The Dissemination and Implementation of Islam within the African American Community: Addressing the Sin of Racism within the Ummah

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Abstract

The United States may be the most racially diverse and religiously pluralistic nation-state today. However, it is also arguably the most societally biased, one where many religious communities are frequently divided along distinct lines predicated upon race, color, ethnicity, and faith tradition. The sociohistorical displacement and dissemination of Islamic power away from indigenous African American Muslims to the newly disembarked post-1965 immigrant Muslims underscore the nascent religio-racial origins of how Islamic identity, membership, community, and consciousness within America has now become unusually conflated with race, culture, and ethnicity within our nation's social imaginary. That is, what it contextually means to be a Muslim in the United States has now become a highly contested, problematic, and racialized category within American Islam—a segregated Islamic reality and existence that is being renegotiated and challenged by modern-day Black Muslims dissatisfied with their oppressed, marginalized and subaltern condition as Muslim Americans within the umma.

> *Black Muslims*, who make up fully half of Muslims whose families have been in the United States for at least three generations (51%), have a centuries-long history in constructing American Muslim cultures. However, Black Muslims are either erased as part of Islam's history in the U.S. or, if accounted for, considered heretical, unorthodox, anti-American separatists.
>
> —Maytha Alhassen[1]

The theo-historical genesis, dissemination, and implementation of American Islam within the Black community and consciousness must begin with the injurious historical reality that Africans were forcibly introduced into the United States from modern-day Gambia, Nigeria, Senegal, and other African nations into the United States as chattel for their white Christian owners.[2] As a result of the transatlantic slave trade, innocent Africans of Islamic heritage represented the single largest monotheistically-oriented religious bloc forcibly transported over into the New World as human property for their new American proprietors.[3] After the Great Migration and Jim Crow, as some historians note, many disaffected African Americans struggling to secure their identity, community, membership, respect and dignity within a white Christian milieu hostile to their Blackness wrestled "with how to reconcile Black Power and the Gospel … faced with the choice of embracing Blackness or the Christian faith … [some] chose Blackness, and left the Church [for Islam]."[4] It is my argument that the societal displacement of Islamic religious authority, validity, and historical relevance away from indigenous African American Muslims to the newly disembarked post-1965 immigrant Muslims heralded the nascent origins of how identity, membership, community, and consciousness within American

Islam has now become unusually conflated with race, culture, and ethnicity within our nation's *social imaginary*. That is, what it contextually means to be a Muslim in America has now become a highly contested and racialized category within American Islam—a segregated Islamic reality and existence that is being socioculturally renegotiated and challenged by present-day Black Muslims dissatisfied with their oppressed, despised, and marginalized condition as Muslim Americans both inside and outside the mosque.[5] This is an idiosyncratic religio-racial United States phenomenon that prejudicially favors the post-1965 immigrant Muslim community because of their perceived whiteness within contemporaneous American society and past physical (geographical) proximity to the religious birthplace of Islam (Mecca).[6]

The American Muslim community (*umma*), when contextually espied through the lens of race, ethnicity, religion, and culture, illuminates the interdisciplinary linkages between identity, community, social imaginary, consciousness, and membership—a present-day social reality that becomes historically thought-provoking and problematic for religious studies scholars when examining the *relations of power* heralding the arrival, dissemination, and implementation of Islam into America vis-à-vis the African American community.[7] It is intriguing how within an American theo-historical context, the typical present-day Caucasian American "thinks of Muslims as a [homogenous] brown mass, lumping together South Asians and Arabs, and ignoring Black Muslims. The [ensuing] racialization of Islam has obscured both the diversity of Muslim America, and the [Foucauldian power relation] tensions that accompany that diversity," reaffirming how our nation's prejudicial social imaginary, community, identity and consciousness has been surreptitiously catechized by whites to theo-historically frame "Black bodies as [nondescript] objects best suited for [human] slavery … [and in the process] establishing the Black body as *Other*" (my emphasis).[8]

Indian-American educator Khyati Joshi acknowledges how "the United States has developed as a society where Christianity and whiteness are intimately linked [as an identity, social imaginary and consciousness] and where Christianity and whiteness generate social [membership and community] norms against which other religions and races are measured."[9] Ironically, for many South Asian and Middle Eastern immigrant Muslims their anxiety and fear regarding African Americans articulates itself as a religio-racial bias negating any similitude, affiliation, or likeness to Blackness and, consequently, also unfortunately manifests itself as an unconscious racial prejudice directed towards all African Americans. Black people within the United States (including Black Muslims) are perceived by many coetaneous non-African Americans (including non-African American Muslims) as lazy, stupid, morally untrustworthy, deviant, oversexed, physically ugly, violent, rapacious, brutal, unfeeling, and inhuman.[10]

As theo-historically surveyed by American religious historian Tisa Wenger, "American religious freedom talk functioned in various ways to shape and to navigate the imperial hierarchies of race, nation, and religion. Americans who could assert the racial status of whiteness claimed this freedom as a racial possession and used it to define a superiority that they tied both to their religion and to the secular modernity that it grounded."[11] Broadly speaking, the American Muslim community has incorporated certain racial and ethnic compositional features and aspects into their mosques. Because of this, many Black Muslims accurately claim that Arab, Persian, and South Asian immigrant groups have allied themselves with whiteness in a manner that racially alienates them from their fellow African American Muslims.[12] Modern-day Black Muslims in their historical encounters with other non-Black immigrant Muslims are quick to note how "the juridical battles that classified Arabs as legally white seems to position the two groups along a hierarchy of whiteness with Blacks at the bottom." The immigrant Muslim desire

to be perceived, recognized, and acknowledged as 'white' by their Caucasian American counterparts made their religious claim of Islamic fraternity, solidarity, and equality with Black Muslims appear disingenuous within the African American community, social imaginary, and consciousness.[13]

A preponderance of post-1965 immigrant Muslims, when arriving to the United States, viewed "Islam as a religious and cultural inheritance [of theirs] … and America as a land of prosperity and opportunity." Because of their ignorance of African American history, they were, generally speaking, incapable of comprehending why Black Muslims with their affiliated African American membership organizations—NOI, MSTA, Black Aḥmadiyyah movement, Five Percenters, etc.—passionately felt "Islam was a spiritual tradition of resistance that was critical of the United States and designed to undo the racial logics of white supremacy."[14] Many current-day Black Muslims take note of how they "often feel discrimination on multiple fronts: for being Black, for being Muslim and for being Black and Muslim among a population of immigrant Muslims"—and, to add insult to injury, made to constantly feel like the Other because many Black Muslims came to the Muslim faith through the Nation of Islam, which, consequently, led many immigrant Muslims to assume that African American Muslims were spiritually dissimilar from themselves and indeed theo-historically illegitimate.[15]

