11

ENDURING TROUBLE

Striving to think anew

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Islam and psychoanalysis are two discourses and practices that overlap; they are both seemingly distinct and share concerns as well as socio-cultural-psychic preoccupations in relation to what makes us human. In this chapter, I want to explore some of the inter-connections between Islam and psychoanalysis in order to draw out a few shared preoccupations between these two seemingly distinct discourses and practices. There is, as Joseph Massad points out, a difficulty with knowing what Islam is and what it has come to mean; does Islam, he asks, name a 'religion, a geographical site, a communal identity?' (2009, p. 193). A similar question can be asked of psychoanalysis: is it a religion, an ideology, a theoretical framework and/or clinical practice? I understand Islam and psychoanalysis as belief systems, ideologies and discourses that involve practices and rituals.

While there is agreement that there are different versions of psychoanalysis and similarly that Islam is practised differently according to geographical location, to date there has been little attention paid to the question of whether there exist specific connections between Islam and psychoanalysis

Attending to this question will hopefully unsettle commonplace perceptions that there is little overlap between the West and the Rest and this chapter is an attempt to prise apart these concrete – and frequently resolutely held – opinions. We need to ensure that Islam and psychoanalysis speak to each other while simultaneously recognising their different conceptualisations of socio-cultural systems and their contrasting understandings of human beings.

Within a psychoanalytic framework we have to endure and tolerate that there is always a gap – a chasm, indeed – between who we desire to be and who we are as we are perpetually riven with conflict, aggression, hate and indifference. Within an Islamic discourse, human beings are conceptualised also as struggling with the basic instincts of egotism, aggression, excessive self-regard and arrogance. The message of

Islam is that individuals are agents of their moral beliefs and actions and are continually responsible before an omniscient and omnipresent God.

One focus of the overlap between Islam and psychoanalysis is an implicit preoccupation with endurance: as an ethical position, struggling with aspects of the self that are unpalatable and unacceptable and persisting with other human beings no matter the obligations that they demand.[1] Endurance can be understood as practice, as ritual and as an implicit aspect of the philosophical frameworks of both Islam and psychoanalysis. Psychoanalytic and Islamic practices both offer a space to be endured and to endure, an interval to tolerate that life cannot be what we desire no matter how fervently we may wish it to be otherwise. Psychoanalysis and Islam punctuate a state of mind, a mood and the overwhelming preoccupations of everyday living.

This chapter addresses one aspect of my wider intellectual project to understand the inter-relationships between the West and the Middle East (specifically the UK and Egypt). This preoccupation came into focus following 9/11/2001 when the discourse of a 'clash of civilisations' took hold. This powerful discourse persists and is difficult to shift, no matter the evidence or arguments to the contrary. Exploring people's perceptions of Jamaica and the UK, the Jamaican cultural theorist Stuart Hall writes that the idea that:

> because I moved – irrevocably as it turned out – from one world to the other, from colony to metropole, there were no connections between them has always seemed inconceivable to me. But others have tended to see these worlds as much more compartmentalised. And to someone who doesn't know the interior life and spaces of the colonial formation, and how its antinomies were forged, the connections may not appear to be evident … their interdependence is what defines their respective specificities; in everything they reverberate through each other but how these interconnections take place, are felt and thought through is challenging to elucidate and trace through.
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> *(2017, p. 11)*

There are various understandings of the inter-relationship between the Middle East and the West, as found, for example, in Samuel Huntington's problematic 'clash of civilisations' thesis (1996) and in the work of Bernard Lewis (2002), both of whom argue that these two geo-political regions are resolutely different and irreconcilable. Huntington's and Lewis' arguments arise from, and perpetuate, the value-laden assertion that the West is politically, culturally and socially superior to the inferior Middle East.

