***“I don't drink coffee I take tea my dear. I like my toast done on one side. I can feel it in my accent when I talk I’m a . . .* [[1]](#endnote-1)”**

**Fundamental ‘British’ Values. Radicalising ‘British’[[2]](#endnote-2) children into a manufactured ‘them and us’ narrative concept of ‘British’ness?[[3]](#endnote-3).**

**Abstract**

In 2014, the United Kingdom Coalition Government, after the now infamous Trojan Horse[[4]](#endnote-4) incident, insisted that all children learn fundamental British values[[5]](#endnote-5). Cameron, as Prime Minister[[6]](#endnote-6), argued that such values, coupled with ‘muscular liberalism’ would “challenge extremist ideology, exposing it for the lie that it is”. This article exists at the place of the apostrophe - as the scare mark (‘ ’) becomes an enclosure, enclosing a manufactured

**Is Britishness just a made up concept?**

possession. I want to problematize what they include and exclude in their concept of **‘**British values**’.** What is this ‘British’ they [[7]](#endnote-7)talk about and why do they feel a need for this **‘**Britain**’** to exist? Within the enclosures provided by ‘ten scare marks’ I present research into historical and contemporary formulations of Britishness taken from academic texts, school textbooks and websites. In addition, by invoking the work of Serres, Bhabba and Billig, I seek to confront Cameron’s challenging discourse. Within this article, I do not though attempt to detail an authentic Britishness but rather from the outset argue that there is, and never was any authenticity in this concept. What I seek to argue here is that their **‘**British -ness**’**is nothing more than a portable, lean-to concept of violence. A ‘manufactured concept’ (Cullingford, 2003) which locates an inclusion but by default formulates an exclusion whose antecedents lie more in the government counter terrorists’ strategies than any substantial historical fact (Kostyuk, 2007). The paper concludes by suggesting that their **‘**Britain**’**is a rhetorical trope. It is itself a Trojan horse - which through flagging and banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) indoctrinates and radicalises our children into an invented- perverted nationalism that the political elite employs to deal with a perceived/ conceived/ contrived threat of an internal other to our geographical, historical an ideological borders.

**Who determines what is or is not fundamental?**

**If it is manufactured where does this leave my schooling – which told me Britain was great?**

**This analysis is disturbing. It disturbs my thoughts but also my personal history- it is troubling**.

**Introduction**

“*During the last week at St. Paul’s Junior School the children have had a British week. They have looked at all things* ***‘****British****’*** *. . . the culture, landmarks, traditions, monarchs and British values. The week culminated with the children wearing red, white and blue . . . [and performing] the National Anthem. . .” [school website]*

*“At St. Peter’s [school] we will actively challenge children, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values . . . including those expressing extremist views.” [school website]*

*“O Lord our God arise, Scatter her enemies[[8]](#endnote-8), And make them fail. Confound their politics. Frustrate their Knavish tricks. On Thee Our hope we fix. God save us all.” [verse of the* ***‘****British****’*** *National Anthem]*

After the Trojan Horse incident in Birmingham the Coalition Government insisted that all children must learn about fundamental British values (An example of such learning is offered above as well as what might happen if these values are not taught). David Cameron, the then Prime Minister, argued that such an approach coupled with what he named as “muscular liberalism” would “systematically confront and challenge extremist ideology, exposing it for the lie that it is . . . and thwart its destructive consequences” (*oh those Knavish tricks)* (Cited in Dodd and Travis, 2015). Through the employment of research into historical and contemporary discourse contained in such things as school textbooks, websites and academic texts, I seek to confront Cameron’s challenge and for myself, challengingdiscourse. Through the enclosures of ten ‘scare marks’ I wish as a “stranger within” (Lander, 2016, 275) to this rhetoric, challenge these **‘**British**’** values and to invert his/ their/ these ideological habits and expose these/ their/ his lies. I argue that their ‘British -ness’ is a “portable” – (McMahon, 2010, 157) “lean too” concept (Stronach, 2010, 175) of violence - a mechanism whose machinations over code with an internal colonialism which militates against the cohesive liberal society it professes to manufacture. To paraphrase a recent British (who was Scottish) Prime Minister, an understanding of British citizenship and shared British values should lead to a shared sense of belonging and a celebration of British identity “which is bigger than the sum of its parts” (Gordon Brown, 2006. Cited in Maylor, 2016, 320).

