremism and human rights organisation *We Will Inspire* will also benefit from a reflection on the gendered implications of the War on Terror. Established in 2009 by Sarah Khan, the aim of ‘*Inspire*’ is ‘to address inequalities facing British Muslim women. By empowering women, *Inspire* aims to create positive social change resulting in a more democratic, peaceful and fairer Britain’ (Inspire 2015b). While Khan describes herself as someone with 20 years of experience campaigning for women’s rights in Muslim communities and as a feminist who has stood up against patriarchy, she has nevertheless been heavily criticised by many within her community for assuming the role of ‘native informant’ (Spivak 1999), who claims to provide for the majority society an authoritative and authentic glimpse into the lives of British Muslim communities, particularly its women members. Some Muslim organisations have also expressed unease at the hidden nature of the resources funding such a public campaign. This resulted in a declaration by Sara Khan openly acknowledging her links

with the government's highly criticised Prevent programme while, at the same time, denouncing the anti-Prevent lobby for 'vilifying those Muslim organisations that do engage with it' (Khan 2016).

The appeal of Sara Khan as a spokesperson in Britain can be understood if the work by Sunaina Maira (2009) is taken into consideration. This looks at how official discourse on 'good Muslim' citizenship in the US is reliant on the gendered, racial and class-based juxtaposition of a dangerous, terrorist Muslim masculinity and an enlightened, civilisable Muslim woman to silence radical dissent. Khan is well-educated, engaged and engaging: not one to 'embarrass' officially approved discourses. Theresa May, at the time Home Secretary, warmly endorsed Khan's work by stating, '[i]t's an honour to stand alongside Muslim women who have gathered together across the UK to challenge extremism and terrorism' (Sanghani 2014). But Maira also reminds us how the media always has a crucial role to play in the circulation and reiteration of these representations: a media that is, it should be stressed, also a key player in the reproduction of the national 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006).⁴

It would be hard to sustain the idea that *We Will Inspire* is an attempt to create Muslim women as *agents* of policy change, rather than simply position them as objects of policy measures, once the organisation's rhetoric is distinguished from its practices. *Inspire* is still perceived as representative of Muslim women's voices as a result of its work with grassroots' movements, consisting mainly of training and leadership programmes for Muslim women on human rights and gender equality, recently reaching out to schools and colleges. By being at the forefront in the fight against extremism, *Inspire* seems to be resisting chauvinist state interventions in the name of women's security (Young 2003). Khan has shown her advocacy of this stance by stating in various fora that the campaign wants to respond primarily to those who view Muslim women as a culturally oppressed group, both within and outside the Muslim community itself. An overview of the campaign's literature, however, soon reveals how a maternalist logic is at play, stripped of any of the radical political force that Ruddick (1989) had envisioned. In Ruddick's view, for women who had been excluded for centuries from political processes because of their reproductive roles to enter the public space using maternal identity and symbols as tools of protest was to enact a politics of resistance, politicising a depoliticised gender.

However, in the context of UN Security Council resolution (S/RES/1325) where women are seen as natural agents in peace-building processes—and given the doctrine of soft population-centred counter-insurgency measures—winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of civilians requires that maternal identities become essentialised and instrumentalised (Khalili 2011: 1474; Brown 2013). Consequently, engaging women in Preventing Violent Extremism and Countering Violent Extremism (PVE/CVE) programmes and policies is founded on gender assumptions that ‘read’ these subjects as ‘potential de-radicalisers, positioning them as embedded security allies and “early warning systems”. [...] often because of a role they are perceived to have as “inside mediators” in families and communities. [...] For policy-makers, they present an entry point to the private sphere of the home, through their role as mothers, wives, and sisters’ (Giscard d’Estaing 2017: 106). It is interesting then that in the PREVENT programme, first developed under Tony Blair’s New Labour government, emphasis was placed precisely on the idea of ‘winning hearts and minds’ through the engagement of Muslim organisations and local communities—what Modood refers to as the ‘values-led approach’ (O’Toole et al. 2012).

Finally, when considering the implication of *Inspire*’s work, it should be noted that Sara Khan is also keen to provide a theological narrative, or ‘counter-narrative to ISIS,’ arguing for a historical and cultural construction of religion and giving human rights an Islamic *raison d’être*. It is through religion that the call for activism is made: standing up and reaffirming ‘Islam as a force of good’ becomes a religious duty and women in particular are asked to take an active role in their families and communities to counter the radicalisation of young British Muslims (Khan 2014). Empowerment is taken in its most literal sense: if women are educated, society will be educated. But despite always stressing socio-economic obstacles (the push factors)—as opposed to the pull factors of the deliverance of an Islamic utopia—little is said about how government policies might actually be worsening inequalities. We can understand the ideological effects at work if we consider the alternative perspective opened by asking whether some young women may be less inspired by those supposed ‘promises’ ISIS might be offering than by a feeling that life in Britain itself currently has little to offer them. To answer this merely with a symbolic repository visualising the message, ‘You belong to Britain and

Britain belongs to you,' where religion, culture and nation are seamlessly elided, exposes the new mythologies under creation.

At the time of the 'Making a Stand' campaign some critics concluded that the image of the woman in the Union Jack hijab was 'a proxy for anti-Muslim bigotry' since Muslim women were being asked to prove their British credentials (Malik 2014). Myriam François argued, 'as good as these intentions might be in terms of a local initiative [...] we can't ignore where voices fit into a broader discourse... [...] one within which there is the presumption of guilt' (WIJ 2014). Sara Khan, however, always defended her choice as '[t]he image of a woman wearing a Union Jack hijab is really nothing new. It was around in the 1990s [...] There's a Muslim British photographer called Peter Sanders who's got a very famous image of a woman wearing a Union Jack hijab. So from our perspective, we didn't think very much of this image' (WIJ 2014). There is a certain logic to this if the focus had exclusively been on the mobilisation of symbolic power, which was essential in this instance to affirm a Muslim subjectivity in the face of far-right and Islamist hate. The demand to be recognised as part of an inclusive national discourse was achieved by the subject becoming 'legible' through markers of difference (the hijab) and sameness (the Union Jack). In order to achieve this, however, a *tabula rasa* would be required or, better, a presumption that the response to these symbolic representations was a homogenous one. Unfortunately, the symbols were loaded and in their attempt to ostensibly present a universal and ahistorical subject, they arguably worked to undermine and erode reciprocal relations of trust.

Symbolic representation has also been considered in the work of Hanna Pitkin where it is treated as being the suggestion, assumption or expression of ideas, rather than the resemblance of forms (1967). More importantly, she explains how symbols are 'recipients of feelings and expressions of emotions intended for what they represent' (Pitkin 1967: 96) and so should not to be taken as mere sources of information. Symbols, however, can still be read as text, providing meaning and signification, but as per Saussurian semiology the signifier in itself is empty. This also means that responses to a symbol/sign are based on experience; 'one must form certain responses in them, form certain habits in them,

invite certain habits on their past' (Pitkin 1967: 101). So, if the symbol itself does not possess an essence other than the emotive associations that the minds of those accepting the symbol confer on it, such responses cannot be learnt or understood. This necessarily makes symbols contingent since time and space continuously operate on them, while simultaneously determined by dominant and normative interpretations, which are particularly powerful when operating within national boundaries. Only with this theoretical framework in mind can the potency of the veil and the flag be truly understood. The veil, as an aesthetic marker of difference, has come to be viewed in Europe as the ultimate symbol of Islam's resistance to modernity and a challenge to secular democracy (Scott 2007), while also allowing public discourses 'to resist, reaffirm and potentially rearticulate the meaning of national belonging' (Korteweg and Yurdakul 2014: 2). Flags, on the other hand, have become an expression of collective identity, constructing communities based on nationhood and belonging (Reichl 2004). The British flag, the Union Jack, has come to represent a unity in difference at a time of disunity and conflict, 'an attempt to weave many narratives into one national epic' (Groom 2012).⁵ However, this utopian project is undermined by the flag's symbolic association with the anti-immigrant, racial-nationalist far-right who display the Union Jack and the cross of St George for a very different purpose on their marches and in their homes. As political symbols go, then, the emotions potentially stirred by the flag and veil are contradictory.

In this case, the symbolic encounter of the British flag and the Islamic veil is best understood as mythical speech, which works differently. As Barthes maintains, mythical speech is metalanguage, as 'we are no longer dealing here with a theoretical mode of representation: we are dealing with *this* particular image, which is given for *this* particular signification. Mythical speech is made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication' (emphasis in text, 1972: 108). A famous comparable example to the woman in the Union Jack hijab would be that cited by Barthes in his essay 'Myth Today': the cover of a 1950s edition of the French magazine *Paris-Match* showing a young black man in a French uniform with his eyes upwards and his hand gesturing in a military salute. As Barthes says, this image signifies that the French Empire is great because all her subjects, regardless of colour, serve

her faithfully. This reading builds on a pre-existing symbolic system wherein a black soldier giving the French salute will connote his French identity and his patriotism. Barthes states that there is only one way to engage with mythical systems and that is by looking at the signifier from two points of view: through meaning using the linguistic system and through form in the context of myths. Signification emerges from this mythical system as the signifier is already formed by linguistic signs: 'it points out and it notifies, it makes us understand something and it imposes it on us' (Barthes 1972: 115).

In analysing the 'Making a Stand' image in detail, it is important to keep in mind that during this coding and decoding exercise the meaning attributed to the symbol/sign depends not only on the subject that encodes but also on the subject that decodes. Hence, the woman wearing a Union Jack as a hijab makes visible a dominant discourse pertaining to what Britain once was and what it has now become. Indeed, this visual juxtaposition has become a repeated trope with international variations: such as the similar placards raised at rallies against Donald Trump, depicting a young Muslim woman, Munira Ahmed, wearing a Stars and Stripes hijab. Although I would argue that the ideological message of these two images is very different, they both rely on the internalisation of certain signifiers of patriotism, juxtaposed with an image of 'alienness' which, nevertheless, can be redeemed by the association. The fact that the flag trumps the hijab as the dominant symbol of belonging is down to the prevailing set of questions about Muslim belonging which figure themselves in national terms: can one be a Muslim and a loyal Briton/American and so on? At a deeper level, it is also owing to the way such meanings are naturalised. The feminist scholar Sara Ahmed has argued that the national 'we' is constructed not by demanding that others fit in, but by asking them to 'be culturally different' (2000: 96) In this sense, reassurance is provided by the red, white and blue colours enveloping the woman's figure, all the more intense because of the contrast with the grey background. This may wish to signal the state logic of masculinist protection (Young 2003), but it also renders the woman 'recognisable'—familiar and less a stranger. The readability of the Union Jack offsets the foreignness of the hijab, but the hijab is still there and it has reason to be. This woman fits into the nation precisely because she allows the nation 'to

imagine *itself* as heterogeneous' (emphasis in text, Ahmed 2000: 113). It is the *appearance* of difference that British multiculturalism has demanded and accepted and on this premise welcomes others with open arms. *Being* different is another matter entirely; embracing different values leaves subjects outside the frame of the state, it results in the suspension of their rights, it makes them suspect and viewed as bodies to be feared. Once again, '[t]he body of the Muslim woman, a body fixed in the Western imaginary as confined, mutilated and sometimes murdered in the name of culture, serves to reinforce the threat the Muslim man is said to pose to the West, and is used to justify the extraordinary measures of violence and surveillance required to discipline him and Muslim communities' (Razack 2007: 107).

A closer look at the image also shows how this particular headscarf is not designed to be a hijab at all—it is a real flag. Made of synthetic material with visible seams it reflects the lights of the studio. In this all too clearly constructed image, agency and self-conscious elaboration of identity are not allowed to emerge; there are no strategic choices being made, 'geared towards gaining agency in a context in which the women and girls face obstacles from various directions' (El-Tayeb 2011: 106). With the woman's arms restricted, there is no possibility of autonomous movement. The lack of movement or even any indication of an individual being radically weakens the image as a call for empowerment in the face of all-round patriarchal oppression. What emerges is a gagged and bound body, dehumanised and operating only as a receptacle of conflicting symbols. There is no raised voice—she is as voiceless and motionless as a mannequin selling 'brand Britain.' Finally, the woman's stark profile recalls the typical framing device used in a police 'mug shot' and deflates the force of the message: 'Stop and think sister. Don't join #ISIS' (Inspire 2015c). There are no details in the background, which can sometimes help focus on the individual(s) being photographed or situate them in readable contexts. The 'mug shot' post appears to hint more at the possibility of incarceration that would result in non-cooperation with the authorities to 'ensure that these terrorists will no longer be able to prey on our children with impunity' (Inspire 2015b). It also prevents eye contact, an effect of veiling often attacked by liberals and Islamophobes as a sign of evasiveness, of having something to hide. The viewer is alerted: some-

thing is not quite right, or so experience tells us. The photographic image freezes time and through the camera's ability to frame the object is meant to deliver impact and elicit emotive responses. But this is where the violence emerges: there is no emotive response, no *punctum* in Barthes' term—'that accident which pricks me (but also bruises, is poignant to me)' (Barthes 2000: 27).

The symbolic force of the veil and flag, together with the framing camera's power to cut, darken and control, diminishes the subject and her body. What is striking, beyond the content of this symbolic encounter, is that the emotions that an image which juxtaposes a veil and a national flag should arouse are circumvented. There is no outright acknowledgement of the British flag's history as a symbol of imperial oppression, used by the British ships during the transatlantic slave trade and through centuries of brutal colonial domination of overseas territories. These resonances are latent in the image and complicate its message when history is factored back in. However, the staging of the image—as has been argued—is carefully organised to prevent just such historical associations or back stories. It is simply designed to propagandise in the present. What emerges from this particular *Inspire* campaign is the annihilation of the subject—her body and language—at a time when marginalised Muslim women have been called on to 'make a stand' against extremism. In an era of increased Islamophobia, Muslim women in hijab are easy and highly visible targets of hate. Yet of equal importance—as this image shows—is the diffusion of mythologies which distort and rob some groups of their individual and collective politics and history, through 'giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal' (Barthes 1972: 142).

A century ago the Union Jack was raised on flag poles across colonised lands to remind its British subjects of the loyalty and gratitude they should feel for a political system that claimed to bring justice and order to otherwise uncivilised and unruly territories. Colonising the contemporary political space with similarly potent symbols could be seen as acceptable, even liberating, in some quarters. To others, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, however, it might appear at best as patronising, at worst as underhand, interfering and manipulative. Visual representations such as these certainly do little to promote trust between communities. I have shown that symbolic representations do not occur in a vacuum, but

are embedded in affective politics. Seeds of mistrust are sown when symbolic mythologies are hoisted like a flag and then draped onto a woman from the Muslim community—a strategy that resonates with the sort of violence that the campaign image was meant to defuse.

Notes

1. It has become a truism to state that without trust in economic and political institutions (banks, government, schools, hospitals, to name but a few) and in each other, the very fabric of society, existence itself, appears to be at risk. As Niklas Luhmann suggests, ‘a complete absence of trust would prevent (one) even getting up in the morning’ (1979: 4).
2. As for European country leaders, it is worth noting the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, declared in 2010 that ‘the [multicultural] approach had utterly failed’ and reiterated this judgement in 2015, when she further called it ‘a sham.’ David Cameron, former British Prime Minister, similarly stated, at a Munich Security Conference on 5 February 2011, that state multiculturalism had failed.
3. These are some of the organisations mentioned by Jones et al. (2014) in their study: the debating forum City Circle (directed in 2009 by Rabia Malik, then by Layla El Waf and currently co-chaired by Sameera Hanif); the educational charity Maslaha (founded by Rushanara Ali, currently MP for Bethnal Green and Bow); the environmental campaigning organisation MADE in Europe (co-founded and directed by Sarah Javaid); the not-for-profit organisation British Muslims for Secular Democracy (founded in 2006 by Nasreen Rehman and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown) and the New Muslims Project (led by Batool Al-Toma). Also worth mentioning are the An-Nisa Society (founded by Humera and Khalida Khan) at the national level. There are finally innumerable organisations at the local level that Muslim women have been active in creating and developing.
4. Criticism was directed towards the choice of platform too, but some considered having an immigrant-bashing and Muslim-denouncing tabloid such as *The Sun* backing the campaign a ‘bold move [... that makes] a valid political intervention’ (Greenslade 2014).
5. The different national patron saints (England’s St George’s Cross, Scotland’s St Andrew’s Cross and the saltire of St Patrick to represent Ireland) betray a Christian religious framework and the nationalist tensions at work in this ‘United Kingdom’ project.

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Part II

Islamophobia and Racism



5

Misrecognising Muslim Consciousness in Europe

Nasar Meer

Introduction

There is a moderately well-known Greek myth, often traced to the *Iliad*, which is deemed to contain one of the earliest invocations of the *idea* of Europe. It is an account which tells of how Zeus became enthralled by the Phoenician princess Europa, to the extent that he abducted and removed her to Crete where she became queen. This queen and her journey are sometimes appropriated symbolically as ‘a true illustration of what we collectively recognise as the origins of European culture’ (Holm 1999: xi). The myth more broadly serves, firstly, as a literary reminder of how, in contrast to Europe’s contemporary northern centres of politics and economics, the very *idea* of Europe has its provenance on the shores of the Mediterranean (Braudel 1995). Secondly, it is an illustration of how Europe is not simply a political entity in the form of the European

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Union, but is also a dynamic matrix of cultural inheritance whose porous boundaries have been shaped both inside and beyond its present frontiers.

This is, at least, one view. Some competing but no less reasonable characterisations of the *idea* of Europe employ a more binary approach in maintaining that ‘the birth of Europe took place in an age of Carolingians in a world-historical interaction with the still young but expanding Islamic civilisation’ (Tibi 2008: 162). The fuller implication is that from this point onwards ‘the foundation of a European identity was basically Christian’, something that was ‘reshaped at the eve of the Renaissance’, and later still became ‘more secular’ in the development of its ‘civilisational identity’ (ibid.).

While this broad historical view of the provenance of ‘a European identity’ may be one amongst many debated by historians, it is the *contemporary* implications of Tibi’s account that set the scene for the focus of our discussion. These emerge in his summation that while ‘the world of Islam was located beyond the southern and eastern Mediterranean boundaries...[c]ontemporary Islamic migration to Europe has changed this feature: no Mediterranean boundary exists anymore, because Islam is now within Europe itself’ (ibid.).

Tibi’s statement offers a valuable contextual account, for while it is broadly accepted that the categories of ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslim’ in Europe are today patterned by a variety of subjective and objective sociological and political differences, a number of intellectual positions nevertheless subscribe to the view that despite internal variation, there is something overarching which furnishes Muslims in Europe with a collective sense of *self*. This is something, it is maintained, which is evidenced by empirically observable Muslim identity-related challenges to established social and political configurations at local, national, and supra-national levels.

While the notion of a ‘Muslim subject’ in Europe is by no means uncontested, being open to long-established charges of essentialism and reification, this chapter focuses on the tensions *within*—rather than a refutation of—at least three predominant interpretations. The first of these is theologically grounded but socially iterative. It maintains that Europe’s Muslims are redefining Islam in the context of their identities as *European* Muslims and that the consequence is a ‘Euro-Islam’: something

illustrated by how Muslims view Europe as their home while being guided by a revised Islamic doctrine. Two competing exponents of this view are Tariq Ramadan and the aforementioned Bassam Tibi. A second interpretation of a 'Muslim subject' in Europe can be described as the 'Eurabia' trajectory. This predicts the numerical and cultural domination of Europe by Muslims and Islam. Its chief exponents include (but are no means limited to) Chris Caldwell and Mark Steyn, who, though differing in several respects, share the view that at a time of alleged demographic, political, and cultural weakness in Europe, 'pre-modern Islam will beat post-modern Christianity' (Steyn 2006b). A third interpretation is more formally sociological and employs a methodology of political claims-making. It reports that Muslims in Europe are 'exceptional' in not following path-dependent institutional opportunity structures of minority integration. That is to say that, taken as an aggregate, accommodating Muslims will be more difficult because Islam is more publicly confessional than other faiths, refuses to be privatised, and instead advances into the public realm of politics in collective and exceptional ways. Different exponents of this view can include Christian Joppke, Ruud Koopmans, and Paul Statham.

In what follows, this chapter tentatively argues that each of these formulations places the burden of adaptation upon Muslim minorities.¹ As such, each displays a normative 'position' or *Weltanschauung* that misrecognises dynamic components of what may be termed 'Muslim consciousness' (Meer 2010). Taking up the opportunity presented in this book to consider seriously the issue of religion and trust, the chapter maintains that Muslim consciousness comprises components that contain compelling evidence that Muslims in Europe are meeting standards of reasonableness in their identity articulations, often from contexts in which they face profound social and political adversity.

To elaborate this argument, the chapter is set out as follows. The next section tackles some issues of definition by considering a 'religious' characterisation of Muslim identity. Following this, the chapter briefly outlines what can be taken to be at least three salient interpretations of the emergence of Muslim presence in Europe, through an account of the writers understood to be their leading exponents. What is offered may be open to the charge of simplification but hopefully not misrepresentation.

This is followed by what is deemed a more reasonable ‘sociological’ characterisation of Muslim identity that is able to recognise the dynamic components of Muslim consciousness in contemporary Europe. What this suggests is that the good faith required for trust in integration contexts cannot be unidirectional or come entirely from Muslims and must instead be reciprocal in a manner that recognises Muslim consciousness on its own terms, too.

‘Religious’ Characterisations of Muslim Consciousness

It would be relatively uncontroversial to note that writers use the descriptive terms ‘Islam’ and ‘Muslim’ in ways that assume they have been operationalised, so that we intuitively understand what they mean and represent. Like many other concepts, however, on closer inspection, it is clear they host a variety of meanings. To begin to unpack these terms, we can ask some obvious questions about what Islam denotes and what *being* Muslim entails. Oliver Roy’s (2004) account of *Globalised Islam* begins in this way:

Who do we call Muslim? A mosque-goer, the child of Muslim parents, somebody with a specific ethnic background (an Arab, a Pakistani), or one who shares with another a specific culture? What is Islam? A set of beliefs based on a revealed book, a culture linked to historical civilisation? A set of norms and values that can be adapted to different cultures? An inherited legacy based on a common origin? (Roy 2004: 21)

A robust account of Islamic history, civilisation, and comparative ethnic relations is beyond the scope of this chapter; indeed, definitive and categorical definitions are neither sought nor—it will be argued—reflect how Muslims view themselves and Islam. Therefore a more modest and relevant exposition could begin by exploring what we mean when we talk about Islam. Is it solely a religion whose first prophet was Adam and last prophet was Mohammed? Is it a state of peace achieved through surrender to God, or is it a political and cultural movement? What is meant by

the phrase that ‘Islam is a way of life’? And can we distinguish Islam as a name of a religion, from the adjective ‘Islamic’, and the noun ‘Muslim’? To begin to answer these questions abstractly, Karamustafa (2004: 108) encourages us to approach our conception of Islam by viewing it as a sprawling civilisational project that is ‘under continuous construction and renovation in accordance with multiple blueprints...all generated from a nucleus of key ideas and practices ultimately linked to the historical legacy of the Prophet Mohammed’. With this enormous stress upon heterogeneity, how, *in tangible terms*, can we derive an understanding of Muslim identity? Karamustafa’s answer is to focus on how this nucleus of ideas represents

a set of beliefs (a version each of monotheism, prophecy, genesis, and eschatology) that underwrite a set of values (dignity of human life, individual and collective rights and duties, the necessity of ethical human conduct—in short, a comprehensive moral program), in turn reflected in a set of concrete human acts (ranging from the necessity of greeting others to acts of humility like prayer). (ibid.)

On a day-to-day basis, we can find these ideas articulated in Islamic rituals and the practice of the pillars of Islam—*Iman* (articles of faith), *salat* (daily prayer), *zakat* (charity), *sawm* (fasting during Ramadan), and *hajj* (pilgrimage). In this way Islam—comprising the beliefs, values, rights, and duties emphasised by Karamustafa—is lived rather than simply practised. As Dilwar Hussain (2005: 39) notes, ‘the congregational prayer is often held as an example of a community in harmony with believers standing in rows and functioning with one body. Fasting and charity sensitise the believers to those who lead less fortunate lives and make the war against global poverty a vivid reality. The pilgrimage symbolises equality and the breaking of barriers between nations, classes and tongues.’

In these religious characterisations of Muslim consciousness, participation is necessitated in some or all of the above practices if one is to consider oneself a Muslim, and it is precisely what informs our first interpretation of a ‘Muslim subject’ in Europe. This is a view that is theologically grounded but socially iterative. It maintains that Europe’s

Muslims are redefining Islam in the context of their identities as *European* Muslims and that the outcome is a 'Euro-Islam' illustrated by how Muslims can view Europe as their home while being guided by a renewed Islamic doctrine.

Euro-Islam: The Promise of Theology

Two competing exponents of this view are Tariq Ramadan and

Bassam Tibi. The origins of the term 'Euro-Islam' may be traced to a variety of sources but is forthrightly claimed by Tibi,² though it may also be sourced to Al Sayyad and Castells (2002) and Ramadan (1999). Its precise provenance, however, is less at issue than what it denotes. For Ramadan (2004: 4), it describes a process already underway in which 'more and more young people and intellectuals are actively looking for a way to live in harmony with their faith, participating in the societies that are their societies, whether they like it or not'. Ramadan perceives this to be the cultivation of a 'Muslim personality', one that is 'faithful to the principles of Islam, dressed in European and American cultures, and definitively rooted in Western societies' (ibid.). He continues:

While our fellow-citizens speak of this 'integration' of Muslims 'among us', the question for the Muslims presents itself differently: their universal principles teach them that wherever the law respects their integrity and their freedom of worship, they are at home and must consider the attainments of these societies as their own and must involve themselves, with their fellow-citizens, in making it good and better. (ibid.: 5)

Ramadan is thus prioritising a *scriptural inheritance* that needs to be reconciled with current and future lived practice, in a manner that reflects 'a testimony based on faith, spirituality, values, a sense of where boundaries lie', something that 'reverses the perception based on the old concepts' (ibid.: 73). A key theological obstacle that Ramadan therefore seeks to overcome is that of the distinction between *Dar Al-Islam* (abode of Islam) and *Dar Al-Harb* (abode of war), a concern that is illustrative of his wider thesis.

Muslims can recognise the ‘abode of Islam’, maintains Ramadan, by the fact that they are able to practice their religion freely and live their lives in a manner that is consistent with Islamic prescription. For Ramadan, this is a question of freedom of worship that is *quite different* from a question of the wider institutionalisation of Islam and/or non-practice of Islam in any given society. He elaborates this at length to contrast it with its antithesis, ‘the abode of war’, in which the legal system as well as the government are anti-Islamic. The important point for Ramadan is to recognise that this distinction does not turn on the distinction between Muslim and non-Muslim contexts since it may well be the case that a majority Muslim society, where the legal and political system prevents Muslims from living in accordance with their Islamic prescription, constitutes *Dar Al-Harb*.

This reasoning leads to an interesting juxtaposition in that ‘Muslims may feel safer in the West, as far as the free exercise of their religion is concerned, than in so called Muslim countries’ (ibid.: 65). The implication of this position is that the dichotomy between the two ‘abodes’ can no longer be sustained. The resolution to this, Ramadan suggests, rests in an exercise of critical interrogation in which European Muslims

have no choice but to go back to the beginning and study their points of reference in order to delineate and distinguish what, in their religion, is unchangeable (*thabit*) from what is subject to change (*mutaghayyir*), and to measure, from the inside, what they have achieved and what they have lost by being in the West. (ibid.: 9)

To pursue this, Ramadan proposes that Islam can be appropriated in movements of reform and integration in new environments as long as the idea of the *alamiyyat al-islam* (the universal dimension of the teaching of Islam) is retained. Just as, he argues, the concepts of *dar al-islam* and *dar al-harb* ‘constituted a human attempt, at a moment in history, to describe the world and to provide the Muslim community with a geopolitical scheme that seemed appropriate to the reality of the time’ (ibid.: 69); in the current era, what is proposed is the recognition of a third abode, *dar al-dawa* (abode of prayer). This is consistent with the ethic of Islam, he maintains, for ‘Mecca was neither *dar al-islam* nor *dar al-harb*, but *dar*

al-dawa and in the eyes of the Muslims, the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, was *dar al-dawa*' (ibid.: 72). He summarises his position thus:

I have investigated the tools that can give an impetus, from the inside, to a movement of reform and integration into the new environments. The power and effectiveness of the 'principles of integration', which is the foundation upon which all the juridical instruments for adaptation must depend, lie in the fact that it comes with an entirely opposite perspective instead of being sensitive, obsessed by self-protection and withdrawal and attempts to integrate *oneself* by the 'little door', on the margin, or 'as a minority', it is on the contrary, a matter of *integrating*, making one's own all that people have produced that is good, just, humane—intellectually, scientifically, socially, politically, economically, culturally, and so on. (ibid.: 5)

Ramadan's project might then be characterised as *both* classicist and revisionist in that he stakes out an ethical resource in Islamic scriptures to propose a qualitatively novel solution that is calibrated to modern—traditionally non-Muslim majority—environments. Yet it is precisely this project of *reconciliation* between Islamic doctrines and European conventions which is challenged by Bassam Tibi (2008: 177), the other key exponent of 'Euro-Islam'. For if Europe is no longer perceived as *dar al-Harb*, and instead considered to be part of the peaceful house of Islam, he maintains, 'then this is not a sign of moderation, as some wrongly assume: it is the mindset of an Islamization of Europe'. He continues:

In defence of the open society and of its principles, it needs to be spoken out candidly: Europe is not *dar al-Islam* (or, in the cover language of some, *dar al-shahada*), i.e. it is not an Islamic space but a civilisation of its own, albeit an exclusive one that is open to others, including Muslims. These are, however, expected to become Europeans if they want to be part of Europe as their new home. (ibid.: 159)

In Tibi's view, the burden of adaptation required to cultivate a Euro-Islam must necessarily rest heavier with Muslims than amongst the institutions and conventions that constitute European societies. That is to say that a civilisational notion of Europe, one that he traces back to the age of Carolingians, must be the vessel in which Islam in Europe comes to

rest. Tibi's formulation is principally driven by an anxiety over the disproportionate development of sizable Muslim communities in Europe and the concomitant emergence of a Muslim consciousness (or in Ramadan's terms 'Muslim personality'). This leads Tibi (2008: 180) to insist that without *religious* reforms in Islam, that is: 'without a clear abandoning of concepts such as *da'wa*, *hijra* and shari'a, as well as jihad', there can be no Europeanisation of Islam.

One source of Tibi's dualism centres on the relationship between religious doctrine and migration, especially with regards to the status on proselytisation, meaning that 'if *da'wa* [prayer] and *hijra* [migration] combined continue to be at work; the envisioned 'Islamization of Europe' will be the result in the long run' (2008: 177). This can only be averted in Tibi's view if Muslims acknowledge that the identity of Europe is not Islamic:

It is perplexing to watch the contradictory reality of Europeans abandoning their faith while the global religionization of politics and conflict enters Europe under the conditions of Islamic immigration [...] The substance of the notion of Euro-Islam is aimed at the incorporation of the European values of democracy, laicity, civil society, pluralism, secular tolerance and individual human rights into Islamic thought. (2008: 153, 157)

The direction of travel here, that is to say that the focus on what needs to be revised, marks the key distinction here between Ramadan and Tibi. Hence the latter has elsewhere promoted the need for a European *Leitkultur*—a guiding culture or leading culture—characterised by values of 'modernity: democracy, secularism, the Enlightenment, human rights and civil society' (Tibi 1998: 154).³

Eurabian Nights: Demographics and Culture

Tibi's concern with a civilisational identity is found in a more exclusionary manner in our second account of an emergence of a large-scale modern Muslim presence in Europe. Unlike the first, this offers an indisputably pessimistic interpretation because it associates the Muslim presence with

a number of detriments to European culture and social harmony. Sometimes sourced to the interventions of the controversial polemicist Bat Ye'or (2001, 2005), the notion of 'Eurabia' describes a numerical and cultural domination of Europe by Muslims and Islam. It is an idea which features prominently in the accounts of various bestselling authors including the late Italian intellectual Orianna Fallaci (2006), the German economist Thilo Sarrazin (2010), the British historian Niall Ferguson (2004), and the polemicist Melanie Phillips (2005), amongst many others. Our first exponent illustrative of this view, Mark Steyn (2006a), thus maintains that 'much of what we loosely call the Western world will not survive this century, and much of it will effectively disappear in our lifetimes, including many, if not most Western European countries'. As such, and in his *America Alone: The end of the world as we know it*, Steyn (2006b) insists that levels of fertility are so low that

[N]ative populations are ageing and fading and being supplanted remorselessly by a young Muslim demographic. The EU will need to import so many workers from North Africa and the Middle East that it will be well on its way to majority Muslim by 2035. [...] The average European Muslim has 3.5 children, whereas the average native woman has 1.5. Europe's successor population is already in place and the only question is how bloody the transfer of real estate will be. Europe is dying and America isn't...

These statistics have not gone undisputed and indeed have been refuted by Hawkins (2009), Kuper (2007), Laurence and Vaïsse (2006), Carr (2006), and Jones (2005), amongst others, principally on the grounds that they both radically overestimate base figures and then extrapolate implausible levels of population growth. The demography panic has nonetheless achieved a degree of traction, and the same demographic fatalism is shared by Christopher Caldwell (2010) in his *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Can Europe Be the Same With Different People in It?* As with Steyn, Caldwell maintains that, with the exception of its Muslim members, all European societies presently fall beneath the 'total fertility rate' required for a society to remain the same size. Muslims are the exception, he insists, because in contrast to a reticent Europe, 'Muslim culture is usually full of messages laying

out the practical advantages of procreation' (ibid.: 15).⁴ The outcome is that while 'in the middle of the twentieth century, there were virtually no Muslims in Western Europe...[a]t the turn of the twenty-first, there were between 15 and 17 million' (ibid.: 10).

The important thing to note, however, is that for Caldwell the numbers are not significant in and of themselves, but instead for the critical mass they potentially generate in incrementally expanding political challenges to European nation-state conventions. As he puts it:

If you understand how immigration, Islam, and native European culture interact in any Western European country, you can predict roughly how they will interact in any other—no matter what its national character, no matter whether it conquered an empire, no matter what its role in? WWII, and no matter what the provenance of its Muslim immigrants. (ibid.: 19)

That this bold claim is open to substantial critique from both empirical and theoretical quarters is not the core issue here (see Tryandifillidou et al. 2011). We are instead concerned with Caldwell's characterisation of the nature of this interaction between Muslims and European societies. This promotes the essentialist notion that Muslim identity politics is an outcome of an Islam that *by definition* is hostile, subversive, and ultimately dominating, for in contrast to Judaism and Catholicism, in his view, 'Islam in Europe is different' for:

Since its arrival half a century ago, Islam has broken-or required adjustments to-a good many of European customs, received ideas, and state structures with which it has come into contact. Sometimes the adjustments are minor accommodations to Muslim tradition-businesses eliminating the tradition of drinks after work, women-only hours at swimming pools, or prayer rooms in office buildings, factories and department stores... occasionally what needs adjusting is the essence of Europe. (Caldwell 2010: 11)

This is, for Caldwell, principally a reflection of the fact that Islam in Europe rests uneasily with European traditions of secularism. Moreover, in a competition between the two—Islam and secularism—the 'arrogant view' that Europeans hold the upper hand will prove the 'biggest liability

in preserving its culture' (ibid.: 22). This emerges as self-evident, maintains Caldwell, in the observation that 'Europeans know more about Arabic calligraphy and kente cloth because they know less about Montaigne and Goethe' (ibid.: 17). The implication is that 'Europe is not welcoming its newest residents but making way for them' (ibid.). That is to say that an appreciation of the vibrancy of Islamic cultural forms goes hand in hand with a depreciation of European cultural forms. This zero sum trade-off takes a more sinister turn, however, where cultural diversity is associated with political violence because:

If the spread of Pakistani cuisine is the single greatest improvement in British public life over the past half-century, it is also worth noting that the bombs used for the failed London transport attacks of July 21, 2005, were made from a mix of hydrogen peroxide and chapatti flour. (ibid.: 17)

Steyn (2006a, b: 84) too stresses the intersections between a critical mass of Muslims and broader political outcomes but goes much further in his assertions by observing that

Mohammed is (a) the most popular baby boy's name in much of the Western world; (b) the most common name for terrorists and murderers; (c) the name of the revered Prophet of the West's fastest-growing religion. It's at the intersection of these statistics-religion, demographic, terrorist—that a dark future awaits.

For Steyn, there is a linear relationship between religion and jihadist violence in the current period that reflects a 'deep psychoses of jihadism's reach within Islam in general and the West's Muslim populations in particular' (ibid.: 81). This is neatly reflected in his question of whether the problem is not that Muslims in the West are unfamiliar with the customs of their new land but rather that they are all too familiar with them—and explicitly reject them. The result of this is 'a mutated form of Islam' (ibid.: 82) which functions as a new European pan-Islamic identity. Unlike its Euro-Islam counterpart, then, this second interpretation of a Muslim subject does not envisage space for synthesis. On the contrary, it predicts that the numbers and sheer will of Muslims will subsume the current

European landmass into an Islamic enclave characterised by a ‘mutated form’ of Islam to be known as ‘Eurabia’.

Exceptional Muslim Claims-Making: The Limits of Integration

The third interpretation of Muslim consciousness is more nuanced than the second and employs a methodology of political claims-making to report that Muslims in Europe are exceptional in not following path-dependent institutional opportunity structures of minority integration. That is to say that, taken as an aggregate, accommodating Muslims will be more difficult because Islam is more publicly confessional than other faiths, refuses to be privatised and instead advances into the public realm of politics in collective and exceptional ways. Different exponents of this view can include Joppke (2009a, b), and Koopmans and Statham (2005), as well as O’Leary (2006), and Hansen (2006), amongst others. For example, in Joppke’s (2009b: 108) account,

if one considers that explicit Muslim claims did not emerge in earnest before 1989, the year of the Rushdie controversy in Britain and of the first Foulard affair in France, the speed and depth of accommodating Muslims have been breathtaking, up to the point of ‘laissez’ France is now providing state financed Imam education.

The explanation for this sustained and rapid claims-making may be found in the force with which ‘in pious Muslims there reverberates the archaic power of religion, which is not merely subjective belief, but objective truth, which cannot leave room for choice’ (Joppke 2009a: 111). The presence of Muslims in Europe has therefore resurrected religious disputes from an earlier age. However, Joppke does not share with Caldwell the notion that there is little difference between national contexts, for while he does point to a European-wide phenomena, it is also at least one feature of what he characterises as the ‘paradox’ of British integrationist policies. By this, he refers to his assessment that ‘while the British state has done more than other European states to accommodate the claims of

Muslim minorities, recent polls have shown British Muslims to be more disaffected and alienated than other Muslims in Europe' (2009b: 454). This he interprets as evidence of 'the limits of [British] integration policy' and orients his stiffest critique to how allegedly 'the neologism "Islamophobia" has functioned as a symbolic device of the British state to recognise the Muslim minority' (ibid.). Indeed, in a challenging and provocative account, Joppke rejects the analytical value of Islamophobia *per se* on the grounds that it has deflected from the 'real' causes of disadvantage and that it fuelled a quest for recognition that stands to be disappointed. He continues:

Britain is a particularly interesting case in this respect. This is because the British case shows a puzzling disjunction between an apparently ill-adapted and dissatisfied Muslim minority and a rather accommodative state policy, which has rarely been far from what organised Muslims want the state to do. Formulated as a counter-factual, if you look for a place in Europe where you would not expect Muslim integration to pose a particular problem, you would expect this place to be Britain. (2009b: 455)

Contrastingly, in a more thorough and dispassionate analysis, Koopmans et al. (2005: 21) come to the same task not to prescribe a position in political theory but instead to identify distinct features of citizenship practice and to let them interact in order to create four possibilities.⁵ Using the two dimensions of (i) a formal basis of citizenship: civic-territorial versus ethno-cultural and (ii) cultural obligations tied to citizenship: cultural monism and cultural pluralism, they chart the emergence of four conceptions of citizenship as follows. The first is termed an *Ethnic Assimilationism* (found in Germany and Switzerland); the second is an *Ethnic Segregationism*; the third is a type of *Civic Republicanism* (evidenced in France, and in a qualified manner, in the UK); and finally, *Civic Pluralism* (e.g. Netherlands). Koopmans et al. (2005: 73) apply this model to the position of five countries (as bracketed above) at three moments (1980, 1990 and 2002) and find that there are two important movements between 1980 and 2002. The first is a movement towards cultural pluralism in all five countries, though to differing degrees and from quite different starting points, and the second is a movement

towards civic conceptions of citizenship. What is most relevant to our discussion is that in related analysis they come to the view that taken as an aggregate Muslims emerge as exceptional in their group demands for accommodation because, unlike other faiths, 'Islam cannot simply be confined to privatized religious faith, but advances into the public realm of politics where the state's authority and civic citizenship obligations reign supreme' (Statham et al. 2005: 455). To elaborate this, they stake out the difference between group demands which seek parity and group demands that are exceptional and discuss the issue of education to illustrate how these differ:

The example of separate schooling for Muslim girls in Britain is a parity group demand because other faith groups have state-sponsored single-gender school. One difference between Catholic girl's schools and Islamic ones, however, is that Islamic schools make a religious faith central to education that promotes values that are less commensurable with liberalism than modern Catholicism. Sometimes Muslim parents' arguments for faith schools make little effort to fit within the culturalism of the civic community, for example, when they express fear at the possible 'westernization' of their children. Important here is that some Muslims see Islam as being more 'true' than other faiths, and more authoritative than the state, which is problematic for liberal democracies. (ibid.: 431–2)

What makes Muslim claims-making exceptional in this view are the ways in which group identity and cultural demands routinely coalesce in a novel and challenging manner because, to some extent, Muslims are promoting a way of life that is antithetical to liberal democratic norms and conventions.

