

Proposal for: On the Future of Anthropology in Schools of Education

Title: *Affective Assemblages: Everyday Education about Muslim Girls*

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Abstract:

Following Cremin (1978), Varenne (2007) sees education as a “conversation among those who have been made ‘consociates’ as they must face, together, potentially dangerous ignorance, and as they must then figure out what to do next with a host of ‘others’” (p.1569). In this paper, I propose that the production of recent confessional texts by Muslim women¹ can be seen as an effort to *deliberately* educate ‘Others’ about Islam and Muslims in the United States. I focus specifically on one text entitled, *Love, Inshallah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women* ([Maznavi](#) and Mattu, 2012), and pay attention to the kinds of performative and affective, and thus educational, work undertaken by it.

Drawing on Ahmed (2010) and Stewart’s (2007) work on affects, and Cvetkovich’s (2007) work on public feelings, I inquire into the affects accumulated by the contributors to *Love, Inshallah*, and the affective publics generated in and through the text. I demonstrate that the text elicits hope in its readers by making space for Muslim women to participate in American citizenship. Here, young Muslim women discursively produce a female subjectivity that shares characteristics with the dominant constructions of American girlhood, including de-politicized narratives of “can-do” (Harris, 2011) girlhood that “promise happiness” (Ahmed 2010). At the same time, however, this performance is delimited by the dominant scripts of contemporary youth citizenship available to Muslims. Thus, even as the text gives us hope through its disruption of the images of Muslim women as oppressed by Islam and/or patriarchal cultures, it takes it away by privileging a specific way of being and knowing, and marginalizing others.

Reading *Love, Inshallah* for its affective performances allows me to propose the text-author relationship as part of the *deliberate* process that Cremlin (1974) calls, education. It also enables me to keep Muslim girlhood a “permanent site of contest” (Butler, 2000, p.337), mirroring the Deleuzian open, affirmative and involutory becoming.

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¹ Such as, Abdul-Ghafur (2005), Bullock (2005), Maznavi and Mattu (2012), Ebrahimji and Suratwala (2011), and Janmohamed (2009).

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