The article exists, then, at the moment of the apostrophe, where the conglomeration of the scare mark, marks an enclosure containing an ideologically mediated possession - a punctuated boundary line now policed by a political elite. Their British and their determination of what are fundamental values “embraces a complex set of themes about ‘us’, our ‘homeland’ duty and honour …. Moreover, these themes are widely diffused as common sense.” (Billig, 1995, 4). British presence, though, within these scare marks, mark an absence. That is, *their* inside is not *my* outside as *their* inclusion marks a boundary for exclusion. I employ scare marks here therefore with the intention to scare – to present and presence a challenge to Cameron’s challenging discourse. By challenging their dominant and dominating narrative, I seek to cross their exclusion zone and reclaim their enclosure, of an inclusion of British and Britain which I do not recognise[[9]](#endnote-9).

**‘Scare mark one**: As a country/ society/ insular island I agree with Brown we have always been “more than a sum of our parts”. It is interesting to note, that, Black people guarded our borders during Roman times. Indeed, recent research into ‘Cheddar Gorge man’ has demonstrated that Britons originally had ‘dark to black skin’[[10]](#endnote-10). Diversity of race, religion, ethnicity, ability and culture were deemed to be ‘British’ by the Romans, but such attributes now – since the ‘War on Terror’ though seem to construct the subaltern, internal other (Taras, 2013), an enemy within, an enemy to be feared, an enemy to be othered. (see Houston- this edition)**’**

**I have always valued the multiplicity of cultures that exist within Britain- for me this is what makes Britain Great.**

I want to problematize what they include and exclude in their concept of ‘British values’[[11]](#endnote-11). What is this ‘British’ they discuss and does this ‘Britain’ exist? I argue therefore that ‘British’ is an artificial concept (Cullingford, 2003) one that has no authenticity. It is a concept that locates an inclusion and by default formulates exclusion as ‘British’ and its values moves values from an illusion to verbal confusion (after Pocock, 1995). This Britain’s antecedents, I suggest, lie more in government counter terrorism strategies than any substantial historical fact (Kostyuk, 2007). Giddens (1985, 215) relates that national sentiments rise up when the “sense of ontological security is put in jeopardy by the disruption of routines”. Perhaps, their values only have fundamental value in their ability to enable us to enter Toni Morrison’s[[12]](#endnote-12) “not there space”. A space of colonialization where an act of “rememoration . . . turns the present of narrative enunciation into the haunting memorial of what has been excluded, evicted and for that very reason becomes the unheimlich space for the negotiation of identity and history” (See Bhabba, 2004, 284). I suggest here then that their ‘Britain’ is no more than a rhetorical trope- perhaps of warm beer, ploughshares[[13]](#endnote-13) and cricket games. It is of itself and in its self a Trojan horse. A frame which through flagging and banal nationalism (Billig, 1995) indoctrinates and radicalises our children into an invented/perverted nationalism that the political elite employs to deal with the perceived/ conceived threat of an internal other to our geographical, historical and ideological borders. In this form, their ‘British values’ become nothing more than a “conventional carnival of surplus emotion” (Billig, 1195, 45) as the “voices of the system . . . show how to transform [the system] in order to reinforce it” (Serres, 2007, 69.).

As ‘our’ national anthem states:

“*Scatter their enemies, And make them fail* **. . .** “

There is now an enemy within . . .

“*God- save us all*”

***Challenging arrival points: departing from false beginnings . . .***

*What is this* ***‘****Britain****’*** *we talk about?*

Let’s start with some facts, or at least what we are given to be facts, about the term British.

Collingwood, the notable historian, tells us that the origin of the word Britain is itself the result of a blunder (See Collingwood and Myres, 1936). Belgic tribes inhabiting the continental shores of the straits of Dover at the time of Julias Ceaser were the ones Plinny called Britanni. From his text they lived immediately south of Boulogne in France.

