

Black Islamic Praxes: Anti-colonial Theories & Inventions of Existence

By

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(When no one wanted to work with me or ran away/withdrew from their supervisory position)

Leyi i ya

Kokwani Flora na Ngisimani Jim Nkuna

Mhani Patricia Nkuna

N'wana Maneo Na'ima Ntsepo

&

To the Memory of My Father

Andrew Teboho Manyike

&

Prof. Bhekizizwe Peterson

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work, it has not been submitted before any university or academic committee, and I have acknowledged all sources cited by means of references.

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Signature

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Date

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I give thanks and praise to Allah (azza wajal) for choosing Islam for me and offering a different cosmology and existence to claim my stake in this life, in this Black lived experience. A special thanks to those who came before me and continue to guide, wrestle, challenge and protect me in my everyday unseen world, va le hansi or as they say my ancestors. Special thank you goes out to my lovely mother Patricia Nkuna, my love, supporter, and sustainer. The Nkuna family who have raised me with love, kindness, and steadfastness; I have to acknowledge that without the Nkunas I doubt that I would have been here studying for a Ph.D. I extend my thanks and gratitude to the Nkuna family for allowing me, without any quarrel, to take my father's surname, for this I am greatly indebted and humbly grateful to you namikhensa. Lastly, I would like to add that I have the highest regard and respect for this clan, I salute you: Mavutana! I would also like to thank Manyike (my paternal line) for the kind and respectful acknowledgment I have always receive ever since I was young, you have treated me generously like a young King. Xiphato: Mondlane! Va ka Manyike hi mbita va chava ku phama, n'waxifake xi mile ndleleni xi milele vahundzi va ndlela, va ka phama u ya zihlaba nga yo yinde ngokupha bantu (voko rakwe ri lele hi ku hanana). Hi vona vana va Nkome wa ku hlambeni. To my sister and younger brother although we have struggled since birth to maintain relations I want to make it clear that for you and your offsprings, I will always make space under the shade of my tree.

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Allah has promised those of you who believe and do right actions that He will make them successors in the land as He made those before them successors and will firmly establish for them their deen, with which He is pleased, and give them, in place of their fear, security. They worship Me, not associating anything with Me. Any who disbelieve after that, such people are deviators. (Surah an-Nur Ayat 55)

“Thus it is related that at the beginning of every century Allah sends a scholar who regenerates their religion for them. There is no doubt that the conduct of the scholar in every century in enjoining the right and forbidding what is disapproved, setting aright people’s affairs, establishing justice among them, and supporting the truth against falsehood and the oppressed against the oppressor, will be in contrast to the conduct of other scholars of his age. For this reason, he will be an odd man out among them on account of his being the only man of such pure conduct and on account of the small number of men like him” (al-Maghili in Sualiman 2020:21).

‘You know it is only in our memory that this is our land’ (Serote 1981:78).

Let him hear it

If he turns his face and sneers

Spit and tell him shit

It’s all or nothing;

He’s got all

And you have nothing

Don’t bargain with oppression

There’s no time man,

Just no more time

For the Black man

To fool around ... (Don Mattera 198: 46)

Abstract

This research explores the intersection between Blackness and Islam to argue that Black African Muslims use their denominational practices to produce an emancipatory political change in their societies. This intersection gives Black Islamic praxes a focus to interrogate the meanings of the experience of being Black and Muslim in contemporary South Africa to develop an emancipatory political culture. The thesis centrally argues that a Black African Muslim is a unique subjectivity in the theory and politics of emancipation in contemporary South Africa and it posits that the meaning of Black Islamic praxes is tied to the development of a new subjectivity and a new thought of political culture in the postcolony. The thesis is a combination of critique, analysis, and prescription; it critiques and analyses the existing paradigms, power structures, and dominant narratives that marginalize Black African Muslims in postcolonial South Africa¹. This work further argues that for Black African Muslims, politics does not only take place at the site of the State but they also operate at the level of thought and subjectivity. This uniqueness enables Black African Muslims to invent a new ontology and epistemology outside of the reigning Western world systems of domination and knowledge production. This denominational thought and subjectivity is expressed in the political and cultural discourses, sound, and literature. With South Africa, these discourses and expressions are directed at expressing the total disappointment in the absence of an effective emancipatory politics, because of the crassest forms of kleptocracy, and the poverty of our spiritual-material existence. These discourses and expressions when combined become a self-sufficient theory of emancipation, which offers a different but productive analysis of the social, political, cultural, and economic situation of postcolonial South Africa. We are living in a period of political and theoretical disorientation because of the failure to imagine a new intellectuality of politics and real emancipatory change. This work draws upon political theories of emancipation. It is broadly located within the discipline of political studies, but it also draws its material from black studies, philosophy, Islamic studies, cultural studies, music, and literature. The thesis centrally asks, what does it mean to be a Black African Muslim in

¹ Settler Colonialism made it possible for the establishment of apartheid. This conclusion is sustained by the fact that colonialism and apartheid subsisted on the exploitation of blacks and violation of Blackness (ontology and episteme). Therefore, I regard apartheid as a pillar within a structure of settler colonialism rather than something different to settler colonialism. Hence, my use of postcolonial South Africa than the use of post-apartheid South Africa.

contemporary South Africa? What is unique about the experience of a Black African Muslim subjectivity? What is the relevance of Black Islamic praxes for emancipatory politics?

Introduction: The theory & method of Black Islamic Praxes or What is it like to be a Black African Muslim

We shall remember

When we are free

We shall hang you dead too.

(Pheto 1983:113)

This research explores the intersection between Blackness and Islam to argue that Black African Muslims produce an emancipatory political change in postcolonial South Africa. This intersection is what the thesis names Black Islamic praxes, a concept that interrogates the multiple meanings of the experience of being Black and Muslim in contemporary South Africa to develop a theory of human emancipation. The thesis centrally argues that a Black African Muslim is a unique subject (for this thesis subjects are the doers or agents of action) in the theory and politics of emancipation in the prevailing oppressive zeitgeist in South Africa. It posits that the meaning of Black Islamic praxes is tied to developing a new subjectivity, a new thought in the postcolony. This work further argues that for Black African Muslims politics does not only take place in the site of the State however, politics includes the order of thought and subjectivity. This uniqueness enables Black African Muslims to invent a new ontology and epistemology outside of the reigning Western world systems of domination and knowledge production. The Black Islamic praxes invents different visions, in the realms of political and cultural discourses, sound, and literature in narrating and fermenting a revolutionary subjectivity and thought. This invention arises because, since the so-called political 'transition' or the 'democratic breakthrough' in 1994, there has been the absence of a political project of emancipation in both politics and social sciences.

The main argument of the research revolves around the concept of Black Islamic praxes as a unique subjectivity of innovation, resistance, and emancipation for Black African Muslims in postcolonial South Africa. It challenges the dominant Western systems of knowledge production and power structures by highlighting the unique experiences and struggles of Black African Muslims within the intersection of blackness and Islam. The thesis aims to redefine subjectivity, politics, culture, and theology for Black African Muslims, emphasizing the need for new multiple thoughts and practices (hence praxes) to combat oppressive systems and promote human freedom and action. The thesis is a combination of critique,

analysis and prescription. It analyzes the existing paradigms, power structures, and dominant narratives that marginalize Black African Muslims in postcolonial South Africa. At the same time, it engages in a detailed analysis of the intersection of blackness and Islam, the unique experiences of Black African Muslims, and the potential for emancipatory politics through the concept of Black Islamic praxes. By challenging established norms and offering new perspectives, the research blends critique with in-depth analysis to propose alternative frameworks for understanding and addressing the issues faced by Black African Muslims.

The thesis constitutes a substantial contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the subject of politics and culture. The premise is that the intersection between blackness and Islam cannot be subsumed under the prevailing forms of politics, culture, and religion/theology or represented by the aesthetic regimes of colonial-modernity². This is because it was the advent of settler-colonial modernity that subjugated Muslims and Africans through the violence of colonial conquests and racist discourses or anthropological difference³. We address the central problem of what it means to be a Black Islamic subject for an emancipatory project because Black existentialism and phenomenology are primarily concerned with what it means to be human, free, born from crises of domination (Gordon 2019). It delves into the meaningful conceptualization of the intersections of Black African Islam outside logical positivism, as a way of challenging the modern assumptions that Islam and blackness are incommensurable, that Islam is foreign to Africa particularly south of the Sahara and that African Islamic practices are syncretic (Ware 2018: p.5).

² For us there is no modernity without colonialism, genocide (in all its forms: physical, biological, cultural, discursive), Enlightenment, capitalism, epistemology, biontology are paradigms of sovereign modernity.

³ Meditating on the invention of anthropological difference by western philosophers Toscani writes “The idea of the savage played a critical role in the emergence of modern political philosophy, and the subsequent unfolding of the ideologies of progress, and the social science of development: classical political economy, anthropology, sociology. In the period of this intellectual ferment, in a Europe wracked by inner turmoil and external conquest – which is to say amid the throes of the colonial emergence of a capitalist world from the matrix of Christian feudalism- the savage was figured largely with reference to the encounter with indigenous people of North America, albeit drawing, as the term’s etymology suggests, on an intra-European imaginary of the *homo sylvaticus*, the man of the woods (2019: 9)”.

Given that race intersects with class in the South African Muslim community, Islam is hegemonically represented by the Malay and Indian communities and excludes Black African Muslims as a cultural Other (Langa 2022; Sitoto 2018; Nkuna 2016). We assign these meanings to belonging to the colonialist and orientalist discourses of settler-colonialism. For us the intersections of what it means to be Muslim African, which we argue is the contemporary task, is tied to revolutionary ruptures and the introduction of the Black African Muslim as a new subject of emancipatory political thought-practices in contemporary South Africa.

The intersections between blackness and Islam or Black Islamic praxes in South Africa emerges because of the absence of an effective emancipatory politics and “social sciences today appears to exist in the absence of any emancipatory project. We are confronted today with the absence of any thought of a better world” (Neocosmos 2009: 2). This absence of an emancipatory political project is reflected in the inability of modern academia and particularly the social sciences to go beyond the given and descriptive analysis of what exists. In postcolonial South Africa today intellectual praise-singing of the state, the celebration of a peaceful transition, a wonderful democracy, and a constitution are the dominant discourses (Modiri 2021; Mngxitama, Alexander & Gibson 2008; Hudson 2019; Neocosmos 2009: 5). Hudson (2019) argues that the notion of a democratic breakthrough of 1994 “fails to rule out the thesis according to which the reproduction of colonialism in South Africa can be reduced to the effect of the inertia of the past, with colonialism itself already neutralised in the present” (p.158).

For Hudson “across the left...South Africa is still a colonial society” and “colonialism is inserted into democracy via capitalism” (2019: *ibid*). For us, Black Islamic praxes is a break with the ordinary settler colonial-capitalist and liberal democratic state situation⁴ of the postcolonial world and re-installs a new mode of sociogeny⁵. This new sociogeny, that is being social in

⁴ Althusser, L. (1971) *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press.

⁵ Sylvia Wynter (2007: 30) quoting Fanon makes the point, “Reacting against the constitutionalist tendency of the late nineteenth century, Freud insisted that the individual factor be taken into account through psychoanalysis. He substituted for a phylogenetic theory the ontogenetic perspective. It will be seen that the black man's alienation is not an individual question. Beside phylogeny and ontogeny stands sociogeny ...” (Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks*, 1967). Sociogeny refers to being social in origin, arising from and having its origins in society. Not an abstract imaginary-symbolic space as per western philosophy and its white liberal-bourgeoisie subjects.

origin, or arising from and having its origins in society is an invention of existence⁶ for Black African Muslims because they acknowledge the “truth which, by forcefully including itself in the world makes sure that the world will never be the same” (Toscano 2006: 15). This is what subjectivity means from a Black Islamic praxes perspective, it is the fidelity to the destruction of current material-spiritual reality. It is not a transcendental substance rather it is a prescription of an ethic and fidelity of the truth of change in ontological perspectives.

Black Islamic praxes enacts a new language not constituted by a differential relation *a la* Saussure’s structural linguistic or scientific conception of language because under modernity elimination is the destiny of the black/Muslim colonized Others. Language signifies to us a culture of modernity and its sovereign thought structure, that is our meaning making structure which is always at loggerheads with modern theories of language because a Black Praxes language emerges from different experience-cosmology. The Black Islamic subject is a subject of the event, the truth or fidelity to the event as a structure of thought, it is not a Cartesian subject that says cogito ergo sum. Rather the Black Islamic subject is a subject that arises because of an event, conversion, a revolution, a leap, and the fidelity to the truth of that occurrence or of that event. This thesis interrogates what it means to be a Black African Muslim not from a positivist teleology but importantly for the purposes of the destruction of modern sovereign episteme and inventing an emancipatory production of the knowledge of the practice of action. Black Islamic thought-practices expands the corpus of Black African and Islamic radical intellectual traditions by studying the intersections between these intellectual, political and spiritual traditions.

⁶ As Marriot, following Fanon aptly puts it “The wish not to be confined by History is no doubt crucial: there is the link of invention to the destiny to which it gives rise (Fanon has to constantly remind himself of that “real leap” whose meaning, in as much as it refers to the destiny [if not the history] of events, is not contained in advance, and whose destination is not prescribed by “History”), which then becomes a sign of liberated existence, that is felt to be an act of self-creation. The leap beyond history, first of all, that very separation between history and invention, is not simply to counter the ways in which history has been used to justify supremacist claims and effects, but to escape the normal teleological form of its writing, and so refigure life as event (2011: 45-46). Our contention is that because of the violent and racist exclusionary tradition of the present world structured by settler colonial-capitalist modernity, the Black and Islamic figures are the in-existent following Badiou (2007), because they are not counted as (Hu)man, therefore subjects whose language cannot make meaning in this symbolic structure, hence to make meaning we have to rely on their terms of lived experience.

To do this the thesis investigates the political subjectivation-the production of political subjects. In the intersection between blackness or Black African Muslims with racism, and slavery in Arab-Mediterranean Islamic lands, came forth the construction of a Black Islamic imaginary through embodiment of knowledge, the narrative of a Black Islamic sonic aesthetics and the militancy and prescriptions of a Black Islamic political practice. This political subjectivation is interrogated in order to problematize how the present conjuncture of the postcolonial modern situation subjects both Black African and Islamic traditions to a position of being outside of modern linear time (Benjamin 1969; Fabian 1983) and therefore as subjects who are fit for domination. It is this existential phenomenology of domination and antagonism (irreconcilable difference) enacted through settler-colonialism and its reproduction in the postcolony that gives us the problematic of understanding the work of this Black Islamic subjectivity and its potentialities to rupture the current situation to invent a better existence. Because settler colonialism violently introduced a new biological conception of the human or a western cultural ontology which we name a *biontology*⁷ and epistemology, settler colonialism for this thesis “has both negative and positive dimensions. Negatively, it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base—as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay, invasion is a structure not an event” (Wolfe 2006: 338).

This structure of thought governed by the biontology and the epistemological fields has maintained the reproduction or perpetuation of the ‘capitalo-parliamentary’ (Badiou 2006b) status quo in ‘post-apartheid’ South Africa. This is because the so-called political transition

⁷ In an interview with Elizabeth Povinelli, Kathryn Yusoff has argued, “I always turn to Georges Canguilhem and his concept of normativity here. Canguilhem was, of course, intervening in the contemporary discourses of biology (life). How, he asked, should life be understood philosophically? Nevertheless, what he showed, and why the morpheme ‘onto’ is inserted between ‘geo’ and ‘power’, is that western ontology, and the epistemological fields it has sprouted, is inflected by – or, more strongly, defined by – the imaginary life. We should not say ontology as if it were neutral to forms of existence. Ontology presupposes the division between life and nonlife – it inscribes this difference into things and our way of knowing things in the natural and critical sciences. Indeed, ontology should be rewritten as biontology. Or it should be renamed as the carbon imaginary: a propositional hinge that joins the natural and critical sciences. Biontology is the true name of western ontology. And the carbon imaginary is the homologous space created when the concepts of birth, growth-reproduction, and death are laminated onto the concepts of event, conatus-affectus, and finitude” (Povinelli and Yusoff 2017: 174).

has closed down the space for transforming the spiritual-material conditions of people and how people think in and conceive their concrete conditions of existence. This is why this thesis is preoccupied with opening the imaginarium⁸ of Blackness and Islam by introducing the Black Islamic subjectivity of the Real⁹ as a resistant.

The intersection between blackness and Islam allows this research to draw upon political theories of emancipation. It is broadly located within the discipline of political studies but it also draws from other social sciences, philosophy, black studies, Islamic studies, cultural studies, music & literature. It investigates the philosophical basis and political implications of emancipatory categories and concepts such as freedom, subjects, racism, truths, consciousness, history, black Islamic imaginary, culture, embodied education, texts, religion, Islamic sound-sonic aesthetics as important aspects of analysing anticolonial political discourse and social theories of modernity. Our subjects seen through the intersections or Black Islamic praxes, as our title suggests, are subjects of biontological and epistemological rupture insisting that to begin and end with politics as a conventional category or academic discipline is to overlook the premises through which the political itself can be critiqued. Premises whose trajectory starts at the genealogical foundations that gave rise to the political but that finally harness for critique those intellectual positions that stand outside those foundations.

This is to say that a true Black Islamic praxes political critique, an anticolonial intervention, must begin with the foundations that gave rise to a particular conception of nature, race, liberalism, secular humanism, culture, anthropocentrism, capitalism, religion, the modern state and much else that has been left intact (Hallaq 2018: 4). In other words, a Black Islamic praxes analyses politics as an epistemology derived from the biontology of domination and

⁸ As Yusoff and many other philosophers of emancipatory politics have demonstrated, the western subject is both fictive and oppositional in that it relies of the imaginary to make the symbolic field in order to make meaning and account for substance- knowledge. It is a subject that is born in opposition to the Other/black/Africa/Islamic/Oriental. Our subjects construct the imaginary from the real or concrete-spiritual conditions of existence.

⁹ The concept of the Real that this thesis is using benefits from contemporary Black radical thought. It refers to the spiritual-ground-materiality of the black colonized subject a subject of resistance, that is “it looks at the stratum of the ‘material Real’ as the genus, the zero-degree of subjectivity” ...it is a subject of the “Real of materiality as the elementary position of the subject of revolutionary emancipation” (Maxaulane 2018: 7).

reveals why modern politics are premised on biopolitical conceptions and practices of power. As an original work and conception Black Islamic praxes does not continue to plow conventional, if not rudimentary, political terrains because of post-colonial and contemporary decolonial critical theories that assumed and wholly left in place the same political subject, the modern subject, as the undivided matrix and locus of the above categories. To place the subject at the center of critique is to inquire into the constitution of the subject as a phenomenon whose measure is the ethical formation, an ethical formation of the truth that ruptures and breaks away from the anti-Black, anti-Muslim capitalist, liberal democratic nationalist state (Badiou 2001).

The thesis centrally asks, what does it mean to be a Black African Muslim in contemporary South Africa? What is unique about the experience of a Black African Muslim subjectivity and thought? What is the relevance of the intersections between Black, African, and Islam or Black Islamic praxes for emancipatory politics? How do Black Islamic praxes allow us to articulate new conceptions of the human or Black Islamic freedoms and actions in contestation with the political, spiritual, economic, and social structures that are in the service of conveying the foundations of an oppressive, immobilizing pessimism hanging heavily in the air of the prevailing Zeitgeist? How do we account for the new intellectual culture of Black Islamic Praxes?

This is a foundational study or a determining imprint,¹⁰ (for Black African Muslim students/militants) and it is an authorial contribution that is important for the history of a community. Black Islamic praxes is a substantial contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the field of political theory and practice. We intervene in Black African and Islamic intellectual traditions to introduce the radical innovation that results from the subjective anticolonial struggle and antagonism (irreconcilable difference) in the postcolonial present. The concept of Black Islamic praxes argues that Blackness cannot be solely analysed from a settler colonial Christian and secular historical context only, and that Islam cannot only

¹⁰ Taking this idea from Michel Foucault's *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), founders of discursivity or a determining imprint, as I understand it refers to a distinctive contribution in the discourse of a tradition, it shows traces of an individual authorial contributions and the manner in which they are conducive to the experience of a society's history. This study is meant as a foundation especially for theoretical contributions for Black African Muslims in not only South Africa but where anti-black domination is (re) produced.

be represented by the Malay, and Indian communities. Black Islamic praxes a constant revolution of oneself and the world, is a way of being in the world that Black Africans subscribe to as a way of dealing with colonialism, anti-blackness, anti-Islamic logic to invent a new existential perspective. In South Africa the total disappointment in the absence of an effective emancipatory politics after the (admittedly contradictory) optimism of the popular upsurge of the 1980s, and its replacement by the crassest forms of accumulation and corruption in elite politics since 1994, has led to a cynicism which is reflected in both social sciences and in politics (Neocosmos 2009: 3). Black Islamic praxes is the launch of a protracted cosmological struggle, which introduces a new anticolonial ontology,¹¹ and epistemology that subtracts any anthropocentrism. Hence, our idea of Islamic praxis according Shahab Ahmed (2016:302) is to “resist our conceptual predisposition to conceptualize and categorize Islam by a *prescriptive view* and the *elimination of difference*...” Instead, we should conceptualize Islam “in terms of *inclusion of difference*”. By giving primacy to the selected parts of the historical phenomenon of Islam such as Arabs of Middle-Eastern or North African origins, Sunni Islam, religion, and race-culture as “normative” or “authentic” Islam and deliberately excluding the value and meaning of “exploration and creativity discourses such as fictional literature, art, music” (ibid: 303) as representative of Islam.

There is a risk of not paying attention to the logic of internal contradiction. The logic of internal contradiction is relevant for paying specific attention to the various historical and (non)human phenomena of Muslim societies, like the Black Islamic praxes. According to Ahmed’s previous conceptualisations, the modern academy has failed to pay attention to this logic of internal contradiction; this is by far one of the most innovative and radical theoretical contributions. For a long time, the *prescriptive view* has sustained the epistemological division between black/African Studies and ‘Middle-East’/Oriental and Religious/Islamic studies, and it is demonstrated by the integration of Islamic sources and imaginations into the “newly

¹¹ For us ontology suggests a pre-given, independent order of existence, since such an order cannot exist without a particular form of knowledge that makes it what it is (as we showed with the concept of biontology). The self, for instance modern or premodern is a particular formation that may lend itself to an analysis of essence or quiddity, although it is a constructed entity. We are suggesting that the ontological is not a stable or fixed quality incapable of transformation or mutation. The Black Islamic subjects introduces a new metaontology in the Black-African and Islamic milieus.

expanded library,” (Brenner 1992; Mudimbe 1988) the colonial library in late twentieth century Africa.

In this thesis, Black African Muslims explore the intersections of blackness and Islam as political aesthetic conceptual categories to be mapped on their societies as a historical and (in)human phenomenon. Aesthetics of blackness and Islam innovate a new way of seeing, feeling, and inhabiting the world, its beauty, radically challenging evil, and of creating artistic practices that are grounded in the experience of everyday life in a postcolonial or post independence world. Aesthetics of blackness and Islam differ from the much-vaunted Western philosophy of aesthetics *a la* German Romanticism in that aesthetic regimes of Black Islamic praxes inaugurate new imaginaries of the world and critique western scientific practices and methods. This allows us to theorize our anticolonial intervention by launching a biontological and epistemological critique of the domination of Man. This anticolonial critique against Man or sovereign modernity is precisely because we want to unveil for the reader how domination inheres in the modern transcendental structures and we minutely analyse it, to intervene and prescribe a way out. As Mignolo points out, and this is the point about the concept of Black Islamic praxes, it dispels the contemporary global linear thinking whether from poststructuralists, postcolonialists and critical decolonial thinkers and theorists. Black Islamic praxes expresses the darker sides of modernity and teaches Black African Muslims in South Africa about

“the transformation of a polycentric and noncapitalist world before 1500 to a monocentric and capitalist world order from 1500 to 2000” (Mignolo 2011: 3).

Why a monocentric and capitalist world order should be resisted? For this thesis, blackness is the broken claim to connection from the linear teleological conceptions of Western humanism in the European and Arab imaginary. Black Africans are agents of change and throwing off value systems and aesthetics that had long held Whiteness as the point of reference. Blackness is an indigenous mode of being that is specifically unique to Africans’ resistance against colonialism and its dominating modes of epistemology. This broken sense undermines the idea of the Western invention of the biocentric conception of ‘Man’ as the plenitude of meaning (compared to Black Africans and Muslims) constructed from the fifteenth century, what Wynter (2003) names as Man 1 *homo politicus*. The conquering

political subject of the state emerged during the Renaissance period and was defined against non-Western people and what Said termed the Orient (1979).

This Man 1 is a subject that emerges with the Copernican revolution, initiates the conquests of non-European lands, and signals the separation between the Church and State. Our critique of the modern state, democracy, and capitalism particularly in chapter three, begins here as the genesis of domination that African and Islamic politics of emancipation should avoid at all cost. Man 1 the political subject of the state is transformed into Man 2, *homo economicus* during the enlightenment movements or the nineteenth-century separation from medieval to the modern and is structured by the Darwinian philosophy of selection and dysselection wherein the African, Indians, and Orientals are the dysselected and subjected Others of the European self. Wynter's critique of the invention of Man serves as a way to alert the student of the social sciences and modern disciplines. That is, the origin story of Man produces "the lived and racialized categories of the rational and irrational, the selected and the dysselected, the haves and the have-nots as asymmetrical naturalized racial-sexual human groupings that are specific" (McKittrick 2015: 10).

Black Islamic praxes reject the category of the human, hence this thesis employs the category of the (non) or (in)human together with the concept of coloniality to signal the 'dark-side' of modernity and the practices that inhere in resistance cosmological imaginaries. Black Islamic praxes like "coloniality" according to Mignolo (2011: 2) "names the underlying logic of the foundation and unfolding of Western civilization from Renaissance to today, which historical colonialisms have been constituted". The rejection of the human is precisely because it is not a neutral category; the Western White Man possesses an a priori will and desire to dominate the material world. For the Western White Man, a "central value attitude" under which the "study of reality was undertaken" since the Renaissance does not fully encompass the experience, and cosmology of the indigenous Black African Muslim epistemically and cosmologically (McKittrick 2003). As the Iranian revolutionary Ali Shariati argued an "agreement on a (precise logical definition) of Man is almost impossible; because it varies according to different scientific insights, philosophical schools and religious ideas" (1987: 7).

The Muslim African subject demonstrates to us a dynamism of nonbeing and the (epi)phenomenology of both *being-Muslim-and-being Black-in-the-world* which takes seriously the historical development of Europeans construction of domination of Others as

the inception of an unsurpassable antagonism (irreconcilable difference) in the present situation. As subjects that address both the gaps within Black and Islamic thought or radical thought practices, our subjects are a novelty of anticolonial ontology and epistemological performance. We critique the notion of the Cartesian subject structured by the mind and consciousness, that is the individualist biological conception of knowledge and existence. On the extreme opposite and different spectrum, altogether our subjects point to a fidelity to the event of resistance as a structure of thought that emerged in the sixteenth century.

Black Islamic praxes takes seriously how the scientific invention of Man, under the Enlightenment episteme¹², cannot be the genus of the 'black' Other since as Mudimbe (1989; 1994) notes, the textual violence of Otherness predates Africa's contact with Europe in the fifteenth century. For Mudimbe, it is also traceable to the Greek-Roman classical works texts¹³ of the medieval period. For Black Islamic praxes as a new hermeneutic of blackness and Islam, we will add importantly to this narrative by including Medieval Arab-Mediterranean sources. Said (1979), argued that Orientalism was sketched in "Classical Greece" and it must have "commenced in formal existence in 1312, when the Church Council of Vienna of that year established a series of Chairs in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac, in cities as far flung as Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Avignon, and Salamanca" (1979: 49). Our exploration of the intersection between blackness and Islam is grounded in a concrete history of an epistemological and physical subjugation in the rise of colonial modernity. For contemporary

¹² We will call the Enlightenment episteme an epistemic sovereignty, an order of knowledge that is geared towards domination anchored by the right to kill or not to, it ushered an episteme that heightened the colonial knowledges about others outside Europe imaginary, its sovereignty is as a result of being a central domain of modernity. As we have learned from both black thinkers and Asian scholars the core of the Enlightenment social and intellectual movements was the displacement of the "local, customary or traditional moralities, and all forms of transcendental faith, by a critical or rational morality, which was projected as the basis of a universal civilization. This new morality, dominantly secular and humanist, and binding on all human beings would set universal standards for the assessment of human institutions. Under the command of human reason finally divorced of traditional principles of morality, the project would aim to create a universal civilization, one premised upon notions of rationality, materiality, individualism, autonomy, and crucial for us, the domination of nature. This is the project that animated Marxism and Liberalism in all its varieties" (Gray in Hallaq 2018: 31).