Joseph Massad (2015), Edward Said (1997), and Marina Warner (2002, 2012), however, elucidate and illuminate the complex inter-relationships that exist between the Middle East and the West. Said's influential book *Orientalism* (1997) explores the nuanced inter-connections that have persisted politically, socially and as importantly – affectively. Warner focuses on the possibilities for a

hopeful interchange but does not avoid thinking through the exploitation of the Middle East as an object of fascination, while Massad and Said are more worried, if not angry, about the uses made of the Middle East by the West for political and military gain. Massad's stringent analysis explores how the very conception of liberalism itself is built upon the notion of Islam as autocratic and restrictive of freedom and democracy. In order to reinforce the illusion of democracy and freedom in the West, Massad writes, the Middle East is positioned as a region that is resolutely patriarchal and autocratic (2015). On this account and in short, those who inhabit the West are the luckiest people on earth, while other human beings who live elsewhere are hapless and unfortunate.

The discourses that position the Middle East and the West as founded on inevitably divergent and irreconcilable differences are prevalent. Embedded within these discourses is the view that these chasms are natural and inescapable. There are, however, different historical accounts that challenge these established discourses. Here, I could draw upon an account of the crusades but this is familiar territory and in the attempt to think anew we must be cautious that we do not adhere to a particular version of events that forecloses knowledge of other histories. The inclusion of a socio-historical account is important because, first, it can let us know (or alert us to the historical reality) that these divisions have not always existed and, second, it can reveal to us that there are other ways of being and relating to the other that do not rest on denigration and exclusion.

The commonplace account of the crusades underlines a history of conflict, war, aggression and domination. Jerry Brotton, however, begins his account of the relationship between Elizabethan England and the Islamic world with an account of a Moroccan ambassador's time in London (2016).[2] The ambassador was in London to negotiate trade agreements and a political alliance that would unite English Protestants and Moroccan Muslims against their common enemy – Catholic Spain. Elizabethan England was close in its diplomatic, commercial and military politics to the Moroccan dynasty. The Protestant and Islamic worlds formed a strong alliance against Catholicism and while, as Brotton points out, this now seems fanciful, such was the power from the Moroccan ruler that it was given serious consideration (2016, p. 7). This political and military alliance extended to the various ways that English men and women came to understand their place in the sixteenth-century world: what they ate, how they dressed and furnished their homes (Brotton 2016, p. 8). The influence from the Islamic world went back to Henry VIII as he and his court wore Ottoman clothing and imported commodities such as cotton, rhubarb, currants, sweet wine and intricate textiles, as well as copious amounts of sugar (Brotton 2016, p. 8).

As early as the 1550s Englishmen were doing business in Muslim countries especially Morocco and Syria. These commercial transactions did not exist just within the sphere of commerce as these businessmen returned to England bringing with them new experiences, new encounters and new words – sugar, crimson, mascara, zero – words that have become embedded within ordinary language (Brotton 2016, pp. 8–9). As Warner maintains, the cross-fertilisation that has

taken place 'between our own culture and cultures which have been deemed irrational and unenlightened has been more pervasive and influential than has been acknowledged or understood' (2012, p. 25).

History is a palimpsest made up of layers upon layers of events, interpretations and conceptualisations that are contradictory and pull in different directions. Before we get carried away with the romance of Elizabethan England and imagine that this was a time of only tolerance and respect, simultaneously there was disgust and distancing from the Islamic world and this may be due to the resonance from the crusades. There was no attempt to understand Islam on its own theological terms; 'instead throughout the Tudor period a powerful set of misrepresentations, misconceptions and misunderstandings developed which defined relations between the two faiths' (Brotton 2016, p. 9). The amicable relationship that prospered briefly arose from expediency and *realpolitik*. Yet, as Brotton points out, that relationship gave rise to a variety of unintended consequences. By the eighteenth century, Brotton asserts, the Muslim world had become remote, rejected and expelled, so that Samuel Johnson commenting on a monumental 1,200-page survey focusing on the Ottoman Empire reveals a typical Georgian indifference to the Islamic region, asserting that 'no-one desires to be informed' (Brotton 2016, p. 11).