***This line of analysis stems from my work as an History undergraduate – an education that corrected many of the ideas given by my state schooling.***

**‘Scare mark two:** Britain as the Romans employed it comes from the Britannic territory – but this is where Julius Caesar left from . . . not where he arrived. The departure point was not the end/ arrival point but was incorrectly labelled as such. Before this, the country had no uniform name. The actual people, Collingwood tells us were called the Pretani or Priteni, so should we actually be called Pretanis, Pretania- do we actually live in a United Kingdom of Great Pretani and Northern Ireland?**’** (See Collingwood and Myres, 1936)

***Think here dodgy dossiers and the Iraq War.***

**‘Scare mark three-** The Romans back dated documents to employ the name Britannic/ Briton. Even then, they never meant that this included all of what we now call Britain -but only the southern half. This brings a completely new meaning to the North South Divide[[14]](#endnote-14). In great Monty Python fashion, *What have the Romans ever done for us*? So - as well as the aqueduct they gave us the North/ South divide.**’**

So, their (the political elite) scare marks, mark out their Britain as an inclusion that excludes. Politicians, of all parties, project their nationalism onto “‘others’; ‘our’ is overlooked, forgotten, even theoretically denied” (Billig, 1995, 7). They scratch out the ‘our’ in our history, as they share an unshared history with all of our children. Here, in this imagined community (Anderson, 2006; Stronach, this edition) they over write our histories with a British and Britain that mean distinct, distinctive and differing things to distinct, distinctive and differing peoples. The embarkation point to my analysis, then, like Julius Caesar, was once well known but they have scratched it out as a departure point for teachers. In revisiting and refocussing this discourse, I seek to move away from the faux depart (Derrida, 1972) and the “invented permanencies” (Billig, 1995, 29) of the rhetorical devices of these politicians. It becomes interesting here at the beginning of my analysis to note therefore that British/ Britain cannot actually be conceived as a “monolithic identity” (Ward, 2004, 31). Such authenticity is in fact inauthentic. In reality, it is an identity formed by the ebb and flow of historical epochs (Kostyuk, 2007) and of a Britain as a “dialectical nationalism” (Brown, 2012, 45) mediated amongst other things by power, a geographical insular place, class, religion, race and gender (Ward, 2004; Kostyuk, 2007).

**‘Scare mark four** - people refer to England, Great Britain and the United Kingdom interchangeably; although legally they mean completely different things (Hunt, 2016). In legal terms, we are the British Isle, which refers to this Island and some 6000 smaller island that are under our (their) control. However, as the British***Island*** we bring in, amongst others, the Crown Dependencies such as the Isle of Man and the Bailiwicks of Jersey and Guernsey. Britain – just Britain – has no legal status at all- it only did for the Ancient Romans. (Hunt, 2016)**’**

***I do this too - the writing of the paper has troubled the very core of my thinking about my homeland.***

***Why is it, as Billig (1995, 78) informs us do we not call ourselves “United Kingdonians” but continually calls ourselves English?***

***I had to look up the term Bailiwick – I do not define such here so as to leave such a pleasure to you!***

So how did our Britain come about? Colley (1994) cogently argues that British/ Britain cannot be anachronistically applied before the Act of Union (1707) of England and Scotland. Like many other European countries, contemporary understanding of Britain began in the 18th and 19th century as a product of political ideology. As Benedict Anderson (2006, 11) notes this was the, “the dawn of the age of nationalism”. Great Britain, and pride in this idea, was therefore manufactured in response to internal (national) and external (international) events. What became needed was an ideal form of Britishness (the best of British Britishness) that enabled people to unite in a pride of Britishness and stand to defend the belief that Britain was indeed great.

The manufacture of a modern Great Britain was also as a result of external pressure which during the late 18th century, but especially the 19th century, led to states constructing national histories and identities as a justification of their territorial and political boundaries in the face of complex and competing nation states (Rhys et. al. 2010). From this point forward what we witness is a “fuzzy notion of Britishness” (Kostyuk, 2007, 61) that from the 1870s to the 1960s rested on monarchy and imperialism (Ward, 2004). Unrelenting “ideological imperialist propaganda” left “no escape” for populations both here and abroad (Mac Kenzie in Ward, 2004, 15) as generation after generation were inculcated into this Great Britain. The signifier Britain became formed and malformed as part of a civilising colonial mission both here and abroad. As we shall observe later, when we examine history textbooks, the Britain they manufacture today does not appear to rest upon a shared journey through a shared history and traditions. Sherwood (2003) and Marshall (2008) concur with this view relating that British is indeed a manufactured concept. One constructed in superior terms in relation to the other. It has always been thus. Such constructions of Britain and its greatness have the nation state to legitimise the expropriation of lands from ‘inferior’ and ‘uncivilised’ peoples. Sherwood details this has been Britain’s civilising mission. It is interesting to note here that in 1988 the Education Secretary Kenneth Baker (1988 see Samuel N.D.) stated in relation to the first national curriculum for history that, “I want our children to know about the main events in our history, Britain has given a great many things to the world. That’s been our civilising mission”[[15]](#endnote-15).