A majority of immigrant Muslims not of African descent fail to historically grasp how the creative religio-racial adaptation of traditional Islam to fit the United States sociocultural paradigm is actually a subversive act of Black Muslim resistance against Eurocentric notions concerning race, religion, culture, and ethnicity. With this in mind, African-American Muslim expressions of Islam seek to capsize Jim Crow-inspired white supremacist ontologies permeating our national consciousness—reversing dominant views of Christian normativity regarding identity, consciousness, community, and membership within our nation's problematic and racialized past.[16] The atoning power of Islam seeks to recapture for the African American Muslim a measure of Black agency, brotherhood, justice, and equality, for Black Muslims well understood that within the national boundaries of America, religious institutions of the African American tradition, community, and universe have historically functioned as a spiritual bastion of civic pride, upliftment, and psychological well-being.[17]

The theo-historical evolution of Black Islamic theology, community, and consciousness within America was mordantly fomented within a discriminatory milieu wracked by racial injustice, where the articulation, expression, and development of an independent Black religio-political movement, personality, and organization free of white influence was considered essential to bolstering affranchising notions of Black freedom, Black identity, Black pride and Black liberty. Many African American Muslims in their racialized encounters with immigrant Muslims (predominately hailing from the Middle East and South Asia) began to collectively realize how "the mistake that a lot of African Americans [Muslims] make when they see foreigners [from Muslim countries] is that they are feeling that these people know Islam. *They do not*. They have to study [Islam] just like we do. They may be fluent in Arabic, but they are not knowledgeable about the *dīn* ("religion, judgment, custom"). Because if you go to some Muslim countries, they are being taught cultural Islam or hearsay Islam. They are not being taught the actual *Sunna* ("prophetic example")."[18]

African American Muslim scholar Jamillah Karim perceptively recognizes how the immigrant Muslim judgment concerning Islamic identity, community and membership is often theologically irrelevant for many Black Muslims because it experientially fails to perceive, comprehend, or acknowledge an African American sociocultural context, history, and

perspective—a unique sociohistorical frame of consciousness that appreciates, accommodates and acknowledges how "Islam had attracted thousands of African Americans by claiming the legacy [and mantle] of Black Religion; a legacy of protest, resistance, and liberation."[19] C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya succinctly corroborate how, "a good way to understand a people is to study their religion, for religion is addressed to that most sacred schedule of values around which the expression and the meaning of life tends to coalesce." In light of this prophetic scholarly judgment, a scrupulous religio-historical examination of African American Islam within the United States reveals the Black Muslim appropriation of a social protest, justice, and resistance-oriented movement whose sociocultural intent and consciousness is to "annihilate or at least subvert white supremacy and anti-Black racism."[20]

The 2014 Pew Religion and Public Life "Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans" declares that 41% of American Muslims are white, 26% are Black, 20% are Asian, and 11% are Hispanic or other. Of course the American Census Bureau categories upon which these problematic classifications are based are polemical and are racially contested within the United States.[21]

African American Muslims reconstructed "Islam as a religion and civilization of resistance to Euro-American imperialism and anti-Black racism," and, as a result, Black Islam as a discrete Muslim religion began historically manifesting itself within the African American community and consciousness as a monotheistic faith tradition theo-historically capable of manumitting African American Christians from their transatlantic slave trade past.[22]

Many non-African immigrant Muslim communities are blithely unaware of the African American narrative concerning historical respectability, consciousness, and justice within the United States. For this sociocultural reason and others, they are intellectually unable to engage or emotionally empathize with their fellow Black Muslim Brothers and Sisters in a manner that would facilitate positive intercultural Islamic community discourse. Many immigrant Muslims are simply unconcerned regarding the ethnocultural intolerance experienced by the African Americans within the United States, alluding to why, for Black Muslims, the non-African articulations of Islamic religious thought, beliefs, practices, consciousness, membership, and expression appear to give credible "witness to an [apathetic] God that stands relatively unopposed to the status quo of racial injustice and marginalization [within the ummah]."[23]

The overwhelming Middle Eastern and South Asian American Muslim sociocultural neglect of United States Islamic history ironically mirrors the general American public's naiveté towards African American Muslims. The average Caucasian American mistakenly believes that "Muslim immigration started in 1965 when the U.S. had a period of immigration reform, others will date it back to the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, yet others to the 9/11 attacks, but usually no one looks further back than the 1960s and certainly not beyond the 20th century"—reaffirming how theo-historically invisible Black Muslims are within America's social imaginary and Islamic national consciousness.[24] In reality, the African American Muslim community is deeply conversant with Judeo-Christian traditions and their biblical Exodus metaphor—*Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God* (Psalm 68:31)—which was subsequently hermeneutically repaired, reified, reconstructed, and typecast (i.e., Blackened) by African American Muslims with Ethiopia contextually established as the new Black Zion.[25]

Many immigrant Muslims unfortunately lack the appropriate theo-historical understanding and elevation of consciousness needed to socioculturally comprehend the Exodus narrative from an African American lens. Such immigrant Muslim ethnocultural illiteracy has contributed to the American injurious religious trope which posits chimerical images of Muslims

as exclusively Middle Eastern—a disingenuous religio-racial perspective that does not accurately represent factual American Muslim historical reality, identity, membership nor community.[26] Unlike the post-1965 Muslim immigrant (Arab, Iranian, South Asian, etc.) theo-historical conception of Islam, "African American Muslims have engaged historical Islam to articulate [unconventional] religious positions as they reflect on the needs of their communities. Their choices are in part informed by the Black experience [within America]," and, as a result, the religious attraction of Islam felt by many African Americans arose because of its religio-cultural emphasis upon Black pride, beauty, power, "discipline, self-respect, and the positive reinforcement of self-affirming values for a suffering humanity placed at the bottom of America's [white] racially constructed social hierarchy."[27]

Generally speaking, Black Muslim religious beliefs and practices within the United States vociferously refute assimilatory religious politics/anti-Black perceptions. By so doing, African American practices concerning Islam theologically represent a highly diversified, distinct, and racialized Black faith tradition that has bifurcated itself along a *color line*. The collective religio-racial identity, consciousness, community and membership of what it means to be a Black and Muslim in America is an African American particularity that is constantly being renegotiated within American Islam as both an inherited identity and as a Muslim expression of social justice, freedom, empowerment, liberation, and resistance.[28]

The African American Muslim recognition of the religio-cultural normativity and religio-racial supremacy promulgated by immigrant Muslims regarding Islam illuminates for them "the failure of [mainstream] Islam to speak to issues of poverty and disenfranchisement in the Black American community." It also exposes the immigrant Muslim's cultural defect concerning their attitude of Islamic diffidence towards racial oppression within the United States.[29] The multifaceted interconnections between the imbricate ethnic identities officially embraced by Black Muslims in America—Islamic, American, African—racially abnegates any religio-racial affiliation with American Christianity or, for that matter, any other monotheistic faith tradition. As a consequence, Black Islam vociferously challenges the theo-historical narrative, identity, membership, community, and consciousness often ascribed to all people of African descent (i.e., the Curse of Ham).[30] Black Muslims problematize the Curse of Ham and its associated racism: "when you get to college, you'll have to choose: Black or Muslim … attempts to insert race into religious conversations, or vice versa, were met with resistance … Black Muslims are not seen as true Muslims. And that is the moral equivocation that legitimizes and props up all manner of anti-Black racism in the American Muslim community today. Black people are not seen as viable potential partners in Muslim faith or love; Black families are not accepted into Muslim faith communities outside of their own"—corroborating how racial discrimination against Black Muslims in America today has not been effectively repudiated by non-African Muslims.[31]

