Black Muslim Theology and the Classical Islamic Tradition: Possibilities of a Rapprochement

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In memory of the late Imam Warith Deen Mohammed (1933-2008)

Abstract

Elijah Muhammad declared unapologetically that "God is a man." This anthropomorphist doctrine does violence to modern normative Islamic articulations of *tawúḥd* (monotheism), the articulations of which involve God's "otherness" from the created world. The Nation of Islam (NOI), therefore, has been the target of polemics from Muslim leaders who, from within and without the United States, have declared its irredeemable heterodoxy. But in premodern Islam, heresy was in the eye of the beholder and "orthodoxy" was a precarious and shifting paradigm. This paper attempts to, in the words of Zafar Ishaq Ansari, "examine how the 'Nation of Islam' fits into the framework of Islamic heresiology."

Introduction

In 1981, Zafar Ishaq Ansari published a groundbreaking article on "Aspects of Black Muslim Theology," namely, the theological claims of Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam (NOI).[1] These claims are quite eccentric and have no obvious basis in the time-honored doctrines of the more traditional articulations of Islam.[2] In this remarkably thorough study, Ansari attempted to view the Nation's theology "in the context of the religious experience of the Blackamericans, especially the Black sects and cults which arose in the early decades of" the twentieth century.[3] This sociological approach was not

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Wesley Williams recently defended his Ph.D. dissertation, entitled "*Tajallÿ wa-Ru'yÆ*: A Study of Anthropomorphic Theophany and *Visio Dei* in the Hebrew Bible, the Qur'an, and Early Sunni Islam," with the Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Michigan. His research interests include Islamic studies, the Hebrew Bible, and African-American religions.

uncommon.[4] He was convinced that, while the substance of these doctrines had little to do with Islam and resemble rather the Christianity (and, more minimally, the Judaism) of the NOI's urban American environment, ultimately the Nation derived its eclectic theology from neither of these world religions. Rather, "the reservoir on which the Black Muslims have drawn is the religious traditions of the Blacks, especially the ideas and attitudes prevalent among them during the first decades of this century."[5] By "religious traditions of the Blacks," Ansari seems to have had in mind that nondenominational folk orientation called "Black Religion" that characterized black religiosity in the urban areas at the beginning of the last century.[6] His confidence in a non-Islamic "folk" context in which to properly understand Elijah Muhammad's claims did not, however, preclude an awareness of a possible broader, distinctly *Islamic* context within which Black Muslim theology might be profitably studied:

> It would be interesting to attempt to examine how the "Nation of Islam" fits into the framework of Islamic heresiology … During its historical career, as is well known, a large number of sects arose from the Islamic body politic. Some of these sects deviated from the accepted doctrines of Islam in such a fundamental manner and adopted such a hostile posture that they ceased to have any relationship whatsoever to the main body of Islam (e.g. Baha'ism, Qadiyanism). There are other sects which remained on the fringe (e.g., certain extremist groups among the Shi`ah and the Khawarij). There are still other sects within the Muslim body politic (e.g., the moderate Shi`ah and the Khawarij) and are considered an integral part of the ummah. In this spectrum, where ought one to place the "Nation of Islam"?[7]

Ansari raises a very relevant question. The polyphonous and, indeed, cacophonous nature of premodern Islamic theological discourse is well documented.[8] Though it might be going too far to speak of distinct *Islams* in the way that Jacob Neusner speaks of distinct *Judaisms*,[9] it is the case that early Islam was not monolithic.[10] Even such conventions as the "main body of Islam," while not totally anachronistic, must be used with more precision than is generally done by both Muslim and non-Muslim scholars if they are to have any substantive meaning at all. When viewed against the backdrop of this theological polyphony, how Islamic or un-Islamic might the NOI and its doctrines look?

The most distinctive and defining aspect of the Nation's theology is, no doubt, Elijah Muhammad's radical claims about God.[11] As Ansari noted:

> Th(is) concept (of God) … is quite distinct, and indeed unique. Despite
> Islamic trappings, it is far too foreign for ordinary Muslims even to under-
> stand, let alone accept … The distinguishing characteristic of this concept
> of God is its unmistakable anthropomorphism.[12]

It is Elijah Muhammad's bold claim that "God is a man, and we just can-
not make Him other than man,"[13] which is most at odds with traditional
Muslim theology[14]; sympathetic Muslim writers often overlook or minimize
this aspect of NOI dogma.[15] Islam is often viewed as the religion *par excel-
lence* of divine transcendence.[16] God is *khilāf al-`ālam*, "the absolute diver-
gence from the world," and this characteristically Islamic doctrine of
mukhālafah, "(divine) otherness," precludes divine corporeality and anthro-
pomorphism.[17] The NOI has thus been the target of numerous polemics from
Muslim leaders within and without the United States declaring its irre-
deemable heterodoxy.[18] But as C. Eric Lincoln pointed out: "Elijah Muham-
mad did not achieve orthodoxy for the Nation of Islam, but orthodoxy was
not his goal."[19] Rather, he was unapologetic and openly rejected the ortho-
dox belief in divine incoporeality:

> The ignorant belief of the Orthodox Muslims that Allah (God) is some
> formless something and yet He has an Interest in our affairs, can be con-
> demned in no limit of time. I would not give two cents for that kind of
> God in which they believe.[20]

The status of various aspects of Black Muslim theology vis-à-vis the
larger Islamic tradition is too frequently judged on the basis of an anachro-
nistic view of the latter.[21] Indeed, studies of Islam in America in general and
of African-American Islam in particular are not infrequently dogged by a
fundamental misunderstanding of Islam as an historical tradition, a misun-
derstanding evidenced by a tendency to objectify and essentialize Islam.[22]
Thus Yvonne Haddad and Jane Smith, who have studied the similarly eccen-
tric Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) founded in 1913 by Noble
Drew Ali in the context of the "sectarian challenge in Islam," suggest that
Islam from earliest times has witnessed theological and political tensions
between a "dominant body of worshippers, those who … identified them-
selves as 'orthodox' and opposition groups that have tended to be viewed
by the orthodox as sectarian deviations."[23] Envisioned here is the 1,400-year
existence of a "mainline Sunni Islam," to which Elijah Muhammad's doc-
trine is "sharply contrasted."[24] According to their reading, these "proto-
Islamic" groups of urban America can be situated within the context of his-
torical Islam, albeit on the sectarian margins.[25]

Haddad and Smith's concept of the (nearly) timeless struggle between "orthodox" and "sectarians" is patently ahistorical.[26] Not that Islam failed to develop the mechanisms whereby "orthodox" and "sectarian" may be delineated.[27] It did develop such mechanisms.[28] But it is the case that, as in those other great monotheistic traditions of Judaism and Christianity, "sectarianism" preceded and, in a real sense, defined "orthodoxy" in Islam.[29] It is also the case that these pre-orthodox "sectarians" of early Islam considered themselves perfectly orthodox and the other articulations as sectarian.[30] What is more, the theological tastes and preferences of this "dominant body of worshippers" often changed markedly, such that the history-of-religions' truism, "one generation's orthodoxy can be the next generation's heresy" and vice versa, is particularly apt for the history of Islam.[31] A more accurate image is surely one of diverse intellectual trends and influential personalities only later spawning distinct schools of thought that competed with each other for hegemonic recognition as "the right way."[32] It was still later that some of these articulations would be codified as "orthodox" and "heresy."

This point is well-made by Edward E. Curtis IV, who emphasizes "the changing nature of Islam's tradition, its dynamism, and the provisional character of its elements."[33] Rightly dismissing the erroneous notion of any "one" normative definition of Islam and its boundaries,[34] he suggests that the study of African-American Islam has been too consumed with dismissing certain Muslims as cultists, heretics, and sectarians. All of these pejoratives and unhelpful labels presume, by their comparison to "orthodox" Muslims, a normative Islam that in no time and in no place has ever existed.[35]

This is an appropriately measured statement based on a careful reading of the history of Islam's developing tradition. Yet in juxtaposing this discursive tradition with the theology of Elijah Muhammad, even Curtis is unable to completely avoid essentializing the former. In regards to his central anthropomorphic doctrine, Curtis claims:

> In the historical terms of scholarly Sunni discourse, these statements seem wholly inconsistent; it is not possible to believe simultaneously that a human being appeared as God and that God is One.[36]

While this statement rings true as far as it goes – the (non-mystical) Sunni textual tradition shows a consistent rejection of the largely Shi`i tendency to identify individuals with God or with divinity – the historical Sunni scholarly discourse could indeed accommodate belief in God appearing as a non-specific – though generously described – human being (i.e., anthropomorphically) and simultaneously being One.[37] Indeed, the "foundations" of Sunnism proved quite accommodating to this.[38]

In early Islam, "heresy" was in the eye of the beholder and "orthodoxy" was a precarious and frequently shifting construct. Can these African-American "proto-Islamic" groups and their doctrines be situated (doctrinally) among the competing "orthodoxies" of classical Islam? Does Elijah Muhammad's anthropomorphist doctrine have any serious precedents in Islam's premodern period? We will present in this study evidence of an important precedent for the most defining aspect of Black Muslim theology, a precedent not just from the "sectarian" margins of the classical Muslim tradition,[39] but from its very (epi)center.

