

## Islām Takes Root in America alongside Racism

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### Abstract

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According to current-day demographic projections, Islām is poised within the next half-century to become the world's fastest growing faith tradition and, with this religious particularity in mind, "American-born Black Muslims stand out from other U.S. [immigrant] Muslims in several ways ... fully two-thirds are converts to Islām, compared with just one-in-seven among all other U.S. Muslims ... [approximately] three-quarters of U.S. Muslims are immigrants or the children of immigrants"; a religious expansion that draws much needed race, religion, culture and ethnicity attention upon the discrete "color line" saturating Muslim identity and membership. The post-1965 immigration of Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia dramatically transmuted the previous American social imagination concerning Islām—in its infancy it was known as a religio-cultural phenomenon exclusively associated with America's indigenous Black community—to a new highly contested and racialized domain that dramatically underscores the fraught relationship between Black and non-Black immigrant Muslims.

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I begin with the premise that there is a [new] American Islām being created - a version of the faith that aligns with the contemporary United States both organizationally and culturally. This faith formation is connected to the immigration of Muslims to the United States since the 1965 changes in immigration laws, even though Muslims have been in the United States, especially among African Americans, much longer than that ... This has led to an ideal typical distinction in the scholarly world that studies Muslims in the United States that differentiates between 'indigenous' and 'immigrant' Islām, largely along racial lines.

—Rhys H. Williams<sup>1</sup>

According to current-day demographic projections, Islām is poised within the next half-century to become the world's fastest growing faith tradition and, with this faith particularity in mind, "American-born Black Muslims stand out from other U.S. [immigrant] Muslims in several ways ... fully two-thirds are converts to Islām, compared with just one-in-seven among all other U.S. Muslims ... [approximately] three-quarters of U.S. Muslims are immigrants or the children of immigrants"; a religious expansion that draws much needed race, religion, culture and ethnicity attention upon the discrete "color line" saturating Muslim identity and membership within America.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Williams, Rhys H. "2010 Association for the Sociology of Religion Presidential Address, Creating an American Islam: Thoughts on Religion, Identity, and Place." *Sociology of Religion* 72, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 127-53.

<sup>2</sup> Mohamed, Besheer. "New Estimates Show U.S. Muslim Population Continues to Grow." *Fact Tank: News in the numbers*. Washington: Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social sciences, 2018.; see also Lipka, Michael, and Conrad Hackett. "Why Muslims Are the World's Fastest-Growing Religious Group." *Fact Tank: News in the numbers*. Washington: Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social sciences, 2017.; see also Mohamed, Besheer, Gregory A. Smith, Alan Cooperman, Jessica Hamar Martínez, Elizabeth PodrebaracSciuapac, Becka A. Alper, Claire Gecewicz, et al. *U.S. Muslims*

The United States has the singular distinction of being “the first independent country in the Americas to introduce racial [binary] selection in policies of naturalization (1790) and immigration (1803),” and, because of this, African Americans have always understood that when *Lady Liberty* beckons the world’s “tired, poor and huddled masses” to American shores—only Europeans need apply because people-of-color are categorically unwelcome.<sup>3</sup> It is my claim that discerning how Islām took root within America among select members of the African American community necessitates grasping how race within America historically functions to frame much of the “color line” discourse between religion, ethnicity and culture; a prejudicial identity and membership reality that sizably impacted the genesis and evolution of Islām within the geographical contours of our race conscious nation.

It is often within the discrete historical context of race, ethnicity, religion and culture that the interdisciplinary linkages between identity and membership become apparent to those exploring the peculiar relations of power that heralded the arrival of Islām into the Americas. The post-1965 immigration of Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia dramatically transmuted the previous American social imagination concerning Islām—in its infancy Islām was generally known as a religio-cultural phenomenon exclusively associated with America’s indigenous Black community—into a new contested and racialized domain where “African American Muslims remain underrepresented in our dominant public images of Islām in the United States, as African Americans remain underrepresented in our politics, culture, and media.”<sup>4</sup> This racialized and paradigmatic hermeneutical understanding of American Islām as predominately non-African in origin illustrates how within our nation’s social imagination “indigeneity and Blackness has become fungible commodities ... rendering disposable and invisible indigenous and Black people still struggling for sovereignty and against racist domination.”<sup>5</sup>

As a direct result of the 1965 *Immigration and Nationality Act* “the three largest American [immigrant] Muslim groups—African Americans, Arabs, and South Asians—are now very different from each other. The [religio-racial] identities of African Americans, who constitute a large percentage of the Muslims in the United States, have been historically shaped by race and class struggle,” and, because of this, American Islām evolved along a “color line,” one expropriating a separatist Muslim identity and membership that “differs from immigrant Muslims in many respects and is also differentiated internally.”<sup>6</sup>

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*Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream.* Pew Research Center (A nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social sciences) (Washington: Pew Research Center, July 26, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Fitzgerald, David S., and David Cook-Martin. "The United States: Paragon of Liberal Democracy and Racism." Chap. 3 In *Culling the Masses*, 82-140. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.; see also Helmore, Edward. "Fury as Trump Official Says Poem on Statue of Liberty Refers to 'People from Europe.'" *The Guardian* (London), August 14, 2019, Digital, US Immigration. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/14/trump-ken-cuccinelli-statue-of-liberty-poem-europe>.; see also Morin, Rebecca. "Immigration Official Ken Cuccinelli: Statue of Liberty Poem Refers to Immigrants from Europe." *USA Today* (McLean), August 13, 2019, Digital, US Politics. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2019/08/13/ken-cuccinelli-statue-liberty-poem-refers-migrants-europe/2004455001/>.; see also Miller, Zeke, and Ashley Thomas. "Top Trump Administration Official Says Famous Inscription on Statue of Liberty Refers Only to Europeans, Those Who Are Self-Sufficient." *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago), August 14, 2019, Digital, Nation & World. <https://www.chicagotribune.com/nation-world/ct-nw-statue-of-liberty-europeans-ken-cuccinelli-20190814-wpgaehwgrvadlk7cl2gt4lb3du-story.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Williams, Rhys H. "2010 Association for the Sociology of Religion Presidential Address, Creating an American Islam: Thoughts on Religion, Identity, and Place." *Sociology of Religion* 72, no. 2 (Summer 2011): 127-53.

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, Julia. "Fungible Indigeneity and Blackness: On the Paradigmatic Domination of Borderlands Theory." *Medium*, Digital June 11, 2018. <https://medium.com/@julia.taylor92/fungible-indigeneity-and-blackness-on-the-paradigmatic-domination-of-borderlands-theory-c4084fbfe919>.

<sup>6</sup> Leonard, Karen I. "The Development of Ethno-Racial Muslim Communities in the United States." Chap. 1 In *Muslims in the United States: The State of Research*. University Press Content Consortium (UPCC) Book Collections on Project Muse, 3-15. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2003. The U.S.-born share of the American Muslim population is approximately 42 %—consisting of the original Black descendants of African slaves, African American converts to Islām and their descendants. See Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social sciences. "Muslims in America: Immigrants and Those Born in U.S. See Life Differently in Many Ways." In *Pew Research Center*. Digital. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, April 17, 2018. Statistics. <https://www.pewforum.org/essay/muslims-in-america-immigrants-and-those-born-in-u-s-see-life-differently-in-many-ways/>.