The Black Muslim promulgation of Islam within the United States illustrates a complex, divisive and contested narrative of American Christianity where the white man employed Christianity as a tool of racial control. He robbed the African American of his true "name from him and began calling him Negro, Black, colored, or Ethiopian, [and in so doing] the European stripped the Moor of his power, his authority, his God, and every other worthwhile possession."[32] The explicit African American Muslim rejection of the Curse of Ham—"the misinterpretation of the Old Testament which offered the holy justification for oppression on purely racial grounds"—masterfully flips the membership, community, consciousness, and identity-politics script upon this problematic Judeo-Christian etiological tradition promulgated by white

Christians and, by so doing, also shrewdly elevates and posits the Black Man as the nonpareil exemplar of humankind within Islam in America.[33]

African American manifestations of Islam claim to proffer their Black Muslim devotees the singular redemptive ability to spiritually realize “the goal of Black self-determination and Black self-identity … full [unfettered] participation in the decision-making processes affecting the lives of Black people, and recognition of the virtues in themselves as Black people.” As an illustration, God, who was lily-white within the Christian Jim Crow tradition, became unashamedly and proudly identified as Black (e.g., Blackman) within the African American Muslim community, social imaginary, and national consciousness.[34] African American Muslims were quite successful in their religio-political efforts to historically expose how the racialization of Christianity from the church pulpit before, during, and after the Great Migration and Jim Crow disenfranchised and alienated many African Americans. As a consequence, Black Muslims were quite effectual in abstracting “away from what has been the central feature of the lives of Africans transported against their will to the Americas: the denial of Black humanity and the reactive, defiant assertion of it.”[35]

African American forms of Islam dramatically underscore for many Black Christians the racialized identity politics, consciousness, community, and membership norms associated with Christianity. Blacks contemplating movement away from Christianity began placing culpability for their oppressed condition upon the religion of their former white slave masters. It is historically significant from a religio-racial perspective how select African American Muslim groups within the United States (for example, the Nation of Islam) creatively reconceived normative notions of Muslim identity, membership, community, and consciousness by shrewdly conflating Black Church biblical traditions, mythologies, and unorthodox religious beliefs/practices that amplify and/or accentuate African nationalist oriented Black “doctrines that made it incompatible with some basic principles of traditional Islam.”[36] Islamic studies scholar Zafar Ishaq Ansari elucidates how such novel Black Muslim religio-racial beliefs and practices promulgated by the Nation of Islam and others are frequently considered anathema to other Muslim communities because of their creative adaption (i.e., Blackening) of established Islamic religious identity, consciousness, community, membership, and doctrines—African American theological convictions which passionately enunciate a strong separatist Black Muslim identity, consciousness, community, and membership schema—which I scholarly reference within the discrete geographical purview and socioreligious context of the United States as being *Black Islam*.[37]

Four Black Islamic Theological Convictions:

I. The God of the Black Muslims is the collective Blackman, mysteriously embodied within all the Pan-African people of the earth, because “in the Black Muslim concept Allah seems to be identical with the collective entity of the Original People, the Black Nation, the Righteous … thus the Qur’anic verse about God: ‘He is the first and the last’ (Q. 57:3) has been interpreted by the Nation of Islam to mean that the Blackman is the first and the last, is the maker and owner of the universe.”[38]

II. The normative Islamic doctrine of prophecy maintains that the prophet Muḥammad is the last Messenger of Allah (Q. 3:144; 33:40; 48:29). However, the NOI asserts Elijah Muḥammad to be another Messenger of Allah and Wallace Fard Muḥammad to be Allah miraculously reborn in human form. As unequivocally stated by Elijah Muḥammad himself, “Allah is making me into Himself,” and, “I am he of whom it is

prophesied as the Messenger of God in the last day who is with God in the resurrection of the dead. I am he."[39]

III. Islamic theology regarding the afterlife (Akhirah) was neoterically reinterpreted, reimagined, and reconstructed by Black Muslims "into a political-historical status within the future of the earth, but with power and authority over others," and, as a result, heaven and hell became "conditions of earthly life rather than [metaphysical] states of super-terrestrial, and post-terrestrial existence … heaven and hell are the conditions which exist on this earth and which human beings experience during their lives."[40]

IV. Black Muslims assert that the theo-historical narrative regarding the genesis, evolution and teleology of mankind has a racialized religio-cultural and sociopolitical dimension. For example, Whites symbolize the devil while Blacks represent the "Original Man" and, because of this, Blacks serve as the Divine progenitor of all ensuing ethnic/racial identities/races (e.g., Chinese, European, Indian, Inuit, etc.). As succinctly stated by Elijah Muḥammad, from the Blackman, "came all brown, yellow, red, and white people. By using a special method of birth-control law, the Blackman was able to produce the white race. This method of birth control was developed by a Black scientist known as Yakub, who envisioned making and teaching a nation of people who would be diametrically opposed to the Original People. A Race of people who would one day rule the Original People and the earth for a period of 6,000 years. Yakub promised his followers that he would graft a nation from his own people, and he would teach them how to rule his people through a system of tricks and lies whereby they use deceit to divide and conquer, and break the unity of the darker people, put one brother against another, and then act as mediators and rule both sides"—and, for this reason, the Divine mission of the NOI was to "reawaken and liberate the Blackman from this yoke of white domination."[41]

Before, during, and after the Great Migration, Jim Crow, and even up to present-day "Black America's bitter struggle for the realization of equality and civil rights … many Blacks inclined their ears, focused their vision and opened their hearts to what they believed to be the message of Allah. This resulted in the dawning of a new faith within the Black community," and, consequently, stoked the spiritual fires of an emerging African American inspired social resistance identity, membership, imaginary, community and consciousness faith tradition explicitly directed against white oppression, dominance, and power.[42] African American Muslim leaders—for example, Elijah Muḥammad, Malcolm X, Clarence 13X, Silis Muḥammad, Abū Koss, ʿAbbas Rassoul, et al.—intuitively understood that the racial key to unlocking the spiritual fealty of African American Christians lay in promulgating an alternative race, culture, community, and ethnicity oriented religious consciousness, social imaginary and weltanschauung where "the Western [Christian] civilization, according to the [Black] Muslim view, is based on false [racist] assumptions about the true nature of man, his origin, and his role and destiny … the only other [religious] certainty that we have is that Islam alone will ultimately prevail in the affairs of men."[43]

Black Islamic studies scholars Ernest Allen and Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar cogently note how Black Muslim leaders in their discourse with non-African American Muslims posit themselves as an African American religious "organization with name recognition in *every* [emphasis added] major Black community," with the iconic Nation of Islam (NOI), "offering an intriguing

example of a religious-oriented nationalist movement which, over a period of six decades, has come to embrace traditional Islam in halting and contradictory ways."[44] The African American community's generally welcome understanding, disposition, and recognition of Islam results from the unceasing African American focus upon a Black identity, consciousness, community, and membership that validates "the long history of oppression, alienation, and injustice that Black people have suffered in the United States," and, consequently, also functions as the socio-historical *reversion* catalyst for their unconventional Muslim beliefs, consciousness, community, practices, and theology.[45]