Misrecognising Muslim Consciousness

The sections above considered what are taken to be three salient interpretations of the emergence of Muslim consciousness in Europe. The accounts given may be open to the charge of simplification but hopefully not misrepresentation. Having summarised these positions, we are now able

to critically engage with each. The first account of a Muslim subject is theologically grounded but socially iterative. While differing profoundly in important respects, both Tariq Ramadan and Bassam Tibi *anchor* the development of a Muslim consciousness in Europe to a doctrinal innovation in Islam.

The argument presented here is that the Euro-Islam thesis assumes too linear a relationship between Islamic doctrine and Muslim identity in a way that minimises the role of the *social*.⁶ The implication being that—no less than with any text—Islamic scriptures offer guidance that are interpreted and applied by human agents in particular social contexts. As Omid Safi (2004: 22) reminds us: ‘in all cases, the dissemination of the Divine teachings is achieved through human agency. Religion is always mediated.’ The point is that the meaning of a text has to be understood in terms of not just interpretations but social context.

It is suggested here that the relationship between Islam and a Muslim identity might be better conceived as *instructive* but not *determining*, something analogous to the relationship between the categorisation of one’s sex and one’s gendered identity.⁷ That is to say, one may be biologically female or male in a narrow sense of the definition, but one may be a woman or man in multiple, overlapping, and discontinuous ways—one’s gender reflects something that emerges on a continuum that can be either (or both) internally defined or externally ascribed. This allows that in addition to the scriptural conception, we could view Muslim identity as a quasi-ethnic sociological formation, which potentially allows a range of factors other than religion (such as ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, and agnosticism) to shape Muslim identities. ‘Quasi’ is used to denote something similar but not the same as because ethnic and religious boundaries continue to interact and are rarely wholly demarcated, hence the term ‘ethno-religious’ (see Modood 1997a: 337).

Compared to the purely theological variety, this sociological category might be preferred as a less exclusive and more valid way of operationalising Muslim consciousness because it includes opportunities for self-definition (such as formally on the census or on ‘ethnic’ monitoring forms [see Aspinall 2000] or informally in public and media discourse). Equally, it can facilitate the description of oneself as ‘Muslim’ and take the multiple (overlapping or synthesised) and subjective elements into

account independently of or intertwined with objective behavioural congruence with the religious practices outlined earlier. It is maintained that this space for self-definition is a helpful means of conceptualising the difference between externally imposed and self-ascribed identities, with both potentially becoming more prominent at sometimes and less at others.

This emphasises the element of choice in self-definition. For example, one might view Islam as a historical, civilisational edifice that has contributed to modern science and philosophy, and take pride in this, but simultaneously disassociate oneself from the religious teachings. This historical or civilisational role of Islam may be discarded in favour of the elevation and reimagining of a particular religious doctrine, or way of being a Muslim, based upon an adherence to articles of divine and confessional faith.

The point is to recognise the pragmatic possibilities that confer emphasis and de-emphasis upon the bearers of such identification, which includes the recognition that the element of choice is not a total one. By this, it is meant that although one may imagine a Muslim identity in different ways, when one is born into a Muslim family, one becomes a Muslim. This is not to impose an identity or a way of being onto people who may choose to passively deny or actively reject their Muslim identity. Consistent with the right of self-dissociation, this rejection of Muslim identification (or adoption of a different self-definition) should be recognised where a claim upon it is made. What is being argued is that when a Muslim identity is mobilised, it should be understood as a mode of classification according to the particular kinds of claims Muslims make for themselves, albeit in various and potentially contradictory ways.

Rather than moving to the second interpretation of the Muslim subject, this last point brings us to the third account which characterises Muslims in Europe as exceptional in not following path-dependent institutional opportunity structures of minority integration. It is suggested that these different positions do not offer a fair reflection of the content of mobilisations undertaken by Muslims *qua* Muslims. To consider this, we can reflect on the issue of Muslim schools in Britain which is raised by each author as illustrative of exceptional group demands. I have elsewhere argued that Muslim identities can inform the movement for Muslim

schools in a variety of ways and that where Muslim constituencies are granted greater participatory space in the shape of provisions for Muslim schooling, it is evident from the testimonies of Muslim educators and the content of school curricula that a reconciliation between faith requirements and citizenship commitments is a first-order priority (Meer 2009). Yet what is often overlooked in the deployment of Muslim identities in the case for Muslim schools in Britain is how the imagining of a Muslim identity goes hand in hand with the imagining of a British identity. This is very evident in the characterisation by head teacher, Abdullah Trevathan, of the ‘ethos’ of *Islamia Primary*, the first Muslim school in Britain to receive state funding:

[I]f anything—this school is about creating a British Muslim culture, instead of, as I’ve often said in the press, conserving or saving a particular culture, say from the subcontinent or from Egypt or from Morocco or from wherever it may be. Obviously, those cultures may feed into this British Muslim cultural identity, but we’re not in the business of preserving... it’s just not feasible and it’s not sensible... it’s dead: I mean I’m not saying *those* cultures are dead but it’s a dead duck in the water as far as being *here* is concerned. (Trevathan, 6 March 2006, personal communication)

Islamia Primary is not unique in trying to partner the Muslim dimension with the national, so that instead of suffocating hybridity or encouraging reification, for example, the outward projection of this internal diversity informs a pursuit of hyphenated identities. The casualty in this ‘steering’ of Muslim identity is the geographical-origin conception of ethnicity, and the scramble to de-emphasise the ‘ethnic culture’ in favour of an ecumenical Islamic identity soon gives rise to an important complaint. This includes the lack of provisions within comprehensive schooling to cater for identity articulations that are not premised upon the recognition of minority status *per se*, but which move outward on their own terms in an increasingly confident or assertive manner. Idris Mears, director of the Association of Muslim Schools (AMS) stresses this position:

I think a general point which is very important to get across is that state schools do not handle the meaning of Muslim identity well for the children.

In actual fact, the way that general society looks at Muslims is as an immigrant minority-ethnic-racial-group and how young people are made to look at themselves through the teaching in state schools tells them 'you are this marginal group/minority group and have therefore got to integrate with the mainstream'. So, there's a process of marginalisation and that often leads to resentment. But in a Muslim school that identity is built upon being a Muslim *not* an ethnic minority. The impact of being Muslim is very different because the role of the Muslims in any situation is to be the middle nation to take the middle ground and be the model as witnesses of humanity. I think it gives young people a greater sense of who they are and how they can interact in society and therefore learn that Islam is not just a thing that is relevant to minority rights. Islam is relevant to economy, to foreign policy, etc which means that we're not getting on to a stationary train but a train that is moving. (Mears, 1 April 2006, personal communication)

This 'train'—which moves between different sites of boundary maintenance—is an articulation of Muslim consciousness. Mears expresses a 'clean' version of Muslim consciousness that is free from ethnic and racial markers and therefore does not correspond to the lived reality but is expressed as an aspiration to be realised through Muslim schooling environments. It is a desire reflected in the findings of Patricia Kelly (1999: 203) who, in her ethnographic study of schooling choices made by Muslim parents with both secular and Islamic worldviews, concluded that

as some less-religious families do opt for specifically Muslim education, we can consider this as an example of a decision to selectively emphasise this pan-ethnic (Muslim) group identity, in order to reap whatever benefits—economic, social and psychological as well as spiritual—it offers.

While this emphasises that much of the motivation for Muslim schooling reflects the desire of Muslim parents who embrace it as a means through which to instil some sense of a Muslim heritage in all its heterogeneity, this is not incommensurable with liberal democratic norms and conventions. As Soper and Fetzer (2010: 13) insist: 'it is theologically naïve and historically misguided to assume Islam is any more inherently

incapable of making peace with liberal democratic values than are Christian and Jewish traditions'. Idris Mears illustrates this view in stressing the distinction between a school premised upon an ethnic-origin conception of Islam, driven by a desire for 'cultural protection zones', and an Islamically driven environment that moves outward to build upon evaluative criteria already established and in place (Mears, 1 April 2006, personal communication).

This brings us finally to the Eurabia thesis, which predicts the numerical and cultural domination of Europe by Muslims and Islam. By now, it should be apparent that the weight of evidence does not support this forecast. This is because Muslims are either innovating with Islam in Europe—both Ramadan and Tibi are evidence of this—or are pursuing well-established policy traditions within European states. Muslims are not, for example, seeking to establish the right to practise polygamy, FGM, or forced marriages. The point instead is that, as Soper and Fetzer (2010: 12) have it, 'Muslims are religiously active, but they lack the political power that well established churches have historically enjoyed, thereby threatening their capacity to win state recognition for their religious needs.' Recalling this reverses Caldwell's (2010) question to ask not whether Europe can remain the same with Muslims in it, but instead at what point, if at all, the emergence of a Muslim consciousness will be recognised as a legitimate constituent in Europe. Put another way, at what cost Muslim constituencies will be denied a participatory space in the form of such things as provisions for Muslim schooling, discrimination legislation, and non-derogatory representation in mainstream public and media discourses? It is evident that there is a movement for some sort of synthesis by Muslims themselves. Europe boasts a rich public sphere and a series of dynamic civil societies that have historically included and incorporated other religious minorities. The question with which it is currently wrestling concerns the extent to which it can accommodate Muslims in a manner that will allow them to reconcile their faith and citizenship commitments. The alternative is to leave Muslims

experiencing [themselves] as invisible at the same time that [they are] marked out as different. The invisibility comes about when dominant

groups fail to recognize the perspective embodied in their cultural expressions as a perspective. These dominant cultural expressions often have little place for the experience of other groups, at most only mentioning or referring to them in stereotyped or marginalized ways. (Young 1990: 60)

This kind of civic status will confer upon Muslims a sort of Du Boisian *veil* from behind which they must look out at dominant society, whilst those in front of it do not see them as full and legitimate co-members of their polity (Meer 2010). That is, institutions and social practices will continue to attribute minority status to some inherent qualities, as if those qualities were the *reason* for, rather than the *rationalisation* for, neither recognising their presence nor taking their sensibilities into account. This seems especially true at moments of acute objectification, in that being ‘singled out for particular interrogation in the west, Muslims have been asked to commit to patriotism, peace at home, war abroad, modernity, secularism, integration, anti-sexism, anti-homophobia, tolerance and monogamy’ (Young 2005: 31). The point is that Muslims are not being asked to sign up to these because they are intrinsically valuable but as ‘a pre-condition for belonging in the west at all’ (*ibid.*).

Conclusions

‘In our time’, describes Anne Norton (2013: 3), ‘the figure of the Muslim has become the axis where questions of political philosophy and political ideology, politics and ethics meet... In relation to Muslims and Islam, liberty, equality, and fraternity become not imperatives but *questions*’ (emphasis added). What this chapter shows is that while this may indeed be true, Muslim consciousness is not remotely the sum of these framings—and resists being purely understood through them—principally by asserting modes of self-identification that strive for certain kinds of pluralism. The chapter maintains instead that three prominent and influential characterisations of Muslim consciousness misrecognise key features in the emergence of the Muslim subject amongst Muslims in Europe. One of the conclusions of this chapter is that Muslim consciousness can too

often be reduced to a subscription to religious belief and practice. In so doing we overlook how Muslims have used appellation of 'Muslim' without any unanimity on Islamic matters (precisely as Jewish minorities have historically negotiated and continue to debate what being 'Jewish' means). This point is not widely stressed. Faith has a central place, of course, but a key argument for this book is that Muslim identities contain many *social layers* that are interdependent—and might feasibly be independent—of scriptural texts. This point is understudied, but the challenge remains of how to read the *social* and specifically that a Muslim identity is mobilised, it should be understood as a mode of classification according to the particular kinds of claims Muslims make for themselves.

Notes

1. This chapter reproduces N. Meer (2013) 'Misrecognising Muslim Consciousness in Europe', *Ethnicities*, 12 (2), 178–196. I gratefully acknowledge Sage copyright.
2. He states: 'I claim the concept of Euro-Islam, first presented in Paris and published in French and German in 1992–5. [...] Others use the notion 'Euro-Islam' without a reference to its origins and often in a different, clearly distorted meaning. I prefer not to mention names, but nevertheless it is imperative to dissociate my reasoning on Euro-Islam from that of Tariq Ramadan, whom I consider a rival within Islam in Europe' (Tibi 2008: 156).
3. Of course how the concept of *Leitkultur* has been adopted varies profoundly and may in many instances not be endorsed by Tibi himself.
4. Or as Steyn (2006b) puts it: 'Islam has youth and will, Europe has age and welfare.'
5. This paragraph draws upon Modood and Meer (forthcoming).
6. I am indebted to Tariq Modood for helping me to develop this argument over the duration of my doctoral studies.
7. It should be stressed that this distinction is problematic, but is adopted as a heuristic device to develop this particular point. See Meer's (2010: 212) discussion of Butler (2006) on this point.

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6

'Non, je ne serai jamais Charlie': Anti-Muslim Racism, Transnational Translation, and Left Anti-racisms

Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley

Introduction

It is rarely noted that a key dimension of 'symbolic violence' is the violence of being rendered symbolic, of becoming a symbol. Speaking in advance of the publication of the first edition of *Charlie Hebdo* since the attacks of January 7, the cartoonist Renald Luzier—'Luz'—remarked that 'This current symbolic weight is everything *Charlie* has always worked against: destroying symbols, knocking down taboos, setting fantasies straight' (quoted in Sayare 2015). Freighted with misunderstandings, the burden of symbolic weight compressed *Charlie Hebdo* into a singularity,

http://www.alterinfo.net/Oui-je-condamne-Non-je-ne-serai-jamais-Charlie-et-je-n-irai-pas-manifester_a109460.html

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one that could, *inter alia*, be made to stand for things that it was not. From other perspectives, outside the inner circle of loss but within the force field of global media attention, this weight was also felt, and regarded as crushing, as tipping the scales between grievable humanity and the not-quite human into further asymmetry.

The *becoming symbolic* of *Charlie Hebdo* is a secondary tragedy, to be sure, but it was an inevitable one, once its accelerated consecration—mediated and condensed by *#JeSuisCharlie*, the demand to symbolically become *Charlie*—was accepted, seized on, modified, questioned, and resisted in torrents of statements, opinion pieces, blogs, cartoons, memes, and social media threads. Any attempt to analyse this event and its aftermath must reckon with this symbolic becoming and how its insistence in turn produced *Charlie Hebdo* as a mediating object for a knot of political tensions and interpretative conflicts in a reluctantly postcolonial Europe and an unevenly fascinated world. In this chapter, we are interested in the debates about the need to understand *Charlie Hebdo in context*; in the ways that this interpretative framework was produced; in the inclusions and elisions that shaped it; on how this furthered a discourse of ‘French exceptionalism’ that disavows the racial structuring of the postcolonial polity; and what this mediation of exceptional context can tell us about the transnational politics of racism in a ‘post-racial’ era. However, to situate this discussion, we must say something initially about the mesh of identifications, antagonisms, and desires that generated a strange spectacle of identification and disidentification.

Firstly, the magazine. Resistant to symbolic weight, *Charlie Hebdo* had nonetheless, since the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons furore of 2005–6, actively inscribed itself in a European narrative of struggling for free expression as both the dominant civilizational value and primary civilizational struggle of our time (Hervik and Sanchez Boe 2008). It had also positioned itself as an emblematic actor in the struggle for *laïcité* as the defining moral value of the French republic, a struggle taken to require particular satirical attention to the putatively disintegrating propensities of Islam. In so doing, the magazine waded into the confused and polarized terrain of

Left anti-racism in Islamophobic societies, a confusion captured by Jason Farago when he asks, 'how did anti-racist, anti-military, anti-church artists end up, in the late 2000s and early 2010s, producing images that antagonized some of France's most vulnerable citizens?' (Farago 2015).

Secondly, the act. *Charlie Hebdo's* cartoons may have antagonized, but Saïd and Chérif Kouachi did not act from a theologically automated allergy to images.¹ Contrary to the dominant theme in coverage, of enraged killers punishing blasphemy and offence, it is more plausible to approach the murderous attacks on assorted workers in the Paris office of *Charlie Hebdo* on January 7, 2015, as a strategized exercise in *propaganda par le fait*. As the 'global war against terror' spills across territories, it accumulates targets and rationales. 'Indefinite in time, it is also indefinite in space' (Chamayou 2014: 52). Thus reconfigured, killing in the name of democracy and killing in the name of Islam are revitalized by ever-expanding ideological remits and spatial logics. As Benoit Challand argues, the enemy for a 'new breed of jihadi extremists' can be a carrier not only of political or economic power but also of the symbolic (Challand 2015).

To target symbolic power is to transform it. *Charlie Hebdo*, since the editorship of Philippe Val, was aligned in the frequently self-regarding struggle against 'the new Islamist totalitarianism'. The Kouachis, bidding for shares in the *Al Qaeda* franchise, sought to provide a visceral, performative confirmation of the clash of civilizations. Accelerate the contradictions: provide further valediction to those in France and Europe who view, through the overlapping aversions of a rich ideological kaleidoscope, Muslims *as in but not of Europe* and invite, through inviting state repression and public suspicion upon them, 'Muslims to act (violently) against a protean mythical enemy, one that can take many forms, be it the decadent moral order of the "West" or even the vitriolic cartoons of Charlie Hebdo' (Challand *ibid.*).

Thirdly, the response. The Paris attacks triggered an intensive expression of emotion and anger in France and elsewhere, at once deeply felt and collectively charged, and also so excessively out of kilter with the scant attention accorded to the daily body count of 'the new world disorder' (Ali 2015). This wave of emotion was soon folded into a larger tide

of explanation, storytelling, framing, projection, and appropriation. Little known outside of France and inconsistently attended to within it, the international media coverage of events in Paris soon turned to wildly uneven attempts to inform transnational publics about the magazine itself. Implacably and at similar speed, the unremitting social environment of connective media generated varied and antagonistic assessments of the politics and aesthetics of the magazine, a magazine blended into the swarm of imagined *Charlies* conjured up by that globalized imperative of identification—*#JeSuisCharlie*.

Murdered, then endlessly mediated, *Charlie Hebdo* became the focus of a global media event and immediately subject to a messy, transnational dialectic of sacralization and de-consecration. The hashtag *#JeSuisCharlie* hardened from an open mode of affective expression to being presented as an ideological demand. Speaking in the National assembly on January 14, the French Minister of National Education Najat Vallaud-Belkacem captured this repressive inflection in assuring parliamentarians that questions raised in high schools by ‘those who are not Charlie’ are ‘above all intolerable to us, when we hear them at school, which has the duty to teach our values’. Discussing the rush of US intellectuals to declare *Je suis Charlie*, Adam Shatz noted how its symbolism was being leveraged to produce a revitalizing ‘moral clarity’ that

Expresses a peculiar nostalgia for 11 September, for the moment before the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, before Abu Ghraib and extraordinary rendition, before all the things that did so much to tarnish America’s image and to muddy the battle lines. In saying ‘je suis Charlie’, we can feel innocent again. Thanks to the massacre in Paris, we can forget the Senate torture report, and rally in defence of the West in good conscience. (Shatz 2015)

And for those who declared that nothing would or could be the same again ‘after Charlie’, it was framed as a *universal event*.² Launching one of the multiple campaigns that called on media outlets to re-publish *Charlie Hebdo*’s cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, Timothy Garton Ash proposed:

All the media of Europe should respond to the Islamist terrorist assassinations in Paris by coordinated publication next week of selected cartoons

from Charlie Hebdo, and a commentary explaining why they are doing this. A week of solidarity, and of liberty. One in which all Europeans, including Muslims, reaffirm the commitment to free speech which alone enables us to combine diversity with freedom. (Ash 2015)

The three previous examples provide vignettes of symbolic weight being leveraged and are starting points for understanding how and why these valences were so intensely resisted. The demand in France *to be Charlie*, and to discipline those who would not be, focused attention on the conditions of inequality and relentless political hostility to those subjects of the republic who could never, under conditions of profound and disavowed racialization, actually be accepted as *Charlie*. The demand to lift the event out of the lethal disorder of the 'war on terror' and to simply *feel* the moral clarity was countered with the insistence that 'the West is a variegated space, in which both freedom of thought and tightly regulated speech exist, and in which disavowals of deadly violence happen at the same time as clandestine torture' (Cole 2015). The sight of world leaders responsible for the deaths and detention of journalists and media workers joining arms in Paris—during the rally for national unity—to affirm freedom of expression, and the circulating stories of French state action against expressions of dissent, generated a spontaneous, social media-led documenting of hypocrisy and a rejection of this loudly self-regarding appropriation.

And, situated at the intersection of this swirl of response and re-mediation, the demand to be *Charlie* splintered on the degree of identification this required with the—hastily assembled—readings of *Charlie Hebdo's* politics on race, secularism, Islam, and anti-racist politics in a conjuncture where anti-Muslim racism is the central, politically generative expression of racism in Europe. It is to this dynamic, and the sub-plot of how to correctly interpret *Charlie Hebdo* in context, that we now turn.

#JeSuisLeContexte

In the aftermath of the attacks, *Charlie Hebdo* was incessantly mediated and mediating. To attend to the first aspect, it is critical to understand that the 'universal event' hailed by commentators such as Garton Ash

took shape within what McKenzie Wark termed a ‘weird global media event’:

It will be made of half-facts and one-and-a-half facts. And made quickly, as the desire for a media story quickly outstrips the reliable data. Certain corrections will later have to be made—silently. It is only global in appearing to speak of a world; somewhere indifference reigns. But it does produce an image of the global for each of the interpretive spaces it touches. Images rendered incomparable by the different ideological narratives that rule in those domains. (Wark 2015)

Wark’s notion of the ‘weird’ hints at how what is assumed—due to the scale and intensity of its mediation—to be a unifying event plays out, as Ingrid Volkmer writes in her study of ‘global public spheres’, ‘in contexts of communicative spheres across diverse sites of subjective micro-networks’ (Volkmer 2014: 3). In this context, initial forms of research can only begin by unpicking threads not to search for the whole inside the part but to cut into situated instances of how negotiations of this symbolic weight unfolded in particular networks. For Wark, ‘the event invokes the master-scripts of ideology, which the event will be made to fit’, and it is precisely within these ‘subjective micro-networks’ that this capture by grand narrative, and its ruptures, can be examined (Wark 2015).

Our examination is informed by our interest in the sociology of racism and anti-racism and therefore focuses on debates as to the ‘correct’ context required to interpret *Charlie Hebdo*’s mode of satire. The ‘context’ that we are interested in exploring was that explicitly provided by the Left for the Left; in other words, by French Leftists and other readers of France for their interlocutors among the Anglo-American Left. As a consequence, both of the ambiguous force of the demand to identify ‘as Charlie’, and of the flow of images and fragments of information about the magazine in and through digital media networks, an intensive debate as to the ‘racist’ or ‘anti-racist’ nature of the magazine flourished among Leftist commentators. As magazine and front covers circulated in a viral mash-up of (dis)orientation, hastily produced response pieces sought—with wildly varying degrees of insight—to offer readings of how *Charlie Hebdo*’s cartoons ‘often represent a virulently racist brand of French xenophobia’ (Canfield 2015).

In response, authors such as Leigh Phillips were quick to point out the pitfalls in readings that betrayed little or no contextual knowledge:

The last few days have been a humiliation for the anglophone left, showcasing to the world how poor our ability to translate is these days as so many people have posted cartoons on social media that they found trawling Google Images as evidence of *Charlie Hebdo's* "obvious racism," only to be told by French speakers how, when translated and put into context, these cartoons actually are explicitly anti-racist or mocking of racists and fascists. (Phillips 2015)

The 'French speaker' linked to in the article is Olivier Tonneau, a self-defined 'Frenchman and a radical left militant at home and here in UK', who wrote a *Mediapart* blog—subsequently translated in part by *The Guardian Comment is Free*—expressing how he 'was puzzled and even shocked' by the proposition that *Charlie Hebdo* could be perceived as 'rampantly islamophobic' (Tonneau 2015). Subsequent to these initial responses, a 'crowd-sourced' website 'Understanding Charlie Hebdo' was established by an uncredited group of 'bilingual Anglo-French and Europeans' and is explicitly aimed at correcting and informing uncontextualized readings of the cartoons: 'The French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo has received a lot of attention after the recent attacks at their office. Some of the criticism directed at Charlie Hebdo is uncalled for and inaccurate. This website tries to explain the cartoons within the context they were published so that they may be better understood.'³

Our interest here is not in adjudicating this to and fro of textual interpretations but in analysing the production of the 'French context' through noting an initial paradox; in order to argue for informed readings of the cartoons in an unbounded and chaotic media sphere, several writers seek to present the French context as, in effect, coherent and bounded. By calling on discrete political and satirical traditions, France is presented as uniquely protected from semiological exchange and ideological cross-pollination, a context outside of the messy realities of both historical global interdependence (Bhambra 2007) and the contemporary circuitries of digital communications (Volkmer 2014). And, while there is no question as to the frequency with which reductive readings of selected

cartoons circulated in Anglophone media, it is another thing to posit the interpretative relation as predominantly one between an Anglo-American (and non-French-speaking) audience and French translators.

For example, Sarah Seltzer echoes Wark's unease with 'recapture by grand narratives' when she proposed to 'move beyond the immediate urge to fit the tragedy into our own simplistic narratives', shaped by the racialized codes of representation that, she proposes, are intelligible to North Americans but not similarly so to the French (Seltzer 2015). However, her suggestion that the *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons contained 'double and triple meanings [...] that] would be immediately noticed by French readers and not by Americans' reveals how quickly the insistence on context can slip into the presentation of a culturally singular vision of 'France' (ibid.). And this cultural singularity is *white*: those who offered a critical reading of racially suggestive cartoons were assumed to be ignorant of the French language and context while those who could provide a 'correct' reading of *Charlie Hebdo* in the French context were exclusively white—the decolonial and anti-racist movements and critiques of black and Muslim France were entirely absent from 'the context'.

In other words, most of the 'context' provided focused a narrow vision of French political culture and 'tradition' that elided or was ignorant of the 'black analytics' (Hesse 2014) which we propose are crucial for a complete understanding of both French historical and contemporary conflicts around race and religion and—vitaly—how these particularisms connect with the same questions as they are explored in other locations and across them in transnational digital spaces. To explore the divisiveness of this event in France, and the ways in which it mediated 'post-racial' disarray on the Left in relation to anti-racism, we propose to contextualize 'the context' offered by these writers. We examine what the call for context included, and what it left out, and organize the discussion in relation to the importance of the history and ideology of *laïcité* and the racism/anti-racism of *Charlie Hebdo*. Our aim is not, in this limited treatment, to fill out the gaps left by these interpreters of French context nor to contribute to the parlour game of how to categorize the magazine, but to note what is emphasized and missed in the foregrounding of a 'white analytics' and the implications of the elision of a 'black analytics' for these discussions.

The Licence of *laïcité*

In several accounts, the primary key to understanding the exceptional nature of the French context is the republican praxis of *laïcité*, and it is certainly the case that these are the terms in which French state actors regularly lay out the challenges facing it: religion versus secularism, liberty versus the proposed totalitarianism of public religiosity/Islam. It is also the case that *laïcité* has been critical to work interested in Islam in France and the more general interest in the postsecular recently advanced by scholars such as Talal Asad and Saba Mahmood. In Olivier Tonneau's 'letter to my British friends', *laïcité* is the key to understanding *Charlie Hebdo's* iconoclastic targeting of 'all religions', but it is also a public philosophy frequently misunderstood by British interlocutors as a French delusion that 'religion can be eradicated once and for all'. Instead, he argues, '*Laïcité* does not deny anybody the right to express their religious beliefs, but it aims to found society on a political contract that transcends religious beliefs which, as a result, become mere private affairs' (Tonneau 2015).

Here, however, Tonneau presents French *laïcité* as equalling 'neutrality' on the issue of religion, an error that has been analysed by many French writers, including Pierre Tévanien (2015) and Christine Delphy (2011). As Tévanien ably shows, based on an examination of the oft-cited but rarely read laws of '1880, 1882, 1886, or 1905', there is nothing in them that equates the neutrality of the state vis-à-vis religion with the compulsion of individuals to be religiously neutral in public (Tévanien 2015). As Delphy explains, the only way in which the law can be misinterpreted is due to the polysemous and political nature of the word 'public'. She states:

Religion, while evidently not being of the State, is nonetheless not 'private', meaning 'without public expression', because the freedom of conscience guaranteed by the law implies freedom of expression, and because public space does not belong to the state. (Delphy 2011)⁴

This distinction is crucial, as the conviction put forward by Tonneau, that *laïcité* renders religious expression/identity *private*, is the ideological

basis for a range of acts that overtly exclude French Muslims from public life. These exclusions permeate quotidian social life; in March 2015, a notice was posted in the public hospital in the Paris suburb of Villeneuve-Saint-George stating that due to the 'laïque and neutral' space of the hospital, anyone wearing an 'ostentatious symbol linked to a religion' would be denied entry, again in defiance of the actual law. The law does not provide for this nor presuppose that observant Muslim children should be forced to be offered no alternative to pork at the school canteen in Gironde⁵ or that mothers who wear the hijab be forbidden from accompanying their children on school trips, as the organization *Mamans toutes égales* (Mothers, all equal) highlights as a frequent occurrence.⁶

For Tonneau, however, misunderstandings of *laïcité* inform the view of 'Anglo-Saxon leftists' that '*laïcité* is a barbaric custom of the Gallic tribe, against which it is necessary to defend the wearing of the veil as a form of anti-imperialist resistance, and to excuse the fascist killers who they see as being poor, working class, oppressed youth' (Tonneau 2015). The rise of the fundamentalism of the killers in France, he argues, is a consequence of 'the utter failure of the French republic to be true to its principles of Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, which are the necessary foundation of *laïcité*' (ibid.).

The problem with the claim that exclusion and extremism are produced by the imperfect realization of *laïcité* is that it lacks any reckoning with the ways in which *laïcité* actively produces forms of public, social, and political exclusion, including on the Left. Pierre Tévanien, for example, has documented the vilification campaign against Ilham Moussaïd, the radical Left *Nouvel parti anticapitaliste* (NPA) candidate in 2010, for her wearing of the hijab. He cites the General Secretary of the Socialist Party, Martine Aubry, who said she 'would never accept a veiled woman on the socialist list' because 'it's a statement of religion that should remain in the private sphere' (Tévanien 2015). Similarly, the spokesperson for *Ni putes ni soumises*, a militantly republican feminist group, established with the support of the then Sarkozy government, condemned the NPA's list as 'anti-laïque, anti-feminist and anti-republican' because of Moussaïd's presence on it, despite her identification as a 'pro-choice feminist' (ibid.). Recalling these exclusions, effected regardless of the actual law, begins to illustrate how an ideological emphasis on *laïcité* has become utterly inseparable from the racism faced by those of migrant origin.

Framing *laïcité* as the relegation of the religious to the properly private sphere allows for a secondary separation: of 'blasphemy' and 'racism'. Both Phillips and Tonneau maintain that blasphemy and racism 'are not the same thing. No one has the right not to be offended' (Phillips 2015). There are a range of obvious ways in which the distinction between blasphemy and racism is critically important, but here context really does matter, as the delineation of anti-Muslim racism draws attention to how the widespread Islamophobic conflation of Islam, Muslims, and the brown-bodied unsettles any straightforward attempt to separate a critique of religion from attacks on Muslim and 'Muslim-looking' people (cf. Sayyid 2009). While this interrelation is highly involved, it is precisely because of this complexity that its complete absence from discussions of context is so problematic. For example, the contemporary French context is marked by instances where the—often gendered—abhorrence of Islam and its visual signifiers generates or legitimates physical and psychological violence and institutional exclusion.

The widely reported disciplining of the school students who refused to 'be Charlie' could, given the rawness of the events, be approached as a knee-jerk reaction; however, it was not at all exceptional; the critical literature on *laïcité* documents countless stories of institutional exclusion and ridicule at the hands of teachers against Muslim girls and their families, even, post-2004, merely for wearing headbands signifying the hijab to school (cf. Fernando 2015a; Chouder et al. 2008). Our point here is not to normatively oppose the irreverence for religion connected by Tonneau and Phillips to revolutionary French anti-clericalism and contemporary dissent against the authoritarian regimes of the Gulf. Rather, it is a basic insistence that all the forces at play in a context must be analysed and thus a treatment of this *context* requires a consideration of the political generativity of relentless attacks on the religion of a marginalized population, one still thought of in the colonialist terms of *les indigènes* (the natives).

And this is why, perhaps, these omissions signal a deeper political and theoretical divergence. For Phillips, the defence of the 'not-Charlies' does not involve the tensions described above, but is categorically 'an illogical, self-destructive, identity politics mess' (Phillips 2015). In other words,

the problem must be understood as part of a larger one at the heart of the definition of anti-racism itself: a problem that has a history and—yes—a context which is patchily rendered by the writers under discussion and which is central to contemporary Left divisions as to how to respond to anti-Muslim racism.

Whose Anti-racism?

It is commonplace to talk of France as exceptional; *l'exception française* is a favoured theme of the French from Left to Right (Stam and Shohat 2012). An academic variation on this exceptionalism situates France as a site almost uniquely resistant to the 'culturally imperialist' and 'relativist' projects of Cultural Studies, Ethnic and Racial Studies, and Gender Studies—a conceit reflected in Phillips' dismissal of 'identitarianism' and Tonneau's pen picture of those 'who think they speak in the name of the oppressed of the world while they have internalized a condescending hegemonic viewpoint using the alibi of cultural studies' (Tonneau 2015). These contentions have an obvious genealogy; as Bourdieu and Wacquant infamously argued, the problem with US-centric, relativist projects is that they have been 'cunningly' posed as universalist (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999: 48).

Responses to Bourdieu and Wacquant's article have made many telling criticisms, not the least of which is how the 'cunning of imperialist reason' argument relegates race and ethnicity as marginal to the central concern of class relations (Bonnott 2006; Lentin 2008; Stam and Shohat 2012). Summing up their discussion of the 'Bourdieu/Wacquant' controversy, Stam and Shohat correctly assert that the two sociologists 'share with many left critics a basic lack of familiarity with the decolonizing corpus' (Stam and Shohat 2012: 115). This body of work foregrounds the 'historicized articulations of subaltern subjectivity' and is thus fundamental for an understanding of the decolonial/anti-racist politics which the Left nevertheless seeks to engage and/or critique (ibid.: 112). The absence of a reckoning with these perspectives points to the affinity of Phillips and Tonneau's arguments with a race-blind view of Leftist politics that

reduces racism to its most overt and extreme forms, while evading its systemic nature through appeals to the promise of universality.

This is clear in Tonneau's definition of the racism faced by North African migrants in France as 'the story that goes back to the Middle Ages of workers who fear the threat of outsiders', a view that reconfirms both the 'class-over-race' blind spot and the denial of the modernity of racism, prevalent in a self-defining 'anti-multiculturalist' Left (ibid.). As Stam and Shohat underline, it is paradoxical that in France 'both the popular media and high-profile intellectuals' from Right to Left ignore or malign 'postcolonial studies, cultural studies and critical race studies' and the anti-colonial/anti-racist struggles from which they are inseparable (ibid.: 244). This elision is paradoxical not only because these interrelated disciplines rely on or extend 'French theory' and the substantial Francophone engagement with the 'Third Worldism' of the 1960s and 1970s but also because 'contemporary France, as a product of colonial karma, is itself a postcolonial nation on demographic, political and cultural terms' (ibid.: 246). In Stam and Shohat's discussion of 'French Intellectuals and the Postcolonial', they argue that the debate on (post)coloniality since the 1980s remains predominantly stuck in a manufactured conflict 'between universal secular Enlightenment and religious and communitarian particularism' (ibid.: 244). It is precisely this binary which has been reproduced in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks and through the production of 'context'.

It follows that what is also absented from this context are political actors that insist on a postcolonial, or 'decolonial', perspective, such as that expressed in the *Indigènes de la République's* 2005 founding statement: 'France is and remains a colonial state.'⁷ The statement obviously demands extensive substantiation, building on evidence from inequities in policing, social housing, education, health, and employment. But it also recalls the fact that, as one anti-racist activist told one of us, 'France [still] has a problem with its Algeria' (Lentin 2004: 99). In other words, France still has a problem of relating to its colonial losses and to those of its citizens whose presence in the country serves as a constant reminder of these losses. However, such a discussion may proceed, the point for us here is once again the significance of absence: none of the discussions of French

context paid heed to the legacies of coloniality, accepting rather the mainstream insistence on French republicanism as the source of anti-racist ideology and guiding spirit. This is clear in the constant references to *Charlie Hebdo* as an anti-racist publication, on the basis of a reduction of racism to Right-wing extremism and anti-immigrant populism.

Tonneau is correct in asserting that a 'main target of Charlie Hebdo was the Front national and the Le Pen family' (Tonneau 2015). However, as Alastair Bonnett points out, 'anti-racism cannot be adequately understood as the inverse of racism' (2000: 3). This is because, in his argument, different forms of anti-racism operate from different understandings of racism and different approaches to anti-racist mobilization, but also, in ours, because of the contradictions on the political Left with regard to anti-Muslim racism.

Understood as a field of contradictions, it becomes clear how Left opposition to the far Right can be entirely consistent with Islamophobia. Take, for example, the secularist blogger Caroline Fourest, who presents her anti-racism as consistent with implacable opposition to such actors as the *Indigènes de la république*, the Indivisibles, or the scholar Tariq Ramadan, all of whom she collectively dismisses as a group of 'fundamentalists', 'nationalists', 'racists' and 'antifeminists'. Fourest's book on Tariq Ramadan is continuous with a critique that has long formed the basis of French opposition to multiculturalism and post-colonialism. Pierre-Andre Taguieff's blaming of a *tiermondiste* (third worldist) anti-Western 'communitarianism' among anti-racists for the failure to defeat Le Pen is one such example (Taguieff 1989, 1992 cited in Lentin 2004).

The location of racism as a unique property of the far Right is congruent with these commentators' expansion of the definition of fascism to include 'Islamists' and to present them as symmetrically aligned. The problem is that Fourest and others like her do not view Islamic extremism only in terms of the violence of *Al Qaeda* or *Da'esh*. Rather, the appeal of Muslim extremism, for Fourest, is due to 'its anti-imperial, third-worldist, anti-Zionist positioning and especially thanks to the fear of appearing "Islamophobic" that paralyses those who simply want to oppose extremism' (Fourest 2004: 11). By this measure, the only Muslims Fourest can

endorse are those who have abandoned Islam and who remain unmoved by the discrimination faced by Muslims in Palestine or elsewhere.

As Sadri Khiari points out, while Fourest is by no means the first to do so, what she calls for is the 'conscience to defend the "good" Muslim against the "bad". The conscience to be *laïc*, not racist. Nor nationalist. The French left hates nationalism but adores France!' (Khiari 2011: 17). But, Khiari intimates, it doesn't work that way; it is not possible to claim 'all that is intelligent comes from France' (ibid.) in denial of the fact that the 2005 uprisings in the *banlieues*—the 'indigenised' *quartiers* (Stam and Shohat 2012: 252)—were too the product of that same France. The Kouachi brothers and Amedy Coulibaly were products of these zones at the 'margins of society' (ibid.). An understanding of one begets an analysis of the other, but where this analysis is offered in this corpus, it serves to further several now familiar myths.

In some ways it is surprising that Phillips claims that 'SOS Racisme, the main anti-racist NGO in the country, has partnered with *Charlie* in the past in campaigns against anti-immigrant politics' (Phillips 2015). It is surprising because in the 30 years of its existence, so much has been written, in English as well as in French, on the origins of *SOS* as an elite project of the French Socialist Party, generously funded by François Mitterrand when chasing the youth vote in 1981 (cf. Jazouli 1986; Malik 1990; Lentin 2004). In a similar vein, Tonneau could evoke the secularist intent of the 1983 *Marche pour l'égalité et contre le racisme* (which he, like most white French, calls the *Marche des beurs*). It is interesting to put these contextual fragments together *in context*, for this social movement, which rose out of the *banlieues* of Lyon to march for citizenship rights, was destroyed from the top-down by *SOS Racisme* and its powerful political backers.