Britain’s history, though, as Marshall accounts, was in the eighteenth century an imperial fantasy as illusory and ephemeral as its dramatic renderings. Even if that fantasy has had real effects on the world stage. The question that I ask about modern Britain is: Is it the fantasy of the terrorist within, an uncivilised and inferior identity that has led to a fantasy of British values? Is not the mandating of the teaching of such manufactured values within schools a form of fundamentalism itself as British values become radicalised and weaponised within a ‘War on Terror’?

***This is an asinine example- but in this paper, I had the power to decide and thus manufacture the concept of British*. I could not resist such an opportunity – but wonder what values, fundamental or otherwise, you would associate with this definition?**

**‘Scare mark five:** For myself Ilike this definition of British – stay with me on this one . . . from the Urban dictionary of slang [[16]](#endnote-16). Yes, there is such a thing . . .

***Br***i- A girl to cute- to perfect, too unique, and petite. She’s a definite good choice in being with. She’s a beauty inside and out without a doubt.

***Tish***- meaning to look good (fabulous, hot, sexy scandalous, beautiful).

So British is a hot scandalous, small girl who is to good to look at!

So where does this take us? Well . . . not very far, so I wish now to move forward and trace the concepts of Britishness and its values through exemplars extracted from history textbooks that date back to the 1920s. What is it that children were taught in the past that British and Britishness meant and what values were they inculcated into? Taking a lead from Bhabha (2004, 4) I seek here to “re-historicize” the emergence of their sign and their discursive manufacturing of this social reality. My departure point, therefore, is grounded in a critique of British values at the level of the signifier because Britain/ British has a meaning that has been codified through mediation and power? As Bhabba (2004, 3) argues,

“The ‘right’ to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by power of tradition to reinscribe through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are in the minority”.

***Questioning end points- problematizing the manufactured history taught in our schools.***

For now, though I wish to move forward in my journey of exploration to question: What are British values? I seek here to problematize the evidence that formulated an arrival point that necessitated the end point of the mandated teaching of British values. I wish to demonstrate that a concept such as Britain, and the values associated to it, do follow old traditions. Though not the traditions of historical reality but the traditions which traditionally observe governments responding to internal and external events by creating moral panics that scare people into believing that something must be done (See Pattison, this edition).

So, I know that there are lists of values[[17]](#endnote-17) taught to children. For myself though these are nothing more than values cloaked by a “syntax of deferral” (Bhabba, 2004, 93) a “technical means for “re-presenting’ the kind of imagined community that is the nation” (Anderson, 2006, 25) as their “prosaic routine words . . . offer constant, but barely conscious, reminders of the homeland, making ‘our’ national identity unforgettable”(Bhabba, 2004: 135). Let us though test such values - what historical traction do they have? Many politicians have linked British values to our shared history. Indeed, Cameron defined British values as “a belief in freedom, tolerance of others, accepting personal and social responsibility, respecting and upholding the rule of law”. These, he argues, are not exclusive but “rooted in our traditions and history” [[18]](#endnote-18). I continue here, then, on a journey of undermining their values. I seek to, scratch out their history and so un create their history and recreate a history (a rememoration in Toni Morrison’s terms) that once was, but is now, through the imposition of British values, in danger of becoming just a dim and distant memory a “fading identity and faint inscription” in school pedagogy (Bhabba, 2004, 80). I will unpick their syntax of deferral, through detailing three exemplars, which reveal British values as a normalising colonization, a discursive splitting of a containment of cultural ambivalence in which their values of British render the other as valueless and provide fertile ground for creating the fantasy of the terrorist within.

***Exemplar 1***

If we go back into the midst of history (back to those Romans again) we may observe that,

Cassius Dio (V.32.3.) tells us that . . .

“Britain, the men there were rumoured to be even more debased, who slay and eat their fathers, and sleep with their mothers and sisters.”

And of British Values we are informed that . . .

“They dwell in tents, naked and unshod, possess their women in common, and in common rear all the offspring. Their form of rule is democratic for the most part, and they are very fond of plundering; consequently they choose their boldest men as rulers . . . They can endure hunger and cold and any kind of hardship; for they plunge into the swamps and exist there for many days with only their heads above water”.

He also tells us that . . .

‘. . . they mostly have a democratic government, and are much dedicated to robbery’ ( think here perhaps politicians expense scandal as a fundamental value) (see Webb, 2009).