Anthropologist Junaid Rana powerfully outlines how "the racialization of Islam emerged from the Old World, was placed on New World indigenous peoples, and subsequently took on a continued significance in relation to Black America … the category of Muslim in the U.S. is simultaneously a religious category and one that encompasses a broad race concept that connects a history of Native America to Black America." With this historical religio-racial particularity in mind, the psycho-religio reticence that some African Americans felt towards the sociocultural, theo-historical, and religio-social adoption of the white man's slave religion, Christianity, within their community provoked within some a wholesale Black exodus towards Islam.[46]

Prominent African American Muslim groups—for example, the NOI and their various historical subgroups (e.g., MSTA, Black Aḥmadiyyah movement, Five Percenters, etc.)—contend that the normative spiritual narrative, social imaginary, consciousness, community, membership, and identity promulgated by Christians disingenuously links itself to a Divine white phenotype—Jesus as a blond and blue-eyed human being—by which subsequent dissimilar American religio-cultural norms, sociocultural values, and respectability are now measured against. African American Muslims also allege that the disingenuous presentation of such an outward religio-racial identity, ethnicity, and countenance heavily biased towards whiteness can and does impart overpowering privilege, entitlement, and legitimacy onto its Caucasian recipients.

The hostile milieu confronting African Americans after the Great Migration and Jim Crow unmasks a sizable religio-racial gulf between identity, membership, community, social imaginary and consciousness vis-à-vis the egalitarian Eurocentric Christian ideals through which the United States currently self-identifies itself with: "Ontology, the world's semantic field, is sutured not simply by white supremacy. More specifically, it is held together by anti-Black solidarity."[47] African Americans as an oppressed and marginalized community within the United States frequently lies outside the pale and, consequently, their continued persecution and harassment by the state during slavery, Jim Crow, and afterwards (e.g., the Black Lives Matter movement) has led many to adopt Islam as a viable faith resistance alternative. African Americans Muslims depict Islam as a Black monotheistic religious tradition whose Pan-African identity, consciousness, community and membership places it firmly against all forms of white dominance, power, manipulation and control.[48]

African American Muslim promulgation of Black Islamic theology took careful note of the racial angst, identity politics, community, membership, social imaginary and racial tension induced by white Christians (e.g., KKK, Knights of the White Camelia, Texas Knights, etc.). In theological response, Black Muslims began shrewdly conflating the United States flag with the Christian cross as a puissant Eurocentric symbol of oppression, tribulation, and servitude: "[the American] flag and cross have been symbols of the misfortune and slavery for Black people. The sign of the cross represents murder and wickedness since its inception, Christ the Prophet was lynched on that cross and ever since the so-called Negroes started bearing it they have been

catching hell on it."[49] Jesuit theologian David J. Leigh, S.J., in *Circuitous Journeys: Modern Religious Autobiography*, asserts how Black Islamic theology proffers the African American an invaluable opportunity to reimagine themselves in possession of a new race, religion, culture, social imaginary, consciousness, community, and ethnicity through their passionate embracement of a Black separatist-identity and membership weltanschauung.[50]

Black Islamic theology contextually signifies and embodies for many African American Muslims an unorthodox theo-historical narrative that overthrows, resists, and hermeneutically flips the normative race, religion, culture, social imaginary, consciousness, community and ethnicity script annunciated by many Middle Eastern and South Asian Muslim Americans regarding Islamic religious identity, membership, beliefs, and practices. Black Islamic theology in opposition to Christianity posits a racialized perspective regarding the iconic symbols of American nationalism and the Christian church—the United States Flag and the Cross—endeavoring to forge a racial consciousness, identity, social imaginary, and membership narrative that purposefully superimposes the brutally tortured, mutilated and crucified body of Jesus upon the injured, cruelly maimed, and similarly executed (lynched) Black human body. By doing so, it draws argute religio-racial recognition upon the bodily oppressions that have occurred/continue to occur against the African American community within the United States.[51]

The religio-racial conviction that Islam is the bona-fide religion of African Americans is of monumental theo-historical importance for current-day African American Muslim identity, community, consciousness, and membership. Indeed, it is "non-western traditions that held out the hope of redemption for U.S. Blacks within a wider framework of Pan-African and postcolonial politics and religion."[52] Ironically, many present-day immigrant Muslims perpetuate Eurocentric notions of racial injustice by discriminating against their fellow African American Muslims such that "Black Muslims are just as likely to experience racism from their own faith community as Black [Christian] Americans are from their own faith communities, with both groups more likely to report experiencing racial discrimination from the general [white American] public." Because of this and other salient reasons, Black Muslims often feel devalued within the greater American Muslim community and mosques.[53]

> As a young [Black Muslim] student, Hind Makki recalls, she would call out others at the Islamic school she attended when some casually used an Arabic word meaning 'slaves' to refer to Black people. 'Maybe 85% of the time, the response that I would get from people is … Oh, we don't mean you, we mean the Americans, Ms. Makki said during a virtual panel discussion on race, one of many organized in the wake of George Floyd's death. That's a whole other [religio-racial] situation about anti-Blackness, particularly against African Americans.'[54]

Corroborating this anti-Black reality is Muna Mire, who vividly recounts how "at twelve, my tearful recounting of racism from my Brown [South Asian] Muslim peers [within America] at the kitchen table prompted my mother to finally open up to me about her own experiences in the Emirates growing up. They were ugly: her peers bullied her and her siblings systematically and on racial grounds … we were still just *niggers*. Even to those we shared our *dīn* with … Black Muslims are not perceived as Muslim … to be Black and Muslim in America today is to live a sort of DuBoisian double consciousness with an added dimension of dissonant interiority."[55]

The discrete psycho-religio environs envisioned by African American Muslims after the Great Migration and Jim Crow was one whose religio-cultural foundation rested upon a Pan-African oriented identity, social imaginary, consciousness, community, and membership weltanschauung advocating strident Black resistance, Black nationalism, Black power, and Black race pride. African Americans who reverted back towards Islam in this sense were the "inheritors of the theology and philosophy of the Aḥmadiyyah movement … which expanded the [Islamic] notion of prophethood beyond the Prophet Muḥammad." [56] Quite a few African Americans who felt increasingly disillusioned by the glacial pace of racial progress and reconciliation within our nation hearkened their ears to a new African American inspired clarion call proclaiming the divisive notion that Christ Jesus symbolically represented a potent Eurocentric oriented simulacrum that was spiritually incompatible with Black sociopolitical aspirations, identity, membership, community, consciousness, and freedoms. Black Islamic theology was thus given birth within the United States to unshackle African Americans from religio-racial bondage arising from prejudicial notions of race, religion, culture, community, social imaginary, consciousness, and ethnicity. Paradoxically, many contemporary immigrant Muslims are blithely unaware that within the religio-racial context of America's problematic theo-historical past, "Islam's racial-religious form operated differently in the mainstream (white) and Black cultural imaginaries … Islam holds divergent—and oftentimes contradictory—meanings, which are dependent upon racial affiliation."[57]