However, for Tonneau, it is the republican correctness of the marchers which is important: 'The spirit of the *Marche des beurs* is that of *Charlie Hebdo*: justice for all citizens, including migrants and minorities.' (Tonneau 2015). Highlighting that the 1983 marchers were not 'making religious claims; they were not walking as Muslims but as French citizens', Tonneau effectively proclaims that to be what Mayanthi Fernando calls 'Muslim French' is an impossibility (ibid.). Whatever ire he undoubtedly has for the participants

of the anti-gay *Manif pour tous*, Tonneau would be hard-pushed to say that, as Christians, they were not also French.⁸

Whose Racisms?

It is this partial understanding of racism that accounts for Tonneau and Phillips' failure to consider why aspects of *Charlie Hebdo's* output and approach *could be seen* as racist. They tend to interpret racism as both externally produced and affective, a feeling instilled in some (i.e. workers) by those who seek to manipulate them (i.e. the far Right). In reality, the racist—like anti-racist—*feeling* is tangential to the question of structural conditions underpinned by racial logics. So, to declare that *Charlie Hebdo* opposed racism does not axiomatically negate the racist connotations of many of its cartoons. And declarations of anti-racism are not actual commitments to dismantling racist structures in ways that reflect and support the actual struggles of racialized people. Therefore, Phillips' proposition that 'accusations of racism (indeed any accusations) must be substantiated by the accuser, not automatically presumed to be true', if we are to accept it, must imply the opposite also: any declaration of anti-racism must be substantiated by those who make it (Phillips 2015).

It is, therefore, vital to see images as productive signifiers, signs that acquire and generate meanings in terms of their effects and not merely in terms of their intentions. The cartoon of a simianized Christiane Taubira, the Justice Minister, for example, may have had the intention, as the 'Understanding Charlie Hebdo' website attempts to argue, of ridiculing the *Front National*. Phillips is correct that some of those branding 'Charlie as a "racist publication" without a reckoning with their satirical approach makes readers think that the paper is akin to the house journal of the National Front' (ibid.). However, the use of racism to negate racism can only be a strategy of those for whom racist caricature has no personal purchase. Further, phenotypical caricatures are generated within a transnational archive of racialized and racializing imagery, images whose meanings cannot be pinned either to intent or to the licence of any one 'context'. 'Race', as Ben Pitcher argues, 'says things we cannot control or may not be aware of' (Pitcher 2014: 4).

It is not just a question of semiotic excess. The idea that such racialized forms of imagery are Anglo-American projections onto satirically inoculated 'French' representations is to elide the (post)coloniality of context—a point made by Thomas Chatterton Williams, an African-American author in Paris, who in an essay on the immediate aftermath of the attacks recalls friends whose living rooms are filled with 'colonial detritus—Sambo-like dolls and figurines, thick-lipped, bug-eyed, disembodied brown porcelain heads' while 'clinging to their belief in the validity and innocuousness of these cartoons' (Chatterton Williams 2015).

A preoccupation with signification is often regarded as a weakness of the 'multicultural Left'; however, the complexity of racism in the 'French context' goes beyond these semiotic questions. In annotating the Taubira caricature, the website *Understanding Charlie Hebdo* notes that 'the cartoon was drawn by Charb. He participated in anti-racism activities, and notably illustrated the poster for MRAP (Movement Against Racism and for Friendship between Peoples), an anti-racist NGO.'⁹ As in the misguided discussion of the alliance between *Charlie Hebdo* and *SOS Racisme*, the MRAP is no stranger to conflict with the more critical, decolonial pole of the French anti-racist spectrum. The MRAP endorsed the existence of 'anti-white racism' in a 2012 orientation statement. In a response by a collective including activists and academics, they ask,

how can the idea of "anti-white racism" not be seen as having emerged from a political debate in France bent on the inversion of responsibility? The "victim" is no longer the immigrant or the descendent of immigrants but the white person, an inversion that could be put in another way; if there is growing hostility to immigration, it is the immigrants' fault. (Collective authors 2012)

In the context of hegemonic post-racialism, the charge of anti-white or 'reverse' racism is particularly potent. It has been a persistent theme of the neocon Right in France as represented most visibly by the highly media-friendly *nouveaux philosophes*, such as Alain Finkielkraut or Bernard Kouchner. So, it is unsettling that the terms of 'anti-white racism', which we have described elsewhere as deflating 'the seriousness and specificity of colonialist crimes [...] through a suggestion of equivalence', were deemed

acceptable by the MRAP (Lentin and Titley 2011: 65). As the signatories of the response cited above point out, the term ‘anti-white racism’ is mobilized by ‘the same personalities who have not stopped stigmatising immigration and the populations of the popular neighbourhoods over recent years’. Like the laws banning the hijab and the burqa, it is not neutral but rather imbricated in France’s complex relationship to its colonial past and post-immigration present, which includes a problematic inclusion of religious difference going back to the emancipation of the Jews (Traverso 1996).

There is no necessary inconsistency between the racist connotations of many of the magazine’s cartoons and the fact that some of its staff took good political positions on other issues. Yet it is the inability to elucidate this type of paradox that unites the Leftist defenders of *Charlie*. Rather than seeing it as worthy of analysis—or even just inconsistent—that a magazine took progressive positions on immigration and asylum, the far Right or Western warmongering in the Middle East could at the same time produce racist images and opinions, they propose that the former annuls the latter.

Conclusion

Racism in ‘post-racial’ times, as several writers have remarked, seems to be increasingly characterized by its deniability (Hesse 2004). The distancing from racism deflects the charge of racism: I cannot be racist if I claim to be appalled by racism. The ‘anti-racist badge’ serves as a shield against racism, which is experienced, in narrower and narrower terms, as an accusation against the individual (Lentin 2011). Moreover, the interpretation of racism, singularly, as an accusation has the effect of rendering it analytically useless; because individuals are wounded by the invocation of racism, it becomes impossible to point to where racism is present in a given situation.

It is against this ‘post-racial’ background that the appeal for *Charlie Hebdo* to be contextualized within a particularist French narrative needs to be understood. Context purportedly provides depth and shade, complexifying what are presented as simplistic narratives. In contrast, we

argue that attention to the presence of race as structuring—both of French sociality in general and of the intervention of *Charlie Hebdo* in that political space in particular—adds everything but simplicity to the narrative. On the contrary, we could argue that it is race that adds complexity, while the attempt to turn from it leads to over-simplification and the reification of categories such as Frenchness, Islam, or *laïcité*.

'Context' in this instance is better understood as a synonym for 'objectivity' or as code for a race—neutral stance—as though such a thing existed—that implies rationality in the face of over-reaction. This kind of appeal for context can be interpreted as an appeal to a white analytics that clashes with a black analytics, which Hesse suggests in the context of US sociology, struggles to define race in the face of structural white denial of its centrality (Hesse 2014). This division between black and white modes of analysis, utterly evident in the segregated environment of early twentieth-century North American academia, should not be discounted as irrelevant to present-day France where the scholarly domain, but also those of activism or media, remain dominated by a secular republican ideological frame that is white in all but name (Balibar 1994).

It is therefore significant that the bulk of critical work on race and coloniality in France has been conducted by a mainly North American group of scholars, aimed at an international audience, and spanning anthropology, history, and sociology (Stoler 1995; Silverstein 2004; Scott 2007; Shepard 2008; Ticktin 2011; Davidson 2014a, b; Fernando 2015a). This is testimony to the truism that analyses that foreground race are still not considered in the realm of serious scholarship in French academia and that blacks and/or Muslims remain largely excluded from French institutions. It is telling that the French scholars who *have* brought race in France onto the agenda internationally are mainly white (cf. Didier Fassin, Eric Fassin, Valerie Amiraux, Jocelyne Cesari).

So, when it comes to narrating the French context, and adjudicating its relationship to race, whose voices are heard is not immaterial. It is not that there is an absence of race critical voices within France itself, writing or speaking in French for a French audience; it is that many of the writers who sought to explain France to the world post-*Charlie Hebdo* were either unaware of them or perhaps felt them to be irrelevant to the meaning of France they wished to share. It fell to the non-French scholars of France

to tell an alternative story (cf. Fernando 2015b), but these lacked the seemingly required authenticity of French commentators. Implicit in the question of which voices could be heard was the understanding, unspoken perhaps, that only those who proclaimed they ‘were’ Charlie could claim to be authentically French. The very schism many of their interventions attempted to explain—between an unproblematically constituted ‘France’ and her ‘immigrant’ subjects—was reproduced by the choice to deny a voice to those who could never be *Charlie*, even if they wanted to (Chatterton Williams 2015).

It would be easy to dismiss those who took to the web to protest the neglect of the French context in the aftermath of the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks as simply ignorant of the questions we have raised. What we argue, in contrast, is that the view of the French context propagated by these authors and others is filtered through a white analytics that, due to its partial reading of that context, is *unable* to present a holistic account. From such a perspective, steeped in the “simulacrum” of universalism... [which] is in a sense much more real, or effective, than the “true” version’ (Balibar 2007), any anti-racism which problematizes not only the policies and actions of the state and its successive governments but the ideology of republicanism itself is seen as part of the problem not the solution.

In a case well known to the French public for several years, the sociologist Saïd Bouamama and the *Zone d’expression populaire* singer Saïdou were taken to court on January 20, 2015, by the Right-wing Catholic organization, the AGRIF, accused of ‘anti-French racism’. Saïdou, commenting on the variable approach to freedom of speech accorded to France’s citizens and pre-empting the discussion of hypocrisy post-*Charlie*, said in 2010: ‘the white person who whistles the Marseillaise will be tolerated more easily than the Arab who whistles it... The Arab will be an “anti-French racist”, the white guy just a “leftist”. The Arab doesn’t have the right to be a leftist!’ (Tévanien 2009). For this reason, the politics of individuals and organizations who take a decolonial standpoint, muddying the waters of the multi-hued yet united republic by declaring themselves (still) *indigènes*, or by demanding a hyphenated French-other identity, are either actively ignored or radically opposed.¹⁰

Of the issues to emerge from the aftermath of *Charlie Hebdo*, it is this dynamic we seek to address, while addressing those (white) Leftists, who, wishing to be on the right side of the argument for justice and equality, are perplexed when they fail to recognize themselves in their interlocutors. How can these progressives reconcile their desire to defeat racism with their suspicion that the very objects of their commitment—the 'victims' of racism—are standing in the way of a universalist idea of freedom and equality? What happens when the knowledge that systemic discrimination denies the equality of fellow human beings conflicts with the feeling that the struggles of these 'brothers and sisters' are misguided? In other words, how can the white Left fight against racism if its leadership is questioned? It appears that these, by no means new, questions about the very nature of anti-racist solidarity are at the core of the quest to explain *Charlie Hebdo*.

Notes

1. The *Charlie Hebdo* edition of February 25, 2015, the first to discuss the attacks, features several versions of this explanation. In an interview with Gérard Bonnet and Malek Chebel, Bonnet, for example, contends that a Muslim that objects to caricatures of the Prophet Muhammed 'remains in an infantile state that confuses the real and representation. It's like the primitive that believes that photography steals his soul. It's an enormous regression.'
2. http://www.lopinion.fr/16-avril-2015/marcel-gauchet-pourquoi-traumatisme-charlie-hebdo-s-est-evanoui-en-cent-jours-23378?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_content=content&utm_campaign=cm. Retrieved March 30 2015.
3. <http://www.understandingcharliehebdo.com/> Retrieved March 30 2015.
4. All translations to the French are our own.
5. See news report available at, <https://www.thelocal.fr/20130305/its-pork-or-nothing-pupils-in-french-school-told>. Retrieved March 30, 2015.
6. <https://sites.google.com/site/mamanstoutesegalestest/>. Retrieved February 18, 2018.

7. 'Nous sommes les Indigènes de la république'. <http://lmsi.net/Nous-sommes-les-indigenes-de-la>. Retrieved March 30, 2015.
8. Indeed, the idea presented by Tonneau, but also in the British context by Steven Howe (2011), that Islam has only recently become a feature of the identity of immigrants from Muslim countries belies the fact that 'Muslim' was an interchangeable signifier of identity, along with "natives" (*indigènes*) and "Arabs" (*arabes*)' under colonialism (Fernando 2015c). Hence, 'race and religion have long formed a nexus' (ibid). To consider therefore the negative portrayal of Islam as racially neutral or even as consistent with an anti-racist positioning not only reveals a lack of empathy with the Muslim other and a hypocrisy, given, as has been pointed out, the rather different treatment of anti-semitism in the ranks of *Charlie Hebdo* (Phillips 2015), but, more significantly, provides a historical account that denies the French state's own amalgamation of race and religion in the management of its colonized populations, a legacy which has been carried over into the post-immigration Metropole.
9. <http://www.understandingcharliehebdo.com/>. Also see, <https://www.vox.com/2015/1/14/7546903/understanding-charlie-hebdo>. Retrieved March 30, 2015.
10. As soon as the *Mouvement des indigènes de la république* came on the scene in 2005, it was denounced as anti-French but also as having misinterpreted French colonial history. In a dossier on colonialism, the fear of being accused of taking an 'ethnicized' approach leads the editorial to presume that the movement had not really taken off: 'there were many who, seduced at the outset by what it incarnated, later took their distance' (*Le Monde* 2006). In the same dossier, the historian of colonialism, Emmanuelle Saada, questioned the utility of referring to present-day French citizens of colonized origin as 'indigenous': 'the indigenous were subsumed under a discriminatory status, the indigenous code, inscribed in law, whereas today, it is the fight against discrimination and racism that is the law' (Saada, cited in Bernard 2006: viii).

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7

Transparency, Trust, and Multiculturalism in Cosy Copenhagen

Tabish Khair and Isabelle Petiot

Denmark, like most of Scandinavia, is seen as a peaceful place of law-abiding citizens, amongst the happiest in the world, with a transparent and trusting public ethos.¹ On the other hand, Denmark is also seen as a country leading the recent exclusionary European backlash against immigrants, Muslims, and multiculturalism.² In this chapter, we argue that these two perceptions are both justified and that they are related.

Identifying Denmark as a First World achievement society, we trace the enmeshment of the requirement for transparency with both state procedures and multiculturalism. With particular reference to the work of Byung-Chul Han, we argue that the association of transparency with trust is problematic, and more so in a multicultural society. Illustrating the (often occluded) multiculturalism of Denmark in the past and the present, we then look at the response to orthodox Islam, given its perceived refusal of transparency (most obviously symbolised by the hijab for many Danes), in public controversies like the Nørrebro Riots and the Danish cartoon conflict. We also examine how recent Danish legislature,

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though worded in a seemingly transparent and universal manner, nevertheless treats recent immigrants (especially from non-white and Third World spaces) not as the achievement subjects that Danes are supposed to be but as disciplinary subjects. We connect this discussion to an attempt to think of xenophobia in different terms, keeping in mind the change of structures of power under high capitalism: a shift from strangers made visible (as the Nazis did with Jews) to strangers expected to stay invisible. Finally, we examine the effect of this lack of trust on accountability, which, we argue, is what the rhetoric of governmental transparency serves to deny.

The Achievement of Transparency

Built in 1815 as Copenhagen's town-hall (later relocated), the classical façade of the current 'Domhuset' (City Court) dominates one of the squares off Strøget, the long pedestrian street winding through the heart of the city. High above its Roman pillars, there is inscribed the legend: *'Med lov skal man land bygge.'* This is the first phrase in a foundational law book, codified in 1241. It means, literally, with law the country shall be built. Ordinary Danes often tend to trace the legalistic and even the democratic basis of their country to this phrase in particular. What this phrase signifies *today* is not just authority but trust. To see the 'law' in the phrase above as signifying only authority is to see one side of the story. The other side is the fact that the law has to be trusted: there has to be belief in the capacity of the law to build a country, and that in itself requires trust. What is being highlighted is not imposition but construction, not prohibition but voluntary acceptance, not discipline but democratic achievement: the country has to be built with the help of laws that its citizens consider transparent and fair, and hence trust.

However, this is a contemporary reading. Though it has become customary in some circles to confuse versions of tribal or class communality with political democracy, the fact remains that in the thirteenth century the definitions of belonging—let alone citizenship—were very different from what pertains today. They were significantly different in the early nineteenth century too, as women, among others (the working classes, etc.)

ought to be able to recall. Whether one defines citizenship in the liberal tradition as a negotiation of equality between strangers or in the conservative sense of a given community of belonging, it can be shown that women gained admission to citizenship quite late, and it can be argued that their gender still impacts on their rights as citizens.

Sovereignty, too, as embedded within the ‘state’ and the ‘nation,’ had another meaning in the past. As Habermas notes, ‘[t]he democratic transformation of the “Adelsnation,” the nation of the nobility, into a “Volksnation,” a nation of the people, required a deep change in consciousness of the general population’ (Habermas 1996: 127). He adds that ‘[t]he ruling estates, which met in “parliaments” or “diets,” represented the country or “the nation” vis-à-vis the [aristocratic] court. As the “nation,” the aristocracy gained a political existence that the mass of the population [...] did not yet enjoy’ (1996: 127). In short, the ‘law’ of the pre-democratic state, run by a nobility usually in tandem with a theocracy, was not a democratic matter of secular negotiation: it was ordered by both ‘God’ and a certain class of ‘man.’

To adapt the Korean-born German philosopher Byung-Chul Han, one can say that the phrase ‘Med lov skal man land bygge’—as codified in a law-code of the thirteenth century or even as inscribed on a public building in the early nineteenth century—was definitive of a disciplinary society. This was a society in which the (aristocratic) sovereign and the super ego held sway: their commandments came in the negative. Its characteristic enunciation was and is prohibition: thou shalt not. The ‘law’ that builds the ‘land’ in that context is a law of sovereign prohibitions. It does to the ‘citizen’ what the superego does to the ego: prohibit it, discipline it.

Han notes that today’s world is no longer ‘Foucault’s disciplinary world of hospitals, madhouses, prisons, barracks, and factories. It has long been replaced by another regime, namely a society of fitness studios, office towers, banks, airports, shopping malls, and genetic laboratories’ (Han 2015a: 8). He goes on to state that ‘[t]wenty-first society is no longer a disciplinary society, but rather an achievement society [... Its] inhabitants are no longer “obedience-subjects” but “achievement-subjects.” They are entrepreneurs of themselves’ (2015a: 8). In this chapter, we argue that contemporary legislation in Denmark—as well as the general slant of the

dominant political discourse—stresses that Danes are ‘achievement-subjects.’ This often results in pressure—legislative as well as social—on immigrants to ‘achieve’ integration and ‘core’ Danish values. When immigrants are seen as refusing to become achievement subjects—and currently Muslims tend to be most notorious for their real or imagined refusals—the discourse, and legislature, needs to turn them into ‘obedience-subjects’ without losing the positivity and transparency of terminology that an achievement society expects.

Han argues that the ‘achievement society’ of today is characterised by various afflictions which result from an excess of positivity, not due to negativity: ‘The past century was an immunological age. The epoch sought to distinguish clearly between inside and outside, friend and foe, self and other. [...] The object of immune defence is the foreign as such. Even if it has no hostile intentions, even if it poses no danger, it is eliminated on the basis of its Otherness. [...] The dialectic of negativity is the fundamental trait of immunity’ (2015a: 1–3).

As against this, neurological illnesses like depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which dominate ‘the landscape of pathology’ today, are ‘not infections, but infarctions; they do not follow from the *negativity* of what is immunologically foreign, but from an excess of *positivity*’ (2015a: 1). Hence, an achievement society cannot talk directly of religion or race, as distinguishing factors, instead it talks of assimilation, common values, and so on. An obsession with transparency (in legislation, but between citizens too, which erodes the otherness of the other self) is an aspect of this. For Han, the demand for complete transparency—which, in our view, characterises uniformly social welfare neo-liberal states like Denmark even more than internally conflicted nations like USA—is a consequence of the excess of positivity demanded by our neurological age. He notes,

[w]hoever connects transparency only with corruption and the freedom of information has failed to recognize its scope. Transparency is a *systemic* compulsion gripping all social processes and subjecting them to deep-reaching change. Today’s social system submits all its processes to the demand for transparency in order to operationalize and accelerate them. Pressure for acceleration represents the corollary of dismantling negativity. (2015b: 2)

What Han wants to highlight is that human existence is not transparent even to itself, and the other is never transparent to the self. He argues that ‘transparency stabilizes and speeds the system by eliminating the Other and the Alien’ (2015b: 2). Han also holds that otherness has now been replaced with ‘difference,’ which essentially bears marks of potential positivity. As Han highlights, ‘[t]oday’s society of control possesses a distinct panoptic structure. In contrast to the occupants of the Benthamian panopticon, who are isolated from each other, the inhabitants of today’s panopticon network and communicate with each other intensively’ (2015b: 46). For instance, unlike the hugely secretive concentration camps of the Nazis and of Stalinist USSR, camouflaged by distance, obscurity, and romanticised names, the Guantanamo camp existed as a deceptively transparent space.³ It was always part of network gossip and governmental communication, though it served purposes of control that, in essence, did not diverge much from earlier versions. The fact that we knew it was there was used to defuse criticism of all that went on there. Transparency and information were used not just to legitimise Guantanamo but also to normalise surveillance society.

It is only when one understands these changes—especially those summed up by Han in the terms ‘the neurological age’ and ‘transparency society’—that one can begin to understand the additional meanings that have accreted to the disciplinary commandment: ‘Med lov skal man land bygge.’ That is why today, in a paramount transparency society of a neurological age, *trust* is an aspect associated with the hidden disciplinary authority of such a statement: one needs to trust the law in order for it to be effective; the law is not a prohibition imposed from outside (as in a disciplinary society) but a ‘consensus’ chosen from inside (as in an achievement society); and hence the law is supposed to be entirely transparent. But can this obsession with transparency allow space for the otherness of multiculturalism: that is, what does the state do when the subject refuses or fails to ‘achieve’ the transparency of living expected of it? One way to understand the frequent political uproar against body and face coverings employed by some Muslim women is to see them as a glaring reminder of this refusal or failure to allow transparency: the ‘hijab,’ then, becomes just the visible tip of a much larger iceberg. Without denying the feminist objections to enforced dress codes, it is

also misleading not to register this aspect of the hijab and similar dresses: the fact that the 'stranger' refuses to stay transparent, and hence becomes visible as strange, and the fact that this one gesture is then read as symbolic or indicative of many such refusals and failures.

Multiculturalism, Islam, and Transparency

Transparency and multiculturalism have a mutual, difficult, and often unexamined relationship, and it is Islam that, for better and worse, serves to problematise this relationship in Europe today. This is more so in a country like Denmark, which, in its public rhetoric, sees itself as 'not really a colonial power' (despite its colonial past and its present possession of Greenland) and whose unilingual bias and relatively small size enable the myth of a holistic, undivided, single national culture. Hence, in Denmark, multiculturalism is always something that is either out there or that comes into being, now and in Denmark, largely as a consequence of what is out there coming into the nation. It is seen as the result of recent immigration or of globalisation, or both.

Of course, this is largely a myth—but a myth that is often promoted even by those who believe in multiculturalism as a policy, when they implicitly or explicitly posit a Danish past that was *not* multicultural. It ignores not just internal cultural differences—the disappearance of difficult Danish dialects, largely due to the location of almost all modern media offices in Copenhagen or Aarhus, has aided this misconception—but also evidence of much European and non-European interpenetration into Denmark in the hoary past. So much so that when a historian wrote about gypsies in Denmark, a major Danish politician (the spiritual leader of the influential nationalist *Danish People's Party*) dismissed it in public as a falsehood: 'As far as I know, there were no gypsies in Denmark before 1864,' she told a major newspaper, and was only challenged by some intellectuals. More recently, now speaker of the Danish Parliament, she also urged the public and authorities to 'stress' gypsies out of Copenhagen.⁴

But even if we look at the non-Europe—arguing that gypsies are seen as a 'European problem'—we find many examples of evaded transculturalism in Denmark. For instance, way back in 1713, when European

critics tended to dismiss the multi-headed, multi-armed, hybrid sculptures of India with Christian-aesthetic repulsion, Bartholomaeus Ziegenblag, a Royal Danish missionary to Tranquebar in South India, wrote the first objective study of Hindu religion and art. The book—*Genealogy of the Malabar Gods*—was written in German and received with immense hostility by the author's colleagues. Significantly, it has *not* been translated into Danish, though an English translation exists. Again, two of the best collections of South Indian bronzes and sculpture from two different historical periods are in Copenhagen, though mostly *not* on display. There is in general no real memory—not even academically in many places—of the hoards of Arab coins recovered from Viking sites, of Danish slave-trading, the passage of lascars through Copenhagen, and so on, in Denmark.

To save space, having noted occluded evidence of Denmark being 'multicultural' in the past, we return to Danish multiculturalism in the present—a struggling official discourse, now heavily under attack, that largely saw cultural differences as colourfully transparent. This is what we mean by the relationship between transparency and multiculturalism: there is often an assumption that cultures are just similarly different and hence transparent to one another. Multiculturalism in this form, which was the version sometimes heard in Denmark's public rhetoric until two decades ago, allows space for difference, but in the same process erodes the presence of otherness, of difference that is not and cannot be fully transparent. This notion of otherness is then left to the political right to incubate and to explode in the public when 'transparent differences' turn out to be more turgid than allowed by official discourses of multiculturalism. Here Islam—traditionally the 'other' in much of European thinking—steps in very conveniently, especially in the extreme forms of Islamism (militant or peaceful) which cast the 'West' as the absolute other too.

One of the political landmark events of this sort of switch from a misleading discourse of transparently different cultures to a simplified and absolute otherness took place in Copenhagen on 7–8 November 1999, a time marking the rise of the *Danish People's Party*. A group of 40 or 50 young men, most of them hooded, set off a train of violent demonstrations that left a number of cars and shops in flames and led to clashes

with the police all along the main street in Nørrebro (which is also one of the major streets of Copenhagen). At its peak, between 150 and 300 young persons were reported to have been involved in the demonstrations. Not only was the scale of the event larger than usual but even its triggering cause was unusual. The young demonstrators were ostensibly protesting against the extradition of 23-year-old Ercan Cicek, a Turkish passport holder who had been educated and brought up in Denmark. Cicek was ordered out of the country under a new law that allowed the Danish authorities to extradite ‘foreign nationals’ with a criminal record. While this law had been implemented earlier, this was the first time that it was being applied to a person who—apart from that piece of paper called a passport—was a ‘Dane’ to the extent of having been brought up entirely in Denmark.

This ‘trigger cause’ probably explains why the ‘Nørrebro uroligheder’ (Nørrebro riots) came to be seen as something caused by foreigners and immigrants, mostly of Muslim descent. Because, according to eyewitness accounts, the young persons demonstrating were often light skinned and light haired, belonging to various leftist Danish groups. However, often ignoring this blue-eyed Danish presence, newspaper reports concentrated on the ‘indvandrere’ (immigrant) problem, which was often a polite way of saying ‘Muslim.’ The Nørrebro riots were used to fuel the ongoing debate on ‘second- and third-generation immigrants’—the very terminology of which reveals its racist and nationalist bias in implying that dark skinned persons born and brought up in Denmark would remain perpetual ‘immigrants.’ Newspapers were full of letters dripping with repulsion and hate—often aimed at both the ‘violence’ and the ‘immigrants’ supposed to have caused it. Such was the Danish outcry against the ‘violence’—often worded in terms of ‘We do not behave like that here’—that even the Labour Council of *Enhedslisten* (the most leftist of established parties in Denmark) distanced itself from the demonstrations. Immigrants—read ‘Muslims’—had failed to *achieve* ‘integration.’ Whether it was the then Prime Minister or left-leaning politicians from immigrant backgrounds, there was a general feeling that these riots by a handful of youths, at least some of whom were not even from an immigrant background, reflected badly on immigrants in general and that such bad immigrants simply had to ‘learn’ Danish social mores.⁵

Masks and hoods were almost the first things to go, with legislation passed to curb their use in demonstrations. Next, of course, was the increasing rhetoric against hijabs and other such coverings. This rhetoric was reflected in statements such as: ‘Why can’t they assimilate in our society?’ or ‘Why can’t they live like us?’ and the questioning of their credentials to ‘contribute’ to Danish society.⁶ In all cases, the matter of transparency was and is at play: it is expected of Muslim students to make their religion almost invisible (even though Protestantism remains a clear presence) in schools.⁷ Transparency, it was suggested, would have given rise to mutual trust, and it was the fault of the Muslim immigrant that he or she rendered himself or herself opaque.

The problem of associating transparency with trust—and we shall examine the legislative fall-out (and their limitations) in the next section—is best highlighted by quoting Niklas Luhmann on the relationship between trust and social complexity: ‘Trust reduces social complexity, that is simplifies life by the taking of a risk. If the readiness to trust is lacking or if trust is expressly denied in order to avoid the risks involved in the speedy swallowing up of insecurity, this by itself leaves the problem unsolved’ (Luhmann 1979: 71). In a multicultural society—and Denmark is effectively one (despite how some Danes might define it)—this problem is complicated by the fact that cultural differences are never fully transparent. If this inevitable lack of full transparency is considered negative—and basically a threat—then the function of trust remains ‘unfulfilled,’ as Luhmann notes about all societies, and anyone ‘who merely refuses to confer trust restores the original complexity of the potentialities of the situation and burdens himself with it’ (ibid.). Luhmann goes on to point out that such a ‘surplus of complexity, however, places too many demands on the individual and makes him incapable of action. Anyone who does not trust must, therefore, turn to functionally equivalent strategies for the reduction of complexity in order to be able to define a practically meaningful situation at all’ (ibid.).

In short, the deceptive trust-inspiring transparency of many new laws relating to ‘foreigners’ in contemporary Denmark, some of which we take up next, flows out of this faulty assumption that trust requires full transparency. In the absence of such transparency across cultures or religions, the state and other bodies have to ‘turn to functionally equivalent

strategies for the reduction of [multicultural] complexity' (quoted above). However, this failure of trust, is not seen as mutual, but entirely laid on the doors of these strangers—who have, so to say, insisted on their visibility by refusing transparent sameness and failing to 'achieve' positively. It does not emanate from a negative prohibition—thou shalt not—but from a famine of positivity on the part of the 'stranger.'

The infamous 'Prophet Mohammad cartoon controversy' was an illustration of this, though that aspect has remained largely unnoticed. It is commonly known that when a national Danish paper, with a large provincial readership, commissioned and published cartoons of the prophet of Islam in 2005, there were protests—many of them violent—in Muslim and other nations, and death-threats against the cartoonists. Aspects of this controversy have been examined: the violence of the Islamist reaction and the mileage derived from the controversy by Islamists as well as European Rightist parties, the stand-off between freedom of speech on the one side and cultural and orientalist stereotyping on the other. What, however, has seldom been noticed is the fact that the cartoons were published on 30 September 2005 and very little happened for the next few days: a Danish teenager did phone in a threat to the newspaper, and he was promptly turned over to the authorities by his mother. The controversy burst into worldwide and often violent protests only in January–February 2006. The reason for this delay was that for weeks various Danish Muslim leaders tried to have their grievances redressed using Danish legal and political channels, and were largely told by authorities and governing politicians to think like Danes. Interestingly, as long as these Muslims remained within such parameters, their grievances were largely ignored—the onus was on them to 'achieve' Danish good behaviour. Once the controversy snowballed—four months after the publication of the cartoons, largely due to a tour of Muslim lands by some Danish imams (one of whom had added a particularly offensive photo, which was not part of the cartoons, in his portfolio)—it was seen as a failure of Muslims to achieve integration yet again.

In short, belonging had to be *achieved* in an achievement society and total transparency was the key to it. Given this assumption, achievement society had a problem: how does one enforce obedience on subjects who refuse or fail to achieve?

The Deceptive Transparency of Marriage Laws in Denmark

Transparency is positional and subjective: what is seemingly transparent from one position might be opaque from another. This is also true of individuals and groups. This makes us ask the following questions: Are laws really transparent? Do all groups see them as equally transparent? What does the myth of or demand for total transparency actually achieve?

One way to understand this is to look at the changing character of the ‘stranger’ under high capitalist conditions (which prevail in Denmark, despite or along with its social welfare structures). In *The New Xenophobia*, one of us (Khair 2016) had engaged with the problem that xenophobia and xenophobic violence have changed character. The stranger was made visible under old xenophobia, and was often persecuted for trying to pass off as ‘one of us’ (most obviously, by the Nazis); the stranger is expected to keep herself invisible under new xenophobia. Khair had highlighted that the character of violence has changed from ‘materiality-based’ to ‘more abstract,’ and that the older forms of xenophobia tried to physically eliminate the other through exclusion, segregation, marking, execution, while newer forms of xenophobia expect the other to voluntarily ‘assimilate’ into the same. The classical, if somewhat simplistic, example is that between the Nazi insistence on marking the Jew with a sign of difference (the Star of David, for instance) and the current insistence in many circles to ‘voluntarily’ debar signs of difference (such as the veil, the tight scarf, beards, etc.) to Muslims. In short, what Khair was talking about was similar to the difference between Han’s immunological age and his neurological age, as well as his distinction between ‘disciplinary society’ and ‘achievement society.’

The stranger is no longer necessarily seen as a foreign insertion—a virus to be combated. The stranger is more likely to be branded when s/he ‘fails’ to ‘achieve integration.’ The failure is not society’s but the stranger’s—who refuses to share in the positivity of society. In actual effect, as highlighted in other terms in *The New Xenophobia*—the two positions—immunological and neurological—can overlap, supplement each other, or be counterposed as justification of new kinds of xenophobia. Obedience or discipline

is imposed on the subject who refuses or fails to achieve—but it is done in the transparent terms of an achievement society.

One of the features relating to Denmark that Khair had examined in *The New Xenophobia* was a set of recently promulgated laws which were deceptive and double-voiced while claiming to be (and supposed to be) transparently trustworthy. Khair had noted that the problem with these laws was that, unlike the laws of old xenophobia, they worked in the abstract. To this can be added the further remark: these are *deceptively* transparent laws.

Take, for instance, these recent rules passed in Denmark to regulate marriages⁸:

- A. The 24-Year Rule: ‘In order to qualify for family reunification, both the spouse living in Denmark and the foreign spouse must normally be older than 24. However, an application for family reunification can be submitted when the younger spouse is 23½ years old.’
- B. The self-support requirement: ‘Normally, it is a requirement that your spouse/partner in Denmark is able to support him/herself. This means that your spouse/partner in Denmark may not have received public assistance under the terms of the Active Social Policy Act (lov om aktiv socialpolitik) or the Integration Act (integrationsloven) for the past three years prior to your application for family reunification being processed by the Immigration Service. It makes no difference how long a person has received public assistance if it was received in the past three years. Even short periods on social benefits (‘kontant-hjælp’) may result in your application for family reunification being turned down.’
- C. The immigration test: ‘Applicants for family reunification who submit their applications after 15 May 2012 are not required to pass an immigration test (indvandringsprøven). Instead, applicants must pass Danish as a second language test. Read more about the Danish test. You must normally pass the immigration test in order to be granted a residence permit on the grounds of family reunification with your spouse/partner in Denmark. In certain situations, you can be exempted from taking the immigration test. Furthermore,

citizens of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, South Korea and the USA are exempt from taking the immigration test.’

- D. The attachment requirement: ‘The connection requirement will be waived if the spouse living in Denmark has had Danish citizenship for more than 26 years. The same applies if the spouse living in Denmark was born and raised in Denmark or arrived in Denmark as a young child and has resided in Denmark legally for more than 26 years. If the applicants are required to meet the connection requirement, family reunification can initially only be granted if their combined connection to Denmark is greater than their combined connection to another country.’

Despite being worded in an abstract and seemingly transparent manner (‘universal’), the implementation of such legislation has far more particular aspects or effects than the wording or theory suggests. For instance, Rule A discriminates between nationals and foreigners; obviously, you do not need to wait until you are 24 if both you and your partner are Danish. Given the fact that only a small percentage of marriages to foreigners run the risk of being forced or even arranged marriages, this discriminatory law reminds one, at a diluted level, of the logic behind Nazi concentration camps: ‘Better to put ten innocents behind barbed wire than to let one real enemy escape (Kogon [1950] 2006: 20).’ Similarly, the privileging of one’s own citizens in matters of human rights is reminiscent of a similar, though stronger, claim of ingrained privilege made for various races, nationalities, and folk in the early twentieth century. While Rule A is based on an obvious difference being made between nationals and foreigners, this lacks the physicality of racism: ‘nationals’ and ‘foreigners’ are highly abstract terms. Moreover, given the fact that EU legislation, as well as dual agreements with (and in recognition of the economic status of) First World countries like the USA, Canada, Australia, and even Japan, allow their citizens to move, work, and settle with relative freedom in Denmark, Rule A is basically applicable to Third World countries, whose citizens have less chance to enter Denmark or work there. As the matter of ‘marriage’ has been commonly associated

with Muslim immigrants—who are seen (far in excess to the actual percentage) as going in for arranged marriages and marrying cousins from abroad, and so on—even ‘foreign spouse’ can be read as a kind of euphemism.

Rule C operates with a similar logic: it just ‘happens to’ apply more to people from the Third World and to coloured people than to people from the EU, who can work and stay in Denmark for long periods without needing to emigrate or to take immigration tests. In this case, the globalised abstract-capital logic of the law is made obvious by attaching a seemingly arbitrary list of countries—‘Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, South Korea, and the USA’—whose citizens do not have to take an immigration test that, some Danish journalists have claimed, most ethnic Danes would have trouble passing. Seemingly arbitrary, but this is not really so if you keep our larger argument in mind, and think of the trajectory of new xenophobia: Israel, South Korea, and Japan are arguably the non-white nations most deeply entrenched in high capitalism.

Rule D is even more interesting. It posits a 26-year residence in Denmark, which means that it basically privileges people born in Denmark, at least as far as their first marriage or partnership is concerned. The vast majority of young people enter their first significant relationship in their early or mid-twenties. This rule obviously privileges ‘ethnic’ Danes. It is undergirded by the rider that ‘their combined connection to Denmark should be greater than their combined connection to another country.’ This rider also abstractly discriminates against Danish citizens of non-Danish ‘ethnic’ origin, as these people, even if born in Denmark, might have spent some years in other countries, the countries of one or both of their parents. It need hardly be pointed out that this rule, too, is easier to overcome in practice if your spouse/partner belongs to an EU nation than if s/he belongs to Turkey, Pakistan or India, as various European (and EU) regulations and mutual treaties permit far greater mobility to Europeans.

The remarkable thing about such legislation is that they apply in two very different ways to two different segments of Danish society: almost splitting up the society into a segment treated, in Han’s terms, as achievement subjects and a segment treated as disciplinary subjects.

To the latter—the segment of Danes from elsewhere (barring First World nations to a large extent), the state and its legislature proclaims, indirectly: thou shalt not!

The seeming transparency of such legislation is deceptive. Their conditions do not apply ‘universally’ and ‘equally,’ as the transparency of wording (which seemingly omits negative restrictions pertaining to colour or religion) suggests: the conditions and prohibitions apply more to some groups, and this is without a specific cause, but largely on the sweeping (unstated) grounds that such groups are to be trusted less in general (e.g. in the matter of women’s rights or marriage ages). Lack of trust is built into such legislation, and it—one can argue—provokes a similar response from its (hidden) victims. Such rules are not discriminatory in an old xenophobic sense, but they affect some strangers more than they affect other strangers. Many of the strangers affected by these rules would have been affected by the prejudices of old xenophobia too, except that most such prejudices—overt racism, for instance—are illegal in Denmark, and Danes believe that they have been largely overcome.

That such rules are xenophobic is illustrated not just by the fact that they are a superimposition over some extant (but now rendered invisible) prejudices and/or victims of old xenophobia—for instance, such rules would automatically affect and forbid marriage with Asians and Africans more than they would marriage with Europeans—but also by the fact that, implicitly, they create two classes of human beings. A Dane, for instance, can marry another Dane even if both of them are under the age of 24 years and neither of them passes the ‘self-support’ requirement. Such rules also allow effective ways out to citizens of First World nations (mostly, but not only, white). This is explicitly laid down in the ‘immigration test’ rule, but it is even more effective in an implicit manner, for instance, the fact that EU citizens, or even US citizens, can move and stay and work more freely in Denmark, by virtue of mutual visa arrangements and other understandings, than Indian or Nigerian citizens can.