¹³ Including Arab-Mediterranean Islamic (I will later show how he's method is limited when it comes to Islam in the medieval context, rather Mudimbe gives us an account of Islam as it was inserted in the colonial library in the twentieth century which for us is too late).

anticolonial black radical thinkers, the fifteenth century as the onset of the European Renaissance, colonial conquests, and the birth of political modernity, marks the “case” or event where blackness came to be associated with primitivism and savagery and thus an undermined ontology.

This thesis will demonstrate that the anti-blackness¹⁴ or the somatic discrimination that emerged in the Arab-Mediterranean lands of Islam stems from contacts with the Greco-Roman paradigm and practiced throughout the medieval era, constitutes the intersection and experience of being Muslim African-Black. This thesis will demonstrate the dynamic understanding of race, ethnicity in relation Arabs and Mediterranean Muslims, in a sense dismantling the simple story of mere racism or discrimination. Far from being apologetic Black Islamic praxes will show how the ideas of Arabness or mediterranean subjectivity was constructed by orientalist and colonialist in a secular modern state. This is particularly important for anyone who is not familiar with this scholarship, Black Islamic praxes is a pedagogical direction of those working both within and outside Islamic studies. Importantly for this study blackness was a signifier of outsider status, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula. Being black meant that you existed outside of the tribal superstructure of the Arabian Peninsula and early Arabian society. I want the reader to really take this into consideration when going through this thesis.

The thesis investigates the relationship between Black African Muslims and Arab-Mediterranean Muslims, highlighting the significance of Islam as a structure of Black thoughts and experiences. The enslavement of Muslim Africans through the Atlantic and Arab slave trade marks the moment of contestation of what it meant to be Muslim, by taking textual interpretations as not only a scholarly issue but a revolutionary event of emancipation that showed why for Black Africans Islam is an embodied praxis of knowledge (Ware 2014). Muslims and Africans revolted against slavery by Arab Muslims and by the white colonial raiders, launching an immanent war to declare simultaneously that blackness is not

¹⁴ For our purposes “Anti-blackness is defined as the beliefs, attitudes, actions, practices, and behaviours of individuals, and institutions that devalue, minimize, and marginalize the full participation of Black people- (or perceived to be) of African descent. It is the systematic denial of Black humanity and dignity (Landor, Kador & Williamson 2022: 74).

incommensurable with Islam and against European slave raiders and colonialists, Muslims are free by virtue of being Muslim.

This is precisely why Black Islamic praxes is an epiphenomenology that demonstrates the construction of blackness and the phenomenology of blackness because phenomenology is concerned with meaning-making “that is when and where it is being imagined, defined and performed and in what locations, both figurative and literal” (Wright 2015:3). Epiphenomenal time relates to the way Black Islamic subjects experience their blackness as “multidimensional” and precluding “only a *direct* and *linear*, causality” (2015: 30). Black Islamic praxes is a multidimensional experience and subjectivity of blackness that is not teleological or articulated through the history of ‘Man’ but includes histories that are unknown in the imaginaire of the middle passage epistemologies and dominant settler colonial discourses. Multidimensionality is one experience of Blackness being determined by epistemes outside the West, Black Islamic praxes is a militant fidelity to indigenous and Islamic spiritual, intellectual, and political truths.

The intersection between blackness and Islam demonstrates that in South Africa, settler colonialism constructed the experience of being Muslim, and the racial taxonomies of the modern thought structure that place the black African Muslim as a cultural other. That is to say, Black Islamic praxes in South Africa interrogate how anti-blackness in Islam and the West, although they yield different power effects and dynamics and operate in different epistemes, they construct a representation that is prescriptive through the obfuscation of race and culture. For the Black African Muslim anti-black Islam in settler colonial societies is reminiscent of somatic discrimination of Black African Muslims by Arab-Mediterranean Muslims and their interpretations of legal sources to define what it means to *be* Muslim. However, what African Muslims have historically shown is that interpretations are not only a matter of a discursive tradition and that a revolutionary struggle should ensue whenever a Muslim's freedom is being undermined. The young Black African Muslim in South Africa should take note of how theoretically Black Islamic praxes can articulate or ferment resistance by handling both the experiences of being-Muslim and being-Black in the modern world without resorting to the categories of Man and his bionto-epistemological burden.

As a result of being the unique subject or figure of thought, Black Islamic praxes extends the ‘long sixteenth-century’ account since there is reason to believe that the domination of man

over man and nature has its primitive origins in European Christian dogma that was transformed into modern colonialism and genocide. That is because Christian Europe “as a social and political formation developed for centuries before the Renaissance, a complex form of domination of man over man” (Bookchin 2007:4) was made possible by Feudalism, the Church, and absolute monarchism, making them predecessors of the modern State. Therefore, as the technology historian, Lynn White particularly in his *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (1963) has maintained that several phenomena- that took place in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries would have occurred in the eleventh or fourteenth century. Lending credibility to the idea that domination was Christian and then later turned into virulent secularism constructed by deists, mechanical philosophers, and early Enlightenment thinkers in order to liberate the European Self because of the constriction of Christianity, hence Christianity had to be transformed into the secularism that functions in our now normative late modern situation¹⁵. As Wynter has demonstrated the enlightenment episteme as a transcendental structure of meaning brought this state of domination over man, its non or (in) human others (Negroes, Indians, Orientals), and over nature to near perfection. Black Islamic praxes argue that domination, as it would be demonstrated in settler colonial violence, “was not an event but a structure and a systematic process of thought that made domination a way of living in and seeing the world, an attitude, which explains why the destructiveness of nature and subjection of (non)human beings to its forces were thoroughgoing and commensurately systematic” (Hallaq 2018:88).

This sovereign and systematic thought structure of the Empire deployed a political regime to deal with conquests and intellectual regimes to deal with the discursive construction and knowledge of blackness and Islam hence for a Black Islamic praxes “modernity and its human subject could not be sustained without colonialism and genocide in all its forms”(Hallaq 2018:14). Starting in Morocco in 1415; 1444 in Senegal West Africa; 1492 in the Americas;

¹⁵ Christianity has been very instrumental in developing a modern matrix of domination, “In a remarkable attempt to formulate a theory of evil, the Yale philosopher Paul Kahn has argued that Christian conception of genesis continues to haunt the secular modern west, a conception that provides the basis for understanding the horrors of the twentieth century. Kahn forcefully argues that the myth of the Fall captures the conceptual boundaries that have defined the very genesis of evil itself.... This biblical understanding must be held responsible for the modern attitudes towards nature” (Kahn in Hallaq 2018:89).

1487, 1497, 1652, 1910 and 1948 in South Africa¹⁶. Modernity's human subject and its discursive genocide (through forms of knowledge) instituted blackness and the Orient/Muslim as lacking any biontological claim, that is, it relegates the others into nonhumanity and as Peter Wolfe has famously noted in the context of settler colonial genocide, it functions by the logic of elimination (2006: 339).

Modern knowledge is dialectically woven into the service power, modern academia, anthropology, sociology, literature, economics, journalism, business schools, engineering, physics, and chemistry, that is social sciences and natural sciences are at the service of perpetuating modern anti-black-anti-Muslim domination. Hence we argue that today social sciences are disabled from thinking beyond the descriptive analysis of what exists because it is systematically removed from politics and life because liberal democracy "statifies and technicises political agency (or reduces it to juridical agency with the sole exception of the casting of the vote every quinquennium" (Neocosmos 2009: 5).

As a new subject of thought and action Black Islamic praxes critiques modern academia and knowledge because these structures are driven by an innate drive impulse to struggle for knowledge, shame nature, and dominate the earth in the service of power. For anticolonial thinkers, settler-colonialism, and slave raids/the Middle Passage created the conditions for fugitivity and alienation, representing blackness as a kind of death-driven nonbeing, or pathologically impure object, and in Moten's terms, this view positions blackness as the referent of an objectifying encounter—with racism—and blackness as the thing that racism represents (Marriott 2016:1). Blackness is also the name of what exceeds race representation and the invention of existence without precedents in the colonial modern world. In contradistinction, Blackness is the name of resistance and revolutionary subjectivity, especially against the dilapidating spiritual-material contemporary conditions. These modern conditions ensure that we "presently live in a moment where the human is understood as a purely biological mechanism that is subordinated to a teleological economic script. That governs our global well-being/ill-being—a script, therefore, whose macro-origin story calcifies the hero figure of homo oeconomicus who practices, indeed normalizes, accumulation in the

¹⁶ See Ndumiso Dlala's (2023) *The Invention of Blacks: Notes on Conquest, Fear and Time*. Wits University Press.

name of (economic) freedom” (Mckittrick 2015: 10). That is why Black Islamic praxes refuses any ontological absolutism.

Thought from the African context, the fifteenth-century European encounter with Africa sutures blackness to Africa. That’s because for Black Islamic praxes “Africans are simultaneously black and indigenous” (Canham 2023: 21) that’s because our conception of blackness takes into account the context of settler colonialism (and for that matter, South Africa is one of the earliest phenomenon of settler colonialism in the continent), Middle Passage episteme, the contacts and encounters in the East or with Arabs, Asians and the Mediterranean world through the Indian ocean. It allows African as indigenes to consider that “new world plantation as the determinative habitat of the slave and the basis for a modern understanding of blackness is pre-empted through the delineation, description, and characterisation of the place that is Africa. Such that the extraction and dispossession of people as chattel should not be separated from the dispossession and extraction of their lands as ownable by colonisers” (Ramphalile, Manyike & Maxaulane 2023: 5). As a unique figure of subjectivity and thought, Black Islamic praxes is rooted in continental black studies in conversation with the African diasporas.

As I have just demonstrated for Black African Muslims, Arab-Mediterranean Muslim’s anti-black logic unsettles the binary of thinking Black discourse as conceptually comprised of colonial and Middle Passage epistemologies. By taking seriously blackness as a multidimensional or a multispectral phenomenon (Black Praxes Journal 2023), we have to expand the imaginarium of black thought by including histories of Arab-Mediterranean slavery, and the subsequent 1776 Revolt by Muslim Africans in Senegambia, Black Islamic sound signatures, Black Islamic imaginary, and Black Islamic political interventions and or leaps. In this way, Islam in the settler-colony sutures Africa and blackness as indigenous to and expands the imagination (the capacity for revolt and the invention of existence) of what it means to be a *Black-African-Muslim-in-the-world*. The uniqueness of our conceptuality should not be missed and should be counted as significant in the politics of knowledge production in the humanities and social sciences studies in South Africa.

As the theory and method of being- Black Islamic praxes or the interaction between black, African and Islam reveals a thorough acquaintance with the methods of research and the relevant literature, and a mastery of the necessary techniques. Black Islamic praxes is a

practice of black public humanities because it traces histories that exist in largely undocumented forms, outside sources that exist outside of formalism and official or sanctioned histories. Bhekizizwe Peterson (2019) argues that black public humanities produces knowledges that come from outside the university space and includes the local saving scheme, associations, unions, mother' church unions, and community radio (2019: 346). I widen the concept and name it Black Islamic public humanities, to include alternative spaces such as the Mosque, community storytelling, prayer ritual, performance stages, *Madrasa* (Muslim school), street knowledge and other acts of active remembering and imaginings that are not officially recognized or valued.

Black Islamic praxes addresses what has always been a thorny issue in modern African, black, and Islamic studies, which is the idea that Islam is foreign to Africa. Modern African thought following colonialist epistemology has concerned itself with the idea that Africa is pure, constrained, and enclosed in itself; this is a recipe for a limited concept of difference and identities. As Mudimbe in *The Invention* (1989) demonstrated, the reinvention of African history in the 1950s, whilst being an act of self-narration also produced limited understandings of the intellectual genealogy of the continent, especially during the nationalist anticolonial struggles.

The conceptions of the continent and its makeup was determined not only by anticolonial but colonial discourses, if Christianity was an opposition, then, the epistemology of 'other Abrahamic religions' was to be seen in an oppositional manner and should be translated as such in modern African epistemology. We now know the debates, according to Soyinka, that both Christianity and Islam undermined African cosmologies, and therefore one cannot choose between these two monotheistic religions to account for African realities and identities without misrepresenting African histories. In contrast, for Mazrui Africa should embrace its *Triple heritage, traditional Africa, Christianity, and Islam* (Nkrumah 1964; Mazrui 2005; Magubane 2005). This is why Souleyman Bachir Diagne raised the concern regarding the lack of representation of Islam in African philosophies, which run the risk of homogenizing Africa (in Sitoto 2018)¹⁷.

¹⁷ According to Kane (2016) "Western universities nowadays typically divide academic study of Africa so that North Africa (Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt) falls within the realm of Middle

Identity discourses, whether of foreign or original essences, continue to pivot around the meaning of “authentic” Africa. As Launay argued (2006) it is anthropologists who originated and studied authentic Africans in the colony as primarily those who practiced ‘traditional religions’ and African Christian theologies but not Islam. The influence of this knowledge is taken for granted and continue to inform discourses about authentic Africans in contemporary African discourses as it can be seen at work in Mbembe’s (2018) discussion of Africa’s identity and differences. Taking Islam and Christianity, (why and how they are linked we are not told but rather the reader is asked to believe because apparently these are Abrahamic religions that developed outside the continent?) Mbembe sees them as the “Oldest containers of Black Identity”, and “if there is something that separated Islam from other religions in Africa, it was probably the way in which the act of piety responded, like an echo, to the act of war” (2017: 95). Mbembe’s claim positions itself in between Soyinka and Mazrui’s polemics, arguing that these two “disciplines” sometimes called “religions” are foreign or authentic to Africa.

In this case, Black or African discourse is similar to the colonialist and orientalist discourses. The scholar-administrator Paul Marty, “director of the Office of Muslims Affairs” in French West Africa”, “exemplified both the tendency to conflate administrative with intellectual functions and the habit of equating race and religion” (in Ware 2018: 19). According to Ware, this is where the racial designation of Islam by the colonialist was conceptualised and practiced: Arab Islam is represented as pure and Islam South of the Sahara, that is *Islam noir*, as deviant and culturally inauthentic. Kenneth Harrow in his study of African Literature suggests that the Orientalist view of Islam in Africa views Islam as an “object, specifically a foreign object introjected [inserted] into a land distant in space and culture from its point of origin, Islam has been conventionally reduced to the notion of a predetermined monolith” (1991: 3). For this thesis Islam is a historical and revolutionary phenomenon.

The intersections between blackness and Islam in South Africa exemplify the inaccuracies of these discourses on societal and Islamic practice. In his research thesis focusing on the literary writer, poet, and revolutionary Don Mattera, Sitoto (2018) argued that an over-reliance on

Eastern studies, whereas the area south of the Sahara, considered Africa proper, is studied within the field of African studies (7).

conversion as a framework for understanding Black African Muslims forecloses the potential to read both Black African and Muslim as critical to Black African Muslim visions. He shows the unsustainability of the apparent incommensurability between Islam and Blackness because his subject has already transcended the discourses of the apparent incommensurability. I agree with Sitoto (2018) that there is a need to go beyond the moment of conversion to provide a critical reading of Black African Muslim self-understanding, subjectivities, and sense of the communal self/Ummah. I also suggest that it becomes significant to approach conversion in its historical, political, and social-cultural context, to study conversion not as a strategy for racially and culturally Othering tendencies but as an event and rupture with the presumptuous meaning of blackness and Islam in South Africa. Additionally, to take conversion as a process of political and aesthetic performance by black African Muslims as they seek, negotiate and articulate their experiences, meanings, and values of being black African Muslims in a postcolonial or post-apartheid South Africa.

Black Islamic praxes or the intersection between Islam and blackness suggests that the idea of original identities discussed by Africanist scholars, orientalist, colonialists, and missionaries are tantamount to speculations that not only fail to acknowledge Africa itself as multidimensional. The inaccuracy of these discourses is that they also function in society and hence in the case of South Africa *it has enabled Indian and Malay Muslims to view black African Muslims as cultural others, or newcomers to Islam, and thus forgoing the serious contributions of Muslim Africans*. Furthermore, the study of identities, since the language turn in the Social sciences, cannot help but be an “adoption of neo-liberal notions such as those of ‘civil society’, ‘human rights’, ‘modernity’ and ‘identity’”, they think “African society, state, and politics in terms of identities: personal, social and political” (Neocosmos 2012: 466).

Evidence goes against the neo-liberal notions of identities of the state. There are Black African Muslims in South Africa from the seventeenth century and those that defected from Christian-Secular thought to Islam in the anti-colonial upheavals of the twentieth century (Sitoto 2018, Haron 1978, Baderoon 2016). Islam is a thought-practice that emerged with indigenous black Africans to rupture the colonial-apartheid status quo. Hence, Black Islamic praxes take issue with the conditions of political performance in religious and spiritual conversion of the Africans by Christian missionaries. We can look at the theoretical map of African religious activities between 1900 and 1920 – the most systematic period of European

Evangelization and its transformation between 1950 and 1960 when its expansion and foundation were being questioned. Mudimbe (1994:36) analyses the power of conversion (discursive, spiritual, and physical) initiated by applied anthropology, colonial sciences, and particularly Christian Missionary activities resulting in a wedge between (African) “traditional or primitive society” and (western) “historical society” that allowed the former to be converted into the latter.

Most importantly, as Mudimbe intimates in the African context, the religious structures that translate the ideological discourses that fuse political performances are the clearest (p. 47). That is conversion and education aims to rearticulate the dominant narrative: “Christianity, Enlightenment, and Colonial Science witness to a violence which posits itself as a condition for modernity” (p. 61). The aims of Christian missionary discourses and activities, if we take them as political and ideological tools, aim to transform or convert the minds and spaces of Africans to institute and continue the project of colonization (real, symbolic, and imaginary). Ultimately, they classify and bastardize the mythological character of African spirituality, and constitute African cultures, social forms, and forms of knowledge “as lacking the Western norm” (p.176). Therefore, the questioning of the foundations of missionary activities in the 1950s and 60s had a political and ideological articulation (African personality, Negritude, Black Consciousness) of subjectivity, which is linked to the epistemological and socioeconomic expressions. In this sense, we can argue that the Black Islamic subject is a new figure that questions the perpetuation of the Christian transcendental and secular structures which could be termed the postcolonial meaning-making structures.

This study emerges from a different intellectual tradition, according to Kane (2016) and Zeleza (2006), most discussions of African intellectuals tend to focus on the intellectuals produced within the tradition of the “colonial library”, who dominate contemporary Africa and Africa’s worldly transactions. For us, the term colonial library’ refers to the body of texts and epistemological order that constructs Africa as a symbol and idea of otherness and inferiority. I find that depending on the models of the colonial library is inadequate to address the emancipatory character of the black colonized subjects and we have to seek an alternative from another source of experience, which is the Black African subjects in Islam. The hegemony of Christian missionaries in the South African spiritual/religious sphere closed down any alternative identity for the black colonized except conversion to Christianity or a native

‘traditional’ identity that also produced indigenous forms of Christianity. Hence, we must understand the radical articulation of a “Black Theology” under the ideological supervision of the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s as seeking precisely to continue the moment of rupturing this legacy of White Christian theological methods and address the problem of black suffering by introducing a new subject of politics and theology. However, the Black Consciousness Movement’s Black Theology has proven insufficient to initiate a decisive “break” with the transcendental socio-symbolic reality of Christianity (Johnston 2009). Black African Muslims adopt a hermeneutic of suspicion (Ricoeur 1974) against the theological discourses that are associated with Christianity and secularism in the (post) colony.

As a unique figure or subjectivity, Black Islamic praxes operate outside the colonial library to argue for the ‘moment of rupture’ that Mudimbe re-reads, by using conversion to Islam by Black African Muslims in South Africa from the 1960s as a radically new transcendental thought-practice and discourse of the historical sociopolitical status quo. The defection from Christianity by African Muslims in South Africa demonstrates that Islam is a *historical phenomenon and a force of revolutionary transformation* for the black colonized subjects. Islam emerges against the South African political and intellectual configurations structured by settler colonialism, capitalism, African nationalisms, Black existential-phenomenology, Marxism-Leninist-Stalinist thought, and (neo)Liberalism.

These categories and histories represent what determines black African social realities and psychological processes in the socius (Modiri 2022; Hudson 2019; Maxaulane 2023; Hart 2013; Nigel 2011). By centering Black African Muslims in the South African sociopolitical, spiritual, historical, and aesthetic spheres, we forgo unlike Mudimbe and the proponents of the colonial library, modification of the current socio-symbolic status quo consistent with the existing transcendental regime of the world to focus on the transformation of being and the social of Blacks African Muslims. Hence, we argue that politics is of the order of thought because it is an “attempt to conceive of politics after the end of classicism and within another space than that of the state” (Lazarus 1996: 13).

In this thesis, the intersection between blackness and Islam or Black Islamic praxes offers a new intellectuality of politics as a militant practice (Lazarus 2007). This is because post-apartheid state politics in South Africa unfortunately represents a systematic political disorientation and social sciences have been plunged into empirical work (Neocosmos 2009

Wamba dia Wamba 1993). Social thought has become moribund along with political and theoretical disorientation in South Africa, which has led to the failure to construct an emancipatory project amidst high and unwarranted racial inequality. State politics have become politics aided by neoliberal political economics, and the high levels of black suffering leads to rampant psycho-existential and material problems. If politics involves a decisive “break” with that which is in the current state of affairs (State as administrative government and state-of-the-situation), then according to Johnston (2009), eventual changes¹⁸ because of a revolution, or a leap gives rise to political militants, thereby creating another world by installing a different transcendental framework (p. 24).

As Wamba Dia Wamba conceives of it, politics is an independent practice outside the state, “Politics is a creative invention. Let us do something about the situation! characterizes a political attitude” (2003: 2). Hence, the state cannot be the kernel of politics for us, our theory warns against Muslims and Africans to think of the state as a liberator. Only a symptomatic break and the militancy this break gives rise to, can differentiate politics from the state. The history of states is different from that of politics. Politics has sites and militants (Lazarus 1992). The ideas of the Islamic state and the African state cannot be the dominant notion of politics, including the party. From a Black Islamic praxes revolutionary perspective, a politics without the party/state establishes an antagonism with capitalism another paradigm of modernity, because capitalism “forged a system of moralism, a structure of ideas, and a materialist worldview that inform and determine a particular concept of profit and financial operations. It dictated and continues to dictate a particular set of relationships between and among institutions and, to no lesser extent, between and among individuals, thus forming a particular meaning of the self” (Hallaq 2018: 35).

Islam as a paradigm of conversion, different from the colonial library, gives shape and expression to a new hermeneutic of the *black lived experience* in South Africa. It “breaks”, at least transcendently so, with the subjectivity of the Judea-Christian socio-symbolic which

¹⁸ Badiouan event and Zizekian act are well known concepts in Continental Philosophy designating occurrences and gestures through which old orders are broken via points of abrupt rupture, points interrupting the cohesion and continuity of whatever counts as the established run of things. See Johnston, A. (2009) *Badiou, Zizek, And Political Transformation: The Cadence of Change*. Northwestern University Press.

complements South Africa's liberal democratic constitutionalism/state. The state or class projects cannot be the imaginaire of our militant subjectivity. Like Badiou's militant subject of the truth, Black African Islam in South Africa is a 'social vision' and resistance to the Judea-Christian and missionary¹⁹ foundations (and continuity) of the South African political economy and cosmology.

The thesis is structured in four chapters or essays, including an interlude, introduction and coda. Each essay contributes to an overarching argument and objective on how the intersections between Blackness and Islam or that a Black African Muslim inaugurates a unique subjectivity in the theory and politics of emancipation in our current state of affairs in South Africa. It importantly posits that the meaning of Black Islamic praxes is tied to developing a new subjectivity, a new thought in the postcolony. The essays must be read separate as making original contributions to aspects of the intersections and political subjectivation that the research is focusing. Reading the chapters as separate original contributions is productive in order to attend to fundamental or foundational critiques of a Black Islamic praxes. The central objective is to help guide future black African Muslim researchers in the varied aspects of Black African Muslim lived experience. The aim is to encourage future Black African Muslim studies in South Africa, we hope the researcher, and intellectuals using an emic method, that is coming from within the community will find enough resources, and scope to critique and develop this work. Present within the structure of each essay is a self-contained argument and the truth of knowledge of the Black Islamic praxes.

The first essay opens the research by demonstrating the uniqueness of Black Islamic praxes through investigating the relationship between black African Muslims and Arab-Mediterranean Muslims, analysing discourses in the disciplines of geography, social history, anthropology, and importantly Islamic legal sources - Qur'an and Hadith. Here we argue that it is unusual in contemporary black, African studies to make Islam a structure of black thoughts and experiences. Secondly, for Islamic studies, our contribution is to show the archaeology of blackness in the imaginary of Muslim societies and how it reproduces itself,

¹⁹ As Mudimbe noted, "the missionary was also, paradoxically, the best symbol of the colonial enterprise... he devoted himself sincerely to the ideals of colonialism: the expansion of Civilization, the dissemination of Christianity, and the advance of progress (1989:47).

especially in the colonial modern world. Thirdly, we want to show that the imaginary of the Black Islamic subject born from the event of settler colonialism and Islamic scholarly interpretation has to do with the embodiment of knowledge, and thus when Muslims are threatened with bondage and oppression, being Muslim is launching a violent struggle to establish Islam. We demonstrate how Muslim Africans reinterpreted Islam through a revolutionary struggle in Senegambia, intersecting the Atlantic and Arab slave trades. Fourth, this Black consciousness approach to Islam is to demonstrate to South African Indian and Malay Muslim communities how a Black Islamic praxes antagonise racist discrimination and is also an approach to analysing the longer roots of somatic discrimination. The memory of the Black Islamic subject is not only limited to the national state territory, it also explores the experiences of the 'Islamic world'/Muslim lands in their varied Islamic cultures and their struggles against the dominant colonial status quo. This chapter displays the relevance of analysing the intersections between blackness and Islam for the production of an emancipatory Black Islamic political subject.

The interlude essay is meant to be a bridge between the first and second chapters; in it, I explore the colonial archive of conversion, missionary thought and discourses to show how Islam offers a different perspective on the black experience. I interrogate the formation of colonial Christian theologies, the formation of native religions, Black theology and Black Islamic theology. Although I still maintain in the thesis that Islam is not a religion but a (non)human and historical phenomenon that should be mapped on Black African lived experience and society, I do not ignore how other Black Muslims have thought about theological debates. This is further proof that this thesis contributes to knowledge that is, the formation of a Black Islamic theology in response to Black theologies and native theologies that spring from the colonial library. Hence, in the broader argument, these theologies cannot break-away from the transcendental structure of the current world dominated by Judea-Christian secular theologies.

The second essay investigates the Black Islamic imaginary by examining how the culture of domination was created by colonial missionary conversion, theories of education that emerged with missionaries, then secular colonial education, and literary history. Colonial missionaries were one of the most dangerous elements of colonialism; their heretical discourses that stem from the sovereign thought structures of modernity ensured that African

cosmology was limited to the Western norm. It is hence why when Black African Muslims defected from Christianity they brought about a new subjectivity through corporeal knowledge or embodied education and cultural productions. In South Africa where Christianity inaugurated the culture of domination, we argue that a Black Islamic praxes stems from suggesting alternative theories of education and knowledge. We look at the classic Islamic education and how Muslim Africans utilized such an education to develop new social arrangements. Black Islamic praxes is an embodied knowledge of the practice of action, it is an attitude and behavior of a subject of truths. This is what is meant throughout the thesis by a new perspective of Blackness. This chapter shows the intersection between politics and cultural discourses and that the culture of resistance of Africans has largely been understood from a secular-Western worldview. Furthermore, the chapter concludes by stating that Black African intellectual history through literature can be significantly and uniquely viewed from a Black Islamic imaginary. Black African Muslims experience and practice Islam as a revolutionary force against the dominating postcolonial status quo with its Western world transcendental structure of meaning.

The third essay zeroes in on this Black Islamic subjectivation by interrogating a political praxis of Black Islamic subjects amid the inertia or absence of an emancipatory project in South Africa. It does so by interrogating the dominant socio-political concepts that drive the modern thought structure such as the state, the party, liberal democracy, transcendentalism, colonialism, (post) apartheid discourses, Black existential phenomenology, and Marxist-Maoist militant interventions. This chapter is meant to be a prescription to give Black African Muslims a strategy for thinking and organizing a new intellectuality of politics in our late modern colonial epoch. It undermines capitalism and the liberal democratic citizenry by arguing for Black Islamic praxes as a new transcendental structure that accommodates new political thoughts and practices. The chapter argues, by using the case of militant Muslims in the anti-colonial struggles, that Islam is a truth-event-thought structure that emerges because of a lack of new perspectives on political theories. Our politics without a party comes at the back of the aborted revolutionary struggles or the so-called democratic breakthroughs, the rampant material-existential suffering, and the anti-Black-anti-Muslim logic in not only South Africa but also the contemporary world to show that the meaning of Black Islamic praxes is a militant figure of anti-colonialism and the invention of existence.