The Black Muslim recognition of the societal evils wrought by America's Original Sin induced the genesis of a novel Black separatist-identity consciousness model predicated upon a racial binary, one where African Americans replaced their enslaved names given by their white Christian masters with the moniker "X". By so doing, Black Islam theo-historically acknowledges the non-European particularity of their own idiosyncratic religion, culture, race, consciousness, social imaginary, community, and ethnicity by resurrecting an erased tribal ancestral name, membership, and identity associated with their suppressed African Muslim forebears.[58] Yahya Monastra aptly illustrates how the lexemic and etymological association, meanings, and connotations associated with the mindful and conscientious selection of one's Islamic religious identity, membership. and name within the African American Muslim community is fundamental to Black consciousness, social imaginary and ethno-cultural distinctiveness within the modern-day and, furthermore, is integral to present-day African American Islamic thought and practices concerning race, religion, ethnicity and culture.[59] Lincoln notes how for many Black Muslims the purposeful usage of the "symbol X has a double meaning: implying 'ex,' it signifies that [African American] Muslims are no longer what they were; and as 'X,' it signifies an unknown quality or quantity. It at once repudiates the white's name and announces the rebirth of Black man and woman, endowed with a set of qualities the whites do not have and do not know … *X is for mystery*. The mystery confronting the Negro as to who he was before the white man made him a slave and put a European label on him."[60]

Black Muslims ardently profess how their nonpareil Islamic theology unshackles an individual from the race, religion, culture, community, consciousness, and ethnicity disadvantages and concerns experienced by African Americans by emancipating them from Eurocentric identity politics, social imaginaries, and mental and religious subjugation. This extraordinary spiritual feat is accomplished through "new African American Islamic rituals focused on the reformation of the Black body, which was depicted as a main battleground for the souls of Black folk. The Black body was reconstructed as a gendered vessel, a symbol for the fate of the Black race, where Black folk could be saved from white Christian violation, poison,

and, in the case of men, emasculation."[61] To put it another way, the Black Muslim signification of African American identity, community, membership, and religio-racial embodiment alludes to how the Black body is categorized and classified within America's Christian social imaginary as a historical continuity "that speaks to the perpetuation of the *white racist imago of the Black body*, where there is an attempt to ontologically truncate the Black body into the very essence of criminality, danger, and suspicion. Black bodies must be stopped, frisked, imprisoned, suffocated, shot dead in the streets and left to rot in the hot sun, or lynched and left swinging as some strange fruit."[62]

The United States of America may be the most racially diverse and religiously pluralistic nation-state today; however, it is also arguably the most societally biased, one where American communities are frequently segregated along divergent lines predicated upon race, color, ethnicity, and religion. What it contextually means to be a modern-day Muslim in America has now become a highly contested and racialized category that is currently being both challenged and renegotiated by Black Muslims inside and outside the mosque. All of this must be taken into account in grappling with present-day racism within the umma, which disingenuously reconciles the religio-racial contradiction of ardently professing to love God while scorning one's Black Muslim neighbor.

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[1] Maytha Alhassen, *Haqq & Hollywood: Illuminating 100 Years of Muslim Tropes and How to Transform Them* (New York: Pop Culture Collaborative, 2018), www.haqqandhollywood.org. The term "Black Muslim" was first coined in 1963 by noted Black Studies scholar C. Eric Lincoln in his publication *The Black Muslims in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994 [1961]), to refer to those African Americans in the twentieth century predominately associated with the Nation of Islam (NOI) and its religious leader, the Honorable Elijah Muḥammad. However, the ensuing religious conversion of increasing numbers of African Americans to Islam has rendered the term "Black Muslim" rather anachronistic, and so it is no longer synonymous with the NOI. Much current scholarship on Black Muslims in America has not sufficiently kept abreast of what it means to be both African American (Black) and Muslim within the geographical purview of the United States. It is my argument that it is today extremely difficult to delimitate, demarcate, and define the religio-racial term Black Muslim, because of the subversive way Blackness as an identity fails to suitably conform to dominant Eurocentric societal assumptions, prejudicial beliefs, and biased racial expectations. Consequently, it defeats any and all attempts to bind its abstruse sociocultural meaning to a one-size-fits-all denotation, signification, expression, or religious characterization concerning the African American community in toto. For example, "to sample Malcolm X, what do you call a Black person with a Ph.D.—or with membership in tony clubs and elite schools … You got it: they all share the dreaded epithet that condemns them to solidarity in derision." See also Touré, *Who's Afraid of Post-Blackness?: What It Means to Be Black Now* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012 [2011]); Samory Rashid, *Black Muslims in the US: History, Politics, and the Struggle of a Community* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013); Oxford Bibliographies, "Black Muslims" (2020), https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780190280024/obo-9780190280024-0002.xml; and Sherman A. Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking toward the Third Resurrection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1-21.

[2] As a person of color in the academy, I am particularly sensitive to the systemic racism, marginalization, police brutality, and oppression directed towards African Americans. My intentional capitalization of the ethnocentric term "Black" is used in a manner similar to the New York Times, Associated Press, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, and other major news organizations "to describe people and cultures of African origin, both in the United States and elsewhere." See Dean Baquet and Phil Corbett. "Uppercasing 'Black': The Times Will Start Using Uppercase "Black" to Describe People and Cultures of African Origin, Both in the U.S. And Elsewhere." *New York Times*, June 2020, https://www.nytco.com/press/uppercasing-black; see also Sylviane A. Diouf, *Servants of Allah: African Muslims Enslaved in the Americas,* 15th anniv. ed. (New York: NYU Press, 2013 [1998]); Michael A. Gomez, "Muslims in Early America." *The Journal of Southern History* 60, no. 4 (November 1994): 671-710. The discrete ethnological term "Black" is contextually defined by the U.S. Census Bureau: "The category Black or African American includes all individuals who identify with one or more nationalities or ethnic groups originating in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. Examples of these groups include, but are not limited to, African American,

Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian and Somali." See U.S. Census Bureau, *2020 Census Questions: Race* (Washington DC: US Government, 2019), https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions/2020-census-questions-race.html#:~:text=The%20category%20%E2%80%9CBlack%20or%20African,Nigerian%2C%20Ethiopian%2C%20and%20Somali.

[3] Diouf, *Servants of Allah;* see also Gomez, "Muslims in Early America."

[4] I define the complex sociocultural term "Blackness" in a manner similar to Andrea C. Abrams, where she posits it as "a fluid concept in that it can refer to cultural and ethnic identity, sociopolitical status, an aesthetic and embodied way of being, a social and political consciousness, and a diasporic kinship … Blackness is a marker of enslavement, marginalization, criminality, filth, and evil. It is also a symbol of pride, beauty, elegance, strength, and depth. It is elusive and difficult to define and yet serves as one of the most potent and unifying domains of identity … It is the foundation of social cohesion and allegiances and, at the same time, is a source of oppression and alienation … Cross-culturally, Blackness is the foil to whiteness in terms of marking the boundaries of race, and, in both contentious and collaborative ways, all other racial identities are in conversation with or are negotiated in terms of Blackness."; see Abrams, *God and Blackness: Race, Gender, and Identity in a Middle-Class Afrocentric Church* (New York: NYU Press, 2014), 1-24.