Finally, the empowerment of high capital, which is basically what these rules buttress and protect, is totally obscured. Any attempt to highlight that such occlusion has xenophobic aspects becomes an exercise in differentialist politics, and is then seen as closer to the racism of old xenophobia, so that at times it is the victim who comes across as xenophobic

and even racist, as almost all right-leaning European politicians stress these days. This is not to say that versions of xenophobia do not exist among, say, coloured immigrants; but this remains a matter different from the structure of new xenophobia, which is not faced up to, and which is even privileged as, the correct and fair state of political being.

Trust, Transparency, Accountability

‘Trust is like the God Particle. Trust, like the Higgs boson, is a thing one cannot see; one can only see its effects’ notes Joseph Sterrett (Sterrett [forthcoming](#): 1). Trust, one can also add, is something that does not depend on transparency. Actually, as Han points out, absolute insistence on transparency is detrimental to trust. The myth of total transparency does away with the need for trust; one necessarily trusts without seeing entirely.

In effect, the rules listed above work in a deceptively transparent manner, as we have already stated, because they actually seem to be fair and trustworthy but affect different individuals—sometimes even different Danish citizens—differently. The seeming transparency of such rules is used not just to evoke trust but also to avoid discussions of accountability. The absolute insistence on transparency in public spheres, it can be argued, often helps to avoid the more necessary insistence on accountability. The legitimate demand for accountability in a representative political system is converted into a problematic performance of transparency, which also allows accountability to be shirked.

The above rules do not hold the Danish authorities accountable—for instance, accountable to the morality of human rights, which prohibits discriminatory treatment on the basis of colour, race, and so on. Actually, the sheer-seeming transparency of these laws makes it impossible—without careful examination—to register that they affect different people differently, and that they are more likely to impact non-whites, non-Europeans, and non-First World citizens negatively. And even when this careful examination is offered, the unfortunate victim can be dismissed as the odd exception. The laws seem transparent enough to be trusted, so transparent that the legislators of such laws need not be held accountable for their unfortunate ‘exceptions.’

It might be a problem of the future in countries like Denmark that the various minorities, who have reason not to put their faith in such deceptively transparent laws, will grow up to have a less trusting relationship to the myth: *'Med lov skal man land bygge.'* This remains a largely under-examined aspect of what the Danish papers sometimes call the 'indvandrers' (migrant) problem and associate with the growing resentment of young men and women *born and brought up in Denmark*. Whether buttressed by data or not (no reliable survey seems to exist), there is a tendency among some Danes to lament the fact that this new generation—born and brought up in Denmark speaking the language and knowing its laws—is supposedly more 'troublesome and hostile' than their immigrant parents used to be.⁹ Were data to substantiate this (and, at least, individual cases do exist), would it be that surprising? To suspect that the land is being built with laws that can affect you differently than they would affect other Danes might not be the best of ways to build a multicultural nation. In a greatly divided, economically uneven world, where capital is far more free to move than labour, the stranger does not and cannot disappear, but the way in which the stranger is seen changes: in some ways, the stranger is not seen as a negative foreign body in and by the law, while at the same time this seemingly transparent law is used to impede the insertion of certain kinds of strangers. The seeming transparency of the law is considered essential for its existence: it is supposed to evoke trust among the citizens. However, this transparency is partly deceptive, because the law itself does not trust certain kinds of strangers, including some who have become citizens. In this, the law reflects the distrust of strangers/others from an immunological age—except that now it has been transformed into a kind of neurological anxiety about those who will not be consciously seen as 'foreign' but never fully trusted, unless the law, by which the land is built, ensures their sameness while, at the same time, not highlighting their difference.

Transparency and Multiculturalism

The seeming transparency of such laws and the expectations surrounding them also undercuts the basis of multiculturalism as a fact of history and a political construct, and reduces it to a kind of commodification—as in

ethnic clothes or dishes. Multiculturalism can never be just an excess of positivity—‘one world, one love’—it has to include space for negativity. Multiculturalism can also never just be about beautiful and fluid ‘differences’; it has to allow for the opacity of Otherness. As we note earlier, this is a historical—not only a political—requirement, for human beings live through both sameness and difference, and differences are not really different if they are transparent.

This is not simply a problem of ‘immigration.’ In many European countries, regional versions of multicultural identities are ignored—so that ‘multiculturalism’ becomes an issue to be lamented or celebrated only when Africans or Asians arrive on the ground. Werbner rightly distinguishes between multiculturalism from above and below: ‘[In Britain,] politicians tend to use multiculturalism as a euphemism for immigration or extremism [...] All they achieve by the failure-of-multiculturalism discourse is a growing sense of alienation among religious and ethnic minorities’ (Werbner 2012: 207). One can argue, following the logic of Werbner’s discussion, that the naming of multiculturalism is not the same as the interculturality and transculturality that exist and have always existed, though in differing permutations, in all spaces. Multiculturalism from below is always there, in all spaces, and it is doubtful that this is recognised by definitions of multiculturalism from above. Ethnicity, sometimes, seems to be a version of multiculturalism from above, but also when it seems to come from below, the problem remains: who is defining a people from within? Is it an internal elite? Is it a new elite or a traditional one? Is it a reactionary or progressive definition? And, finally, do we have the language to comprehend ‘multiculturality’ from below, and is it not likely that any bid to define and tabulate it will be prescriptive at least to some extent? The insistence and assumption of ‘transparency’ across differences makes it impossible to even come to grips with such inevitable questions. Not only is the law, like language itself, never transparent, but even a country and ‘its culture’ are never transparent—to themselves or others. When this assumption of transparency is taken across ‘cultures,’ it can lead to major conflicts—as in the Mohammad cartoon controversy, which was, apart from its Islamist angle, also an amalgamation of the disappointed expectation that Muslim immigrants ought to be good achievement subjects of the Danish state and the fact

that even images are not *transparent* across differences and ‘cultures.’ Trust does not require transparency; it requires accountability, as discussed earlier. The belief in transparency is often used to negate the demand for accountability. In that sense, it is finally an impediment to the sceptical trust required to sustain the body politic.

Notes

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8. All the quotes below, under A, B, C, and D, referring to Danish family and marriage rules, have been downloaded from the official source,

https://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/familyreunification/spouses, accessed 23 March 2013.

9. While newspaper accounts focus on troubled teenagers and ‘immigrant’ criminal bands—containing youth born and brought up in Denmark—the cultural scene seems to mostly accentuate the difference positively. A new generation of documentaries (*Ghettodrengen, Mit Danmark*) and films (*To kvinder*) show us the ‘immigrant’ character as having grown away from a certain personality type (subdued, very much attached to their root, traditional) found in films made up to the late 1990s.

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Part III

Gender, Multiculturalism and the Limits of Trust



8

Multicultural Neoliberalism, Global Textiles, and the Making of the Indebted Female Entrepreneur in Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*

Stephen Morton

If multiculturalism is conventionally understood as a form of liberal governmentality that promises to celebrate and respect cultural difference, it also entails a form of subjectivation in which the subject of difference is encouraged to assimilate to the liberal values of a dominant culture. Yet in the context of neoliberal globalization and the unequal development of capitalist modernity on a world scale, multiculturalism can also aid and abet neoliberal forms of subjectivation that normalize debt and poverty as a form of life. In Monica Ali's novel *Brick Lane*, the protagonist's narrative of transnational mobility is articulated as a form of social mobility in which she progresses from a position of cultural alienation and patriarchal dependency to one of independence. Yet this narrative of female independence is supplemented by a series of letters exchanged with her sister, Hasina, in Bangladesh about the material conditions of their lives on both sides of the gendered international division of labour. These letters tell another story about the ways in which multicultural texts are part of a larger fabric of global economic relations that are

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rendered invisible by a narrow focus on Nazneen's narrative as multicultural bildungsroman.

Rather than reading Nazneen's narrative as a story of social mobility through transnational mobility, this chapter considers how the novel inadvertently normalizes homeworking and the entrepreneurial as the horizon of freedom and assimilation for the gendered postcolonial migrant in neoliberal Britain. In so doing, I argue that the novel raises wider questions about the ways in which neoliberal discourses of self-management, personal responsibility, and the entrepreneurial cut across the gendered international division of labour between the core and the periphery. In what ways might Nazneen's socio-economic and geographical trajectory from the relatively impoverished peripheral space of a village in Bangladesh to the ostensibly prosperous core space of a public housing estate in East London shed light on the ways in which liberal discourses of women's empowerment have been increasingly subordinated to the economic rationality of neoliberalism? And how might the novel's references to textile manufacturing in Bangladesh and London be read as a trope for the global connections between the ostensibly disparate experiences of poverty, debt, South Asian women's labour, and the socio-economic empowerment of the multicultural entrepreneur? The narrative trajectories of Nazneen and Hasina may appear to be discontinuous with the rhetoric of female self-empowerment in discourses of microfinance in South Asia. However, if Nazneen's narrative of assimilation to the entrepreneurial culture of late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century London is compared to the emancipatory rhetoric of the indebted female entrepreneur in narratives of the Grameen Bank, the socio-economic differences between the plight of South Asian women textile workers in the core and the periphery of the contemporary world economic system start to seem less clear. Against the promise of happiness associated with the lures of diaspora, this essay suggests that a consideration of the genre and form of contemporary novels such as *Brick Lane* helps to illuminate the ways in which late liberal discourses of multiculturalism (Povinelli 2011) are increasingly subordinated to the economic norms and values of neoliberalism.

One of the narrative threads running through Monica Ali's 2003 novel *Brick Lane* concerns the economic relationship between a hypochondriac

and rather menacing moneylender called Mrs Islam and the female protagonist, Nazneen. After Nazneen's husband, Chanu, takes out a loan from Mrs Islam to pay for a computer and a sewing machine for private use in the family's council flat in Tower Hamlets, Mrs Islam pays several visits to Nazneen, during which she makes increasingly threatening demands for repayments on the loan at exorbitant rates of interest. The representation of how Nazneen overcomes this relationship of indebtedness is broadly consistent with the generic conventions of the bildungsroman and its narrative framing of the protagonist's trajectory of self-determination in a modern capitalist society. Yet the novel's suggestion that debt is an obstacle to be overcome rather than an economic relationship that has become normalized in neoliberal societies aids and abets the myth of self-empowerment associated with the figure of the entrepreneur. By reading Nazneen's narrative of economic empowerment against the grain, we can begin to see how the generic codes of the multicultural bildungsroman can help to shed light on the rhetoric of neoliberalism, its regimes of subjectivation, and indeed its normalization of debt.

The novel's location in and around Brick Lane in the 1970s and 1980s, its focus on the social lives of migrant characters from the Bangladeshi diaspora, and its suggestion that the female protagonist is assimilated to the liberal ideology of multicultural Britain has led one critic to read the novel as a coming-of-age story in which the novel's migrant protagonist—a Muslim woman from Bangladesh—learns to adapt to the cultural values of contemporary Britain. In an article on *Brick Lane*, Michael Perfect has argued that "The major concern of the novel is not the destabilization of stereotypes but the celebration of integration; the veneration of the potential for adaptation in both individuals and societies" (Perfect 2008, 109). In Perfect's reading, "Ali employs stereotypes as aesthetic counterpoints in order to further emphasize her protagonist's final integration into contemporary British society, and [to suggest] that the novel might usefully be understood as a "multicultural Bildungsroman"" (109). Such a reading is compelling in its attempt to link one of the novel's generic codes to the contested field of multiculturalism. Yet this approach also overlooks the ways in which the novel appropriates the generic conventions of domestic fiction and the epistolary novel to evoke the interpellation of its female Bangladeshi migrant

protagonist, Nazneen, as a *feminina economicus* in the global economic system. As John Marx has argued:

Brick Lane presents the feminization of labor as a family affair. It tells a story of working life that features two sisters, who both spend at least some time in the garment industry. In London, Nazneen stitches blue jeans in her council flat before helping to found a small business. In Dhaka, Hasina performs the “real woman job” of “machinist” in a garment factory before doing a stint as a sex worker and taking a longer-term position as a nanny. By the novel’s end these disparate itineraries appear to indicate a fundamental distinction between the two sisters and their lots, but this conclusion is not given from the beginning. (Marx 2006, 16–17)

Although much of the plot of *Brick Lane* is set in East London, the letters that Nazneen receives from Hasina clearly establish a connection between the core and the periphery of the global economic system. Certainly, Nazneen’s socio-economic position in London may seem to be less precarious than that of her sister in Dhaka. Yet it is also important to note that Nazneen’s multicultural narrative of self-determination is made possible by her taking on the gendered role of a homemaker, who stitches textiles and fabrics for low wages at home in order to pay off debts Chanu has accrued to a local moneylender. The novel’s focus on Nazneen’s individual struggle for self-determination within the setting of a patriarchal family structure could be seen to ignore the way in which the Bangladeshi community of East London has also been excluded from participation in the dominant public sphere on the grounds of religion, race, and class, as Rehana Ahmed has argued (Ahmed 2010). What critics such as Marx and Ahmed don’t quite manage to articulate, however, is the way in which the novel also stages the subjection of the gendered diasporic subject to the norms and values of neoliberalism.

If Nazneen’s narrative of upward socio-economic mobility is at one and the same time a narrative of multicultural assimilation, it is also a narrative about how Nazneen becomes an entrepreneur, who commodifies the garments she produces at home for consumption in the globalized market of contemporary London. In this sense, Nazneen exemplifies the

work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit of capitalism that prevails in contemporary British society. Understood in the terms of contemporary right-wing discourses of Islamophobia and anti-immigration, Nazneen is a 'good Muslim' precisely because she conforms to the market-based norms and values of personal responsibility or 'responsibilization', hard work, and the entrepreneurial associated with neoliberalism (Shamir 2008; Brown 2015). As a consequence, her narrative can be seen to question the promise of happiness associated with the lures of diaspora from the periphery to the core of the contemporary world economic system.

Significantly, there are certain structural parallels between Nazneen's coming-of-age story and the rhetoric of trust in discourses of microcredit in the global South. Just as Nazneen is a model subject of neoliberal multiculturalism, who is enterprising and pays off the debts accrued by her husband, so contemporary microlending practices presuppose a responsible and trustworthy subject, who can be relied on to repay their debts. Crucially, the patriarchal domestic sphere plays a constitutive role in producing gendered subjects of debt who are deemed to be trustworthy by virtue of their subordinate socio-economic status within the household. Microcredit, or the financial practice by which non-governmental organizations provide entrepreneurs with small, low-interest loans, involves a moral economy of trust that works to control and regulate the subject of debt. Developed by the Grameen Bank in rural Bangladesh, microcredit or microfinance is predicated on the assumption that 'poor women are bankable' (Karim 2011, xxi). The assumption underpinning this claim, as the founder of the Grameen Bank, Muhammad Yunus, explains, is that poor women are more financially insecure in the traditional patriarchal family structure of Bangladesh (Yunus 2003, 71–83). Such rhetoric of women's economic empowerment not only obscures how women borrowers of microcredit are subjected to the norms and values of the global market and finance capitalism; it also effaces the ways in which patriarchal kinship relations work to control women's economic empowerment (Karim 2011).

A consideration of the correspondences between the economic subtext of Nazneen's narrative of education and upward social mobility in *Brick Lane* and the entrepreneurial rhetoric of women's empowerment in narratives of microcredit can shed light on the ways in which the production of

neoliberal subjectivity—under the guise of multicultural assimilation—is bound up with a relationship of debt. Such a relationship also complicates the core–periphery dynamics that shape conventional understandings of the feminization of labour in the global economy, as I suggest later in the essay.

To clarify how these wider economic narratives are mediated, it is also important to note that Nazneen’s narrative of cultural formation in *Brick Lane* embeds elements of the epistolary novel. As many critics have noted, the novel’s concern with the experiences of women in the global economy is mediated through the letters exchanged between Nazneen and her sister, Hasina, in Bangladesh. The reproduction of Hasina’s letters to her sister in the novel serve a number of functions. First, the letters work to establish a sense of the novel’s verisimilitude as a diasporic narrative: Nazneen is geographically separated from her sister, and so the letters could be seen to operate as a chronotope that emphasizes the spatial and temporal distance between Dhaka and London. In the fictional world of *Brick Lane*, the spatial coordinates of the epistolary novel take place on a global scale. In this respect, Hasina’s letters function as a metonym for an older system of postal communication—a system that registers the spatial and temporal distance separating the two sisters. The material form of the letter and the slow transnational circulation of mail across continents also foreground the respective locations of the two sisters on the core and the periphery of the world market and their exclusion from the speed and flexibility associated with transnational capital. In this respect, the novel also highlights the material difference between the transnational circulation of novels as print commodities within privileged circuits of literary publication and the relatively cheap transnational distribution networks of letter writing. This material difference between a handwritten letter and the printed page of a novel is further underscored by the linguistic differences between Hasina’s letters and the narrative voice. Indeed, the broken English of Hasina’s letters raises questions about the limitations of the cultural form of the English novel to represent the voice and experiences of Bangladeshi women. As Alastair Cormack puts it: ‘Without any account by the narrator, it is hard to know what we are reading—whether the letters represent inept attempts at English or are a free translation from illiterate Bengali’ (Cormack 2006, 715).

We might also read Hasina's reproduced letters in the printed pages of *Brick Lane* as an attempt to register the untranslatability of a Bangladeshi working-class woman's experience in the cultural form of the English novel. Such a reading draws attention to the social as well as cultural and linguistic differences between Hasina's voice and that of the third person narrator in *Brick Lane*. By staging its aesthetic failure to represent Hasina's voice, in other words, the novel encourages readers to recognize Hasina's precarious socio-economic position as a Bangladeshi woman on the periphery of the global economy. This staging of aesthetic failure also works to emphasize the apparent differences between Nazneen and Hasina's experiences of women's textile labour in the global economy. In so doing, *Brick Lane* establishes a tantalizing connection between the production and circulation of the literary text and the textile as global commodities.

In *Brick Lane*, the textile as trope also weaves together the threads of debt, accumulation, and gendered labour exploitation in the fabric of the story. In so doing, the novel can be seen to not only complement but also complicate the use of the textile as trope in recent critical approaches to world literature and continental philosophy. In a suggestive re-reading of Henry James's short story 'The Figure in the Carpet', Pascale Casanova has suggested that it is only by looking at an individual work of literature in relation to the totality of world literary space that we can grasp the conditions of possibility for an individual work of literature (Casanova 2004, 1–4). By restricting her focus to the global literary marketplace, however, Casanova elides the philosophical and material significance of the Jamesian metaphor—the text as textile—that frames her argument. Post-structuralist theorists from Roland Barthes and Jacques Derrida to Gayatri Spivak and John Mowitt have also foregrounded the etymological connection between the text and the textile or weave, from the Latin *texere* (*OED*). In so doing, they have sought to highlight the ways in which the textual is interwoven with our consciousness and understanding of the world. Referring to an extract from Derrida's essay, 'Form and Meaning: A Note on the Phenomenology of Language', Mowitt argues that Derrida uses the figure of interweaving to highlight 'the impossibility of separating consciousness and language' (Mowitt 1992, 98). It is perhaps axiomatic to say that the subject's consciousness and understanding

of the capitalist world system and their place within it are mediated by language and representation. Yet writing about garment manufacturing can also help us to trace patterns of debt and gendered labour exploitation that are inscribed in the warp and weft of the text's generic threads, as we will see.

If the weave of a text implies the material practices of 'folding, cutting and binding' (Dieterich and Rooney 2005, 1), the reading of a text also entails unbinding the book into its various paratextual, intertextual, and generic elements. As Monica Ali acknowledges in the printed end matter that forms part of *Brick Lane's* paratext (Ali 2007), her descriptions of Bangladeshi migrant women's homeworking in East London and the conditions of garment manufacturing in Bangladesh were indebted to Naila Kabeer's sociological study, *The Power to Choose* (2000). A consideration of the intertextual relationship between *Brick Lane* and *The Power to Choose* can help to illuminate the ways in which *Brick Lane* makes use of the epistolary form to represent the circumstances of women's work in the core and periphery of the world market system even as it subordinates these concerns to Nazneen's individual narrative of upward social mobility and neoliberal apprenticeship as entrepreneur.

What is particularly interesting about Ali's fictional transformation of the testimonies presented in Kabeer's monograph is the way in which it exaggerates Hasina's exploitation as a Bangladeshi woman worker in the sweatshops of Dhaka. Indeed, as Perfect observes, the testimonies Ali appropriates are 'the most despairing ones that Kabeer's study has to offer'; what's more, in some instances Ali modifies the testimonies 'to make them even bleaker' (Perfect 2008, 118). At the same time, Perfect suggests that Ali's representation of Nazneen's experiences in London downplays the experiences of racism, isolation, and physical abuse to foreground Nazneen's narrative of female individualism and social mobility. The weaving of Kabeer's testimonies into the fabric of the novel serves to accentuate how Nazneen's self-empowerment is made possible by her becoming an entrepreneur, who together with her friend and business partner, Razia, produces her own garments for sale in the global marketplace. In this way, the novel suggests that women can escape from poverty and patriarchal exploitation by becoming entrepreneurial.

To better understand how Ali's narrative framing of homeworking and the entrepreneurial as a form of economic self-empowerment challenges the core-periphery dynamics of the gendered international division of labour, it is instructive to critically evaluate how recent materialist approaches to multicultural narratives have read these narratives as allegories of the international division of labour. In a discussion of the race and class politics of the cosmopolitan au pair narrative in the fiction of Bharati Mukherjee and Jamaica Kincaid, Bruce Robbins offers some thought-provoking reflections on the challenges of rescaling cultural forms such as the bildungsroman. Taking issue with Raymond Williams's attempt to extend his arguments about the geography of the English bildungsroman and the displacement of the rural working class from the country to the city in nineteenth-century Britain into 'the larger world of the British Empire and the global neocolonialism that followed it' (Robbins 2007, 109), Robbins makes the following claim: 'To see the country/city opposition in terms of the context of the international division of labor is [...] to relativise it dramatically' (109). For Robbins, the difficulty with Williams's argument is that it suggests that the international division of labour can be reduced to a 'simple class allegory' (109). 'Relative to the superexploited Indian textile workers', Robbins continues, 'the British working class is not simply a working class. And the reverse is also true: in the international division of labor, native elites are not simply elites' (109). Robbins's critical reflections have important implications for reading *Brick Lane*. If Nazneen's narrative of personal growth is a narrative of social mobility, it is clearly also a narrative of transnational mobility. In this respect, *Brick Lane* could be said to reinvent the genre of the nineteenth-century European bildungsromane on a transnational scale (Robbins 2007, 236). Moreover, by framing Chanu's cultural elitism and his nostalgic longing for a certain idea of Bengal in relation to his feelings of discrimination and exclusion from the promise of socio-economic mobility in late twentieth-century Britain, *Brick Lane* suggests that class and gender relations are shaped and determined by the core-periphery dynamics of the global economic system. It is important to emphasize too that Chanu's idealism about the 'honourable [Bengali] craft of tailoring' (Ali 2007, 208) involves Nazneen sewing on a machine he has purchased via a cash loan from a local moneylender. In this respect,

the novel suggests that patriarchal social relations and creditor–debtor relations work in mutually reinforcing ways to aid and abet women’s socio-economic oppression in the core as well as the periphery of the global economy.

In a similar vein, Hasina’s letters from Dhaka offer an insight into the experiences of ‘those left behind in the periphery’ (Robbins 2007, 110). We have already seen how the language and form of Hasina’s letters have drawn criticism from some readers for conveying the impression that Hasina is illiterate. Jane Hiddleston, for instance, has noted that since ‘both sisters speak Bengali [...] it seems baffling that the letters should have been written in this stilted, pidgin style [...]’ (Hiddleston 2005, 63). If we read the fragmentary style of Hasina’s letters as a form of global working-class writing, however, it becomes possible to read her narrative and that of her sister as an allegory of women’s socio-economic subjectivation in the contemporary world system.

Sonali Perera has suggested that working-class writing is an ‘unsettled genre’ which does not figure in ‘cartographies of a world republic of letters and in certain circumscribed maps of transnational modernism’ (Perera 2014, 5). Against predominant definitions of the literary, Perera ‘traces an alternative genealogy for working-class writing as world literature that move[s] away from a literary historiography organized by national periodization to the crossings and crisscrossings of cartographies of labor’ (Perera 2014, 6). In a discussion of the Sri Lankan workers’ periodical, *Dabindu* (*Sweat*), for example, Perera considers how the fragmented form and collective authorship of this Sinhalese publication mediates the everyday lives of women workers in free trade zones. While the poems, letters, and works of short fiction included in this journal are sometimes treated as sociological evidence of women’s working conditions, Perera argues that they also point towards a different conception of working-class literary form and genre. Referring to Tillie Olsen’s *Yonnodio* as a paradigmatic example of a working-class novel that rejects the individualist and developmental logic of the bildungsroman, Perera suggests that there is a similar ‘sociology of form’ at work in the writings in *Dabindu*. Perera’s reflections on the literary form of *Dabindu* shed interesting light on the representation of the global division of labour in *Brick Lane*. If the literary experiments of the anonymous contributors to

Dabindu refuse the generic conventions of the bildungsroman, Hasina's fragmentary letters similarly interrupt the narrative authority and coherence of Nazneen's bildungsroman. In this way, the epistolary subtext of *Brick Lane* and its reference to the material conditions of women's precarious socio-economic position in the global division of labour give the lie to the promise of happiness symbolized in Nazneen's narrative of economic self-empowerment.

A consideration of how literary form can help to elucidate the ways in which neoliberalism produces desiring subjects, who are willing to comply with its entrepreneurial norms, lies beyond the scope of Perera's analysis. Yet her critique of the individualist and developmental logic of the bildungsroman raises further questions about how the affective *telos* of the bildungsroman—its production of a happy, cultivated, and bourgeois subject of possessive individualism—provides a model for understanding the formation of entrepreneurial subjectivity in contemporary novels such as Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*.

In a discussion of the nineteenth-century bildungsroman, Franco Moretti identifies a recurrent concern with the pursuit of happiness in the narrative structure of the bildungsroman. Referring to a passage from Schiller's *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Moretti describes how the bildungsroman 'does not bother with "extraordinary men", "universal aims", or what "may be gained for the world as a whole" (Moretti 1987, 31). On the contrary, as Moretti proceeds to explain, the 'purpose [of the bildungsroman] is to create "full and happy men [*sic*]"—full and happy because "tempered", not "partial" or unilateral' (31). For Moretti, the formation of the happy subject of *bildung* takes place 'outside the world of work' (25). In contrast to novels such as *Robinson Crusoe*, which can be seen to embody the spirit of the protestant work ethic, in novels such as *Wilhelm Meister* or *Pride and Prejudice*, Moretti argues, 'capitalist rationality cannot generate *Bildung*' (26). Moretti acknowledges that 'capitalist production has generated a set of values [that are] wholly functional to [the] logic of [the *bildungsroman*]' (25). However, he also maintains that 'Western modernity' turns to values 'outside of the strictly economic domain [...] in order to make existence meaningful' (25). Yet this idea of an autonomous cultural sphere is increasingly untenable in the current neoliberal phase of global capitalist modernity.

Contemporary diasporic narratives of transnational mobility such as *Brick Lane* certainly borrow from the generic conventions of the nineteenth-century bildungsroman to register the experience of upward social mobility associated with the movement from periphery to core. Yet unlike the protagonists of the nineteenth-century bildungsromane, such diasporic narratives also foreground the ways in which the socialization, development, and happiness of the diasporic subject is inextricably bound up with the moral values of neoliberalism and its techniques of subjectivation. Gayatri Spivak (2012) has suggested that Schiller's project of aesthetic education can provide the conceptual tools for imagining an alternative to neoliberal globalization. Spivak's suggestion might at first seem surprising when one considers that the genealogy of aesthetic education is bound up with the ideological project of imperialism's civilizing mission—the very project that also consolidated the globalization of capital. Yet if we situate this use of aesthetic education in relation to Derrida's dismantling of the western philosophical tradition, it is possible to read Spivak's call for a new pedagogy as a means of rethinking the false universalism of western humanism and its aesthetic ideology—an ideology that continues to underpin contemporary discourses of neoliberalism.

Spivak's rethinking of aesthetic education in an era of globalization also raises questions about the ideological role of aesthetics and culture in contemporary regimes of neoliberalism. How, for instance, might a consideration of the multicultural bildungsroman as a genre of neoliberalism shed light on the cultural formation of the gendered South Asian diasporic subject as entrepreneur? And to what extent can the narrative resources of the contemporary neoliberal bildungsroman work to challenge or contest the framing of debt as a technique for the empowerment of women in the global South? Recent accounts of such rhetoric have focused on the role of trust and distrust in the construction of indebted subjects. In *The Making of the Indebted Man* (2012), Maurizio Lazzarato has suggested that the neoliberal economy is first and foremost a subjective economy and that the figure of the 'indebted man' is the exemplary figure of neoliberal globalization. Lazzarato's universalization of the masculine figure of indebted *man* certainly raises questions about the apparent gender blindness of his approach to questions of debt and

capitalist regimes of subjection. What's more, his focus on the European credit crisis of the early twenty-first century ignores the significance of earlier regimes of debt colonialism from transatlantic slavery and the East India Company to the structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Caribbean. Yet in spite of these limitations, Lazzarato provides a suggestive account of how debt functions as a regime of neoliberal subjectivation.

Reading Karl Marx after Nietzsche and Deleuze, Lazzarato argues that the money economy that Marx described so well in *Capital* is not simply based on a market principle of equal exchange; on the contrary, the money form embeds an unequal relationship of power through credit. As Marx wrote, '[...] credit offers the individual capitalist [...] an absolute command over the capital and property of others, within certain limits, and, through this, command over other people's labor. It is disposal over social capital, rather than his own, that gives him command over social labor' (Marx 1981, 570). This regime of command over the capital and property of others simultaneously produces a moral economy of trust in which the neoliberal subject as entrepreneur takes responsibility for their own welfare: '[i]n the debt economy, to become human capital or an entrepreneur of the self means assuming the costs as well as the risks which are not only [...] those of innovation, but also and especially those of precariousness, poverty, unemployment, a failing health system, housing shortages, etc.' (Lazzarato 2012, 51). Many of the examples that Lazzarato marshals to support his argument are taken from the specific economic and historical context of the financial crisis in early twenty-first-century Europe and North America. Yet, he also emphasizes that 'there is no single site from which [capitalist] power relations emerge'; and that '[e]very economic, political, or social mechanism produces effects of power specific to it, requires specific tactics and strategies, and affects the "governed" according to different processes of subjection and subjugation [...]' (Lazzarato 2012, 105–6).

A consideration of the specific patriarchal and cultural determinants shaping the 'subjection and subjugation' of Bangladeshi women in the core and the periphery of the world market system can shed further light on the ways in which the neoliberal rhetoric of self-government makes use of women's empowerment to extend the reach of capitalist markets.

We have already seen how cultural forms such as the bildungsroman can illuminate the ways in which the story of the growth and cultural formation of *an* individual is simultaneously a story about how *the* individual subject is subjected to particular regimes of capital. Novels such as Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* clearly foreground the ways in which the development of the individual bourgeois subject and his geographical movement from the country to the city is bound up with the laws of capital. Philip Pirrip's cultural formation as an urban gentleman in Victorian London is simultaneously an education in the laws of the market, the dangers of debt and consumerism, and the moral economy of friendship. In this respect, there may seem to be superficial parallels between the moral codes of the nineteenth-century English bildungsroman and the contemporary multicultural bildungsroman.

Yet such parallels also raise important questions about the political significance of Nazneen's narrative of education and the symbolic dimensions of her self-realization as an entrepreneur in contemporary Britain. To what extent does Nazneen's decision to start a small business help to normalize the neoliberal values associated with the figure of the entrepreneur? And in what ways might this neoliberal *bildung* eclipse the conditions of precarity and poverty that Hasina's letters emphasize? To address questions such as these, it is helpful to compare the representation of the female migrant as entrepreneur in *Brick Lane* with the rhetoric of micro-lending as an economic means to women's self-empowerment. If *Brick Lane* can be read as a contemporary narrative of female individualism, in which Nazneen is able to separate from her husband and live a life of relative economic security with her daughters in a London council flat, the neoliberal rhetoric of microcredit seems to rest on a similar kind of narrative logic about the economic empowerment of poor women through finance capital or debt. In books such as *Banker to the Poor* (1999; reprinted 2003) and *Jorimon and Others* (1991), the founder of the Grameen Bank, Muhammad Yunus, details how the microlending practices of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh have facilitated the economic empowerment of women living in conditions of abject poverty. In so doing, he sought to challenge the claims of his critics that Grameen subjected the poor to the norms and values of finance capitalism by framing credit as a human right that can help the poor to improve their lives. In

his account of the Grameen Bank, *Banker to the Poor*, Yunus describes how ‘economists have failed to understand the social power of credit’, and emphasizes how credit institutions have ‘favored the rich and in so doing have pronounced a death sentence on the poor’ (Yunus 2003, 150). It is this narrative of Bangladeshi women’s social and economic empowerment that underpins Yunus’s claim that credit needs to be considered as a human right.

Yunus’s autobiographical account of his role in the foundation of the Grameen Bank makes a compelling case for the social benefits of micro-credit. His self-fashioning as a Bangladeshi nationalist intellectual and former professor of economics at Chittagong university, who became disillusioned with the capacity of dominant economic theories to address questions of poverty and hunger in Bangladesh during the famine of 1974, provides a powerful political and ethical frame of reference to support the claims he makes for extending finance capital or credit to the poor and the illiterate. What is more, Yunus’s anecdotes about individual Bangladeshi women who transform the economic conditions of their lives from abject poverty to relative economic stability suggest that such women can gain economic sovereignty through credit. In his account of Mufia Khatoon, for example, Yunus evokes an oppressive patriarchal family structure in which Mufia was frequently beaten by her husband, verbally abused by her mother-in-law, and forced to live ‘a half-starved existence’ (Yunus 2003, 68). After a local village leader intervened to arrange for a divorce for Mufia, she was liberated from this situation but forced to beg for a living. It was only after Mufia joined the Grameen bank in 1979, Yunus asserts, that she was able to escape from this condition of penury:

Mufia starved through the famine of 1974 and her makeshift house was destroyed in a storm in 1978. But in 1979, she joined the Grameen Bank and borrowed 500 taka to restart her bamboo business. When she paid back her first loan, she felt like a new person. [...] During her first eighteen months as a Grameen Bank member, Mufia was able to buy 330 taka worth of clothing for herself and her children and cookware for 105 taka. These were luxuries that she had not had since she was divorced from her husband fifteen years earlier. She and her children were also eating more

regularly and more nutritious food. Meat was never an option, but vegetables were more common, and occasionally she bought dried fish in the market as a treat.

Mufia is one of thousands of former beggars who are now living a dignified life because they were able to access loans from Grameen Bank. (Yunus 2003, 68)

Yunus's account of Mufia's social and economic circumstances represents her participation in the Grameen Bank's moneylending scheme as a story of upward social mobility and economic sovereignty. In so doing, he also presents Mufia's story as a sign of the progressive capitalism of the Grameen Bank. Yet at the same time, such 'success stories' of women entrepreneurs who turn their lives around after taking out microloans from the Grameen Bank works to efface the paternalistic position of Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank in relation to poor, rural women such as Mufia. Yunus repeatedly distinguishes the economic policies of the Grameen Bank from charities and non-governmental organizations that place the rural poor in a position of dependency and do little to alter their economic circumstances. In his representation of women such as Mufia as trustworthy subjects of debt who achieve social and economic sovereignty through an entrepreneurial spirit, however, Yunus downplays the way in which women such as Mufia are paradoxically denied a voice in their 'own' economic success stories.

In a critique of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, Gayatri Spivak (1988) has taken these thinkers to task for suggesting that the oppressed can speak and know their own conditions and for effacing the position of the intellectual who claims to speak for the oppressed. In Spivak's account, this ethical problem of the intellectual speaking for the oppressed and effacing that position as a speaking subject is a danger that underpins different scenes of representation where there are asymmetrical relations of power between the subject and object of representation. This ethical danger is clearly exemplified for Spivak in liberal discourses of British colonial reform in nineteenth-century India, such as the prohibition of Hindu widow sacrifice or *sati*, in which British colonial police officers supervised, documented, and represented the voices of the gendered subjects of *sati*-suicide. But such a risk also haunts Yunus's representation of rural

women such as Mufia Khatoon. By presenting her story as an unmediated account of her family life and economic circumstances, Yunus portrays Mufia as a subject of neoliberal economic rights rather than a precarious and vulnerable woman with little choice but to accept loans from the Grameen Bank. In a similar way to Spivak's account of how the British colonial state attempted to speak for the gendered subaltern, Yunus's framing of Bangladeshi village culture as traditional and conservative seems at first to present the Grameen Bank workers as benevolent saviours of the subaltern woman from a repressive Muslim patriarchy. In an account of the challenge the bank faced in its attempt to establish networks of women borrowers in Tangail District, Bangladesh, Yunus describes the opposition to the bank's lending practices from conservative clerics and village leaders and the myths they circulated about Muslim women who joined Grameen:

It was in Tangail that we first encountered large-scale opposition from conservative clerics. In numerous cases these figures tried to scare uneducated villagers by telling them that a woman who takes loans from Grameen is trespassing into an evil area, forbidden to women. They warn her that as punishment for joining Grameen, she will not be given a proper burial when she dies—a terrifying prospect for a woman who has nothing.

Other rumors, which can be as frightening to a poor woman as they seem ludicrous to Grameen staff, often surface in the villages. [...] Manzira Khatun, age thirty-eight, from the Rajshahi District, heard she would be tortured, have a number tattooed on her arm, and be sold into prostitution. Grameen was said to convert women to Christianity, to destroy Islam by taking women out of *purdah*, to steal houses and property, to kidnap women borrowers, to run away with any repaid loans, and to belong to an international smuggling ring or a new East India Company that would recolonize Bangladesh as the British had done two and a half centuries ago. (Yunus 2003, 107)

These rumours are revealing for a number of reasons. Certainly, they can be seen to represent a conservative, patriarchal, and religious worldview, which is threatened by the secular values of a bank which seeks to lend to poor, rural women. Yet the myths that women who took money from the Grameen bank would be transgressing the rules of *purdah* and would

therefore lose their social status as respectable Muslim women also reveals something about the threat that the bank poses to the economic power of village moneylenders, as well as to the patriarchal socio-economic structures of village life. Indeed, in a subsequent anecdote, Yunus offers an account of a Grameen bank worker who was threatened by a local cleric and forced to quietly close his branch. It was only after a group of local Muslim women went to that cleric and persistently challenged his claims that 'Grameen is a Christian organization [that] wants to destroy the rules of *purdah*' (108) that the cleric allowed the Grameen worker to return to the village. According to Yunus, these women had challenged the cleric on the grounds that the Grameen manager was a Muslim who knew the *Qur'an* better than the cleric; eventually, he conceded to their request, adding that if they wanted 'to damn [themselves] to perdition forever [they should] go ahead [and] join Grameen' (Yunus 2003, 109). This reported exchange between the women villagers and the cleric may seem to question the stereotype of the rural woman as a passive victim who is represented by the conflicting voices of a conservative Muslim patriarchy on the one hand and a secular male neoliberal intellectual on the other. Yet it is also important to note that the women insisted in their petition to the cleric that 'Grameen allows [them] to work at home, husking rice, weaving mats, or making bamboo stools, without ever going out' (Yunus 2003, 108). This detail is significant because it reveals how the women wished to preserve their social identity as Muslim women by continuing to observe the rules of *purdah*. What Yunus implies without explicitly stating in this anecdote is that it is rural women's internalization of patriarchal codes of social conduct which makes them reliable and trustworthy subjects of microfinance. In this respect, microfinance can be seen to exemplify what Gayatri Spivak (2008) has called 'feudality without feudalism'. In the introduction to *Bringing it all Back Home* (1994), Spivak attempts to make sense of why the authors of the book describe the domestic sphere in modern western capitalist societies as 'feudal' (Spivak 1994, xii). While such a designation may seem anachronistic to a traditional Marxist historicist, Spivak argues that such an argument is strategically useful for understanding how feudal class processes operate in the domestic sphere (Spivak 1994, xii). As Spivak proceeds to argue, such 'feudal class processes' are imbricated in contemporary formations

of debt bondage in the so-called developing countries. Here, Spivak is thinking of the ‘way in which the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and the transnational agencies and the donor countries, and so on, play the game is by mortgaging the future: debt bondage’ (Spivak 1994, xiii). More recently, in ‘More Thoughts on Cultural Translation’ (2008), Spivak explains that “‘Feudality’ signifies a mode of production where the value-form is taken by loyalty’, and adds that, ‘In the international civil society you have self-selected moral entrepreneurs who work on emotions like loyalty’ (Spivak 2008). Although Spivak does not specifically mention the Grameen Bank in this short discussion, it is clear that figures such as Muhammad Yunus and his Grameen Bank workers have exploited the loyalty and trustworthiness of rural women as a resource for finance capitalism. Yet they have done so in a way that appears to circumvent the feudal relationship conventional to earlier forms of debt bondage. To further clarify this point, it is instructive to return to *Brick Lane*.