By the eighteenth century there was a resolute distancing by England towards the Islamic world especially in the political, economic and military spheres, but, in the field of culture, there was a rather different response to Islam by the West. For example, *The Arabian Nights* was celebrated, albeit, with different responses that ranged from appreciative enjoyment to horror. This medieval Arabic story collection 'became established in Europe as a masterpiece of imagination, inventiveness and wit, and took its place as a supreme fiction' (Warner 2012, p. 20). Histories, along with affective responses, are always intricate, nuanced and contrary. As Warner points out:

> Pursuing the well-rehearsed racial and negative values of the past does not contribute to opening a dialogue; uncovering a neglected story of reciprocity and exchange can make for a greater understanding. And one place where the conversation between East and West took a different shape was fiction, especially fabulist stories, packed with wonders, elastic in handling time and space, and plotted according to the different laws of fate and magic.
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> *(2012, p. 26)*

There is never a clear fit between the political, cultural, social and affective spheres and we must endure what we do not know and tolerate that nothing ever dovetails together neatly. In her first Reith Lecture *The Day is for the Living* (2017), Hilary Mantel stresses, that we must resist the temptation to use history as a way of organising our ignorance of the past. It is when we think that we have understanding in our grasp that we should be at our most vigilant to that which is inevitably pulsing away underneath the surface.

Towards understanding belief systems

An understanding needs to take place focused on the place of religious beliefs in the lives of many people whatever their faith, as religious beliefs require to be taken seriously. Terry Eagleton points out that most contemporary cultural theorists pass 'over in silence some of the most vital beliefs and activities of billions of ordinary men and women' (2016, p. ix), and this absence sits alongside the declaration of a wholehearted commitment to diversity. I understand religion as a source of solace and simultaneously as an ideological system that constrains human beings as religious faith binds people into the socio-political order. This viewpoint adheres to Marx's opinion that religion 'is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people' (1844/1970). It is important to take seriously religion's place in the yearning to belong. We have to be respectful of various belief systems based on the recognition that all religious systems are based on and founded in ideology. In short, no belief system is neutral and that includes both secularism and psychoanalysis.

It is commonplace to understand the word Islam as meaning 'surrender', Massad, however, prefers the phrase 'giving oneself over' (2015). Islam is a religion based on discipline; furthermore, and as Geaves points out Islamic law prescribes all human activity: diet, dress, hygiene, prayer, commerce, relations with others and the rules of warfare (2010, p. 46). By professing their faith, Muslims accept a structure based on a direct personal relationship with God and the Message of the last Prophet Mohammed (Muslims believe in the existence of Jesus Christ but not that he was the last Prophet). The pillars of faith, ritual practice, social obligations, moral codes and prohibitions define Islam as a religion. The pillars are: there is no god except God, Muhammed is his Messenger, daily prayer, paying zakat – charitable contributions and fasting during Ramadan, which is perceived as having a threefold function: spiritual, physiological and social. Ramadan is a month to turn inwards towards introspection and reflection. The last pillar of Islam is to perform Hajj but only if there are financial resources to undertake a pilgrimage.

In Cairo, where I live for some of the time, religion saturates everyday life: for example, the call for prayer (adhan) fills the soundspace. Everyday talk is replete with religious belief – thanking God for everything including misfortune. The rituals and habits of everyday living, including cleanliness, prayer and diet, are undertaken according to the Qur'an and the hadith. This is a world in which it is impossible to avoid religion, and within which atheism cannot be imagined. I was brought up within the Muslim faith and despite identifying as secular I do find myself throwing up prayers (if they can be called that) into thin air rather frequently in the hope that they land somewhere (they hardly ever do). My mother and stepfather were both devout Christians. I know the value of religion and what it provides in relation to consolation, belonging and as an emotional and social glue.