These questions are not simply academic. Identifying possible precedents for Elijah Muhammad's most distinctive – and disqualifying – doctrines within "mainstream" classical Islamic discourse has, in my mind, far reaching implications for the future of African-American Islam. Inasmuch as African-American Muslims constitute one of the largest groups of Muslims in America, the implications for American Islam generally are equally far reaching. The most immediate impact, I suggest, will be on the current discussion of identity and authority in American Islam. As American Muslims are deeply involved in the process of determining the nature and authenticity of an indigenous American Islam,[40] the question of identity is the "mother of all issues, *umm al-masāʾil*."[41] Equally pressing is the question of who may legitimately participate in this process.

The hegemony of the immigrant Muslim leadership in America and the concomitant non-recognition of indigenous (i.e., African-American) interpretations of Islam raise the issue of authority.[42] Urgent is not only the question of who are the bona fide members of the American *ummah*, but also who has the authority to speak on its behalf and offer interpretations of Islam. If African-American Muslims are to (re)gain an authoritative voice, the continued adherence of the NOI under Minister Louis Farrakhan to the anthropomorphist doctrine of Elijah Muhammad begs the question of his future role and the role of the Black Muslims in general. This question is relevant because, while the membership of the NOI is likely relatively small, Farrakhan's influence has always reached well beyond the "registered" numbers.[43] We will conclude this discussion with suggesting some sociological implications of our findings.

African-American Islam and the Authority to Define

In his latest book, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking toward the Third Resurrection* (2005), Sherman Jackson makes an important and no doubt

seminal contribution to the discussion of American Islam. Calling attention
to the fact that the African-American Muslim population had its genesis well
before, and thus independent of, the influx of foreign-born Muslims into the
United States following the repeal of the National Origins Act and the
Asiatic Barred Zone in 1965, Jackson points out that the "cultural legiti-
macy" and esteem Islam enjoyed for a long time in the black community as
a whole,[44] a circumstance that is no doubt the *sine qua non* of the later phe-
nomenal spread of Sunni Islam among Blacks, goes back to the "Islamizing"
efforts of the so-called "proto-Islamic" movements of the early twentieth
century: Noble Drew Ali's MSTA and, especially, Elijah Muhammad's
NOI.[45] As noted, the doctrinal eccentricities of these movements, particu-
larly of the NOI, provoked the ire and condemnation of some traditional
Muslim leaders (indigenous and immigrant) who did not hesitate to declare
these groups and their leaders to be patently "un-Islamic." Grounded as they
were in the distinctly domestic phenomenon of "Black Religion" and lack-
ing any relationship to or even real knowledge of the classical tradition of
Islam (what Jackson calls "the super-tradition of historical Islam"), these
proto-Islamic groups proved incapable of authenticating themselves in the
face of the new critical mass of immigrant Muslims hailing largely from the
Middle East and South Asia and who, by dint of their origin alone, were pre-
sumed to be *the* authorities on the intellectual legacy of historical Islam and
thus the legitimate definers of a properly constituted "Islamic" life in
America. The MSTA and the NOI's general unfamiliarity with the "her-
meneutic and juridical tradition of historical Islam," as well as that of other
African-American Muslims, meant that they could not appeal to this super-
tradition themselves in order to authenticate their doctrines as Islamic.[46]

Upon Elijah Muhammad's passing in 1975, an event marking in NOI
historiography the end of the so-called "First Resurrection" (i.e., African
Americans' "resurrection" out of the "grave of ignorance" into the light of
"Islam"), leadership of the Nation was assumed by Elijah's son, Wallace D.
Mohammad (the late Imam Warithuddin Muhammad), who boldly transi-
tioned the NOI away from the eccentric doctrines of his father and into
mainstream Sunni Islam. In 1976, he changed the movement's name to the
World Community of al-Islam in the West (WCIW). Meanwhile, after a
brief showing of solidarity with Imam Warithuddin, Minister Louis Farra-
khan, national spokesman for Elijah Muhammad and the NOI at the time of
the former's passing, rejected the transition and left the new WCIW to
reconstitute the old Nation of Islam. This period of divided leadership on the
basis of Elijah Muhammad's legacy has come to be known as the "Second
Resurrection."[47]

Elijah Muhammad, despite his "tenuous relation with the sources and traditions of historical Islam,"[48] ceded no authority to the growing immigrant Muslim community to define Islam for him and his followers.[49] If any challenged his interpretations of the Qur'an, it was they, with their *tafs̄r bi al-ma'th ́r* (tradition-based interpretations), who misunderstood the Book, not he.[50] He, the claim was, had received his interpretations directly from God.[51] However, during the transition to Sunni Islam, Imam Warithuddin, who jettisoned his father's claim of divine authority and the doctrines based upon it, did recognize the authority of the new (largely) Arab and Indo-Pakistani adjudicators of all things "Islamic" in America. In so doing, Jackson and others argue, he relinquished to the new régime of immigrant Islam the religious authority that had theretofore always been the preserve of African-American Islam.[52]

But the latter, in all of its articulations, harbored from the beginning a "critical weakness" that made this "régime change" as inevitable as it was consequential: non-mastery of the classical tradition of historical Islam and the consequent inability to appeal to it for purposes of self-authentication. African-American Muslims, now predominantly Sunni, could no longer define for themselves and for non-Muslim American observers what it meant to be Muslim. Henceforth, that authority rested squarely and exclusively with the new immigrant Muslim community.

But, argues Jackson, in reality this community, despite the presumptions, was only slightly less tenuously related to and only marginally more knowledgeable of this super-tradition of historical Islam than were those indigenous Muslims who were expected to recognize its self-authenticating authority.[53] Under the new régime, instead of insights from the classical Islamic tradition, the priorities, perspectives, historical experiences, and interpretations of Arabs and other immigrant Muslims are made normative and all "Islamicity" in America is measured in terms of how intimately one identifies with these. The consequences of this régime change for African-American Muslims were significant.

> The introduction of Immigrant Islam into the collective space of Black-american Muslims resulted in the latter's loss of their interpretive voice as well as their monopoly over what had functioned as a bona fide, indigenous tradition of proto-Islamic and Islamic thought and exegesis … From this point on, virtually every indigenous insight, proclivity or ambition would be impugned or marginalized via a prima facie presumption that all that was alien and meaningless to the immigrant Muslim was alien and meaningless to Islam.[54]

African-American Islam has thus fallen into a crisis of authenticity and an authority deficit. Lacking the requisite knowledge and training in the traditional Islamic sciences that would allow them to appeal to the classical tradition in order to authenticate their interpretations, African-American Muslims have effectively lost the authority to define Islam for themselves and through the prism of their own socio-historical experiences in the same way that other Muslims do. No longer can they independently and autonomously participate in the enterprise of defining for themselves a properly constituted Islamic life in America.

The Challenge of a Third Resurrection and the Future for Black Muslim Theology

This crisis of African-American Islam can be overcome, Jackson suggests, by African-American (or *Blackamerican*, to use his term) Muslim mastery and *appropriation* of the classical tradition of historical Islam, a development he calls the "Third Resurrection" in recognition of the genetic link between the spread of (Sunni) Islam among African-American Muslims and the earlier "proto-Islamic" movements. During this envisioned era, African-American Muslims will acquire competency in the classical tradition and apply it to situations and in ways that reflect their own indigenous concerns and perspectives, rather than those of their immigrant co-religionists. Such a development would allow them to "(re)emerge as self-authenticating subjects rather than dependent objects of and in this tradition."[55] During this dispensation, the agenda of Black Religion and the charismatic leadership of the First and Second Resurrections will be replaced as authenticating agents by learned appeal to the sources and authorities, though not necessarily to any fixed doctrines, of historical Islam.

> [T]he Third Resurrection will look to the classical legacy as a *starting point* rather than the end of its contemplation. More importantly, the structural features of classical Islam will confer upon Blackamerican Muslims both the right and the responsibility to develop their own body of concrete doctrine.[56]

Jackson appeals to the ecumenicism of the premodern Muslim religious discourse as such a structural feature to be enlisted by the Third Resurrection into the cause of African-American Islam. Unlike Christianity with its ecumenical councils, Islam chose not to adjudicate doctrinal disputes through a centralized ecclesiastical authority. Instead, the unanimous consensus (*ijmāʿ*) of the community of religious scholars and jurists regarding a doctrinal and/or

juridical point was the mechanism by which a doctrine or ruling was made probative on the community as a whole. Short of such a consensus, no doctrine could be rightfully declared *the* Islamic position, nor could a doctrine be declared un-Islamic so long as it is grounded in the authoritative sources, based on recognized principles of interpretation, and did not violate a preexisting unanimous consensus. Working within this framework and having mastered the classical tradition, African-American Muslims would conceivably be able to proffer their own interpretations and get them recognized as authentically Islamic, thus becoming independent agents rather than passive recipients in the process of formulating doctrine.[57]

I share Jackson's vision of a Third Resurrection. He has brilliantly illuminated the path that African-American Muslims must tread if they hope to preserve their integrity and identity as both black and Muslim, and to regain the self-authenticating authority they lost as a consequence of the post-1965 "régime change." Self-authentication can be achieved now, in any generally recognized way, only through the ability to responsibly appeal to the "supertradition of historical Islam." Here is the relevant question for our purposes: if this Third Resurrection is the future of African-American Islam, what role might these seminal "proto-Islamic" groups play in this development? In Jackson's view, it seems, none.