Towards the end of Monica Ali’s novel, there is a scene in which Nazneen confronts the moneylender Mrs Islam. In response to Mrs Islam’s demand for more money and the intimidating behaviour of her two sons (one of whom wields a cricket bat), Nazneen accuses Mrs Islam of charging her *riba*, the Arabic word for interest or usury (Ali 2007, 444). The appearance of this untranslated Arabic word at this point in the novel seems to have an almost magical power in the heated exchange between Nazneen on the one hand and Mrs Islam and her menacing sons on the other hand. As John Mullan argues, *riba* ‘is a forbidden thing, and a word that, Nazneen’s hesitation tells us, is not easy to say’ (Mullan 2004). It is Nazneen’s utterance of this word that undermines Mrs Islam’s moral authority in her demand for further repayments. By encouraging Mrs Islam to swear on the *Qur’an* that she is not a usurer, Nazneen is able to annul this relationship of debt bondage. Nazneen’s challenge to Mrs Islam is the condition of possibility for both her economic sovereignty and for Nazneen’s emergence as the heroic female individual of the neoliberal bildungsroman. Just as Nazneen’s escape from debt bondage is framed as a narrative of female individualism, so too in many of the Grameen Bank’s success stories, poor Bangladeshi women are presented as heroic entrepreneurs who achieve economic empowerment through

credit in the face of significant adversity. It is partly this emphasis on individual economic empowerment that provides the grounds for Muhammad Yunus to defend the practice of microlending against the charge that it transgresses the *Qur'anic* prohibition on interest. Since the women borrowers are also shareholders in the bank, Yunus suggests, they cannot be regarded as paying interest on the loans as they are borrowing from themselves. Yet such narratives of individual economic empowerment also conceal the residual structure of loyalty and inequality that underpins the Grameen Bank's microlending practices—a structure that Spivak names feudality. In this context, Mrs Islam's ostensibly weak protest against the charge of *riba*—‘Is this how I am repaid for helping a friend in need?’ (Ali 2007, 444)—is illuminating, for it points to the way in which social networks organized around trust, loyalty, and friendship have been instrumentalized by finance capitalism. In a critique of microlending in Bangladesh, the anthropologist Lamia Karim argues that ‘microfinance is fundamentally a relationship of inequality between the creditor and debtor’ (Karim 2011, xxxii). ‘While credit is theorized as “trust” by microfinance proponents,’ she continues, ‘analyzing it as debt shows us how debt functions at the confluence of two powerful forces: the financial responsibility to return debts and the social consequences of breaking the “trust” between the borrower and her community’ (xxxii). It is precisely these social consequences and economic inequalities that are effaced in the Grameen Bank's narratives of economic empowerment and individualism.

If the contemporary multicultural bildungsroman rehearses a pedagogical narrative in which the individual figure of the entrepreneur provides the normalizing frame of reference through which freedom, success, and happiness are understood, it may be difficult to see how the cultural and intellectual resources of aesthetic education might offer an alternative to the entrepreneurial rhetoric of capitalist realism. Yet if we begin to trace the threads of women's agency in the fabric of narratives such as *Brick Lane* and the paternalistic prose of the Grameen Bank, as this chapter has suggested, we might also start to identify and question the subordination of late liberal discourses of multiculturalism to the economic norms and ideological imperatives of neoliberalism. Such an approach has profound and far-reaching consequences for comprehending

how reading contemporary fiction can, in turn, transform our knowledge and understanding of how narratives of finance capitalism operate by normalizing debt and the entrepreneurial as a regime of subjection and subjugation that masquerades as self-empowerment for some of the world's most economically precarious and vulnerable populations.

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9

From Islamic Fundamentalism to a New Life in the West: Ali Eteraz and the Muslim Comedy Memoir

Amina Yaqin

The public fascination with ‘the Muslim’ has risen exponentially in recent years. Film, television, the theatre, and fiction have all seen an upsurge of interest in texts and productions purporting to shed light on Muslims, how they live and—most often—how they have come to be radicalised. In television, the years since 9/11 have seen an upsurge in drama series, such as *24*, *Sleeper Cell*, and *Homeland*, which have normalised the idea of a Muslim ‘enemy within’. Conversely, in the realm of comedy, shows such as *Little Mosque on the Prairie* and *Citizen Khan* play with (and sometimes against) stereotypes to expose the ‘ordinariness’ of Muslim life when caught in absurd situations. However, both these forms—and countless others—operate in what Peter Morey and I have called a frame, encompassing Muslims and what can be said about them at the present time (Morey and Yaqin 2011: 18–43). They all respond, whether directly or indirectly, to a view of Muslims as alien and problematic, either confirming or contesting this notion. As such, the question of which Muslims can be trusted to speak becomes freighted with the agendas of a predominantly

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non-Muslim audience and media industry fixated with certain ‘problems’. In a situation where, as Rehana Ahmed has said of literature, texts are chosen for publication in order to satisfy ‘a mainstream readership’s spurious desire to “know” the Muslim Other in the context of events such as 9/11 and 7/7’, a premium is placed on the writer who can give us a true insight into the supposedly warped life of the modern Muslim subject (Ahmed 2015: 17). In this chapter, I look at a memoir by the Pakistani American author Ali Eteraz entitled, *Children of Dust: A Memoir of Pakistan*, published in 2009. I consider the destabilising generic hybridity of Eteraz’s text which at once plays out with gusto the story of a radicalised Muslim while, at the same time, deploying at points a comedic tone that not only undercuts the serious confessional nature of the text but throws back onto the reader a degree of interpretative work in order to make a coherent message out of the different registers employed. In the end, the chapter suggests, Eteraz’s destabilising tactics raise questions around readerly trust: can we trust what we are reading to obey the diktats of the governing frame and tell us what the path to (and from) radicalisation is like? And, more tellingly, can we trust that Eteraz is not, through his wry tone, sending up the whole project in which so much Western time, money, and obsessive interest are invested?

Children of Dust is a hybrid text that challenges both the conventional expectations of the memoir form, through its use of novelistic devices, and works to authenticate, but also satirise, the ‘Muslim subjectivity’ of the narrator. The book narrates the attempt to form trusting relations through the experiences of the protagonist, from his early expressions of piety through to his later Sufi-inspired liberal Muslim persona. Eteraz’s protagonist is caught between the double bind of family/spiritual duty and free will as he tries to construct a persona that is modern and ‘authentically Muslim’. With a wry humour, the memoir mimics the condition of ‘postcolonial melancholia’ for the diasporic Muslim subject in which a multicultural positivism is overtaken by the neo-imperial politics of the Global War on Terror. After 9/11, the protagonist finds himself responding to the call for a Muslim reformation. However, his plans are disrupted when a friend calls into question his understanding of the Sufi tradition he claims to embrace. The idea of knowing or not knowing the self is constantly at play in the memoir

unsettling the reader. The narrator's transformations have the effect of calling into question the very idea that there is a definitive Muslim subjectivity which can be captured and rendered to the non-Muslim reader in literary form. Eteraz's satirical representations of himself invite the reader to work against the grain of the now familiar Muslim fundamentalist-turned-Sufi story.

I will argue that it is in the text's deployment of humour that we can see traces of a potential multicultural coexistence and a rebuilding of social trust. In this interstitial space of comedy, Eteraz can be both modern and traditional. Paul Gilroy's reading of the humorous style adopted by the British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen (aka Ali G) offers a useful comparative route into understanding Ali Eteraz's edgy comedy writing style (Gilroy 2004: 144–53). Gilroy's analysis of the effects of laughter and satire as disruptive forces against the 'postcolonial melancholia' of a multicultural society that ridicules immigrants and strangers, helps the reader to locate the nuances of Eteraz's representation of Muslim stereotypes in an American publishing market.

One of the questions the Western fixation with Muslims throws up is their degree of trustworthiness. Onora O'Neill has argued what matters most is not trust in an abstract sense but how we measure the trustworthiness of people in particular respects (O'Neill 2002). What might be the shared values that underpin trust in a multicultural society and what are the limits of trustworthiness? Trust is a social transaction that can be shaped and understood through religious and ethical models of citizenship and morality. Marek Kohn suggests that trust is a 'practical attitude rather than a transcendent passion' (Kohn 2008: 9). The promise of trust requires mutual respect and goodwill and an openness to dialogue (Laden 2013). Modern nations foster trustworthiness in society through shared systems of public life, social justice, accountability, and human rights. This generalised model of trust works in tandem with policies of multiculturalism in ethnically diverse societies with the aim of building social cohesion across diverse groups. It is based on a particular set of reasonable values that may not be uniform across groups and can come into conflict with narrower community values. Trust is called into question when there is a failure of the systems that promote trustworthiness.

Kohn suggests that when a society does not have trust then expectations fall on individuals and families. In his reading, the family can become a problematic source for social trust when it comes to the building of community relations. In what he calls ‘familistic’ societies, power aims to produce loyalty to the family above everything else. Familistic loyalties are stronger than loyalty to the wider society. A classic example would be the mafia in Southern Italy. However, some migrant communities—Muslim among them—operate familistically, in Kohn’s terms, as they tend to place trust within their own entrenched and marginalised networks. (One of the most prominent examples of this among Muslims in Britain would be the *biraderi* or clan-based system of family obligation which has come to be embedded in Muslim communities in the North of England. Here family loyalty and trust trumps allegiance to a wider society which Muslims already see as untrusting and thus untrustworthy.)¹

In order to understand why mistrust might be associated with particular social groups in multicultural societies, I wish to turn to the sociologists Cvetkovich and Lofstedt who define social trust as an intrinsic value that people place in each other. It is based on confidence, involves an element of risk and is mediated through power. They refer to premodern and modern contexts of social trust, the former operating through interpersonal familial relationships and the latter through institutional systems as well as interpersonal relationships. Their argument is that traditional social trust in American society engenders social distrust because it maintains existing interests and encourages ‘within group trust’ and ‘across group distrust’: in other words, it discourages risk taking and mutual vulnerability across groups (Earle and Cvetkovich 1995: 19). They argue that American society nowadays operates through a model of distrust and places less value than previously on community networks that can contribute to a more complex formation of social trust—something also born out in Robert Putnam’s classic study of late twentieth-century America, *Bowling Alone* (Putnam 2000).

In my reading of *Children of Dust*, I suggest that the text reflects the clash of familial and associational patterns of trust and mistrust through a narrative that embodies the limits of cultural diversity at a turning point in history. The text represents attempts to build social trust from familistic, communitarian, and individualist perspectives. In fact, the memoir

plays out these negotiations in its plotting, character interactions, and form. In choosing to present his story in five books, corresponding to the stages in his journey from Pakistan to America, and from Islamic purism to a more hybrid sensibility, Eteraz employs what are more commonly considered novelistic devices, such as a Bildungsroman structure and use of an at times ironic voice. Trust also requires that we make ourselves vulnerable to each other. The risk of trusting is that one will be let down by the person in whom trust is being placed. Significantly, as he encounters a diverse group of people, from a range of socio-economic backgrounds, Eteraz's narrator makes himself vulnerable to others, and is in return rewarded with trust or mistrust depending on the type of moral and ethical meanings he has constructed in the process of telling his story.

In his analysis of the popular American Television series *24*, Peter Morey draws on Tzvetan Todorov and his description of genres: 'They function as "horizons of expectation" for their audiences, who have some sense of what elements will go to make up the particular cultural package they are encountering' (Morey 2010: 256). In the case of the Muslim memoir, the 'horizon of expectation' is fairly narrow and the cultural package on offer is usually a straight forward translation of a narratable Muslim life which functions to offer the lay reader an explanation of Islam and of certain modes of Muslim behaviour. The specific question of form and the Muslim memoir has been analysed by Rehana Ahmed in her reading of British Muslim autobiographical memoirs by Ed Husain, Sarfraz Manzoor, Yasmin Hai, Zaiba Malik, and Shelina Zahra JanMohamed. She argues that it is 'the personal appeal of these autobiographical narratives, the individualism of their form, which endows them with the potential to communicate across cultural barriers but also delimits that communication' (Ahmed 2015: 209). Ahmed's insightful reading suggests how the form can 'intervene in Muslim-majority relations and mediate cross-cultural understanding in multicultural Britain' (2015: 184). However, this 'anthropological' expectation is never a neutral enterprise, and certain inclusions and omissions will impact on the degree of critical credence such texts receive. For instance, as Adrian Banting has shown, the felt need to include 9/11 in JanMohamed's *Love in a Headscarf* presents a peculiar digression from the main narrative of a young professional Muslim woman's search for a life partner; it is as if this point is

shoe-horned in as part of the bundle of expectations a Muslim writer will be obliged to meet (Banting 2017: unpublished PhD).

In the case of *Children of Dust*, such expectations appear acutely in both the narration and in the peritextual paraphernalia through which the book was marketed and received. What emerges is a narrative that is both responding to the commodification of the ethnic subject and presenting a critical voice that tries to dissect the perceived authenticity of the native informant. The popularity of Eteraz's memoir can be gauged from its reception of the Nautilus Gold Book award in 2010, its recommendation on the Fall 2009 reading list in *O*, the Oprah Winfrey magazine, and its listing as one of the *New Statesman's* Books of the Year in 2009. In addition, the Library of Congress cataloguing keywords: 'Muslim—Biography; Radicalism—Religious aspects—Islam; Islamic fundamentalism; Religious awakening—Islam' encourages an instrumentalist reading of the story of what we expect to be the journey to enlightenment of a paradigmatically illiberal subject—the Pakistani Muslim American. The dust jacket shows a picture of a row of boys sitting behind a low bench reading the Qur'an in a *madrassa*. This establishes a particular stereotyped paratext for the narrative that is contained in the book, confirming the outsider status of the Muslim immigrant to America.

As a memoir that has been most aggressively and successfully marketed in the United States, *Children of Dust* captures the 'long-standing allure' that Farzaneh Milani has spoken of with reference to the popularity of the Iranian memoir in America. She notes the high sales of autobiographies, memoirs, and travelogues in the United States commenting that

[p]ublic confessions of misfortune and hard-earned redemption, even from characters with ambiguous moral or legal status, seem to fascinate Americans. The more unbearable the suffering, the better the sales; the more sordid or horrific the experience, the greater the potential for commercial success. (Milani 2013: 140)²

This is particularly true of those memoirs which purport to give an account of the suffering (and sometimes redemption) of the subject in Muslim lands, labouring beneath injustice, tyranny, and religious oppres-

sion. As several critics have noted, such memoirs became increasingly popular in the years after 9/11, in tandem with the aggressive pursuit of American strategic interests in these regions. One of the ways in which suffering is embedded in Eteraz's memoir is through its link to Pakistan as a place of misery and misfortune.³ We get a sense of this throughout the memoir and particularly after the family moves to the United States. For instance, when the parents are confronted by disobedience from their offspring in Alabama, they perceive this as a result of American influence and threaten the children with the punishment of being sent back home to Pakistan. In the process, they teach their children to perceive the West as a hedonistic place that is not to be trusted and Pakistan as a place where their fate will be determined by the family.

In contrast to the gloomy alienation suggested by the text's peritexts, Eteraz's biographical details on the dust jacket indicate that he is networked into American society as a successful high-achieving cosmopolitan Pakistani author who travels across the world, is a graduate from elite institutions, and comes with a notable publishing profile. We learn that he is:

[a] graduate of Emory University and Temple Law School, he was selected for the Outstanding Scholar's Program at the United States Department of Justice and later worked in corporate litigation in Manhattan. He is a regular contributor to *True/Slant*; has published articles about Islam and Pakistan politics in *Dissent*, *Foreign Policy*, *AlterNet* and *altMuslim*; and is a regular contributor to *The Guardian* UK and *Dawn*... He currently divides his time between Princeton, New Jersey, and the Middle East. (Eteraz 2009: cover blurb)

This self-presentation is significantly altered in the book as there is no direct reference to either Emory University or Temple Law School in the story. Instead, Eteraz's self-construction in the memoir lies closer to the more conventionally expected profile of the Muslim male immigrant to the West who is emotionally and materially deprived, and whose Islamic cultural inheritance therefore almost pre-programmes him to turn out a particular way. Indeed, the conventional outline of the narrative may be what has ensured its positive reception in the United States: Eteraz

appears to confirm the pre-existing framing of the Muslim subject as susceptible to radicalisation and filled with antipathy to the West, but here with the added bonus that this particular subject describes a course that leads him back into the fold of reasonable subjects. In the end, after all his travails, the Eteraz shown in *Children of Dust* turns out to be one of us after all—a development confirmed by his appearance on the US book circuit, critical plaudits, and the reward of a follow-up book contract.

The expectation from Eteraz as an author is best articulated in the interview on NPR radio with Terry Gross whose comments focus on the appeal of American individualism embedded in the memoir that clashes with the austere, collectivist Islamic narrative. She says:

your story strikes me as the story of a lot of American kids and teenagers, in that so many Americans struggle with their identity and they try on several different personalities when they become teenagers ... until they finally figure out who they really are. It seems to me you did that, but every step of the way it was about your relationship to Islam. (NPR 2009)⁴

Here we see a double move where the impulse to universalise the experience in the book is immediately foreclosed by the determinant frame of being a Muslim. Eteraz explains the motivation that guided him; ‘I felt like I was protesting not just against the kind of character-making, you know, Islam bashing non-Muslims but also ... the violent fanatic extremists from the Muslim side’ (2009). Eteraz chooses to do this by effectively inhabiting the available Muslim positions within that frame, one by one, as if trying them on for size. I would suggest that it is this compendious quality—displaying to us an array of ‘Muslim types’—that has contributed most to the text’s positive reception among Western publishers and readers.

The urge to present an ‘authentic’ voice is evident in the text itself from the outset. In the prologue, the narrator/author tells us:

To say that I was enamoured of Islam would be an understatement. I waved the banners of this faith from Asia to America. I studied Islamic scripture and scholarship from an early age. I aspired, perspired and prayed one day

to be lucky enough to rise to the apex of my religion. Over and over again I strove to be an Islamic activist – to become the embodiment of Muhammad's religion. (Eteraz 2009: xi)

At this point, it seems clear that we are, at last, to be given a direct insight into the radicalised mind. This is elaborated through a chronological narrative spread across five books outlining the journey from mental and physical oppression to spiritual enlightenment. In Book I, the narrator gives us a detailed account of his beginnings in Pakistan in a pious and impoverished household. Here he faces the rigours of *madrassa* life and general unhappiness caused by a lack of material wealth. The family's financial misfortune in Pakistan is alleviated by their move to America in Book II. As Muslim migrants, Eteraz's parents are shown to be highly conservative in their attitudes to the West, and under their influence, Eteraz re-styles himself in the guise of the Islamist 'Abu Bakar Ramaq': one of several name changes he undergoes, corresponding to his shifting understanding of Islam. *Children of Dust's* determination to cover all possible identity options presented to the Muslim in the contemporary Western gaze is confirmed when, after temporarily falling under the influence of secular postmodernist thinkers, 9/11 jolts the narrator into remaking himself as an Islamic reformer. In the fifth and final book, his tortured Muslim soul can only be saved by taking the path of Sufi quietism and migration to the Middle East. However, even that is not enough as he adds one final twist to the tale with his return to America and retreat to a diasporic nostalgia embodied in his relationship with his mother. All these twists and turns give the book a somewhat hectic, disorganised feel, added to by the comedic under-cutting. What the reader is left with is a baggy monster of a book from which Eteraz emerges as an impressionable but trustworthy native informant who delivers a memoir that appears to confirm American society's worst suspicions about its Muslim immigrant subjects.

Eteraz's deployment of irony—at times gentle and at times caustic—serves to position us as readers in relation to the different personae he adopts. This is memorably the case where he satirises supposed Muslim homophobia and the limits of sexual freedom. For instance, when he is

in his fundamentalist phase as Abu Bakar Ramaq, the narrator finds himself analysing his responses to his friend Moosa Farid's homophobic utterances. Moosa is introduced to us with his diatribe on homosexuality: "Man, I walked in on that white boy sodomizing another one... The room smelled like wet towels. Gross stuff. It was like I was back in the Prophet Lut's time. We know how God punished *them*" (2009: 150). The narrator summarises Moosa as someone who thought 'the gays' in Manhattan were after him and that '[a]ll these homosexuals were surely sent as a sign to remind Moosa Farid how much of a Muslim he was; how unlike Manhattan he was. And the more Moosa talked about homosexuals, the more Muslim I felt too' (2009: 150). The pronounced fundamentalism of Moosa's claims articulated in excessive fashion is designed to reiterate the disorientation that comes from normative religious morality. By emphasising Moosa's opinions, the narrator shifts attention away from his own sexual confusion to the heteronormative views of his friend. This technique of familiarity and alienation offers a way of challenging the narrative of authenticity and 'truth-telling' promised by the memoir. Gayatri Gopinath in her study of queer diaspora elaborates on how heterosexuality and queerness can be used as foils to explode the 'binary opposition' between 'heterosexuality and homosexuality, original and copy' (Gopinath 2005: 11). In the book, the exaggerated heteronormativity of Moosa can be read as a strategy to underscore the East/West, *halall/haram* dyad through which the narrator at this point constructs his world.

Eteraz shows how the idea of being authentic is not intrinsic to the individual but part of a larger story of becoming, impacted on by family, heritage, and nation. In the narrative, there is a turning point from the story of familial control to individual resistance as the narrator takes charge of his narrative through the symbolic act of renaming. He begins the book with the name given to him by his parents, Abir ul Islam, which metamorphoses into self-chosen names reflecting the stages that he is going through. The most notable of these are the fundamentalist Abu Bakar Ramaq and the noble protestor Ali Eteraz. (In my analysis, I will therefore refer to the narrator as a generic term of reference given that the book is marked by a variety of personae.) Not long after his arrival in America, Abir ul Islam changes his name to the American Amir. When he

announces this to his parents, he tells them that Abir ul Islam is a horrible name. 'A *beer* ul Islam' is how Americans pronounce it and make fun of it he tells us. 'I've been called every major alcoholic beverage, there is [Bud, Budweiser, Bud Light]. Even fictional ones. ... I know the names of as many beers as there are names of Allah' (2009: 141). The comedic mixing of the *halal* (Abir) with the *haram* (alcohol) is indicative of Eteraz's satirical style and contrasts with the mock seriousness of the different personae he appropriates. Later when he goes to university and becomes a born-again Muslim, he decides to call himself Abu Bakr Ramaq signifying his ancestral link to the Abbasid Caliphate. 'The name Ramaq, which meant "spark of light," represented the passion I felt for Islam' (2009: 163).

As Abu Bakr Ramaq, he engenders trustworthiness in his persona by conveying his knowledge about Islam. He plays at being the perfect Muslim by tracing family ancestry to the Caliphate, growing a beard, uttering *alhamdulillah* and *subhanallah* in almost every sentence and converting non-Muslims (2009: 164). Donning the guise of the missionary, he sets about disproving the work of two false prophets of Islam in the west: Osama bin Laden who he considers to be an impostor and Salman Rushdie who he labels a secularist troublemaker. Notably, this is before 9/11. He discounts bin Laden's persona as a scholar and writes him off because he has no interest in the afterlife. He thinks Salman Rushdie is a 'false prophet' because he 'was out to undermine every Muslim's faith, it seemed to me' (2009: 171). To ensure that his rejection of Rushdie is real, he is at pains to tell the reader that he has read *The Satanic Verses* in order to challenge it. This deliberate act of reading the book satirises those British and worldwide protestors who never read the book they selected to burn. In an attempt to write-off that type of protestor, he contrasts his close reading of Rushdie's offensive book with a lecture that he attended in England by the African American Imam, Zaid Shakir, on 'The Changing Face of Secularism and Islamic Response'.⁵ Through juxtaposing an evangelical Muslim convert Shakir with a liberal Muslim-born Rushdie, he sets up an absurd comparison. Showing himself to be a moderate mediator, he chooses to shelve Rushdie's book in the Art History section of the library as an 'act of protest' so that 'weaker' Muslims would not be influenced by it. In doing so, he evokes humour

because ‘Muslims – who considered images haram – didn’t usually study art history. Hiding the book was way better than burning it – which drew attention to it’ (2009: 173). Removing violence from the radical persona of Ramaq, Eteraz replaces it with the aura of laughter. This joking voice disturbs the reader’s perception of a fundamentalist and highlights the ‘close link between laughter and moral judgement’ (Billig 2005: 159).⁶ The ‘angry Muslim’ is thereby undercut and revealed as just another stereotype to be inhabited by Eteraz’s protagonist. According to the philosopher and scholar Annette Baier, terrorists are typically ‘angry or resentful about something, but it is very easy to deceive oneself about what it is that angers one’ (Baier 1994: 204). The Ramaq persona is brought to a sudden end after an unsuccessful trip to Pakistan to find a suitable wife. From there, the book jumps to the persona of Amir ul Islam who embraces modernity and anti-Islamic values. This avatar is short lived, coming to a sudden end when the attacks on the Twin Towers occur.

Incorporating the global North’s perennial perception of Muslims as a problem, the book tries to both translate and critique Muslim life. Given his primary American audience, Eteraz includes a reference to 9/11 as a turning point for the narrator in his approach to Islam. He also refers to global events such as the 2006 Danish cartoon controversy, where Muslims worldwide protested the publication of insulting cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad by the Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, to convey his position on the need for an Islamic reformation. While referring to the event as a ‘fiasco’, the narrator describes it as a key trigger that awakened a calling to Islam. Objecting to the violence that came out in some of the protests against the cartoon controversy, he chooses to offer his own earnest position. Now in his fifth and final guise, the voice of the noble protestor Ali Eteraz tells us that: ‘It required being a renegade willing to protest, to wage a life-affirming counter-jihad against the nihilism of jihadists, to toss away magazines of bullets and replace them with magazines containing bullet-points of knowledge’ (Eteraz 2009: 279).

The adoption of religion as an authentic mode of existence in reaction against the West is something that is common to the anti-Western

revivalist rhetoric employed by groups such as the Taliban and Daesh/ISIS: the latter seeking to reinvent the Islamic Caliphate as an alternative model for Muslims.⁷ Yet, this type of revivalism still very much articulates itself through the good Muslim/bad Muslim paradigm also beloved of Islamophobes in the West, simply reversing the evaluation, so that fundamentalists become 'good' and liberal secular Muslims 'bad'. Eteraz's work subtly challenges totalising interpretations of authentic and inauthentic Islam. The strain of trying to maintain the dividing line is central to Eteraz's comedic representation.

Writing of the potentially destabilising effects of comedy in his book, *After Empire*, Paul Gilroy recalls the phenomenal popularity of Sacha Baron Cohen's comic creation Ali G in the early years of the twenty-first century. For Gilroy, Ali G's humour teases out the anxieties that circulate around minority identity to comic effect. Gilroy claims that Ali G's random assemblage of youth cultural styles—in both dress and vernacular speech—which mixes and confuses black and Asian styles and idioms, results in 'undecideability'. This leads to a kind of cultural estrangement that has the effect of 'alienating' its audience, in the Brechtian sense:

It is not far fetched to suggest that the huge amounts of energy that were wasted worrying about whether the Ali G character was a white Jew pretending to be a black, a white Jew pretending to be a white pretending to be a black, a white Jew pretending to be an Asian pretending to be black, and so on might have been better spent positioning his tactics in a proper historical and artistic sequence of strangers whose strangeness was functional and educative. (Gilroy 2004: 79)

His assessment is that Ali G's mixing of styles and hybrid identities and his self-representation 'as a stranger in his own country', helps to disrupt a 'postcolonial melancholia' which imagines Englishness in nostalgic white hegemonic terms (2004: 149).

While it is, perhaps, harder to identify such claiming estrangement as a deliberate tactic in the somewhat hectic narrative quick changes of *Children of Dust*, we can nonetheless argue that as a diasporic

subject in America, the impact of Eteraz's stagings are similar to those of Ali G through the use of laughter to disrupt the latent threat posed by his ethnic identity as a Pakistani and a Muslim in age of the War on Terror. In the mixed audience response that he gets, it is clear to see that there are different interpretations of his memoir. For instance, an American blogger 'Teal Warrior', reads the book as an anthropological insight into a Muslim community that she wishes to have more knowledge about after 9/11.⁸ In her reading, Eteraz offers a reliable cultural translation of 'religious zeal'. There is no reference to the comic in this strait-laced perspective. Such responses are more indicative of a certain kind of liberal Western wish-fulfilment—the desire to have the speaking Muslim subject confirm for us the rightness of our own prurient anthropological interest in 'the Muslim' as an ultimate Other. On the other hand, another American reader and academic, David Waterman, reviewing the book for the journal *Pakistaniaat*, appears to recognise an implicit invitation to the reader to recognise his or her cultural prejudices, describing the story as 'long and heart-rending, sometimes funny, sometimes frustrating', and suggesting that Eteraz's willingness to share it 'makes us all better off in the telling and re-telling as we reflect on our own covenants and baggage' (Waterman 2010: 50).⁹ In short, this writing has the potential to unlock the dialectic of authentic/inauthentic, West/non-West, in the process making visible what Mufti calls, the 'identification of selves as insiders and outsiders, nationals and aliens' at one and the same time (Mufti 2000: 101).

The fact that Eteraz rehearses and discards a series of positions that are *intrinsic* to Islamic cultures—donning and doffing identities and ideological standpoints as if they were mere costumes—suggests that the quest for authenticity may be a wild goose chase. Eteraz's diasporic journey and the many religious identities he appropriates in Pakistan and in the United States, translate the impossibility of locating a true essence of Islam, echoing a discomfort with available national and religious projects.¹⁰

The resulting question of whether we can 'trust' this narrator to give us the actual experience of Islamic radicalisation, is a corollary for those

questions of trust that are raised in the text itself. Owing to the conservative nature of his parents, Eteraz's protagonist is exposed to a constant mistrust of the West. The first generation of Muslim migrants are here depicted as resistant to American individualism in particular. The parents exercise a tight control over the morality of their sons. In the United States, as the family network shrinks, the parents turn to religious community membership in an effort to belong and to provide alternative role models for their children to make up for the absence of an extended family: 'Pops's preferred means of regulation was to keep me busy with the Tablighi Jamaat, the merry band of missionaries from Pakistan who sent sorties to the West to make certain that Muslims in America didn't give in to hedonism' (Eteraz 2009: 120). In Alabama, the family's orthodox Sunni beliefs turn to a hardline Salafi Islam so that they can fit in with a community tenaciously clinging onto an ossified notion of Islamic orthodoxy, despite some reservations over the strict interpretation of what is permissible in Islam. In highlighting evangelical Islamic group membership as part of his migrant Muslim experience, Eteraz illustrates the 'within group' model of associational trust, mentioned by Earle and Cvetkovitch, followed by his parents, that fosters a mistrust of others who don't observe the same rituals.

Another place where mistrust is articulated is in gender and interpersonal relationships. Eteraz, cursed by his internalised sense of mission as the harbinger of Islam, is unable to sustain personal relationships. His relationship with girls is generally doomed because he projects the impression of a sex-starved Pakistani male stereotype. He eventually finds solace in spiritual awakening and male friendship. This is exemplified in the last part of the novel which charts his relationship with his friend Ziad and his migration to the Middle East as the place most in need of Islamic reform. Their homosocial friendship is depicted as a symbolic echo of the historic relationship between the thirteenth-century mystic Jalaluddin Rumi and his poet companion Shams of Tabriz, with the narrator in the role of Rumi and his friend as Shams.¹¹ The friends bond over the poetry of the seventeenth-century Punjabi Sufi poet Bulleh Shah as shared cultural common ground, but their reception of his message is markedly different. The poetry of Bulleh Shah is a significant point of reference as it provides an important intertextual link referring to the poet's rejection

of religious orthodoxy in his time cutting across class, caste, and religious hierarchies to convey a sufi message of devotionism.¹² By including Bulleh Shah's verse, the narrator is pointing to a tradition of Sufi syncretism that he feels is lost because of the lack of patronage given to the vernacular heritage of Punjabi. Caught between the popularity of Rumi for an American audience and the authenticity of his Punjabi ethnicity, the narrator tries to translate what he thinks is the 'reformist' message of Bulleh Shah's poetry for his friend. However, Ziad feels that the narrator is a literalist in the way he reads Bulleh Shah's work and as his friend and companion he feels it is his duty to make him aware of this. He accuses the narrator of misunderstanding Bulleh Shah and being an idolater because:

You, my friend, place the Second Witness over and above the First. That's wrong. It's wrong because the real covenant that guides your life, the one that you should be obsessed with, is in the service of all humanity. It's for the 'We'. It's for God. ... You associate partners with God. Islam is your idol.' (2009: 333)

The narrator has to learn from Ziad that 'he isn't a "noble" or a "shaykh"'. He is told: '[o]n top of that you're a Pakistani-born American. To many Arabs that makes you dirty *and* an imperialist. This is what you are in their eyes This is the rebuke you'll run into the moment you go into a *madrassa* or a mosque and try to get some support around here' (2009: 283–4). For Ziad, the narrator is the one who is most in need of reform. His persona is shown to be completely individualistic without any ability to laugh at himself: a personification of the Muslim middle classes who are the 'mall-going, bureaucratic, Camry-driving portion of the population – which is uptight and stuck-up' (2009: 298).

Ziad's ridiculing of the narrator shifts the humour from laughter aimed at the migrant's incongruous adaptations to multicultural life to a darker mode of satire in which he himself becomes the butt of the joke. Michael Billig has observed that it is 'easy to praise humour for bringing people together in moments of pure, creative enjoyment. But it is not those sorts of moments that constitute the social core of humour, but, instead, it is the darker, less admired practice of ridicule' (Billig 2005: 2). Billig argues

that 'ridicule provides a key force in maintaining a social order' and that laughter is a 'rhetorical' rather than a 'natural' reaction (199). In the face of ridicule, Eteraz abandons his grandiose plans of reform and his covenant to Islam, opting instead to return to his family. Billig's reading of laughter as a rhetorical act here echoes Gilroy's observations. When applied to the comedic tone of parts of the book, it reiterates that the memoirist may not be a disruptive force to the social order that he finds himself in. Instead his comedy is an act of fitting in: part of a desperate attempt at making himself a trustworthy multicultural subject.

The narrator's uneasy relationship to Sufi devotionality also has to be resolved so that the reader can fully trust Eteraz's redemption. Predictably, he finds this in a community celebration amongst the Pakistani labouring class in the Middle East. Initially uneasy about sharing space with fellow Pakistanis, he finds himself feeling at home because his host Arif shares his values about Islamic moderation condemning suicide bombers who give Muslims a bad name. During the gathering, the ritual of a devotional song *hamd* in a mixture of ethnic languages from Pakistan, 'melted away my skin and sinew and made me a part of the men around me. These men who were raised from dust, lived in dust, and would eventually rest in dust. I felt one with them. I was *not* alone. We were many. We were all children of dust' (2009: 324). Here, in a ground clearing gesture aimed as a response to his friend Ziad's critique, Eteraz tries to shift the grand Sufi narrative of a Rumi and Shams of Tabriz by immersing himself in a Pakistani working-class experience of devotional music connecting and authenticating the syncretic South Asian spirit of Bulleh Shah's poetry.

As the book gravitates towards the softer Sufi side of Islam, we see the comedy give way to a nostalgic yearning. The memoir ends abruptly with the narrator's return to the fold of family. In particular, he goes back to live with his mother, in part recreating the domestic set-up of his childhood. Instead of Lahore, the location this time is California. He finds solace in his mother's simple piety enacted on her prayer mat where she 'performs two *rakats*, two cycles of prayer' (2009: 336). Significantly, her prayers take place after listening to Punjabi love songs on YouTube that are about the pain of separation from the beloved. Juxtaposing music and prayer, Eteraz challenges the limits of permissibility in certain strains of Islam, where music is censored. In his apparent regression, Ali becomes

Abir again as he asks his mother to tell him the same story she used to when he was a child and his mother responds with the lines: ‘My little Abir. You grew up all these years, [...] Just to become innocent again’ (2009: 337). In the room with his mother, he seems to have left all the social hierarchies behind that have caused him his insecurities and withdrawn to the womb. At this moment, his mission to translate Muslim life seems to have deserted him completely. The experience of social distrust in a multicultural society as a Muslim American and in particular a third world Pakistani Muslim American has returned him to the only comfort he trusts, of family.

Eteraz on one level rejects the cultural traditions and values initially upheld by his family. He discovers their values to be fixed, offering very little room for manoeuvre. However, his own subsequent journey, as described in the memoir, is coloured by the difficulties of placing trust (and being trusted and trustworthy). His story remains poised between offering a social critique of Islam and a reiteration of the dominant perception of Muslims as a problem in society. The narrator’s final state is one of seemingly permanent nostalgia, unable to reconcile the comforts of the past with the challenges of the present. The book’s driving quest—Abir ul Islam’s covenant to propagate Islam—illustrates how the obsession with being authentic can lead to an identity crisis for Muslims in the West, and can drive a wedge between the competing demands of tradition and modernity. In conclusion, we might suggest that Eteraz himself, as a writer, has not wholly escaped this trap, since to rehearse supposedly ‘authentic’ positions—even if ultimately to repudiate them—is to recapitulate the ‘already known’: the procession of pre-scripted Muslim identities, from Salafi to Sufi, which pass before the Western reader like a familiar parade. In short, what makes the book flawed is its attempt to cover all possible angles. The desire to fulfil the expectations required of a Muslim writer causes the book to vacillate between humour and earnestness. As his reception in the United States shows, Eteraz has proved that he is able to respond to the demands of American individualism, but in the process he has had to forego an association with the community. His narrator-protagonist retreats to the folds of family, just as Eteraz himself adopts the expected role of native informant. The comfort felt by the narrator’s retreat into the known and familiar may well be echoed by the

(Western) reader's relieved recognition of the Muslim types played out before our eyes. Comedy may introduce uncertainty into this exchange at times, but ultimately Eteraz's memoir confirms a limited frame of options for the Muslim in America (and perhaps the Muslim American) which chime disturbingly with the some of the more reductive stereotypes about non-integrated minorities and an 'enemy within'.

Notes

1. On *biraderi* networks amongst the Pakistani community in the UK, see Alison Shaw, *Kinship and Continuity: Pakistani Families in Britain*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2000. Parveen Akhtar, *British Muslim Politics: Examining Pakistani Biraderi Networks*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Pnina Werbner, *The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings Among British Pakistanis*. Berg, 1990.
2. This view is also present in Linda Anderson's assessment of the increased reading interest in memoirs since the 1990s. She notes the shared link between reality TV and memoirs and extends our understanding of this phenomenon as merely voyeuristic, marking it instead as a 'need to form "ad hoc communities", to find provisional settings which can both extend and confirm the meaning of the individual and the personal' amongst viewing publics (Anderson 2001: 114). On the Muslim memoir also see Anshuman Mondal's 'Bad Faith: The Construction of Muslim Extremism in Ed Husain's *The Islamist*'. In *Culture, Diaspora and Modernity in Muslim Writing*, ed. Rehana Ahmed, Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin. Abingdon/New York: Routledge. 2012, 37–51.
3. Such texts often foreground female experience, thereby underlining the association of Islam with patriarchal oppression. The trajectory of these stories features escape or (more often) rescue by the forces of Western enlightenment. Focussing on the derivative nature of their favoured style and imagery, Roksana Bahramitash has labelled such texts as instances of 'Orientalist Feminism'. See Roksana Bahramitash, 'The War on Terror, Feminist Orientalism and Orientalist Feminism: Case Studies of Two North American Bestsellers', *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 14:2 (2005), 221. See also Dora Ahmad, 'Not Yet Beyond the Veil: Muslim Women in American Popular Literature', *Social Text*, 99:27:2 (2009), 109–111.