As Massad points out, Islam is often positioned as the counter-point to liberalism (2015) and a prevalent belief that liberalism and liberal values will rescue Muslims from a rigid and overly strict ideology dominates in the 'West', where an often-expressed aim 'is to convert *Muslims and Islam* to Western liberalism and its value system as the only just and sane system to which the entire planet must be converted' (Massad 2015, p. 3). The apparently sacred values of freedom, liberty and equality are the only route to a different salvation. Secularism as a belief system that consoles and reassures is bypassed through this unthinking faith in a particular liberal framework.

We need to be attentive to, and cognisant of, the ways in which psychoanalytic theory and practice can dovetail too neatly into liberal ideologies. Psychoanalysis, after all, is also a belief system that can ensure an illusion of coherence, understanding and access to a distinctive matrix of knowing the world and human beings. Massad provides an essential challenge that perturbs a liberal (psychoanalytic?) viewpoint that Muslim subjectivities should be reliant on Western beliefs of what constitutes exemplary maturity, rationality and autonomy (Massad 2009, 2015).

Eagleton argues that secularism has its roots in a material history including the expansion, during the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries of European commercialism and more recently, the rapid growth of international monopolies as well as the impact of new technologies (2016). Interwoven with these massive shifts in the economic and material spheres was the partial dissolution of traditional hierarchies and as Eagleton asserts it was not so much God but priests that were the site of criticism for the task 'was not so much to topple the Supreme Being as to replace a benighted version of religious faith' (Eagleton 2016, p. 6). It was reason and not God that should be the all-powerful and self-determining power and while the 'Enlightenment sought to reconstruct morality on a rational basis … [but] the morality in question remained largely Christian in provenance' (Eagleton 2016, p. 9). It is crucial to understand that 'although secularism is often defined negatively – as what is left after religion fades – it is not itself neutral. Secularism should be seen as a presence. It is *something*' (Calhoun et al. 2011, p. 5).

Perhaps one reason that the commonplace assumption that secularism is value-free and without basis in ideology arises from a fear and distrust of excess. As Adam Phillips writes, 'nothing makes us more frightened, more furious, more despairing than other people's extreme commitment to political ideals or religious beliefs' (Phillips 2009). Phillips explores this horror of excess as based on fear and despair of our own longings and desires and these emotions are provoked when we judge someone as holding excessive beliefs (the basis on which a judgement is made of what is believed to be excessive, out of proportion, intemperate is always complex). I have no conscious desire to blow myself up and simultaneously I can identify with the wish to make an impact and the need to go out with a bang and not an ordinary whisper. Feeling flooded by anxieties about excess can lead to either a pretence of tolerance and/or proselytising against excessive religious

beliefs. Jean Bethke Elshtain carefully explores Charles Taylor's distinction between tolerance and proselytising, writing that proselytisation occurs when a person

> knowingly and determinedly sets out to change someone else's mind about something basic to his or her identity and self-definition, like religious belief. Toleration requires that (I) learn to live with deep differences even though (I) may disagree profoundly with another's beliefs and identity.
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> *(2004, p. 130)*

Full respect entails recognising that we inhabit and transmit different histories and these histories are active as they form our belief and value systems, our perceptions and responses to other human beings. A crucial aspect of recognition is understanding that though histories and lived experiences are not congruent, that does not undermine the necessity of respect. Iris Marion Young writes that within 'a stance of moral respect, each party must recognise that others have irreducible points of view, and active interest that respectful interaction must consider … such mutual acknowledgment is the meaning of moral equality' (1997, p. 351). Respect entails accepting that people can express their religious beliefs differently and indeed publicly. Far too frequently, people declare the following: 'people can believe what they want as long as they keep it hidden' (Bethke Elshtain 2004, p.131). Some Islamic practices are public: for example wearing the veil, praying in the street if circumstances require it and the call for prayer. The private/public divide does not hold the same importance for all societies.