***Exemplar 2***

To play about with British values further- what lens do we place on this? According to research from the Ukraine and research from India in the 1920s, British values are:

“We like our tea and always wear a coat and have an umbrella and we look like gentleman. We are calm, concentrated and reserved. We are very tall and strong . . .” (Kostyuk 2007, 98).

“. . . the British like vegetables and tin goods but the women are independent and strong” (Sinha, 2003, 153).

The question I ask is why is it that recognition of strong independent women is not part of the list of British values taught in schools?

***Exemplar 3 - history textbooks***

***This quote is from a professor who introduced me to textbook research. I cite it here as a continuation of the process of confounding their politics and frustrating their knavish tricks but also as a mark of respect to one who opened my eyes to such deceits.***

**- .**

**‘Scare mark six**

‘In writing and re-writing their pasts nations rarely tell the truth about themselves and, therefore, in the manner in which they present national stories history textbooks are intentional, maybe even tendentious, literature . . . Politicians of all persuasions have long recognised that controlling the present and shaping the future relies significantly upon controlling the manner in which the past is presented’[[19]](#endnote-19) (Crawford, 2009, 54).

As Billig (1995, 52) also accounts,

“. . . textbooks are often good sources for discovering a social science’s common sense. Textbooks, in seeking to transmit the disciplinary vision to a new generation of disciples, tend to package the approved views in a handy form”[[20]](#endnote-20).

By examining this “handy form” of nationalism this phase of the research analysed the representation of Britain, Britishness and its values in history textbooks that have been given to children and which are included in the Munckton Collection[[21]](#endnote-21) and those owned personally by the author. In total 20 British History textbook books, published between the 1920s and 1970s were subject to examination. In uncovering the history textbooks subcutaneous (Johnsen, 1993) layer the aim was to examine the conscious and unconscious British values these media promoted as well as their prejudices and stereotypical ideas (Fritzsche, 1992). This phase of the research built on the tradition of historical archaeology (see Hodkinson 2013) coupled with proto-text analysis to develop an alternate means of examining and, ironizing the master narratives (Funari et al., 1999) of Britain and its values. Application of these techniques, then, provided a theoretical framework, which built an analysis of the active formulation of British identity which focused surveillance back onto the, “dominant groups [changing] sense of self’” (see Chapman et. al., 1989, 19).

Before I begin, to reveal the data, it is interesting to note that history teaching in Britain was originally formulated in the 19th Century to foster a sense of loyalty in the country (Gosden & Sylvester 1968) within an educational system where “ . . . the teacher merely operates on the tongue of the pupil and teaches him how to wag it in a particular way” (cited in Parker, 1925, 1). However, as the quote below denotes, by the 1960s perhaps a different view of what history teaching was for was being taken:

“An imaginative reconstruction of a person’s point of view, capture another person’s feelings his thought to interpret his motives. This is a fundamental element of historical thought; this ability to understand another person is fundamental to social life. To be able to appreciate how another person is likely to feel, to react and to act in a given situation, to be aware of other people in the sense, to have a concern for them and a willingness to allow for differences in a point of view…” (Gosden & Sylvester 1968, 4)

*Valuing Fundamental Reoccurring British themes?*

An analysis of the textbooks revealed reoccurring themes that related to Britain/ British and their associate values. I wish here to refer to two of these themes.

Britain as confusion and illusion . . .

A reoccurring theme within the textbooks is the confusion and the interchangeability of the usage of the terms [Great] Britain/ British/ English and England. In a section relating to events of 1734, we observe “While the nations of Europe were fighting one another, he [Prime Minister] kept England out of war for 18 years, so that England was able to store up wealth while other nations wasted theirs”. Another example, in York, et.al. (1941, 117) relates that, “In Great Britain to-day, that is in England, Scotland and Wales there are about 45 million people”. The authors define Great Britain here correctly to include the Welsh but Great Britain from 1922 onwards should be referenced as Great Britain and Northern Ireland and therefore perhaps the text should have included the Irish. Later in the same text though the authors state, “After the death of Queen Anne in 1714, a new family of sovereigns ruled Great Britain and Ireland” (pg. 55). The question that might be asked here is what do the British have against the Irish- as they are included here but not later in the textbook? [[22]](#endnote-22)

Of further interest, perhaps, is that York, et. al. (1941, 63) include a map of India in which distance is referenced to “English Miles”. Personally, I was not aware that English miles were different to Great British miles or indeed verses miles employed elsewhere in the world. At the edge of this map then the legend showed us how to read it (Serres, 2015). A reading steeped in a legend of the rhetorical empire spirit. In another textbook (Hounsell & Airne, 1962: 170) it states, “You have read in Tudor times how British colonies were founded.” The British here though is incorrect as there was no Britain during the reign of James 1st. This then is a scratching out and renaming as Britain only came into being in 1707 with the Act of Union. This incorrect employment of Great Britain before 1707 is common within many of the textbooks up until the 1960s.