The fourth essay explores a unique contribution to Islam and blackness; in actuality it is the embodiment of *being-Black-and-being-Muslim* in the world, it is the performance of Black Islamic praxes. It invents Islamic sound signatures, it uses allusions as a language best suited for this attempt to build a narrative of sound life, signalling that our subjects are sound subjects that break with a dominant textualist understanding of Islam. This essay introduces an aural & sonic method of re-articulating and reinventing colonial knowledge from the position of an alienated history/reality through Black Islamic sonic aesthetics. The essay shows how embodied knowledge inheres in the figure of Black African Muslim musicians through their performance of the black lived experience under colonial and 'post-apartheid' dispensation. This sound subjectivity develops the social significance of sound by demonstrating that the intersection between Islam and blackness is multi-layered and simultaneously indigenous. I play with the trio of musicians, Abdullah Ibrahim, Johnny Akhir Dyani, and Zim Nqawana, to show how music and sound enable a break with colonialist knowledge about African cosmologies and embrace Islam not just in the anticolonial period but also to bring in a new approach to sound and performance. These sound scientists demonstrate how Islam is intertwined with indigenous histories and knowledge systems of truths, and inventing truths from an improvisation of being. This chapter gives a social history of jazz and Marabi through Sufi mystical practices, Japanese philosophical discourse, and sustains that black Islamic sonic aesthetics is a criticism of the prescriptive conceptualization of Islam. An Islamic sonic aesthetics or sound signature shows yet again that the event of conversion precisely because of the material domination of modern thought structure, calls forth an invention of existence or the destruction of the dominant postcolonial status quo. This is what is meant in this thesis by a different or a Black perspective of Islam.

A note on epigraphs and footnotes, this thesis uses epigraphs as launching pads for Black Islamic thoughts; they are not always necessarily related to the contents of the chapters. In themselves, epigraphs and footnotes provide the context or historically expand on concepts and ideas that inheres in the contents of this research. Epigraphs may be seen as conversations that spark thought processes but they are not determinative. Footnotes have been useful in not only expanding and providing context but as well as a platform, to continue some of my thoughts after this research. I hold in high regard both these forms of communication because they attest to the multiple streams of thought that could not be

accommodated by the form of writing a candidate is expected to subscribe. My hope is that the use of footnotes and epigraphs become informative and guiding and to be approached as a conversation between the reader and the text.

A PhD thesis for the guerrilla intellectual or a Black intellectual praxes militant is the result of years of theoretical-practical observation, teaching, and innovation that deals with change. This thesis is made possible by all those Black beings, dead and alive, who over the centuries since the encounter with white settlers, have launched Resistance against the aliens and have been opposed to their naturalization in this land. It is a result of this naturalization that the indigenous population is split or divided and the aliens continue to wield a monopoly of power, wealth, and knowledge. The division of the indigenes is a comment on how we have let the settlers continue to rule the status quo; we have become complicit through our alliance/collaboration with them, and betrayal of ourselves. These are the militant voices that are marginalized in history and society but they always find a way of re-emerging even after decades or centuries this tradition is neither linear nor prescriptive rather it is birthed from the concrete existential situation of those who maintain a familial relation to the soil, the fauna, and flora.

Chapter One: Islam in the *Bilad al-Sudan*: Tracing Black Otherness in Pre-modern Islamic Arab-Mediterranean Epistemology & Discourses

Narrated by Anas:

Allah's Apostle said, "Help your brother, whether he is an oppressor or he is an oppressed one. People asked, "O Allah's Apostle! It is all right to help him if he is oppressed, but how should we help him if he is an oppressor?" The Prophet said, "By preventing him from oppressing others." (Sahih Bukhari Volume 3, Book 43, Number 624)

O you who believe! Retaliation is prescribed for you in the matter of those slain: the freeman for the freeman, and the slave for the slave, and female for the female ... (Qur'an 2: 178).

All this is sheer speculation (Mudimbe 1989:27).

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the praxes of Muslim Africans, subjectivities of resistance against slavery and anti-blackness of Arab-Mediterranean²⁰ Islam and western colonial modernity, inaugurates an invention of existence (Marriot 2011; McKittrick 2007). The chapter has three aims which firstly, has to do with the reasons Muslims from Black Africa presented a different *tafsir* (exegesis) interpretation on slavery in Islam that goes against the dominant Arab-Mediterranean trends. It also offers us the insight that Islam is not, against Orientalist & Africanist discourses, a monolith and we cannot rely on “the virtual equation of Islam with the Middle East” (Asad 2009). Secondly, we want to show how our archaeology²¹

²⁰ Here I want to be cautious and direct the reader: by Arab and Mediterranean I mean to suggest not only identities that are constructed by orientalists and colonialists in the secular modern world but I want to suggest that we understand these identities not as the same but as geographical areas as well. I do this to acknowledge that modern colonialism expanded the idea of racism, and especially anti-black racism to the entire world through slavery and settler colonialism. I did mention to the reader in the introduction there will be no easy historical judgement in this thesis.

²¹ Here archaeology's critical force is restricted to the comparison of the discursive formations of different periods, such as the pre-European thought-imagination and centring African and Islamic modes of being (onto-epistemology). Such comparisons suggest the contingency of a given way of

of anti-black practices and discourses in Arabo-Mediterranean Islam contributed to Western fabrications and constructions of racial theories that uniquely equated Blackness with slavery or/ and settler colonial modernity. Thirdly it is to show how Islam and Blackness have been constructed by Muslim Africans in their resistance to Atlantic and Arab slavery using education and embodiment, that is the embodied education expressed through acting according to instructions derived from the Muslim praxes. What we want to acknowledge is that the questions, debates and acts of these Muslim African communities were not only concerned about the “marginal” or “different” or the “unacknowledged” Muslim identity of Africans. Rather they were also interested in “new forms of life” of being Muslim outside of the Arab Mediterranean Muslim modes of being Muslim. Therefore, we ask what modes of knowledges allowed Arab and Mediterranean Muslims to develop about slavery, Africa and Blackness? How did education and embodiment of Muslim African resistance to slavery construct or reinterpret Islam and Blackness? How did the political defeat of Muslims ensure the construction of Black and African Otherness in western slavery and colonial modernity?

This chapter will argue that the transformation of Africans and blackness into a symbol or an analogy to slavery/servitude in Islamic epistemology was manufactured through Arab-Mediterranean ethno-cultural discourses, the political-economy of the expansion of Islam and therefore it was ideological. However, it is important to acknowledge that “Islamic sources (particularly early ones) can use black to describe both the standard Black African phenotype as well as someone who has very dark skin but no African descent” (Brown 2023: 106). We contend that to understand the racism inherent in Islam in South Africa we cannot only rely only on the settler colonial paradigm, rather we need to excavate Arab-Mediterranean/North African conception of blackness and Islam. In the sense that the power of Islamic scholarship mainly through geography/cartography (including ethnography, medieval political-economic conquests *Jihads*) and the legal discourses (the Qur’an, Hadith, and Islamic law *ash shari’a*) were galvanized to justify Black African enslavement and in the process inventing the sociocultural meaning of blackness and Africa prior to western colonial modernity.

thinking by showing that Muslim people, Africans, Arabs, Berbers living in previous ages had thought very differently and, apparently, just as effectively.

The argument is sustained through a symptomatic reading of mainly the revolution brought about by the Qur'an and the Prophetic hadith as the main sources and authority of Islamic discourses and practice in Islamic Africa. From this perspective the chapter will look at some Greco-Roman geographic discourses and sources that influenced Arab imaginations about Africa and Blackness²². These historical and cartographical sources will lead us to interrogating the status of slavery and Blackness in the story of Ham in Judea-Christian sources and how they were assimilated into Islamic corpus by Arab Mediterranean *alims*. We will proceed to provide an exegesis of the Qur'an, Hadith and al-Shar'i on slavery as formulated by Arab/Mediterranean Muslims scholars. Lastly, the chapter will explore the meaning of slavery and Blackness in the imagination and societies of Muslim Africans in their interpretation of Islamic sources using education & embodiment in the resistance against the Atlantic and Saharan slave trades.

The chapter develops an argument which is not prevalent in the fields of black or African studies and Middle Eastern or Islamic studies, at least in South Africa, and therefore our contribution is based on opening a different archive of Blackness, Islamic history of ideas, and lived experience of being Muslim African. We want to show the subjectivity of the Muslim African as understood from the long genealogy of practices and discourses that have landed naturally with the current western world anti-black epistemologies and ontologies. The anti-black practices of Islam in South Africa give expression to these broken claims that connect Arab-Mediterranean and western racial theories. These broken claims to connection simultaneously foreground the embodiment of education that gives birth to the revolutionary imagination of what it means to be Muslim African or the black Islamic subject not only in South Africa.

Unlike Mudimbe (1989; 1994) and Wynter (2003; 1984) who are concerned with how the west, (including Greek and Roman paradigms of difference that carried over to the medieval and modern period) invented the category of the Human subject in parallel to non-western

²² In *The Idea of Africa* (1994) Mudimbe sets out the aim of the study as the "narrative about the margins and the exterior" or "what has been said in the Greek tradition about the so-called ... *agrioi* (savages) *barbadoi* (barbarians) and about *oiorpata* (women killers)" (71). Our interest is to follow the various discourses and naming (appearing in different Arab-Mediterranean, and what is now the "western tradition" from the greeks to the moderns) of the Africans that led to their association with slavery or subjugation as per our late colonial modern episteme.

“non-human” Others i.e., *Indians, Negroes, Orientals*. We intervene to give new interpretations to pre-modern Islamic and African sources, which precedes modern western racist theories and modes of being human.

Arabs in the Bilad al-Sudan

According to the Greek *Periplus*²³, a Greek guide book used by navigators and written sometime in the first century A.D., reported Arabs trading along the Somali coast for slaves and increased with the establishment of Arab settlements along the coast in the early eighth century.²⁴ Immediately before the Islamic revelation/revolution in seventh century A.D. western Arabia in general and Mecca in particular witnessed the presence of large numbers of African slaves, mostly *Ahbash* or *Abyssinians* (Harris 1971). However, as Chinyelu (1993: 361) has noted the close proximity of Arabia and Africa suggests that there have been longstanding interactions between the two regions and importantly as Houston points out “Arabia was originally settled by two distinct races, an earlier ‘Cushite Ethiopian’ race and later Semites” (Houston 1985: 113)²⁵. Indeed, Cheikh Anta Diop has argued and presented a case suggesting that Africans were the only inhabitants “prior to the eighteenth-century B.C.” (1974: 127) in Arabia. Hence, Houston puts the “arrival of the Semites in Arabia at an even later date, at about 1300” (1985: 23).

²³ “The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (our present Red Sea), by an unknown author, probably written at Alexandria, and dated between 130 and 95 B.C. (Huntingford 1980: 5). It is without doubt a firsthand description and “a text moreover which shows every sign of being the work of a man who had himself been to most places he mentions” (1980: 5). Its account of the eastern coastland goes from Muos Hormos (very probably the present Abu sharm al-qibli on the Red Sea, about 300 miles south of Suez) to Raphta on the coast of Azania (the Tanzania of today). As suggested by G. Matthew, Raphta probably “lies lost in the Rufiji delta” (in Huntingford 1980: 100). The *Periplus* details the goods exported from the coast and indicates their specific origin. These include cinnamon, fragrant gums in general, incense ivory, rhinoceros horn, and tortoiseshell (in Mudimbe 1994:18).

²⁴ See, Harris, J.E., (1971) “Points of Origin” in *The African Presence in Asia*. Northwestern University.

²⁵ From a Muslim African perspective, the Arab “civilization” as Harrow notes (1996), that marks the Maghreb is defined as “intermediate,” that is, intermediate between Hellenism and the Renaissance; intermediate culturally between late Roman secularism and the medieval clericalism; intermediate spatially between Africa and Europe on the one hand, and India and China on the other (xv).

The term *Habash* or *Ahbash* has a wider connotation and lumped most of the dark-skinned people of the western coast of the Red Sea (Hassan 1977:85). This taxonomy coincides with the prior tradition of the Greeks and Roman²⁶ conceptions of Africa or the marginal. Whereas Tsri (2016) notes that the various Greco-Roman writers considered and characterised as Ethiopians (also spelled 'Aethiopians'), with whom there had been contact and knowledge of peoples from the areas south of Egypt or the land of Kush²⁷. Ethiopians according to the Snowden were the yardstick by which antiquity measured coloured peoples. The skin of the Ethiopian was black, in fact, blacker, it was noted than any other peoples (1970:2). In the abridged version of Lidell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon (1909: 19), the translation offered for Ethiopian is written thus: "Αἰθίοψ, οπος, ὁ, fem. Αἰθιοπίς, ἴδος, (αἶθω, ὄψ) an Ethiop, negro, properly Burnt-face" followed by a couple of associated words denoting 'burnt,' 'burning heat,' and 'fire' and then followed by the entry "αἶθονσα (ζc. Στοά), ἡ, (αἶθω) the corridor or vestibule of a house; mostly looking East or South, to catch the sun – whence the name" (In Ramphalile 2018: 25). Furthermore, Mudimbe tells us more about what he calls ethnographic mapping of the margins written by Greco-Roman scholars, they are ethnographic because they do not only tell us about the geographic locations, they also seek to establish a symmetry between cultural difference, place and people.

Diodorus Siculus exoast of Tangier and Algeria, Numidia Africa proper plains his objective at the end of the first paragraph of Book III: to describe Ethiopians, the Libyans, and the Atlantians (III, I, 3). For their geographical location one can refer to these statements which opens Book V of Pliny's Natural History..."[The Greeks gave to Africa the name of Libya and they call Libyan the sea which lie in front of it. It is bounded by Egypt."] This indication reproduces a division which goes back to the time of Herodotus (IV, 145-67). During the first century, specifically after Cesar's victory over Pompeius's army at Thapsus in 46 B.C., Africa is the name of Carthage's territory.

²⁶ We are following Mudimbe's studies of thinking Greco-Roman as the origin of the western intellectual tradition, which is seeing Roman as the successor to Greek cultural discourses and thought (1994).

²⁷ However, Snowden (1997: 28) refutes the idea of a racial imagination that is attributable to the Greeks and Romans because he refuses to see how these societies then formed the foundation of a racial imagination that carried over to early Christianity and European medieval and modern periods.

On the east, it is bounded by the province of Cyrenaica, and to the west by the two Mauritaniae. The administrative reorganization of 27 B.C. integrates *Africa Nova* (Numidia) and *Africa Antiqua* and establishes three main regions: the *dioecesis Hipponiensis*, the *dioecesis Numidica*, and the *dioecesis Hadrumentina*. The first two are under the authority of a *legatus* and the third is governed by a *procurator* (Mommsen and Marquardt 1892, XI, II; Mommsen 1921). The Roman African coast is both a culturally strong and a politically weak part of the empire (Benabou 1976). Pliny, in a lively description of, situates it. He begins by presenting the two Mauritaniae, Mount Atlas (*fabulossimum*), the first Roman penetration into the northwest region of the continent under the principate of Claudius, the coast of Tangier, Algeria, Numidia, *Africa proper*-the region of Tunisia and Tripoli, the gulf of Cades Sydra, the province of Cyrenaica, and [“the following region which is called Libya Mareotis and borders upon Egypt”] (V, VI, 39 in Mudimbe 1994: 72).

The term *Habash* or *Ahabash* was restricted because Arab knowledge of Africa was through their knowledge of Abyssinia. As Chinyelu argues, even “with the arrival of the Semitic Arabians around 1300 B.C., the current inhabitants of that land, it is inconceivable that all African presence subsequently vanished” (1993: 363). For Mudimbe, Diodorus of Sicily's Book III provides “the history of the country and some supposedly Ethiopian customs” and it is “linked to myths and authority of Greek writers” (1994:79).

Ethiopians were, according to such sources “first of all humans,” (III, I, I) and have been called autochthonous. They are the first humans to be generated by the earth, the first to be taught how to honor the gods, “their sacrifices are the most pleasing to heaven,” and “from all time they have enjoyed a state of freedom and of peace with one another.” Founders of human culture, they sent out colonists to Egypt when “what is now Egypt was not a land but a sea” (III, iii, 2): “[Historians] say that the Egyptians are colonists sent out by the Ethiopians, Osiris having been the leader of the colony” (III, iii, 2). As signs of the Ethiopian influence on Egyptian customs, Diodorus invoked the sacred writing (hieratic), the sacerdotal orders, and belief that kings are gods (III, iii, 4-7).

What western ancient texts reveal through their ethnographic mapping is the idea of that Ethiopians “are black in color and have flat noses and woolly hair” (1994: Ibid). Chinyelu's studies and time-frames about the origins of Arabia contradicts the many western scholars

who have argued that the relationship between Islam and Abbyssinia goes back to the founding of Islam when Muslims were being persecuted in Mecca and sought refuge from the king Negus (Robinson 2004; Hunwick & Powell 2009; El Hamel 2013; Harris 1971; Letvtzion & Powell 2000). As Hassan explains

Indeed, it was to Abyssinia that the first Muslim refugees fled, where they were well received and protected by its king. The term *Habash* embraces the Abyssinians and their southern neighbours on the Horn of Africa and some Beja on the Northern frontiers. (It was probably due to the proximity of their country to Abyssinia and their resemblance to the Abyssinians that some Arab writers considered them a "race of Abyssinians" and hence their country was called "Middle Abyssinia". The Abyssinian slaves were highly valued as eunuchs and concubines. The term Nuba, like the term Sudan has both a restricted and a general sense. The former refers to the people of Christian Nubia whose inhabitants fought the Arabs gallantly in the first half of the seventh century. The latter embraces the inhabitants of the Nilotic Sudan and all the black people who were procured from beyond Nubia and sold into slavery. These slaves were not actually Nubians, though commonly known by that name. Like the Abyssinians, the Nubians won themselves an excellent reputation in the Muslim world as faithful employees and useful servants. They were employed as servants, nurses, concubines, labourers and soldiers. The Buja or Beja were the Cushitic-speaking nomads of the regions between the Nile and the Red Sea. They were very similar to the Abyssinians, and it was probably for the same reason that they were valued as concubines. It was due to their predatory campaigns on Upper Egypt that the Arabs clashed with them in the eighth century. They also came in touch with them through the newly established Arab ports on the western coast of the Red Sea. The Zanj were the Bantu-speaking peoples of East Africa, south of Abyssinia (from about 3°N to 5°S), though sometimes the same word is applied to the black Africans or negroes in general. Their habitat, "the land of Zanj", provided the Arab traders from about the middle of the eighth century with a continuous supply of slaves. Among the African slaves, they occupied the lowest positions and hence they were probably the least valued by the Arabs (Hassan 1977: 88).

As Hunwick also explains

By the seventh century blackness of skin/African origin was virtually synonymous in the Arab world with both the notion and the word “slave”; they were ‘*abid*. Even to this day the word for Africans in many dialects of Arabic remains just that- ‘*abid* – “slaves” (2009: xix).

The contradictions seem to be predicated on the time-frame (when did Africans/Ethiops occupy Arabia? Before the emergence of Islam or with the emergence of Islam) rather than on the facticity of the events. It also becomes clear that the discursive construction of blackness in the Arab imagination involves interactions that are usually not regarded in modern scholarship, in the attempt to erase black presence prior to the 7th century. What we know is that Abyssinia provided a safe haven for Muslims who were persecuted and as Edward Blyden says of Muhammad, “When in the early years of his reform, his followers were persecuted in Arabia, he advised them to seek asylum in Africa” (1967: 266). Ten years after the death of the Prophet of Islam the “Ethiopic” Arab Muslims conquered Egypt ruled at that time by the Eastern Roman Empire, the Byzantine. According to Du Bois, “the Arabs invaded African Egypt, taking it from the Eastern Roman Emperors and securing as allies the Negroid Egyptians, now called Copts, and using Sudanese black ...in their armies [including] one of Mohammed’s wives was an African women named May” (1987: 185-186). To take the interrogation of Black presence and construction further, not only in Arabia, in a study of Black Africans in Morocco, El Hamel points out that,

Moroccan Arabic sources assert that all the black people in northwest Africa were originally slaves who had been freed under different circumstances through time. However, one group of black people – namely the Haratin - might not have been of slave origins from sub-Saharan Africa, but native to southern Morocco. French anthropologist Denise Jacques-Meunie argued that the Haratin are descendants of black people who inhabited the Draa valley since time immemorial. The ancestral form of the term *Hartani* derives from the Berber word *abardan*, which is connected to skin color. It means “dark color” ... (2013: 109-110).

Chinyelu argues that whilst the presence of dark-skinned Africans is still widespread in North Africa, one would have to consider that the conquest by Semitic Arabs of the region overtime

changed the demography of the population from Black to Arab (1993: 375)²⁸. Rogers for his part points out that the whitening of North African population was the number of whites from Europe who were brought there as slaves, “each time Yakub Al-Mansur returned to Africa from his campaigns in Europe, he did so with large number of white slaves (1967: 112-113). According to Chinyelu, the Caliph Abd-er-Rahman III established a system of *clientella* made up of slaves from the Black sea region, French, Germans to be educated at his palace and they went on to form an elite corps of the Muslim society and it was their descendants who were expelled together with the Moors from Spain in 1610 who contributed to the change of complexion of North Africa (1993: 376). Furthermore, Williams shows that the “ruthless sexual traffic in Black women that gave rise to the new Breed of Afro-Asians” in the Arabia of the Semites, these new Breeds rejected the race of their mothers and joined their fathers and forefathers in the raids and conquests against Blacks, “century after century until all North Africa was taken” (1987: 51). The point is not to assign Arabs and Berbers²⁹ with the authority of being the first to enslave Black Africans nor do we have to deviate from the fact that slavery was part of antiquity tradition the world over³⁰. Slaves were not necessarily black, although black slaves always constituted a significant proportion of the slave population. They came from the frontier regions; they came from western Europe and from the steppes of southern Russia. They were prisoners of war, non-Muslims who had resisted the expansion of Islam

²⁸ He cites Chancellor Williams who said that “...the poor and hungry nomads from the vast desert areas of the Middle East poured into the most fertile and easily accessible areas of this other land of deserts in North Africa” (1987: 50).

²⁹ Harrow “...the Berber and Arab cultures are themselves multidimensional, marked by the uneven distribution of power and authority; the writer often comes to sense the deep presence of an Islamic identity only after being positioned as the outsider with respect to a dominant western culture. Islam is thus once the religion of the victorious invading Arabic armies; the faith carried by jurists and mystics; the rituals of the umma, ...and thereby the repository of long-standing indigenous practices; and finally, the “family” ways, the familiar sense of self faced with the Other (Harrow 1996: xxi).

³⁰ Yet the Arabs were neither the first to introduce slavery and the slave trade among (black) Africans, nor were they the first to enslave them. Slavery or a form of “serfdom” and the selling of slaves was a fairly common phenomenon in many parts of the African continent. Furthermore, both the Pharaohs and the Romans were already involved in procuring black African slaves. Indeed, the presence of African slaves engraved on Egyptian monuments bears witness to the antiquity of slavery (Hassan 1977: 85).

(Lovejoy 2005:15)³¹. For our purposes we are focusing on the discourses of othering Black Africans including African black Muslims.

Hassan points out how the Islamic era fuelled the trans-Saharan slave trade during its beginnings. The various conceptions of Blackness or Africa that we find in Arab sources do inform us about the schema of knowledge that was sustained by an asymmetrical power and knowledge relations. It becomes clear for us that knowledge about African descriptions comes from both Arab sources in terms of their expeditions and encounters with the inhabitants of Africa (Berbers and Zanj or Nubi or Ahbash) and the heritage that comes from the Greeks and Romans, “some of the stereotypes of blacks in the geographical/ethnographic literature merely echo material that originated in an ancient Greek writing” (Hunwick 2009: xix). Whilst Hassan is quick to point out, on the one hand, the different characteristics of Blacks in Arab imagination and classifications, the transformation of this identity ends up conflating all these notions of blackness and African societies to the justification of enslavement, on the other hand.

The cartographic/geographical construction of the world the Arabs inherited was from the Greeks, a Ptolemaic conception of the world. Ptolemy a Greek scholar who lived in Alexandria, Egypt in the second century C.E. Ptolemy took the Mediterranean societies of Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome and other areas as centres of civilization because of their temperate climate, which encouraged the development of agriculture and urban life (Robinson 2004: 74). In this framework of “climes” the Mediterranean occupied the middle position (3 and 4) out of seven. The last or seventh clime was situated in the far North amid intense cold, in the present-day North Europe Arctic circle and was essentially uninhabitable. The first clime is represented by intense torrid heat, uninhabitable and produced populations or “individuals who were distorted mentally and physically” (Hunwick: *ibid*). Inheriting this knowledge, the Arabs conformed to these notions in their knowledge systems as they conquered the Mediterranean lands (Du Bois 1987: 185-186; Mavroudi 2015).

³¹ See Isaac Mendelsohn (1949) *Slavery in the Ancient Near East: a Comparative Study of Slavery in Babylonia, Assyria, Syria, and Palestine, from the Middle of the Third Millennium to the End of the First Millennium*. Oxford University Press.

In a paper titled “Region of the Mind: Medieval Arab Views of African Geography and Ethnography and Their Legacy” (2005) John O. Hunwick (109) a scholar of Islamic slavery writes that Al-Khwarizmi³² is, in fact, the first Arab writer who had something to say about sub-Saharan Africa. He wrote at a time when ancient Greek works had begun to be translated into Arabic at the behest of the Abbasid caliphs, and his *Surat al-ard* ['Depiction of the Earth'] is essentially a work of geographical co-ordinates that seems to have been instructions for making a map. Ptolemy, provides Arab writers with a cartography that enabled the conceptualization of the African interior and its inhabitants. Especially Al-Khwarizmi who used the Ptolemaic *climata* scheme of the world as carrying knowledge of the territories for the sake of navigational and travelling purposes but for some writers “it goes beyond a mere reference function and becomes a framework for theories about skin colour and mental and moral qualities” (Ibid: 107). It is important to note that as the Ptolemaic framework was the standard, new material or data was introduced by Arab travellers and this data was made to fit Ptolemaic’s framework. Also lending credence to the fact that the veneration of earlier sources of knowledge in pre-Islamic Arabia inasmuch as it was the case in post revolution/revelation, was to play a major role in resuscitating Greek authority³³.

These theories were recorded by medieval Arab Muslim travellers and scholars, one of them Ibn Haukal the Baghdad native. Who, after his travels through Ghana and along the Niger River in the tenth century, wrote, "I have not described the country of the African blacks and the other peoples of the torrid zone: because naturally loving wisdom, ingenuity, religion, justice and regular government, how could I notice such people as these, or magnify them by inserting an account of their countries" (in Bovill 1970: 61-62). That Blackness or Africa is presented as the antithesis of civility is closely related to the cultural and religious beliefs that the abode of Islam provided for the best forms of civilization according to ancient knowledge and the presupposition of the Arabs, that Africa did not have ancient knowledge. Many of the

³² According to Hopkins and Levtzion (2011), his name indicates he came from Khwarizm 'on the Lower Oxus River south of the Aral Sea' though he lived and worked in Mesopotamia.

³³ In fact, most Arab world maps bear a fairly close resemblance to the Ptolemaic model. On Arab maps such as those of Ibn Hawqal in the tenth century or al-Idrisi in the twelfth, Africa occupies almost half of the circular space, while Europe and Asia occupy the other half (conventionally the south is at the top of maps and the north at the bottom) (Hunwick 2005: 109).

characteristics attributed to black Africans because of climatic factors were applied to black slaves in the Muslim world.

It is clear that the Arabs conformed and enhanced what Mudimbe, analyzing the Greek paradigm of African/black difference, terms Africa the geography of monstrosity that is “the space comprising unknown places and their inhabitant” (1994:79) and inserting this knowledge of the fantastical as *real* knowledge about the classification of beings and societies.

Here is how al-Kendi (a prince of Arab philosophy), undoubtedly inspired by some Greek, puts it: God has established a chain of causes in all parts of creation; the cause exercises on the creature subject to it an influence which in turn becomes cause; but this purely subjective creature cannot react on its cause or its agent. Therefore, the soul being the cause and not the effect of the sphere, the sphere cannot react to the soul. But it is the soul’s nature to follow the body’s temperament as long as it meets no obstacle, and that is what takes place in the case of the Zendj. Since their country is very hot, the heavenly bodies exert their influence and draw the humours to the upper part of the body. Hence the eyes of these peoples, their hanging lips, and their large, flattened nose, and the development of the head following the upward movement of the humours. The brain loses its balance, and the soul can no longer exert its complete action on it; the swell of perceptions and the absence of any act of intelligence are the result” (Popovic 2011: 16-17).

Al-Dimashqi, a fourteenth-century Syrian writer (d. 1327) who draws copiously on earlier writers and adds little which is original, echoes some of these prejudices:

The equatorial region is inhabited by communities of Blacks who are to be numbered among the savages and beasts. Their complexions and hair are burnt, and they are physically and morally deviant. Their brains almost boil from the sun's excessive heat ... The human being who dwells there is a crude fellow, with a very black complexion, burnt hair, unruly, with stinking sweat, and an abnormal constitution, most closely resembling in his moral qualities a savage, or animals. He cannot dwell in the 2nd zone, let alone the 3rd and 4th, just as the people of the 1st zone live not in the 6th, nor

those of the 6th in the 1st, or the equatorial region, because of the difference in the quality of the air and the heat of the sun. God knows best (Hunwick 2005:127).