In the process of defining, categorizing and constructing Islāmic conceptions of identity and membership, non-Black Muslims in America—especially those Muslim immigrants hailing from the geographical regions of the Middle-East and South Asia—discern the multifarious concept known as *race* in way that curiously abets “the creation of a racial caste line separating what would later become labelled Blacks and Whites.”<sup>7</sup>

As duly recognized by African American civil rights legal scholar, Michelle Alexander, the persistent existence of a Black-White racial binary within America has, “not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it ... through a web of laws, regulations, and informal rules, all of which are powerfully reinforced by social stigma,” and, consequently, “[Americans] avoid talking about caste in our society because we are ashamed of our [problematic] racial history. We also avoid talking about race [and its conflation with identity and membership],” casting light upon how racism within America is a permanent fixture that is sadly inextinguishable.<sup>8</sup>

American historians, for example, James Hutson, have noted how America’s “peculiar institution” merged itself with Islāmic constructions of race, religion, ethnicity and culture in an unconventional way that impelled some slave-owning *Founding Fathers*—Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Rush, et al.—to “explicitly include Islām in their vision of the future of the republic” and, with this in mind, “on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1805, Thomas Jefferson hosted the United States’ first ‘iftār at the White House.”<sup>9</sup> The religio-racial oriented membership perceptions propagated by Jefferson and others concerning their notions of Muslim identity fomented the historical establishment of a noxious “color line,” such that when President Jefferson hosted the first ‘iftār welcoming Tunisian Muslims at the White House he was also simultaneously enslaving over, “six hundred [Black Christian] people during his lifetime and was a lifelong protector of the [American] institution of slavery ... including his half sister-in-law, the enslaved [Black] house servant Sally Hemmings, and her [Christian] children, whom he almost certainly fathered.”<sup>10</sup>

America’s historical affinity and support for a racial binary preserving problematic European constructions of identity and membership illumine how the gordian “color line” knot concerning race, culture, ethnicity and religion suggested that only whites were entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. One cannot in good moral conscience disentangle the historical establishment of Islām within the African American community without first unraveling the “color line” conundrum that “Black tells you about skin color and what side of town you live on.

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<sup>7</sup>Wacquant, Loïc. "From Slavery to Mass Incarceration: Rethinking the 'Race Question' in the Us." *New Left Review* 13 (2002): 41-60.

<sup>8</sup>In a manner similar to Michelle Alexander, I also define the discrete term, *racial caste*, as “the way it is used in common parlance to denote a stigmatized racial group locked into an inferior position by law and custom.”; See Alexander, Michelle. "Introduction." In *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, 1-19. New York: The New Press. Reprint, 2012.

<sup>9</sup>My use of the Arabic tern, *‘iftār*, is used to explicitly denote “the meal that Muslims eat after sunset during Ramadan to break the day’s fast.” See "Iftar." See *Collins English Dictionary*, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/iftar>. Complete & Unabridged 2012 Digital Edition New York: HarperCollins Publishers October 2018; Ironically, “Jefferson’s interest in the Qur’an and his own study of Arabic led to his active promotion and eventual creation of an Oriental Languages department at his alma mater [College of William and Mary].”; see also Hutson, James H. "Early Tolerance: The Founding Fathers and Islam--Library Papers Show Early Tolerance for Muslim Faith." Digital. *The Library of Congress Information Bulletin* 61, no. 5 (May 2002). <http://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/0205/tolerance.html>; see also "The Jefferson Qur’an." Oxford Islamic Studies Online, Oxford University Press, 2019, accessed April 1, 2019, [http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1009\\_jefferson.html](http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1009_jefferson.html).

<sup>10</sup>Approximately 15% of the Tunisian population is Black in hue and, with this in mind, rampant racial abuse and discrimination towards Blacks are still widespread within an Islāmic society that is supposed to have done away with racial inequity and prejudice. See Issa, Nada. "Tunisia's Dirty Secret: Five Years after the Revolution, Tunisia's Black Minority Has yet to Experience the Freedoms Enjoyed by Other Citizens." *Al Jazeera America* (People & Power), Digital March 17, 2016. <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/peopleandpower/2016/03/tunisia-dirty-secret-160316153815980.html>. See also Finkelman, Paul. "Thomas Jefferson and Slavery." In *The Encyclopedia Virginia*. Digital. Charlottesville: Library of Virginia and Virginia Humanities, September 20, 2018. [https://www.encyclopediaivirginia.org/Jefferson\\_Thomas\\_and\\_Slavery](https://www.encyclopediaivirginia.org/Jefferson_Thomas_and_Slavery); see also "The Jefferson Qur’an." Oxford Islamic Studies Online, Oxford University Press, 2019, accessed April 1, 2019, [http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1009\\_jefferson.html](http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/focus/essay1009_jefferson.html).

African American evokes discussion of the world,” because racial identity and membership in the United States is inextricably linked alongside a larger socioreligious *signification*—the semiotic process of naming and identifying things—of a contested American domain associated with race, ethnicity, culture and faith.<sup>11</sup> As astutely recognized by African Religious Studies scholar, Richard Turner, “signification (the issue of naming and identity) is not only the interpretative [“color line”] thread that runs through the historical narrative of Islām in Black America ... Black peoples’ signifying themselves as the people they wanted to be, through their embracing of Islām, was the result of the adaptation of the religion to local cultures that was integral to global Islām,” and, because of this, signification is the key to historically unraveling and comprehending the convoluted “color line” role of Islām within the Muslim American context and narrative.<sup>12</sup>

America is arguably the most religiously plural nation-state within the modern world and “the native-born Muslim population [in America] contains a higher proportion of Blacks, and lower proportions of Whites and Asians,” and, because of this striking demographic religio-racial reality, American Muslims of Black (African) identity and membership currently comprise an astounding forty percent of all domestic-born American Muslims in toto.<sup>13</sup> The racialized identity and membership notions of ethnicity, culture, and religion that whites adopted towards Blacks during the transatlantic slave trade period, *Jim Crow* and even within the modern-day are now similarly employed by contemporaneous immigrant Middle East and South Asian Muslims and, because of this immutable “color line” reality, “African American [Muslims] experience racism again, this time in the very religion they believed could offer an alternative”—African Americans correctly assert how orthodox notions of Islām propagated by Middle East and South Asian immigrant communities greatly “hinders attempts to adopt the [Muslim] religious tradition in a way that takes into account the structures of [African American] life and thought that have characterized the Black experience in America.”<sup>14</sup> American Muslims are most often represented in the media as Arab or South Asian immigrants. The distinction between the African American Muslim experience and that of their immigrant co-religionists has long been a source of [sizable] racial tension in the Muslim community ... I think a lot of African American Muslims see a hypocrisy sometimes with immigrant Muslims, said Saba Maroof, a Muslim psychiatrist with a South Asian background who lives in Michigan. We say that Muslims are all equal in the eyes of God, that racism does not exist in Islām. And yet, cases of overt racism are not uncommon, like when South Asian or Arab immigrant parents do not want their kids to marry Black Muslims ... Racial dynamics have long shaped Muslims’ political identities [and membership]. There’s a tendency to regard issues [*Black Lives Matter* oriented topics] that impact Black people—and by extension, Black Muslims—as not thoroughly Islāmic.<sup>15</sup> Contemporary Black Muslims note that if one accepts the theological argument that “Muḥammad was able to purge notions of Black inferiority from himself and his companions during the first generation of Islām,” his erstwhile successors miserably failed to eradicate the “color line” membership and identity bias from contaminating subsequent Islāmic discourses concerning race, ethnicity,

<sup>11</sup> Smitherman, Geneva. "What Is Africa to Me?: Language, Ideology, and African American." *American Speech* 66, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 115-32.; see also Doja, Albert. "Rituals of Naming and Exposure: Meaning and Signification in a Name." *Onoma: Journal of the International Council of Onomastic Sciences* 41 (2006): 237-70.