Of real interest across the range of textbooks is that when ‘great battles’ were won they were invariably won by Englishmen (and in the textbooks it was always men rather than the British women). Note for example this quote from York, et.al. (1941, 25) in relation to Indian campaign of 1800s. “Yet this vast country, nearly as large as Europe, was won by a handful of Englishmen to form the greatest empire in the world”. Or, this from Firth & Nunn (1931, 96 & 99) “Two columns of English ships under the command of Lord Nelson” and that “Nowadays England has the Royal Navy to protect her shores.” Perhaps here, it is as Said (2007) believes that the English pronoun is employed to give the weight of a distinguished powerful nation. Interestingly, though, these texts are not themselves distinguished because they are nought but a re-historicisation of the events. For example, archive evidence[[23]](#endnote-23) from the Indian campaign states that the army in India actually consisted of, “five hundred European soldiers, two thousand sepoys and six hundred seamen”. Nelson’s famous signal at the Battle of Trafalgar, “England expects every man should do his best” is problematic. It should have included the line and we also expect the West Indies, Africa, France . . . Nelson’s ship actually contained 441 ‘English’ - 64 Scots, 63 Irish, 18 Welsh, three Shetlanders, two Channel Islanders, one Manxman, 21 Americans, seven Dutch, six Swedes, four Italians, four Maltese, three Norwegians, three Germans, two Swiss, two Portuguese, two Danes, two Indians, one Russian, one Brazilian, one African, nine West Indians, and interestingly three French volunteers[[24]](#endnote-24). This, therefore, really was a British ship that was more than a sum of its parts. It seems that we perhaps were closer to Europe then than we are now after. What these texts seemingly show though is a vindication of western imperialism and the “triumph of English knowledge and power” (Said, 1978. 35).

**The British as brave . . .**

“brave.

*Adjective:* ready to face and endure danger or pain, showing signs of courage

Synonyms; courageous, plucky, fearless, valiant, valorous, intrepid, heroes, lionhearted, manful, macho, bold, daring, daredevil, adventurous, audacious, death- or-glory . . .

*Verb*: endure or face (unpleasant conditions or behaviours) without showing fear.”

What becomes clear through a reading of the textbooks is the prevalence given to the value of bravery. That is within the pages of the textbooks, it is demonstrable that a key foundation stone of the British character is not only must we show bravery but that in the face of danger, we must not take a step backward. There does appear to be some historical fact in this claim. Back to those Romans again, Tacitus informs us that the Britons have “boldness in challenging danger, and when near they have the same timidity in shrinking from it” (Churchill, 1956, 19). The demonstration of this value in one of the most famous school history textbooks of the mid 1900s, ‘Our Island Nation’ is replete. From the first few pages, bravery is specifically highlighted, for example, “Julius Caser was told [that Britons] were very big, brave and fierce’. Bravery is often coupled synonymously with Britain, note for instance, “Brave Britons . . . fought well and bravely”. Another example also makes clear it is not just males who are brave but “many of the women of Britain were as brave and as wise as the men and quite difficult to conquer” (17).

Within the textbooks, such bravery reveals itself by British armies winning battles despite our troops being massively outnumbered. In the York, et. al. text (1941, 62) it is recounted, in relation to the colonisation of India that “. . . this vast country, nearly as large as Europe, was won by a handful of Englishmen to form the greatest Empire in the World”. In Firth & Nun (1931, 88) it states, “Although the English army was so small it stood firm” In addition, Anon (1930) constantly reinforces this form of bravery:

“Although the British only had half as many ships as their enemies they beat them.” (109)

“The British were still fewer than their enemies but at once they went against them.”(16)

“Major Vincent Eyre a British Officer who had a few men at hand, broke through the rebels and saved the brave men of Arah. So, after all seventy beat the ten thousand.”