Not that able Black Muslims and Moorish Americans cannot acquire the requisite learning in the classical tradition; rather, it seems that Jackson would argue that it is these groups' irredeemable heterodoxy – their "theological and doctrinal excesses, omissions, and downright blasphemes"[58] – that preclude a future for them in the new "classical sources and authorities" – centered era. These groups are of little or no significance today, he argues, and as early as 1976 the NOI had "ceased to be a contender in the ongoing competition to define Islam in America."[59] The astonishing success of the historic Million Man March in 1995 as well as a respected moderator's injection of Louis Farrakhan into an important Democratic presidential debate in 2008 suggests that the reconstituted NOI has more than a "little" significance today. However, it is indeed doubtful whether this sociopolitical significance alone could render the NOI again "a contender in the ongoing competition to define Islam in America."

In addition, Jackson is able to situate the NOI's doctrinal "irregularities" in the context of classical Islam's theological pluralism. Like Ansari, he frames that context by Islam's heresiographical tradition and notes:

> While certainly condemnable from the standpoint of Muslim orthodoxy, these infelicities (i.e., God is a man, God is black, Elijah Muhammad is a

prophet, Noble Drew Ali is the author of another revelation, etc.) are no
more outlandish than some of what we encounter in the early history of the
Muslim world, where, incidentally, the people knew Arabic and had direct
access to Muslim Scripture (Qur'an and hadith) and Muslim scholarship.[60]

Jackson cites exemplary precedents for some of the NOI's heterodox
doctrines from the famous work, *Maqālāt al-Islāmīyīn* (Doctrines of Those
Who Associate Themselves with Islam), by the renowned theologian al-
Ash'ari (d. 935), which chronicled various doctrinal trends among the early
Muslims. He cites

1. The Bayaniyah sect, which held that God existed in the image of man
    and that He would entirely perish, except for His face.
2. The Mughiriyah sect, which held that its founder was a prophet and
    that God was a crowned man of light.
3. The Khattabiyah sect, which held that all Shi`i imams were prophets
    and messengers of God.
4. A Murji'ah sect that held that deeds were irrelevant to the constitution
    of belief, that belief is purely a matter of having the knowledge of God,
    and that ignorance of God is unbelief.
5. The Azariqah sect, which held that every major sin (e.g., adultery,
    wine-drinking) is an act of unbelief and that the territories of those
    Muslims who disagree with them are non-Muslim, enemy territories.

Here, Jackson has taken an important step toward answering Ansari's
above question regarding the NOI's place within the spectrum of sectarian
thought in early Islam: every group cited by Jackson was an extremist
(Shi`i[61]) group that is generally considered to have "deviated from the
accepted doctrines of Islam in such a fundamental manner … that they
ceased to have any relationship whatsoever to the main body of Islam."
Thus, as suggested already by Haddad and Smith, it is the sectarian margins
of early Islam that provide the framework from which to view these "proto-
Islamic" groups in America. Inasmuch as the anthropomorphist doctrines of
the Bayaniyah and the Mughiriyah helped ultimately render them interest-
ing side notes of history with no relevance to the modern Muslim world, the
NOI's anthropomorphist doctrine could only render it inconsequential to the
future of Islam in America, at least in terms of that "ongoing competition to
define Islam in America."

The examples cited by Jackson from al-Ash`ari's *MaqⱰlⱰt al-Islam¼y¼n* are as good as any to be found in that work. It is the case, however, that al-Ash`ari's intent was specifically to log "sectarian" views as he understood this to mean. What were the views of the orthodox during al-Ash`ari's time, the contemporary followers of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855)[62]? With them we find equally relevant parallels to Elijah Muhammad's anthropomorphist doctrine. These parallels re-situate the contextual view of Black Muslim theology from the sectarian margins of the classical tradition to within its epicenter. In this section of this study, I shall illuminate these parallels and draw out their implications for the possibilities of a future role for the NOI in the third resurrection.

From Orthodoxy to Eccentricity: Elijah Muhammad in the Context of Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal

In the ninth century, Sunni orthodoxy consolidated itself in Baghdad, and it did so around the theological creed of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855), eponym of the Hanbali school, one of the four legal schools recognized as orthodox by all Sunni Muslims.[63] As noted by Christopher Melchert, the primary biographer of Ibn Hanbal today: "Ahmad ibn Hanbal … was the central, defining figure of Sunnism in the earlier ninth century CE."[64] His high reputation was initially based on his assiduous work as a collector of hadith, the transmitted reports of Prophet Muhammad. But when the `Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun (d. 833) instituted a *miὑnah* (inquisition) in 833 in order to force community assent to a particular sectarian dogma Ibn Hanbal refused to comply, thereby becoming the hero-victim of the affair and the champion of the strictest articulation of (emergent) Sunni orthodoxy.[65] At the center of this orthodoxy was an anthropomorphist doctrine based largely on a literalist reading of the anthropomorphic descriptions of God found in the Qur'an and, especially, the Sunnah of the Prophet.[66]

Ibn Hanbal was an anthropomorphist in the strict sense of affirming for God an anthropoid form.[67] He was not an anthropomorphist in the loose sense in which this word is generally used by Muslim and non-Muslim scholars translating the Arabic term *mushabbih*. This latter term, though normally (carelessly) translated as "anthropomorphist,"[68] literally means "likener," as in "one who likens the Creator to his creation." On the basis of a Qur'anic passage (*al-Shura* [42]:11 "There is nothing like Him"), Ibn Hanbal, in agreement with practically all Sunni schools of thought, denied that God was like His creation.[69] But this passage is ambiguous

(*mutashābih*), Ibn Hanbal claimed, and requires a proper, not-so-obvious interpretation.[70] And the proper interpretation does not suggest that God is incorporeal. As Elijah Muhammad would do later, Ibn Hanbal rejected the idea that God is "an invisible spirit that exists everywhere," as alleged by the heretics.[71] Rather, he was emphatic that God had an anthropoid form according to which He created Adam's form; however, His form was "transcendent" in that it lacks the limitations and fallibilities found in the human "copy."[72] It is in this latter sense that "none is like Him."[73]

This particular doctrine of "transcendent anthropomorphism"[74] did not derive explicitly from the Qur'an, but instead is based largely on a prophetic report found in the most authoritative and orthodox hadith collections, according to which Prophet Muhammad said "God created Adam according to His form."[75] This report was controversial in Ibn Hanbal's day and beyond.[76] Some scholars read the possessive pronoun "His" (*hi*) of "His form" as "his," namely, Adam's form. That is to say that God created Adam in Paradise in the same form that he, Adam, had when he was sent to Earth. In other words, Adam was not a giant in Paradise who then shrunk, as some had claimed.[77] On the other hand, other scholars had no problem reading "His form." The famous hadith scholar Abu Muhammad ibn Qutayba (d. 889) thus declared: "God possesses an actual form, though it is not like other forms, and He fashioned Adam after it."[78]

This latter position was that of Ibn Hanbal. He states in one of his creeds, "God created Adam with His hand and in His form,"[79] and argues elsewhere: "Adam was created in the form of the Merciful (i.e., God), as comes in a report from the Messenger of God ..."[80] Ibn Hanbal rejected the exegetical devices that read "his form" rather than "His form." When asked about a contemporary's statement that "he (Adam) is according to the form of Adam, He is not according to the form of the Merciful," Ibn Hanbal reportedly responded: "He who says that God created Adam according to the form of Adam is a *jahmī* (disbeliever)."[81]

Equally significant for Ibn Hanbal's theological *weltanschauung* were the reports purporting to describe Prophet Muhammad's alleged visionary encounter with God.[82] The Prophet is supposed to have seen God in "the most beautiful form (*aúsan s´ra*)," that of a beardless, wavy-haired young man (*shabb amrad ja`d*).[83] Whether this vision of God was with the Prophet's eyes or in his sleep, he saw Him in reality (*rā'hu úaqqān*), Ibn Hanbal argued, "for the visions of the prophets are real."[84] While these reports were very controversial, affirmed by some and rejected completely by others, Ibn Hanbal not only affirmed them but made belief in their literal meaning a fundamental component of a Muslim's faith.[85] He was not alone in this,[86] but it was cer-

tainly the unequivocal support given by this "champion of the Sunna"[87] that made these reports and their anthropomorphic presentation of God a defining characteristic of Sunni Islam for the next four centuries.[88] When Caliph al-Qa`im (r. 1031-75), in support of the leading Hanbali imam al-Qadi Abu Ya`la' (d. 1066), made the Hanbali articulation of Sunni Islam the "official credo of the state" through his proclamation of the "Qadiri Creed (*I`tiqād Qādirī*)," at the center of this Sunni orthodoxy was an anthropomorphic deity who is a divine corporal person (*shakh§*) for whom "terms such as 'young man' (*shābb*), 'beardless' (*amrad*), [and] 'wavy, curly (hair)' (*ja`d wa qatāt*) ... have all been established as designations that apply to God."[89]