<sup>12</sup> Turner, Richard B. "Islam in the African American Experience." Chap. 32 In *The Black Studies Reader*, edited by Jacqueline Bobo, Cynthia Hudley and Claudine Michel, 445-72. New York: Routledge, 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Muslim Americans are an immigrant heavy population where approximately 63% are born outside the United States. Interestingly, nearly all of the foreign-born Muslims came to the United States after 2000 (40%) or during the 1990s (31%). An additional 16% arrived in the 1980s. Just 12% arrived before 1980. See Lugo, Luis, Alan Cooperman, Gregory Smith, Besheer Mohamed, Phillip Connor, Neha Sahgal, Conrad Hackett, *et al.* "Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism." In *Mainstream and Moderate Attitudes*, edited by Andrew Kohut, Paul Taylor, Elizabeth Mueller Gross and Scott Keeter. Washington: Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. The center conducts public opinion polling, demographic studies, content analysis and other empirical social science research. It does not take positions on policy issues., 2011.; see also Eck, Diana L. *A New Religious America: How a Christian Country Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation*. New York: HarperCollins. 2009. 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, Jane I. Smith, and Kathleen M. Moore. "Embracing Islam." Chap. 3 In *Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islāmic Identity Today*, 41-60. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.; see also Houston, Sam. "Sherman A. Jackson and the Possibility of a “Blackamerican Muslim” Prophetic Pragmatism." *Journal of Africana Religions* 1, no. 4 (2013): 488-512.

<sup>15</sup> Green, Emma. "Muslim Americans Are United by Trump—and Divided by Race." *The Atlantic*, Mar. 11, 2017.

Culture and religion--Islām today operates under a binary categorization schema that is ironically quite similar to Christianity.<sup>16</sup> The odd proclivity by immigrant (e.g., Arab, Iranian, Afghani and South Asian) Muslim groups to categorically establish and promulgate their orthodox notions of Islām as normative and beyond reproach highlights their self-presumed mastery over Islām due to their previous geographical proximity to Mecca and, given this point, also encouraged the genesis of a new type of Islāmic superiority, arrogance and racism within America—one mirroring and extending in a religio-racial manner the domestic bigotry and prejudice that has “existed on what is now US soil for half a millennium, starting with the racialization, exploitation and pillage of America’s indigenous peoples.”<sup>17</sup>

African American scholar of Islām, Sherman Jackson, posits how the historical fabrication of a distinctive Black Muslim identity and membership by African Americans was a psycho-religio protest analogous to that exercised by disaffected Black Christians struggling to find recognition, respect and equality within a “color line” slanted faith tradition and, another key point to remember, also evoked a social justice oriented protest “appeal to Muslim tradition in an effort to reconcile Blackness, Americanness, and [theological] adherence to Islām.”<sup>18</sup> It is ironic that when one considers how “the Muslim slaves who captured the American imagination in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were all distinguished by their leadership qualities and learning. Some of these individuals would become local legends spawning a spate of literature trying to explain their literacy and supposed ‘Oriental’ origins,” would then later historically be “often left out [vilified] and ignored by their [immigrant Muslim] co-religionists. African American Muslims in particular are segregated out of mosques dominated by South Asian and Arab American Muslims. Referring to *Black Muslims as abed* [my emphasis], or ‘slave,’ is commonplace [within immigrant Muslim communities].”<sup>19</sup>

Blackamerican Muslims found themselves increasingly unable to address their cultural, political, and social reality in ways that were either effective in an American context or likely to be recognized as “Islāmic” in a Muslim one. Like Blackamerican Christians of an earlier era, struggling to find their voice in the context of a Christianity dominated by white Americans, Blackamerican Muslims found themselves struggling to reconcile a dignified Black, American existence with the super-tradition of historical Islām, on the one hand, against the presumed normativeness [and dominance] of a historically informed and culturally specific Immigrant Islām, on the other.<sup>20</sup>

As correctly observed by Black Islāmic Studies scholar, Jamillah Karim, the Middle East and South Asian American “color line” pursuit of a white identity and membership within the United States induced many Middle East and South Asian Muslims to “differentiate themselves from Blacks and also drives them to perceive and treat Blacks with a [prejudicial] scorn taught by the dominant [Christian] racial discourse. It is this [American] reality, difficult to escape, that moved Toni Morrison to write that racial contempt of African Americans is the right-of-passage into American culture [for those who are not Black],” and, consequently, also encouraged Ta-Nehisi Coates to saliently note the racial binary observation that “in America it is traditional to destroy the Black body—it is heritage.”<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Turner, Richard B. "Muslims in a Strange Land: African Muslim Slaves in America." Chap. 1 In *Islam in the African-American Experience*, 11-46. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Jackson, Sherman A. "Introduction." In *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking toward the Third Resurrection*, 1-21. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Reprint, 2011.; see also Houston, Sam. "Sherman A. Jackson and the Possibility of a “Blackamerican Muslim” Prophetic Pragmatism." *Journal of Africana Religions* 1, no. 4 (2013): 488-512.; see also Cole, Mike. "The United States." Chap. 2 In *Racism: A Critical Analysis*, 87-133. London: Pluto Press, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Jackson, Sherman A. "Introduction." In *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking toward the Third Resurrection*, 1-21. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Reprint, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Khan, Zeba. "American Muslims Have a Race Problem: South Asian and Arab Muslims Must Address the Overt and Subtle Forms of Racism in Their Communities and Mosques." *Al Jazeera America* (Opinion), Digital June 16, 2015. <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2015/6/american-muslims-have-a-race-problem.html>.; see also Marable, Manning, and Hishaam D. Aidi. "Introduction: The Early Muslim Presence and Its Significance." In *Black Routes to Islam*, edited by Manning Marable and Hishaam D. Aidi. The Critical Black Studies Series, 1-16. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Jackson, Sherman A. "Introduction." In *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking toward the Third Resurrection*, 1-21. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Reprint, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> Karim, Jamillah. "African American and Immigrant Relations between Inequality and Global Flows." Chap. 1 In *American Muslim Women: Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah*, 25-50. New York: NYU Press, 2009.; see also Khan, Zeba. "American Muslims Have a Race Problem: South Asian and Arab Muslims Must Address the Overt and Subtle Forms of Racism in Their Communities and Mosques." *Al Jazeera America*, June 16 2015. I see also Coates, Ta-Nehisi. Chap. Section 7 In *Between the World and Me*, 99-107. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

African American Muslim history is proximally associated with Black Nationalism and, because of this, it is historically engaged in a sociopolitical quest for a Pan-African separatist identity, membership and community ('Umma) that is perspicuously distinct from the rest of non-Black America.<sup>22</sup> Paradoxically, being characterized as a Black Muslim within current-day society presents itself within the American social imagination as a racialized identity and membership symbol, one where "the name [Black Muslim] is an identifying mark which, by the application of a rule, establishes that the individual who is named is a member of a preordained class (a social group in a system of groups, a status by birth in a system of statuses)," a religio-racial status generally regarded by many Middle East and South Asian immigrants to be derogatory in nature as it contextually appertains to traditional Muslim constructions of race, culture, religion and ethnicity.<sup>23</sup> It should be recognized that within the racialized contours of United States history, the distinct identity and membership term, *Black Muslim*, was first coined and taken root in 1963 by noted Black Studies scholar, C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Muslims in America*—scholastically deployed to refer to those African Americans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century predominately associated with the *Nation of Islām* (NOI) and its religious leader, the Honorable Elijah Muhammad.<sup>24</sup>

It was the domestic hegira of over six million plus African Americans during the *Great Migration* (1916-1970)—"a transition from an era when one race owned another; to an era when the dominant [white] class gave up ownership but kept control over the [Black] people it once had owned, at all costs, using violence even; to the eventual acceptance of the servant caste into the mainstream"—that functioned as the discrete sociohistorical catalyst for the religious establishment of Black Islām as a sui generis identity and membership category within the larger African American faith community.<sup>25</sup> Black Muslims well understood the noxious American "color line" tradition concerning the indiscriminate use of violence directed against them "from the torturous slave trade to the lash of the slaveholder to the noose of the Ku Klux Klan, Blacks, irrespective of gender [religion] or class, have withstood seemingly constant violence from the hands of White America. Racist violence [incessantly] followed Blacks as they made the *Great Migration* from the South to the North," and, because of this, Black Islām classically began within the geographical contours of our nation as "an essentially northern grassroots [religio-racial resistance] movement."<sup>26</sup> The glacial progress of religio-racial reconciliation within contemporaneous American society—from the *Great Migration* to the present-day—results from the historical confluence of race, culture, ethnicity and religion interposing itself within a racial binary mentalité generally hostile to Black identity and membership; the Islāmic American narrative within the United States has become over the passage of time a nationally contested racialized "color line" terrain psychologically inimical towards people of Africanist descent—"Racism as a layered phenomenon, not only directed at American Muslims by non-Muslims, but existing within the Muslim community itself, particularly toward African Americans by immigrants."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Umma* is the Arabic word for a Muslim community in a religious sense. It is an important theological concept within Islām, because it is used to express the essential unity and theoretical equality of Muslims from all ethnicities, backgrounds and cultures. See "Ummah." Oxford Islamic Studies Online, Oxford University Press, 2019, accessed Jan. 29, 2019, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2427#>; see also Roy, Olivier. "Introduction: Islam: A Passage to the West." Chap. 1 In *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*. Ceri Series in Comparative Politics and International Studies, 1-57. New York: Columbia University Press and Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales, 2004.