The othering and conflation of blackness, skin colour, morality and cartography/geographic knowledge develops along and in parallel to the description of sub-Saharan Africa as the *Bilad al-Sudan* or *Ard al-Sudan* (literally “Land of Blacks”) and therefore, as I will demonstrate, justified the Othering, enslavement of black Africans to the extent that even African Muslims were captured as slaves. The term Bilad al-Sudan has come to refer to the land that lies south of North Africa and stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. Hassan tells us that when the ninth century Arabic prose writer, Mu’tazili advocate and theologian, and master of the Arabic language of African descent Abū ‘Uthman ‘Amr ibn Baḥr al-Kinānī al-Baṣrī, or al-Jāḥiẓ of Basra wrote in his essay *Fakhr al-Sudan ala al-Bidan* (the Boast of the Blacks against the Whites), he used the word in a restricted and general sense to denote a distinct group by that name and whose exact location or qualities were not mentioned. For Hassan the tenth century is too early to talk about a specific description of who the Sudan actually are (1980:86). Contrary to Hassan’s thesis, as we saw from Hunwick, blacks were already assumed in language to be ‘*abid*. Taking seriously Kane (2018: 41) the name Bilad al-Sudan was coined by Medieval Arabic writers “as an “instrument of authorization” over darker skinned inhabitants of the regions of Africa penetrated by Islam and that by the seventeenth century “Arabized Africans appropriated the term as a badge of greatness.” Later on in the essay I will show how geography and cartography were used to justify the cosmological othering of Black Africans using the story of Ham/Canaan.

Knowledge about Africa and Black Africans was used in parallel to the expansion of Islam and the ethno-cultural and ideological Othering of Black Africans both by Berbers who were attacked and enslaved by Arabs and Arab Muslims. Slavery in Islam was/is a condition that was said to be enabled by *as-saby* that is, “the acquisition of slaves from the vanquished people made captives in war” (El Hamel 2013:113) or jahiliyya denoting pre-Islamic Arabia but as El Hamel tells us.

The term Jahiliyya is problematic. At the time of the Prophet, it referred mainly to the state of ignorance of the guidance from God. But, according to the Qur’an XXXIII, 33, the term was extended to include all societies in the state of moral ignorance during the intermission of the prophetic teachings. Throughout Islamic history the term

became an abstract label used at random, transcending space and time and absorbing multiple meanings: barbarism, paganism, lawlessness, ignorance, heathendom, immorality, and anything or any individual/group outside or even inside Islam (2013:18).

Therefore, the term Jahiliya in classical Islamic theory of local and international relations designates the division between *Dar al-Islam* (Abode of Islam) and *Dar al-Kufr* (Abode of War, of ignorance). Locally, because in pre-Islamic Arabia relations between the tribes were governed by mutual alliance or enmity, when two parties confronted each other in war, the victorious party confiscated or disposed of the persons and goods as they saw fit. Islam came to theorise the relations in Islamic law in the same manner. According to Maliki jurisprudence, the political leader of the Muslim community (khalifa or imam) could do one of the following: kill the defeated enemies, let them go free, make them pay ransom, make them pay poll tax (*jizya*) and retain their religion, or enslave them (Kane 2016:100). Internationally, the theory was to be applied to the expansion of Islam outside the Arabian Peninsula by the Khalifa Rashidun (the rightly guided Caliphs). After the demise of the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (632 c.e.) the first Khalifa was Abu-Bakr, the second khalifa Umar who ruled for ten years, sending troops to Egypt and Iraq, then the third khalifa Uthman who ruled for ten years as well, and then the fourth khalifa Ali, his cousin and son in law of the Prophet took over the reign 656 (Hallaq 2005).

Ignoring the history of Islamic influence in Africa or Abyssinia, most historians of Islam have preferred to expurgate the expansion.

From Egypt, Islamic influence extended in three directions, through the Red Sea to the eastern coastal areas, up the Nile valley to the Sudan, and across the western desert to the Maghreb. In the eleventh century, Arab nomads drove southward from Egypt to the Sudan and westward across North Africa. These nomads contributed to the Islamization and Arabization of the Sudan and North Africa. At the same time, Muslim seamen from Egypt and Arabia established commercial centres along the Red Sea and Africa's east coast (Levtzion & Pouwels 2000:1).

The attack on North Africa first came to Egypt with the expansion of Islam, when the Arabs encountered with the Nubians, black Africans, and imposed an annual tribute to be delivered

to the Muslims. In Nubia, the annual tribute took the form of about four hundred slaves in exchange for food stuffs. The tribute, known as the *baqt* or *pactum* was a continuation of an old practice (El Hamel 2016; Hassan 1977). To fulfil this obligation the Nubians were in the habit of capturing slaves from their enemies who lived further to south or south west. It is also reported that the governor of Dahlak delivered one thousand slave girls consisting equally of Nubians and Abyssinians in 977 to the ruler of Yemen. To be sure the Khalifa Uthman b. Affan approved the first attack of *Ifriqiya* led by the Muslim commander ‘Musa b. Nafi’ who pursued the invasion of the entire *Maghreb* (land of the West) under the Roman Byzantines³⁴. According to Conant’s historical studies of “North Africa Under the Byzantium” (2023: 9)

In 646–647, another exarch of Africa, Gregory, staged a rebellion against Heraclius’s grandson and successor Constans II. This time, however, the revolt was ephemeral, cut short by the Arab invasion. After their conquest of Egypt, the region’s new Arab governors used it as a staging ground for their invasion of the Maghrib. The Islamic conquest of western North Africa unfolded in three or four successive waves. The first of these was the short invasion of 647–648, which culminated in the Battle of Sbeitla (647). This battle pitted the forces of ‘Abdallāh ibn Sa’d, the Muslim governor of Egypt, against those of Gregory, the rebel exarch of Africa. The Byzantine forces were defeated, Gregory was killed, and the victorious Arab army engaged in plundering raids across North Africa. A generation later, Arabs renewed their raiding in 665–689, mainly under the leadership of ‘Uqba ibn Nāfi’ (d. 683). Around 670, the city of Kairouan was founded to allow Arab armies to overwinter in the west. This period saw protracted low-level raiding and warfare, especially against the autochthonous Amazigh population. ‘Uqba ranged as far west as Tangier and the Atlantic, but he was killed in an ambush as he returned to the east. Resistance to Arab raiding parties in

³⁴ Historians often interpret this fact as implying that the Byzantine state was weak in Africa, but it would be a mistake to push this interpretation too far. The region’s autochthonous populations undoubtedly did offer stiff resistance to the Arab invaders, but the Byzantine Empire also seems to have maintained solid control of what is now northern Tunisia throughout most of the 7th century. The region continued to be divided into large estates, which were probably owned by the state, imperial officials, the church, and members of the local elite, and which fell to the victors after the conquest (Conant 2023: 9).

this period was organized by Amazigh leaders, most prominently Kusaila and the Kāhina (the prophetess).

Among the fruits of these campaigns and the subsequent occupation was a steady flow of booty, a large proportion of which consisted of slaves seized from the indigenous Berber population. The Berber had gotten their name from Greeks and Romans, a Mediterranean lexicon, a term describing them as barbaric because they were perceived to be outside the latter's civilization therefore as Others (Robinson 2004:38). After decades of such predation and resistance many Berber tribes finally embraced Islam "it was these Berbers, converts to Islam, who conquered Spain in 711 A.D (Chenyelu 1993: 369)³⁵.

The seed of this North African community came from the very heartland of Islam. As the early Islamic empire took root outside the Arab peninsula in Iraq and beyond in the seventh century, some Muslims questioned the legitimacy of the Umayyad Khalifa. Authority, they argued, should be entrusted to the most qualified of Muslims and not be the preserve of a single family (Savage 1992:351). More moderate in their opposition were the Ibadiyya³⁶ who, as a group, became gradually recognizable in Basra³⁷ by the end of the seventh century. Moving out of Basra they sought to spread their message and moved westwards to encounter the Berbers of Ifriqiya who were responsive to their message of man's equality before God and provided a theological shield against the military excesses of the Arab conquest. They succeeded in establishing their own rule under the Rustamids (778-909). However, E. Savage and Hassan find it ironic that the Ibadi's exploited the people from the Bilad al-Sudan and

³⁵ Kaegi adds, "Even after the catastrophic defeat of the exarch Gregory at Sbeitla and the establishment of Kairouan as a permanent base of operations for the Islamic army, Byzantine control of northern Tunisia was strong enough for the region to hold out until 698 when the forces of the *amīr* Hassān ibn al-Nu'mān definitively captured Carthage. It was the fall of the metropolis that fatally weakened the empire's ability to defend its remaining holdings in North Africa and that correspondingly provided the victorious Arab armies with an even stronger base from which to launch further expeditions. Within a little over a decade, Hassān and his successor, Mūsa ibn Nusayr, had gained recognition of their authority across the Maghrib, opening a path to the subsequent invasion of Iberia and southern Gaul in 711–717" (Kaegi 2003: 166-168).

³⁶ J. C. Wilkinson, (1982) 'The early development of the Ibadi movement in Basra', in G. H. A. Juynboll (ed.), *Studies in the First Centuries of Islamic Society*. Carbondale. 135

³⁷ Basra had a famous slave market, *Suq al-Rdqi* or *Suiq al-Nakhkhd*s (vendors of slaves), which was located in the *Suq Bab Jami'* on the western side of the city and was adjacent to the money changers, booksellers, and retailers of textile (See Hassan 1977).

fuelled the Oriental slave trade after proclaiming or accepting the message of man's equality. However, these ideas were based on the ethno-cultural perceptions and stereotypes that had come to define the relations between Arab-Berbers armed with the *sharif* (claiming genealogical links with the Prophet of Islam). The genealogical status and peoples of the Bilad al-Sudan were said to have no relations with the genealogy of the Prophet of Islam. E. Savage opines.

The origins of the slave trade from North Africa to the central Islamic regions lay in the Arab conquest. The demand for slaves still remained even after the end of the conquest and was a demand that North African merchants soon came to fill. Whatever the initial political and religious appeal of Ibadi opposition to the Arab conquest, the movement found its subsequent economic footing by meeting the ever-growing demand for labor with slaves from the Bilad al-Sudan. From the outset, this replacement was influenced strongly, if not instigated, by Ibadi merchant-shaykhs until they made the slave trade a predominantly Ibadi monopoly from the mid-eighth century onwards. The Ibadi community's wealth and security also provided the means for its emergence and expansion as a sect among the diverse Berber tribes, which was the beginning of their subsequent, far-flung network of trans-Saharan commerce (1992:353).

Demand for South-West and North African slaves lay primarily in the east, where they were sold for different purposes in the markets of the central Islamic lands. The best known historically were the female singers, *qayna*, who entertained the caliphs themselves. Black slaves were imported largely to fill domestic occupations such as servants, nurses, concubines, eunuchs and business assistants. They were also used as labourers, sailors, administrators (Lovejoy 2005: 24; Hassan 1977:91). Although the early Abbasid Caliphs enrolled some black slaves in their armies, the major expansion came when Caliphs, distrustful of their own subjects, decided to rely on foreign elements who had no attachment except to their master. This phenomenon, of using black African slaves as part of the military was not an isolated event and in fact came to play a significant role in the Arab/Berber imperial conquests in the medieval period. The military status of Blacks in the Almoravid (c. 1054 - c. 1147), Almohad (c. 1130 – c. 1269) and Marinid (c. 1244 – 1465) forms part of the

justification of enslavement and conquest in Islamic sources of Africa. Briefly, Snowden reports the idea of black Africans in the military in the Greek and Roman sources.

It was not until the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. that Greek colonists and mercenaries encountered sizeable numbers of black Africans. The Greek mercenaries of the Egyptian pharaoh Psammetichus II's Nubian campaign were apparently among the first Europeans to meet black Africans in the military combat on African soil. This Greek military experience in Egypt is reflected in the prominence given to black warriors in the 6th century Greek art...During Xerxes' invasion of Greece (480-479 B.C.), black soldiers among the Persian troops stimulated the interest and curiosity of 5th century Greeks. For mainland Greeks, the Nubian soldiers were the first black Africans they had seen in the flesh. Evidence of Greek interest in Nubians is attested by the popularity of black African themes in the 5th century Greek art and of "Ethiopian" themes in theatre (1993: 47).

The discourses are evident in Greco-Roman and Arab interactions with black Africans whether of military, enslavement, geography and environmental or climatic theories that blacks were perceived as Other, and skin colour was the major determinant. However, to continue with the discussion of the expansion of Islam into North Africa and the subsequent enslavement of the peoples of the Bilad al-Sudan. According to Lovejoy (2012: 24) from "1400 to 1600, the geographical area where slavery was most important included a strip of territory along the southern borders of the Sahara Desert, the Red Sea shores, and the East African coast." The estimated number of "export trade across the Sahara Desert, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean was sustained on a level of 5, 000 to 10, 000 slaves per year for the centuries before 1600" (Ibid: 25). Rudolf Ware points out that the end of slavery in the United States "led to massive slaving in the Nilotic Sudan and the development of slave-worked cotton plantation in Egypt" (2017: 346). Suggesting that the nineteenth-century collapse of the cotton slave industry in the U.S gave impetus and created a "huge market opportunity for Egyptian producers, and Ottoman slavers who responded by pillaging the Sudan on an unprecedented scale, importing as many as 25,000 to 30,000 slaves per year in the early 1860s" (Cuno 2009: 186).

From the time of conquest in North Africa, Arabs were aware of the gold of West Africa and attempted to invade Ghana many times but they were unsuccessful. Scholarship readily attests that the expansion of Islam in West Africa was through trade not conquest (Kane 2016;

El Hamel 2013). Kane goes on to say that Islam was introduced in the Bilad al-Sudan, Kanem to be precise, in the year 46 of the Islamic calendar when the Arab troops were penetrating neighbouring regions like Fezzan and Kavar, hence even today Kanem-Bornu in modern day Chad and Nigeria is a major center of Islamic learning (2016:44). Whilst, unpreventably, the Berber communities have been intermixing with Blacks in the Sahara since prior and in the expansion of Islam and its slave trade in the Sahara. As we pointed out the Berber tribes had wanted to control the Gold of Ghana and it took the Almoravids “al-murabitun” in the tenth to the eleventh century to organise and control over the desert; they also gained control over the trans-Saharan trade network routes. The Almoravids were led by Yusuf Ibn Tashfin as Rogers says he was “Brown color, middle height, thin, little beard, soft voice, black eyes, straight nose...woolly hair” (1952: 223)³⁸.

The Almoravid military campaign against their neighbours in the north (Morocco) and South in the Sudan (black west Africa) significantly weakened the Ghana kingdom which was not Islamic (El Hamel 2013: 121) but had a large Muslim population and one can venture to ponder whether that was one of the reasons Abd Allah b. Yasin launched an attack on Awdaghast which was paying tribute to the ruler of Ghana. Ibn Yasin was invited by the Sanhaja Berber leaders to teach the converted Muslims Maliki Islamic beliefs. Finding it difficult at first³⁹ he decided to lead a small group of his followers in a remote area in the desert to propagate his teachings and owing to the growth of his movement he led his followers to jihad in western Sahara, Morocco and black West Africa, he dubbed his movement “Dar al-Murabitin,” he died in battle after conquering the Sus region (south Morocco) (ibid).

Iberia (what the Arabs called *Al- Andalus*) had been conquered in 711 by Tariq b. Ziyad on behalf of Musa b. Nusayr (El Hamel 2013: 115)⁴⁰. Though Tarik never became the ruler of

³⁸ According to Rogers, of his “15000 men, 6,000 were Senegalese, a jet black and of unmixed descent” (1952: 213).

³⁹ As Ware points out “when dismayed by Sanhaja resistance to his puritanical reforms, he contemplated withdrawing among the Sudan, ‘among whom Islam had already appeared’” (2018: 94).

⁴⁰ According to Chenyelu “Tarik’s forces were heavily outnumbered by the Visigoths, but rather than retreat back to Africa, Tarik rallied his legions. “Men, before you are the enemy, and the sea is at your backs. By Allah, there is no escape for you save in valour and resolution. His men proclaimed their support for Tarik, saying “we will follow thee, O Tarik” (1993: 372). Dozy argues that Musa was jealous of Tarik’s conquest having planned to lead conquering army himself and reprimanded Tarik saying,

Muslim Spain other Moorish leaders would set up a Muslim empire in Europe⁴¹. The Almoravid used Islamic teaching as base for organization and militarism that succeeded in extending their community throughout the Sahara in the eleventh century to ensure Islamization of Saharan Berbers and Black African people, not only through militant activities, but also using teaching and intermarriage and trade⁴². Invited by the Abbassid ruler of Seville they defeated Christians led by Alfonso VI of Castille in 1086 to rule over Morocco, Spain and the eastern part of Algeria until 1147. Almoravid rule was challenged and ended by another Berber group in the Masmuda of the Atlas Mountains. They rallied around a spiritual scholar who preached a new doctrine based on the principles of *tawhid* (Oneness of God), ideas of Sunni legal schools as well as Sufi doctrines and in declaring himself *Mahdi* (divinely guided one), he combined messianic vision, and later militancy to mobilize Muslims against Almoravid laxity (ibid). His followers/movement were called the *al-muwahhidun*, but through a Spanish mispronunciation they were called the Almohads, they ruled over the Maghreb by 1149 and they defeated the Castilians in 1195 and lasted for a century to possess the most extensive empire by Morocco in the twelfth century (Chenyelu 1993: 367; Ware 2018). It is important that we recognize a pattern of internal and external Jihads justified by particular assignation of what jahiliyya means. As Lovejoy has argued slavery is one of the ways in which to study

“Why has thoust advanced without my permission? I ordered thee only to make a foray immediately to return to Africa” (1972: 233).

⁴¹ Rogers (1952) tells us that “Seven years after the capture of Gibraltar the Moors invaded France; and conquered and overran most of its southern portion. They went as far as Geneva. Switzerland was then a part of France. ... They remained in Southern France, however, until 1140 Aided by fellow Muslims from East they captured Sicily in 1087 and took a million pieces of gold. In 846, they invaded Italy, seized Rome, plundered the Vatican and St. Peter’s Cathedral, and carried off immense wealth in gold, jewellery, tapestry, and paintings. Later with Jews as intermediary they sold back much of this loot to the Pope (1952: 59).

⁴² According to Kane, “After the Ibadis, the post-Almoravid Sanhaja Berbers had the strongest impact on Islam in the medieval Sahara and Bilad al-Sudan. The interactions between Sanhaja Berbers and Sudani people started before Islam and continued with the expansion of the trans-Saharan trade, which brought them into closer contact. At times, Sudani / Berber interactions were peaceful, but at other times, Berber competed with their Sudani neighbors for land and tended to push them farther south into the Savannah. With the rise of the Almoravids, scholarship developed in the Sahara to an unprecedented extent. They unified large parts of the region around Maliki jurisprudence. Through educational institutions they created, the Almoravids deepened knowledge of Islam in the region and sent missionaries to teach throughout the Sahara. The theological and political unity resulting from the Almoravid expansion greatly facilitated the movement of commercial caravans and pilgrims (2016: 66).

the political and economic transformation of African history because slavery “infected all levels of society and economy” (2005: 35).

When it came to Islamic legal duties, the laxity with which the Almohads were accusing the Almoravids was part of the ideology of ethnic-sectarian conquests in Medieval Islam. By the same token jahiliyya was a convenient instrument to launch an assault on one’s opponents. All these movements and dynasties “used a large number of black slaves in the armies” and many succeeding dynasties would also rely on black soldiers to maintain their power” (El Hamel 2013: 121). Even the Marinid dynasty which succeeded the Almohad in the time of changing geopolitics in Andalusia on behalf of the Christians and the Sudan on behalf of the Muslims, used black Africans in the army. Being part of the conquering expeditions Black Africans were present in the building of Muslim societies in Andalusia (Hunwick & Powell 2000: xv). This was to be the case in the seventeenth century Morocco in the dynasty of Mûlay Ahmad ad-Dhahabî, the Sa’adian sultan of Morocco (1578–1603), where orders were issued to collect all blacks whether of slave origin or free to be conscripted into the army. To command loyalty, Mawlay Isma’il justified the orders through his political administrative powers and the shari’a⁴³. As El Hamel correctly points out, the colour of their skin and their slave origin status were the grounds for enslavement, regardless of the blacks’ integration in Moroccan society (2013:163). It should be taken seriously that the denigration of black Africans and their enslavement in Morocco is still a phenomenon that is present, and El Hamel’s study reveals that this anti-black phenomenon is justified by historical and legal discourses of Islam (Lovejoy 2005:25).

The defeat of the Muslims against the Portuguese-Castilian coalition in 1340, and the eventual Christian emancipation of Granada in 1497 was a watershed moment both for European, Muslims and Black Africans as it justified slavery and colonization of the world. It also greatly affected the sources of slavery in Europe/ Mediterranean and it increased slavery sources in sub-Saharan Africa. As Kane noted “racial prejudice against black people was so deeply

⁴³ In 1591, Mûlay Ahmad ad-Dhahabî, the Sa’adian sultan of Morocco (1578–1603), sent his army elite to conquer Songhay, not only to subordinate its peoples but most importantly to control the economic network in which salt and gold mines played key roles. Gao, the Songhay political capital city, was seized. Timbuktu was ransacked and plundered. Its intellectual and vocal leaders, including Ahmed Bâba, who was then thirty-six years old, were deported to Marrakech where they were imprisoned and kept in complete isolation for many years (Adama 2021: 3).

entrenched that free-born Muslims...were being enslaved by other Muslims, partly because of the color of their skin” (2013: 101). In a paper titled “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought” (1997), the section titled Muslim antecedents, J.H. Sweet opines.

By the ninth century, Muslims were making distinctions between black and white slaves. These invidious distinctions are best reflected in the two Arabic words for slave. The word '*abd*' (plural '*abid*'), the traditional word for slave, embodied its legal meaning, but in the popular dialect, European slaves came to be called *mamluks*. The white *mamluk* commanded a higher price than the black '*abd*' because he could bring a substantial Christian ransom or be exchanged for a Muslim captive. The differing treatment of white and black slaves reflected their relative worth. The *mamluk* was viewed as an investment to protect, whereas the '*abd*'s value was based on his labor as an expendable means of production. Wherever there was back-breaking work to be done in the Arab world, black slaves were made to do it. From ninth-century Iraqi land reclamation projects to fourteenth-century Saharan salt and copper mines, black Africans toiled under the worst conditions. White slaves were rarely assigned to such arduous tasks; they were usually household servants. Distinction, which identified blacks as subordinate Others, was not limited to slaves. Free blacks were also known as '*abid*'. For the emancipated slave, '*abd*' no longer carried its legal stigma, but the color distinction was no less pernicious. Opportunities for free blacks were limited to such lowly occupations as butchers and bath attendants. Thus, even in freedom the black African performed the tasks of a social and ethnic inferior. From North Africa to Persia, blackness equalled slavery ('*abid*') and the degradation that slavery implied (1997:145-146)⁴⁴.

Sweet is drawing our attention to the genealogy of western slavery and racism in medieval, Renaissance and early western modernity to the high point of Atlantic slave trade, and for us importantly, the colonization of Africa and other non-western societies in the nineteenth to late twentieth century. He traces this genealogy from Muslim discursive antecedents from

⁴⁴ Hassan also emphasizes this point, “Two types of slaves were in great demand. The first were of Turkish origin and were used primarily as soldiers, and known as *mamluks* (i.e., owned); the second were the Sudan or the blacks who were primarily used as servants, soldiers” (1977: 86)

the time Muslims ruled over the Iberian Peninsula from 711 in the Middle Ages to the medieval/Renaissance period when Spain and Portugal defeated the Muslims in 1492. Drawing on the distinction that Muslims constructed between the white and black slaves and the assignation of superiority to light skinned people as compared to Black skinned people of the Sudan, or Abbyssinia, Kush or Zanj, these descriptions were instrumental in Euro-America racism (1997: 150).

The colour prejudice that Semitic Arab Muslims inherited from the Greco-Romans and constructed or refined between black Africans and Arabs at the beginning of their encounter with Blacks gets transposed to the Berber relations with the peoples of the Sudani mainly through conquests, geography, education, military work, trade and enslavement. As we have seen thus far, the ideological othering of Black Africans in Arab sources far from being a true reflection of reality or a true biological and geographic certainty has been presupposed on the basis of (geo) political-economic authority, knowledge of Greco-Roman conceptions of the world that Arabs inherited, and misinterpretation of Islamic legal sources, which will be interrogated shortly. While enslavement was practiced internally and externally in the societies we are studying, the African slave predominance in Islam is enacted by a series of broken transmissions of power and knowledges. The impact of Arab slave raids and trades had a detrimental impact on the discursive construction of African and blackness. For even the decline and ultimate demise of external demand for enslaved Africans did not lead to the reduction of slavery within Africa (Lovejoy 2005: Ware 2010: 345). The distinction between Mamluks and abid becomes, for Sweet the beginning of difference or exclusionary practices that are actualized and taken to the extreme in European colonial modernity, the thought structure of knowledge and the performance of attitude and behaviours that conform to scientific racial theories; in a nutshell we can say the performance of white subjectivity. These practices were refined by sets of ethno-cultural symbols and myths that equated blackness with slavery, a fallacy at best.

Qur'an, Hadith, and Shari'a: Against the Hamitic Myth

The expansion of Islam under the Arabo-centric theocratic development instigated racial discrimination, difference, violence and essentialized the cultural values of pre-Islam Arabia, while also undermining the revolutionary Prophetic vision of the ideal *Ummah* of Muhammad. As we have noted regarding the ethnography and cartography of Africa as

postulated by the Greco-Roman civilizations and inherited by Arab scholars-geographers, the enslavement of the peoples of the Bilad al-Sudan or sub-Saharan Africa was justified using these knowledges and a construction of a cosmology of inferiority based on the Hamitic myth. That is, cartography, textual exegesis, political economy and ideology of ethno cultural exceptionality were used in tandem with moral commentary of Black Africans, as devoid of reason, civility because of the torrid heat of the lands that they occupy and inhabit. These commentaries were popular to the extent that we have to ask and investigate their origins. Under the auspices of the Hamitic myth and the geographical construction of the lands and peoples of the Sudan, non-Muslims and Muslims alike, justifications of enslavement followed a pattern of pre-Islamic Arabian cultural mores.

According to the Historian E. R. Sanders in a paper titled "The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspectives" 1969, "[T]he Hamitic hypothesis is well-known to students of Africa. It states that everything of value ever found in Africa was brought there by the Hamites, allegedly a branch of the Caucasian race (521). Historians and orientalists such as Bernard Lewis, attributed the origin of the Hamitic myth to Arab not Judaic sources, "There is, however, says Lewis, nothing in the text of the [*Talmud*] to indicate that the hereditary curse had been extended from servitude to blackness or that the hereditary curse was transferred to Canaan, who was white, to Kush who was black. Neither Kush nor racial blackness is mentioned, nor is there anything to show that blackness was seen as a punishment (1969:55, *footnote* 9). Lewis is incorrect on both fronts. The most prevalent explanation for the presumed inferiority of blacks came from the Old Testament. The story of Ham has functioned to justify the subjection and degradation of blacks for over a thousand years.⁴⁵ Interpretations of the curse of Ham can be found in the Babylonian Talmud, a collection of Jewish oral traditions that first appeared in the fifth/sixth century. Citing Robert Grave and Raphael Patai (1964), who "reported from the Babylonian Talmud, compiled in Babylonia around A.D. 500, written partly in Hebrew but mostly in Aramaic, that Noah said:

Now I cannot beget the fourth son whose children I would have ordered to serve you and your brothers! Therefore, it must be Canaan, your first born, whom they enslave.

⁴⁵ For a fine exploration of the complexities and contradictions in the evolution of the myth see Benjamin Braudel, "The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods" (1997).

And since you have disabled me from doing ugly things in blackness of night, Canaan's children shall be born ugly and black! Moreover, because you twisted your head around to see my nakedness, your grandchildren's hair shall be twisted into kinks, and their eyes red; again, because your lips jested at my misfortune, theirs shall swell; and because neglected my nakedness, they shall go naked, and their male members shall be shamefully elongated!" Men of this race are called Negroes, their forefather Canaan commanded them to love theft and fornication, to be banded together in hatred of their master and never to tell the truth (In El Hamel 2013: 61-62).

Against Lewis, reference to the Hamitic curse is found in Judaic sources predating Islam and race is central, that is blackness is at the forefront of this punishment on Ham's descendants. Arab culture assimilated the racial aspect of the Hamitic curse and applied it to their own religious texts and slavery, that is for blackness to be analogical to slavery. Etymologically, ham may designate dark colour, it means "hot" in Hebrew and Arabic (both Semitic languages). The curse is mentioned in the bible, in Genesis chapter five for the first time.

Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, blessed be Jehovah, the God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant. God enlarge Japhet And let him dwell in the tent of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.

Here we find no mention of racial differences among the ancestors of mankind according to Judaic/Christian texts-Torah/Bible. It is much later that an idea of race appears with reference to the sons of Noah, it presents a number of the negative stereotypes that were later ascribed to African slaves-deformed lips, crinkled hair, and elongated penises. In Arab Muslim cosmology, sub-Saharan Africans emerged as the son of Ham, destined to perpetual servitude. The Hamitic curse provided a justification for the increasing debasement of sub-Saharan Africans (Sweet 1997: 149). Muslim vilification of blacks was constantly being refined as blackness and slavery came to be regarded as synonymous. Morality, ethnic and geographical assumptions were clearly the foreground to these ideas (as we have seen with the construction of geography and ethnography of Black Africans) and whilst Muslims should follow the Qur'an the cultural material of Judaic and Christian traditions was assimilated into Islamic sources and thought. As El Hamel points out

Evidence of the acceptance of the Hamitic story can be found in the work of early Muslim scholars and from the fact that in Arabia the majority of slaves were black Ethiopians whose subjugation was justified because of their blackness and the negative cultural perceptions that blackness held for Arabs. Interesting, one of the early Arabic writers who addressed the issue of race was a scholar versed in Judeo-Christian traditions, Abu 'Abd Allah Wahb b. Munabbih (d. 728 Or 732) of Persian origin from Yemen. Many biblical traditions can be traced back to his writing and influence. Ibn an-Nadim (d. 990), author of well-known book *The Fihrist* (index of Arabic books), noted that Wahb b. Munabbih was a person of the Book who converted to Islam. Ibn Qutayba (d.889) of Baghdad wrote that Wahb b. Munabbih believed "that Ham b. Nuh was a white man having a beautiful face and form. But Allah (to Him belongs glory and power) changed his colour and the colour of his descendants because of his father's curse. Ham went off, followed by his children [...]. They are the Sudan." Other Muslim scholars followed suit (2013: 67)

Nehemiah Levtzion & JFP Hopkins in their influential and informative *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* (2011), an English translation of what Islamic scholars wrote about West Africa between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries. Included writings about what Muslim scholars have commented on the Bilad al-Sudani, for us, the Hamitic curse, we will only note a few of these authors to further strengthen our argument. That, Arab/Muslim writers defended knowingly and in ignorance, based on their pre-Islamic revolution/revelation Arabian ethnic-cultural background the Hamitic curse whilst justifying, degenerating and undermining Black Africans through enslavements and epistemology. Al-Ya'qubi (d. 897 in Egypt) commented on the Hamitic curse.

Nuh awoke from his sleep and learnt what had happened he cursed Kan'an b. Ham, but he did not curse Ham. Of his posterity are the Qibt, the Habasha, and the Hind. Kan'an was the first of the sons of Nuh to revert to the ways of the sons of Qabil (Cain) and indulged in distractions and singing and made flutes, drums, guitars and cymbals and obeyed satan in vain amusements. Nuh divided the earth between his sons, assigning to Sam the middle of the earth ...and to Ham the land of the west coasts (*sawahil*) [...]. After they had crossed the Nile of Egypt the descendants of Kush son of Ham, namely the Habasha and the Sudan, split in two groups. One of these groups

proceeded to the south, between the east and the west. These were the Nuba, Buja, Habasha and Zanj. The other group went to the west. These were the Zaghawa, HSBH, Qaqu, Murawiyun, Maranda, Kawkaw and Ghana (2011: 20-21)

In their study of *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam* (2009) Hunwick & Powell give us further evidence of the stereotypical characterizations of various races of women who were enslaved and were to be sold to be concubines, focusing on the (11 cent.) Arab Christian physician al-Mukhtar Ibn Butlan wrote a manual on how to buy slaves and detect their physical flaws. He reserved his lowest gradation for the Zanj women, by characterizing them as uglier, blacker, with pointed teeth and imminent danger lurking from them. The Zanj slave women/concubines “have the most sparkling teeth because of the abundance of saliva produced by their bad digestions. They endure drudgery. A Zanj who has been well fed stand hard beating without feeling pain” (Hunwick & Powell 2009: 37). It is said that their inability to speak Arabic made them a good fit for music and dancing. He said that Nubians make good slaves based on their genealogy of the Hamitic story, he proceeded to divide different slaves into groups such as the people of the Caucasus region, Slavs, Armenians, Turks, Sicilians, Indians and black Africans: the Nubians, Abyssinians, and the Zanj (Hopkins & Levzion 2011: 36). Even At-Tabari one of the most influential and prolific Muslim scholar` of his time and to whom I have turned to in order to understand pre-Arabian history and society, gave racial classifications based on the work of Wahb b. Munabih and ancient Hebrew sources about the names of their neighbours and other peoples they have encountered. At-Tabari clearly adopts an Arabo-Persian-centred culture perspective of his time.

Ham begat all those who are black and curly-haired, while Japheth begat all those who are full-faced with small eyes, and Shem begat everyone who is handsome of face and beautiful hair. Noah prayed that the hair of Ham’s descendants would not grow beyond the ears, and wherever his descendants met the children of Shem, the latter would enslave them (ibid).

Unlike Arab scholars, according to scholars who study the Hebrew myths of the Genesis claim that these oral traditions grew out of a need of the Israelites to rationalize their subjugation of Canaan, a historical fact validated by the myth of Noah's curse. Talmudic or Midrashic explanations of the myth of Ham were well known to Jewish writers in the Middle Ages, as

seen in this description by Benjamin of Tudela, a twelfth-century merchant and traveller to south of Aswan:

There are a people... who, like animals, eat of the herbs that grow on the banks of the Nile and in their fields. They go about naked and have not the intelligence of ordinary men. They cohabit with their sisters and anyone they can find... they are taken as slaves and sold in Egypt and neighbouring countries. These sons of Ham are black slaves (Sweet 1997: 146).

It is quite surprising that Arab-Mediterranean Muslims used the Torah or Jewish oral cultural traditions as the source of racial differentiation and classifications that ended up excluding black African Muslims, instead of using the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet of Islam to justify their bias classification and enslavement of black African Muslims. The epistemological transformation and construction of the black African as the prime or most deserving of slavery according to sources other than Islam or to the extent of undermining the Qur'an and the Hadith in favour of the political and culture to justify African enslavement is ironic for Muslim scholars. Furthermore, one cannot help but question the idea of lumping Islam in the genealogy of the Abrahamic religions: Judaism and Christianity as if the socio-political and cultural ideological conditions did not enable a rupture with such discourses. By the Fourteenth century racial stereotypes and negative perception of the image of black Africans were conspicuous in Arabic sources. We read this in two famous Islamic scholars who produced monographs that were authoritative sources for Muslims in travel and social history and they allow us to see their cultural assumptions of the inferiority of peoples of the Bilad al-Sudan.

Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan scholar of the medieval era whose travels are legendary and quoted in many sources, writing about the peoples of the West Africa, he reserved the most disdainful narratives: "These people have remarkable strange ways. As for their men, they feel no jealousy.... The women there have friends and companions among foreign men" (Hopkins & Levtzion 2011: 283). Although not using the Hamitic curse, one could venture to suggest that local practices of the "unbelieving Malians" made Ibn Battuta think of himself as being in a position to comment on other cultures negatively, as an authority: and so were not these women and men fit for slavery in his time? We can only answer in the affirmative. Continuing with his disdain narrative "At this I repented at having come to their country because of their

ill manners and contempt for the white men” (2011: 284). That he saw himself as white and therefore superior is undeniable, the contempt that is displayed on non-Muslim Africans further excuses the authority of his epistemology. ‘Abd ar-Rahman Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), one of the best-known Arab historians and thinkers, refuted the Hamitic curse in favour of the environmental or climatic theory. For him the story of Ham is nothing but a “silly story”, in his text *The Muqaddimah* (introduction to his universal history) he writes.

To attribute the blackness of the Negroes to Ham, reveals disregard of the true nature of heat and cold and the influence they exercise upon the climate and upon the creatures that come into being in it. The black skin common to the inhabitants of the first and second zones is the result of the composition of the air in which they live, and which comes about under the influence of the greatly increased heat in the south ... (1961: 59-60).

“All this is sheer speculation” as Mudimbe would say, whilst according to El Hamel Ibn Khaldun broke away from the cultural assumptions of his contemporaries, the climatic and environmental theories did not so much change the negative perceptions of the image of blackness as much as they perpetuate the theories according to their Greek origins and Arab inheritance and practices. For Ibn Khaldun the lack of social organization, the feebleness of the intellect and lack of civility was all a matter of the environment that blacks find themselves hence there are blacks who are better civilized because they are not situated near the equator in the Torrid Zone. One can argue that Ibn Khaldun subscribed to the same cultural and scholarly assumptions that are evident in Ibn Battuta and therefore signifying an epistemological ethnocentrism as Mudimbe noted within western epistemologies on Africa (1989: 27). I argue that Arab Muslim scholars and their societies did not need to employ the Hamitic story in order to justify enslavement and racial negative perceptions, rather in Islam the condition for enslavement is unbelief, furthermore enslavement is not the only necessary conditions in a case of as-saby, rather it is subjected to several conditions and options that I have already alluded to according to a particular Legal school.

Qur’an, Hadith on Slavery...

Slavery existed prior the Islamic revolution/revelation in Arabia and the birth of Prophet Muhammad. It was viewed as a practice that determined the social-wealth status of families

as it was deeply embedded in the social structure hence it was able to continue after the introduction of the new social order brought forth by Islam. Lovejoy argues, by the “eighth, ninth and tenth centuries, the Islamic world had become the heir to this long tradition [Greco-Roman] slavery, continuing a pattern of incorporating black slaves from Africa in to the societies north of the Sahara and along the shores of the Indian Ocean” (2005: 15). The Qur’an assumed slavery to be part and parcel of the social order and cultural norms of the society. Arab Muslims used slavery in their expansion and interpreted slavery in accordance with the new religion, however slaves were used for the same reasons as in the past “in the military, administration, and domestic service” (Lovejoy 2005: 15).

The texts do not clearly advocate the abolition of slavery, many of the Qur’anic texts speak to the various ways in which slaves can be set free: the act of freeing is left to the conscience or God-fearing owner (Hunwick 2009: 2). Furthermore, slavery was used as a way to maintain the “religious requirement that new slave pagans and the need for continued imports to maintain the slave population made Africa an important source of slaves for the Islamic world” (2009: *ibid*). The Qur’an, the primary source of Islam and Islamic law does not authoritatively advocate or formalize using slaves as concubines.

The Prophet Muhammad’s (570 – 632 cents.) revolutionary teaching in the Hejazi cities of Mecca and Yathrib – later renamed Medina occurred during a transitional period of Arabian history and created a centralized community – he proclaimed a new religion with a political order at its center⁴⁶. By the time of his death in 11/632, he had left behind a small polity and clear notions of justice, but with underdeveloped ideas of law and an even less developed judiciary. He taught that Muslims should refer to only two sources to decide all matters: the Qur’an and the Sunna (“the trodden path”, It is the sayings, the actions, and the way of life of the Prophet)⁴⁷.

⁴⁶Islamic religion and the activity of the Muslim community produced a new empire and a rich civilization which came to dominate much of Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Because Islam developed in central Arabia, its religious and social milieu provide the context for understanding Muhammad's reformist message and mission (Episoto 2005: 2).

⁴⁷ Having found slavery as a regular feature of the social order, Islam like Judaism and Christianity before it, did not abolish slavery but tried to mitigate its evils by advocating good treatment and encouraging manumission. The spirit of Islam towards traffic in human beings is echoed in a tradition ascribed to the Prophet Muhammad condemning such an activity: *Sharr al-nas man ba al-nas*; the

By the time of Muhammad, Mecca and its northern neighbour Yathrib had known a long history of settlement and were largely a part of the cultural continuum that had dominated the Near East since the time of the Sumerians. True, the two cities were not direct participants in the empire cultures that prevailed elsewhere in the Near East, but they were tied to them in more ways than one. Prior to the Arab expansion in the name of Islam, Arabian society had developed the same types of institutions and forms of culture that were established in the imperial societies to the south and north, a development that would later facilitate the Arab conquest of this region. This conquest, as one historian put it, “helped to complete the assimilation of the conquering peoples, begun in Arabia, into general Middle Eastern society.” It was these societies and cultures that provided the larger context in which Islam, as a legal phenomenon, was to grow. This context, however, was only to become relevant much later, as we shall see in due course (Hallaq 2005: 9).

After the Prophet’s ascension in 11/632 Muslim scholars assumed the task of providing legal consultations and decisions using the Qur’an and Sunna as the leading and primary sources. Schools of legal thought, therefore, formed around leading early scholars such as Abu Hanifa (d. 767), Malik ibn Anas (d. 796), Muhammad ash-Shafi’i (d. 820), and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855). As El Hamel points out, “[T]hese schools came to be known as Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi’i, and Hanbali and represented the prominent schools within the Sunni practice. These schools of law operated as professional guilds, ensuring the training of jurists, the production of legal knowledge, and the development of philosophies of law (*usul al-fiqh*). As for the Shi’a practice, the legal system of Imam Shi’a (Twelvers) represents the main Shi’i populations. Ja’far b. Muhammadas-Sadiq (702-765) is considered the founder of the Twelver Shi’a school of law (2013: 20). Together with El Hamel, I continue to argue that the interpretation of the Qur’an, the Hadith and shari’a were constructed in the perspective of a pre-Islamic ethnic-

wickedest of people are those who sell people. Indeed, Islam does not allow the enslavement of Muslims and it recognizes two categories: those born in slavery or prisoners of war - as a product of a war declared on the inhabitants of Dar al-Harb which lies outside Dar al-Islam or the land of Islam (Hassan 1977:88).

centred cultural, the political economy of conquest, social norms and not according to the Qur'an or/and the Prophetic ideal of an Islamic *ummah*.

What the Qur'an says about slavery

As El Hamel puts it thus

The Qur'anic verses on slavery require particular careful examination. The Qur'an generally uses the following terms: *fata* (pl. *fatayat*), literally meaning "boy"; *fatat* (pl. *fatayat*), literally meaning "girl"; *raqaba* (pl. *riqab*), meaning "neck"; and the expression *ma malakat ayanukum*, meaning "that which your or their right hands possess." These terms designate slaves as personal property. The Qur'an deliberately avoids calling an enslaved person by name 'abd (pl. 'abid) and for the feminine gender ama (pl. ima'), literally meaning "slave," because the words 'abd and ama in the Qur'an are reserved for all God's creatures – His servants and worshippers, obeying Him only – hence such indirect language as "what their right hand possess." It is important to note that the word 'abd (root ' . b. d) has differing meanings; the difference is clearly rendered in the plurals and the nouns of the adjective 'abd. The plural 'ibad means worshippers but the plural 'abid means slaves and ubidiyya means slavery but 'ibada means worship (2013: 21).

As one would have noted, it is only in the cultural-social interpretations and practices of slavery, the (geo)political-economic expansion of the Caliphs and dynasties, the knowledge of geography/cartography, and the somatic experience of difference based on skin color that the word 'abd has been transformed to justify blackness and enslavement, to make blackness or ethiops synonymous with slavery. According to the translation and *tafsir* (exegesis) of Muhammad Asad⁴⁸ (2003), the word *Ar-raqabah* (of which *ar-riqab* is the plural) denotes, literally, "the neck", and signifies also the whole of a human person. Metonymically, the expression *fi'r-riqab* denotes "in the cause of freeing human beings from bondage" and applies to both the ransoming of captives and the freeing of slaves. By including this kind of expenditure within the essential acts of piety, the Qur'an implies that the freeing of people

⁴⁸ I will use Muhammad Asad's translation throughout this discussion, (2003) *The Messages of the Qur'an: The full Account of the Revealed Arabic Text Accompanied by parallel Transliteration*. Book Foundation.

from bondage - and, thus, “the abolition of slavery - is one of the social objectives of Islam” (70). These are the verses that mention this act in the Qur’an:

1. True piety does not consist in turning your faces towards the east or the west - but truly pious is he who believes in God, and the Last Day; and the angels, and revelation, and the prophets; and spends his substance - however much he himself may cherish it - upon his near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and the beggars, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage (*fi ar-riqab*) (2: 177).
2. AND IT IS not conceivable that a believer should slay another believer, unless it be by mistake. And upon him who has slain a believer by mistake there is the duty of freeing a believing soul from bondage and paying an indemnity to the victim's relations, unless they forgo it by way of charity. Now if the slain, while himself a believer, belonged to a people who are at war with you, [the penance shall be confined to] the freeing of a believing soul from bondage; whereas, if he belonged to a people to whom you are bound by a covenant, [it shall consist of] an indemnity to be paid to his relations in addition to the freeing of a believing soul from bondage (*tahrir raqaba*) (4:92).
3. AND WORSHIP God [alone], and do not ascribe divinity, in any way, to aught beside Him. And do good unto your parents, and near of kin, and unto orphans, and the needy, and the neighbour from among your own people, and the neighbour who is a stranger, and the friend by your side, and the wayfarer, and those whom you rightfully possess (4: 36).

The word ‘*Abd*’ that came to be widely and commonly associated with slaves is in point of fact a practice against the teachings of the Qur’an (El Hamel 2013: 33). The word ‘*abd*’ is used by Allah to designate his creatures, servants, those who worship Him only. About the Prophet Muhammad Allah says

4. Limitless in His glory is He who transported His servant (‘*abdihi*, e.g, Muhammad) by night from the Inviolable House of Worship [at Mecca] to the Remote House of Worship [at Jerusalem] – the environs of which We had blessed – so that We might show him some of Our symbols: for, verily, He alone is all-hearing, all-seeing (17: 1).

5. Are they, then, not aware of how little of the sky and the earth lies open before them, and how much is hidden from them? – [or that,] if We so willed, we could cause the earth to swallow them, or cause fragments of the sky to fall down upon them? In all this, behold, there is a message for every servant [of God] (*'abd munib*) who is wont to turn unto Him [in repentance] (34:9).

The word *fata*, literally meaning “lad” or “boy” to designate a servant or slave boy is used three times but I will highlight only two:

6. And lo! [In the course of his wonderings,] Moses said to his servant (*fatah*): “I shall not give up until I reach the junction of the two seas, even if I [have to] spend untold years [in my quest]! (18: 60).
7. And after the two had walked some distance, [Moses] said to his servant (*fatah*): “Bring us our mid-day meal; we have indeed suffered hardship on this [day of] our journey! (18: 62).

And *fatayat* (sing. *fatat*) which means “maiden” or slave girl” is mentioned twice.

8. And as for those who are unable to marry, let them live in continence until God grants them sufficiency out of His bounty. And if any of those whom you rightfully possess (*ma malakat aymanukum*) desire [to obtain] a deed of freedom, write it out for them if you are aware of any good in them: and give them [their share] of the wealth of God which He has given you. And do not, in order to gain some of the fleeting pleasures of this worldly life, coerce your [slave] maidens (*fatayatikum*) into whoredom if they happen to be desirous of marriage;⁴⁹ and if anyone should coerce them, then, verily, after they have been compelled [to submit in their helplessness], God will be much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace! (24: 33).
9. And as for those of you who, owing to circumstances, are not in a position to marry free believing women, [let them marry] believing maidens (*fatayakum*) from among those whom you rightfully possess (*ma malakat aymanukum*) (4: 25).

The word *'abd* appears in its female rendering to denote slave, the feminine gender of *'abd* is *ama* (pl. *ima'*) meaning female servant or “slave girl”.

10. AND [you ought to] marry the single from among you as well as such of your male and female slaves as are fit [for marriage]. If they [whom you intend to marry] are poor, [let this not deter you;] God will grant them sufficiency out of His bounty - for God is infinite [in His mercy], all-knowing (24: 32).

11. God propounds [to you] the parable of [two men -] a man enslaved, unable to do anything of his own accord, and a [free] man upon whom We have bestowed goodly sustenance [as a gift] from Ourselves, so that he can spend thereof [at will, both] secretly and openly. Can these [two] be deemed equal? All praise is due to God [alone]: but most of them do not understand it 16: 75)⁴⁹.

Another term designating the slave is *asri* (pl. *asra*)

12. IT DOES NOT behove a prophet to keep captives unless he has battled strenuously on earth. You may desire the fleeting gains of this world - but God desires [for you the good of] the life to come and God is almighty, wise. (8:68) Had it not been for a decree from God that had already gone forth, there would indeed have befallen you a tremendous chastisement on account of all [the captives] that you took (8: 67).

As Muhammad Asad clearly points out “the institution of slavery is envisaged in the Qur’an as a mere historic phenomenon that must in time be abolished” (2003: 608). The verses that we have been extracting from the Qur’an, and there are many others, El Hamel quotes about “thirty-one verses [that] provided the basis for legal formulations regarding the practice of slavery and the taking of slaves for concubinage in the Islamic world” (2013:36). Consequently, we can discern the verses on emancipation as well, in his *Ilhya*, the chapter “*Huquq al-mamluk*” Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, the Persian medieval theologian, philosopher and mystic (d. 111) says the rights possessed by the slave are that he should share in the owner’s food and clothing and should not be assigned work above his capacity.” He continues, “When the slave owner is angry with him [slave], he should reflect on his own shortcomings, or the sins of disobedience he has committed, his infringement of God’s rights and his failure to obey

⁴⁹ According to Muhammad Asad, “The obvious answer is that they cannot. The implication is equally clear: if even these two kinds of man cannot be deemed equal, how could any created being, with its intrinsic, utter dependence on other created beings, or any force of nature conceivable or imaginable by man, be thought of as possessing powers comparable with those of God, who is almighty, limitless, unconceivable - the self-sufficient fount of all that exists?” (2003: 558).

Him fully, despite the fact that God's power over him is greater than his power over his slave (quoted in Hunwick 2009: 9).

Hadith on Slavery

The Hadith (pl. *ahadith*) is a collection of reports of what the Prophet Muhammad practiced, said, or answered when asked a question about various issues relating or not to the ummah. In his lifetime, the Hadith consisted of oral reports relating to the sayings, actions and ways of life of the people of the Prophet. The Hadith are reported through a chain of transmission that scholars developed amidst inaccurate reports and they developed a strict *isnad*, the chain of transmission. Whilst the Prophet did not recommend that his words be committed to writing, he only allowed Qur'anic verses to be written down. It is only in the late second century, after the Prophet's death, that the Hadith was recognized as the second fundamental source of Islam after the Qur'an⁵⁰. The Hadith as an embodiment of Islamic social ideals and therefore the model of every Muslim scholar preserved the knowledge of the Prophet and his Sunna.

There are two collections that are widely referred to and most respected *ahadith* called *as-sahihayn* (the authentic collections or collections of sound correct reports): *as-sahih* of al-Bukhari (d. 870) and *as-Sahih* of Muslim (d. 875). There are other collections with varying degrees of authenticity that are used in the Islamic world, such as *Sunan* Ibn Majah (d. 887), *Sunan* Abu Dawud (d. 889), *Sunan* at-Tirmidhi (d. 892), and *Sunan* an-Nasa'i (d. 915). The *Muwatta* of Malik b. Anas (d. 795) the founder of the Maliki school of law as we have demonstrated in the expansion of Islam in North and West Africa, and *Musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855), the founder of the Hanbali school of law, are still recognized as significant sources in the general corpus of the Prophet's reports. Hunwick (2009) collected a number of Hadith from *as-sahih* al-Bukhari as "Basic texts on slavery" where the Prophet insisted on the emancipation of human beings, I have crosschecked them against Bukhari's volumes using the *Alim* (scholar/intellectual) on "the book of emancipation" (*kitab al- 'itq*) sources and I use El Hamel who writes on this issue as well:

⁵⁰ According to Kane, "Devotional poetry praising the Prophet Muhammad (and other Sufi saints) is one of the common genres found in the intellectual production of the Bilad al-Sudan (2016: 85).

1. Narrated By Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "Whoever frees a Muslim slave, Allah will save all the parts of his body from the (Hell) Fire as he has freed the body-parts of the slave." Said bin Marjana said that he narrated that Hadith to 'Ali bin Al-Husain, and he freed his slave for whom 'Abdullah bin Ja'far had offered him ten thousand Dirhams or one-thousand Dinars⁵¹.
2. Narrated By Abu Dhār: I asked the Prophet, "What is the best deed?" He replied, "To believe in Allah and to fight for His Cause." I then asked, "What is the best kind of manumission (of slaves)?" He replied, "The manumission of the most expensive slave and the most beloved by his master." I said, "If I cannot afford to do that?" He said, "Help the weak or do good for a person who cannot work for himself." I said, "If I cannot do that?" He said, "Refrain from harming others for this will be regarded as a charitable deed for your own good."⁵²
3. Narrated By Asma' bint Abu Bakr: The Prophet ordered us to free slaves at the time of solar eclipses⁵³

Other reports build conversations and discussions around the topic/issues relating to recommendations for owners of slaves to respect, marry, and manumit their slaves.

4. Narrated By Ibn 'Umar: The Prophet said, "Whoever manumits a slave owned by two masters, should manumit him completely (not partially) if he is rich after having its price evaluated."⁵⁴
5. Narrated By Abu Huraira: On my way to the Prophet, I was reciting: 'What a long tedious tiresome night! Nevertheless, it has saved us from the land of Kufr (disbelief).' I had a slave who ran away from me on the way. When I went to the Prophet and gave the pledge of allegiance for embracing Islam, the slave showed up while I was still with

⁵¹Hadith 2518; *The Alim*, Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 49.

⁵² Hadith 2519; *The Alim*, Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 49.

⁵³ Hadith 2520; *The Alim*, Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 49.

⁵⁴ Hadith 2522; *The Alim*, Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 49.

the Prophet who remarked, "O Abu Huraira! Here is your slave!" I said, "I manumit him for Allah's Sake," and so I freed him.⁵⁵

6. Narrated By Abu Musa: Allah's Apostle said, "He who has a slave-girl and educates and treats her nicely and then manumits and marries her, will get a double reward."⁵⁶

It is interesting that slaves are not addressed as a single class and the continual insistence is on treating them as brothers or as part of families, al-Bukhari reports that the Prophet said: Narrated by Al-Ma'rur bin Suwaid: I saw Abu Dhar Al-Ghifari wearing a cloak, and his slave, too, was wearing a cloak. We asked him about that (i.e., how both were wearing similar cloaks). He replied, "Once I abused a man and he complained of me to the Prophet. The Prophet asked me, 'Did you abuse him by slighting his mother?' He added, 'Your slaves are your brethren upon whom Allah has given you authority. So, if one has one's brethren under one's control, one should feed them with the like of what one eats and clothe them with the like of what one wears. You should not overburden them with what they cannot bear, and if you do so, help them (in their hard job).'"⁵⁷

At this point one can observe through analysis how the Hadith and the Qur'an were redacted and bowdlerized by the preceding Muslims in order to justify conquest, concubinage and enslavement. Nowhere does the Koran and the Hadith make mention of justifying slavery of the peoples of the Bilad al-Sudani, and thus one can venture to conclude that medieval Islamic jihads manufactured the opportunity to go outside the bounds of Islam through using the Shari'a thereby contradicting the teachings of the Koran and the Hadith. However, we should not proceed without taking seriously that nowhere in the Prophetic sayings is there any mention of abolishing of slavery (is this blind spot revealing the nature of the existing political-economic situation of the new/young Muslim community?). Here I think Muhammad Asad's critical reflection is informative, "At the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, slavery was an

⁵⁵ Hadith 2532, *The Alim*, Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 49.

⁵⁶ Hadith 2545, *The Alim*, Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 49.

⁵⁷ Hadith 2546; Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 49.

established institution throughout the world, and its sudden abolition would have been economically impossible” (2003: 70-71)⁵⁸. According to Syed Ameer Ali

Slavery by purchase was unknown during the reigns of the first four Caliphs, the *Khulafa-rashadin*, “the legitimate Caliphs” as they are called by the Sunnis. There is, at least, no authentic record any slave having been acquired by purchase during their tenure of the office. But with the accession of the usurping House of the Ommiah, a change came over the spirit of Islam. Moawiyah was the first Mussulman sovereign who introduced into Mohammedan world the practice of acquiring slaves by purchase. He was also the first to adopt the Byzantine custom of guarding his women by eunuchs (1880: 38-39).