Ibn Hanbal affirmed the literal meaning of the Qur'anic and prophetic (anthropomorphic) statements about God,[90] but he was no irrational fideist. His "literalism" was not the consequence of a rejection of all "reasoned" approaches to scripture, nor was it absolute. He was quite willing to interpret scriptural statements about God figuratively, particularly those that seemed "anti-anthropomorphist." An illuminating example is his treatment of Qur'an 6:104: "Vision comprehends Him not, and He comprehends all vision." For many theologians, this passage confirms that God is invisible, and thus incorporeal, and can never be seen under any circumstances.[91] Ibn Hanbal and the Sunni orthodoxy that he represented argued otherwise: God can and will be seen in the Hereafter by the believers with their eyes.[92] While much of the argument of those who affirmed the beatific vision rested on Prophetic reports (hadith), a small number of Qur'anic passages were also cited as proof-texts by both the deniers and the affirmers. In the following quote, Ibn Hanbal tries to reconcile this scriptural material:

> As for His statement, "Faces will be bright, looking to their Lord" (75:23) and He said in another verse, "Vision comprehends Him not and He comprehends all vision," (the heretics) said: "How is this?! It is reported that (the people of Paradise) will look toward their Lord and he said in another verse 'Vision comprehends Him not and He comprehends all vision'." And (the heretics) doubt the Qur'an and claim that it is contradictory. (But) as for His statement "Faces will be bright," it means the Beauty and the Whiteness. "Looking toward their Lord" means to see their Lord with the eyes (ta`ayana) in Paradise. As for His statement "Vision comprehends Him not," it means in this world, not the Hereafter ...[93]

In harmonizing two ostensibly contradictory verses, one seemingly anthropomorphist and the other anti-anthropomorphist, Ibn Hanbal interprets them both. He makes the anti-anthropomorphist verse ("Vision comprehends Him not") conform to the dictates of the anthropomorphist verse

("Faces shinning, looking toward their Lord") and then interprets the latter in a way that enhances its anthropomorphist import; "looking toward their Lord" becomes "seeing their Lord with the eyes." This seems to be his characteristic hermeneutic.[94] Contrary to the direction in which Sunni theology will ultimately go, Ibn Hanbal reads the scriptural anthropomorphisms as *muúkamÆt* (i.e., admitting to only a literal meaning) and the seemingly anti-anthropomorphic descriptions as *mutashÆbihÆt* (ambiguous and therefore requiring a non-literal interpretation). Where the scriptural anthropomorphisms are insufficiently clear in their corporeal import, he provides an interpretation that removes any ambiguity. This is instructive. As there is nothing in the Qur'an that necessarily warrants this hermeneutic, Ibn Hanbal must be understood to have made a *theological choice* to interpret the Qur'an as he did. And considering that the Qur'an itself offers little support for this anthropomorphist doctrine, and also that the authenticity and interpretation of many of the prophetic reports relied upon had been the subject of significant debate, one cannot escape the question of how it was that Ibn Hanbal settled on such a doctrine. Whatever the answer, the question raises an important point: the major figure of ninth-century Islamic religiosity *chose* divine anthropomorphism as his dogmatic position, and he *chose* to interpret the Qur'an in the light of this dogmatic position.

Aziz Al-Azmeh, the British scholar of Islam, has observed:

> When asked whether one may transmit a *hadith* … which related of the Prophet his statement that he saw God in the shape of a young man, Ahmad b. Hanbal readily declared that one may, given the authority of the transmission … It comes (then) as no surprise to us that, given the interdiction of allegory and insistence on literalness, streetcorner religiosity purveyed an anthropomorphic Allah.[95]

This religiosity could have been found on street corners in any of the seventy American cities in which Elijah Muhammad established a temple. Now it is true that Ibn Hanbal's anthropomorphist doctrine was not that of Elijah Muhammad. The "imam of Baghdad" certainly never spoke of a "self-created black God" or a divine oligarchy of twenty-four men-gods, as did the "Islamizing prophet of the [American] city." Nevertheless, anyone familiar with the main heresiographical works of classical Islam, al-Ash`ari's (d. 935) *MaqÆlÆt al-IslÆmïyïn* (Doctrines of Those Who Associate Themselves with Islam), al-Baghdadi's (d. 1037) *Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq* (The Difference between the Sects), and al-Shahrastani's (d. 1153) *Al-Milal wal-Nihal* (Sects and Schisms), and are appropriately aware and aloof of the authors' own sectarian agendas, will recognize that the classical discussion on God

and related matters featured a very wide array of views among which Elijah Muhammad's "irregularities" would have been quite at home.

Despite the fact that Elijah Muhammad "seems completely unfamiliar with the vast *tafsῑr* (quranic commentary) literature produced over the four-teen centuries of Islam," Herbert Berg is convinced that the Black Muslim leader could be considered "the first and only major African American *mufas-sir* – quranic exegete."[96] While certainly atypical, Berg finds precedents for "most of" the features of Elijah Muhammad's Qur'an interpretations.[97] Many classical and modern *mufassirs* worked in languages other than Arabic and relied upon Biblical materials (*isrā'ῑlῑyāt*) and personal opinion (*tafsῑr bi al-ra'y*), as did Elijah Muhammad.[98] In many ways, the latter's social and polit-ical readings of the Qur'an are comparable to the exegetical objectives of his Egyptian contemporary Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966).[99] Thus, argues Berg, "what distinguishes Elijah Muhammad from Muslim exegetes is merely his unique understanding of the message of the Qur'an. His heterodoxy may have a bearing on his status as a Muslim, but not on his status as a *mufassir*."[100]

Most Muslim exegetes would no doubt find Elijah Muhammad's het-erodoxy completely disqualifying, both as a *mufassir* and as a Muslim, for he wholly subsumed the Qur'an under the framework of his anthropomor-phist doctrine. But this too has a classical precedent with the unassailably orthodox Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Of course, I am not arguing here for the "correctness" of Elijah Muhammad's radical exegesis. I am, however, sug-gesting that the classical Islamic framework from which this eccentric doc-trine has been viewed can be and, indeed, should be broadened. The intra-religious pluralism of the classical period to which Jackson appealed as a structural feature to be enlisted by the "Third Resurrection" is the proper framework. But the postulate that "Islam rejects the attribution of any human form to God,"[101] while certainly true for virtually all articulations of Islam today, is demonstrably *not* true for *all* articulations – orthodox or sectarian – throughout Islam's long history.[102] If the reconstituted NOI could embrace the spirit and the goal of the "Third Resurrection," it might just make itself again at least a participant in the discussion regarding a viable formulation of Black American Islam.

African-American Islam, Anthropomorphism, and the Sociological Implications

But controversy aside, in terms of the impress he made on the world (Elijah Muhammad) must be reckoned one of the most remarkable men

of the 20th century. Among his more commonly recognized achievements were his enormous contributions to the dignity and self-esteem of the Black undercaste in America. Beyond that, and with infinitely more far-reaching implications, Elijah Muhammad must be credited with the serious re-introduction of Islam to the United States in modern times, giving it the peculiar mystique, the appeal, and the respect without which it could not have penetrated the American bastion of Judeo-Christian democracy. If now, as it appears, the religion of Islam has a solid foothold and an indeterminate future in North America, it is Elijah Muhammad and Elijah Muhammad alone to whom initial credit must be given.[103]

C. Eric Lincoln's observation regarding the decisive role played by Elijah Muhammad in Islam's successful "penetration of the American bastion of Judeo-Christian democracy" is still worth noting, even while Robert Dannin's ethnographic study suggests that African Americans encountered and embraced Sunnism long before Imam Warithuddin Muhammad's "Sunni-izing" program.[104] Also worth pondering is Elijah Muhammad's "enormous contributions to the dignity and self-esteem of the Black undercaste in America." As noted as well by Lawrence H. Mamiya:

> One could argue about the relative influence on the larger American society of any of these new religious groups and certainly the case can be made that the Nation of Islam had one of the more significant societal impacts. After all, it helped to change the self-perception and ethnic definition of some 34 million black Americans from a stance of self-hatred, confusion, and inferiority to one of self-affirmation, ethnic pride, and dignity. This awakening of black consciousness affected all other minority groups in the country …[105]