<sup>23</sup> Levi-Strauss, Claude. "Universalization and Particularization." Chap. 6 In *The Savage Mind (La Pensee Sauvage)*, 161-90. Hertfordshire: Garden City Press. Reprint, 1966.; see also Chan-Malik, Sylvia. "Islam in the Arts in the USA." Chap. 20 In *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, edited by Roberto Tottoli, 320-33. London: Routledge, 2014. Reprint, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Lincoln, C. Eric. *The Black Muslims in America (Foreword by Gordon Allport)*. Kindle ed. Boston: Beacon Press. Electronic. 1994. 1961.; see also Mamiya, Lawrence H. "Black Muslim to Bilalian: The Evolution of a Movement." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 21, no. 2 (June 1982): 138-52.; see also Bowen, Patrick D. "The African-American Islāmic Renaissance and the Rise of the Nation of Islām." *Dissertation*, 16-17. Denver: University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology, 2013.

<sup>25</sup> Wilkerson, Isabel. "Epilogue." Chap. Part V *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, 527-39. New York: Vintage Books. Reprint, 2011.; see also Lemann, Nicholas. "Chicago." Chap. 4 In *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America*, 223-306: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Reprint, 2011.; see also Gilkes, Cheryl Townsend. "Plenty Good Room: Adaptation in a Changing Black Church." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Social Science* 558, no. 1 (July 1998): 101-21.

<sup>26</sup> Knight, Frederick. "Justifiable Homicide, Police Brutality, or Governmental Repression?: The 1962 Los Angeles Police Shooting of Seven Members of the Nation of Islam." Chap. 11 In *The Black Studies Reader*, edited by Jacqueline Bobo, Cynthia Hudley and Claudine Michel, 139-52. New York: Routledge, 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Thompson-Miller, Ruth, Joe R. Feagin, and Leslie H. Picca. *Jim Crow's Legacy: The Lasting Impact of Segregation*. Perspectives on a Multiracial America. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 2015. 2014.; see also Thompson-Miller, Ruth K. "Jim Crow's

The frequent acts of systematic violence directed against Blacks during the transatlantic slave trade, *Jim Crow*, etc. was implemented as a menacing means of identity politics and membership control by individuals fearful of “color line” change—an African American narrative that for many Middle East and South Asian immigrants is experientially alien and psychologically inaccessible.<sup>28</sup> The *Great Migration* underscored how the civic illusion of American identity and membership promulgated within our nation’s collective social imagination engendered the genesis of an injurious racial binary and, because of this, Blacks began to dispute the fictitious Eurocentric inspired weltanschauung concerning race, religion, ethnicity and culture where every American can overcome institutional adversity through the application of hard work, gumption and a ‘fair shake’—an Americanism dating back to the 1820s that was later thoroughly debunked by Frederick Douglass.<sup>29</sup> It was the bromidic propagation of a Eurocentric “color line” worldview—disingenuously posited within our nation’s social imagination as the *American Dream*—which provided the discrete sociocultural identity and membership conditions necessary for the religio-racial expansion, growth and adoption of Black Islām within the larger African American community.<sup>30</sup>

African American religious identity and membership took nascent root and form within a “color line” soaked religio-racial environment where slavery, intolerance and *Jim Crow* flourished and, with this in mind, Black Islām simultaneously became part and parcel of a new idiosyncratic Muslim tradition that is unrecognized, for the most part, by many post-1965 immigrant Muslims because of their cognitive inability to recognize that “the [Black] Muslim community in America is one of continuous [resistance and] struggle ... to self-understand and self-define in a nation defined from its inception by *difference* [my emphasis].”<sup>31</sup> The discrete racial binary conditions responsible for the Muslim “color line” identity and membership differences that currently exist between the immigrant and African American Muslim communities is an insecure and unpredictable brotherhood that, according to Imām Talib ‘Abdur-Rashid of *The Mosque of Islām Brotherhood*, calls attention to the Middle East and South Asian immigrant’s “great lack of awareness of the role of Muslims of African descent in the origin and [historical] establishment of Islām in America.”<sup>32</sup>

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Legacy: Segregation Stress Syndrome." In *Dissertation*, 345. College Station: Texas A&M University, 2011.; see also Bernard, Antoine. "The Black Family: A Generational Causality of War." *European Journal of Academic Essays* 4, no. 3 (2017).; see also Kahf, Mohja. "Exploring Islam(S) in America." Chap. 3 In *Modern Arab American Fiction*, edited by Steven Salaita, 32-41. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Cone, James H. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books. 2013. 2011.; see also Lartey, Jamiles, and Sam Morris. "How White Americans Used Lynching's to Terrorize and Control Black People." *The Guardian*, April 26, 2018.; see also Massey, James L., and Martha A. Myers. "Patterns of Repressive Social Control in Post-Reconstruction Georgia, 1882–1935." *Social Forces* 68, no. 2 (December 1989): 458-88. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/68.2.458>.

<sup>29</sup> *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*. Electronic ed. New York: Random House, 2018, s.v. "Weltanschauung"; see also *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*. Electronic ed. New York: Random House, 2018, s.v. "Fair Shake"; see also Colaiaco, James A. *Frederick Douglass and the Fourth of July*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 2015. 2006.

<sup>30</sup> *The American Dream* as mythos was socioculturally immortalized within our nation’s collective imaginary during the 19<sup>th</sup> century where countless stories of self-made men and women whose hard work and common sense took them from rags-to-riches circulated widely in textbooks and popular mainstream American culture—“more than one hundred million schoolchildren were reared on these standard schoolbooks”—*Horatio Alger* being heralded as the most iconic exemplar of this illusion. See Wuthnow, Robert. "Self-Made Men and Women." Chap. 4 In *American Myths: Why Our Best Efforts to Be a Better Nation Fall Short*, 104-27. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Reprint, 2009.; see also Jeffries, Bayyinah S. "African American Muslim Women in the Nation of Islām Movement: Appeals, Benefits, and Outcomes." Chap. 2 In *A Nation Can Rise No Higher Than Its Women: African American Muslim Women in the Movement for Black Self-Determination, 1950–1975*, 51-78. Lanham: Lexington Books. Reprint, 2015.; see also Barboza, Steven. "Holy Empires: Prodigious Son." Chap. 2 In *American Jihad: Islām after Malcolm X*, 94-104. New York: Doubleday. Reprint, 2011.; see also Weisenfeld, Judith. "Religion in African American History." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Ali, Muna. Young Muslim Americans Narrating Self While Debating Faith, Community, and Country. December 2013. Dissertation. Advisor: James Eder, Arizona State University, Phoenix.; see also Elliott, Andrea. "Between Black and Immigrant Muslims, an Uneasy Alliance." *The New York Times* (New York), March 11, 2007, NY Region. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/11/nyregion/11muslim.html>.