Sayeeda Warsi[3] writes poignantly about what her Islamic faith means to her:

> My faith is about who I am and not about who you are. It's a rule-book for me, not a forced lecture series for you. Its strength is a source of peace for me not ammunition with which to fight you. It's a ruler I have chosen to measure myself against, not a stick with which to beat you. It allows me to question myself, not to judge you. And recognizing myself, being sure of who I am, being comfortable in my identity, does not mean having to downgrade, erase or reject who you are.
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> *(Warsi 2017, p. 270)*

This passage can be understood as a description and as a reassurance both that Warsi will not proselytise and force anyone to convert, and as a calm resistance to relentlessly being positioned as a religious fanatic.

The moral endeavour to respond to and tolerate the other is at the core of Islamic and psychoanalytic discourses. Both frameworks argue that we all have to give ourselves over to the demands of the other and propose that enduring the other human being is central to the effort of being a moral human being. For psychoanalysis, we have to endure the other and withstand that other human

beings are never as we want them to be as they never provide unconditionally and meet our desires without reservation. While for psychoanalysis the moral code is the relationship between one human being and another, within Islam morality entails the profound relationship with God. The relationship of a Muslim with God is a conscious and voluntary submission to the will of God and it provides a degree of intimacy between God and the human being (Geaves 2010, p. 47). Islamic ethics are linked primarily to the ideal of being virtuous and are based, as Geaves points out, on a strong sense of social justice. Muslims have to prepare for divine judgement by striving to right the wrongs of social injustices and political injuries (Geaves 2010, p. 48).

Of equal importance to the discourses of Islam and psychoanalysis is the proposition that ethical and moral conduct requires self-discipline on the part of the individual. Endurance is ethical as it entails not forcing the other to be who we wish them to be and necessitates the endeavour to avoid being coercive and colonising other/s (Butler 2005). Interwoven with enduring the other, there are the vexed difficulties of acknowledgement and recognition. Entwined with acknowledgement and recognition is the necessary capacity for empathy which I understand as allowing the other into the self so that the other person makes a difference to who we are (Young-Breuhl 1998). Emotions, however elusive, weak and slippery they may be, have effects that are, in contradiction, powerful as they pulse through, and between, human beings. As Kathleen Stewart writes, ordinary affects 'highlight the question of the intimate impacts of forces in circulation. They're not exactly "personal" but they sure can pull the subject into places it didn't exactly "intend" to go' (Stewart 2007, p. 4–5).

Emotions and fantasies can pull us away from our best intentions as embroiled in self-other relationships, there is always the use of the other. Winnicott explores the necessity of the use of another person and material objects as crucial aspects of finding the self (1970). As part of the ritual of prayer Muslims roll out a rug that is used only for prayer and it is worth registering, if not pondering on, the symbolism of Freud's oriental rug that lies across his couch. Many patients lie on couches that, I hazard a guess, are covered in oriental rugs. Lynda Marinelli writes in her catalogue to the exhibition – *The Couch: Thinking in Repose* – that Freud's choice of 'examination bed' opens a wide spectrum of experience between dreaming and waking, dissoluteness and moral control. It serves as a therapeutic instrument, as a site of free association and as a vehicle of poetic production (Marinelli in Warner 2012, p. 411). In order to free associate, to start edging towards speaking that which is illicit and socially forbidden, and to begin to know the 'stranger within',[4] that which is unwelcome and alien we lie on an object that comes from elsewhere.

To use an object fully, however, as Warner points out, is to allow it to exist in all its foreignness and strangeness (2012, p. 49). The object frequently takes on a religious allure and Warner draws attention to how visitors to the Freud Museum behave as if there is 'something holy about the room, elicit exchanges in hushed voices and referent behaviour turning the visitors into pilgrims' (2012, p. 412).