The texts are though also very quick to ensure that such bravery is not attributed to our colonial rivals especially, but not only, the French. To be specific, whether an English/British army wins or loses the textbooks always detail that they fought with bravery. In the case, ‘God forbid’, that our army should lose, the textbooks, invariably account that they were hopelessly outnumbered and despite fighting bravely they were “slowly driven away” (Firth & Nunn, 1931). However, when our enemies are beaten, they do not retreat with honour but, “ . . . the French attacked in vain. They became frightened and at last ran away”. A final, but important point to note here is that in many of the textbooks bravery is fundamental. Especially, when as British we make a ‘stand against the odds’ and do so in a cool and calm manner (perhaps this is the British stiff upper lip often referred to in relation to British culture). This value is made explicitly clear below,

“In the British ranks, not a trigger was pulled- do not fire until you see the whites of their eyes was the order, calm and cool the British waited.” (York et. al, 1941, 75)

**‘Scare mark seven:** why is bravery not one of the current British values? Now that we have lost Empire do the British not need to instil this value into our children?**’**

**Conclusions**

**‘Scare mark eight**: Are British values, then, just a form of cultural programming – a form that we have seen before which create the Other in times of need. As Sir Peter Fahy has said through such narratives do we risk ending up with “stereotyping and that population alienated, and end up with a ‘them and us’ narrative”.Perhaps as Smith (1995) believes our national past has always been stated in mythic terms. So perhaps British values “contain kernels of historical fact, around which there has grown up accretions of exaggeration, idealisation, distortion and allegory ... stories told, and widely believed, about the heroic past, which serve some collective need in the present and future” (Smith, in Low-Beer 2003). It is this collective need in the present that I think is fundamental to British values.**’**

***As part of a collective re-remembering- I invite you to research Arthur Roberts- ‘Britain’s Black Scottish Tommy’ during World War One – it is people like this- not British Values that makes Britain Great*.**

**‘Scare mark nine:** does creating British values juxtapose the other, the not British, traditionally used as justification for subservience??**’** Invoking Benedict Anderson, the question that perhaps should be asked is: is the Britain of fundamental values, just an “imagined community” and is it the case, as Yeandle (2002, 1) states, “as an imagined community [we] urgently need to reimage [our]self”

For now, though, let us try to draw this Britishness thing together. Given the analysis above it appears that Britishness may be conditionally considered as a frame to which many kinds of information is attached (Kostyuk, 2007). These recently incarnated British values are not fundamental but rather are a modern incarnation of old imperial logic. Perhaps they are nothing more than just a form of cultural programming in which Smith (2013, 1) might argue that, “homogeneity is overtly valued through an overarching assimilationist agenda”. To further this point it is useful to consider Brown’s take on one of the British Values, that of tolerance. She relates that:

‘Tolerated individuals will always be those who deviate from the norm, never those who uphold it, but they will also be further articulated as deviant individuals through the very discourse of tolerance (Brown, 2009 p. 44).

Possibly, then, British values are about forcing out the subaltern internal Other, the stranger within. They perhaps will serve only to promote a stratification of citizenship into those who really belong, namely the indigenous majority, “those who can belong, namely those of minority ethnic heritage who have assimilated or integrated and those who really do not quite belong, or those we tolerate up to a point, namely the Muslim ‘Other” (Tarras 2013, 410).

**‘Scare mark ten:** should we be doing this to our children?**’**

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1. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Englishman\_in\_New\_York [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The enlarged scare/shudder marks here are employed to mark a boundary that the *they* and the *them* control. They represent and mark a patrolled boundary and how inclusion within such marks highlights an exclusionary act. An exclusion that marks out the other or those who are to be othered as the War on Terror like the French Revolutionary terror of 1793-194 turns ever more inward. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. I quite like the way the use of the enlarged apostrophe opens up a space between the lines. This is perhaps a space where real analysis of these manufactured terms can take place. I will try an exploit such places to emplace a thought or a statement or my underlying worries about this concept they call British and the apparently fundamental nature of such. I realise, though, that such a technique may be difficult to read. This point should not be lost as I find Fundamental British Values hard to read. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. The Trojan horse incident relates to an apparent plot by Muslim hardliners in 2014 to infiltrate the management and the teaching staff of 21 schools in Birmingham. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Trojan_Horse> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Many people shorten Fundamental British Values to FBV but I refuse to do so. This is because a search of this terms on the internet reveals some horrific definitions of this not least in the Urban Slang dictionary. For myself the definition of it as a Facebook Virus is interesting in which we are informed “begins a chain of idiocy which continues to grow, further making the Facebook Virus a global pandemic**”**. Let’s hope that the idiocy of British values does not become such a pandemic! [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Prime Ministers speech at Munich Security conference 5/p2/2011 see <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference>.