<sup>32</sup> *The Mosque of Islām Brotherhood* (aka Muslim Mosque Inc., Masjid Malcolm Shabazz and Muhammad’s Temple of Islām #7) is a historically African American masjid that was formed by Malcolm X (aka Malcolm Little and el-Hajj Malik el-Shabazz) after he left the *Nation of Islām* (NOI) on March 12, 1964. It is the “successor in interest” to Marcus Garvey’s Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) and Noble Drew Ali’s Moorish Science Temple of America (MSTA) movement. See Stein, Isaac. "Harlem Mosque Leader Talks Malcolm X Legacy." *The Chicago Maroon* (Chicago), Feb. 28, 2014, Digital, News. <https://www.chicagomaroon.com/2014/02/28/harlem-mosque-leader-talks-malcolm-x-legacy/>; see also "A History of

As documented by Black Studies scholar, C. Eric Lincoln, “Black Muslims are not an isolated phenomenon. They are rooted in the whole structure of [America’s] racial tension,” or, to put it another way, Black Islām deftly acts and reacts to the historical and current-day “color line” realities associated with an American racial binary distrustful of any race, religion, ethnicity and culture not Eurocentric in origin.<sup>33</sup> America’s problematic “color line” presence and existence of a racial binary affecting religious identity and membership within America’s Christian churches and Muslim mosques—segregated congregational services, accommodations and privileges—reveal the existence of considerable social distance between Black and non-Blacks concerning the adjudication and dispensation of the salvific love attributable to God.<sup>34</sup>

The dystopic and bifurcated religious landscape, characterized by a sizable religio-racial chasm (race, ethnicity, religion and culture) within the current-day, aptly illustrates the immense influence and control associated with the “color line”—“in every area of American life, the Negro is discriminated against: in government, in business, in politics, in industry, and in education ... in religion, then, as in other areas of American life, the status of the Negro is one of segregation”—reflecting the perdurable American sociocultural reality that identity and membership within “religion does not inhere in a vacuum ... [it is] represented in the final analysis by people and it is *judged by the way people professing it behave* (my emphasis).”<sup>35</sup> For Black Muslims in particular, “the [immigrant] Muslim community in America is in denial concerning issues of race, class, and ethnicity. Arab and Desi [South Asian] Muslims simply do not interact with Black and Latino Muslims.... Nobody wants to call anybody out. And that is a problem,” reaffirming how Islām is a racialized and contested membership and domain category where African Americans are neither wholly welcome nor viewed by other immigrant Muslims as authentic and faithful members of the larger Muslim community (‘Umma).<sup>36</sup>

The religio-racial institutional breach between mainstream white Christian church (e.g., Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, etc.) teachings, doctrine and practices provided incontrovertible evidence and proof to many non-Christian African Americans, especially Black Muslims, that white Christians employed the “color line” hermeneutics of identity and membership to both repudiate and ostracize the African American and, in so doing, Christianity was posited by African American Muslims as the theological source of all Black oppression.<sup>37</sup> Ironically, a nearly identical religio-racial rupture predicated upon the “color line” occurred between Black Muslims and their immigrant Muslim brethren much later, despite the disingenuous historical claim—made famous by Rev. Edward W. Blyden within *Christianity, Islām, and the Negro Race*—that Islām miraculously douses the flame of racial intolerance, bigotry and hate.<sup>38</sup> Black Islām adroitly exploits the pressing racial identity and membership concerns of the greater African American community who felt stigmatized by whites and, as a result, Black Muslims trumpeted the religious claim that “the Christian religion is incompatible with the Negro’s aspirations for dignity and equality in America.

Masjid Malcolm Shabazz." Masjid Malcolm Shabazz, 2019, <http://themasjidmalcolmshabazz.com/about-us.php>; see also Essa, Azad. "Landmark Conference: 'People Don't See Black Muslims as Trailblazers. We Are Here to Change That': Conference at NYU Challenges Erasure and Discrimination Faced by Black Muslims in the United States." *Middle East Eye* (New York), April 28, 2019, Digital, Religion. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/landmark-conference-people-dont-see-black-muslims-trailblazers-we-are-here-change>.

<sup>33</sup> Lincoln, C. Eric. "The Dynamics of Black Nationalism." Chap. 2 *The Black Muslims in America* (Foreword by Gordon Allport), 33-49. Boston: Beacon Press. Reprint, 1994.; see also Jenkins, Toby S. "Mr. Nigger: The Challenges of Educating Black Males within American Society." *Journal of Black Studies* 37, no. 1 (September 2006): 127-55.

<sup>34</sup> Thompson-Miller, Ruth K. "Jim Crow's Legacy: Segregation Stress Syndrome." In *Dissertation*, 345. College Station: Texas A&M University, 2011.; see also Thompson-Miller, Ruth, Joe R. Feagin, and Leslie H. Picca. *Jim Crow's Legacy: The Lasting Impact of Segregation*. Perspectives on a Multiracial America. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. 2015. 2014.; see also Geis, Sarah. "Do Chicago's Arab and African-American Muslims Share Mosques? If Not, Why Not?" *WBEZ 91.5 Chicago* (Chicago), Oct. 8 2017. <https://www.wbez.org/shows/curious-city/do-chicagos-arab-and-africanamerican-muslims-share-mosques-if-not-why-not/35a117d6-3bf4-4737-bc3a-cbe2214812ff>.

<sup>35</sup> Mays, Benjamin. "The American Negro and the Christian Religion." *Journal of Negro Education* 8, no. 3 (July 1939): 530-38.

<sup>36</sup> Stein, Isaac. "Harlem Mosque Leader Talks Malcolm X Legacy." *The Chicago Maroon* (Chicago), Feb. 28 2014, Digital, News. <https://www.chicagomaroon.com/2014/02/28/harlem-mosque-leader-talks-malcolm-x-legacy/>.

<sup>37</sup> Chapman, Mark L. "Christianity Is the White Man's Religion." Chap. 2 In *Christianity on Trial: African-American Religious Thought before and after Black Power*, 42-68. Eugene: Wipf & Stock Publishers. Reprint, 2006.; Muḥammad, Elijah. *Message to the Blackman in America*. Kindle ed. Vol. 1, Phoenix: Secretarius MEMPS. 2012. 1957.

<sup>38</sup> Blyden, Edward W. *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*. Baltimore: Black Classic Press. 2013. 1888.



It has hindered where it might have helped; it has been evasive when it was morally bound to be forthright; it has separated believers on the basis of color although it has declared its mission to be a universal brotherhood under Jesus Christ. Christian love is the white man's love for himself and for his race. For the man who is not white, "Islām is the hope for justice and equality in the world we must build tomorrow"; the genesis of Black Islām within America therefore does not subscribe to the traditional Islāmic doctrine promulgated and espoused by many post-1965 immigrant Muslims.<sup>39</sup> Current-day Black Muslims recognize the problematic existence of a racial binary mindset responsible for the modern-day Muslim race relations breakdown within the United States and, as a result, many South Asian Muslims, for example, S. Kaazim Naqvi, often paint a bleak portrait of American Islām where racism clearly divides the 'Umma because of the "color line."<sup>40</sup> For many "Black converts [to Islām], the underlying cause of the persistent racial ["color line"] divide was grounded in a sense of immigrant [religio] racial superiority [towards African Americans] ... immigrant criticism and condescension to Black Muslims was deeply rooted in their sense of [Middle East and South Asian Muslim] exceptionalism."<sup>41</sup>

It is an incontrovertible fact that many immigrant Middle East and South Asian Muslims fail to appropriately comprehend how and why Black Islām within the United States ameliorates a complex sociological reality where "American Islāmicism has for centuries generalized and collapsed a multiplicity of Muslim sects, schools, and practices (including secular nonpractice) into a monolithic or misrepresented symbol of foreignness," and, because of this, many immigrants categorize Black Islām in a racially pejorative manner that impedes meaningful dialogue and "contact between immigrant Muslim communities and African American communities."<sup>42</sup> The cultural appropriation of orthodox interpretations of Islām and its subsequent "Blackening" by African American Muslims strikingly demonstrates the Black psychological emphasis upon a Pan-African Nationalist identity (i.e., Negritude) and resistance membership—a hermeneutical maneuver that "flips the script" concerning traditional Islāmic conceptions of race, religion, culture and ethnicity held by many immigrant Muslims—that can be seen contextually seen through its modern-day support of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement's emphasis upon African American notions of freedom, social justice and sociopolitical power.<sup>43</sup> The religio-racial attributes of Black Islāmic identity and membership inculcates many African Americans with psychological traits approximating temperance, sobriety and self-control because Black Islām "demands that Muslims gain [self] discipline in their struggle," and, by so doing, self-actualizes their innate Africanist oriented race, culture, ethnicity and religious potential.<sup>44</sup> Black Muslims, unlike many Middle East and South Asian immigrant Muslims, are keenly attuned to why and how the "color line" narrative of the United States concerning

<sup>39</sup> Lincoln, C. Eric. "Preface." *The Black Muslims in America (Foreword by Gordon Allport)*, iii-vi. Boston: Beacon Press. Reprint, 1994.