4. Terry Gross interview with Ali Eteraz, NPR 'Fresh Air'. October 29, 2009. Referenced as 2009a in text. <http://www.npr.org/books/authors/138132877/ali-eteraz>. Accessed June 16, 2017.
5. Imam Zaid Shakir is a co-founder of Zaytuna College in Berkeley California. His biography can be accessed on <https://www.newislamicdirections.com/about/>. Eteraz seems to be referring to a lecture that he gave at Aylesbury mosque, UK on 'The changing face of secularism and the Islamic response' in February 1999. The text is available on <http://www.masud.co.uk/ISLAM/misc/sec.htm> Accessed June 20, 2017. On social media, Zaid has 67.2k followers on Instagram and 137k followers on twitter.
6. According to Freud, 'jokes act as displacement activities permitting subterranean (sexual, hostile) desires—bypass ethical and social constraints'. See Sigmund Freud. *The Joke and its Relation to the Unconscious*. Trans. Joyce Crick. London: Penguin Classics. [1905] 2002.
7. Historically, this is true of anti-colonial movements as well. An engaging context of Muslim anti-colonial resistance is provided by Ayesha Jalal in her book, *Partisans of Allah*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008. For a recent study that explodes the myth of the 'war of civilisations' between Islam and the west see Mahmood Mamdani's, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and Roots of Terror*. USA: Three Leaves Press, 2004.
8. Review of Eteraz's book by blogger 'Teal Warrior' aka Dixie Theriault <https://dixie-afewofmyfavoritethings.blogspot.co.uk/2009/11/> Accessed 01/07/2017. For a real life anthropological study of Arab Muslim American lives in Brooklyn and how they negotiate multiple identities in a time of cultural misunderstandings see Moustafa Bayoumi, *How Does it Feel to Be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America*. New York: Penguin Press. 2008.
9. See all reviews listed on the author's website. <http://alietiraz.com/child-renofdust> (Accessed June 19, 2017).
10. My understanding of diaspora is influenced by seminal publications from Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996. James Clifford 'Diasporas' in *Cultural Anthropology*, 1994. 9:3, pp. 302–338, and Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, eds, *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press 1994.

11. The critic Elena Furlanetto talks about the 'Rumi phenomenon' in the American literary market since 1994 with reference to the critically acclaimed Turkish novelist Elif Shafak's 2010 novel, *The Forty Rules of Love*. Furlanetto argues that the cultural translation of Rumi for a Western audience flattens local nuances and carries traces of Orientalism. The Rumi phenomenon was sparked by the best-selling translation by Coleman Barks's 1995, *The Essential Rumi* (Elena Furlanetto, "The "Rumi Phenomenon" Between Orientalism and Cosmopolitanism: the case of Elif Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*", 2013, 17: 2, 201–13).
12. See Christopher Shackle's reading of Bulleh Shah's devotional Sufi poetry in his 'Sacred Love, lyrical death', *Critical Muslim*. 2013: 5, pp. 31–48.

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Part IV

Muslim Minorities and the Discourse of Liberal Secularism



10

Powders Revisited: Queer Micropolitical Disorientation, Phenomenology, and Multicultural Trust in Hanif Kureishi and Stephen Frears' *My Beautiful Laundrette*

Alberto Fernández Carbajal

It has been three decades since the release of *My Beautiful Laundrette* in 1985, a financially modest film written by Hanif Kureishi and directed by Stephen Frears, whose international box-office success took its own makers by surprise. Set in economically challenged and racially restless London during the peak of the Thatcher era, with a young British Asian man as its main protagonist, the film came out only a few years before the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* and all its attendant controversies. These polemical events, now commonly known as the 'Rushdie affair', have constituted the foundational moment of British Muslim identity as a political category.¹ Pitted against such a dire watershed, I propose *My Beautiful Laundrette* (henceforth *Laundrette*) as a more invigorating

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seminal representation of the subcontinental Muslim diaspora's fortunes in Britain. The film has gradually achieved iconic status as a galvanising representation of diasporic experience in the UK, and, specifically, of British national identity and its tensions with issues of class, ethnicity, and sexuality. Tellingly, Gayatri Gopinath opens her study *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* with an analysis of *Laundrette*, and, most recently, Sadia Abbas examines *Laundrette* in the initial chapter of *At Freedom's Limit: Islam and the Postcolonial Predicament*, focusing on Islam's role in British race relations. Both texts help to confirm the film's iconic status as a foundational narrative of South Asian diasporic and queer experience. In their book *Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation Since 9/11*, Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin urgently prompt: 'The crucial question being asked is whether cultural difference can be harmonized and a multicultural society created or sustained, or whether the experiment of respecting and attempting politically to include identity positions with values that may jar with those of the majority is a doomed enterprise' (Morey and Yaqin 2011: 44). As I argue here, *Laundrette* attempts to answer this question in an affirmative manner, paving the way towards a more multicultural understanding of Britain as a nation by pushing against socially enforced ethnic boundaries and through the strategic deployment of queerness.

The film is self-consciously pitted against a series of big-budget films and TV series released in the 1980s whose chief concern was Britain's imperial past, and which have been dubbed, via Rushdie, a 'Raj Revival'.² *Laundrette* was meant as a rebuff to, in Kureishi's own words, 'lavish films set in exotic locations' (Kureishi 2000: 5) which glorify British imperialism. However, despite its current recognition as a seminal film on diaspora, it was not sympathetically received by Muslim audiences on either side of the Atlantic upon its release. Gopinath reminds us that the film 'engendered heated controversy within South Asian communities in the UK' (Gopinath 2005: 2). John Hill also notes it 'was criticized from within the Asian community both for its representation of homosexuality and [...] of Asians as money grabbing' (Hill 1999: 212). Additionally, Donald Weber records that 'Pakistani groups in the U. S. protested outside theaters' (Weber 1997: 125). Bart Moore-Gilbert cites the case of Kureishi's own aunt, who 'berated *Laundrette* for its supposedly negative vision of

Pakistani immigrants and did so partly through comparing it unfavourably with [Richard Attenborough's] *Gandhi*' (Moore-Gilbert 2001: 74), which Weber notes earned her having one of Kureishi's lesbian agitators in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* named after her. Frears and Kureishi's film clearly succeeded in tickling the sensibilities of its minority Muslim audiences, whose occasional preference for aesthetically safe and politically conservative 'heritage' drama colluded ideologically with the tastes of the dominant white audience which *Laundrette* fearlessly indicts.

At heart, the problem in Kureishi and Frears' film is what Ruvani Ranasinha calls, via Kobena Mercer, 'the burden of representation': 'Namely, the assumption that minority artists speak *for* the entire community from which they come' (Ranasinha 2002: 39). Ranasinha usefully maps two camps in critical responses to *Laundrette*: on the one hand, the faction featuring Mamood Jamal and Perminder Dhillon-Kashyap, who 'perceive the role of the minority artist as necessarily didactic, so as to reduce "the imbalance caused by decades of misrepresentation and stereotyping"' (Ranasinha 2002: 51); and on the other, Stuart Hall, who defends films such as *Laundrette* for their refusal to depict a monolithic representation of black experience in Britain which is 'always and only "positive"' (Ranasinha 2002: 51). Indeed, Kureishi's craft transcends the pedagogic role of the minority artist, as it refuses to create any images of British Muslims—or of white Britons—that are solely vilifying or victimising. In fact, as Jago Morrison suggests, Kureishi's texts 'are far too playful, irreverent and counter-cultural to fit into any orthodox political agenda' (Morrison 2003: 179). Instead, Kureishi concentrates more keenly on disorientating his audience by challenging essentialist identitarian constructions of race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. A contemporary of Kureishi, Kenan Malik asserts that growing up in Britain in the 1970s, he witnesses how "Paki-bashing" was becoming a national sport' (Malik 2010: 4). He argues that this polarisation was superseded in the 1980s, particularly after the 'Rushdie Affair', by new forms of collective identity: 'Radicals lost faith in secular universalism and began talking instead about multiculturalism and group rights' (2010: 4). I wish to illustrate here how a pre-Rushdie film such as *Laundrette* already started blurring the lines between ethnic communities, strategically utilising queerness as a means of challenging

the legacies of the racially turbulent 1970s and of forging a multicultural form of trust for contemporary Britain.

Laundrette continues to aid us in the ‘queering’ of multicultural London by disorganising mainstream Muslim and non-Muslim ideologies surrounding ethnicity and sexuality in a critique that should be envisaged as intersectional. In the forthcoming pages, I argue, firstly, that Kureishi’s plot and psychological implausibilities enact a queer form of micropolitical disorientation whose effect is that of challenging the essentialist identity categories dictated by mainstream dominant ideologies. I suggest that Kureishi is making intelligible queer intimate relations previously deemed impossible, hence subverting normativity. Secondly, I undertake queer phenomenological readings of scenes in the film that ‘queer’ the diasporic body by merging it with its surrounding bodies and spaces, drawing attention to the contours of ethnically polarised bodies and spaces. Meanwhile, I also draw attention to how female sexuality and gender non-conformity also subverts normative gendered spaces. Lastly, I delve into the topic of British multicultural trust by undertaking a queer phenomenological analysis of the film’s closing scenes, where the violence suffered by queer bodies in queered spaces generates trust between different factions of British society, hence blurring the lines separating ethnic communities in the multicultural state.

To offer a brief summary of the film, *Laundrette* charts the coming of age of Omar (Gordon Warnecke), a British youth of mixed Pakistani and British heritage. His father, Hussein (Roshan Seth), is a South Asian leftist journalist who has had no success in Britain: both his profession and his marriage, to a now deceased British woman, fell victim to his inability to come to terms with British racial prejudice. Hussein begs his enterprising brother Nasser (Saeed Jaffrey) to employ Omar in his garage for the summer months and to ‘fix him with a nice girl’, since he is not ‘sure if his penis is in full working order’ (Kureishi 2000: 12). From the outset, the film’s exploration of diasporic experience in Britain is attuned to sexual exploration. Omar is informally supervised by his cousin Salim (Derrick Branche), who in due course is found out to lead an affluent life through drug dealing. Not challenged enough by car washing, and inspired by keeping his uncle’s accounts, Omar asks Nasser to allow him to run his dwindling laundrette, called Churchills, a name that playfully

alludes to a bygone era in British history. Nasser agrees, partly because he envisages him as the heir to his businesses, through his potential marriage to his daughter Tania (Rita Wolf). While planning his takeover of the laundrette, Omar comes across his old schoolfellow Johnny (Daniel Day-Lewis), formerly a National Front supporter who, despite his devil-may-care attitude and his continued liaison with his white supremacist friends, agrees to help him in his new enterprise. In essence, the film is an exploration of the burgeoning relationship between Omar and Johnny, who eventually become lovers, and who in so doing contravene, on the one hand, the strictures of Thatcherite Britain, with its discouragement of interracial relations and homosexuality,³ and, on the other, the Muslim diasporic community's heteronormative and familial values, both within the context, brimming with irony,⁴ of ruthless Thatcherite entrepreneurship. By challenging ethnic and sexual mores, I suggest the film is hopeful about developing trust between polarised communities, thus paving the way towards a multicultural assemblage of sociocultural perspectives.

The film refuses from the start to vindicate the position of any single ethnic grouping. Its stance is not too congratulatory of the British Muslim community's licit and illicit endeavours; nor does it completely vilify the white British contingent, with Johnny offering an antidote to the sway of white supremacy. *Laundrette* is not self-indulgent regarding the complex sociopolitical and affective positions of its characters, who 'queer' British social relations through an investment in interethnic queer intimacy. Hill argues that 'in common with postmodern thinking, there is a strong sense of the constructedness and fluidity of social identities, and a rejection of any sense of fixed identities or "essences"' (Hill 1999: 207). Perhaps more crucially for our purposes here, Paul Dave suggests that 'the multiculturalism of *My Beautiful Laundrette* [...] cannot be mistaken for an uncritical liberal pluralism in which social heterogeneity is understood as the unproblematic mixing of distinct and self-coherent identities' (Dave 2006: 13). *Laundrette* can be seen as challenging essentialist constructions of the various social identities (i.e. ethnic, national, class-related, sexual) of multicultural British society. Crucially, the blurring of societally enforced barriers—or the ironic inversion of social expectations—contributes to a disorganisation of mainstream ideologies and the assemblage of seemingly contradictory political perspectives. Kureishi's

script hence relies on unsettling its audience in order to start conciliating different political and ethnic perspectives. Moore-Gilbert notes that *Laundrette* contains ‘improbabilities at the level of plot which compromise their effectiveness as examples of critical social realism’, and that the film ‘is predicated on the intrinsically unlikely scenario of a young British-Asian man falling in love with a member of a vicious racist gang (and vice versa)’ (Moore-Gilbert 2001: 99).⁵

By contrast, Buchanan cites Vincent Canby’s idea that ‘characters behave in a way that has been dictated not by plausibility but [by] the effect it will create (my emphasis)’ (Buchanan 2007: ix). Ranasinha concurs, suggesting that ‘while Kureishi’s portrayals are not intended as representative, we need to distinguish this from their *political effect*’ (Ranasinha 2002: 49; my emphasis). In light of these debates, I would suggest that mimeticism is never fully central to *Laundrette*’s concerns, and that the most pressing questions when interpreting it should not involve historical accuracy (i.e. whether Muslims routinely slept with skinheads in the 1980s), but, rather, an appreciation of the film’s ‘queering’ of hermetic sociopolitical positions, and the effect that such a bizarre arrangement of human intimacy has on the audience’s collective consciousness. Kureishi himself observes that ‘[f]or immigrants and their families, disorder and strangeness is the condition of their existence’ (Kureishi 2002: 3). In this sense, diaspora is almost always ‘queer’ in the extended meaning of the word; it involves unavoidable strangeness, in this case embodied in Omar and Johnny’s unexpected relationship across ethnic lines, whose queerness becomes a transgressive political strategy. Kureishi and Frears are not aiming at mimeticism or even realism here, but at disorientating the film’s majority and minority audiences in a manner that shakes up their political complacency, by forcing them to think about the potential to create a less polarised and more truly multicultural society that pushes against hermetic ethnic and racial boundaries.

Such a disorientation is central to Sarah Ahmed’s model of queer phenomenology, especially regarding the confusion experienced by diasporic bodies in relation to their surroundings. Ahmed observes that ‘bodies that experience being out of place might need to be *orientated*, to find a place where they feel comfortable and safe in the world (my emphasis)’ (Ahmed 2006: 158). POWDERS, the revamped laundrette, is such a place

of relative safety, where Omar can forge an affective connection with Johnny, albeit not without political complications. Ahmed argues that '[t]he point is not whether we experience *disorientation* (for we will, and we do), but how such experiences can impact on the orientation of bodies and spaces (my emphasis)' (Ahmed 2006: 158). Disorientation, and reorientation, of the British Muslim subject of diasporic heritage is not self-contained; it does not involve only the individual but also its attendant bodies and spaces, such as Johnny, POWDERS, and their local London community, the nation by metonymic extension, and even *Laundrette's* audience, whose political perceptions are being purposefully disorientated. Nonetheless, Ahmed is self-confessedly interested in 'how queer politics might *involve* disorientation, without legislating disorientation as a politics' (Ahmed 2006: 158). This assertion would suggest that queer disorientation is beyond politics; in this sense, it would fit Morrison's aforementioned observation that Kureishi's texts exceed politically orthodox positions. However, whilst the disorientation created by Omar and Johnny may not be *party*-political, it does not fully transcend politics, since, according to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'everything is political, but every politics is simultaneously a *macropolitics* and a *micropolitics*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 213). They explain that the politics of the public realm, which perpetuates categories highly segmenting individuals and communities, have a mundane counterpart in 'unconscious micropercepts, unconscious affects, fine segmentations that grasp or experience different things, are distributed and operate differently' (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 213). At the level of everyday lived experience and desire, queer subjects who 'are distributed and operate differently' have the power to start challenging the boundaries separating ethnic groups in the multicultural state.

Omar and Johnny achieve, at the level of their mundane everyday life in their racially agitated suburban community in London, a micropolitical form of resistance to both white hegemonic and homophobic ideologies characteristic of the Thatcher period, whilst offering an affective challenge to the heterosexist and patriarchal model offered by the diasporic Muslim community in Britain. The fact that Omar has a Muslim diasporic background and Johnny has supported racist political parties makes their relationship all the more affectively and politically

reinvigorating, for they are pushing micropolitically against the boundaries of dominant ideologies. According to Gopinath, 'queer diasporic cultural forms suggests alternative forms of collectivity and communal belonging that redefine home outside of a logic of blood, purity, authenticity, and patrilineal descent' (Gopinath 2005: 187). Most teasingly negotiated in Omar and Johnny's unorthodox, almost impossible, relationship, Kureishi's version of multicultural Britain suggests a form of belonging that goes against blood and notions of cultural purity, by favouring intimate intercultural relations, whilst making visible the same-sex desire often repressed by mainstream Muslim ideologies. This offering of the unexpectedly queer has the hopeful effect of disorientating mainstream cultural values, and this disorientation, as a form of micropolitics, has the power to attach itself intersectionally to other forms of anti-normativity (i.e. class- and gender-related) further challenging the British status quo.

The fact that Kureishi stages such negotiation of communitarian identities within the bounds of the diasporic body, and its relationship with other bodies and spaces, makes *Laundrette* all the more compelling as a multicultural visual narrative. Vijay Mishra suggests:

By lifting the lid on the diaspora's own homophobic and exclusive rhetoric, by representing gay and lesbian diasporic selves, by mingling the crisis of the working class with the anxieties of diaspora, Kureishi shifts the debates to question about the diasporic body as corporeal selves within the racial economy of the nation. (Mishra 2007: 201)

Mishra exposes Kureishi's bravery in tackling homosexuality in *Laundrette*, a topic that remains to this day highly controversial within Britain's Muslim communities, whilst drawing attention to the material despair of a working class, embodied in Johnny and his white British associates, who have been turned by Thatcherite politics into an economically hard-up underclass drawn to racism and criminality through lack of opportunity. Omar's mixed-race body also challenges a monocultural, racially pure conception of Britishness, which is only accentuated in intercourse with Johnny. Nonetheless, the label 'gay' does not seem to encompass their complex sexual orientations; crucially, neither of them staunchly

rebuffs the advances of Omar's cousin Tania, which means they fit the polymorphous term 'queer', implicating, according to Annamarie Jagose, an 'open-ended constituency' of desire (Hawley 2001: 3). Omar and Johnny's bodies become intertwined in the human tapestry of British multiculturalism, a rebellion against what Amartya Sen perceives as the threat of contemporary British 'plural monoculturalism' (Sen 2006: 157).

However, the queer relations between Omar's mixed-race diasporic body and Johnny's white British body do not happen in a vacuum or in an alternative heuristic space reserved for queer dissidence; rather, they actively engage their surroundings, intimately and micropolitically. The revamped laundrette is named 'POWDERS' in wry reference to Omar and Johnny's co-option of Salim's drug dealing earnings. Through Hugo Luczyc Wyhowski's film-set design and Oliver Stapleton's soft-focus cinematography, POWDERS becomes not only 'brightly painted' (Kureishi 2000: 42); it shimmers, with rolling aquamarine waves painted above each washing machine. It also has '*a neon sign saying POWDERS*' (Kureishi 2000: 42) that further glamorises it. As Omar's Papa tells Johnny when he diffidently visits the laundrette later on: 'I thought I'd come to the wrong place. That I was suddenly in the ladies' hairdressing salon in Pinner, where one might get a pink rinse' (Kureishi 2000: 52). This camp joke is final proof that the space has been constructed as purposefully queer: it could be a laundrette, but it could well be an Indian hairdressing establishment due to its flamboyancy. Omar and Johnny dress up for the occasion, discarding their ordinary daywear for a suit and bright white clothes, respectively, matching the laundrette's refurbished state.

In Ahmed's thinking, 'spaces are not exterior to bodies; instead, spaces are like a second skin that unfolds in the folds of the body' (Ahmed 2006: 9). Interpreted in a phenomenological manner, POWDERS acts as a second skin to Omar and Johnny's bodies, as the queer establishment's bright new spaces merge with their own physicality. The laundrette's grand opening is given nuance by the spatial juxtaposition of the suburban street, the laundrette's public spaces, and its back room, where the two-way mirror connotes both privacy and social surveillance, and where spaces merge with bodies.⁶ Ranasinha highlights 'the one-way [*sic*] mirror in the laundrette, where we see two different "illicit" relationships in ironic counterpart: Nasser dancing with his lover Rachel, and Omar and

Johnny having sex in the back room' (Ranasinha 2002: 42). Nasser and Rachel's relationship is deemed 'illicit' not only because it is adulterous (Nasser being married to Omar's aunt Bilquis) but also because it is interracial, contravening the Thatcherite discouragement of racial intermixing and the ethnic exclusivism of the British Muslim diaspora. The fact that Omar and Johnny are engaging in queer interracial relations simultaneously renders their 'transgression' compellingly parallel to its heterosexual counterpart, embodied by Nasser and Rachel and, *in absentia*, by Papa and Omar's late mother, Mary. Moore-Gilbert reads this use of the two-way mirror as a technique Kureishi has inherited from his prior involvement in 'fringe' theatre, by 'recall[ing] the use of back-projection' (Moore-Gilbert 2001: 69), in itself, a 'queering' of genre and medium through stylistic assemblage. The two-way mirror allows for these visual superimpositions to embody an intersectional depiction of multicultural British society, creating a jointly interethnic and queer disorientation of mainstream values within Britain's multilayered and assembled private and public spaces. At the centre of the action, divided but rendered parallel by the two-way mirror, Rachel and Nasser, on the one hand, and Johnny and Omar, on the other, challenge sexual and ethnic separation. Standing on each side of the laundrette's physically delineated but visually porous spaces, the film's diegetic audience (the general public eagerly watching the establishment's imminent unveiling) and its extra-diegetic audience (the audience watching the film from the other side of the screen) act as the receivers of micropolitical ideological change, being wilfully exposed to interethnic and queer liaisons going against the grain of British and diasporic normative ideologies.

Far from being a solipsistic place enabling merely private liaisons, *POWDERS* becomes the stage where the multicultural nation's racial and sexual politics are micropolitically played out through bodily interaction. Gopinath observes that 'Omar initially acquiesces to Johnny's caresses, but he abruptly puts a halt to the seduction' (Gopinath 2005: 1), confronting his new partner (in several senses of the word) regarding his racist past: 'what were [my old friends] doing on marches through Lewisham? It was bricks and bottles and Union Jacks. It was kill us. People we knew. And it was you. [Papa] saw you marching. You saw his face, watching you. [...] Oh, such failure, such emptiness' (Kureishi 2000: 43). In Kureishi's

script directions, '*JOHNNY kisses OMAR then leaves him, sitting away from him slightly. OMAR touches him, asking him to hold him*' (Kureishi 2000: 43). Conversely, in the film, as Gopinath rightly notes, 'as Omar continues speaking, [Johnny] slowly reaches out to draw Omar to him and embraces Omar from behind. [...]'. The scene eloquently speaks to how the queer racialized body becomes a historical archive for both individuals and communities' (Gopinath 2005: 1). Omar's historically representative body is torn between intimacy with Johnny and animosity surrounding the 1977 Lewisham race riots of Omar and Johnny's early years, which demonstrates there is no neutral or apolitical merging of bodies taking place. Johnny's body wants to bridge the ideological gap created between him and Omar by his involvement in racist marches in the turbulent 1970s, but he needs to become beholden to him in order to exonerate himself from his racist past. As Johnny states in a subsequent scene: 'Nothing I can say, to make it up to you. There's only things I can do to show you that I am ... with you' (Kureishi 2000: 44).

Laundrette's focus on bodily action and performance, rather than on a mere discursive apology for British racism, fits a queer phenomenological interpretation of multicultural trust in the scene, whereby Omar and Johnny's queer bodies and their relation to each other micropolitically negotiate larger political tensions in the nation. This scene is followed by the official opening of *POWDERS*, during which the two-way mirror acquires further significance. Uncle Nasser catches Omar and Johnny hurriedly dressing after having sex. When he sees them tucking in their shirts, he asks them: 'What the hell are you doing? Sunbathing?' to which Omar replies, with a mixture of candour and obliqueness: 'Asleep, Uncle. We were shagged out' (Kureishi 2000: 45). Although Nasser eyes Omar disapprovingly, he does not question him, strategically ignoring Salim's earlier suggestion that '[t]here's some things between [Omar and Johnny] I'm looking into' (Kureishi 2000: 40). Omar's Muslim family is unwilling to voice the taboo of homosexuality, only referring to Omar with his self-coined soap-related but also queer nickname 'Omo' (Kureishi 2000: 40). As we see, the Muslim family's insistence on patri-linearity and heteronormativity throws an important hurdle in the way of Omar and Johnny's relationship, one that puts a temporary stop to

the development of multicultural trust between the two men but which is qualified by later developments in the film.

For now, the laundrette opens for the impatient multitude outside. As Omar revels in the sight of his new business from behind the surveying two-way mirror, Johnny is proudly standing on the other side of the security mechanism, guessing, or at least partially seeing, Omar's body on the other side, and standing in the place of his reflection. For a brief moment, through Frears' inspired direction, Johnny and Omar's reflections blend together, creating a single superimposed image that gives the visual impression of an assembled identity. This assemblage is an optimistic qualification of Jasbir K. Puar's interrogation of the 'surveillant assemblages' attending racialised bodies after 9/11 and their obsession with Muslims and brown bodies. These surveillance systems, Puar argues, 'create the sameness of population through democratization of monitoring at the same time they enable and solidify hierarchies—in other words the circuit amid profiling and racial profiling' (Puar 2007: 155;156). In this case, and against all odds, it is Omar's mixed-race British body that is standing on the point of social surveillance, whilst a white British body is the one being profiled. The assemblage of their reflections constitutes a moment of breakdown of sociopolitical hierarchies and surveillance techniques, as Johnny wilfully stands in front of Omar and beams at him, his body's image purposefully blending with Omar's equally smiling reflection. This visual bodily assemblage is enacted following a micropolitically significant scene of interpersonal physical communion, and, together, they force the audience to confront the monocultural exclusivism of British national identity. Buchanan cites Annabel Cone's idea that 'the need for love and intimacy plays out in an indoors completely turned away from ... public spaces' (Buchanan 2007: 124). Conversely, I would suggest the film creates a queer space between the public and the private, between loving intimacy and social surveillance, whose visual presentation micropolitically disorganises mainstream expectations, forging a new form of trust.

Despite *POWDERS'* grand opening, Johnny and Omar's glory, as well as Nasser and Rachel's elation, is short-lived: the laundrette's unveiling only exacerbates family duties, and the film's most prominent unorthodox relationships are swiftly checked. Nasser's daughter Tania confronts

Rachel about her economically dependent relationship on her father, as she candidly states: 'I don't mind my father having a mistress. [...] But I don't like women who live off men. [...] That's a pretty disgusting parasitical thing, isn't it?' (Kureishi 2000: 46). Rachel responds to this loaded comment with a counter-attack asking Tania about her own financial dependence: 'But tell me, who do you live off?' (Kureishi 2000: 46). The scene is scripted in conjunction with Nasser and Omar's discussion about Omar's future. Nasser, who is panicking about the altercation taking place elsewhere in the room, gathers from Omar that it is he who has invited Tania to the event, after which he says: 'Then marry her. [...] If I say marry her you then damn well do it! [...] Your penis works, doesn't it?' (Kureishi 2000: 46). Omar, intoxicated literally by the champagne at hand and figuratively by his success, follows his uncle's instructions and adds heteronormativity to Thatcherite entrepreneurship. When Tania tells Omar she will need his financial help in leaving home, he seizes the occasion to ask her whether she will marry him, to which she tartly responds: 'If you can get me some money' (Kureishi 2000: 47).

Although Tania's financial plea is ironic (since she would merely be turning down one form of male economic support for another), her attitude helps Kureishi underline the transactional character of Omar and Tania's enforced nuptials, taking to task the Muslim family's traditional approach to interpersonal relationships as being, above all, heterosexual and monocultural. A despondent Johnny stops cooperating, which results in Omar reminding him in a later scene of his subservient employment status. Omar has come to realise he has family obligations to fulfil:

OMAR: I don't wanna see you for a little while. I got some big thinking to do.

(JOHNNY looks regretfully at him.)

JOHNNY: But today, it's been the best day!

OMAR: Yeah. *Almost* the best day. (Kureishi 2000: 51; my italics)

This has been *almost* the best day because it has come very close to ratifying Omar's relationship with Johnny, which has brought down ethnic and sexual barriers and has started forging affective multicultural connections across ethnic groupings. However, Omar's family has quickly

put a stop on his relationship with Johnny by discouraging, in the same breath, homosexual and interracial relationships, even when Omar's own parentage is clearly intercultural. Nasser's plan to marry Tania to Omar carries the ideological weight of Muslim patrilinearity and the clear desire to keep things 'in the family', which reveals a conservative strand beneath his neoliberal economic principles. Moreover, Nasser and Rachel's extra-marital relationship does not survive Rachel's fraught encounter with Tania. For a while, it looks like Omar's debt to Salim, who has discovered the laundrette's refurbishment has been funded by his co-opted drugs, and Omar's family obligation to Nasser, will stand between him and Johnny. All these complications threaten to undo the film's burgeoning mapping of interethnic and queer connections, as the strict values of Omar's social grouping attempt to reinforce monoculturalism and heteronormative patriarchy.

Before we examine *Laundrette's* denouement, we must focus on Tania's plight, for it is one of the main issues which has divided critical approaches to the film. Her representation involves a phenomenological interweaving of bodies, objects, and spaces which complements my analysis of the film. From the outset, Tania is represented as physically forthright and, through her strategic use of her body, as rebelling against patriarchal values by moving between strictly gendered spaces. In Omar's first visit to his uncle's household in years, during which he is shown around as a small child would, he is introduced to a 'selection of wives' (Kureishi 2000: 19). Rahul K. Gairola observes that gender segregation is present in the living room that 'resounds a *zenana* (or part of the house reserved for women)' (Gairola 2009: 43).⁷ Within this separate sphere reconstructing South Asian cultural spaces within Britain, Omar meets Salim's wife, Cherry, and is reintroduced by Bilquis to her 'three naughty daughters' (Kureishi 2000: 19). The eldest, Tania, stands in the middle and, after looking at him flirtatiously, takes the initiative and brings him to his uncle Nasser, followed by Cherry's disapproving gaze. Outside the door to the men's room, Tania accosts Omar physically by pushing him against the wall and asking him to see her later, stating she is 'bored with these people' (Kureishi 2000: 20). Inside, Omar finds his uncle mocking Papa with family anecdotes about his courting of, and marriage to, Omar's mother, as well as discussing Hussein's communist past, his alcoholism,

and his failed journalistic career in Britain. Nonetheless, Nasser affectionately welcomes Omar to the company of the other men. This setting of cigars and booze is clearly a space reserved for men only. While they discuss Nasser's taste for gambling, Hussein's socialism and English racial prejudice, Tania appears behind the window overlooking the garden, and shows her breasts to poker-faced Omar and choking family friend Zaki. Here, Tania is impinging upon the strict homosocial spaces of her father's home, by bringing highly coveted female sexuality to its boundaries, although it is only Omar, with his privileged viewing position facing the party of men, alcohol-infused Zaki, and the film's audience who witness her transgression. Gairola argues that 'Tania has also managed to move between the gendered spaces, and her visibility to Omar (but not to the other men) underscores her agency as a queer subject who negotiates the terrains of her sexual desires' (Gairola 2009: 47). Tania's ability to flout, albeit only to a certain extent, gender segregation, demonstrates she is disorganising the traditional gendered spaces of her family home with bodily irreverence. Later, she confronts Omar again authoritatively in an empty, almost liminal room, and takes the lead, kissing him while discussing her father's expectation of Omar's takeover of the family businesses, explaining '[h]e wouldn't think of asking me' (Kureishi 2000: 22), clearly because she is a woman. While they are in the middle of discussing Nasser's affair with Rachel, during which she states 'I hate families', eavesdropping Bilquis, standing by the sliding window, asks her to 'come and help' (2000: 22), breaking the erotic spell and consigning her, yet again, to a domestic gender role.

Although, according to an article on 'Asian stars' in Britain published in *India Today*, Rita Wolf, the actress playing Tania, sees the baring of her breasts as a sign of 'how little things have changed' (Chandran 1987: para. 14), implying that the exposure of the female body on screen remains a way of commodifying it for its implied male audience, Tania's trajectory in *Laundrette* reveals a more complex 'queering' of traditional female roles, particularly within the Muslim diasporic community in Britain, by drawing attention, through her irreverent body and speech, to the limitations such roles bring to Muslim women's experience. Tania is keen on disrupting the homosocial mapping of space that protects male interests, initially by taking the lead during Omar's visit to her family home and

physically mocking its gender segregation, and later by coming between Omar and Johnny, attempting to engage either's attention as a means of escaping the stifling confinement of her family home. Ranasinha suggests that, despite Inderpal Grewal's view that Kureishi 'does not do too well with feminist issues [...], [i]n his characterization of Tania as fearless, outspoken and sexually free, Kureishi contests the trope of the submissive Asian daughter and undermines stereotypes of Asian women as passive and desexualized' (Ranasinha 2002: 48). Gopinath's reading of the film is less optimistic: '[t]he film's female diasporic character Tania, in fact, functions in a classic homosocial triangle as the conduit and foil to the desire between Johnny and Omar' (Gopinath 2005: 4). In addition, she persuasively argues that 'all too often diasporas are narrativized through the bonds of relationality between men' (2005: 5). Abbas concurs with Gopinath, suggesting that 'the world the film delineates has no space for Tania, or for a queer *female* subjectivity', although suggesting that 'the film is aware of this' (Abbas 2014: 15). While it is undeniable that *Laundrette*, and Kureishi's work more generally, is keenly focused on the interrogation of British and diasporic masculinities, Tania's changing material circumstances can still be interpreted as a significant rebuttal of diasporic patriarchal expectations on women. In addition, her negotiation of space challenges gender policing, while making the film's audience reconsider their preconceptions about Muslim femininity, hence micropolitically eroding well-established tropes about Islam and women.

Undeterred by Omar and Johnny's lack of interest in her erotic advances and in her plans to move out of the London suburbs, Tania refuses to be confined to a fixed, clear narrative, even stepping out of the boundaries of Kureishi's script. In the film's second-to-last scene, Tania is spotted by Nasser at Vauxhall rail station, visible across the way from her uncle Hussein's flat, only seconds after Hussein and Nasser had discussed the possibility of her marrying Omar. To Nasser's consternation, she simply disappears between passing trains, in a 'queering' of body and space that is neither a suicide in the style of Omar's mother, Mary, or a conventional scene in which we witness her sentimental departure. As Buchanan observes, Tania's disappearance constitutes 'a mysterious vanishing act which disturbs the already confused Nasser even more and is no doubt intended to show the unpredictable, fugitive nature of family relationships'

(Buchanan 2007: 116). Nasser's patriarchal disposition has alienated him from three of the most important women in his life: his wife Bilquis, by wilfully ignoring her desires; his mistress, Rachel, because of his failure to legitimise their relationship publicly; and his oldest daughter, Tania, by refusing her enough independence to decide her own fate. Tania's final decision to flee is a micropolitical rejection of gender roles, and her trajectory is suitably predicated as open-ended, matching Jagose's description of the 'queer'. By contrast, Gopinath is sceptical, arguing that 'Kureishi's framing of the female diasporic figure makes clear the ways in which even ostensibly progressive, gay male articulations of diaspora could run the risk of stabilizing sexual and gender hierarchies' (Gopinath 2005: 4–5). Gopinath's critique of the film as stabilising hierarchies concurs with Grewal's, who suggests that 'this disappearance seems to be the *only* solution for a feminist Asian woman' (quoted in Ranasinha 2002: 48). The proposal of a 'solution', however, disagrees with the film's purpose, and with Kureishi's craftsmanship more generally, since, for him, 'scepticism [is] preferable to didacticism or advocacy', since '[p]olitical or spiritual solutions render [...] the world less interesting' (Kureishi 2002: 8). *Laundrette* is not keen on providing a narrative solution to gender trouble that fits any macropolitical schemas or moral didacticism. Whilst the film remains aware of its own ideological horizons, it also creates an open-ended space for those British subjects of diasporic heritage, such as Tania, who refuse to comply with societal expectations. By allowing her to purposefully vanish out of view, *Laundrette* is also inflecting a queer micropolitics in this vanishing act, asking the film's minority (Muslim) audience to consider the relative lack of opportunity offered to young British Muslim women by residual patriarchal values, and compelling its majority (white) audiences to rethink the stereotype of the submissive and thoughtless Muslim woman.

Such rejection of macropolitical collusion does not mean the film is without a political purpose, since the violent relationship between bodies and spaces finally clinches its queer micropolitical commentary on race relations in multicultural Britain. The development of trust is effected through the expiation of racist ideologies through bodily experience, in the merging of queer bodies and spaces. The tense relations between the white and the Asian communities come to a head after Salim's exercise of

reverse racism, when, after stating that what Johnny's old gang needs 'is a taste of their own piss' (Kureishi 2000: 61), he drives over Moose's foot. Following this incident, Johnny explicitly refuses to engage further with Salim, and Genghis and his friends start patrolling POWDERS' environs, watching out for Salim. Eventually, they start destroying Salim's car while he is inside the laundrette, in a visually powerful scene, in which the stillness inside contrasts with the aggressive movements of the skinhead gang outside, destroying the car on the other side of the laundrette's window. This can be interpreted as an attack on Salim's privileged economic status in Britain. Ahmed suggests that '[b]odies tend toward some objects more than others given their tendencies' (Ahmed 2006: 58). Reflecting the economic precariousness of Thatcherite Britain, both the financially deprived racist gang and affluent Salim are suitably driven towards the symbol of wealth, and the car becomes an extension of Salim's body, which is also beaten up when he comes out of the laundrette to confront the attackers. While Salim is being attacked by the whole gang, Johnny publicly crosses the racial line to defend him, antagonising his former clan and effectively siding with the South Asian diasporic community. This is a moment of high political significance for the film that shatters ethnic separation and the fear of multicultural belonging.

In the footage, Johnny tells Genghis that he does not want to fight; nonetheless, like Salim, he also gets beaten up, before Omar comes to his rescue at the same time as the British police. It is at this moment that we witness a decisive phenomenological merging of bodies, objects, and space. While Omar is picking up Johnny's distressed body (his face now fully covered in blood) from beside the destroyed car, Genghis runs behind both of them, holding up a rubbish bin and shouting. For a second, it looks like he is going to hit both Omar and Johnny; instead, he turns at the last moment and puts the bin through the laundrette's window. Significantly Omar and Johnny's queer bodies acquire micropolitical significance as they become one with the troubled queer spaces of their smashed up laundrette. In fact, the violence that Johnny receives from his confederates seems to be what is necessary in order to atone for his racist past; this bodily sufferance starts to develop multicultural trust, since Omar seems reassured by this act, and appears visibly elated by Johnny's heroism, telling him, in the soothing spaces of POWDERS' back

room: 'You're dirty. You're beautiful. [...] I'm going to give you a wash' (Kureishi 2000: 68). After Tania's departure, and while we watch POWDERS' broken spaces, in the back room, Omar and Johnny are shown washing each other, their act of cleansing symbolising an ethnic and sexual assemblage that has come out of the renegotiation and expiation of Britain's racist history.

While Johnny and Omar splash each other amidst laughter, the door closes in on us, acting as a theatre curtain, in playful reference to Kureishi's own theatrical beginnings. Gayatri Spivak argues that 'the two boys had been kept in the same place; the development of the solution to racial problems' and deems this optimistic denouement too overtly 'didactic' (Spivak 1993: 249). Conversely, I would suggest Omar and Johnny's relationship has been presented as multilayered, through the aforementioned superimposition of bodies and spaces and their eventual micropolitical merging of intersectional ethnic and sexual debates, which refuse to ring with any glib moral or macropolitical rhetoric, and which generate trust between opposite factions of British society. In fact, the film's final blending of blood and water could be interpreted as a queer reconfiguration of prominent racist imagery, particularly that of Enoch Powell's incendiary 'Rivers of Blood' speech,⁸ in which he warned the British nation that 'the black man would have the whip hand over [the white British population]' (Gilroy 1987: 48). Blood has indeed been spilled because of racial unrest, within a context where the 'black man' (Omar) has occasionally had the economic 'whip' over the white man (Johnny), but this fact has been ostensibly qualified by Johnny's wilful rejection of his involvement with the National Front and his physical expiation of his racist past, which leads Omar to trust him. It has also been checked by Omar's final embrace of Johnny, cancelling their hierarchical relationship and leading to a cathartic moment of assembled intimacy, of multicultural trust, whereby brown and white bodies wash each other in materially checked but affectively strengthened queer spaces. This is Kureishi's most hopeful picture of race relations in Britain to date, one that is playfully anarchic and non-partisan, and which subverts normative ideologies by making strategic recourse to queerness. As I have shown, instead of subscribing to a totalising macropolitical worldview, Kureishi allows *Laundrette* to function micropolitically, affectively eroding at the heteronormative and

monocultural biases of mainstream nationalist and diasporic ideologies in Britain, in a way that presciently anticipates some of the political turmoil surrounding the publication of *The Satanic Verses* but which retains hope for the ability of normative ideologies, whether of majority or minority ethnic groupings, to be gradually qualified in order to foster trust across ethnic lines. Thirty years on from its original release, *Laundrette's* intersectional approach still has the power to tease and disorientate its audience, drawing attention to Britain's social groupings, and suggesting the transgressive assemblage of various discourses of emancipation (i.e. queer, feminist, ethnic, class-related) as the best hope for Britain as a truly multicultural nation.