It must not be overlooked that it was no doubt Elijah Muhammad's anthropomorphist melanotheosis that affected this change in self-perception among his followers and was at the root of the more general "awakening of black consciousness" spawned by his preaching and that of his fire-brand ministers like Malcolm X. For Elijah Muhammad, the African Americans' collective experience of slavery, the noose, Jim Crow, and general discrimination produced the "so-called Negro," which he understood to be a "dead human being" (ostensibly from the Greek *nekros*, "dead body"). He declared his mission to be nothing short of the "resurrection of the dead."[106] The first step in repairing the damage done by the experience of slavery and its after-shocks, Elijah argued, is self-awareness – African-Americans' discovery of their "true selves" – followed by self-actualization: "Accept your own and Be yourself" was the Black Muslim mantra.[107]

A critical step in this "resurrection" process, as Elijah viewed it, was the African American's total disengagement from the political and, most importantly, religious systems of America. In particular it was the "White man's mystery God," namely, the "formless spirit" of the slave master's Christianity, that rendered the "so-called Negro" dead and powerless.[108] And as Louis E. Wright Jr. pointed out, for Elijah Muhammad true "freedom" and authority is not achieved by simply disengaging oneself from the "slave-master's religion"; it required disengaging from the slave-master's "god-type" as well.[109] Replacing Christianity and its incorporeal deity with Islam and an incorporeal deity was, from Elijah Muhammad's perspective, insufficient. The only antidote to Christianity's "slave-making" effects and its "mystery God" was a masterfully appropriated Islam *with a corporeal God!* It was above all else his radical claim that "God is a (Black) man" that undoubtedly accounts for his "enormous contribution to the dignity and self-esteem of the Black undercaste."[110]

The phenomenal sociological impact of Elijah Muhammad's anthropomorphist doctrine was nullified when, after the "Great Migration" in the 1970s from "Black Muslims" to "black Muslims" (i.e., African-American Sunni Muslims), the latter were compelled to "forfeit (this) prized ownership" of Islam to the new regime of immigrant Islam.[111] As Jackson well-noted, this transition signaled the end of the African-American Muslims' ability to "employ Islam in ways that promoted a dignified existence for themselves."[112]

> [P]erhaps the most lamentable development was the seemingly reversed effect that Islam was exerting on the pathologies and dysfunctionalities of the urban ghetto. Beyond the explicitly religious vices, for example illicit sex or alcohol consumption, Islam was fast losing its significance as a fortifier of indigenous constructions of such values as manly pride, fiscal responsibility, or civic consciousness. Whereas under the "Islam" of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, education, work, and community-uplift were synonymous with Black Muslim, Sunni Islam was increasingly being invoked as a reason *not* to work (for the infidel), *not* to be educated (in the infidel's institutions), and *not* to be involved in the (infidel) community …
> In short, on the new, immigrant-influenced understanding of Islam, Sunnism was in many ways becoming a cause rather than a solution to the problem of Blackamerican Muslim dysfunctionality in America.[113]

From a strictly sociological perspective, these lamentable circumstances might raise the hope that a reconstituted NOI, despite its theological irregularities, might have a role to play in any prospective "Third Resurrection"; but

a reconstituted NOI that has moved beyond its diffidence toward the classical Islamic tradition.[114] Only, as Jackson has argued, by mastering and appropriating this tradition might one become an effective self-authenticating subject in the plurality that is, indeed, American Islam. Part of the burden of this study was to demonstrate that the all-important sources and authorities of the classical Islamic tradition are worth seriously considering, even for the unapologetically eccentric Black Muslims.

Conclusion

Can the African-American "proto-Islamic" groups be situated (doctrinally) among classical Islam's competing "orthodoxies"? The anthropomorphist doctrine and the Qur'anic exegesis of Elijah Muhammad and the NOI indeed can. This finding has significant implications. First, it problematizes most treatments of African-American Islam, inasmuch as these treatments are often informed by an ahistorical judgment regarding these groups' doctrinal relation to Islam's global, historical tradition. The objectifying and essentializing tendency characteristic of these treatments is surely counter-productive to any attempt to adequately grasp the phenomenon that is African-American Islam.[115] Such characterizations as "proto-," "simulation-ist," and similar terms, as well as the suggestion that these groups are more cultural nationalists that sincere "Islamizers," precludes a more than super-ficial and *sect*ually (sic) biased assessment of these movements that have had such an impact on the American scene in general and on the African-American community in particular.

Our findings have further academic implications, I suggest. Once our new "polyphonic awareness" allows us to recognize Black Muslim theology as "one of the many voices and presences within the historical depth and cultural breadth of the Islamic tradition," avenues for the study of Islamic theology open it. As Hava Lazarus-Yafeh has keenly observed in a different context:

> [I]t is impossible to understand (Islamic) literature properly without paying serious attention to its various predecessors … One should not think in terms of influences or cultural borrowing only, however. It has been said that the Near East resembles a palimpsest, layer upon layer, tradition upon tradition, intertwined to the extent that one cannot really grasp one without the other, certainly not the later without the earlier, *but often also not the earlier without considering the shapes it took later.*[116]

It is not impossible that the shape Islamic theology took in the West at the hands of these early African-American groups may shed some light on earlier developments in the East. The possibility that Ibn Hanbal's anthropomorphism might help elucidate Elijah Muhammad's would be strengthened if W. D. Fard, Elijah's teacher in Detroit, proves in fact to be an Arab who had access to some relevant classical Arabic sources.[117] If so, there is also then the possibility that Elijah Muhammad's anthropomorphist doctrine might shed some light on classical Islamic anthropomorphism – maybe, for example, the black-haired, white-skinned *shābb* (Youthful God) of the proto-Sunni Hashwiyyah condemned by the Zaydi imam al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim (d. 860)[118] or the Hululiyyah (Incarnationists) condemned by the fanatical Ash`ari `Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi (d. 1037), according to whom the Qur'anic description of Adam's creation and animation with a breath from God (e.g. 15:26-34) is a symbolic picture of God incarnating within Adam's newly molded body.[119] By taking seriously and better understanding Elijah Muhammad's claims, we might be able to better understand these earlier Muslim claims.

Our findings have social implications as well. While noting that "the most crucial element in the history and development of a social group is the maintenance of its identity," Sulayman S. Nyang suggests that "the identity question is central to the Muslim presence in the United States."[120] Dannin has pointed out that "[i]n terms of Islamic identity, America has now become an arena for competing self-images where religious authority and cultural preferences are often conflated."[121] It is in this context that the polemics and counter-polemics between the NOI and its immigrant and indigenous critics should no doubt be seen. As Berg noted recently, the construction and maintenance of an identity involves creating boundaries, and what we see here is "a struggle over who controls the 'copyright' over Islamic figures, texts, and terminology."[122] But as Jackson and Curtis have argued, these other (immigrant) "Islams" are no less historico-culturally informed than are the so-called "proto-" Islamic groups, and these latter are not necessarily any less "authentic" interpretations of Islam than are the others. The positive sociological effect of Elijah Muhammad's anthropomorphist doctrine should thus be as much a consideration as is the NOI's alleged lack of "theological purity" in any discussion of the future of African-American Islam and American Islam more broadly. Thus there seems to be little reason why the NOI cannot be a legitimate contender in the ongoing competition to define Islam in America.

Endnotes

1.   Zafar I. Ansari, "Aspects of Black Muslim Theology," *Studia Islamica* 53 (1981): 137-76. I use here the term *Black Muslim*(*s*) to refer specifically to the Nation of Islam and its members, and *African-American Muslims* to refer to non-NOI Muslims. I also use *African-American Islam* as a catch-all referring to all articulations of Islam among African Americans.

2.   Basic sources on Black Muslim theology include, but are not limited to, the following: Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Black Man in America* (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1965); idem, *Our Saviour Has Arrived* (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple of Islam No. 2, n.d.); idem, *The Theology Of Time Lecture Series*, printed transcript by Abass Rassoul (U.B.U.S., Hampton, 1992).

3.   Ansari, "Aspects," 142.

4.   As pointed out by Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the Black American Experience* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 170.

5.   Ansari, "Aspects," 168.

6.   On which see G. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of African Americans*, 3d ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999).

7.   Ansari, "Aspects," 174.

8.   See, for example, Josef van Ess, *The Flowering of Muslim Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); W. M. Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998).

9.   See, for example, Jacob Neusner, "Comparing Judaisms," History of Religions 18 (1978): 177-91.

10. On the other hand, Herbert Berg does speak of distinct "Islams," even "African American Islams." "Mythmaking in the African American Muslim Context: The Moorish Science Temple, the Nation of Islam, and the American Society of Muslims," *JAAR* 73 (2005): 685-703.