[5] I define the sociological term "social imaginary" in a manner similar to social scientist and philosopher, Charles Taylor, where he posits it as "something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode. I am thinking, rather, of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations." See Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 23-30; see also Yasmine Flodin-Ali, "What Malcolm X Taught Me About Muslim America," *Religion and Politics: Fit for Polite Company* (May 22, 2018), https://religionandpolitics.org/2018/05/22/what-malcolm-x-taught-me-about-muslim-america/; Derek S. Hicks, *Reclaiming Spirit in the Black Faith Tradition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 35-62 (chap. 2: "The Debasement Campaign"); Sylvester A. Johnson, *African American Religions, 1500–2000* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 67-90 (chap. 2: "Dueling Revelations and Atlantic Exchanges").

[6] Sarah Parvini and Ellis Simani, "Are Arabs and Iranians White? Census Says Yes, but Many Disagree," *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 2019, https://www.latimes.com/projects/la-me-census-middle-east-north-africa-race/.

[7] I am alluding to the Foucauldian notion concerning discipline/control as a mechanism of *power/knowledge* that prejudicially favors the in-group regulating social norms and values within a society—one where *power/knowledge* is understood to be something that creates and operates within a sociological context and is cunningly constituted though associational forms of shared knowledge, accepted norms and understandings; more importantly, it also relationally constructs and targets group membership, social identity-politics scripts, and truth itself. As noted by Foucault, "truth is a thing of this world: It is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its own regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is, the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true." Also, by conceiving of power/knowledge as a "strategy and not as possession means to think of it as something that has to be exerted and not something that can simply be acquired. It is not localized exclusively in certain institutions or individuals, but it is rather a set of relations dispersed throughout society." See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995); see also Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 109-33 ("Truth and Power"); Sergiu Balan, "M. Foucault's View on Power Relations," *Cogito. Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 2 (2010): 55-61; see also Meghan Kallman, *An Analysis of Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish* (The Macat Library), 30; see also Charles Taylor, "Foucault on Freedom and Truth," *Political Theory* 12, no. 2 (1984): 152-183; see also Ivan Strenski, "Religion, Power, and Final Foucault," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 345-367.

[8] My use of the term "theo-historical" follows the usage of Eric A. Weed, who defines it as a scholarly method used to interpret lived theologies, where "lived theology is an investigation of how people envision and operate within a religio-cultural system," and, as a result, this type of hermeneutical procedure endeavors to theologically discern religion through historical analysis. See Weed, *The Religion of White Supremacy in the United States* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2017). I use the term "Other" in a scholarly manner similar to that elucidated by Jean-François Staszak, where he posits it as a "member of a dominated out-group, whose identity is considered lacking and who may be subject to discrimination by the in-group." I assert that racism within America is an "ideology of racial domination" that is societally exercised by the dominant in-group upon the marginalized and discriminated against out-group. See Staszak, "Other/Otherness," in *International Encyclopedia of Human*

Geography, ed. Rob Kitchin and Nigel Thrift (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008), 43-47; see also Matthew Clair and Jeffrey S. Denis, "Sociology of Racism," in *The International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. James Wright, 2nd ed. (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015), 857-863..

[9] Khyati Joshi, "The Racialization of Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism in the United States," *Equity & Excellence in Education* 39, no. 3 (August 2006): 211-226.

[10] Muna Mire, "Towards a Black Muslim Ontology of Resistance: Anti-Blackness and Islamophobia Structure American Black Muslim Subjects through Opposing Regimes of Identity and Visibility," *The New Inquiry*, April 29, 2015, https://thenewinquiry.com/towards-a-black-muslim-ontology-of-resistance/.

[11] Tisa Wenger, *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 1-14.

[12] Many mosques in America are segregated along race, color, and ethnicity. See Ihsan Bagby, *The American Mosque 2011: Basic Characteristics of the American Mosque Attitudes of Mosque Leaders* (Washington, DC: Council on American Islamic Relations, 2012); see also Jamillah Karim, *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah* (New York: NYU Press, 2009); Flodin-Ali, "What Malcolm X Taught Me About Muslim America."

[13] Therí A. Pickens, *New Body Politics: Narrating Arab and Black Identity in the Contemporary United States* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 1-17.

[14] Su'ad Abdul Khabeer, *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States* (New York: NYU Press, 2016), 1-26.

[15] Jeff Karoub, Sophia Tareen, and Noreen Nasir, "Black Muslims Aim for Unity in Challenging Time for Islam," *Associated Press*, April 15, 2017, https://apnews.com/e55bcb7470f44d1cb6046abd01a16a1c.

[16] My use of the sociopolitical term "national consciousness" refers to a communal sense of national identity that is both socially constructed and, more importantly, *imagined*: a mutual and shared understanding that is held by an in-group that ideates a common ethnic/cultural/national heritage. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 39-48 (chap. 3: "The Origins of National Consciousness"); see also Alina Sajed and Timothy Seidel, "Introduction: Escaping the Nation? National Consciousness and the Horizons of Decolonization," *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 21, no. 5 (2019): 583–91; Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2007), 170-180 (chap. 4: "Mutual Foundations for National Culture and Liberation Struggles").

[17] Robert J. Taylor, Linda M. Chatters, and Jeff Levin, *Religion in the Lives of African Americans: Social, Psychological, and Health Perspectives (*Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2004); see also Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*, 1-21.

[18] The Arabic word *dīn* appears in seventy-nine verses within the Qur'an and, broadly speaking, refers to three general senses: 1) judgment/retribution, 2) custom/usage, and 3) religion. The specific meaning is very dependent upon the particular context in which *dīn* is being employed. See Louis Gardet, "Dīn," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., (Leiden: Brill, 2012); see also Jamillah Karim, "Can We Define 'True' Islam?: African American Muslim Women Respond to Transnational Muslim Identities," in *Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Carl W. Ernst and Richard C. Martin (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 114-130. The Arabic word *sunna* generally refers to habitual practice, well-trodden path, precedent setting example, prophetic example, etc. and, consequently, also refers to the authoritative "body of traditional social and legal customs and practices of the Islamic community": Asma Afsaruddin, "Sunnah," in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sunnah.

[19] Karim, "Can We Define 'True' Islam?"

[20] Sam Houston, "Sherman A. Jackson and the Possibility of a 'Blackamerican Muslim' Prophetic Pragmatism," *Journal of Africana Religions* 1, no. 4 (2013): 488-512; see also C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya's preface to *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), xi-xvi.

[21] According to the U.S. Census Bureau the racial category "White" explicitly refers to "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa" (https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html); see also Parvini and Simani, "Are Arabs and Iranians White?"; see also Pew Research Forum, "How Racially Diverse Are U.S. Religious Groups?" (Washington, DC: Pew, 2014).

[22] Edward E. Curtis, "Black History, Islam, and the Future of the Humanities Beyond White Supremacy," *Humanities Futures*, 2016 (Global Blackness and Critical Islamic Studies), https://humanitiesfutures.org/papers/black-history-Islam -future-humanities-beyond-white-supremacy/.