Notes

1. The polemic surrounding *The Satanic Verses* has left a clear imprint on Kureishi's work. In 'The Word and the Bomb', Kureishi asserts that '[t]he Rushdie case remains instructive. In the end it is Islam itself which suffers from the repudiation of more sensual and dissident ideas of itself' (Kureishi 2005: 11). Kureishi's second novel, *The Black Album*, set in London in 1989, follows the movements of the diffident British Muslim Shahid Hasan, who becomes involved, and eventually disenchanted, with a group of politically active Muslims who condemn the publication of Rushdie's novel. Kureishi's narrative features its own book-burning scene mirroring similar historical events involving *The Satanic Verses*. 'Bradford' (Kureishi 2005: 75–80) features Kureishi's visit to the Northern British city, and what he perceived as a hub of Islamist sentiment subsequently informed his post-Rushdie and post-Gulf War short story 'My Son the Fanatic' (Kureishi 2010: 116–127) and his eponymous adaptation of it to film released in 1997. As a self-declared atheist of Muslim ethnic heritage, Kureishi's relationship with Islam remains ambivalent: he can passionately defend freedom of speech against Islamic offence and condemn Islamic fundamentalism, whilst castigating racial profiling of Muslims and Western interventionism in Muslim-majority countries. Due to his British upbringing and his distance from Muslim ideologies, Kureishi's cultural position can be a double-edged sword most sharply deployed in his creative work, while his essays betray a not too sophisticated understanding of Islam and an eagerness to embrace the legacies of Enlightenment.

2. These include David Lean's remarkably free adaptation of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, the film version of M. M. Kaye's *The Far Pavilions*, and ITV's grand adaptation of Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*, *The Jewel in the Crown*. Rushdie's astringent reservations about films and TV series produced in the 1980s and set in the Indian colonial past are articulated in his famous essay 'Outside the Whale', collected in *Imaginary Homelands*, where he observes that 'the British Raj, after three and a half decades in retirement, has been making a sort of comeback' (Rushdie 1992: 87). Bart Moore-Gilbert offers a perceptive reading of *Laundrette* as a response to this Raj-Revivalist cultural trend and to the popular genre of 'heritage film', although such analysis is sometimes undertaken at the expense of oversimplifying the work of other independent production companies, such as Merchant-Ivory. The equally independently produced and class conscious *A Room with a View*, produced by the postcolonial team of Ismail Merchant, James Ivory, and Ruth Praver Jhabvala, released in 1985, also features Daniel Day-Lewis, in a critique of the biases and exclusions of the British class system during the Edwardian period.
3. According to Moore-Gilbert, Kureishi's films aim to 'counter a more specific manifestation of the New Right's assault on "permissiveness", its desire to curb homosexuality' (Moore-Gilbert 2001: 87), and he lists Thatcher's failure, fuelled by the AIDS crisis, to bring homosexual age of consent in par with its heterosexual counterpart and the discouragement of discussions of homosexuality enforced through the gagging Section 28, part of the Local Governments Act of 1988, which forbade the public 'promotion' of homosexuality.
4. Kureishi's use of irony ensures that his critique is neither too acerbic nor victimising. His most salient use of irony in *Laundrette* involves an inversion of imperialism. John Hill argues that 'a part of the film's strategy is to use the business success of the Asian characters to invert old imperial power relations' (1999: 210). In addition, Bradley Buchanan suggests that '[i]rony is Kureishi's most reliable trope, and he evinces scepticism about the capacity of any group or ideology to effect lasting or meaningful change' (Buchanan 2007: 14).
5. One of the film's original American reviewers, Rita Kempley, concurs with those critics who question the film's veracity, when she observes that '[t]he two men fall in love in this heady atmosphere of suds and soap; their heads spin like the clothes in a tub. It all seems to come *out of nowhere*' (Kempley 1986: 25; my italics). According to Kempley and other like-minded commentators, the relationship between Omar, a mixed-race

British man, and Johnny, a white Briton who formerly supported the National Front, would seem, at best, unexpected, and, at worst, improbable. However, their liaison mirrors that of Kureishi himself with one of his friends earlier in life, ‘who became Johnny in *My Beautiful Laundrette*’ (Kureishi 2002: 26), with an added element of ‘wishing’. In an interview with Susie Thomas, Kureishi declares: ‘You might say that one of the most important parts of you is your wishing, your desire, and in your writing there might be a lot of wishing’ (Thomas 2007: 11). However, as I propose earlier, the film’s intentions reach beyond mimesis and social realism.

6. Rahul. K. Gairola’s analysis of this scene is particularly insightful: ‘This scene is especially significant if we consider its framing. Frears situates the two men in the foreground of a one-way mirror looking out into the laundrette, where Nasser and his mistress Rachel are dancing to a waltz. Behind Rachel and Nasser, a crowd of working class locals eagerly awaits the laundrette’s grand opening. Frears maps out the boys in the foreground having sex in the backroom upon the image of Nasser and Rachel kissing on the other side of the one-way mirror. This shooting technique not only humanises both couples using close-ups and soft colours but suggests that both modes of eroticism are equally transgressive in the face of the heteronormativity that drives Thatcher’s economic liberalism’ (Gairola 2009: 45).
7. Gairola usefully notes that ‘[i]n South Asian culture, the term “aunty” does not literally denote one’s blood-aunt. Rather, it is a gentile colloquialism used to address elder women who are family friends or to express a respectful familiarity’ (Gairola 2009: 53n).
8. Paul Gilroy’s seminal study *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack* draws critical attention to Powell’s highly polarising political rhetoric. Gilroy has stated that Powell’s ethnocentric position constructs ‘black presence [...] as a problem or threat against which a homogenous, white, national “we” could be unified’ (Gilroy 1987: 48). In ‘The Rainbow Sign’, Kureishi himself confesses the negative effect that Powell’s speeches had on him as a teenager, which made him feel ashamed of his South Asian heritage, since ‘[t]he word “Pakistani” had been made into an insult. It was a word I didn’t want to be used about myself. I couldn’t tolerate being myself’ (Kureishi 2002: 28).

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11

Multiculturalism and Muslims in Germany: An Unwelcomed Reality?

Asmaa Soliman

Introduction

The high influx of Syrian refugees to Germany in recent years has sparked old debates about the place of Muslims in Germany. Studies, such as the one conducted by the University of Leipzig in 2016, show that there is an increase of Islamophobia in Germany. More than 40 per cent of the respondents oppose the immigration of Muslims to Germany (Decker et al. 2016). Not only the waves of refugees arriving to Europe but more so reactions to major events across Europe, such as the 2015 Paris attacks or the Christmas market attack that happened in Berlin in 2016, are moments that exacerbate relations of trust between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Europe. For some, these incidents serve as a clear justification for the closure of Europe's borders because of the stereotyped perception that Arabs and Muslims pose a threat to Europe. Heated discussions about multiculturalism and the presence of Muslims in German society have contributed to an increased scrutiny of Muslim communities.

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Indeed, in the current climate, ongoing atrocities undertaken by ISIS, in the name of Islam, reignite fear toward Muslims in Europe and the 'Muslim question' continues to be in the spotlight. Thus the multicultural reality in Germany is often characterised by mistrust, lack of understanding and anxiety.

The case studies in this chapter draw on individuals who were part of a broader research project that was conducted at University College London. The project examined young German Muslims' public engagement in relation to their German Muslim identities between 2012 and 2014 across various cities in Germany. Research participants were second generation young German Muslims, who consider themselves religious and who were and are actively involved in various spaces of the public sphere including media, the arts and civic society. In this paper, I refer to seven participants from my original research study. They include Saloua Mohammed, Soufeina Hamed, Nuri Senay, Yasmina Sayhi, Kuebra Guemuesay and two anonymous members of the social network *Zahnraeder*. Saloua Mohammed founded the volunteer association *Lifemakers* in 2003. *Lifemakers* is a youth association that is concerned with voluntary social work, covering a wide range of activities. Soufeina Hamed is a cartoonist. Her comics and cartoons can be found online at www.tuffix.deviantart.com.

Nuri Senay is the founder of *muslime.tv*, a media platform that presents diverse Muslims from Germany in a documentary style. He founded *muslime.tv* in June 2010. Yasmina Sayhi is the main founder of *Cube Mag*. *Cube Mag* is a youth journal that was first published in 2009. Kuebra Guemuesay is a journalist, columnist and blogger. In 2008, she founded her blog *Ein Fremdwörterbuch* for which she is most popular. *Ein Fremdwörterbuch* can be translated as *A Dictionary of Foreign Words*. *Zahnraeder* (*Gear Wheels*) was founded in 2010. It is a nationwide NGO, supporting social entrepreneurship among Muslims in Germany and encouraging social projects that benefit the wider society. It organises regular *Zahnraeder* conferences during which young Muslims get the chance to present their project ideas and collaborate with one another.

The chapter is divided into two sections. First, I provide an introduction to multiculturalism and Muslims in Germany covering a general overview, public opinion polls, political statements, media representations and comments by scholars. Then, I present in-depth insights into German Muslims' own viewpoints about the acceptance of their German Muslim identity and society's openness towards multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism and Muslims in Germany

Germany has the largest Muslim population in Western Europe after France. Between 3.8 and 4.3 million Muslims live in Germany, and they constitute around 5 per cent of the total population (Haug et al. 2009). Most Muslims in Germany are of Turkish origin. The second largest group of Muslims comes from Bosnia, Bulgaria and Albania. The third biggest group has Middle Eastern origins and the fourth biggest group comes from North Africa. As regards Muslims' denominations in Germany, the majority are Sunnites. In respect of religiosity, most Muslims consider themselves religious (Haug et al. 2009). Thirty-six per cent see themselves as very religious whereas 50 per cent state that they are religious. A little under 50 per cent of Muslims in Germany have German citizenship. Today, there are Muslims of first, second, third and, in some cases, fourth generation living in Germany.

Muslims have been present in Germany since the seventeenth century. Ottomans came during several wars to Germany, either as military officials or as prisoners of war. After World War I, students, intellectuals and converts constituted a small Muslim community that was mainly active in Berlin and opened the first mosque in Berlin in 1924. The first major wave of Muslims arrived in Germany as labour immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s mainly from Turkey, and also from North African and Eastern European countries (Muehe 2007; Schiffauer 2005). Initially they were expected to leave after their work was accomplished. In 1973,

the period of recruitment was officially stopped. However, only half of the four million immigrants actually left the country. Moreover, those who stayed brought their families to Germany fearing stricter rules on immigration. After 1973, family reunion became the main form of Muslim migration to Germany (Wolbert 1984). During the 1980s, most Muslims who came to Germany were refugees and asylum seekers. Labour immigrants were usually concentrated in so-called ethnic districts that are still visible in the residential distribution of today. However, over time, many Muslims started to move to regular inner-city areas.

With regard to employment, the majority of first generation immigrants are workers. They often have unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in various areas, such as mining, textile, handicraft and car industries (*Euro-Islam Info* 2013; Muehe 2007). Yet they are totally underrepresented in the domain of public service. Remarkably, there is a high proportion of self-employed individuals within Muslim communities in Germany. Still, unemployment remains a big problem. Unemployment rates are consistently twice as high for non-Germans, with Turkish immigrants being in the worst situation (Blaschke 2004; Vollmer 2004). Muslims face similar disadvantages as other immigrants in the German labour market. This can partly be traced back to their insecure residence status and to the lack of German citizenship that restricts access to the labour market. A further reason for high unemployment rates among Muslims can be ascribed to lower levels of education. The latest PISA studies show that immigrants as well as children of immigrants, including Muslims, are not as successful in schools as children of German origin (Muehe 2007). Compared to Germans, they are more likely to be in lower division schools and to leave school without a degree. However, there is a remarkable diversity of education levels within Muslim communities (Haug 2011). Muslims with African, Middle Eastern and Asian origins present the highest levels of education. Lack of education among Muslim immigrants is mainly ascribed to recruitment of less-qualified migrant

workers during the 1960s and 1970s. A more nuanced picture shows that the second and third generations of Muslim immigrants have higher educational attainments than the first generation.

In respect of political participation, there is a very limited political representation of Muslims in Germany (Muehe 2007). While there are some individual politicians who have a Muslim background, only a few of those who regard themselves as Muslims and who feel close to Muslims' interests can be found within the political spectrum. Considering the limited political representation of Muslims in Germany, Muslim organisations play an important role in representing Muslims' concerns. There are four main Muslim umbrella organisations in Germany, namely the 'Tuerkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt und Religion' (DITIB), the 'Islamrat fuer die Bundesrepublik Deutschland' (IRD), the 'Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren' (VIKZ) and the 'Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland' (ZMD) (Amiriaux 1996; Engelbrecht 2010; Thielmann 2006). Regarding state-led organisations, the German government launched the 'Deutsche Islamkonferenz' ('German Islam Conference') in 2006, whereby it aims to speak to a unified body of Muslim representatives about Islam-related issues (Bodenstein 2010; Kerber 2010; Thielmann 2010).

Several scholars emphasise that unlike other immigration countries, Germany has only recently acknowledged that it is an immigration country (Amir-Moazami 2005a; Schiffauer 2006; Nielsen 2004; Bade 1997; Muenz and Ulrich 1997). There is a preference for a mono-cultural society, and there is an unease with the idea of multicultural society (Amir-Moazami 2005a). Generally, the debate about multiculturalism in Germany has revealed considerable criticism of efforts that promote multiculturalism (Chin 2007). Multiculturalism has repeatedly been accused of having separationist, dangerous effects. It is argued that even though, since the 1990s, some German politicians started to stress the importance of a multicultural approach in Germany, taking the UK as a positive example, there were no substantial changes in German policies (Amir-Moazami 2005a). Multicultural policies are only partially supported. Although one

can say that there is a reality of multiculturalism in terms of different cultural and religious communities living in Germany, it is a rather unwelcomed reality.

Immigrants are still not seen as a self-evident part of Germany but rather as objects that have to be regulated by the state. Minorities continue to remain outsiders and are distinguished from Germans in several ways, especially legally, economically and ethnically (Panayi 2000). In respect of Muslims, Frank Peter (2009) describes policies towards Muslims in Germany as a form of 'rationalised tolerance policy', that is, as a liberal strategy of exclusion where the acknowledgement that Muslims should be respected in their difference remains unacceptable. Differences associated with Islam are often seen as narrow-minded and potentially violent, which have to be restricted by top-down policies (Amir-Moazami 2005b). Schirin Amir-Moazami (2005a) observes that there is a preference of politicians to define what counts as legitimate Islam in Germany. It is reflected by a one-way process 'which presupposes the ability and willingness of Muslims to submerge themselves into the dominant norms of the recipient societies' and which departs from the multiculturalist concept of integration (Amir-Moazami 2005a: 23). One might argue that the German Islam Conference that was initiated by the government in 2006 illustrates a step forward in Germany's multiculturalist policies towards Muslims. However, several critics as well as Muslim members doubt the conference's intentions and progress. They see it as a top-down policy that seems to be primarily concerned with security issues (Silvestri 2010). It is argued that it does not reflect a genuine dialogue where the concerns of Muslims are acknowledged (Amir-Moazami 2011). Additionally, the composition of Muslim participants is vehemently criticised by numerous representatives of Muslim umbrella organisations (Lau 2006; Riedel 2010). They argue that it is a selective choice that ignores Muslims' self-organisation and prefers a specific form of Islam.

Generally, relations between politicians and Muslim organisations are said to be rather complicated (Muehe 2007). The *Verfassungsschutz*, Germany's internal intelligence service, is commissioned with

differentiating between moderate and dangerous Muslim organisations (Schiffauer 2006). However, its strict and hasty dealing with Muslim organisations by categorising them as Islamist threats without decisive proof has damaged relations between the two sides (Schiffauer 2010; Thielmann 2010; Lemmen 2000; Ozkan 2011). With his book *Nach dem Islamismus*, Werner Schiffauer, for example, challenges the common view that the Muslim organisation *Milli Goerues* is still oriented towards Islamism (Schiffauer 2010). Schiffauer (2006) argues that claiming rights, especially demands that are related to recognition of differences, creates fear and suspicion within the political sphere (Schiffauer 2006).

Even though the notions of German 'Leitkultur' and cultural nation are contested nowadays, it is often argued that they are still quite popular. Some claim that this continuing strong attachment to an ethno-cultural concept of citizenship can be related to Germany's history (Amiriaux 1996; Koopmans 1999; Brubaker 1992). The division of Germany during the Cold War and the problematic situation of ethnic German minorities in Eastern Europe are said to have contributed to the desire of a citizenship model that unites all ethnic Germans.

In respect of the concept of cultural nation, it can be said that it goes back to the nineteenth century, even before the partition of Germany (Weigel 2008). As a 'belated nation', this concept developed to mark a community with a common cultural tradition that unites all its members, even if it still does not have a nation-state and a constitution. It is contended that the drive to liberate German society from France strengthened longing for a German cultural nation (Chadde 2009). A cultural nation stands for a nation that shares a common culture, a common history, a common language and common experiences (Henningsen 2000/2001; Weigel 2008). Importance is often attached to the protection of the nation's culture and in transferring its cultural traditions over generations. In contrast to the concept of a nation-state that values political unity, this concept values ethno-cultural unity over political unity. In the context of Germany, as Dominik Haemmerl (2011) emphasises, Christian-occidental values are referred to as important components of

German 'Leitkultur' in addition to a common history, a common language and common traditions. He cites the CSU's convention programme of 2007 that says the following:

The CSU avows itself to the German cultural nation. Its language, history, traditions and Christian-occidental values constitute the German 'Leitkultur'. (Excerpt of the CSU Basic Policy Programme cited in Haemmerl 2011: 15, my translation)

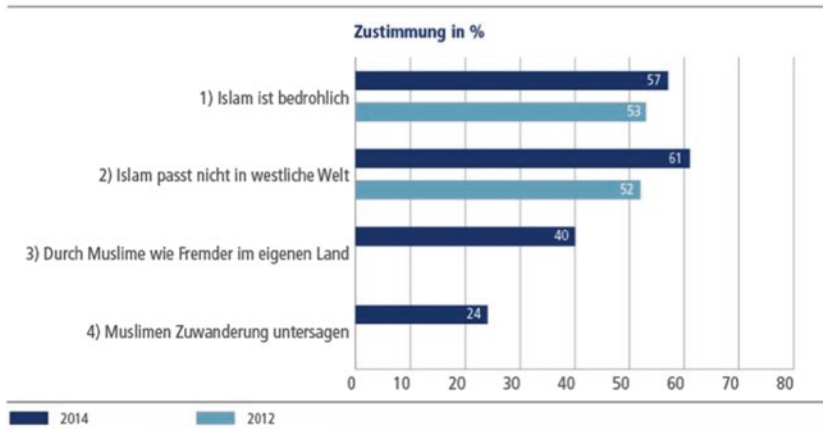
The problem with such a concept is that it involves an automatic exclusion and dissociation of outsiders who do not share the same culture and who do not meet the requirements of inclusion. It creates a 'we-group' opposed to foreigners. Due to the fact that it aims at the homogenisation of a collective, there is little space for cultures that are not part of the nation's self-definition. Consequently, there is a preference to ask people whose cultures differ from one's cultural nation to assimilate and to adapt to it. A further problem is that it implies the idea that one's culture is superior to others (Haemmerl 2011). It has been said that even if the ethno-centric identification of a cultural nation is not per se racist, there is a danger of racist tendencies.

Public opinion in Germany about Muslims and Islam is not very positive. A poll that was conducted by ARD Infratest dimap in 2010 says that there is a remarkable hostility towards Muslims in Germany and reports the following results (*Spiegel* 2010): 37 per cent of 1000 respondents think that Germany would be better without Islam; 35 per cent are concerned about Islam's spread in Germany and 44 per cent argue that since the debate about Thilo Sarrazin's book about Muslims, one can dare to criticise Islam more openly.¹ Another poll that was undertaken by the University of Muenster for the excellence cluster 'Religion and Politics' finds that Germans are more critical towards Islam than several other European countries (*Die Welt* 2010; Pollack 2011). The results show that 40 per cent of West Germans and 50 per cent of East Germans feel endangered by foreign cultures and the idea that Islam belongs to Germany does not find much resonance. The study argues that in comparison to France, the Netherlands and Denmark, there is more intolerance of 'foreign' religions in Germany. Less than 5 per cent Germans think of Islam as a

tolerant religion. In West Germany, 34 per cent think positively about Islam and in East Germany only 26 per cent. Less than 30 per cent in West Germany and less than 20 per cent in East Germany support the building of mosques. According to another study undertaken by the US-based Pew Research Centre, 70 per cent of Germans consider the relations between Muslims and Western countries to be generally bad, which is the highest percentage among all Western countries (Muehe 2007). Generally, a rise of anti-Islamic sentiment is noticed (Schiffer 2011).

A recent study published in 2015 by the Bertelsmann Stiftung, confirms results of previously mentioned surveys (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2015). It observes a spread of Islamophobia, arguing that it is much more than an exception. The following illustration shows in more detail Germans' attitudes towards Muslims in the years 2012 and 2014. The first statement with which 57 per cent agreed in 2014 and 53 per cent in 2012 is 'Islam is threatening'. The second statement is 'Islam does not fit into the Western world'. It was found that 61 per cent supported this statement in 2014 and 52 per cent supported it in 2012. The third statement reads as follows: 'Through Muslims one feels like a foreigner in one's own country'. It was found that 40 per cent agreed with this in 2014. The last statement, which was embraced by 24 per cent of German society says 'Prohibit Muslims immigration'.

Abbildung 1: Einstellungen zum Islam und zu Muslimen in den Jahren 2012 und 2014



Source: Bertelsmann Stiftung

Debates about Muslims and Islam in Germany as well as about the compatibility of Islamic values and German values are increasingly gaining relevance (Baumgarten 2011). Often, discourses about Muslims in Germany are characterised by fear, misunderstanding and negative connotations. Public rhetoric reflects a rather polarised relation between Islam and Germany with titles like ‘Fear of Islam’, ‘The Headscarf and Qur’an: Has Germany capitulated?’ or ‘How much Islam can the State bear?’ (Coruh 2011). It has been observed that especially since 9/11 Muslims in Germany are often suspected of being potential terrorists (Bosse and Vior 2005; Muehe 2007). This view is not only common among some circles of the population but also among some parts of the political spectrum where an increasing use of surveillance on Muslim citizens can be seen (Schiffauer 2004). Such a suspicious attitude towards Muslims is not limited to particular extremist groups but affects the wider Muslim community. Schiffauer (2006) argues that there is a ‘moral panic’ underlying discourses and representations of Muslims. It is characterised by exaggerated claims about threats and an atmosphere of suspicion.

Also with regard to the media, studies show that there is a rather negative portrayal of Muslims (Muehe 2007; Schiffer 2005; Macgilchrist and Boehming 2012; Frindte et al. 2011; Ramm 2010). Kai Hafez (2011) argues that the enemy image of Islam was confirmed by various empirical social studies. Islam is often connected to issues like terrorism, radicalisation, oppression of woman and fanaticism. Moreover, a strong politicisation of Islam and a narrow selection of topics mostly associated with violence can be observed in the media’s representation of Muslims in Germany from the late 1970s onwards, particularly in the aftermath of the Iranian revolution.

Young German Muslims and Their Feelings of Belonging

The formation of hybrid identities, which stand for the encounter ‘of two ethnic or cultural categories which, while by no means pure and distinct in nature, tend to be understood and experienced as meaningful identity’,

plays a crucial role especially among younger generations of Muslims in Europe (Lo 2002: 199). When asked how they would define themselves, the research participants say they have multifaceted identities involving various layers. With regard to their attachment to religion and culture specifically, three components are important for all of them, namely their German identity, their Muslim identity and their original ethnic identity. Saloua Mohammed, for example, describes herself as German Muslim with Moroccan origins. She expresses this mixed identity feeling as follows:

Moroccan [identity] is my origin, my parents, the parent's home, the upbringing and yes something very beautiful, a beautiful mark on my spirit. I also feel very connected with my parent's homeland. But I am not 100 per cent only that and I notice this again and again when I travel to Morocco in the summer break. I am quite thoroughly German...I have in different respects a German way of thinking, in quotation marks, but I would say I am by far more flexible in my German way of thinking than someone with German origins. And this is the Moroccan touch or Oriental touch...Muslima of course out-and-out, I try to lead a spiritual life to a large extent. (Mohammed 2014, personal communication)

Similarly, *Zahnraeder* sees herself in multiple ways. She perceives herself as a German Muslim with Pakistani cultural origins and describes her identity as follows:

I can never say I am the one or the other. Both countries are part of who I am...I live in between two cultures and I have found my own way... Religion plays an immense role in my life... While carrying out my day-to-day actions as a German citizen, Islamic values influence and accompany me throughout my day. Both identities are so closely attached to each other that I cannot even dismantle them. I can neither abstain from the one nor the other. I combine them easily with each other...they influence each other. (*Zahnraeder* member 1, 2012, personal communication)

Saying that she cannot dismantle the different identity layers illustrates that her German, Muslim and Pakistani identities are mixed in such a way that it is not possible to isolate them from each other.

The research participants favour the view that identity does not have to be reduced to one main attachment, even if there is one identity that is more relevant than the others. In their opinion, one can be many different things at the same time. When asked how she sees herself, Soufeina Hamed responds as follows:

I believe that human beings don't only have one identity. I believe that the word identity, because it is singular, leads to the assumption that there is only one identity. I believe that human beings have different identities. Of course, I can describe myself as a Muslima but also as a daughter, as an artist, as a psychologist. I would be very detailed when going through important fields of my life. (Hamed 2014, personal communication)

There is a strong refusal of views that categorise individuals into single identity boxes. Kuebra Guemuesay believes that restrictive identity perceptions are misleading. She does not like questions that ask her to choose between different identities and elaborates on this as follows:

When someone asks me whether I am German or Turkish I say it's just a category, I don't have to decide...I give the facts when someone asks me who I am. I am of Turkish origin, born and raised in Germany. I sort of avoid the question when someone asks me 'are you German or Turkish or Muslim or whatever' because I feel that it is limiting and reducing myself to certain labels that do not describe me. (Guemuesay 2013, personal communication)

Again, the idea that one has to choose between different identities is challenged.

Even though the participants define themselves as German Muslims, they argue that it is not always easy to have such an identity. Particularly, the feeling of being German is often questioned from the outside. The rather negative attitude towards Muslims, as well as the lack of the recognition of Muslims as part of German society, as outlined above, is often sensed by German Muslims. Although this sentiment was both shared by male and female participants, it seems that Muslim women who are publically visible face more difficulties. Often references are made to their headscarves as

markers of non-belonging. Kuebra Guemuesay, for example, shares instances where she was told that she does not belong to German society because of her veil and where she was verbally attacked:

I felt very strongly about my German identity. I was always saying, you know, I am German and it is very clear. And I would tell my friends 'You are German, you should tell everyone that you are German, they can't take it away from you'. And then I had a moment where it really broke me. It was when someone told me that I wasn't German because I was wearing the headscarf, which is like a small incident but to me it meant a lot. Those people meant a lot to me. They were people that I have spent two years of my life with and they were studying Politics together with me...So, that moment made me feel like, you know, this adopted child of a family and everyone is like, yeah, she is adopted. She feels like she is part of the family, but she is not really part of us and then she finds out. That is how I felt, like I never belonged but I thought I belonged and everyone was making fun of me. That is how I felt in that moment and it really broke my heart... I had a few encounters that struck me...I think on the street I met this lady who shouted at me and said 'Schleiereule' and she looked like a very well-educated, well-off woman and it really struck me. I was super surprised and I did not expect that to happen in that area of Hamburg that was very well-off and I didn't expect this from a lady like her...There were a few other incidents at the same time, I was working for a German TV station and I had the most Islamophobic, racist experience I have ever had in my entire life (Guemuesay 2013, personal communication).

This excerpt brings to the fore the hardship that German Muslims can face as Muslims living in Germany. The idea that they feel completely German yet are told otherwise because of their Muslim association is conveyed. The second incident Guemuesay mentions reflects her personal experience of being verbally attacked and insulted because of her Islamic veil. The expression 'Schleiereule' stands for barn owl. It is a targeted term of abuse directed at veiled Muslims who are equated with this specific type of nocturnal and secretive bird. Such experiences of recognition illustrate discrepancies between German Muslims'

self-understanding and the ways in which they are seen by the wider society. Nuri Senay, for example, says that while he identifies as German, Muslim and Turkish, he sometimes feels to be the one more than the other and vice versa. He describes this as follows:

When the political situation and the general mood are against migrants and Muslims, I withdraw into my Muslim or my Turkish identity. When the situation is more relaxed my German identity is stronger and also the identification with Germany. (Senay 2012, personal communication)

This shows that his identity is strongly influenced by how he feels, which is in turn influenced by public and political attitudes towards Muslims. It illustrates that identity is not only a result of how one perceives oneself but also how one is perceived by others.

Yasmina Sayhi stresses that the way in which she is perceived by German society influences her feelings of comfort about her German Muslim identity. She argues that although many Muslims feel at home in Germany, German society is still reluctant to accept Muslims as equal citizens. According to her 'there are often worlds in between' regarding the way in which she sees herself and the way German society sees her (Sayhi 2012, personal communication). Sayhi emphasises that she has to fight to find her place in German society. Soufeina Hamed also argues that having a German identity as a Muslim is not easy. She expresses her disappointment as follows:

It is an issue in Germany that one still refers humans back to their origins. One feels the urge to categorise others. It does not have to be negative and, of course, this topic, religion and culture and the mixing of both, that wearing a scarf means that one does not belong. This is something I also feel, that I am never really seen as part of German culture, even though I have a German passport, my mother is German and I feel German. Yet from the outside I never have the feeling that I am really part of it. (Hamed 2014, personal communication)

Even though Hamed's mother is ethnically German, she conveys the idea that one's Muslim identity places one outside German culture.

According to Hamed, there is a constant need to justify oneself for one's German Muslim identity. She underlines that 'one is automatically in a position in which...one has to defend oneself, to justify oneself for one's choice' (Hamed 2014, personal communication). This need to justify oneself as a German Muslim is something that came up repeatedly in my interviews. A member of *Zahnraeder* stresses that by having a German Muslim identity, one becomes like a lawyer who is expected to not only defend himself but also the whole Muslim community:

Being a Muslim, it was always different being a Muslim because no matter where I told people that I am a Muslim I always had this feeling that, you know, in the beginning I had to justify myself for being a Muslim... My identity as a Muslim made me somebody, to an advocate, to a lawyer, to somebody who was defending Muslims. (*Zahnraeder* member 2, 2013, personal communication)

Several German Muslims express their criticism towards narrow-minded concepts of German identity. According to *Zahnraeder*, two member conceptions of Germanness that are based on ethnicity are rather exclusive:

In Germany, where I grew up, who is who is based on ethnicity. But, you know, I don't buy into this...I was aware of other people and their static conceptions of being Muslim and being German. But I was never satisfied with that... I saw German Germans telling German Muslims that they are not German enough...There was something I really disliked about this whole identity and nationality and religious stuff...It has something exclusive...It is always some people who have the legitimacy of deciding upon, okay, who can join and who can't. I disliked this idea because in my understanding of being German, of being Muslim, it is not something exclusive. It is something everybody can join...People are afraid of taking this step of defining themselves in a new way...I think people are conservative in this point... I really think that Germany at a certain point, compared to, you know, its Western neighbours, has a deficit in this regard. (*Zahnraeder* member 2, 2013, personal communication)

One can sense the youths' frustration about ethnic-based definitions of German identity. By saying that some people 'have the legitimacy of deciding' who is German and who is not, one understands that there are powerful external mechanisms claiming authority over the definition of who counts as German. Saloua Mohammed also sees that Germany is, in comparison to other countries, not fully open-minded towards different cultural and religious groups. She argues that this contradicts the public call for appreciation of diversity:

Well, I am again and again shocked when I see that on the one hand, we live in an age where it is said 'Yeah, transnational, transatlantic thinking and without barriers, without limits and we are after all one small village, globalisation blah blah blah'. Yet, I still attract attention with my, in my opinion and for myself, very normal multiple identities and unfortunately not only positively, but instead with particular enemy images. Nobody asked me whether I want to be categorised in [this way] and in which I, honestly speaking, do not find myself...I see that Germany, in comparison is a bit more narrow-minded when it comes to openness towards others. Or more specifically when you are not only different, in quotation marks, but also a Muslima and maybe you also show this openly. Then one is very sceptical towards you, not all human beings, I don't want to generalise but the majority. One sees question marks. And I can't really classify this because it is a bit contradictory with what one tries to articulate here in the name of mainstream openness, diversity and 'we are all so open'. (Mohammed 2014, personal communication)

It is obvious that there is a sentiment of discomfort with German Muslim identity. By saying that she still 'attracts attention' and people are 'sceptical towards' her due to her Muslim identity, German society's lack of trust towards Muslims is brought to the fore. One can not only sense Mohammed's deep disappointment but also her scepticism of Germany's public call for openness.

These different statements touch upon previously mentioned literature that claim there is a German particularity with regard to immigrants, characterised by a strict definition of German citizenship based on descent (Amiraux 1996; Seifert 1997; Brubaker 1992; Mandel 2008). All participants argue that their Muslim identity makes them be perceived as less

German. Dominik Haemmerl's (2011) idea that Christian-occidental values are referred to as important components of German 'Leitkultur' seems to play a role in the case studies' awareness. Scholars' arguments about Germany's difficulty with the acceptance of multiculturalism and the recognition of Muslims are reflected in young German Muslims' experiences. As discussed above, the idea that Germany is a multicultural country is not very popular within German society (Amir-Moazami 2005a; Chin 2007). The research participants feel that there is an 'us versus them' distinction, which according to Werner Schiffauer (2006) is often used in Germany as a marker between ethnic Germans and immigrant minorities. People who do not have purely German origins and who feel attached to other identifications are often not fully seen as parts of society. They are seen as 'foreign' and 'different'. Panikus Panayi's (2000) argument that non-ethnic Germans are still not seen as a self-evident part of Germany and continue to remain outsiders finds resonance. It seems that recognising equality and difference, which multiculturalist theorists such as Tariq Modood (2012) and Charles Taylor (1992) reflect on, is not seen in a relational way. The two concepts are rather seen in oppositional terms. Once one is perceived as 'different', it seems that one is not seen as an equal part of society.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at multiculturalism and Muslims in Germany, arguing that there is a huge gap between a multicultural reality, on the one hand, and an acceptance of multiculturalism and multicultural identities, on the other. Relations between Muslim communities and the wider German society are still characterised by a lack of trust. This is not only confirmed by scholars' analyses, political statements and public opinion polls but also mirrored in German Muslims' own experiences. In conversation with the literature, this ethnographic research shows that although the research participants strongly identify as German Muslims, they do not feel as equal citizens of German society. These young German Muslims

feel that there is still an ‘us versus them’ distinction, arguing that due to their Muslim affiliation, their belonging to German ‘Leitkultur’ is often questioned by wider society, something that is also reflected in public opinion polls as illustrated earlier in the chapter. In order to change the status quo, an important step forward would be to strengthen relations of trust between Muslim minorities and wider German society. In the current climate where both Islamist and right-wing extremism is on the rise and where deadly attacks have shaken several European countries, there is an urgent need to counteract fear and prejudices. European societies, particularly Germany, have to move beyond multiculturalism as tolerance to more inclusive public cultures that replace the securitisation of Muslims with a commitment to the integration of Muslim communities.

Notes

1. Thilo Sarrazin, a German SPD politician, and the author of *Deutschland Schaffi Sich Ab (Germany Abolishes Itself)* has sparked a heated debate since the publication of his controversial book in 2010. His claims about Muslims were perceived as Islamophobic, polemic and inaccurate.

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12

Living 'True' Islam in Multicultural Britain: An Ahmadi Case Study

Farrah Sheikh

Introduction

This chapter explores questions of trust, multiculturalism and Islam in relation to Ahmadi Muslims in Britain. I conducted over a year of field research and collected ethnographic case studies in order to gain insight into the ways in which Muslims construct their identities in a post-9/11 context. My exploration of the current state of Islam in Britain took me to London, Leicester and Norwich; I collected the life histories of over 40 Muslims. Many of my respondents described themselves as 'mainstream' or 'ordinary' Muslims, meaning that most ascribed to a normative form of Sunni or Shia Islam. Nevertheless, journeying deeper into the folds of British Muslim life, I learnt more about forms of Islam practised at the margins, particularly in the Ahmadi Muslim community. The Ahmadis I encountered all claimed to practise 'true' Islam although their narratives seldom feature in mainstream discourse on British Muslims. In a time of increased securitisation of Muslim issues,

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I suggest that the concept of a 'true Islam' is important amongst divergent Muslim communities jostling for ownership over an Islam that is recognised as both authentic and untainted by narratives of extremism. However, the concept of 'true Islam' also features heavily in the narratives of de-radicalisation espoused by political elites. Therefore, I propose that displaying adherence to 'true Islam' forms part of the strategies many Muslims utilise in order to differentiate themselves from 'dangerous' Muslim Others and build trust. The obfuscation of religion and culture in narratives of British multiculturalism allows minorities—including religious minorities, such as Ahmadi Muslims—the power to both identify as part of the British Muslim story and assert their unique Muslim identity as the most authentic manifestation of being Muslim in today's Britain.

This chapter presents the case of Ahmadi Muslims, an under-researched group in the field of British Muslim studies, as self-styled followers of 'true Islam'. The discourse of multiculturalism relies on minority affiliations to race, ethnicity and religion, all of which are bound and essentialised as natural (Friedman 1997; Baumann 1999). This has implications for groups like Ahmadi Muslims, who are considered, at best, a minority within Muslim minority communities or, at worst, completely outside the fold of Islam. At the same time, however, Ahmadi Muslims are subject to many of the same anti-Muslim prejudices and stereotyping that mainstream Muslims encounter. Therefore, I argue that Ahmadi Muslims face a double penalty: they not only practise their form of Islam at the margins of British Muslim life but also must cope in a Britain characterised by increasing securitisation, hostility and fear of radical Islam. As a minority within a minority, Ahmadi Muslims have employed a variety of strategies to position themselves as the bastion of 'true Islam', which they claim is moderate and compatible with everyday life in Britain. This positioning is important to the question of trust, as Ahmadi Muslims seek to build trust through a vocal and visible commitment to 'true Islam' that often involves the adoption of a politically quietist approach to British public life. At the same time, the Ahmadi approach to building trust leaves the community in a precarious position, as they become even further alienated from mainstream Muslim communities. In this chapter, I explore some of the strategies Ahmadi Muslims employ to both negotiate

their complex positioning within British Muslim life and engage in trust-building within British society more widely.

From Colonial India to Britain: Origins, Organisation and Development of the Ahmadi Muslim Community

The *Jam'at-i-Ahmadiyya* was founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908) in nineteenth-century colonial India and is one of the most contested Muslim movements to emerge from South Asian Islam (Khan 2015). In his eloquent account of Ahmadi beliefs, practices and history, Adil Hussain Khan describes how the Ahmadis evolved from a Sufi-inspired brotherhood to fully fledged global movement. As noted scholars of Ahmadiyat such as Lavan (1974), Friedmann (2003), Valentine (2008), Khan (2015) and Qasmi (2015) have discussed, disagreements over whether Ahmadis can be considered within the fold of Islam stem from Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's claim to have received divine revelations after the Prophet Muhammad. He also claimed to be the embodiment of the Mahdi and Messiah that adherents of most world religions are said to be waiting for ahead of Judgement Day. Ahmad's assertion of a messianic role violates mainstream conceptions of prophethood in Islam, which declares the Prophet Muhammad to be God's final messenger to humankind. Instead, Ahmadis believe their community was founded by the second coming of Jesus Christ, who was sent by God to reform society prior to Judgement Day.

The *Jam'at-i-Ahmadiyya* was first established as an Islamic reform movement in Punjab. Khan (2015) links the establishment of the Ahmadi movement to the troubles of colonial rule in India. As India was under British control, many Muslim intellectuals of the day were engaged in debates over religious reform as a means of addressing the political, religious and social upheaval that came with the colonial experience (Khan 2015, 1–2). This same period produced the influential thinkers Muhammad Iqbal and Abu'l A'la Mawdudi. For Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his followers, the chaotic conditions of colonial India represented a context ripe for the Messiah's (or Mahdi's) return, as prophesised by Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. According to Khan (2015), Ghulam Ahmad gathered support for his cause by coupling a reformist programme with claims

of a divine inspiration to guide Muslims back to authentic Islam. Unlike other Islam-based movements, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad called for members of all faiths to unite under the banner of his one true religion, later developed as Ahmadi Islam.