11. As opposed to Martha F. Lee, *The Nation of Islam: An American Millenarian Movement* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), according to whom "the focus of (NOI) religious belief" was/is the Fall of America (p. 2). On the other hand, Lawrence Mamiya, "The Black Muslims as a New Religious Movement," (in *Chuo Academic Research Institute, Conflict and Cooperation between Contemporary Religious Groups: International Symposium Proceedings* [Tokyo: The Institute, 1988], 210) suggested that the NOI's "central theological myth" is that of Yakub and the origin of the races. While this latter is certainly the most noted by outside observers, it is clearly secondary to Elijah Muhammad's myth of God, his origin and nature. As Warithuddin Muhammad, his son and successor, noted, the center of the NOI's Islamic identity was the latter's doctrine of divine anthropomorphism: "God incarnate … God in the flesh, God as man." Quote from Turner, *Islam in the Black American Experience*, 203.

12. Ansari, "Aspects," 142.

13. Muhammad, *Message*, 6.

14. As Mattias Gardell points out, "the different interpretations of the religious creed of the NOI and orthodox Islam are so far apart that they are irreconcilable." "The Sun of Islam Will Rise in the West: Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam in the Latter Days," in *Muslim Communities in North America*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idleman Smith (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 32.

15. See, for example, Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995): "The core of the philosophy of the Nation (of Islam) was characterized by a combination of messianism and a form of chiliasm. A fundamental belief in Allah as one with no sons or partners dominate the theology …" The NOI's fundamental belief is clearly that Allah is a man, a conspicuous omission here.

16. See, for example, William A. Graham, "Transcendence in Islam," in *Ways of Transcendence; Insights from Major Religions and Modern Thought*, ed. Edwin Dowdy (Bedford Park, South Australia: Australian Association, 1982) 7-23 and Abdoldjavad Falaturi, "How Can a Muslim Experience God, Given Islam's Radical Monotheism," in *We Believe in One God: The Experience of God in Christianity and Islam*, ed. Annemarie Schimmel and Abdoldjavad Falaturi (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 77ff.

17. Muhammad Ibrahim H. I. Surty, "The Concept of God in Muslim Tradition," *Islamic Quarterly* 37 (1993): 127f; Faruq Sherif, *A Guide to the Contents of the Qur'an* (Reding: 1995), 24.

18. See, for example, the fatwa (legal opinion) against the Nation of Islam and its current leader, Louis Farrakhan, on 7 March 1998 by the Board of Ulema of the Italian Muslim Association, which read, in part: "Regarding the 'Nation of Islam', their official doctrine is that Allah appeared in the form of a human being named Fareed [sic] Muhammad, and that this 'incarnation of God' chose another man, called Elijah Muhammad, as his Prophet. This is a clear contradiction of the Monotheistic faith (*Tawūḥd*), and of the Koranic teaching according to which Mohammad (blessings and peace upon him) is the Seal of the Prophets. That is enough to say that everyone who belongs to the "Nation of Islam" is not, *ipso facto*, a Muslim, but an unbeliever." On the Sunni critique of Elijah Muhammad and the NOI, see Edward E. Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America: Identity, Liberation, and Difference in African-American Islamic Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002): 79-83; Turner, *Islam in the Black American Experience*, 189-96; Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), chapter 8.

19. C. Eric Lincoln, "The American Muslim Mission in the Context of American Social History," in *The Muslim Community in North America*, ed. Earle H. Waugh, Baha Abu-Laban, and Regula B. Qureshi (Canada: The University of Alberta Press, 1983), 223 [art.=215-33].

20. Cited by Ansari, "Aspects," 147. On Black Muslim responses to these polem-
    ics, see further Edward E. Curtis IV, *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of
    Islam 1960-1975* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006), chapter 2.

21. See, for example, Lawrence H. Mamiya, "Minister Louis Farrakhan and the
    Final Call: Schism in the Muslim Movement," in *The Muslim Community*, 240
    [art.=234-55], who observes that it is said of Elijah that "he saw and knew Allah
    (Master Farad, Muhammad's teacher) personally, which of course is doubly
    heretical in orthodox Islam (to identify a human being as God, and to say that
    one saw God)." Similarly Denis Walker, *Islam and the Search for African-
    American Nationhood: Elijah Muhammad, Louis Farakhan and the Nation of
    Islam* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, Inc., 2005) 273, 274, 282, who claims: "The cen-
    tral doctrine of Sunni Islam … is that there is no God but a non-corporeal
    Allah." He points out Elijah Muhammad's "anthropomorphist blurring of the
    Qur'an-affirmed transcendent God," for "the Islamic concept of God reiterated
    throughout the Qur'an is that the Omnipotent Creator is beyond human sense-
    perception and unbounded by both time and space." See further Ernest Allen,
    Jr., "Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Continuing Evolution of the Nation of
    Islam," in *The Farrakhan Factor: African-American Writers on Leadership,
    Nationhood, and Minister Louis Farrakhan*, ed. Amy Alexander (New York:
    Grove Press, 1998), 58; idem, "Religious Heterodoxy and Nationalist Tra-
    dition: The Continuing Evolution of the Nation of Islam," *The Black Scholar*
    26 (fall 1966/winter 1977): 2-34; and Robert Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to
    Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4. As has been amply
    shown, anthropomorphic theophany and *visio Dei* were important elements of
    an earlier "orthodoxy," as was the motif of "transcendent anthropomorphism."
    See esp. Wesley Williams, "*Tajallī wa-Ru'yē*: A Study of Anthropomorphic
    Theophany and *Visio Dei* in the Hebrew Bible, the Qur'an and Early Sunni
    Islam," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (Univ. of Michigan, 2008) and below.

22. For example, Amina Wadud, "American Muslim Identity: Race and Ethnicity
    in Progressive Islam," in *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and
    Pluralism*, ed. Omid Safi (Oxford: One World, 2003) 276, charges the seminal
    "proto-Islamic groups," i.e., the Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA)
    and the NOI, with failing to "sustain the integrity of Islamic dogma involving
    belief in one supreme transcendent God, Allah, and in the prophecy and living
    example of the Prophet Muhammad." Such a statement obscures the fact that
    both of these dogmas were debated and Muslims offered various interpreta-
    tions of them; thus God can be supremely transcendent and anthropomorphic,
    and God's communication to humanity might continue even though Muham-
    mad is *khētam al-nabīyīn*, Seal of the Prophets (33:40). On transcendent
    anthropomorphism in early Islam, see below n. 74. On the different classical
    interpretations of *khētam al-nabīyīn* and the question of the cessation of pro-
    phecy, see Yohnan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continues: Aspects of Ahmadi Reli-
    gious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (New York: Oxford University
    Press, 2003), chapter 2.

23. Yvonne Haddad and Jane I. Smith, *Mission to America* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 1 [art.=1-22].

24. Ibid., 10. Likewise, Sulayman Nyang contrasts the "theological purity" of Sunni orthodoxy with the heresy/heterodoxy of Elijah Muhammad's "simulationist" doctrines, for example, his selective, pragmatic appropriation of bona fide Islamic symbolism, suggesting that Elijah Muhammad's Islam is other than "bona fide." Sulayman Nyang, "Convergence and Divergence in an Emergent Community: Study of Challenges Facing U.S. Muslims," in *The Muslims of America*, ed. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 236-49.

25. For another view of the MSTA and its relation to Islamic tradition, see Susan Nance, "Mystery of the Moorish Science Temple: Southern Blacks and American Alternative Spirituality in 1920's Chicago," *Religion and American Culture* 12 (2002): 123-66; idem, "Respectability and Representation: The Moorish Science Temple, Morocco, and Black Public Culture in 1920's Chicago," *American Quarterly* 54 (2002): 623-59.

26. See, more recently, Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), where Islam still seems to be objectified and essentialized, and the "orthodox" and the "sectarians" still make an early appearance in the history of Islam.

27. As argued by such scholars as Watt, *Formative Period*, 5f.; Alexander Knysh, "'Orthodoxy' and 'Heresy' in Medieval Islam: An Essay in Reassessment," *Muslim World* 83 (1993]) 48-67.

28. Sherman A. Jackson, *On the Boundaries of Theological Tolerance in Islam: Abuu Hamid al-Ghazali's Faysal al-Tafriqa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 30-31. See further Norman Calder, "The Limits of Islamic Orthodoxy," in *Intellectual Traditions in Islam*, ed. Farhad Daftary (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers and The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000), 66-85.

29. See, for example, Fazlur Rahman, *Revival and Reform in Islam: A Study of Islamic Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 30. On Judaism and Christianity, see John B. Henderson, *The Construction of Orthodoxy and Heresy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1998).

30. The classic example being, for example, the Khawarij, on which see Watt, *Formative Period*, chapter 1.

31. Henderson, *Construction*.

32. See, most recently, A. E. Souaiaia, "Reasoned and Inspired Beliefs: A Study of Islamic Theology," *The Muslim World* 97 (2007): 331-49.

33. Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America*.

34. On the methodological inappropriatness of offering a "definition" of Islam, see also Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), chapter 2.