There are two (minimum) ethical endeavours that need to occur. First, there is the essential knowledge that an object that we use comes from outside of ourselves and arrives from somewhere foreign and distant. Second, we also have to struggle with the abject knowledge that we are dependent on the other for our very existence (Winnicott 1970). Our reliance on the other is dependent on a belief that other human beings are on the whole trustworthy and simultaneously we have to acknowledge our tendencies to exploit, colonise and manipulate other people. Enduring dependency and knowing that we are reliant on other human beings can lead to paying back the debts incurred to other human beings whether known, familiar or not.

Need, desire, fantasy

In thinking through the relationship between psychoanalysis and Islam, there is the crucial matter of temporality. Psychoanalysis emphasises the relationship between the past and the present while for Islam it is the future that holds the promise of an ideal life in paradise. I could let the matter rest there, except it is not that straightforward for two reasons. First, temporalities are fused as the past, present and future are intertwined in a complex knot of temporalities, experiences and identities (Treacher Kabesh 2011). Second, as Adam Phillips explores, all our lives are lived through that which we continue to wish had taken place (2013). We live our lives through that which has been but is now absent and that which has never occurred, as well as through our wishes and desires for a different life. We dream that if we had had another life – had actually been someone else – then this life would be smoother and more fulfilling and with fewer disappointments/frustrations/regrets. It would be a life of ease and satisfaction.

Much of our mental life is about the lives we are not living, the lives we are missing out on, the lives we could be leading but for some reason are not (Phillips 2013, p xi). What we fantasise about and yearn for are people and experiences that are absent and needless to say we 'also learn to live somewhere between the lives we have and the lives we would like' (Phillips 2013, p. xi). We learn, albeit reluctantly, to inhabit the reality principle and 'our lived lives might become a protracted mourning for, or an endless tantrum about, the lives we were unable to live' (Phillips 2013, p. xiii). A crucial aspect of the reality principle is that we have to endure life in all its frustrations, irritations, challenges, pleasures and joys. We pay the price and make a reluctant choice about whether to believe that God will ensure us the ideal life in the hereafter or that through undergoing an analysis our lives will improve in the here and now. Phillips writes that Darwin showed us that everything in life is vulnerable, ephemeral and without design or God-given purpose... Belief in God (and providential design) was replaced by belief in the infinite untapped talents and ambitions of human beings (and in the limitless resources of the earth) (2013, p. xiv). A profound belief of neo-liberal societies is that people can achieve their potential, be productive and make use of the

opportunities available. Standing still is never an option let alone passing our sell-by date. Baumann argues throughout *Liquid Life* (2005) that people in the West are meant to possess a life of choice, individuality and fluidity, and are supposed to be in a process of an endless remaking of identity.

Stephen Frosh underlines that endurance is a generous state of mind. He writes, psychoanalysis 'reminds us that there is something important about stillness, about remaining with a situation until it organises itself under the pressure of its own desire; it reminds, us, that is to say, of the virtues of endurance' (Frosh 2015, p. 157). Waiting for someone either literally or emotionally can offer someone a lifeline. Waiting for someone also entails having to endure that something or someone is more important than oneself and being willing to give oneself over to another human being is a crucial aspect of our humanity.

Within neo-liberal discourses, waiting can too easily be seen as passive, irrational, and too simplistically perceived as fatalism. Muslims become positioned as passive dependents who are overly dependent on divine will and are not autonomous or reasoning beings. There is a spiritual humility in the knowledge that we must give of ourselves and if you are a practising Muslim to know that your fate has been preordained by God. This is not a passive fatalism. We should not assume, as I did until recently, that fate is equivalent to passivity because it does take courage, patience, fortitude, to accept one's fate which after all is another way of accepting who one is. In any case, as Freud points out, it takes an awful lot of energy to be passive (1905/1953). To think psychoanalytically about fate leads to questioning the belief in the value of autonomy as a sign of maturity and an interrogation of a belief that rationality and reason can exist without the workings of the unconscious. We have to be wary that the unconscious does not become another implicit form of fate so that the unconscious works in this way: nothing to do with me, it's my unconscious.