If imperial or monarchic Islam based on the pre-existing Arab-Umayyad cultural norms and the influence of other civilizations (Greeks, Byzantium, Mesopotamia etc.) was the model, then it certainly went against the ethic of the Koran. Hence through the ulama, the leaders or sovereigns could sponsor the reconciliation between political knowledge and the interpretations of the Qur’an and the Hadith to justify their rule, a dynastic theocracy. If the Qur’an contains no word condoning the enslavement of human beings, we should venture to investigate why and we find that the Qur’an “does not speak in the future tense (prior enslavement) regarding slavery” that is “what to do when someone acquires a slave” but it provides recommendations “for the past acquisition of slavery” (El Hamel 2013: 42). The Qur’an, whilst not condoning abolishing slavery did not seek to institutionalize it rather slaves or captives were to be considered as part and parcel of “just war” or jihad in the service of

⁵⁸ In order to obviate this difficulty, and at the same time to bring about an eventual abolition of all slavery, the Qur'an ordains in 8:67 that henceforth only captives taken in a just war (jihad) may be kept as slaves. But even with regard to persons enslaved in this or - before the revelation of 8:67 - in any other way, the Qur'an stresses the great merit inherent in the freeing of slaves and stipulates it as a means of atonement for various transgressions (see, e.g., 4:92, 5:89, 58:3). In addition, the Prophet emphatically stated on many occasions that, in the sight of God, the unconditional freeing of a human being from bondage is among the most praiseworthy acts which a Muslim could perform (Asad 2003:70-71).

self-defence: “And fight in God’s cause against those who wage war against you, but do not commit aggression – for verily, Allah does not love aggressors.”⁵⁹

All verses are against enslavement or oppressive wars for material/worldly gains and aims primarily to eliminate slavery or oppression. It is important to emphasize that the Prophet Muhammad’s ethics was the foundation in the struggle for social justice, but the Islamic revolution that he brought forth in jahiliyya Arabia seemed to have undergone abandonment after his death and the passing of the four rightly guided Caliphas, hence the message of the Koran was “eroded by elitist regimes of political power aspirations” (Hallaq 2005: 28). By the “ninth century and with the compilation of the first manuals of Islamic law, concubinage and slavery were clearly defined as institutions under Islamic law,” failing to adopt the procedures that allowed the prohibition of alcohol. This Islamic law “was the codification of male-dominated and male-sanctioned interpretations of the Qur’an and the Hadith created a patriarchal idol model legal discourse (El Hamel 2013: 46).

If this is the case then we can caution Wael Hallaq that whilst the “rationality of this [Shari’a] epistemology was framed within an ethical conception of the world, conceived as woven by a moral fibre” (2018: 81); the meaningful analysis of power/knowledge, that is specific to Islamic cultures reveals that the Shari’a epistemology is not devoid of ethnic-cultural and political knowledge construction⁶⁰. And if El Hamel believes that “a consistent abolitionist movement is clearly a modernist idea... especially in the nineteenth century during contact

⁵⁹ Allah continues, “Hence, fight against them until there is no more oppression and all worship is devoted to God alone; but if they desist, then all hostility shall cease, save against those who [wilfully] do wrong” (Qurán2: 190).

⁶⁰ On a premodern Islamic conception of the analysis of power/knowledge outside the Saidian and Foucaudian analysis (they are mainly meant for western societies), see Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam: Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008). It is also important to note for the reader that in his previous work *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (2005) in the “Introduction” Hallaq states that “the success of the four schools [of Law], as well as their evolution to the final stage of doctrinal schools, was partly connected with a particular relationship that existed between law and the legal profession, on the one hand, and the political, ruling elite, on the other” (6). Whereas I think he takes it for granted in the text I have just cited above: *Restating Orientalism: A Critique of Modern Knowledge* (2018), it is because he is making the argument or insisting that Islamic law was not dictated by the biopolitical conception of power that is truly a mark of modern western knowledge or law not the premodern Islam as it is demonstrated by Omid Safi’s text.

with Western ideas and campaigns” (2013: 44), I will demonstrate the falsity of the claim by providing how African Muslims prior to the nineteenth and twentieth century were engaged in a revolutionary resistance struggle to abolish the enslavement of Muslims. The problem with modern Muslim discourses on emancipation is that it focuses much on the “self-congratulatory narrative of emancipatory Europe” but for us “Islamic ideals were used to struggle against slavery” (2016: 346).

Islamic Legal Discourse: Maliki School of Law

The Shari’a is derived from the teachings of the Qur’an and the Prophetic tradition, the law was largely conceived by the jurisconsultants in the form of juridical opinions through which jurisconsults answered queries emanating from judges or private individuals (Kane 2016: 82). The Koran and the Hadith provide a structure or framework for the commentary and the establishment of the law and its clarification. That the law as it is found in the dominant schools of law that I mentioned earlier, is derived partly from the specific socio-cultural environments in which the founder of the school inhabited need not surprise us. The textual commentaries and corpus that are found in various legal schools were constructed centuries after the Prophet’s death and they have nonetheless been a point of stability in governing Muslim communities. Early in its history, “Sunni Islam consciously decided not to mediate interpretive disputes through a centralized ecclesiastical body,” that is, the “only binding interpretive authority would be the *Ijma* (Unanimous Consensus) of the community of recognized interpreters (Jackson 2009:53).

This was Malik ibn Anas’s methodology of composing and answering queries from private individuals to judges, by examining and cataloguing legal items according to the *sunna* and the *ijma*, based on the scholar’s and practices of the people of Medina. Malik was able to produce one of the first legal manuals in the Islamic world called the *Al - Muwatta* (*The Smoothed Path*). The Abbasid ruler Abu Ja’far al-Mansur (754 – 775) consulted with Malik to ask if he could write a legal text in order to commit the whole empire to one legal system “Malik did not approve because he thought Iraqi people, who had their own version of jurisprudence based on reason by analogy (*al- qiyas*), would not accept his *fiqh* which was based on consensus of eminent scholars of Medina” (El Hamel 2013: 52). This reveals that Islam had spread and penetrated many cultural norms and societies that it would be

impossible to impose from the outside foreign norms to other cultures. The spread of Islam however did spread the phenomenon of Arabness.

To get an idea of the diversity and complexity of the arteries that flowed into the new, hybrid Arabness, consider the Arab conquest of Samarqand in Transoxiana, which began in the first/seventh century. This city lay at the intersection of the trade routes that led from India to Afghanistan, via Balkh and Timidh, and from Persia, via Marw, northward and eastward into the Turkish steppes and along the Silk Road to eastern Turkistan and China. This general area was known to the Hellenic for some time (Alexander the Great occupied Samarqand more than once) and boasted Buddhist, Nestorian Christian, Zoroastrian, Chinese, and Manichean inhabitants (Jackson 2009:33).

Jackson is correct to point what most scholars of Islam tend to forget, that the expansion of Islam gradually assumed an “Arab” identity and made it synonymous with Islam, and being Muslim. It is fair to say this cultural assimilation whether voluntary or not was incorporated into the epistemology of Islamic law. It is not a contradiction because Malik’s *Muwatta* as Kane demonstrated was used by African Muslim intellectual tradition. Correctly, Malik pointed out that people should follow “interpretations of their own scholars” (El Hamel: 2013:54), but the imperial spread of Islam ensured that his school of law was followed because “[The] success of *Muwatta* is due to the fact that it always takes an average view on disputed matters” (Schacht in Ibid: 47)⁶¹. However as El Hamel argues it is “Malik b. Anas who helped identify slavery as we know it” he continues,

Indeed, by the time of Malik b. Anas, a little more than a century after the death of the Prophet, the institution for slavery seemed well entrenched. We can see from the early texts on Islamic law such as *al-Muwatta* that the language and terms designating slaves changed manifestly from those in the Qur’an. ‘*Abd* (pl. ‘*abid*) and *ama* (pl. *ima*)’ – words that the Qur’an avoided using to designate the servile conditions of humans, as these terms are reserved in the Qur’an to mean all of God’s creatures and His

⁶¹ Even though Kane has argued that the Almoravid spread of Islam and Islamic education in the Sahara and the Sudani encouraged mainly Islamic scholarship and trade, at least I have tried to be critical by pointing out the political desires to conquer and eventually doing so in the reign of Al-Mansour, through also making use of aggression.

servants – became the most common words for slaves in Islamic law. The Qur'an did not address the forms of slavery or the status of slaves; however legal scholars developed a selective vocabulary of slavery derived from various Hadith, excluding the notion of the contract of freedom (*al- mukataba*, which is found in the Qur'an (Ibid: 47-48).

Malik rejected the right to the *wala* of a freed slave, that is the slave entered in a client-patron relationship after being free, encouraging that they should join the fictive kinship of the master or former owner. The issue of emancipation of slaves also arises and Malik rejects any condition made by the master, "If he owns the slave completely, it is proper for him to completely, it is more proper to free him completely and not mingle any slavery with it."⁶² Regarding the female slave (*mudabbara*), the master has the right of sexual intercourse with her but he cannot sell or give her away, and the children cannot be sold or given away. On the issue of the status of the mother who bears children for her master (*umm al-walad*) Malik pronounced that "if a female slave give birth to the child by her master, he must not sell her, give her away, or bequeath her. He enjoys her when and when he dies, she is free."⁶³ As El Hamel argues "the legal edict on behalf of *umm-walad* offered the principal vehicle for upward mobility in the system of slavery in Islam." The introduction of *umm-walad* as a legal term ensured the status of the mother to be subordinate, especially if they are slaves, however we should also note that even many "Moroccan sultans' mothers were black concubines. He continues, "in order to preserve the social order, mainstream jurist Malik b. Anas advised against marriage with slaves if a man could afford to marry a free woman."⁶⁴ Thus the genealogy of scholarship together with the imperial interests of slavery edified the already entrenched cultural practices that were to be infused with the epistemological foundation of the legal edifice, diverting the revolutionary Prophetic teachings and the teachings of the Qur'an.⁶⁵

⁶² Hadith 2522; *The Alim*, Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 3, Book 49.

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ For instance, Wael Hallaq demonstrated that the legislations that the Prophet undertook were revolutionary in terms of how they trumped and challenged fundamental pre-Arabian laws especially when it came to the rights of women (2005:23-24). See also Leila Ahmed's (1993) *Women and Gender in Islam*. Yale University Press.

The Book in Chains and Revolutionary interpretations in the *Bilad al-Sudan*

The (geo) politics and the decline of the Mediterranean slave trade shifted the source of slaves from Europe to sub-Saharan Africa in the Atlantic, whilst still continuing in the trans-Saharan slave route. The Atlantic slave trade was the largest migrations of humans in history, it carried about 12.8 million Africans away from the continent to Europe and American vessels from 1440s to the 1880s through the Middle Passage. This was the case in Senegambia where Portuguese slavers arrived in the 1440s.⁶⁶ To use the term race in a fifteenth-century Iberian context may be problematic. The social context must be considered when examining the functions of racial identifications. Though the concept of race was not unknown in the fifteenth century, the words *razza* in Italian, *raza* in Castilian, *rafa* in Portuguese, and *race* in French simply referred to a group of plants, animals, or humans that shared traits through a shared genealogy (Gordon 2007: 84; Sweet 1997: 144)⁶⁷. As Ware points out, it is the

⁶⁶ According to Lovejoy, “The scale of the Portuguese slave trade along the Mauritanian, Senegambian and Upper Guinea coast was about 80,00 for the second half of the fifteenth century. Another reason was that trade was well established in the Senegambia, and particularly geographical features of the region made it easy for seaborne merchants from Portugal to tap existing commerce” (2012: 40).

⁶⁷ For his part Gordon also traces the roots of modern anti-black racism and the development of a Black Consciousness, “As a semiological notion, Black Consciousness is thus fluid. It becomes a term that can be understood as an identity of most people. It also brings under critical reflection the question of the formation of whiteness—there was not always, for instance, a Europe. That geopolitical notion emerged from the process that succeeded the expulsion of the Moors from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 in the name of Christendom. The consequent unfolding of a political anthropology of hierarchical racial formation brought along with it the transformation of what was, in reality, the western peninsula of Asia into “Europe” as literally the home of white people, of Europeans. (I will leave aside the current political dynamics in the formation of a European Union in the face of the multiraciality of nearly all of these countries.) The Hegelian challenge returns here through the fragility of these relations by virtue of their dependence on dialectics of struggle for recognition. There was no reason for Christendom to have considered itself white nor for Moorish Islam to have considered itself black, except for the unique consequences that led to the formation of Europe as the place of whites and Africa as the place of blacks. The Hegelian model affirms their mutual role in the formation of their modern identity. This point could be illustrated through the etymology of the word “race.” The term has immediate roots in the French by way of the Italian word *razza*, which in turn suggests origins in Spain or Portugal through the term *raza*, which, according to Sebastian de Covarrubias in 1611, referred to “the caste of purebred horses, which are marked by a brand so that they can be recognized . . . Raza in lineages is meant negatively, as in having some raza of Moor or Jew.” Yet, if we consider that Spain and Portugal were under (Afro-Arabic) rule for 800 years, a continued etymology suggests the Arabic word *ra’s*, which is related to the Hebrew and Amharic words *rosh* and *ras*—head, beginning, or origin. One could push this history/ genealogy

largescale enslavement of Africans that inaugurates colonial modernity (2016: 365) in the fifteenth century not until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did "scientists" begin using "race" to legitimize claims of human biological superiority and inferiority.⁶⁸ For his part Mudimbe believes that "[C]oncepts such as "racial inferiority" and "slavish disposition" were not new. Aristotle used them. They were simply rethought in a new context" (1994:99). The treatment of black Africans from the Middle Ages to the early modern period appears to be racism without race. Orlando Patterson's studies of slavery has demonstrated that "the absence of an articulated doctrine of racial superiority does not necessarily imply behavioural tolerance in the relations between peoples of somatically different groups"(Patterson 1982: 420). The classification of human beings based on pseudoscientific claims during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries gave greater legitimacy to racism, but the science of race merely reinforced notions of biology that had been evolving for centuries and thus the genocidal colonial modernity (settler).

further and go to the Coptic or to the ancient Egyptian/Kamitan considerations in the word Ra, as in the god Amon-Ra, which refers to the sun and, at times, the King of all gods or located in the origin stories of the gods. In short, the theme of origins, beginnings, and the rising sun, even when connected to animals such as horses and dogs, suggests the following narrative. The Moors introduced ra's into the Iberian Peninsula (Andalusia) to articulate origins and to differentiate even themselves from the Christian Germanic peoples (Visigoths) they conquered and colonized. By 1492, by then hybrid (Germanic-Afro-Latin-Arabic) peoples who pushed out the Moors (mostly Afro-Arabic, but by this point probably Afro-Arabic-Latin-Germanic) in the name of Christendom, used the term that by then became raz and eventually razza to designate the foreign darker peoples within a theologically oriented naturalistic episteme who, in a holy war, were pushed further southward back to the continent of Africa and into (as they imagined it) the Atlantic Ocean and the New World. Although both uses of the word and its mutation refer to foreigners, the indexical point is what has shifted in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern World. Where ra's may have once meant "I" and "we" who are from elsewhere, it became "they" who are not from here and who exemplified a deviation from a theological order in which being Christian located one in a normative and natural relationship with God. The discursive shift into what is often referred to as the "other" took shape. We see here the compatibility with the Hegelian model, since the term emerged, through struggle, to the effect of a mutual formation. But, as we will see, its slope was a slippery one" (Gordon 2007: 84-85).

⁶⁸ *Sarracenus* sometimes referred to all slaves including blacks; 7th-century Catholic scholar and archbishop of Seville, Isidore, wrote that *maurus* meant black; James E. Brunson and Runoko Rashidi, "The Moors in Antiquity," in *Golden Age of the Moor*, ed. Ivan Van Sertima (New York, 1992), 27.

Sweet is adamant that Iberian conceptions of race, that is somatic corporeal discrimination against Black Africans, or the moors was already prevalent during the Muslim domination, to an extent that we can say Islamic discourses and practices of slavery towards, especially Black Africans were crucial for the Spanish and Portuguese' construction of race.

Political shifts in Europe and Asia had dictated the early Iberian slave trade in large part. When the Christian conquests came to an end in the 1260s, so too did much of the supply of Muslim slaves captured as prisoners of war along the frontier zones. Because Portugal and Castile were not integral parts of the Mediterranean trade until the fifteenth century, white slaves were not available in the same numbers as in the northern kingdom of Aragon. Even though a number of these Muslim captives were of sub-Saharan descent, it was not until the middle of the fifteenth century that a significant black slave population emerged. The trade in Caucasian slaves from the east was curtailed when the only remaining bastion of Christian control over the Black Sea fell to the Ottoman Turks at Constantinople in 1453 and Ivan the Great rose to power in Russia in 1462. The Turks restricted the sale of light-skinned Muslims to western traders on religious grounds, and the emergence of a strong leader in Russia ultimately translated into state protection from slave raids. Where blackness always had implied slavery in Castile, slavery now implied blackness (Ibid 155-156).⁶⁹

With the decline in the flow of slaves from the Black Sea in the 1450s, the African trade became the principal supplier for Spain and Portugal. The Venetian merchant Cadamosto reported that 800 - 1, 000 slaves passed through Portuguese ports each year⁷⁰. Rising demand in Portugal, Spain, and later in the Atlantic islands meant increasing profits for merchants and traders, and settlements expanded along the African coast to support the trade. After several

⁶⁹ Also, as Orlando Patterson reminds us, "Late medieval and early Renaissance Venice and Genoa were extremely dependent on slave labor, and the Italian colonies of the Mediterranean during the late Middle Ages not only were large-scale plantation slave systems but, as Charles Verlinden has shown, were the models upon which the advanced plantation systems of the Iberian Atlantic colonies were based. These, in turn, were the testing grounds for the capitalistic slave systems of the modern Americas" (1982: vii). Hence whilst we may take seriously Sweet's allusion to the Islamic influence of Euro-American slavery, it is important to bear in mind how slavery was integral to the rising of states in the Mediterranean and in Euro-American domains as well.

⁷⁰ See Josiah Blackmore, *Moorings: Portuguese Expansion and the Writing of Africa*. University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

military defeats at the hands of coastal African nations, the Portuguese abandoned armed action in favour of peaceful trade as a means of obtaining slave labor.⁷¹ It is important to note that with the fall of Granada both Muslims and Africans were considered infidels that a Holy War justified their enslavement and humiliation (Lovejoy 2005: 69; Blackmore 2006: 4).

Here it becomes important to remember that the European encounter or arrival in the New World inaugurated a new mode of epistemology and ontology especially for the Portuguese in Africa. These sociointellectual and sociospatial ruptures enabled the “economic expansions, and new religious and secular politics ruptured existing planetary organization and forced a reconsideration of how the self, other, and space are imagined (McKittrick 2006: 124). This is because their arrival in what they called the New World or Africa “the inhabitants of Europe had to grapple with the psychic-unimaginable conception of the human, and in fact their arrival “ruptured their understanding of physiology, religion, politics, and geography” (2006: 124). Blackmore concurs, that is, for “Portugal on the eve of expansion, Africa was familiar and strange, a known place across the modest parcel of sea between the Algarve and Ceuta, and, farther south, an unknown expanse of land that glimmered black under the equatorial sun” (2006: 2). Africa for Portugal was known through the figure of the moors, the Muslims who ruled Europe as we have been detailing. Hence “for Portugal, as for Spain, Africa was part of the demographics and history of home in the figure of the Moor, simultaneously another and a closer, more intimate presence” (2006: *ibid*).

In his *Geography*, for example, Strabo, in speaking of Libya (i.e., Africa), mentions the Moors or Maurusians (from Maurusia, the Greek word for Mauritania) as “a Libyan tribe living on the side of the straight opposite Iberia” (157). Pliny the Elder includes Tangier in his *Historia naturalis* (Natural History) as part of Mauritania, and in it live “the Moors (from whom it takes its name of Mauretania), by many writers called the Maurusii” (231). Pomponius Mela, like Strabo, juxtaposes Mauritania and Spain as facing one another across the sea and identifies the mountains Jabal Musa and Gibraltar as the Pillars of Hercules (41– 42) (Blackmore 2006: 2).

⁷¹ See, Saunders (2010) *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441–1555*. Cambridge Iberian and Latin American Studies.

In their attitudes toward blacks, the Portuguese followed where Arab-Mediterranean Muslim slavers had led according to Sweet. We also see how geography and cartography were essential for the imagination of conquest and expansion. However, the reader should be puzzled why is it that Africa becomes an unimaginable place, when since the 8th century Muslim Africans had been occupying Europe. I am not trying to suggest that Blackmore, McKittrick, Wynter and others are misleading us; however, this *faux pas* has to do with the Portuguese and Spanish records that clearly omit the knowledge of the long *durée* European conquest by Muslim African. For our argument it was the Iberian-cum European demand for slaves that turned these ideas into a coherent ideology in early colonial modernity.⁷²

According to Lovejoy “In a letter dated 1391-1392, the black king of Bornu (present-day northern Nigeria), Uthman ibn Idris wrote to the sultan of Egypt protesting the pillage of his land and the enslavement of his people (2005: 30). Even though his people were free Muslims, the Arabs took his “people as merchandise” and sold them to slave dealers. In his appeal, the king noted that his nation was founded by an Arab, thereby proving his people's sharif Muslim authenticity. The problem of Arab Muslims illegally enslaving black Muslims persisted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and even into the nineteenth century in West Africa, provoking commentary from Islamic jurists and historians alike. Unfortunately, sources became unreliable towards the end of the Middle Ages in Europe and slave-raiding in western Bilad al-Sudani increased and became more common, Islamic countries followed by the Portuguese turned South to sub-Saharan Africa and East Africa intensely.

⁷² For El Hamel, the *Siete Partidas* (The Seven Divisions) the Spanish manifestation of the thirteenth-century renaissance of Roman law that swept across Europe and ultimately instituted by Alfonso X in order to replace the prevailing feudal foundations throughout the ensuing Hispanic empire from Asia to Africa to the new world (2013: 56). Here the *Siete Partidas*, is comparable to the epistemology of legal discourses of Islamic law we have just analysed, it understood slaves to be those taken in war as captives and who are the enemies of the faith, and they could only emancipate themselves by informing on the activities of other Muslims and crucially by “legal baptism” (ibid :57). The *siete partidas* recognized human rights of slaves but not civil rights and the slave entered into a client-patron relationship with the master as we have seen in Muslim slavery discourses but more importantly it demonstrates the genealogy of common ideas of enslavement in the Mediterranean that were taken to their extreme in the American South, where the black African was taken as a fungible, chattel, property or commodity object devoid of any Human characteristics in comparison with the white master.

The enslavement of Muslims was at its peak in the seventeen and eighteenth century in West Africa Senegambia region, and the debates about who is part of the Muslim community was crucial in this instance to determining the freedom of persons. These questions, debates and acts, we claim, were not only concerned about the marginal or different or the unacknowledged, rather they were concerned with the new forms of being Muslim outside of the Arab Mediterranean Muslim modes of being Muslim. According to the practice of the clerical communities, those who embody Islamic knowledge, especially the Almaamy (*Al-Imam*) Abdul-Qadir Kan, the Qur'an teacher and a specialist in Maliki law, the Muslim was anyone who recited, ""*La ilaha illa Allah*," even if it was pronounced "*ra ira'a ira Arra*" This saying was supposed to refer to the accent of non-Muslim peoples from Senegambia" (Ware 2018:115).

The enslavement of Muslims highlighted and pronounced the intensity of the Atlantic slave trade inasmuch as it did in the Saharan slave trade, and consequently verdicts were sought about the legitimacy of enslaving Black Africans, especially Muslims. If as we have argued that Arab and European raids and discourses ensured that Black Africans whether Muslim or non-Muslim were to be enslaved according to a self-formative epistemological language (against the Qur'an and Hadith) of religion, skin colour, geography, legal rulings, socio-economic and political discourses of ethnocentric and racial markers of superiority, African Muslims were to resist these despicable practices by asserting the freedom of the Muslims based on the *Shahada* (the article of faith) whether with a clear Arabic accent or not. Particularly important is to highlight how African Muslims centred the ethical problem associated with slavery. This enabled the emergence of a new meaning of being Black and Muslim and it ruptured the Arab-Mediterranean Muslim's anti-black interpretation.

Inasmuch as slavery was a wide phenomenon in the world and in Africa, legal debates occurred about the rights and duties, the plausibility of enslavement. In "some parts of Islamic Africa – and this is a story forgotten in the self-congratulatory narratives of emancipatory Europe – Islamic ideals were used to struggle against slavery rather than to defend it" (Ware 2017: 347). Legal verdicts (*fatwas*) were elaborated by Maliki scholars and questions were asked by pious Muslims about the rules governing enslavement. We find three sets of questions being asked by Muslim individuals named Sa'id Ibrahim al-Jirari and Yusuf b.

Ibrahim b. Umar Al-Isi consulting/writing to the much-celebrated scholar of the medieval Bilad al-Sudan, Ahmad Baba⁷³.

Scholars like Ahmad Baba and others tended to craft capacious definitions of Muslim identity to protect free Muslims from victimizing one another with political violence and enslavement. Here Baba departs from the commercial and Arab ethno-cultural interpretations that guided the construction of Islamic law on slavery. The first set of questions were about the timeline of Islamization of the peoples of the Sudani, the regions that provided slaves for North Africa. The second set of questions were directed at the burden of proving the slave status. The third dealt with the epistemological justification of enslaving black African peoples (Kane 2016: 101). From the questions we can tell that these two individuals were familiar with Islamic law and the various fatwas that were given regarding the issue of slavery, but they seemed to want to take advantage of the fact that Ahmad Baba, a leading scholar of Maliki jurisprudence, was situated in Morocco at that time.⁷⁴ Al-Jirari asked concerning the first set of questions.

What do you have to say...concerning slaves brought from the lands whose people have been established to be Muslim, such as the lands of Borno, 'Afnu Kano, Gao, Katsina, and the like whose adherence to Islam is widely acknowledged amongst us. Is it permissible to have possession of them and to buy and sell them as we wish or not? ... For it is known that, according to the Shari'a, the reason why it is allowed to own others [others] is [their] unbelief.... Were those lands which we mentioned, and other similar lands of the Muslims of

⁷³ Following the Moroccan occupation of Timbuktu in 1591, he was exiled to Marrakesh in 1594, jailed for two years, then obliged to remain in the city for many years. He was widely known both for his teaching and for the *fatwas* (legal opinions) he issued. He was offered administrative positions but declined them all in favor of teaching. In 1608, he was permitted to return to his hometown, Timbuktu, where he continued to write and teach until his death in 1627, but he held no public office there. His special field of competence was jurisprudence. He was also recognized for his abilities in *hadith* and wrote several works on Arabic grammar. He is probably best known for his biographical compendium of Mâlikî (founded by Malik ibn Anas died A.D. 795 is orthodox school of Muslim jurisprudence predominating in Sudanic Africa and the Maghreb) scholars, *Nayl al-Ibtihâj bi tadrîs ad-dibâdj*, a valuable supplement for the Western Islamic world to Ibn Farhûn's *ad-Dibâj al-Mudhahhab* (Adama 2001: 1). See Hunwick, J. and Harak, F. (2000) *The Ladder of Ascent: Towards Grasping the Law Concerning Transported Blacks*. Rabat: Institut des Études Africaines, Université Mohamed V.

⁷⁴ Al-Mansur, the Moroccan ruler, sent an expeditionary force of four thousand soldiers to invade Songhay in 1591, despite heroic resistance, Songhay was conquered, and prominent scholars and libraries were exiled in chains to Marrakesh.

the Sudan. Conquered [their] people enslaved in a state of unbelief, while their conversion occurred subsequently-hence there is no harm in [owning them] or not? One of the qadis of the Sudan reported that the imam who conquered them whilst they were unbelievers chose to spare them as slaves, since he had a choice ...and that they still remain in a state of slavery, and whenever the sultan needs any of them, he brings in as many as he wants (*Ibid*).

Whilst Ahmed Baba concurred that unbelief was the source of slavery, concerning the periodization of conversion of the peoples of the Sudani his reply to Al-Jirari was thus.

You asked: were those aforementioned lands belonging to the Muslims of the Sudan conquered and their people enslaved in a state of unbelief, while their conversion to Islam occurred subsequently, so there is no harm in owning them or not? The reply is that they converted to Islam without anyone conquering them, like the people of Kano, Katsina, Bornu and Songhay. We never heard anyone conquered them before their conversion to Islam (Hunwick and Harrak 2000: 135)

The second set of questions included the burden of proof regarding slavery because Maliki jurists had divided opinions.

In the *Nawazil* of Abu Asbagh Ibn Sahl, we read that the generally accepted view is that whoever claims to be free and mentions that he is from a land in which free persons are frequently sold, and if the purchaser confirms that he bought him from such a land, then... the purchaser is charged with proving the person's slave status ... Sidi Mahmud the qadi would accept their word without requiring them to prove that they are from those lands (*Ibid*: 135-6).

On the third set of questions regarding the permissibility of enslaving anyone who is of black skin, Al-Jirari brought up Noah's curse, the Hamitic myth, Baba replied.

As regards the hadith which you cited from Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti's *Azhar al- 'urush fi akhbar al-Hubush*, coming from the hadith of al-Hakim, on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud, that Noah was bathing and saw his son looking at him and told him: "Are you watching me bathe? May God change your colour!" And he became black and he is the ancestor of the Sudan-I came across it in his book *Raf' Sha'n al Hubshan* (The Raising of the Status of the Ethiopians), and the actual words are: "As for the blackness

of their skin, Ibn al-Jawzi said: “As for what is related about Noah’s nakedness being exposed and Ham not covering it and being cursed, this is something not proven and is not correct” (Hunwick and Powell: 2009: 39-43).