The Ahmadis' questionable status in the Muslim family stems from the controversy around Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's messianic claims. Whilst Ahmadis believe their founder to be a lesser prophet than Muhammad, Ghulam Ahmad's assertion challenges Islamic orthodoxy; hence, the majority of the Muslim world declares Ahmadis to be heretics. Ahmadis also believe that Jesus Christ died in Kashmir after surviving crucifixion—therefore, he will not return as the Messiah (instead this prophecy is fulfilled by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad)—and they reject violent/defensive jihad, which again challenges Islamic orthodoxy (Friedmann 2003, Valentine 2008, Khan 2015).

As Khan (2015) records, the Jam'at experienced a crisis of authority following Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's death, as disagreements quickly emerged over his role as a prophet or *mujadid* (renewer of faith). A second set of disagreements arose over the community's leadership, with the founder's son, Mirza Mahmud Ahmad, eventually taking control over the Qadiani Ahmadi faction of the newly split Ahmadi community. The other faction, the Lahori Ahmadiyya, rejected Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's prophecy; instead, they saw Ghulam Ahmad as the *mujadid* of the age. Over time, the two factions' differences evolved to the point of complete divergence in theology and practice. The concept of *takfir* was an important marker of difference between the two Ahmadi factions and eventually cemented their distinction. Although Qadiani Ahmadis (henceforth 'Ahmadis') insist that they do not consider non-Ahmadi Muslims outside the fold of Islam, they did begin to isolate themselves from the time of the 'Split', as Mirza Mahmud Ahmad ordered the newly established Ahmadi group to pray separately from other Muslims for the first time. Ahmadis were no longer permitted to pray behind non-Ahmadi imams, even at funerals (Ahmad 2007, 56–57, and 134–137).

Mahmud Ahmad also placed restrictions on marriages with non-Ahmadis; however, this restriction was most often applied when Ahmadi women wished to marry non-Ahmadi Muslim men (Lajna Imaillah 1996). The Ahmadi conception of *bay'at* is perhaps the most interesting. As illustrated by Khan (2015), in Sufi orders, a *bay'at* is traditionally

understood as a voluntary pledge of allegiance between *murid* and *murshid* (resembling a student-teacher relationship). However, children born to Ahmadi parents were now considered Ahmadis, despite being far too young to pledge *bay'at* themselves. Ahmadiyat could now be passed from generation to generation, a strong departure from other Islamic movements, especially Sufi movements in the subcontinent (Khan 2015, 79). *Chanda* is another distinctive Ahmadi practice, whereby all eligible Muslims are required to give a financial contribution in addition to *zakat* in order to provide the Jam'at with regular income.

In 1922, the Jam'at developed its infrastructure to include an advisory council (*majlis-i-shura*), which allows council members from local Ahmadi sections from across the globe to develop and send Jam'at policy suggestions for the Caliph's consideration. Taking a bird's-eye view of the community's infrastructure, the Jam'at is segmented into local, regional and national sections. Special representatives from the hierarchy deal with both spiritual and administrative elements of Ahmadi life. Missionaries undergo seven years of training before taking responsibility for religious leadership and propagation of Ahmadi Islam. They are answerable to a national *amir*, who serves as the link between the Caliph and each local section of the Jam'at. Each local division selects a president, who can only be elected by paying members of the community. According to Khan (2015), Ahmadis who cannot or do not financially contribute to the Jam'at are barred from participating in elections unless they have special permission from the Caliph. He goes on to say that seeking an exemption or reduction in payments is a humiliating process that carries social stigma (Khan 2015, 81). Finally, the community is further subdivided into auxiliary organisations that exist for both men and women. This highly sophisticated and bureaucratic infrastructure ensures that Ahmadi Islam is tightly controlled; its members are held accountable for their actions at every stage of their lives. A strong sense of Ahmadi identity is developed in phases, as young Ahmadis assume the responsibilities that come with graduating to each successive *majlis* as they age.

In 1947, the Jam'at moved its headquarters from Qadian, India, to Rawbah, Pakistan. As documented by Qasmi (2015), a virulent anti-Ahmadi movement began to take shape soon after the move, and Ahmadis

in Pakistan saw the erosion of their civic and political rights. In 1974, Pakistan's Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, introduced a constitutional amendment that declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims. Ten years later, under the regime of General Zia ul Haq, Ahmadis were prohibited from publicly practising Islam or identifying as Muslims. Ahmadis were forbidden from using Islamic honorifics or greetings, building mosques or reciting Islamic texts. In essence, Ahmadi Muslims were criminalised in their everyday lives. Unable to fulfil his duties without violating Pakistan's new laws, the fourth Ahmadi Caliph, Mirza Tahir Ahmad, left Pakistan for Britain. Today, the headquarters of the global Ahmadi community remains and continues to thrive in Britain.

Ahmadi missionaries planted early Muslim roots in Britain. In 1889, Ahmadis helped to establish the Woking Mosque Mission, Britain's first purpose-built mosque, which served as the centre of Islam in England until the 1970s, when the administration changed to a Sunni committee. The annual *Jalsa Salana* takes place in the English countryside and, according to Ahmadi sources, sees an estimated 35,000 people make the journey to the UK for the convention. Scholars of Ahmadiyyat—such as Lavan (1974)—have suggested that *Jalsa* takes precedence over the Hajj pilgrimage. However, as Khan (2015) rightly points out, it is virtually impossible for Ahmadis to perform Hajj unless they masquerade as another sect. This offers some explanation as to why more Ahmadis appear to make the journey to *Jalsa* rather than going on Hajj. Nevertheless, Britain—and England in particular—is central to this chapter's Ahmadi Muslim story.

Ahmadi Muslims, Multiculturalism and the Question of Trust

Despite repeated attempts to present Muslim identity as a homogenised entity, my research makes clear that there is no single 'British Muslim' narrative that can accurately capture the British Muslim experience. This is an important observation as it allows Ahmadis enough room to negotiate Britain's multicultural landscape to carve out a space for themselves as representatives of British Islam. Britain's endorsement of multiculturalism and freedom of belief support Ahmadis' right to identify as part of the British Muslim milieu, despite protestations by other Muslims. As Parekh (2000) highlights,

in the absence of any serious discussion on religious pluralism, multiculturalism as a political discourse makes use of the language of diaspora, culture and religion to frame its minority communities. Whilst multiculturalism has different outcomes in different places, there is a general sense that the term refers to the existence of pluralism and diversity in any given society. For example, Taylor (1994) suggests that liberal governments engage in 'politics of recognition', attributing or minimising the value of difference through multiculturalism. Modood and Werbner (1997) exhibit the ways in which multiculturalism is a result of power struggles, and the many negotiations of collective identities that are usually structured around ethnic difference. Turner (1993) challenges multiculturalists to include an anthropological lens in their discussions on culture to further the aims of human self-production.

Kymlicka (1995) argues that all cultural minorities have the right to live autonomous lives and proposes that minority groups ought to be split into two categories: polyethnic (or immigrant) groups and national minorities. Immigrant groups who have migrated voluntarily have some responsibility to integrate into host societies, whilst national minorities should be afforded rights in recognition of their long contribution to the development of the nation. However, as appropriately pointed out by Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood (2012), this theory is difficult to apply in the British context. Indeed, nations do exist in the form of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but their national populations are not treated as cultural minorities. Britain's colonial history means that some populations migrated voluntarily to the UK but were originally from other territories also considered British. Other populations were moved involuntarily due to independence movements, slavery and forms of servitude (including indentured and non-indentured labour). With this in mind, in the British context, multiculturalism commonly refers to the ways in which post-immigration groups are absorbed into British society. Meer and Modood (2012) argue that, over time, multiculturalism in Europe has come to be understood as the 'political accommodation by the state and/or a dominant group of all minority cultures defined first and foremost by reference to race, ethnicity or religion' (Meer and Modood 2012, 181). Extending the argument slightly further, I suggest that not only does this political accommodation fail to consider the inner workings of a given minority community but the policy itself is not concerned with doing so. In their discussion on multiculturalism versus the merits of interculturalism, Meer and Modood (2012) assert that policies of

multiculturalism almost always refer to large, recently settled Muslim populations (Meer and Modood 2012, 179). With this in mind, I further propose that these Muslim populations are rarely discussed in ways that advance our insight into the multiplicity of voices that exist in Britain's Muslim communities. This assortment of voices includes mainstream Muslims, who are readily accepted as representatives of Islam, *and* Muslims like Ahmadis, who are marginalised and erased from the narrative of Muslim Britain.

Using the language of diaspora in a discourse of multiculturalism is important because it links diverse Muslim communities through a set of basic shared beliefs akin to the way racialised minority communities are bound together by shared heritage or similar migration patterns. Meer and Modood (2012) discuss this issue in more detail, suggesting that the language of diaspora is also interlinked with questions of power, as everyday understandings of multiculturalism consistently refer to cultural minorities with limited social power even if they are large in number. This discourse is seldom used in reference to Britain's indigenous groups; there is scarcely a mention of an English, Scottish or Welsh diaspora. Clearly 'indigenous' populations are positioned very differently to cultural minorities considered part of multicultural politics. As Avtar Brah points out, this relational positioning is very important. Brah (1996) teaches us that the *situatedness* of any group in relation to political, economic and state discourses affects how the group is viewed by others. The concept of situatedness is important for our discussion on Ahmadi Muslims because it enables us to understand and deconstruct the modes of power operating within and outside Muslim communities. Furthermore, it helps us understand how Ahmadis are represented under a policy of multiculturalism and simultaneously disavowed by many mainstream Muslim groups. Here, I am concerned with an exploration of the margins of Muslim identities. I delve into the contested spaces where Ahmadis can politically and spiritually identify as Muslims whilst they are also being interrogated, investigated or even rejected by mainstream Muslim communities. Thus, the 'British Muslim' label becomes a useful tool, as it can help to understand the parameters of Muslimness and the power relations within the boundaries of what it means to be Muslim in Britain today.

Pnina Werbner suggests that multiculturalism is both a discourse and a political theory. Werbner (2012) takes multiculturalism beyond the realm of everyday tolerance, arguing that religion and culture are often

obfuscated within the doctrine of multiculturalism; here, Islam is constructed as a culture rather than a religion. She suggests that it is not always appropriate to discuss religious pluralism and multiculturalism interchangeably. Politicians treat Muslims as cultural minorities, conflating ethnicity and religion. In the case of Muslim community conflicts, it is not necessarily accurate to dissect Muslim issues using the language of cultural conflict, as these conflicts often stem from religious conviction. One such example is the murder of Ahmadi Muslim shopkeeper, Asad Shah that took place in 2016. Shah was killed by a non-Ahmadi Muslim for allegedly disrespecting the Prophet Muhammad. In this case, the perpetrator's act of violence was clearly rooted in religious and not cultural sentiments. Werbner (2012) argues that culture is used as a euphemism for religion and, hence, multiculturalism assumes that minority cultures also encompass religion by default. This obfuscation becomes further evident when issues relating to Muslim life—such as providing halal food, wearing a headscarf, accessing Islamic institutions—are viewed through the lens of multiculturalism rather than religious pluralism. Arguably, this position stems from the limited space for non-Christian forms of religion in Britain's public sphere.

The inclusion of Ahmadi Muslims in the wider British Muslim milieu has implications for the question of trust and Muslim communities. In the case of Ahmadi Muslims, my findings suggest that Ahmadi's presentation of themselves as moderates has been a source of security and protection. Ahmadi Muslims have helped shape their image as 'good Muslims' (Mamdani 2004) through declarations that Ahmadi Islam is 'true Islam' or the 'one true religion', maintaining strong interfaith relationships, professing loyalty to the nation, delegating political activism to the Caliph, giving generously to charity and making regular public commitments to peace over extremism. Based on my interactions with Ahmadi respondents, the Ahmadi approach to integration seems to have worked in their favour. Ahmadi Muslims appear to enjoy a level of acceptance in wider British society, as both media and political elites seek to empathise with Ahmadi persecution and exclusion from mainstream Islam. On the other hand, this sense of empathy is problematic for intra-Muslim relations as Ahmadi's are held up as 'model' minorities—the standard that other Muslims ought to aspire to, risking escalation of

resentment of Ahmadis that already exists amongst some Muslim communities. Although Ahmadi efforts to build relations with non-Muslims have yielded some positive results, considerable distance still remains between Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims, particularly those of Pakistani origin. In general, non-Ahmadi Pakistani Muslims tend to reject Ahmadis as members of the global *umma* (Qasmi 2015). Mainstream British Muslim organisations often avoid incorporating Ahmadi voices in their representation of Muslims; the Muslim Council of Britain cites ‘theological differences’ as the primary reason for the exclusion of Ahmadis. A society based on the ethos of multiculturalism, like Britain, is not necessarily concerned with the nuances of minority identities. Freedom of religion is legally protected to an extent; hence, the State is less concerned with variant forms of Islam that are lived and practised within its borders unless they are deemed Islamist or threatening. Switching from multiculturalism to a doctrine of religious pluralism could risk essentialising faith communities based on a set of uniform beliefs. For Ahmadi Muslims, in particular, the obfuscation of religion and culture can be beneficial at times, as it allows Ahmadis to openly state their affiliation to the category of British Muslim and position themselves as ‘true’ Muslims.

Developing Trust Strategies for Ahmadi Survival

‘Love for All, Hatred for None’: Conceptualising ‘True Islam’

Pulling up outside the *Bait ul Futuha* mosque in Morden, I could not help but feel a little apprehensive about the day ahead. My research request had been approved by senior members of the Ahmadi Muslim community and a day of interviews with select people had been prearranged on my behalf. As I learnt through attempts to access members of the Ahmadi community, the Jam’at is full of gatekeepers; as an outsider it is difficult to penetrate their structures. As an ethnographer from a Muslim background, my research proposal was initially met with suspicion in some quarters of

the community. As a non-Ahmadi Muslim of South Asian origin, it was often assumed that I would hold anti-Ahmadi perceptions rooted in Pakistan's excommunication of Ahmadi Muslims—an attitude prevalent amongst many British Pakistani Muslims even today. My motivations for approaching the Ahmadi community were scrutinised and I was questioned about my educational, religious and family background before receiving permission to go ahead with my research.

As previously mentioned, a multifaceted, bureaucratic system is in place within the Jam'at. My host Kamil (named change to protect anonymity) explained that the Caliph and leader of the worldwide Ahmadi community—His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad (also affectionately referred to as 'Huzoor' by my informants)—was often present at the mosque and there were many enemies in the UK (including other Muslims) who sought to do the Caliph and his followers harm. As a global organisation headed by a single leader, a centralised structure is necessary for imparting a set of uniform teachings across a global community. An official and authoritarian structure also assists in the control and management of a complex Ahmadi Muslim identity comprising religious, ritual, social and institutional layers of existence.

As the day's schedule was explained, I realised that I was only permitted to interview men. This was an interesting position, as elsewhere in the field I often found it was easier—being a Muslim woman scholar—to interview women. Here, it was the opposite. This situation was my first discreet encounter with the Ahmadi concept of 'true Islam', which I later inferred was also linked to the community's position on *purdah* (gender segregation). Akin to many other Muslim schools of thought, Ahmadi males are held responsible for the protection of Ahmadi females. As I was in the process of building relations of trust and rapport with members of the Ahmadi community, Ahmadi women were being simultaneously protected from my investigation until I proved trustworthy.

Early interactions with Ahmadi male informants helped me understand the processes of community-building within the Jam'at. Practices, rituals and beliefs all stem from the Ahmadi conception of 'true Islam'. As part of this conceptualisation, non-Ahmadis are not expected to adhere to the same rules in Ahmadi spaces. For example, Ahmadi women are typically expected to observe *hijab* (headscarf at the minimum) and both

genders practise *pardah*. As a non-Ahmadi woman, I was not subjected to either of these codes during my time in Ahmadi spaces. Whilst I was treated with the utmost respect, I was considered a complete outsider—almost a non-Muslim. This is unsurprising, given Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's position on non-Ahmadi Muslims, mentioned earlier. Interestingly, I found my informants consistently referred to the Quranic injunction that 'there is no compulsion in religion' (Qur'an, 2: 256) in order to explain and sometimes justify their expectations of and behaviours with non-Ahmadis, especially non-Ahmadi women. This position makes sense when considered in tandem with the Ahmadi perspective on Islam, which suggests that only Muslims who accept the founder of the Ahmadi sect, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, as the promised Messiah and non-law giving messenger of God can be said to practise the 'true Islam'. The men were matter of fact about their beliefs during our interview sessions, and whilst they were all very careful not to pronounce *kuffar* (unbelief) on other Muslims, it is evident that Muslims who do not follow Ahmadi Islam are seen as failing in their adherence to the authentic, 'true Islam'. Mirza Mahmud Ahmad's teachings and edicts are very much part of the lived experiences of my Ahmadi informants.

From my observations and interactions with Ahmadi respondents, I noticed an Ahmadi identity that appears to be rooted in both a clear narrative of 'true Islam' and a strong sense of difference from other Muslims. This sense of isolation and separateness was demonstrated in two ways: firstly, mainstream Muslim groups and people often refuse to recognise Ahmadis as fellow Muslims, giving Ahmadis little choice but to close ranks and develop their own forms of representation; secondly, Ahmadis are themselves forbidden to pray with those who deny their prophet and, thus, 'true Islam'. Informants made it clear that other Muslims were welcome to pray inside Ahmadi mosques, but an Ahmadi Muslim was unlikely to pray behind a non-Ahmadi imam due to theological disagreements over Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's role as a messenger of God. Furthermore, narratives of persecution feature heavily in Ahmadi discourses. It is no secret that Ahmadi Muslims face intense persecution in countries like Pakistan, where they are rejected as Muslims and often forced to flee violence because of their faith. These narratives are used to help formulate an Ahmadi identity rooted in rejection by other Muslims,

which further justifies the community's self-reliance and isolation from other Muslim groups in order to survive.

Whilst the Jam'at is keen to build relations with non-Ahmadis and actively engages in civic life through its community, charity and interfaith endeavours, a sense of separateness is reinforced by the community's leadership structures. For example, the community does not accept donations from individuals or organisations outside the Ahmadi circle. Sanctions are often imposed on Ahmadi Muslims who choose to marry outside the Jam'at (including if an Ahmadi Muslim marries a non-Ahmadi Muslim); such sanctions can include forbidding or restricting access to Ahmadi structures, community and support. In addition, mixed couples and their families also experience social stigma. One's personal relationship with the Caliph, which nurtures spiritual growth, can also be severed if an Ahmadi steps outside the boundaries set by the community. Informants argued that by offering the Caliph their pledge of allegiance, Ahmadi Muslims agree to strictly adhere to the community's rules without question. This pledge of allegiance—or *bay'at*—is renewed every year at Jalsa Salana and comprises the ten main conditions that shape Ahmadi identity and personal commitment to the Caliphate (Ahmad 2006). In these ways, the community is able to stay united and share a common outlook on Islam. Stepping outside the boundaries is a clear violation of Ahmadiyyat and 'true Islam'. Therefore, rule-breakers are not taken lightly.

A shared perspective on religion is key to the Ahmadi claim to preach 'true Islam'. Missionaries propagate the Ahmadi message across the world—including at the Bait ul Futuwa and Fazl mosques in London—through a set of uniform teachings. As the global Ahmadi movement grows, it has begun to 'de-Pakistanise' in an attempt to prioritise Islam over culture (Gualtieri 2004, 48). From West Africa to Asia to Europe, Ahmadi missionaries are tasked with imparting identical teachings to other Muslim groups. This uniformity was evident in the stories narrated by my Ahmadi respondents. As I probed deeper into Ahmadi religious beliefs, asking respondents to elaborate on their conception of Islam, its teachings and how they apply this in their daily lives, there was a sameness in my interviewees' responses. From this, I inferred that Ahmadi teachings are rolled out fairly homogeneously in order to preserve a strong sense of kinship, identity and community through a commitment to 'true Islam'.

As part of the Ahmadi concept of 'true Islam', my informants repeatedly and specifically invoked the Quranic verse 'there is no compulsion in religion', along with the community's motto 'Love for All, Hatred for None', in order to cultivate a narrative of Islam that is non-threatening to the culture, laws and norms of British society. Furthermore, the role of the Caliph is also important for keeping Ahmadi Muslims in check. Informants were keen to emphasise the community's teaching that it was not permissible for Muslims to rise up against a ruler, even if the ruler was a tyrant; a position rooted in *Sunnah*. This position means that loyalty to their country and respect for the rule of law is religiously sanctioned for Ahmadis. Furthermore, on the surface at least, these positions are enforced by the Ahmadi Caliphate. The Caliph exerts a level of control and influence over his followers, as they have sworn a solemn oath to serve and follow his commands. He can also discipline members for non-compliance. In an interview with one of the community members, my respondent Kamil illustrated the importance of the Caliph in everyday Ahmadi life by sharing reflections on his personal relationship with his Huzoor: 'He is my master, I am his servant. If I pledged my initiation, my oath to him, I will do what he says because I believe in it and I believe he is not going to say go and kill XYZ because that is incompatible with the Caliphate, it's incompatible with the way God works.'

In the Ahmadi positioning of 'true Islam', they are able to retain a strong sense of Islamic identity whilst also engaging in trust-building with non-Muslims. In so doing, Ahmadis are able to address the fear of Muslims propagated in British society's current narratives. The Ahmadis I interviewed all emphasised specific Islamic teachings that are in harmony with a multicultural society, displaying the religion's accommodating and tolerant nature. As I have shown, citing Islamic teachings that demonstrate Islam's compatibility with British norms allows Ahmadis to stress that non-Ahmadis, and non-Muslims in particular, can never be compelled to adopt a Muslim way of life. Those who preach otherwise (including extremists) are not adherents to 'true Islam'. As Ahmadis are minorities in both their adopted countries and British Muslim life, the quietist nature of their 'true Islam' narrative is part of a wider survival strategy. Through my interactions with the Jam'at, I found that narratives of Ahmadi Islam appear to mirror the goals of multiculturalism in many

ways. In essence, multicultural policies are designed to deal with people from a diverse range of backgrounds without compelling them to assimilate into a single identity. By emphasising their 'there is no compulsion in religion' and 'Love for All, Hatred for None' mottoes, Ahmadis attempt to show that they are not trying to force non-Muslim Britons into a Muslim way of life. The two narratives espouse similar ideals, albeit in very different ways. In fact, it is religiously sanctioned that Muslims, especially Ahmadi Muslims, must peacefully co-exist with others. Hence, I propose that the Ahmadi conception of 'true Islam', which mirrors the ideals of multiculturalism through the use of particular Islamic teachings, assists Ahmadi efforts to build trust with the wider non-Muslim society by addressing the issue that westerners fear most: Islamisation of their societies.

Ahmadis as 'Good Muslims'

The War on Terror renewed focus on Muslims in the west, bringing into question their loyalties, affiliations and identities whilst also regurgitating old stereotypes about a dangerous Muslim Other (Said 1997). At the same time, western narratives of Muslim Others within their own borders are rarely concerned with the nuances, internal power struggles and dynamics of their diverse Muslim communities. As a result, Ahmadi Muslims seldom feature as part of mainstream British Muslim discourse. When they do, however, Ahmadi narratives are often co-opted by those perpetuating the myth of the 'good Muslim', as Ahmadis are presented as patriots who vocally condemn dangerous Muslim behaviour.

As Mamdani (2004) suggests, judgements of 'good' and 'bad' Muslims refer to Muslim political identities rather than the religious or cultural (Mamdani 2004, 15). Muslim identities have undergone a process of racialisation, resulting in notions of 'British Islam' and 'British Muslims'. The British Muslim label is a useful tool of analysis, as it helps to explain how the complex internal dynamics of Britain's diverse Muslim population are overlooked in the interest of national priorities. A hyphenated Muslim identity reminds the Muslim Other of his/her loyalty to the nation, especially in a post-9/11 context (Sayyid 2006).

Multicultural policies and the racialisation of Muslim identities have led to Ahmadis' recognition as 'British Muslims'. I argue that Ahmadis use this position to present themselves as 'good' Muslims adhering to the 'true Islam', which is accommodating, non-threatening and docile in nature. Ahmadis fit into the 'good' Muslim paradigm in many ways, as their narratives of Islam, society and peaceful co-existence mirror western governments' demands for Muslims to condemn radicalism and control their communities' behaviour. In the context of the War on Terror, Muslims have been repeatedly told to 'choose a side' and work with the authorities to combat Islamist terrorism. Whether implicitly or explicitly, Ahmadi Muslims appear to fulfil at least part of these expectations through regular press releases and the Caliph's speeches, all of which condemn acts of terrorism. Furthermore, the Jam'at launched an anti-extremism campaign in Scotland in 2016, which elicited high praise from politicians. Although this campaign had a strong interfaith presence, mainstream Muslims did not participate. The split between Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims is deep-seated on a number of religious and political issues. In addition, Ahmadis' anti-extremism message goes hand in hand with the Jam'at's position on *jihad*, as this concept is interpreted as an internal spiritual endeavour, and not a defensive struggle. In short, Ahmadi Muslims show the distance between their 'true Islam' and other Islams, positioning themselves as polar opposites to the Muslim subject considered dangerous, extremist or 'bad'.

The concept of 'true Islam' propagated through the 'Love for All, Hatred for None' slogan is used to bring Ahmadi Muslims closer to mainstream British society, as they present themselves as 'good' Muslims. For the question of trust, this is an important location for the Ahmadi community. The persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan and other countries allows Ahmadis to situate themselves on the *same side* as wider British society, who are also fearful of extremist Muslims. Similar to the non-Ahmadi British public, Ahmadis are also concerned with persecution by extremist Muslims for their beliefs and way of life. A far cry from the bearded men calling for *jihad* or engaging in extremism on our television screens, Ahmadi Muslims actively condemn acts of violence and ardently distance themselves from other Muslims, extremist or otherwise.

'Prayer Is Our Weapon. When We Get Attacked, We Hit the Prayer Mat'

Kamil made the above statement during our interview at the *Bait ul Futuha* mosque in Morden. As we discussed the complexities of British Muslim life, Kamil made it a point to explain the Ahmadi position on persecution, terrorism and tragedy at length. Instead of engaging in political activism, strikes or protests to deal with injustices, Ahmadi Muslims are actively encouraged to respond with prayer and patience. Whether another Ahmadi is targeted in Pakistan for their faith or a non-Ahmadi Muslim is seen to commit an act of violence in Britain, Ahmadis are encouraged to use prayer as a 'weapon' in every instance; they call on God to provide spiritual defence against atrocities. At first glance, it appears Ahmadis prioritise prayer and peaceful co-existence over striving for civil rights. Upon second reflection, however, the picture seems more complex. I observed that individual Ahmadi Muslims often engage in political quietism justified through Islamic teachings that are part of the Ahmadis' 'true Islam'. Politics and representation are left to the Caliph. In turn, the Ahmadi Caliph acts as politician, adjudicator and world leader as he speaks on behalf of Ahmadi Muslims with regard to persecution, Islamophobia, the headscarf and wider issues of injustice related to Muslims and geopolitics. Other representations are made by spokespersons appointed and briefed by the upper echelons of the Ahmadi structure.

Many of my respondents were proud of their Caliph for standing on the world stage as the global leader of the Ahmadi community and discussing sensitive political issues that affect both Ahmadi and non-Ahmadi Muslims alike. As my informants emphasised, having a Caliph sets Ahmadis apart from other Muslims. In the eyes of my Ahmadi respondents, where other Muslims are left searching for answers to complex global problems, strong leadership means that Ahmadis need not concern themselves with these questions. As my respondents explained, the Caliph deals with worldly matters and advises his followers that prayer will help them make sense of difficult political situations. The Caliph provides Ahmadis with leadership and solace through his representations on their

behalf. One respondent, Jamal (not his real name), summed up this position:

I find that whenever anyone says ‘What are solutions to this or that crisis’, I say that you should pray. People don’t really get it but to me it completely makes sense, and that’s where I find my religion helps me. My life is a lot easier in that, not that I don’t have to think about these things; I do think about these things. But I’ve got all the answers and the answers come from my faith in the Caliph. The Caliph has spoken extensively about war and issues going on in the world. It makes my life a lot easier.

In making the lives of his followers ‘easier’, the Caliph assumes a huge responsibility. Not only is he responsible for spiritually nurturing a global religious community, but he also oversees the political domain. This allows the Caliph and his representatives a great deal of control over shaping the image of Ahmadis as ‘good’ Muslims. While British or western values place a great deal of emphasis on individual liberty, Ahmadis surrender many personal liberties in pledging allegiance to the Caliph; they trust their leader to manage the Jam’at’s external affairs, leaving everyday Ahmadis to go about their lives in peace. Hence, through the Jam’at, Ahmadis in Britain are encouraged to work as ‘good’ Muslims and build trust with wider society by promoting and propagating their form of ‘true Islam’.

Conclusion

Ahmadi Muslims in Britain employ a range of strategies to both protect themselves from the persecution their brethren face in Pakistan (and elsewhere) and propagate the Ahmadi mission. Unlike in Pakistan, Britain’s policy of multiculturalism and emphasis on religious freedom means that Ahmadis can publicly identify themselves as Muslims without fear and carve out a space in the spectrum of British Muslim life. Nevertheless, positive acknowledgement of Ahmadis as Muslims does not mean that multiculturalism is a perfect policy. Scholars in the field of British Muslim studies have highlighted the emerging gap between religion and culture amongst young Muslims in Britain. In the absence

of any serious discussion of religious pluralism, we must ask what it means to be 'multicultural' in today's Britain? As Pnina Werbner points out, ethnic minorities may be open to scrutinising cultural norms, whilst believers, who trust that the tenets of their faith—and therefore certain behaviours—are rooted in religious scripture and are less likely to be open to negotiation (Werbner 2012, 204). We have seen that Ahmadi Islam is emphasised as the most authentic and truest way to be a Muslim. My informants were clear that tenets of the Ahmadi faith were not up for negotiation, as such would risk invalidating their pledged *bay'at* and place within the *Jam'at*—a place of security, spiritual nourishment, community and friendship. At the same time, Ahmadi Muslims have managed to shape their faith and use the language of culture for the benefit of the *Jam'at*'s survival.

The construction of the British Muslim subject under multicultural policies tells us little about forms of Islam that are lived and practised in everyday Britain. Far from building trust, centring our conversations on generic 'British Muslims' without appreciation of the position or context that these divergent communities find themselves operating in, risks alienating Muslims even further. The observations shared in this chapter could help us to consider the limits of 'British Muslim' subjectivity, facilitating meaningful conversations on questions of trust, multiculturalism and British Muslim life, particularly in the distinctive case of Ahmadi Muslims. Contrary to the pressures faced by mainstream Muslim leaders to control Muslim behaviour, Ahmadi Muslims have been able to shape a 'good Muslim' identity by presenting an image that responds to mainstream society's many concerns about Islam. Ahmadi Muslims have, in a number of ways, developed a non-politicised form of Islam: a form that can be understood as 'culture' under a policy of multiculturalism. In so doing, Ahmadi Muslims present a challenge for politicians who claim that multiculturalism has failed, and that Muslims are untrustworthy. The Ahmadi community's global outlook dispels myths that Muslims actively seek to live in insular communities, and their outreach to non-Muslims shows how Muslims can peacefully co-exist with others if one is committed to the teachings of the 'true Islam' and is willing to risk harmonious relations with mainstream Muslims.

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13

Afterword: Multiculturalism Can Foster a New Kind of Post-Brexit Englishness

Tariq Modood

The Brexit referendum result was a shock. Especially surprising—given that the whole exercise was a result of the divisions within the Conservative Party—was the fact that about 30% of those who voted Labour in 2015 voted Leave in June 2016 (Ashcroft 2016). It is clear that the Leave vote disproportionately consisted of those without a degree and over the age of 45. Equally over-represented in the Leave vote in England were those who say they are more English than British or only English and not British.

There is some reason to suppose that this new and rising English nationalism is anti-immigration and even worse—given that England is a highly diverse country—anti-multiculturalist. While it is worrying that the Brexit result seems to have led to a rise in racial abuse and harassment, and this must be challenged both for itself and because of the fear and distrust it is sowing, there is a larger problem here. It would be highly divisive if the current sullen and resentful mood of this new English nationalism was to become a long-term feature. Let me find an optimistic

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note to close on by emphasising that it is not necessarily the case that English national identity and multiculturalism must be opposed to each other.

To many, multiculturalism as a political idea in Britain suffered a body blow in 2001. In the shock of 9/11 terrorism and after race riots in some northern English towns, many forecasted that its days were numbered (Kundnani 2002). If these blows were not fatal, multiculturalism was then surely believed to have been killed by the 7/7 attacks in London in 2005 and the terrorism and hawkish response to it that followed. But this is far too simplistic.

Multiculturalism is the idea that equality in the context of difference cannot be achieved by individual rights or equality understood as sameness and has to be extended to include the positive inclusion of marginalised groups marked by race and their own sense of ethnocultural identity. The latter is reinforced by exclusion but may also matter to many individuals as a form of belonging. Multiculturalism therefore grows out of an initial commitment to racial equality, the elimination of white discrimination against non-whites—of the kind that the Labour government outlawed in the 1960s and 1970s—into a perspective that allows minorities to publicly oppose negative images of themselves in favour of positive self-definition and institutional accommodation. The 1980s saw this transition, spearheaded by black pride movements but in the main as vehicles for South Asian minority group claims. One of the most significant pivots in this transition was The Satanic Verses affair of 1988–1989, which launched a Muslim identity mobilisation which ultimately grew to overshadow other multiculturalist and anti-racist politics (Robertson 2012). It is significant to note that multiculturalism in Britain has had this conflictual and bottom-up character, unlike in Canada or Australia, where the federal government has been the key initiator.

The Labour Legacy

Nevertheless, anti-racism and multiculturalism require governmental support and commitment. The first New Labour term (1997–2001) has probably been the most multiculturalist national government in Britain—

or indeed Europe. It abolished the primary purpose rule in relation to immigration (Antonsich 2015). It introduced Muslim and other faith schools on the same basis as Christian and Jewish schools. Muslims (in particular, the Muslim Council of Britain at the national level) were brought into governance, as is common with other identity and interest groups. The MacPherson Report was published, initiating a high-profile discussion of institutional racism and requiring an appropriate programme of action from the London Metropolitan Police and other state bodies (MacPherson 1999). The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 strengthened the previous equality legislation, especially in relation to the duty of public bodies to actively promote racial equality. It selectively targeted disadvantaged groups such as Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and African Caribbeans in relation to education and employment policies, while recognising that other minorities such as the Chinese and Indians were not disadvantaged relative to whites in these policy areas—it moved a white/non-white divide lacking in nuance. Holocaust Day was instituted in 2005. Religion was added to the census in 2001, acknowledging the multi-religious make-up of modern Britain.

What makes this package of measures ‘multiculturalist’ is that they are directed in different ways to addressing the inequalities that (primarily, non-white) minorities experience, without limiting such a conception to that of black-white racial equality alone. It goes beyond that colour dualism in recognising a related ethnoreligious pluralism, and extending anti-discrimination beyond colour to include ethnicity and religion, to meeting specific disadvantages suffered by self-identifiable groups, supporting such groups to be active civil society players and to bringing them into governance. Contrary to the glib ‘death of multiculturalism’ view this agenda continued, to some extent, in the second and third New Labour governments as well, primarily in the extension of religious equality in law, culminating in the Equality Act 2010 which put religion on par with all other equality strands and therefore made it part of the strongest anti-discrimination legislation in Europe. Wanting to bring organised Muslims into forms of community co-governance was another strand of continuity, even though such partnerships were prone to breakdown and mutual recrimination.

Multiculturalism and Common Citizenship

Yet, after 2001, and especially after the bombings of 2005, there were significant departures from the earlier multiculturalism too. It is, however, not accurate to understand those developments as the end of multiculturalism. They mark a 'rebalancing' of multiculturalism so as to give due emphasis to commonality as well as respect for difference (Meer and Modood 2009). At a local level, this consisted of a new discourse and accompanying programmes of community cohesion, which were premised on the multiculturalist idea of plural communities but designed to cultivate interaction and cooperation, both at the micro-level of individual lives and everyday experience and at the level of towns, cities and local government.

At a macro level, it consisted of emphasising national citizenship, not in an anti-multiculturalist way as in France but as a way of bringing the plurality into a better relationship with its parts and hence the pluralistic definitions of Britishness offered during this period, for example, in the Crick report (Casciani 2003). While they referred to the English language, to the history of the emergence of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law and to values such as liberty and fairness, they also stressed that modern Britain was a multinational, multicultural society, and there were many ways of being British and these were changing (Uberoi and Modood 2013). As ethnic minorities became more woven into the life of the country, they were redefining what it meant to be British.

Hence the idea that an emphasis on citizenship or Britishness was a substitute for multiculturalism is quite misleading. Indeed, it is often overlooked that the theorists of multiculturalism have regarded citizenship as a foundational concept, and explicitly developed multiculturalism as a mode of integration, albeit a difference-respecting integration rather than assimilation or individualistic integration. Moreover, they have tended to emphasise not just minority identities per se but also the inclusion of minority identities within the national identity. This is also how the Canadian and Australian governments have understood multiculturalism and continue to do so (if the Australian government under Howard gave up on that idea, it has been revived subsequently). If we look at what

multiculturalists have argued (as opposed to the caricatures presented by their critics), this has been the dominant interpretation in Britain too.

Take the report of the Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain (2000), better known as the Parekh report after its chair, the Labour peer Bhikhu Parekh (Runnymede 2000). It made national identity and ‘retelling the national story’ central to its understanding of equality, diversity and cohesion. This involved a critical engagement with top-down and simplistic ideas of national identity but also argued that a shared national identity, no less than the elimination of racism, was important in giving all citizens a sense of belonging. It argued that citizenship, and especially the acquisition of citizenship through naturalisation, was—in contrast to countries like the USA and Canada—undervalued in Britain and it was the first public document to advocate the idea of citizenship ceremonies.

Also evident from the Parekh report is multiculturalism’s focus on socio-economic inequalities and the way they can particularly affect some or all non-white groups. Here Britain does not have the record of countries like Canada, Australia and the USA in enabling immigrant communities to be upwardly mobile, but its record is much better than that of other EU countries, especially anti-multiculturalist ones like France and Germany. In relation to ‘ethnic penalties’, the extent to which membership of an ethnic group means that one’s socio-economic location is worse than it is for whites, the overall picture is patchy. There has been good progress on ethnic minorities into higher education and achievement of degrees; some progress on getting ethnic minorities into the most prestigious universities; limited progress on ethnic minorities getting jobs appropriate to their qualifications; and the least amount of progress on reducing the disproportionate rates of ethnic minorities in low-paid jobs and in unemployment.

Englishness and Multicultural Britishness

The point of the above is that multicultural Britishness continues to have a pertinence as an ideal, and its ethos is present in elements of law and policy and forms of governance. Hopefully this will be true of future

governments, in contrast to recent efforts to displace it with a more top-down, mono-nationalist and establishment 'British values' perspective.

Yet over the last couple of decades a new set of identitarian challenges have become apparent, initially in Scotland but latterly throughout the UK. In none of the nations of the union does the majority of the population consider themselves British without also considering themselves English, Welsh, Scottish or Northern Irish. The 2011 census is not a detailed study of identity but it is striking that 70% of the people of England ticked the 'English' box and the vast majority of them did not also tick the 'British' box (Office for National Statistics 2011). This was much more the case with white people than non-whites, who were more likely to identify as British only or British combined with English.

While other surveys, including more recently than 2011, show that about 75% of white English say they are equally English and British, nevertheless, multiculturalism may have succeeded in fostering a British national identity amongst the ethnic minorities—something that the anti-racists of the 1970s and 1980s would have thought impossible. The challenge now is to relate those who primarily think in mono-nationalist terms with those who think of themselves in bi-nationalist terms—for example, English and British—or whose sense of Britishness is a union of multi-level and cross-cutting differences. Multiculturalism here offers the plea that not only English national consciousness should be developed in the context of a broad, differentiated British identity but ethnic minorities become an important bridging group between the English mono-nationalists and the English British. Paradoxically, a supposedly out-of-date political multiculturalism becomes a source from which to think about not just integration of minorities but also how to conceive of our plural nationality and give expression to dual identities such as English British. It is no small irony that minority groups who all too often are seen as harbingers of fragmentation could prove to be exemplars of the union and a source of differentiated unity.

The minimum one would wish to urge upon a centre-left taking English consciousness seriously is that it should not be simply nostalgic, exclusively majoritarian and that it should avoid ethnonationalism ('Anglo-Saxonism'). More positively, multiculturalism, with its central focus on equal citizenship and diverse identities and on the renewing and

reforging of nationality to make it inclusive of contemporary diversity, shows how we can be equally sensitive to internal diversity, multiple identities and the need to strengthen an appreciation of the emotional charge of belonging together. Such a sense of belonging can only grow if there is some basic cross-cultural trust but it can also deepen it. Multiculturalists should avoid responding to the growing English consciousness in ways that harden division and distrust but seek to embed it in the British nest of national identities and make it embrace rather than shun both minority identities and a cross-cutting Britishness.

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