During the Enlightenment and beyond, rationality became an important value, and this entailed that, as Eagleton points out, the imperative to deny failure, disorder or vulnerability prevailed (2016). Islam and psychoanalysis perpetuate the fiction, either overtly or covertly, that if human beings place their faith in their particular system then doubt and ambivalence will be alleviated. In seeming contradiction, however, psychoanalysis stresses the importance of enduring our fragmented and broken identities (one reason why psychoanalysis is unpalatable for many). Within psychoanalytic theory, release is never readily available while within an Islamic framework redemption will take place on Judgement Day.

Islam and psychoanalysis as discourses and as practices stress the importance of thinking as a verb and both frameworks emphasise the necessity of thinking anew and the struggle of understanding. The word jihad circulates in the contemporary Western geo-political region. It evokes fear if not terror, anxiety if not dread, troubling wordless affect if not horror. The word – jihad – probably, I hazard a guess, is what most non-Muslim people associate with Islam and the association of a war against the other is its most simplistic connection. It is worth pointing out that in the over 80 accepted definitions or understandings of jihad only one refers

to war and this with strict stipulations and conditions: war is legitimate only in self-defence and if it is necessary due to aggression or colonisation (Ramadan 2017, p. 161).

Jihad means 'effort' and is an injunction to the self to carry out a perpetual struggle to overcome negative thinking, emotions and behaviour. It is a command that every human being should resist temptation: sexual, material, whatever corrupts, and to overcome the negative impulses within ourselves and in society. Jihad, the effort required, is twofold as it focuses on resistance *and* reform. Jihad within Islam resonates with the psychoanalytic injunction to continually re-think, exert effort and struggle with our aggression, hatred, envy, selfishness and apathy – in short, our negative impulses. Psychoanalysis in this reading *is psychoanalysis as jihad*.

Atmospheres are ambiguous, for as Ben Anderson writes, on the one hand, 'atmospheres are real phenomena. They "envelop" and thus press on a society "from all sides" with a certain force. On the other, they are not necessarily sensible phenomena' (2009, p. 78). Atmospheres are indistinct and simultaneously equivocal as they shift 'between presence and absence, between subject and object/subject and between the definite and indefinite – that enable us to reflect on affective experience as occurring beyond, around, and alongside the formation of subjectivity' (Anderson 2009, p. 77). The tone and atmospheres of a society can be enigmatic, elusive and have material effects on subjectivities and subjective experience. There are various demands that are made on Muslims to be legitimate and to become like a Western subject while simultaneously remembering that this is impossible.

Perhaps a starting place is to scrutinise how all human beings strive to be legitimate subjects because as Ferguson pithily asserts 'subjection is preferable to abjection' (2013). The perpetual question that has to be persistently asked is: how is the other always being exploited in order to ensure that our (my) place in the socio-political order is secure? This exploitation takes place through disavowal, distancing, direct or in-direct racism or through what Bourdieu describes as symbolic violence (1991). Accountability, following Butler (2005), is based on knowing that we internalise and perpetuate the socio-political orders that we live by and we cannot wish that away. There is the necessary and persistent matter of how we can be hospitable and respectful to other human beings. This pertinent challenge applies to individual subjects of whatever faith, to Islam and psychoanalysis as systems of belief, and to societies from whichever geo-political region. Knowing the value of our inter-connections is one way forward to being hospitable and respectful.

Notes

1 I am indebted to Stephen Frosh for his essay 'Endurance' (2015).
2 It is worth reading the novel *Leo Africanus* by the Lebanese author Amin Maalouf (1992) that is based on a Renaissance man who travelled extensively and explores how Islam and Christianity are inter-related.
3 Sayeeda Warsi is a lawyer and a member of the House of Lords in the UK.

4 Julia Kristeva's book *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991) is an exploration of the foreigner in society and the foreigner within ourselves – the unconscious.

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