   Here particular bodies became coded as dangerous. For a fuller expansion of this concept see Basham, V.A. & Vaughan- Williams, N. (2012) Gender, Race and Border Security Practices: A Profane Reading of ‘Muscular Liberalism’, BJPIR, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-856X.2012.00517.x [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Who are the they? It is the them, the always have been. Those who have control of the master narrative of society. ( See Hodkinson In Press- Unseeing eye) [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. One verse of the original National Anthem specifically referred to crushing the rebellious Scots. This fifth verse and the linkage to the Scots was dropped in the early 1800s. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. This is vey jingoistic language reminiscent of the Falklands War of the 1980s. However, we need to attack this ‘War on Terror’ rhetoric- we must reclaim, civilise and disrupt it territorialisation. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. See: https://www.theguardian.com/science/2018/feb/10/cheddar-man-changed-way-we-think-about-ancestors [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. I am reminded here of Benedict Anderson’s word, “ …nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time” . “ Nationalism, are cultural artefacts … To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today they command such profound emotional legitimacy”. (2006,3& 4) [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. See for example Evans, S. (2013) Programmed Space, Themed Space, and the Ethics of Home in Toni Morrison's "Paradise", *African American Review*, 46 (2/3), pp. 381-396. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. I am minded here of Serres notion of the ploughshare “The blade of the plough is a sacrificial blade, killing all the plants to make a clean space. Everything that grows here is excluded. Not only weeds but everything. The ploughshare is a sacrificial knife frenetically manipulated at the height of murdering fury.

    It slices. It does not decide but it slices. Not in two but in three. It cuts up space. It marks a closed line; inside, the sacred; outside, the profane; inside, the temple; outside the vague area filled with evil. Inside the city, surrounded by walls, and outside the country”. Serres (2007: 177). However, it is clear that the rhetoric of British politicians does not observe the ploughshare as thus. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. North South divide- see for example: http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/north-south-divide-uk-british-education-economy-gender-pay-gap-difference-a7484046.html [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Britain as part of its civilising mission has also given the world; slavery, the slave trade, violent colonisation amongst other things. We tend to forget this aspect of our civilising mission. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. See http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=british%20slang [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. I could cite their list here but I am loathed to publicise their nonsense any further than is necessary. However here in the foot notes I exemplify my aversion to one of their words - tolerance, offered by them as a Fundamental British Value, by invoking Billig (1995: 82), “In Western democracies, ‘our’ tolerance is much praised by ‘ourselves’. Journalists and politicians, especially when arguing for immigration restrictions, cite ‘our’ tolerance, and ‘their’ tolerance, as a reason for excluding ‘them’ – the foreigners”. . .” ….The rhetoric denies ‘our’ prejudice and it condenses an argumentative structure, which attributes intolerance to ‘them’; ‘our’ tolerance is threatened by ‘their’ presence; ‘they’ are wither intolerant or cause intolerance; thus, ‘we’ seek to exclude ‘them’, not because ‘we’ are intolerant but, wrote the reverse, because, ‘we’ are tolerant.”

    I spoke, in 2000, to a German Professor, who was also a survivor of Auschwitz who informed me that tolerance was a word often employed by the Nazi’s towards people of the Jewish faith. Such tolerance it seems ended with the ‘Final solution’. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. David Cameron, The Mail on Sunday, June 15, 2014 [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. For a very recent example of this practice in China see : https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jan/13/china-rewrites-history-books-to-extend-sino-japanese-war-by-six-years?CMP=oth\_b-aplnews\_d-2 [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. I am very mindful here that teacher’s pervert the cultural message of textbooks and that children do not necessarily absorb the message. See Beigi, A., & Hodkinson, A. (2018) A comparative analysis of the cultural representation of disability in school textbooks in Iran and England. *Education 3-13, 27-36.* [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. I am profoundly grateful to access to this material and the time you spent scanning in the images. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Perhaps after the intervention of the Democratic Unionists during Brexit, this question gains even more traction. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Please see: https://archive.org/stream/bengalin175657se03hilluoft/bengalin175657se03hilluoft\_djvu.txt [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. See the black heroes of Trafalgar. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/the-black-heroes-of-trafalgar-320576.html [↑](#endnote-ref-24)