35. Curtis IV, *Islam in Black America*, 6.

36. Ibid., 133. See also idem, *Black Muslim Religion*, 10: "To be sure, the religious thought of Elijah Muhammad was decidedly heretical from the point of view of traditional Sunni orthodoxy." Curtis also suggests that "Muhammad's unique version of Islam contradicted many of the foundations of both Sunni and Shi'i traditions." Edward E. Curtis IV, "Islamizing the Black Body: Ritual and Power in Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam," *Religion and American Culture* 12 (2002): 181 [art.=167-196]. The anachronism here will be highlighted below as we explore the theological "foundations" of Sunnism.

37. On anthropomorphism in the early discursive tradition of Islam, see especially Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra*. 6 vols. (Berlin: 1992), esp. vol. 4; idem. "The Youthful God: Anthropomorphism in Early Islam," The University Lecture in Religion at Arizona State University, 3 March 1988 (Tempe: 1988); Claude Gilliot, "Muqatil, Grand Exégete, Traditionniste Et Théologien Maudit," *Journal Asiatique* 179 (1991): 39-84; Daniel Gimaret, *Dieu à l'image de l'homme: les anthropomorphismes de la sunna et leur interprétation par les théologiens* (Paris: Patrimoines, 1997); Robert M. Haddad, "Iconoclasts and Mu'tazila: The Politics of Anthropomorphism," *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27 (Summer-Fall 1982): 287-305; Merlin Swartz, *A Medieval Critique of Anthropomorphism: Ibn al-Jawzi's Kitab Akhbar al-Sifat, A Citical Edition of the Arabic Text with Translation, Introduction and Notes* (Leiden: 2002); Wesley Williams, "Aspects of the Creed of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal: A Study of Anthropomorphism in Early Islamic Discourse," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34 (2002): 441-63; idem, "*Tajallī wa-Ru'yῙ.*"

38. While exploring the question of the NOI's "Muslim-ness," Allen Howard Podet ("Patterns of Classical Islam and Some American 'Black Muslims,'" *Religious Education* 89 [1994]: 338-56) similarly emphasized the historical and modern diversity of the Islamic tradition, maintaining that "[t]here is no single religious tradition which is an entity called 'Islam.' Rather, Islam is a congeries of religious adaptations …" Yet in the final analysis, the NOI's anthropomorphic doctrine may indeed put it outside the pale of Islam "despite the flexibility and variety that characterizes Islam (p. 355)."

39. Kathleen Malone O'Connor, "The Islamic Jesus: Messiahhood and Human Divinity in African American Muslim Exegesis," *JAAR* 66 [1998]: 493-535) argues for the legitimate "Muslim-ness" of the various Black Muslim groups for which the notion of human divinity is pivotal (i.e., the NOI, the Ansarullah, and the Five Percent Nation of Islam) on the basis of classical precedents for such notions "within the history of Sufi and Shi`i Islam and the Islamic sectarian communities who draw upon their source texts for authority" (p. 497). We are thus still on the "sectarian" margins of Islam. See also Josef van Ess, "Drusen und Black Muslims," *Die Welt des Islams* 14 (1973): 203-13.

40. Smith, *Islam in America*, xiii.

41. As pointed out by Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, "The Dynamics of Islamic Identity in North America," in *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, eds. Yvonne

Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 25. Sulayman Nyang says as well: "The identity question is central to the Muslim presence in the United States." "Convergence and Divergence," 247.

42. Wadud, "American Muslim Identity"; Haddad, "Dynamics of Islamic Identity," 43-48; Jamillah Karim, "Between Immigrant Islam and Black Liberation: Young Muslims Inherit Global Muslim and African American Legacies," *MW* 95 (2005): 497-513; Robert Dannin, "Understanding the Multi-Ethnic Dilemma of African-American Muslims," in *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, 331-58.

43. As pointed out by Walker, *Islam and the Search*, 548: "The capacities of Farrakhan and his followers to communicate ideas and motifs to millions of African-Americans in the last two decades of the 20th century ran far ahead of the slow expansion of the little sect itself and such modest institutions as it was able to build."

44. Especially prior to the so-called "Afrocentrist" critique of Islam, for which see Sherman Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking Toward the Third Resurrection* (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 99-129; Yusuf Nuruddin, "African-American Muslims and the Question of Identity: Between Traditional Islam, African Heritage, and the American Way," in *Muslims on the Americanization Path?*, 267-330.

45. See also Lincoln, "The American Muslim Mission," 221. This stands true even as we take due notice of Robert Dannin's suggestive ethnographic study, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*. See below.

46. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 3-5.

47. On this history, see especially Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad*; Curtis, *Islam in Black America*, chapter 6; Lawrence H. Mamiya, "From Black Muslim to Bilalian: The Evolution of a Movement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 21 (1982): 138-52.

48. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 5.

49. Herbert Berg, "Elijah Muhammad: An African American Muslim *Mufassir*?" *Arabica* 45 (1998): 326 [art.=320-346]. See also Turner, *Islam in the Black American Experience*, 159 and 193.

50. Berg, "Mythmaking," 700.

51. See, for example, Muhammad, *Message*, 187.

52. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 5, 66-73. See also Curtis, *Islam in Black America*,107-27.

53. Ibid., 12-13.

54. Ibid., 70.

55. Ibid., 6.

56. Ibid., 8

57. Ibid., 6-8, 55.

58. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 45.

59. Ibid. 59.

60. Ibid., 45.

61. The Murjiah, however, were not Shi`i.

62. On orthodoxy and the Hanabila, see Williams, "*Tajall¥ wa-Ru'yŒ*," 207-42.

63. Timan Nagel, *The History of Islamic Theology, From Muhammad to the Present* (Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener Pubs., 2000) 237; Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1974) 391-92.

64. Christopher Melchert, "Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and the Qur'an," *JQS* 6 (2004): 22 [art.=22-34].

65. On Ibn Hanbal, see Christopher Melchert, *Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006); Nimrod Hurvitz, *The Formation of Hanbalism: Piety into Power* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002).

66. For a discussion of Ibn Hanbal's creed and the relevant sources, see especially Wesley Williams, "Aspects of the Creed of Ahmad Ibn Hanbal: A Study of Anthropomorphism is Early Islamic Discourse." *IJMES* 34 (2002): 441-63 and below.

67. Ibid.

68. See discussion in Williams, "*Tajall¥ wa-Ru'yŒ*," 259-65.

69. See his statements in Ibn Taymiya, *Dar' Ta`Œruè al-`Aql wa al-Naql*, 10 vols., ed. Muhammad Rashad Salim (Riyad: 1979) I:256.

70. Ahmad b. Hanbal, *Al-Radd `alŒ al-ZanŒdiqah wa al-Jahm¥yah* (Cairo: 1393 AH), 20.

71. Ibid.

72. See his arguments at *Al-Radd*, 36f. Cf. `Abd Allah ibn Ahmad, *Kitab al-Sunnah*, 2 vols. ed. Muhammad b. Sa`id ibn Salim al-Qahtani (Damman: Dar Ibn al-Qayyim, 1986), 1:280, nos. 533 and 534.

73. See his relevant comments quoted in Ibn Taymiyya, *Dar' Ta`Œruè*, 1:256.

74. On "'transcendent anthropomorphism" in the history of religions, see Ronald S. Hendel, "Aniconism and Anthropomorphism in Ancient Israel," in *The Image and the Book. Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Karel van der Toorn (CBET 21; Leuven: Uitgewerig Peeters, 1997) 205-28; Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Dim Body, Dazzling Body," in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body: Part One*, eds. Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (New York: Zone, 1989): 19-47. On the same in Islamic tradition, see Wesley Williams, "A Body Unlike Bodies: Transcendent Anthropomorphism in Ancient Semitic Tradition and Early Islam," *JAOS,* forthcoming; idem, "*Tajall¥ wa-Ru'yŒ*," 252-72.

75. Al-Bukhari, êaꥺ, vol. 8, book 74, no. 246; Muslim, êaꥺ, "Al-Jannat wa êifat Na`imiha wa AhlihŒ," no. 6809; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 6 vols. (Cairo: 1313 AH), 2:315.

76. On these controversies, see Daniel Gimaret, *Dieu à l'image de l'homme: les anthropomorphismes de la sunna et leur interprétation par les théologiens* (Paris: Patrimoines, 1997) 123ff; Montgomery Watt, "Created in His Image: A Study in Islamic Theology," in idem, *Early Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990) 94-100.

77. Ibid.

78. Quoted by Ibn al-Jawzi, *Kitāb Akhbār al-êifat*, in *A Medieval Critique of Anthropomorphism: Ibn al-Jawzi's Kitab Akhbar al-Sifat, a Citical Edition of the Arabic Text with Translation, Introduction and Notes* ed. and trans. Merlin Swartz (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 175 (Eng.)

79. Ibn Hanbal, *`Aqīda I,* apud Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqāt al-Hanābila*, 2 vols. ed. Muhammad Hamid al-Fiqi (Cairo: Matba`at al-Sunnah al-Muhammadiyah, 1952), 1:29. I use here Henry Laoust's classification of Ibn Hanbal's creeds as found in Ibn Abi Ya`la's *ÿabaqāt*. See Henry Laoust, "Les Premières Professions de foi Hanbalites," in *Mélanges Louis Massignon*, PIFD, 3 (Damas: Institut Francais De Damas, 1957), 12ff.

