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'This timely collection of papers provides a welcome intervention in debates surrounding trust and multiculturalism, and is especially crucial in its consideration of strategies for rebuilding this.'
—**Humayan Ansari OBE**, University of London, UK and author of *The Infidel Within: Muslims in Britain Since 1800*

This book critically engages with the contemporary breakdown of trust between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in the West. It argues that a crisis of trust currently hampers intercultural relations and obstructs full participation in citizenship and civil society for those who fall prey to the suspicions of the state and their fellow citizens.

This volume of interdisciplinary essays by leading scholars explores the theme of trust and multiculturalism across a range of perspectives, employing insights from political science, sociology, literature, ethnography and cultural studies. It provides an urgent critical response to the challenging contexts of multiculturalism for Muslims in both Europe and the USA. Taken together, the contributions suggest that the institutionalisation of multiculturalism as a state-led vehicle for tolerance and integration requires a certain type of trustworthy 'performance' from minority groups. Despite this performance, existing discourses of integration and underlying patterns of mistrust can contribute to Muslim alienation on the one hand, and rising Islamophobia on the other.

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Muslims, Trust and Multiculturalism

Edited by Amina Yaqin,
Peter Morey and Asmaa Soliman

PALGRAVE POLITICS OF IDENTITY & CITIZENSHIP SERIES

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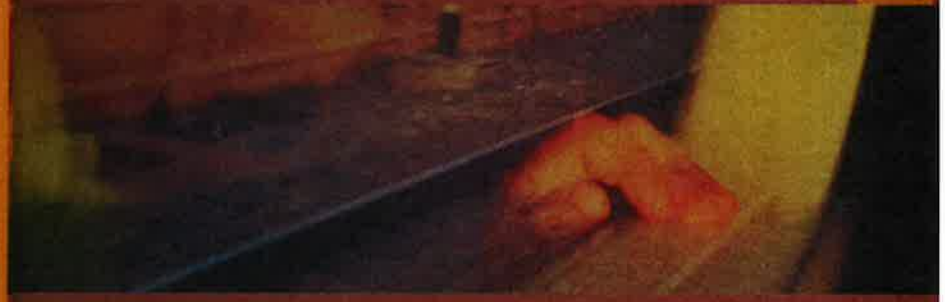
New Directions



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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, position 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 knowable 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 Melinowski, 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-exiting 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: something 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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