As Kane notes “the intellectual exchange is enlightening about the discourses on and practices of slavery in the seventeenth century North and West Africa” (2016: 104). Ahmad Baba’s revolutionary exegesis and reading of the hadith clearly shows us how African Muslim scholars understood the Qur’an and Hadith in their context and most significantly, according to the Prophetic Sunna. In his text *The Walking Qur’an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (2014) Rudolf Ware centres African Muslim tradition of Islamic education as embodiment, giving expression to the classical framework of Islamic education that has mutated in other parts of the Muslim world and transformed by colonialism. This seems to not be the case in Africa. This epistemology of embodiment was importantly crucial in Africa where slavery sparked a response that made the clerical tradition to combine politics and Islam as an act of resistance. If the clerical tradition in the Sudani departed from the earlier conception of Islam and politics as coagulate and therefore influenced scholarly or epistemological and legal interpretations of the Koran, then West African Muslim intellectuals or the walking *Qur’ans* or *tafsir* (exegete) developed a revolutionary, radical, theological, and legal approach to combine scholarship and politics.

“-Unbelief is a result of ignorance (*jahl*) rather than wickedness.

-It is God’s will that some remain in *jahiliyya* longer than others.

-There is no obligation in religion, and true conversion occurs in God’s time.

-Jihad is not an acceptable means for converting non-Muslims.

-Jihad is legitimate only in self-defense to protect Muslims’ survival.

-Muslims may support non-Muslims rule as long as they are allowed to practice Islam

-Muslims must present an example to be emulated so non-Muslims will come to Islam.

-Scholarship must be centre on Muslims life to keep Islam from being corrupted” (Ware 2014:89).

This interpretation of Islam according to a Maliki doctrine developed by the luminary scholar from Jakhanke, Al Hajj Sasim Suwari Siise in the fifteenth-sixteenth century was definitely against the medieval jihads instigated by Arab-Berber (here in the Sudan named the *baydan* (white Berbers) that we have been studying so far. However, the enslavement of the bearers of the Koran particularly when it reached its ultimate proportions in the eighteenth century ignited a revolution and resistance from the teachers of the Koran, Ware narrates.

Arriving safely at the Senegal River, Ceerno Sulaymaan Baal found a man held in bondage in a riverboat. The man was reciting the Qur'an aloud, Sulaymaan Baal rushed toward him and asked how he had come to this fate. He replied that he had been traveling to town of Bakke when the princes of the region captured him and sold him to the owners of the boat in which he was being held.... "Ceerno Sulaymaan told the occupants of the boat: *release him, he is a Muslim and thus free.*' They responded, what you say means little to us. We bought him with our own money.' Ceerno had with him a student who was called Aali Mayram and who was gifted at wrestling and very physically strong. He fought the occupants of the boat by himself, defeated them and brought out of the boat the man who was reading the Qur'an. The Shykh released him and ordered him to leave" (my emphasis Ibid: 111).

The selling of Qur'an teachers, reciters, and their enslavement and assassinations in their neighbouring states agitated Sulaiman Baal to organize a multi-ethnic movement. By 1775, the British governor of Senegal, Charles O'Hara, incited the Saharan slavers in massive warfare against clerics, devastating the region and enslaving thousands of Fuuta's Muslim within a span of few months. Sulayman Baal, the father of this revolution died in one of the battles and the revolution seemed doomed until Abdul Qadir Kan intervened (2016: 350). Seeing the Book in chains thus ignited a revolution in Senegambia that began in 1770-1890, because the aim of the Qur'an schooling was to not only transmit discursive knowledge as per Cartesian subjectivity but to remould the body into a living vehicle of Islamic knowledge. Islamic epistemology is about creating or moulding the Walking Qur'an and those who fully internalized the Word of God were sanctified beings as was the case with the teachers and scholars (ibid). The enslavement of Muslims, the walking Qur'an, galvanized resistance that was to target skin colour as our second epigraph notes and Muslim enslavement by other Muslims as the first epigraph by the Prophet of Islam declares. The fact that Muslims were

being enslaved because of skin colour and their Islam, warranted a revolution that, as Ware argues, goes against the idea that abolition of slavery in Africa was begun by Western philanthropists. We argue that the narrative of Muslim teachers/revolutionary clerics in West Africa enlightens us about black African Muslim resistance and abolition prior to the arrival of Europeans. The Almaami's stance on slavery was to abolish it according to Islamic fundamentals and improvisation of knowledge.

Interpreting and actualizing Islam-the goal of classical learning that the Almaami embodied and taught-meant pondering radical action. It meant interpreting Islamic law and values in an utterly changed world, improvising an Islamic solution. Sources suggest that for Almaami 'Abdul-Qadir, this solution involved not only ending the Atlantic slave trade from his lands but freeing the slaves within them-abolishing the institution of slavery. Contemporary sources claim that he effected abolition by offering freedom to any slave who would recite a verse of the Qur'an. Whatever earlier Maliki scholars may have thought, Kan apparently did not think that even a single verse of the Book should be kept in chains. Muslim legal authorities had struggled with this idea for centuries. Many rejected the idea that enslaved converts should be immediately freed, but a fundamental incompatibility existed between the dignity associated with Islam and the indignities of slavery.

The same argument is to be extended, if the revolutionary interpretation of the Shari'a was formed by African Muslim scholars it then tells us about the contribution of Africa in the (trans)formation of Islam since these interpretations were non-existent as I have shown in our interrogation of Islamic interpretations and legal discourses. Furthermore, the narrative about the revolutionary clerical scholars in the Sudan points to us the laxity of the arguments that Islam and slavery have been, since its inception, inseparable, "such exegetical exercises had[s] the paradox outcome of seeming to mock the Qur'an" (Ibid: 113). Shykh Muusa Kamara, a scholar from Fuuta Toro who comes from the tradition of the Almammy Abdul Qadir Kan "was so convinced of the inherently abolitionist nature of the Qur'anic Call and the Prophetic example that he saw the colonial abolition of slavery not only as the fulfilment of God's will, but also of the Prophet's wishes" (Ware 2016: 350).

As we have shown through the Sunna of the Prophet and the ink of the Qur'an that there is no condoning or condemnation of slavery, rather Allah speaks of slavery in the past tense-toward manumission and eventual abolishment. However, the construction of the legal

edifice, because of the socio-political influences encouraged enslavement and the eventual enslavement of Muslims and black Africans, which indirectly or diffusely came to inform early modern constructions of race through ontological and evolutionary pseudo-fantastical sciences of the eighteenth and nineteenth century that coincided with the colonial and genocidal period particularly in Africa⁷⁵.

The discourses that enabled the representation of Black otherness are nowhere justified by the authoritative sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the Hadith. What this analysis displays are the fusion between the ideological with the epistemological cultural ethnocentrism to justify Black African enslavement to an extent that even African Muslims were to be held to the same bondage. The use of cartography, political-economic expansion, pre-existing Greco-Roman sources to justify the Islamic legal discourses have been seen to be seminal in the construction and representation of Africans. Islam, as the history of Islam demonstrates, is neither monolithic nor the same, what the revolutionary interpretations/hermeneutics of African Muslim clerics/scholars and subjects confirm to us is the need to take seriously the Prophetic revolution/revelation as the basis from which to meaningfully conceptualize and practice the historical and human phenomenon - Islam. Even if it means going against Islamic disciplines, geographic/cartographic, cosmological, and somatic traditions of differentiation, and ethno-cultural authoritativeness that have been constructed by the ulama and their political rulers especially in the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.

It will not be over stating the fact that Islamic expansion and defeat by the Castillians and Portuguese exacerbated the slave trade, particularly in the Atlantic, and gave way to the racial discrimination that was to be adopted by Europeans and constructed into a coherent ideology of the modernity in the New World and the colonization and genocide of "non-western" lands

⁷⁵ According to Hallaq (2018) the roots of modern colonialism and genocide are to be excavated in the forms of power and knowledge that transformed Christianity to secularism, in actuality reinvented and expanded it into secularism that is a "sovereign deficit." The two necessary conditions for this phenomena are "first is the rise of the modern state, which updated and refined to a state of art of rule that existed in obvious and crude forms of monarchical absolutism but especially under the Catholic Church; the second is a doctrine and practice of domination over nature (in its widest meaning), represented by the distinction between fact and value and expounded philosophically in the respective divorce between Is and Ought" (84-86). So accordingly, we should look deeper into the roots of modern colonialism and genocide that helped raise the status of race /racism particularly against Black Africans and the Orient.

and peoples. As I have argued, the black Muslim is a free individual by virtue of the pronouncement of the Islamic *Shahada* (article of faith), and the epistemological ethnocentrism of the dominant Islamic tradition does not help us to understand how Islamic epistemology of embodiment aid us to resist against any ontological-epistemological dehumanization, slavery and colonization. Rather what the epistemology of embodiment clearly demonstrates, and this is particularly important for the black Islamic subject in South Africa, is the invention of new forms of existence of being Muslim. Making the imaginary and material realities of the black Islamic subject to resist modern racism that is prevalent not only in South African Islam but also in a settler colony and in late modernity.

The absence of discourses about race/racism and symbolic blackness in particular that are found in Islamic praxis or dialectic between theory/discourse and practice are here found wanting and problematized because they are part of the epistemological construction of mainly Arab-Mediterranean Islamic law and its ultimate practice by Islamic societies. Modern Muslims scholars and practitioners have been silent or apologetic about Arab Islamic role in the subjugation/enslavement and Otherness of Black African Muslims in particularly. They either feign ignorance or go back to exegetical exercises in order to absolve themselves and to ignore a serious interrogation of Islamic history. On the other hand, scholars from Black and African studies want to hold to easy comparisons between Islam and Christianity as an invading force, taking seriously the *a priori* idea of Africa or Blackness as pure or authentic. That these strategies are insufficient should be clear from our above critical investigations as clearly exhibited by the revolutionary struggles to overthrow slavery in the Senegambia.

What the reader should also take seriously is the dialectical nature of Islamic disciplines, consisting of practice and reading along with the clerical revolutionary *tafsir* or exegesis point towards a different archive and non-linear genealogy found in Arab Mediterranean Islamic imaginations and sources. Muslim Africans contest and simultaneously invent modes of being Black and Muslim as new forms of life. Islam in the *Bilad al-Sudan* should trace Black Otherness in pre-modern Islamic Arab-Mediterranean epistemology and discourses in order to reveal the meanings of *being* Muslim African or of the Black Muslim subject as a radical innovation that breaks away from the status quo of meaning making. This genealogy gives us an entry point into the process of how blackness was constructed by Euro-America or settler colonial ideologies of race and non-being. It most importantly points us to the perpetuation

of racism in South African Islam, which to our claim has two origins, and they are Arab Islamic deep sources and a settler colonial situation in South Africa. For the black student and scholars, the middle passage might have inaugurated modernity; however, it is much more difficult to assume such premises from the Black African Muslim perspective. Instead, for the Black Muslim the Atlantic and Saharan slave trade and settler colonialism inaugurates a revolutionary praxis that agitates for the re-establishment of the pre-slavery demographics, and the return to relatively stable human networks based on anti-violation interchanges and mutual respect.

Interlude: Missionary Discourse & Performance - Narratives of conversion in the colony

Hence, the notion of God does not seem to make sense any longer out of the particular history of an environment and the human culture, which produces it and then colonizes it (Mudimbe 1991: 21).

Properly speaking reading a grim life seems an effort of fear and trembling, the tragic fear of knowing, of naming the present South Africa. It is the fear of tracing the becoming of blackness. This tracing requires a reading of South Africa in its immediacy, its immediate relation to a multitude of blacks, the living or the dead (Letsoalo 2016: 4).

Introduction

That colonialism and particularly important for our own undertaking, settler colonialism performatively transforms nature, man and orders of knowledge within the culture of the colonized, is because it is inherently genocidal. Here genocide does not only have to account for physical violence and annihilation, but we also have to stretch the concept to accommodate for the myriad ways in which the subject population were dominated and conscripted. We emphasize genocide of the biological, cultural and discursive because of the concept of the colonality, which refers to 'long-standing patterns of power that emerged because of colonialism, but that define culture, labour, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production...' (Maldonado-Torres; 2007: 243). These patterns continue to endure

long after formal colonial rule ended; it is these patterns that calls forth the Black Muslim subject to radically intervene in breaking the patterns of colonial domination. The Australian scholar Patrick Wolfe has, for example, influentially argued that settler colonialism should be thought of as a structure rather than an event, a structure that either erases the native subject physically (through genocide, for example) or erases the Native through cultural assimilation (2006). In the latter case, the emphasis is on the erasure, through assimilation, of the native as an embodiment of historical consciousness. Analysed as a structure, colonialism needs to be accounted for by staging multiple events/encounters between the colonizer and the colonized.

This chapter will interrogate the discursive and cultural genocide of the black-colonized and how the transformation of the order of knowledge and reality were construed to instil and perpetuate colonial modern culture. Consistent with our narrative, we argue that colonialism of the settler and non-settler type is discursively genocidal. It becomes important for the Black Muslim subject to explicate the foundation of African discourses of culture and/or Otherness particularly as they relate to the order of knowledge introduced to the colonized by the violence of colonialism in the form of missionary performances and modern education. Missionary performances, and modern education are not only significant because of their role in displacement and replacement of orders of knowledge of the Other or the Orient, they are important because they constructed the black subject into an objectified antimodern subject. Settler colonialism transfigured the black-colonized socio-symbolic structure, by this we are referring to the “customs, institutions, laws, mores, norms, practices, rituals, rules, traditions, and so on of cultures and societies (with these things being entwined in various ways with language)” (Johnston 2023).

It is the reason why we argue that the black-colonized suffered a death at the kernel of subjectivity and it is why the interpretation of the socio-symbolic structure of colonialism is able to conscript (Scott 2004) the colonized into the structures of the reality of modernity. This conscription is conceptualized, as a form of death at the kernel of subjectivity or the material ground, will be accounted for by the discursive formations instantiated by missionary performances, colonial education together with the reaction to conquest by the colonized. As Jan Mohamed criticized the postcolonial theorist Bhabha for fetishizing “what he calls “colonial” discourse (that is, the discourse of the dominators and the dominated) and map its

contradictions as the problematics of an "ambivalence," an "indeterminacy," that is somehow intrinsic to the authority of that discourse".

To impute in this way, at this late date, and through the back door, an innocent or naive "intention" to colonialist discourse is itself a naive act at best (1985: 60).

To bracket off the political in the making of culture and history, is nothing but a humanistic ideal in the studies of colonial discourse as we read them from postcolonialist thinkers of emancipation. It is this "typical facet of humanistic closure [that] requires the critic systematically to avoid an analysis of domination, manipulation, exploitation, and disfranchisement that are inevitably involved in the construction of any cultural artefact or relationship" (Ibid). Indeed, Fanon was not over reaching when he argued that colonialism is a "world turned upside down" where the "pathological came to occupy the space of the normal" (1963). The African as any other non-western cultures transfigured by settler colonialism were forced to enact and perform their new ontological reality, their subjugated subjectivity. This is because culture as the transitory, elastic, (non)homogeneous practices – the knowledges, identity, representation, ideas, communications, customs, arts, laws, capabilities, habits of the individuals and social behaviour of a particular people or society of a given peoples and persons was *radically revolutionised by secularism which compartmentalized the human and nonhuman life through its performance of thought structures of sovereignty*. That culture has been radically redefined since the incursion of colonialists from an anthropologically projected closed kinship system on the stages of evolution to fulfil an *a priori* teleology, is made explicit in the anticolonial/imperial culture of resistance, which means a self-authored cultural practice. The relevance of our archaeology of African realities and discourses on the colonised ground is to understand some of the most persistent ways in which colonial modernity of the settler type continues to be dominant in the culture of the post-colony or post-apartheid South Africa and indeed in the Black intellectual tradition.

This chapter will argue that cultural and discursive genocide launched by sovereign thought structure of the colonial library on African culture, codes and laws should be a point of imminent critique by anti-colonial theorists. Black Islamic anticolonial discourses should pave the way for reversing the gains of colonialism and postcolonialism and therefore unmask the

structure of modern epistemology as it functions to sustain late-modern colonial culture⁷⁶. As Mudimbe (1988) argued against what we could call the epistemological component of the damage done by colonialism. He demonstrated that the construction of knowledge about Africa forms part of colonial subjugation of Africa. Here the political does not only imply political “forces” or “activities” but rather and more powerfully, it is an episteme put into practice for material ends and benefit to the dominators. The construction of the black South African cultural and intellectual tradition particularly through the culture of missionary discourses and education betrays the workings of colonial knowledge in the continued dominance of the status quo. It is this order of knowledge that is the foundation of assimilation and difference, literacy, culture of letters, politics, ideologies, and the theologies of adaptation and incarnation that betrays the workings of the colonial library. These vistas of thought will serve to open further debates about how the black intellectual tradition in Africa could only rely on modern western theories of knowledge and subjectivity to announce an alternative culture outside the liberal western culture.

The African Muslim is situated in a new situation to rupture and unmask the sovereign thought structure, which is embodied in nationalist historical frameworks of the post-colonial or post-apartheid culture in South Africa. Indeed, *Black Muslim techne undertakes this critique in order to demonstrate to the practitioner of Islam how Christian and secular Enlightenment cultures influenced the reaction to the western order of knowledge and why it is important to challenge its normativity in the postcolony*. For why would the Islamic tradition in Africa be omitted in the construction of the black radical/intellectual tradition and culture of resistance in South Africa particularly? It is this exclusionary narrative that accounts for the need for the exhumation of the participation of the black Islamic praxes as a revolutionary tradition and

⁷⁶ Mbembe (2002) has commented “Africa offers nothing comparable, for example, to a German philosophy that from Luther to Heidegger has been based not only on religious mysticism but also, more fundamentally, on the will to transgress the boundary between the human and the divine. Nor is there anything comparable to Jewish Messianism, which, combining desire and dream, confronted almost without mediation the problem of the absolute and its promises, pursuing the latter to its most extreme consequences in tragedy and despair, while at the same time treating the uniqueness of Jewish suffering as sacred at the risk of making it taboo. It is true that, following the examples of these two metanarratives, contemporary African modes of writing the self are inseparably connected with the problematics of self-constitution and the modern philosophy of the subject. However, there the similarities end” (Mbembe 2002: 240).

an emancipatory component of South Africa's history. Our suggestion is that by studying symptomatically the genocide of native culture and the resistance of the colonized-black subject, the Black African Muslim should be able to account for her/his own emergence. Put another way, the limits of black-colonized subjects under the Judea-Christian transcendentalism of settler colonialism is where we can locate the emergence of the African Islamic subjects in South Africa. Indeed, we question the formation of this intellectual tradition because as Mudimbe argues that even as black African intellectuals resist the colonial library, many African scholars end up using 'categories and conceptual systems that depend on a Western epistemological order' (1988: xv). Consequently, Mudimbe tells us, "Even in the most explicitly "Afrocentric" descriptions, models of analysis explicitly or implicitly, knowingly or unknowingly, refer to the same order" (1998: x). Following Foucault in *The Order of Things* (1970), Mudimbe (1991:114) defines semiology as "the knowledge and methods which allow one to observe, describe, and relate social cultural signs in a given culture", and hermeneutics as "the knowledge and technical norms which permit one to read, relate, and interpret relations and meanings in a given culture. Mudimbe's archaeology of Africanist discourses is pertinent to elucidating the dominance of the sovereign thought structure and the reaction or interpretation by African Enlightenment intellectuals.

This chapter will demonstrate that we cannot continue to take for granted the development of the modern black intellectual, the society, and culture because of Christian missionary performances and western secular culture and the transformation of cultural or life symbols and realities of the colonized-black subject. Instead, *we have to locate the new in the limit of secular resistance*. We insert our narrative into the South African cultural experience.

African Discursive formations: Cultural Genocide - the entire modern missionary enterprise is "a child of the Enlightenment"-Epistemological ethnocentrism

That the history of the church and missionary activities were the most successful and sustained attacks on non-western cultures is not an understatement, however what becomes important is the cultural conversion that missionary discourses and performances enacted. To understand the implication of the violence of missionary speech what Mudimbe calls "the power of speech" that is the dominance of European cultural models, signs and symbols

forced upon the African landscape and peoples that marked both their transformation is significant in the archaeology of the black radical and intellectual traditions in South Africa. It importantly points out the exclusion of indigenous as well as non-Christian traditions, as Mosala opines, “[T]hus the attempt to implant Christianity among the indigenous Black people from the 17th century onwards, was more than an attempt to win religious converts; it was an effort to transform, by dismantling, African societies. Both the missionaries and the indigenous people knew this. It was for this reason that the conflict took the form of a military-political struggle. That struggle is a protracted one. It has never ceased” (1984: 93).

Indeed, it has not ceased, because discourses on African culture in the colonial library, missionary and anthropological discourses continues to provide the sources of the colonizing experience. We launch a cosmological, epistemological and performative struggle precisely because it is these interpretations of colonial sciences that left a discursive and cultural mark, trace and an imprint on African discourses and realities within the African culture. The student of the history of ideas in Africa should begin by looking closely at theological discourses and their systemic assault on African conceptions of God. It should not come as a surprise that the idea of God from the western Christian perspective and its geocentric science were of great use to the expansion of settler colonial adventures and in having claims to colonial sovereignty in South Africa.

The role of the church according to Bengt Sundkler (2000: 333) a Swedish-Tanzanian Church historian, missiologist, professor and bishop played a “catalytic role” in Africa. This role according to the expansionist programme of colonialism helped in cementing the efforts of conquests, quelling resistance, normalizing conquest/the status quo and introducing Enlightenment civilization discourses of progress and the Human whilst the native was charged as nonhuman⁷⁷. Indeed, contrary goals in theory and practice were and are still the fulcrum of the colonizing experience. The church was pivotal for the conquest of non-western

⁷⁷ Alongside the missionaries were two other conspicuous figures; the explorer and the soldier, Mudimbe put it thus, “The explorer, at the end of the fifteenth century, was looking for a sea-route to India. Later on, he concerned himself with mapping out the continent and, in the nineteenth century compiling information and organizing complex bodies of knowledge, including medicine, geography and anthropology. The soldier was the most visible figure of the expansion of the European jurisdiction. He built castles and forts on the coasts, was in charge of trading posts, participated in the slave trade, and in the nineteenth century, implemented colonial power (Mudimbe 1988: 46-7).

lands from the sixteenth century in the New World and was acting on the behest of European monarchs or kings to claim what they called *terra nullis* (lands that did not belong to anyone) (Wynter 2003; Ramphalile 2018).

The first of these symbols, the padrao de Sao Gregorio, is a cross-erected at Kwaaihoek on 12 March 1488 by Barthamelou Diaz. From the sixteenth century and mostly productive in the eighteenth, nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century, European missionaries have been pivotal for securing territorial sovereignty for the colonialists and implementing the conquest strategy of conscripting the natives using education to colonise according to the colonial state's consolidation of power⁷⁸. Mudimbe cites the "The bulls of Nicholas V-Drum Diversas (1452) and Romanus Pontifex (1455) who had indeed already given the kings of Portugal the right to dispossess and eternally enslave Mahometans, pagans, and black people in general" (1988: 45; Buck-Morss 2000).

Indians, Islam, Negroes and non-western peoples were all to suffer ontologically-epistemologically at the hands of the expansionist programme of the Europeans as it was abstracted by advocates or intellectuals of emancipatory studies in the postcolonial political traditions of thought. However, for us these events (event as a structure) are mutually constitutive, the subjugation of these peoples and their lands should be the starting point for the anti-colonial intellectual who is investigating the structural genocide issued by European ideology and narrative of modernity. We can see for instance that the beginnings of the Spanish empire in the Americas came at the back of the *Reconquista*, the Christian Reconquest of the Iberian peninsula which had been an Islamic multicultural empire from the eighth century until 1492 (Mosses 2008: 30; Wynter 2003; Gordon 2000; Corrales 2021).

Furthermore, the Valladoid debate (which was said to be a moral debate concerning religion), between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda on whether the Indians were human or even possessed a soul and therefore, the debate was, whether they should be

⁷⁸ According to Anderson the nation "is imagined as *sovereign* because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state" (1983: 7).

exempted from enslavement and barbaric labour practices in the Americas. The suggestion that Indians should be exempted from these slave labour practices in favour of Black Africans implicates both Indians and blacks in the genocidal consequences of settler colonialism that was to continue in the nineteenth century (Magubane 2001). Furthermore, the Muslims, the moors were said to be heretics who should be subjugated, and their religion destroyed (Blackmore 2009).

The missionaries, whose powers were significant in the second half of the nineteenth century in Africa (Hastings 1994) were significant for Western knowledge, power, and being, and they were successful in terms of cultural propaganda. As Sundkler argued emphatically, “The power of the word was something with deep traditional roots and was, with the arrival of the missionary, to acquire new meaning” (326). Perhaps Mudimbe borrowed from Sundkler (there are references of him in his works) “the power of speech” signalling how the catalytic role of the missionary enabled discourses of power and dominance over the culture of the colonized subject. For instance, the South African Native Churches Commission could state with jubilation in 1925 that “[T]he rapidity of and ease of which the South African Native has received the teachings of Christianity is one of the most remarkable phases in his acceptance of European civilization” (Sundkler 1961: 19; Bompani 2008: 667). Missionary discourses colonized precisely because Christianity meant western secular and liberal culture in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, it was the pronouncements of the missionary politician or the missionary administrator John Phillip of the London Missionary Society (LMS), a Scot who arrived in 1819 who was opposed by the Dutch settler’s descendants.

According to Sundkler it was John Phillip who “invited the first (European) Continental mission societies to direct their resources to South Africa. He suggested Namibia to the Rhenish Mission’, Lesotho to the French Evangelicals; and Natal to the American Board of Boston” (2000: 334)⁷⁹. It is this call to the Europeans to missionize that attest to the imperial and colonization as a token of salvation of the African landscape and peoples in order to enact or

⁷⁹ As Hastings (1996) has noticed only in New Zealand did Missions surpass the number of missionaries in South Africa, “By the 1800, for instance, there were nine different societies at work in Natal and Zululand. No fewer than seventy-five mission stations were opened in Natal, Pondoland and Zululand between 1844 and 1877. Nowhere else in the world, it is claimed, with the exception of New Zealand, was so thickly populated with missionaries (358).

introduce Christianity as *the* culture of civilization. Suffice to say the socio-political role that missionaries played in promoting Western grids of knowledge and the enactment of an *authentic* African subjectivity through conversion is what enabled the transformation or the colonization of the natives⁸⁰.

The discourses of authenticity have largely been ignored in the postcolonial episteme in Africa, however, it continues to inform the vistas of thought that informs the identity of Africanness and Blackness, therefore automatically disqualifying other possibilities⁸¹ of identification. Missionaries, the colonial commissioner, and anthropologists were all significant in promoting the conversion of the African colonized subject particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This transformation was predicated on the missionaries' transplantation or novel uses of the binary structure of sovereign modernity. As an important aspect of the colonizing missions, the missionaries launched an unprecedented assault on native cosmologies with the solution being conversion to Western culture. If Christianization meant the introduction of the concept of God for the missionary, it was because as a political agent of the colonial and imperial state, their culture was deeply embedded in this conception. Mudimbe reminds us, as we will see in our interrogation, that.

One must not forget that since its birth Christianity has appropriated for itself both the only way to true communication with the divine and the only correct image of God and God's magnificent (1988: 51).

The effectiveness of the missionary movements since their penetration of the African continent from 1840s, strategically superior to the anthropologist and the settler's initiatives, was due to the self-sacrifice the missionary was able to undertake in order to be in close proximity and peaceful relations with the colonized. This proximity meant that conversion of the colonized culture had to take on discursive and practical symbols and signs, the peacefulness of the missionary; the proximity was not only disingenuous, it was also calculative. It was performative. For it is the exploitation of the casualties and consequences

⁸⁰ For a discussion of the impact of Western scientists and missionaries on determining the identity of the African subject see Robert Lunay, "An Invisible Religion? Anthropology's Avoidance of Islam" (2006).

⁸¹ The debates on authenticity have been largely responsible in Africa and her diaspora, for the exclusion of non-Christian conceptions of Blackness.

of war between the colonial mercenaries/soldiers with the anticolonial warriors and sovereigns that the missionary-for example with the defeat of the Pedi, Xhosa and Zulu sovereigns-pronounced the superiority of Christian culture and the inferiority of the indigenous.

Missions and missionaries acted as a buffer between the emerging settler colonial state⁸² and the indigenous peoples (Sundkler 2000: 336; 349-365; Sundkler 1961). This is certainly the case when we analyse the salient role missionaries played in the dispossession of land. I mean to argue that the establishment of “chains of missionary stations” that all ambitious missionaries established were significant for the dispossession of land to escalate. Certainly, Christian missionaries’ obsession with land is scarcely taken serious in debates about colonial dispossession and genocide/conversion as Hastings has noted.