80. Ibn Hanbal, *`Aqīda IV,* apud Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqāt*, 1:313. From the report of Ibn `Umar: "Do not make your face ugly, because Adam was created according to the form of the Merciful." Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Kitāb al-Sunnah*, ed. `Abd Allah ibn Hasan ibn Husayn (Makkah: al-Matba`at al-Salafiyyah, 1349 AH), 56. See also idem, *Musnad*, 30 vols. ed. Shu`ayb al-Arna'ut (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risalah, 1993; hereafter *Musnad²*), 12:275, no. 7323; 12:382, no. 7420; and 15:371, no. 9604.

81. Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqāt*, I:309.

82. Ibn Hanbal, *`Aqīda III,* apud Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqāt,* 1:246; idem, *`Aqīda V,* apud Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqāt*, 1:312. On these various reports, see Williams, "*Tajallī wa-Ru'yē*," chapter 6; `Ali ibn `Umar al-Daraqutni, *Kitāb al-Ru'yē*, ed. Ibrahim Muhammad al-`Ali and Ahmad Fakhri al-Rifa`i (Zarqa', Jordan: 1411 AH) 305-59; Muhammad ibn Khuzayma, *Kitāb al-Tawúīd wa Ithbāt êifat al-Rabb*, ed. Muhammad Khalil Harras (Cairo: 1968), 197-230.

83. Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, 1:368, 4:66, 5:243, and 5:378; idem, Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad ²*, 4:221, no. 2634, 4:351, no. 2580; Al-Suyuti, *Al-La`āli' al-Masn ˆah fī al-Aúādīth al-Mawè ˆah* (Egypt: al-Maktaba al-Tijariyyah al-Kubra, 1964), 29; Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqāt*, 2:45f; `Abd Allah ibn `Abi, *Al-Kāmil fī Du`afāʾ al-Rijāl*, 7 vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1984) 2:677; George Makdisi, *Ibn `Aqīl: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 130ff.

84. Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya, *Zād al-Ma`ād fī Hadiy Khayr al-`Ibād*, 6 vols. (Beirut: Manshurat Muhammad `Ali Bay·un, Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, 1998), 3:29.

85. Ibn Hanbal, *`Aqīda III*, apud Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqāt*, 1:246; idem, *`Aqīda V*, apud Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqāt,* 1:312.

86. See, for example, the declarations of Yahya ibn Ma`in (d. 847) and Abu Zur`a al-Razi (d. 878): Muhammad ibn `Imran al-Marzubani, *Kitāb N´r al-Qabas al-Mukhta§ar* (Fisbadin: Dar al-Nashr Frantis Shitayinir, 1964-) 1:48; Al-Suyuti, *Al-La`āli',* 30.

87. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi's description of him: *Ta'rīkh Baghdad*, 14 vols. (Cairo: al-Maktabat al-`Arabiyyah bi Baghdad, 1931), 3:336.

88. On the association of Sunni Islam with Prophet Muhammad's vision of God, see, for example, Williams, "*Tajallī wa-Ru'yē*," 21ff; Al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim, "*Kitāb al-Mustarshid*," in *Anthropomorphism and Interpretation of the Qur'an*

in the Theology of Al- Qasim Ibn Ibrahim, ed. and trans. Binyamin Abrahamov (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996], 133; Al-Jahiz, *Risălah fἵ al-Năbitah*, apud *Rasἅ'il al-Jἅhi`*, 4 vols., ed. `Abd al-Salam Muhammad Harun (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanji, 1964-79), 2:18; Ibn Babawayh al-Qummi, *Kitἅb al-Tawúἴd* (Tehran: Maktabat al-Buzarjumahri Mustafavi, 1955) 66f; `Izz al-Din ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kἅmil fἵ al-Ta'rἴkh*, ed. C. J. Thornberg (Leiden: Brill, 1851-76), 8:229ff.

89. Al-Qadi Abu Ya`la, *Kitἅb al-Mu`tammad fἵ U§ἴl al-Dἴn*, ed. W. Z. Haddad (Beirut: Dar al-Mashriq, 1974), 58. Cf. 85; Ibn al-Jawzi, *Kitἅb Akhbἅr al-êifat*, 49 (Eng. 183).

90. Ibn Hanbal, `*Aqἴda III*, apud Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqἅt*, 1:246; *Abu Bakr al-Khallal's `Aqἴda al-Imἅm Aúmad*, ed. `Abd al-`Aziz `Izz al-Din al-Sayrawan (Damascus: Dar Qutayba, 1988), 32.

91. On the various debates over this, see Anthony Keith Tuft, "The Origins and Development of the Controversy over *Ru'yἅ* in Medieval Islam and Its Relation to Contemporary Visual Theory" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1979).

92. See *The Encyclopedia of Islam New Edition* (hereafter *EI* ²) 8:649 s.v. "*Ru'yat Allἅh*," by D. Gimaret.

93. Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Radd*, 13f.

94. Ibn Hanbal, `*Aqἴda 1*, apud Ibn Abi Ya`la, *ÿabaqἅt*, 1:29; Ibn Hanbal, *Al-Radd*, 40f.

95. A. Al-Azmeh, "Orthodoxy and Hanbalite Fideism," *Arabica* 35 (1988): 264-65 [art.=253-266].

96. Berg, "Elijah Muhammad," 321.

97. Berg, however, does not discuss in this context Elijah Muhammad's anthropomorphist doctrine.

98. Herbert Berg, "Elijah Muhammad and the Qur'an: The Evolution of His Tafsir," *The Muslim World* 89 (1999): 43 [art.=42-55].

99. On Qutb's exegetical methods, particularly as employed in his *Fἵ Zilἅl al-Qur'ἅn*, see Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi`, *Intellectual Origins of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), chapter 6.

100. Berg, "Elijah Muhammad and the Qur"an," 43. Cf. Curtis, *Black Muslim Religion*, 47-48.

101. World Assembly of Muslim Youth, *The Concept of God in Islam* (1997; brochure)

102. On anthropomorphist theologies in classical Islam, see above n. 37.

103. Lincoln, "The American Muslim Mission," 221.

104. Robert Dannin, *Black Pilgrimage to Islam*. Cf. Curtis, *Black Muslim Religion*, 176.

105. Mamiya, "Black Muslims," 218.

106. Muhammad, *Message*, 306.

107. For example, Muhammad, *Our Saviour Has Arrived*, 92-95; idem, Message, 42-3.

108. Message, 3.

109. Louis E. Wright Jr., "Elijah Muhammad's Political Thought on God and Authority: A Quest for Authenticity and Freedom," *Journal of Religious Thought* 51 (winter-spring 1994-95): 47-75.

110. Lincoln, "The AmericanMuslim Mission," 221.

111. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 5.

112. Ibid., 73.

113. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 60.

114. As Jackson observes: "The traditional Islamic sciences had rarely been used to empower Blackamerican Muslims. Rather, they have been routinely deployed as instruments for bludgeoning them in conformity. As a result, especially among those descended from the Nation of Islam, there developed a sense that any attempt to gain authority on the new criterion would render one a permanent follower of immigrant, Old Guard, or overseas masters. This fear of domination translated into a palpable diffidence if not aversion towards the traditional Islamic sciences." Ibid., 75-76.

115. As O'Conner remarks: "Regarding individuals and communities who claim Muslim identity … but whose views, ritual practices, and even lifeways diverge from the Sunni majority to the point of mutual exclusion, it is necessary … to create a more polyphonic awareness of the many voices and presences within the historical depth and cultural breadth of the Islamic tradition." "Islamic Jesus," 503.

116. Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 4. Emphasis mine.

117. There are numerous theories as to the identity and background of Elijah Muhammad's mysterious teacher in Detroit. All of these lack convincing supportive evidence (see especially the discussion of the various theories by Gardell, *In the Name,* 50-54). Muhammad claimed that Fard was born in Makkah and, as an adolescent, was given access to important "books of wisdom" there. Richard Brent Turner finds support for the Middle Eastern origin of Fard from, among other things, the report by Akbar Muhammad, the son of Elijah Muhammad, that he (Akbar) had seen a sample of Fard's Arabic handwriting, a forensic specimen that convinced him Fard was "Turko-Persian" culturally. Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 165, 269 n. 53.

118. Al-Qasim ibn Ibrahim, *Kitāb al-Mustarshid*, 133 (Eng.).

119. Abu Mansur `Abd al-Qahir ibn Tahir al-Baghdadi, *Al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq*, trans. Abraham S. Halkin, *Moselm Schisms and Sects (Al-Farq bayn al-Firaq), Being the History of the Various Philosophical Systems Developed in Islam* (Tel Aviv: 1935), 79.

120. "Convergence and Divergence," 247.

121. Robert Dannin, "Understanding the Multi-Ethnic Dilemma of African-American Muslims," in *Musilms on the Americanization Path?*, 353 [art.=331-58].

122. "Mythmaking," 700.