[23] Duane T. Loynes, "A God Worth Worshiping: Toward a Critical Race Theology" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2017).

[24] Kim Hjelmgaard, "What You Don't Know About America's Islamic Heritage," *USA Today*, November 23, 2018, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/11/16/islam-america-muslims-religion-president-trump-american/1736878002/.

[25] Richard Brent Turner, "African Muslim Slaves, the Nation of Islam, and the Bible: Identity, Resistance, and Transatlantic Religious Struggles," in *African Americans and the Bible: Sacred Texts and Social Textures*, ed. Vincent L. Wimbush (Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2012), 297-320.

[26] My use of the discrete term "whiteness" is deployed within a sociohistorical context to examine "how diverse groups in the United States came to identify, and be identified by others, as white—and what that has meant for the social order." See Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies," *Journal de la Société des américanistes* 95, no. 1 (2009): 117-163; see also Muhammad Khalifa and Mark A. Gooden, "Between Resistance and Assimilation: A Critical Examination of American Muslim Educational Behaviors in Public School," *The Journal of Negro Education* 79, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 308-323; Jackson, *Islam and the Blackamerican*.

[27] Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies"; see also Khalifa and Gooden, "Between Resistance and Assimilation."

[28] W.E.B. DuBois prophetically noted in 1903 within *The Souls of Black Folk* how, "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea." It is an iconic sentence where DuBois goes on to elucidate how the color line is posited as "the question of how far differences of race…will hereafter be made the basis of denying to over half the world the right of sharing to their utmost ability the opportunities and privileges of modern civilization." Approximately forty years after the death of DuBois, celebrated Swedish sociologist, Gunnar Myrdal, prophesied how the delirious state of race relations within the United States, if left unresolved, would socioculturally tear America apart at the seams. The painful conversation concerning the "color line" still continues today with the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Stephon Clark, et al. See DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (London: Halcyon Ltd., repr. 2012); see also Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy,* 7th ed. (London: Taylor & Francis, 2017). The Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press, 2020) defines the sociological term "color line" as "a social and legal system in which people of different races are separated and not given the same rights and opportunities." See also Alia Chughtai, "Know Their Names: Black People Killed by the Police in the U.S.," *Al Jazeera*, 2020, https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2020/know-their-names/index.html; Abdin Chande, "Islam in the African American Community: Negotiating between Black Nationalism and Historical Islam," *Islamic Studies* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 221-241.

[29] Sunni Islam is the largest denomination (87-90%) within Islam and, consequently, its doctrine, beliefs, and practices are claimed to normatively "represent the Muslim consensus concerning the teachings and habits of the Prophet." See Beatrix Immenkamp and Christian Dietrich, *Understanding the Branches of Islam: Sunni Islam,* Members Research Service, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) (Brussels: European Union, January 2016); see also Sebastian Kusserow, Patryk Pawlak, and Christian Dietrich, *Understanding the Branches of Islam*, Members Research Service, European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) (Brussels: European Union (EU), September 2015); Sara H. Grewal, "Intra- and Interlingual Translation in Blackamerican Muslim Hip Hop," *African American Review* 46, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 37-54.

[30] The "Curse of Ham" (Genesis 9:18-27) was utilized by the Christian proponents of Slavery as the Biblical justification for the enslavement of Africans because of their Black skin. See Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery.* Religion in America. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.; see also Lee, Felicia R. "From Noah's Curse to Slavery's Rationale." *New York Times*, November 1, 2003, https://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/01/arts/from-noah-s-curse-to-slavery-s-rationale.html; David M. Goldenberg, "The Dual Curse of Slavery and Black Skin," in *Black and Slave: The Origins and History of the Curse of Ham* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2017), 87-104; Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, "Noah and His Progeny," trans. William M. Brinner, in *The History of Al-Tabari Vol. 2: Prophets and Patriarchs (an Annotated Translation)*, ed. Ehsan Yar-Shater (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 10-27; Nathan Saunders, "The Evolving Theology of the Nation of Islam," in *New Perspectives on the Nation of Islam,* ed. Dawn-Marie Gibson and Herbert Berg (London: Routledge, 2017), 236-250.

[31] Omar Etman, "For Black Muslim Students, a Two-Pronged Fight for Solidarity," *PBS NewsHour*, August 13, 2016, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/black-muslim-college-students-issue-call-allies (emphasis mine).

[32] C. Eric Lincoln, "Black Nationalism: The Minor Leagues," in *The Black Muslims in America*, 43-45.

[33] Nation of Islam, “Jewish Clergy and Black Slavery,” in *The Secret Relationship between Blacks and Jews* (Boston: AAARGH Publishing House, 1991), 143-146; see also Elijah Muḥammad, “The Origin of Races,” in *Yakub (Jacob) the Father of Mankind* (Phoenix: Secretarius MEMPS, repr. 2002), 53-60.

[34] Kwame Ture and Charles V. Hamilton, “Black Power: Its Need and Substance,” in *Black Power: Politics of Liberation in America* (New York: Vintage Books, repr. 2011), 34-57; see also Elijah Muḥammad, *Jesus: Only a Prophet* (Phoenix: Secretarius MEMPS Ministries, 1966); see also Elijah Muḥammad, *The God-Science of Black Power: The Destruction of the Impossible*, ed. Nasir Makr Hakim, vol. 1 (Phoenix: Secretarius MEMPS, repr. 2008).

[35] Charles W. Mills, “Non-Cartesian Sums: Philosophy and the African-American Experience,” in *Blackness Visible: Essays on Philosophy and Race* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 1-19.

[36] Thomas S. Kidd, “Christians Respond to Muslims in Modern America,” in *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 96-119; see also Elijah Muḥammad, *Message to the Blackman in* America, vol. 1 (Phoenix: Secretarius MEMPS, 2012 [1957]); Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*.

[37] My use of the American ethnological term “Black Islam” is inclusively employed to reference the singular African American ability to give birth to novel manifestations of Islam within the African American (Black) Muslim consciousness and social imaginary. The blackening of Islam by the Black Muslim community in Detroit (1930), like all other previous African American community expressions of organized religion within the United States, “has helped Black people to endure the tribulation of overt and covert oppression which [theo-historically] continued as a cruel nightmare long after the Emancipation Proclamation.” It is my argument that African American Muslim formulations of Islam reveal “a deep backstory in the continuing drama of resistance, protest and race in America,” and, having recognized this salient theo-historical fact, is profoundly embedded within the socioreligious fabric connecting all Black religious communities in the United States. See V. DuWayne Battle, “The Influence of Al-Islam in America on the Black Community,” *The Black Scholar* 19, Civil Rights in the Second Renaissance, no. 1 (January/February 1988): 33-41; see also Michael Wolfe, “The Islamic History Behind the George Floyd Protests,” *Religion News Service* (Columbia), June 22, 2020, https://religionnews.com/2020/06/22/the-islamic-history-behind-the-george-floyd-protests/; Sanya Mansoor, “‘At the Intersection of Two Criminalized Identities’: Black and Non-Black Muslims Confront a Complicated Relationship with Policing and Anti-Blackness,” *Time,* September 15, 2020, https://time.com/5884176/islam-black-lives-matter-policing-muslims/; Marian Fam, “For Muslim Americans, a Moment of ‘Deep Reflection’ after Floyd,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 29, 2020, https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2020/0629/For-Muslim-Americans-a-moment-of-deep-reflection-after-Floyd; Zafar Ishaq Ansari, “Aspects of Black Muslim Theology,” *Studia Islamica* 53 (1981): 137-176.