<sup>40</sup> Mogahed, Dalia, and Youssef Chouhoud. "American Muslim Poll 2017: Muslims at the Crossroads." In *Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)*, edited by Karam Dana, David Dutwin, Rachel M. Gillum and Amaney Jamal, 16. Digital. Washington: Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU), 2017. Statistics.

<sup>41</sup> Naqvi, S. Kaazim. "Chicago's Muslims: Unity and Fragmentation." Chap. 6 In *Chicago Muslims and the Transformation of American Islam: Immigrants, African Americans, and the Building of the American Ummah*, 147-74. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2019.

<sup>42</sup> Rashid, Samory. "Divergent Perspectives on Islam in America." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2000): 75-90.; see also Edwards, Brian T. "Islam." Chap. 34 In *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, edited by Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, 137-41. New York: NYU Press, 2014.

<sup>43</sup> I define the term, *Black Lives Matter* (BLM), as an African American inspired movement whose telos is the realization of Black freedom, social justice and power for people-of-color everywhere It was founded in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi as a sociocultural response "to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman." See "Herstory." BLM, 2019, accessed August 29, 2019, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/herstory/>; see also Lebron, Christopher J. *The Making of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History of an Idea*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017.; see also Ransby, Barbara. *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-First Century*. Vol. 6, Oakland: University of California Press, 2018.; I define the linguistic term, *Blackening*, in a manner similar to that posited by Black Biblical Scholar, Rev. Michael J. Brown Ph.D., where he asserts it is a culturally specific African American reading/interpretation/action oriented towards self-liberation. See Brown, Michael Joseph. "Afrocentrism and the Blackening of the Bible." Chap. 3 In *Blackening of the Bible: The Aims of African American Biblical Scholarship*, 54-88. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2004.; see also Wimbush, Vincent L. "Reading Texts as Reading Ourselves: A Chapter in the History of African-American Biblical Interpretation." In *Reading from This Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in the United States*, edited by Fernando Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert, 95-108. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994. Reprint, 1995.; see also Melton, J. Gordon. "Nation of Islām: Religious Organization." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Nation-of-Islam> . Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica Online, 2018.

<sup>44</sup> McCloud, Aminah B. "Introduction." In *African American Islam*, 1-8. London: Routledge, 1995.

“the cultural matrix of white supremacy ... persists into the present era,” and, for this and other reasons, the *American Dream* concerning liberty, equality, justice and freedom “is very close to a nightmare [for Blacks] and that no matter where Africans find themselves, they are faced with the [racial binary] problem of race and color.”<sup>45</sup> African American Islām in an identity and membership hermeneutical movement similar to that conceived by the Black Church assists “Black people to endure the tribulation of overt and covert oppression which continued as a cruel nightmare long after the *Emancipation Proclamation* ... Black religion lit the fires of resistance deep within the soul of the Black community,” and, as can be seen within the larger African American faith community, also greatly contributed to the historical rise of Black Islām.<sup>46</sup> As truthfully acknowledged by ethnic studies scholar, Sylvia Chan-Malik, “the [modern-day] Muslim American community came to embody two distinct, and in many cases, mutually opposed visions of Islām and the [American] nation, one which viewed the [Islāmic] faith as a means to counter the dehumanizing effects of white supremacy and national disenfranchisement, as was the case for Black American Muslims; and the other which saw Islām as a religious and cultural inheritance,” and, with this being said, the racialized nature of the religio-racial fissure dis severing Black and immigrant Muslims from one another within the ‘Umma becomes abundantly clear from an ethnological perspective.<sup>47</sup>

For many modern-day Black Muslims “Islām was considered as part of a legacy of Black expressions of faith that diverged from normative Christianity. Islām was not a foreign presence in the Black communities I grew up ... Of course, this is not to say that everyone in the Black communities I was a member of completely understood the [five religious] tenets of Islām or that they understood Islām as theologically acceptable - I mean, Black Christians still believed their [religious] path was the right path, just as Black Muslims believed their [religious] path was the right path. This is just to say that Islām was a recognizable expression of faith and religion in the Black community,” and, for these and other sociocultural reasons, many African American Muslims are quite reticent to “throw shade” (i.e., pass disrespectful judgement) upon other Black Muslim traditions that theologically deviate from immigrant conceptions of Islām.<sup>48</sup>

Black Islām characterizes itself as a self-liberating faith tradition, one where its Muslim adherents are not simply a domestic religious minority possessing a subaltern identity within a coercive and constraining majority but, rather, an essential constituent of a larger international and global pan-African body (‘Umma) taking root and form within America.<sup>49</sup> African Americans during the *Great Migration* and afterwards experienced great difficulty in securing any form of secular or religious identity and membership acceptance from their white Christian brethren and, consequently, Black Islām proffered the race, religion, culture and ethnicity claim that it was a self-empowering, nation-building and social-solidarity oriented (‘Asabiyya) religious tradition bequeathing social justice, freedom and innate Black power to all people of Africanist descent.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Chrisman, Robert. "Blacks, Racism and Bourgeois Culture." *The Black Scholar* 7, no. 5 (Jan.-Feb. 1976): 2-10.; see also Ojo-Ade, Femi. "Africans and Racism in the New Millennium." *Journal of Black Studies* 32, no. 2 (Nov. 2001): 184-211.

<sup>46</sup> Battle, V. DuWayne. "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.

<sup>47</sup> Chan-Malik, Sylvia. "Common Cause: On the Black-Immigrant Debate and Constructing the Muslim American." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion* 2, no. 8 (May 2011): 1-39.

<sup>48</sup> Abdurraqib, Samaa. "Faith or Fight: Islam in the African American Community." *Counterpoints* 346, no. Teaching Against Islamophobia (2010): 169-85.

<sup>49</sup> Esposito, John L. "The Future of Islām and U.S.-Muslim Relations." *Political Science Quarterly* 126, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 365-401.; see also Bailey, Sarah Pulliam. "In the First Majority-Muslim U.S. City, Residents Tense About Its Future." *The Washington Post*, Nov. 21, 2015.; see also Cesari, Jocelyne. "The Numbers Debate." Chap. 1 In *When Islām and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and in the United States*, 9-18. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. Reprint, 2006.

<sup>50</sup> My use of the linguistic term ‘Asabiyya (Arabic: عصبية) refers to the theological conception or notion of social solidarity/group fellowship/tribal unity that underscores the Muslim idea of social cohesion/shared goals/group consciousness. See Malešević, Siniša. "Where Does Group Solidarity Come From? Gellner and Ibn Khaldun Revisited." *Thesis Eleven* 128, no. 1 (May 14, 2015): 85-99. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513615587415>.; see also Ahmed, Akbar. "Ibn Khaldun's Understanding of Civilizations and the Dilemmas of Islām and the West Today." *Middle East Journal* 56, no. 1 (Winter 2002): 20-45.; see also Ssekamanya, SirajeAbdAllāh. "Ibn Khaldun on the Role of Knowledge, Skills and Values in the Rise and Fall of Civilizations: Implications for Muslim Educators in the 21st Century." *Educational Awakening: Journal of the Educational Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2007): 25-44.