[38] *The Study Quran: A New Translation and* Commentary, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr et al. (New York: HarperOne, 2015).

[39] Daniel C Peterson, “The Calling of a Prophet” in *Muhammad, Prophet of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, repr. 2007), 49-64; see also Claude A. Clegg’s preface to *The Life and Times of Elijah Muhammad* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, repr. 2014), xi-xiii; Ansari, “Aspects of Black Muslim Theology”; Elijah Muḥammad, “The Exegesis of the Pilgrimage,” in *The True History of Elijah Muhammad—the Black Stone*, ed. Nasr Makr Hakim (Irving: Secretarius MEMPS, repr. 2012), 222-229.

[40] Ansari, “Aspects of Black Muslim Theology”; see also David J. Leigh, *Circuitous Journeys: Modern Religious Autobiography* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 137-161 (“Malcolm X and the Black Muslim Search for the Ultimate”).

[41] Per NOI mythology, Yakub (Arabic: Yaʿqūb) was an insane Black scientist who lived over 6,000 years ago on the Greek island of Patmos—he was directly responsible for creating the white race through a mysterious scientific process called grafting—and, with this in mind, Black Muslims have theo-historically reconstructed him as the Biblical figure, Jacob (Patriarch of the Jewish people). See Elijah Muḥammad, *Message to the Blackman in America*; see also Ricardo R. Laremont, “Race, Islam, and Politics: Differing Visions among Black American Muslims,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10, no. 1 (January 1999): 33-49.

[42] Battle, “The Influence of Al-Islam in America on the Black Community.”

[43] Elijah Muḥammad, “What Does the Future Hold?” *American Muslim Journal* 7, no. 2 (August 1982).

[44] Ernest Allen, “Religious Heterodoxy and Nationalist Tradition: The Continuing Evolution of the Nation of Islam,” *The Black Scholar* 26, no. 3/4 (The Nation of Islam: 1930-1996) (Fall-Winter 1996): 2-34; see also Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, “There Go My People: The Civil Rights Movement, Black Nationalism, and Black Power,” in *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, repr. 2018), 37-68.

[45] Black Muslims assert Islam to be their natural religion and, because of this, when an African American Christian converts to Islam—he or she is *reverting* back to their original faith tradition. See Richard Reddie, "Why Are Black People Turning to Islam?" *The Guardian*, October 5, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2009/oct/05/black-muslims-islam; see also A. Christian Van Gorder, "Islamic Social Equality in Response to Racism and Slavery," in *Islam, Peace and Social Justice: A Christian Perspective* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co Ltd., 2014), 137-148; see also Molly Patterson, "Louis Farrakhan," in *Icons of Black America: Breaking Barriers and Crossing Boundaries*, ed. Matthew C. Whitaker (Santa Barbara: Greenwood, 2011), 281-290.

[46] Junaid Rana, "The Story of Islamophobia," *Souls* 9, no. 2 (April 2007): 148-161.

[47] Tryon Woods, "The Fact of Anti-Blackness: Decolonization in Chiapas and the Niger River Delta," *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5, "Reflections on Fanon" (Summer 2007): 319-330.

[48] Kambiz GhaneaBassiri, *A History of Islam in America: From the New World to the New World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9-58.

[49] Chester L. Quarles, "Klan Surrogates," in *The Ku Klux Klan and Related American Racialist and Antisemitic Organizations: A History and Analysis* (Jefferson: McFarland, 1999), 129-154; see also Essien Udosen Essien-Udom, "Religious Ritual and Ceremonial Life," in *Black Nationalism: The Search for an Identity in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, repr. 1995), 211-230.

[50] Leigh, *Circuitous Journeys*, 137-161.

[51] Edward E. Curtis, "Islamizing the Black Body: Ritual and Power in Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 12, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 167-196; see also Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015).

[52] Anna Hartnell, "Reclaiming 'Egypt': Malcolm X" in *Rewriting Exodus: American Futures from Dubois to Obama* (London: Pluto Press, 2011), 133-170.

[53] Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research, *Understanding and Combatting Racism within Our Ranks,* Delivering Khutbahs with Purpose (Irving: Yaqeen, 2019).

[54] Fam, "For Muslim Americans, a Moment of 'Deep Reflection' after Floyd."

[55] Mire, "Towards a Black Muslim Ontology of Resistance" (my emphasis).

[56] In the latter half of the nineteenth century in Punjab, India, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be an inspired prophet. At first a defender of Islam against Christian missionaries, he later adopted certain doctrines of the Indian Muslim modernist Sayyid Ahmad Khan—namely, that Jesus died a natural death and was not assumed into heaven, as the Islamic orthodoxy believed, and that jihad 'by the sword' had been abrogated and replaced with jihad 'of the pen.' His aim appears to have been to synthesize all religions under Islam, for he declared himself to be not only the manifestation of the Prophet Muhammad but also the Second Advent of Jesus. Within many Muslim countries, however, there is fierce opposition to the Aḥmadiyyah group and movement because of its claim that Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet (and thus eliding the finality of Muhammad's prophethood). In a novel hermeneutical move, channeling or rather *Blackening* the theology and philosophy of the Aḥmadiyyah movement, Black Muslims would then later theo-historically assert Wallace Fard Muḥammad to be Allah incarnate and, consequently, Elijah Muḥammad as the "Messenger of Allah." See Elijah Muḥammad, *Message to the Blackman in America*, vol. 1, 957; see also Fazlur Rahman, Muhsin S. Mahdi, Annemarie Schimmel, et al., "Islamic Thought," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Islam/Islamic-thought; Aminah Beverly McCloud, *African American Islam* (London: Routledge, 1995), 9-40 (chap. 1: "The Early Communities: 1900 to 1960").

[57] Sylvia Chan-Malik, *Being Muslim: A Cultural History of Women of Color in American Islam* (New York: NYU Press, 2018), 1-38.

[58] My use of the term 'America's Original Sin' is employed in a sociocultural manner, its context and reference to racism similar to that posited by American theologian Jim Wallis: see his *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2016); see also J.D. Scrimgeour, "Malcolm X," *The Concise Oxford Companion to African American Literature*, edited by William L. Andrews, Frances Smith Foster and Trudier Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 270-271.

[59] Yahya Monastra, "The Name Shabazz: Where Did It Come From?" *Islamic Studies* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 73-76.

[60] Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*, 94-137 (my emphasis).

[61] Edward E. Curtis, "Islamising the Black Body: Ritual and Power in Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 12, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 167-96.

[62] George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race in America* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, repr. 2017), 1-16 (“Black Bodies and the Myth of a Post-Racial America”), my emphasis.