Black Islām successfully purloins a page from the Black Church by astutely commandeering a Black liberation theology oriented hermeneutic model—most fully developed and articulated upon by the late Black Christian theologian, James Cone—that all Black theology from the various African American faith traditions (Christianity, Islām, etc.) originate, emanate and project from the particularity of individual life experience and ethnic identity collectively residing within its Black membership body.<sup>51</sup> African American religious thought and practice, generally speaking, irrespective of one's particular faith identity and membership as a Muslim, Christian, etc. is markedly dissimilar from that practiced by non-African Americans because it is experientially “reinterpreted for and adapted to the life-situation of Black people's [“color line”] struggle for justice in a nation whose social, political, and economic structures are dominated by a white racist ideology.”<sup>52</sup>

All Black faith traditions, for example, Black Islām, Black Christianity, etc. is a potent religious and prophetic force capable of inciting profound spiritual change in terms of identity and membership because of its inherent subversive character, power and defiant disposition—“[Black] religion resists. It often resists, in particular, the [normative] values of the dominant culture [it pushes against]. It resists because religious people sometimes feel called by God to stand for something different than what everybody else believes, no matter how radical the vision they are pressing might seem to others”—and, as a result, African Americans like “no other [ethnic] community has had to pursue [racial] reconciliation with America through the *weltanschauung* of a ‘protest people’ who defined themselves in conscious opposition to the dominant [white] culture.”<sup>53</sup>

African American Islām blackens normative religious narratives and traditions espousing conventional Muslim tenets and precepts and, consequently, theologically liberates African American Muslims from spiritual oppression by promulgating a novel religio-racial identity and membership annunciating a pan-African oriented religious cosmology accentuating the primacy of Black religion, ethnicity, culture and race.<sup>54</sup> By shrewdly coupling “Afro-Eurasian Islāmic figures, place names, texts, events, and themes” to a Black Islāmic eschatology, Black Muslim groups like the NOI, Nation of Gods and Earth, Lost-Found Nation of Islām, etc. successfully “entertained various [theological] notions of what it meant to be Muslim, including [novel] historical interpretations of their Muslim identities. In creating and sustaining these [alternative] historical narratives, members of the NOI [and others] constructed and contested the [conventional] meaning of their collective identity as Muslims.”<sup>55</sup> It is the singular exceptional ability and propensity of African Americans to terraform older and more traditional forms of religious traditions into new synthetic forms of organic devotion which differentiated African Americans from their non-Black counterparts—the Black Muslim community in America is consequently quite diverse in terms of their Islāmic beliefs, practices and norms.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Cone, James H. *Black Theology and Black Power*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. 1997. 1969.; see also Cone, James H. *God of the Oppressed*. Greenwich: Seabury Press. 2012. 1975.; see also Cone, James H. *A Black Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books. 2010. 1970.

<sup>52</sup> Cone, James H. "Black Theology in American Religion." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, (75th Anniversary Meeting of the American Academy of Religion) 53, no. 4 (1985): 755-71.

<sup>53</sup> Carter, Stephen. "The Religious Resistance of Fannie Lou Hamer." Chap. 2 In *God's Name in Vain*, 25-40. New York: Basic Books. Reprint, 2009.; see also Jackson, Sherman A. "Between Blackamerica, Immigrant Islam, and the Dominant Culture." Chap. 4 In *Islam and the Blackamerican: Looking toward the Third Resurrection*, 129-68. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Reprint, 2011.

<sup>54</sup> Muḥammad, Elijah. *The Supreme Wisdom: Solution to the So-Called Negro's Problem*. Kindle ed. Vol. 1, Irving: Secretarius MEMPS. 2012. 1957.; Dr. Molefi Kete Asante, Ph.D. as the founder, principal theorist and authority of *Afrocentrism* and *Afrocentricity* defines it as: “Placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior.” It has its historical impetus and origins in the scholarly work of African diaspora intellectuals (e.g., Négritude movement, Harlem Renaissance, etc.) present within the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. See Asante, Molefi K. "Dancing between Circles and Lines." In *Afrocentric Idea Revised*, 1-24. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.; see also Turner, Diane D., and Molefi K. Asante. "An Oral History Interview: Molefi Kete Asante." *Journal of Black Studies* 32, no. 6 (July 2002): 711-34.

<sup>55</sup> Curtis, Edward E. "Black Muslim History Narratives." Chap. 3 In *Black Muslim Religion in the Nation of Islam, 1960-1975*, 67-94. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social sciences. "Muslims in America: Immigrants and Those Born in U.S. See Life Differently in Many Ways." In *Pew Research Center*. Digital. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, April 17, 2018. Statistics. <https://www.pewforum.org/essay/muslims-in-america-immigrants-and-those-born-in-u-s-see-life-differently-in-many-ways/>.

African American religious scholar, Edward Curtis, asserts how Imām Wallace F. Muḥammad (aka Wallace D. Fard, Wallace D. Muḥammad, et al.)—Founder of the Nation of Islām—viewed the Nation of Islām as “a religion and a social movement organization. In fact, “the [Muslim] religion as it was introduced to the membership was more a social [justice] reform philosophy than Orthodox Islām,” and, with this having been said, the Honorable Elijah Muḥammad subsequently draws sharp ethnological attention to the Black proclivity to theologically reconstruct, revise or redact (i.e., Blackening) traditional identity and membership narratives antipathetic to the pan-African oriented goal of Black freedom, resistance social justice and power in its most comprehensive and inclusive meaning, sense and vision.<sup>57</sup>

The teleological ambition and object of Black Islāmic self-empowerment, self-sufficiency and self-liberation is to be socioculturally identified via race, religion, culture and ethnicity as a separatist inclined Muslim faith community in both identity and membership—one possessing a religio-racial flavor robust enough to overcome the normative “color line” conceptions of religion arrogantly propagated by non-Black (Middle East, South Asian, etc.) immigrant Muslims.<sup>58</sup> It is not coincidental that Black Muslim religious expression closely parallels the African American sociocultural concern for freedom, social justice and human dignity between dissimilar individuals because “for African-Americans, the viability of Islām as a worldview hinged largely on its primary emphasis on social justice, and its ability to provide African-Americans with an historical identity independent of slavery,” and, because of this, any credible African American religious tradition must always juxtapose itself against bigotry, prejudice and racial intolerance.<sup>59</sup>

The novel Black Islāmic identity advanced by African American Muslims is oftentimes at odds with immigrant Muslim conceptions of Islām, nonetheless, within the historical purview of the *Great Migration* and afterwards it greatly bolstered African American self-esteem, power, nationalism and pride—psychologically assisting African Americans experiencing “double consciousness” to intellectually educe, develop, embrace and assimilate a new religious meaning, identity and moral purpose regarding the world around them.<sup>60</sup> Black Islām espouses a separatist oriented religio-cultural worldview rooted within a racialized identity narrative theologically announcing Black Liberation, Black Power and Black Nationalism for all African Americans. I define the discrete linguistic term, *Black Nationalism*, as a Black separatist-oriented political “ideology that promotes Black autonomy and control of Black institutions that ultimately seeks the [political] establishment of an independent Black nation-state.”<sup>61</sup>

A great deal of the Black Muslim religious experience during the *Great Migration* and afterwards attests to and confirms the persistent African American struggle for respectability, power, justice, identity and freedom vis-à-vis race, religion, culture and ethnicity; if one is to psychologically understand and intellectually comprehend the rise of Black Islām within America versus the immigrant Islām experience, one must first acknowledge the growing Black consciousness movement to overcome social, religious, economic and political oppression that confronts African Americans on a daily basis within our nation’s history.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Marsh, Clifton E. "Nation of Islam, 1930-1959." Chap. 4 *The Lost-Found Nation of Islam in America*, 37-48. Lanham: Scarecrow Press. Reprint, 2000.

<sup>58</sup> Lincoln, C. Eric. "And Why They Become Believers." Chap. 1 *The Black Muslims in America (Foreword by Gordon Allport)*, 27-32. Boston: Beacon Press. Reprint, 1994.

<sup>59</sup> McCloud, Aminah Beverly. "Conclusion." Chap. 6 In *African American Islām*, 163-74. London: Routledge, 1995.; see also Wallis, Jim. "The Original Sin and Its Legacy." Chap. 3 In *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America (Foreword by Bryan Stevenson)*, 33-56. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Group. Reprint, 2017.

<sup>60</sup> My use of the term, *Double Consciousness*, is being used as “a concept in social philosophy referring, originally, to a source of inward ‘twoness’ putatively experienced by African-Americans because of their racialized oppression and disvaluation in a white-dominated society. The concept is often associated with William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, who introduced the term into social and political thought, famously, in his groundbreaking *The Souls of Black Folk*.”; See Pittman, John P. "Double Consciousness." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. Summer. Stanford: The Metaphysics Research Lab, Center for the Study of Language and Information (CSLI) at Stanford University, March 21, 2016. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2016/entries/double-consciousness/>; see also DuBois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. Halycon Classic Series. Kindle ed. London: Halycon Ltd. 2012. 1905.

<sup>61</sup> Fleming, Kenyatta Jay. "The History of Black Nationalism and Internal Factors That Prevented the Founding of an Independent Black Nation-State." Clark Atlanta University, 2008.

<sup>62</sup> "Introduction." In *Black Nationalism in America*, edited by Jr. John H. Bracey, August Meier and Elliott Rudwick. The American Heritage Series, xxv-lx. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1970.; see also Rashad, Adib. "Black Religion

Black Islām religiously, psychologically and cognitively empowers many African Americans disenchanted with Christianity, racism and oppression to salvage, recover and reclaim a new racialized and ethnicized Muslim inspired mental outlook, separatist Black identity, and resistance demeanor—“drawing on the political parallel, in which each state considers itself distinct from and superior to its neighbors, this attitude has come to be known as Black Nationalism.”<sup>63</sup> Black studies scholar, C. Eric Lincoln, in his iconic publication, *The Black Muslims in America*, sheds invaluable light upon how African American Muslims have recast (Blackened) traditional Islām and, in so doing, adapted it to fit their particular religio-racial, religio-cultural and theo-historical needs and Black identity, beliefs, practices and tradition concerns.<sup>64</sup> The Black Muslims have made a science of Black Nationalism. They have made Black the ideal, the ultimate value; they have proclaimed the Black man to be the primogenitor of all [human] civilization, the Chosen of Allāh [God], “the rightful ruler of the Planet Earth.”<sup>65</sup>

Many African American Muslims, for example, the NOI, define their Black Muslim identity, membership, beliefs and tradition vis-à-vis race, religion, culture and ethnicity as, “more than courage and rebellion; it is a way of life. It is an implicit rejection of the ‘alien’ white culture and an explicit rejection of the [European] symbols of that culture, balanced by an exaggerated and undiluted pride in ‘Black’ [Africanist] culture,” or, to put it more concretely, it was Elijah Muḥammad who would see within Islām the spiritual medicine needed for the eschatological salvation of all African Americans—a religio-racial identity politics infused faith tradition that could potentially liberate Blacks from the paralyzing grip of racism, intolerance and “color line” hate within America.<sup>66</sup> C. Eric Lincoln convincingly argues that Black Muslims channel their African American resistance by remonstrating against the Black Church and, by so doing, drawing argute attention to their ecclesial inability to historically remedy the observed race, religion, culture and ethnicity injustices committed against the greater Black community within America.

African American Muslims like Malcolm X vociferously repudiate the integrationist ideal espoused by some African American Christian pastors, for example, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and, instead, embrace the Black identity reality and membership credo that “racism is a permanent feature of our society, and that those fighting for racial justice should resign themselves to this [ugly truth].”<sup>67</sup> It is therefore within the peculiar historical context and reality of the domestic hegira (*Great Migration*) that Black Islām definitively takes religious root within the greater African American community and, unlike many post-1965 immigrant Muslims unconcerned with Blackness, many modern-day African Americans seek both psycho-religio and religio-cultural explanations to the following three identity and membership oriented queries: 1) Is it truly of benefit to be Christian within a prejudicial reality and “color line” existence that segregates, vilifies and psychologically injures the African American in mind, body and spirit 2) Can Islām provide a more fruitful religio-racial identity, greater sociopolitical power and human religiosity more conducive to people of Africanist descent, and 3) Is Christianity authentically African and truly Black in its history, character, identity and membership disposition vis-à-vis Islām.<sup>68</sup> African American Islām visibly and definitively provided its Black Muslim adherents with “a new [religious] life, a clean way of living, and a [psychological] peace of mind,” and, for this predominate reason, Black Islām greatly values and cherishes the sublime sense of elevated human value,

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and Black Nationalism." Chap. 7 In *Islām, Black Nationalism and Slavery: A Detailed History (Introduction by Sulayman S. Nyang and Foreword by Alauddin Shabazz)*, 103-26. Beltsville: Writers' Incorporated, 1995.

<sup>63</sup> Lincoln, C. Eric. "Black Nationalism: The Minor Leagues." Chap. 3 *The Black Muslims in America (Foreword by Gordon Allport)*, 43-45. Boston: Beacon Press. Reprint, 1994.

<sup>64</sup> Lincoln, C. Eric. *The Black Muslims in America (Foreword by Gordon Allport)*. Kindle ed. Boston: Beacon Press. Electronic. 1994. 1961.

<sup>65</sup> Lincoln, C. Eric. "The Dynamics of Black Nationalism." Chap. 2 *The Black Muslims in America (Foreword by Gordon Allport)*, 33-49. Boston: Beacon Press. Reprint, 1994.

<sup>66</sup> Rashad, Adib. Chap. Introduction In *Islām, Black Nationalism and Slavery: A Detailed History (Introduction by Sulayman S. Nyang and Foreword by Alauddin Shabazz)*, 1-6. Beltsville: Writers' Incorporated, 1995.; see also Lincoln, C. Eric. "Black Nationalism." Chap. 2 *The Black Muslims in America (Foreword by Gordon Allport)*, 43-45. Boston: Beacon Press. Reprint, 1994.

<sup>67</sup> Valls, Andrew. "The Broken Promise of Racial Integration." *Nomos* 43, no. Moral and Political Education (2002): 456-74.

<sup>68</sup> Bobo, Lawrence D. "Racism in Trump's America: Reflections on Culture, Sociology, and the 2016 Us Presidential Election." *The British Journal of Sociology* 68, no. S1 (2017): 85-104.; see also Doherty, Carroll, Jocelyn Kiley, and Bridget Johnson. "Most Americans Say Trump's Election Has Led to Worse Race Relations in the U.S.: Growing Share of Public Says There Is Too Little Focus on Race Issues." 1-18. Washington: Pew Research Center (A nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis and other empirical social sciences), 2017.; see also Khazan, Olga. "Being Black in America Can Be Hazardous to Your Health." *The Atlantic*, July/August 2018.

Identity, respectability and religious purpose furnished by its Afrocentric oriented teachings—an empowered psycho-spiritual state of mind and self-liberation incomprehensible to many immigrant Muslims because of its zealous affirmation of a proud Pan-Africanist horizon extolling Black identity, Black Power and Black Membership.<sup>69</sup> To be a Black Muslim in America draws much needed race, religion, culture and ethnicity attention upon a prejudicial 'Umma where “the Arabs despised the Black color as much as they loved the white color; they described everything that they admired, material or moral, as white”—Islām within America has now become a nationally contested racialized realm that is now just as prone to racism as Christianity, period.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Lewis, Bernard. "The Crows of the Arabs." Chap. 20 In *Islam in History: Ideas, People, and Events in the Middle East*, 247-60. Peru: Open Court Publishing. Reprint, 2001.

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