Nowhere else was Christian life so long dominated by the ‘station’, the mission estate large or small, than where Africans accepted a missionary landlord and a shaping of society according to missionary regulation. With the advancing wave of white settlement, which was taking over the subcontinent, crushing the societies that had lived there and dispossessing them of a great part of their land, it was inevitable that the simultaneous wave of missionaries, with their own share of land should be seen and resented as part and parcel of the same thing. When land was granted by colonial authority to a mission, the people living on it sometimes simply migrated. Nevertheless, as settler land alienation continued, numerous Africans were bound to seek employment, security, and a home in the relatively benign atmosphere of a mission station (1994: 359).

Conversion being a sharp symbol and tool of colonization gave effect to the colonizing structure and marginality, which embraced “the domination of space, the reformation of the natives’ minds, and the integration of local economic histories into the western perspective (Mudimbe 1988: 2). Conversion as a transfigurative agent or the discursive and performative

⁸² We will elucidate more on the theory of the nation and state in the final chapter, but it is worth remembering here what Gellner thought about the nascent construction of the nation “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist” (1964: 169). This for me speaks to European ideas of nationhood and statehood as they were implanted in the African settler colonial space to an extent that it defined the political thought of English/British, Dutch-Afrikaner settlers and African Nationalists in the end of the nineteenth century.

agent that gave weight to the genocide of indigenous culture included the spiritual, physical, and human metamorphosis. The intellectual productivity of conversion from paganism or savagery to civility made Christianity the ideal discursive starting point for the missions.

Pay close attention to how undermining indigenous cosmologies was predicated on the theory of the colonizing structure and marginality and it is from this model that missionary speech and actions were always given in advance, that is predetermined. Predetermined by the epistemic structure, actions, and attitudes of the west since the fifteenth century where the ideology of racial superiority and theories of otherness were ploughed and indefatigably performed in the eighteenth, nineteenth and the pre-wars twentieth century colonial spaces. Church, missions and State joined hands in bringing to Africa the benefits of what was thought to be a Christian Western civilization.

The Church and the missions were dependent on the colonial powers from the time of the Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch colonization in the 16th and 17th centuries when there was co-operation between the secular and spiritual powers of Europe. However, the indigenous people were seen as objects for profit and trade. Even though as Mudimbe notes that by the eighteenth century the balkanization of the continent and the revival of Christianity, a “group of distinguished prelates even re-evaluated the meaning of the so-called curse of Ham, hoping that the “interior of Africa may participate in the solemn joy of the Church’s triumph”” (Bwinwenyi, 1981: 625-26 in Mudimbe 1988: 46).

Conversion of the spirit, minds and spatiality of the colonized, to some extent, affirms the power of religious revival in Europe, which meant both Protestant and Catholic Missions, would participate jointly in their proselytising projects in the foreign lands. What we have to keep insisting on is the fact that the missions and missionaries represented or were the symbol *par excellence* of the ideals of colonialism. This is because of what Mudimbe calls the “authority of the truth” that is “God’s desire for the conversion of the world in terms of cultural and social political regeneration, economic progress and spiritual salvation” (1988:48). The authority of truths stems from the rise of modern western sovereignty and the classification of beings and societies from anthropological and ethnological sources, by this we mean to imply the semantic taxonomy of the ideology that gave rise to primitives and savages as a mechanism to centre conversion or proselytism.

For the missionaries' theology of salvation functions according to a language that depends on the premise that the subjected populace is pagan or primitive. Meaning pagan or primitive religions are the other side of the white transcendental God: Good/Evil. The mediators of this pagan and evil religion are missionaries who convert the pagan aborigines to the Christian Western civilization. Evolutionary theories provided the path for this authority of truth, or we can call it the missionary theology of salvation, which as a policy of conversion to a civilized life was "presented as a gradual one". At the "lowest level one finds primitives or pagans; these infected by the will to become westernized" become catechumens; the zenith of their development is achieved when they become Christians or "evolues," that is, westernized individuals" that is lacking, "European coequality" (1988: 52; Fabian 1983). One cannot dismiss this theory from the practices of the missionaries because the theory of the Same and the Other, the Africans being the absolute starting point in the history of western humanity as pagans and or savages⁸³. Absolute beginning in the evolutionary sense of western historicity clearly indicating a path of conversion from primitiveness or savagery to European civilization. Here we should not mistake the point of salvation, for it does not only entail, "spiritual salvation" much as it means socio-cultural salvation, ultimately missionaries clothed the new material realities of the colonized natives in new philosophical clothes making Christianity a western garb for cultural genocide of the colonized⁸⁴.

To demonstrate this let us pursue our models, firstly, the work done by the Morovians from Germany who established institutions (Christian villages) among the Khoi-Coloureds who became the first to be converted, first from 1737-43 and from 1792 onwards. They were baptized and "had caught a vision and been awakened to a new dimension of life. Remarkably

⁸³ As Robert Moffat (1842:284-285) explained in an unusually somber letter home: Indifference and stupidity form the wreath on every brow-ignorance, the grossest ignorance of Divine things, forms the basis of every action; it is only things earthly, sensual, and devilish, which stimulate to activity and mirth Only satiate their mendicant spirits by perpetually giving, and we are all that is good, but refuse to meet their demands [and] their praises are turned to ridicule (quoted in Camoroff & Camoroff 1986: 3).

⁸⁴ For Mudimbe "Accordingly, the missionary's language presents three major approaches: derision of so-called primitive religions and their gods, refutation and demonstration to convince evolving Africans, and imposition of rules of orthodoxy and conformity for converts" (1988: 53). This is the strategy of conversion that we will demonstrate below with our models, however important for us is how this language of missionary conversion transforms and at the same time introduces new symbols of life.

they had received this inspiration not after generations of study, but during only a few years of fellowship with the missionary and his Book" (2000:330). Making missionary discourses or their theology of salvation an evolutionary expression of conversion from savagery and Satan's darkness to civilization through baptism as the symbol for a new life.

Following the missionary - his speech and word, for the "missionary was not only a pastor and teacher but a father" (Ibid: 330), and the imposition of orthodoxy through study and books (reading and writing; we shall discuss extensively in the next section) until the community and the individual could express their own faith as Christians. Secondly, the separation that missionaries instigated between Africans, the Kholwa or in the case of the Xhosa 'School Xhosa', the civilized Christian Africans and 'Red Xhosa' or heathens/pagans/savages those who still subscribe to the indigenous institutions was one of the most unfortunate phenomena. Hastings attests, "No people anywhere in Africa was more evidently divided by Christianity in two sections than the people who for long bore the main brunt of settler advance, the Xhosa (1994: 359).

The separation or division within the conquered population particularly because of land dispossession led to a situation where people wandered; devastated and distraught hence the mission station could be the only space to find shelter, education, employment, in short civilization⁸⁵. As we said above the role of the missionary was much more sinister than is

⁸⁵ Let us always keep in mind that the terms red, school, tribal, pagan etc. are not innocent at all and in fact, they signify the sovereign thought structures of modernity, an episteme of evolution to western civilization. Bernard Magubane's polemic with anthropologists and sociologists who were accounting for industrialization and urbanisation in the early twentieth century colonial South Africa helps us in this regard to view these terms in a critical fashion "What does all this mean, or what causes these three types of responses? According to Mayer, these are due to the "Red" syndrome that stresses the superiority of the traditional, undiversified institutions, resulting in conservatism. The conservatism of the "Red" is also due to the function of ancestral spirits who are believed to be in town to pull the migrants back to the "ways of the ancestors," and represent the supreme moral authority. The "Red" migrants can thus use witches to excuse their behaviour when they break any part of the ancestral code. The syndrome of the "School" Xhosa is more tolerant of diversified institutions, resulting in a single-strand type of relations and loose-knit networks, and carries within itself the dynamic of change. Those "Red" Xhosa who change and accept urban ways are described by Mayer as "deviant or neurotic personality" (1961: 182). This conclusion is based on six "case histories" reported in from ten to fifteen lines. Mayer then gives what he calls a historical explanation of these types of personalities: the two groups of Xhosa react differently to the urban situation because their ancestors reacted differently to conquest over a hundred years ago. Some accepted Christianity and

usually accorded. Thirdly, the missionary manipulated signs to subvert⁸⁶ “pagan religion” and gain a following of the Chiefs and the community: it is said that the missionary had a cosmological influence, the duel between the missionary William Shaw and the Xhosa rainmaker Gqidiwa elaborates our point.

“William Shaw was challenged by the rain-maker, Gqidiwa ... the Methodist missionary suggested an alternative ...large number of people assembled to hear him [the missionary], including the principal chief. Sermons and prayers followed – and rain fell” (Sundkler 2000: 355).

This meant the chief’s renunciation of the traditional rainmaker and encouraging people to follow the missionary symbolising victory for missionaries’ discursive or cultural genocide. Fourth, the missionaries begin by approaching the chief to grant him some land to establish his mission station, he then proceeds to attract a few sympathizers through gifts and initiatives, then follows the promotion of vocations and the building of schools and hospitals all of these initiatives and actions are then turned into economic interests (Mudimbe 1991). Which entails integrating local economic histories into western economic perspectives⁸⁷, Sundkler continues, the missionaries promoted?

formal education from the conquerors, and others refused (ibid:293). Now when one wants to organize facts to contribute to knowledge, one is careful to base classification upon essential qualities. But suppose that instead of organizing knowledge, you set out to organize ignorance and prejudice and to justify certain policies. You then select the unessential rather than the essential qualities. You will entirely conceal the question how and why a particular phenomenon is what it is (Magubane 1972: 1707-1708).

⁸⁶ According to Wilson (1965: 265) “The missionary expected them [the converted Africans] to shed all traditional beliefs and rituals relating to ancestors, witchcraft and sorcery, divining, and medicines, as well as many customs, like traditional dancing, giving and receiving *ikhazi* (marriage goods), and polygyny”.

⁸⁷ That Protestantism and capitalism or Christianity and capitalism were essential in producing a different class of blacks or Africans (Kholwa Africans) cannot be denied no matter how antagonistic settlers were against this initiative. Those who inhabited the mission station, the kholwa, a new tribe led by the missionary “prospered considerably, benefitting from schooling for their children and from missionary encouragement to take ploughs, wagons, square houses, and cash crops. In 1864, the American missionary at Mvoti reported 48 upright houses, 22 ploughs, and 14 wagons owned by residents of the station. The following year a group of Mvoti people actually opened their own sugar mill-‘a visible triumph of Christianity and civilization’, as the satisfied missionary described it: ‘Men with black skins who few years ago were naked boys ... are now competing with the white man in

“The laborious memorization of the Ten Commandments in the catechumens’ class and the Three Rs at the day school were all very well ... The refreshing effect of God’s rain was supplemented by the missionary’s water furrow and the plough. Several 1820 settlers, acting as local Wesleyan preachers, established themselves also as shopkeepers up-the country. They had an interest of their own in helping promote the use of ploughs. It was all part of the puritan Gospel of work [to demonstrate that] Christianity and idleness are not compatible” (2000:355).

As Mudimbe remarked ultimately “all missionaries, whatever their denominations, operate according to the same canon of conversion” (1988: 52). The missionary ability to exert power over the common-sense meanings and routine activities diffused in the everyday was essential in overturning the indigenous episteme, what we shall call the death at the kernel of subjectivity or of being. Here Fanon in the essay *Medicine and Colonialism*, captures our observation, that is “[T]he colonized perceives the doctor, the engineer, the schoolteacher, the policeman, the rural constable, through the haze of an almost organic confusion” (1965: 121). That is medicine, along with other economic technologies were used as a civilizational tool of conversion. This is going to be important for cultural expression whether in literature or art or politics of these modern colonized Africans, as we will discuss in the next section. Our analysis gives us a clear performative schema of the ideology of missionary performances as it shows precisely that the conversion of Africans was initiated according to Darwinian evolutionary assumptions of salvation and most importantly as an expression of the politics of subjection during the colonial period. In this case, the colonial commissioner, the anthropologist and the missionary all subscribed to a sovereign episteme of bio-cultural genocide that is the transfiguration of the colonized symbols of the real and reality itself.

As per our models of the theory of the colonizing structure, conversion is aptly tasked with normalizing the paradigm of the colonial status quo, to install a new material reality and to performatively transform/convert the colonized according to evolutionary assumptions as God’s gift. In this instance, we see how resistance to this epistemology that is of the missionary stations or churches would require not only an inversion of the symbols and signs

manufacturing sugar steam mill of their own from canes of their own cultivation and without any superintendence in the work” (1994:360).

of the new Christian God rather a rupture with the Christian transcendental system of thought. Anyway, it is important to note how the conversion of the natives was concomitant with the rise of the colonial state and as a result the concomitant structural genocide of the colonized⁸⁸. Not only was it important to implant Enlightenment ideals of western civilization through salvation, it was also as important to transform spatial arrangements (hunger for native lands) and institutions. Which meant the defeat and discrediting of native sovereignties through war and treaties were essential to missionary and colonial episteme (Peterson 2000; Sundkler 1961). What is clear without exception is that from the mid-nineteenth century, the evolutionary mode of modern sovereign episteme that missionaries, anthropologists, the colonial commissioners and the settlers expressed was to construct a dyselected (Wynter 2017) authentic African subject fit for the purpose of subordination.

This colonized African subject was constructed to fit to the taxonomies of European Christian-secular Enlightenment ideals of the human save to say that he or she was considered to be outside the fold of humanity (West 2002; Mosala 1984). This subject was to take on altered symbols and signs (to reclaim life in death, at the kernel of subjectivity) firstly by proposing an independent-breakaway church movement and at the same time challenging the missionary episteme⁸⁹. This initiative to breakaway and challenge the episteme was predicated on the adaptationist theology of the church in Africa, which has to do with searching for African cultural elements for the local gospel. More so the need to break away from the missionary episteme or we should say paternalism, opens new ideological rifts in missionary performances and discourses. Whereas the mainstream churches (Anglican,

⁸⁸ We cannot take lightly the structural genocide of the colonized, nor refrain from emphasizing that missionary churches and particularly the mission stations as places where new proto villages or communities were formed played an instrumental role during the wars of conquest and during the machinations used to destabilize the anticolonial resistance which was taking place. These machinations enabled the missionaries to organize their Christian villages in values that ensured “a collection of individuals grouped together without reference to their traditional kinship-based social structure. For all practical purposes they were now under the authority of the missionary, not that of the chief” (Pauw 1975: 21).

⁸⁹ According to Mudimbe, “the search for an African Christianity was already enveloped by themes of cultural authenticity and independence. It clearly implied that a relative rejection of both anthropologists’ and missionaries’ interpretation of African traditions and religions as well as the colonial presence” (1988:57)

Methodist and Catholic) espoused a liberal humanism of the west, their religious orthodoxy was accompanied by centralised constitutions. Native sects and movements or African Independent Churches emerge as an oppositional force “opposing the power, teaching or religious rules of mainstream Christianity (Mudimbe 1991: 18). However here we should be careful of imputing too much of an epistemological break in the African Christian discourses, although it will be evident that their theological exegesis was radical not only on a socio-cultural level but also for the anti-colonial nationalist struggles, yet significantly the problem should be seen as being constituted by continuity⁹⁰.

That is the theologies of adaptation and particularly incarnation theologies seek to bring Christianity to bear on African traditional symbols and values as much as it seeks to fix the Christian message in African local contexts, indeed Deus Christianorum (Christian God) and Deus Africanorum (African God) become the *betre noir* of the African Christian and the missionary. That is because by seeking to contextualize Christianity to African settings one has to re-symbolize or enact new symbols of tradition to be compatible with the Christian message. Take the Tswana kgosi Khama who became Kgosi after defeating his father Sechele for not adhering to Christian belief because he followed “tribal beliefs”. Khama enacted structural changes to the Tswana of Bamagwato and was the “jewel in the crown of the London Missionary society. Khama “gave up rain-making but benefitted from missionary prayers for rain. He totally gave up circumcision ceremonies, and *bogwera* died away among the Ngwato. He encouraged schools instead. He even forbade *bogodi* (bride-wealth). Missionaries praised him for making such ‘a clean cut with the heathen past’” (Hastings 1994: 366).

One could imagine the joys of the missionary for this late Victorian and Edwardian world and Khama was the model par excellence of marrying Christianity and African “traditional” culture. It will be naïve to forget how the missionaries were helping Khama secure his territory from the settlers, seeking protection from the British Monarch. However, the adaptationist

⁹⁰ Mnyanda has argued ferociously and convincingly that “Fort Hare might have been the training ground of anticolonial superheroes, but the fact remains, all their tools of resistance were borrowed from master’s box” (2016: 42). Our thesis is also that African Christians did not initiate a decisive and wholesale epistemological and transcendental break with the Judea Christian-Secular sovereign thought structure of colonial modernity rather it is marked by continuity of the Christian message under new premises driven by political liberation and the attendant scientism.

route taken by missionaries sought to ensure that modernization and Christianity would wipe away the heathen past of the Tswana tradition, pitting modernity against tradition. Already the problematic is encountered because as a replacement of the concept of primitiveness tradition still stands outside of modern time, history and epistemology, “African tradition – Deus Africanus- is dated before, or at least situated outside of, the historical experience in which God became the word” (Mudimbe 1991:14). These attempts at fusing the Christian message and the African God or traditional religion remains problematic precisely because they have to conceptualize and enact their tasks within or against western history or God’s sign, and they seem to emerge from this western paradigm.

It is a paradox to note that African discourses which correct, critically reread, reinterpret, or challenge the colonial library or the missionary performance are possible and thinkable only insofar as they actualize themselves within those same intellectual fields which nowadays permit political, anthropological, or theological exchange with or refusal of earlier statements (Mudimbe 1991: 8).

According to Bengkt Sundkler in his *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (1961), one of the chief reasons for African independent churches or missionary breakaway of the native churches from 1890 was mainly because of “not only opposition to European control, but also a positive desire to adapt the message of the Church to the heritage of the Tembu tribe. As the Queen of England was the head of the English Church, so the Paramount Chief of the Tembu should be the *summus episcopus* of the new religious organization” (p. 38). Here nationalism as a secular political ideology developed in Europe and appropriated by the natives in the fight against imperialism and colonialism as embedded in western culture proved to be important for the development of separatist churches, the formation of political organizations, the formation of the black intellectual tradition to adapt to the colonial status quo and the theology of progress. Working with Letswalo’s reading and critique of nationalism

Manu Goswami, in her reading of Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, makes a case for thinking nationalism through the modern nation form as a ‘social form’, “at once universal and particular, objective and subjective” (2002:785). The dual nature of the nation form allows Goswami to read nationalisms as structural-historical determinations and as determinations of consciousness. More, she pays “attention on the global articulation of the nation as a social form rather than the particularistic

content of specific nationalist movements” (785). If Goswami is correct, I wish (as I propose in this dissertation) to think the nation form and becoming a national independently of any nationalism. Put negatively, becoming national and nationalism are not the same thing, though the former constitutes a possibility of the latter (P.9 footnote 6).

Taking place in the latter parts of the nineteenth century,⁹¹ separatist Churches emerge as a will to power (reaction to conquest), adaptation and nationalist sentiments. Moreover, colonial policies of racial taxonomy, which aesthetically imputed Satan’s darkness on the colonized life and light of salvation on the missionaries, was one of the *raison d’être* of these churches. What these distinctions does is to launch vitriol attacks on the aesthetics of the black body, illuminating the enlightenment racial epistemology of the sublime on whiteness. If Satan’s darkness and the transcendental whiteness does not belong to the black and white subjects then the episteme does not hold water, but the fact that there is this dichotomy of darkness and lightness/ blackness and whiteness it legitimises the supremacist projections of the missions and the colonizers.

Missionaries as colonialists give power to the Manichean divide in the colony. One of the chief reasons of the theological roots of the split or resistance to missionary discourses gave rise to Ethiopianism advocated by a Wesleyan minister, Mangena M. Mokone a nationalist and Zionism. Sundkler points out that Mokone heard missionaries preach in their sermon “Ethiopian mentioned in the Psalms and in Acts of the Apostles,” the Psalms had mentioned, “*Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God*” (especially 1961: 38-56; Mosala 1986: 51). Therefore, Ethiopians seceded White missionary churches and Zionism seceded from Ethiopianism. However it is Zionism, which is accused of serving as a bridge from Christianity to heathenism.

In actuality it is this heathenism that separated the Ethiopian, who was seen as educated and civilized in the eyes of the liberal missionaries, from the Zionist who was classified as being lax, and creating a syncretism of African paganism and Christianity. If Sundkler insists on

⁹¹ Mainly from 1872 in Basutholand there was a succession from the Paris mission and “[O]f greater significance was the tribal church, organized in 1884 by Wesleyan minister, Nehemiah Tile” and the first Ethiopian church in the Witwatersrand 1892 (p. 38).

imputing separatist church to the will to power one will have to contend with the fact that after succession from the missionary church, native churches still faced successions from within. For instance, Sundkler speculates that one of the chief reasons the African started a church it was “to get a living out of it that his motive for organizing a separate church is economic” (1961: 126).

However, if we take seriously the paternalism of the missionary patriarchs, the western epistemological unity in Christianity as we have been alluding to it, then independent churches according to the missionaries should stop being a phenomenon that is “largely misdirected” or that displayed “an utter lack of disregard for the principles of Christian comity” (Ibid: 60). The economic interests of African Independent Christian church belongs to the structure of missionary activities in South Africa, one only has to recall how the plough, the wagon and the school or hospital were essential to white missionary encounter with Africans after dispossession by colonial mercenaries and soldiers. Analysed socio-politically the ideological split between the native sects and the mainstream missionary churches had everything to do with power.

For our own purposes, Africans were engaging in resistance or the transformation of the western paradigm and questioning it precisely because of its colonial nature⁹². This should not lead us to steer our lenses away from the activities of civilizing discourses that was associated with nationalism and Judea Christian transcendental system of divination. For Hastings (1994) there was something sinister in the way Missionary priests with their Victorian episteme, were treating African Christians, this has to do with the “reluctance to ordain Africans” compared to other parts of the African continent, for example Samuel Ajayi Crowther had been ordained in 1843. In such a situation “there was, for the African church, no real avenue of escape. The black Christian was restricted to an increasingly boring existence inside a sort of cultural no man’s land, neither African nor European: forced or persuaded to abandon the one society but refused admittance to the other (ibid: 365). It is

⁹² Indeed “that the explosion of independency, the ideal of Ethiopianism once it began, should develop fast in South Africa, and to an extent far beyond anything experienced elsewhere , seems hardly surprising. The Churches had been married to colonialism so profoundly and painfully in South Africa that there was bound in time to be a divorce of massive and bitter proportions (Hastings 1994:365).

clear that the indigenization was not welcomed by the missionary church in South Africa or that Africans took it upon themselves to indigenize it.

For Appiah-Kubi it is because of 'spiritual hunger', as Sundkler and Mudimbe seems to be alluding, which caused the emergence of African churches. This hunger has to do with the "religious need of healing, divinity prophesying, and visioning" through the Christian church (in Mosala 1986: 50). Zionist nativist churches follow the charismatic prophet who proclaims holy revelations in African religion by formulating the same eschatological order as mainstream Christianity. The prophetic imagination aims to enunciate a new symbolic order that announces the new messiah, the Black messiah who through a physical event announces the encounter with God himself. In this instance, I am thinking here of the Prophet Ntsikana who said: "my children something has commanded me to wash off the red ochre, therefore do you also wash it off". He continues, "this thing" says "Let there be prayer! Let everything bow and kneel" (Hastings 1994: 218). The washing of the red ochre symbolises the break with local traditional symbols and the prayer, the bow and the knee are signs of the new Christian religion of surrendering to the new God. Not forgetting that Ntsikana "composed the four hymms which were soon taken over by the mission Churches and printed already during the 1820s" the hymnody becomes demonstrative and causative of indigenization of Christianity⁹³ (ibid: 221). Another prophet is Timothy Cekwane, it is said one day when he was praying over his congregation in Natal, "There appeared in the firmament a miraculous star with a long tail. Moreover, it stood still exactly over the place where Timothy prayed upon the mountain. Wild with joy and excitement, the group hailed Timothy as thee elect" (Sundkler 1986: 325). The whole of the cosmos proclaimed Timothy as the spiritual leader that even when praying over his people blood came out of his hands.

The confrontation between nature and the supernatural gives rise and validity to the encounter between God's message and the messenger. That this event had occurred during and after the 1913 land act and Halley's Comet, gives the prophetic imagination or

⁹³ Writing on the embodiment of the modern Enlightenment episteme on the first generation of educated black intelligentsia, Peterson notes that with reading and writing plus the introduction of the printing press, 'In the genre of hymnals, the output of converts such as Ntsikana (c. 1783-c. 1820) and Isiah Shembe (c. 1870-1935) were to be deeply influential, the thematic concerns of their hymns often revisited in the twentieth century' (2012: 294).

performance its providence as well as a gesture to socio-political struggles. What is significant for us including these examples is that the prophetic performances start occurring “with the arrival of Christianity” that is God in Africa “becomes talkative once missionaries arrive. This is a decisive event” (Mudimbe 1991: 25). This is because God starts communicating with human beings through dreams and incarnates himself that is he is an *Ens Causa Sui* (a being who is the cause of its being) and clearly an anthropomorphist conception. This demonstrates that the arrival of God through his prophets coincides with physical and human events, which has to include social, spiritual and political transformation in these communities.

The Africanizing of the Church or the emergence of traditional African religion is but a comment on cultural discourse during and post conquest, “The human context, therefore, is always both a providential text and a sign of God’s presence” (1991: 20). Here Christianity or *Deus Christianorum* and revelation still occupy the place of the Universal but in a local context, one need only to think of the appropriation of a *Deus Israel* hence what is “unanimously accepted today... is that Jesus signifies the fulfilment of all existing regional revelations” (Ibid:21).

I am arguing that even in their need to initiate an indigenization of Christianity or of the Church, the Independent churches were functioning within the same western epistemological grids of European culture and at the same time accommodating itself to the colonial state policies. The spread of independent churches from the late nineteenth century, together with the rise of African nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century reveals the complexity of these churches. Whilst clearly the epistemological foundations of white missionaries were questioned, it is the continuation of the Enlightenment ideals of civilization amongst other indicators, education that would exercise an influential role in the normalization of colonial secular ideals. African independent churches accommodated by the colonial government policies after the formation of Union in 1910 and particularly after the Land Act of 1913 (Sundkler 1961: 65-79). In the interim, independent churches were continuing to emerge⁹⁴ and denouncing the politics of change in their theology, and in fact the colonial state was more appreciative in using the church as a pacifist tool and the independent churches largely

⁹⁴ Sundkler notes “In 1913 there were some thirty Separatist Churches. By 1948, the figure had risen to 800. In 1960, there were 2, 200” (1961: 303).

adapted to the colonial nature of politics⁹⁵. Clearly the colonial state was utilising these Independent Churches for the sake of normalizing the status quo, whilst at the same time continuing to segregate the colonized by endowing privileges upon some, as the missionaries had done.

The indigenization of the church reveals a complexity between resistance and accommodation to settler colonialism; this is precisely because of the lack of acknowledgement that the religious and secular are part of the same western cultural heritage or existence. The power of missionary discourses in repelling indigenous symbols of culture and the shaping of a nascent African intellectual class gives rise to the secular nationalist reactions to colonialism. Bhekizizwe Peterson notes, "[T]he new African intelligentsia were the products of mission school, and they exhibited well into the twentieth century" ambiguous and paradoxical relations with missions" (2012: 292). Throughout the first half of the twentieth century the role of nationalist political aspirations, the Pan-Africanist connections and the intellectual exchange between African Americans and Africans in theology provided the basis of the epistemological mutation (Peterson 2012; Masilela 2012). This is the case for as we have been surveying, in South Africa the rise of indigenous or separatist churches from the second half of the nineteenth century enabled the resistance and continuation of the western theological paradigm. It is this paradigm, which retained its evolutionary perspective when the symbols of the missionary church were being challenged. Meanwhile the political grip of settler colonialism from 1910 to the coming of the second wave of settler colonialist state in 1948 was being harshly enforced on the black colonized.

The indigenous Church or Ethiopianism and Zionists presents paradoxical and indeed ambiguous signs, between political and cultural autonomy and the reinterpretation of the Christian God and its genealogy, which had a direct impact on religious thinking. Whatever the details of individual grievances that fuelled the independent black churches movement, at an ideational level the movement developed a new dimension by the 1930s through the efforts of African petty bourgeois or elite intellectuals to "remake" African culture. Increasingly, they tended to view the independent churches in a political context, both as a

⁹⁵ The colonial state used preachers to quell resistance or wage strikes in the mines, one such figure, Saul N who was a former mine clerk and ordained in 1943 says, ""The mine is always interested to have church service to tame the boys"" (Ibid: 305).

celebration of Africanness and as practical experiments in black self-determination. Whereas the Western Christian teaching of the missions had helped propagate a concern for individual spiritual welfare, African intellectuals drew on prevailing political and ideological currents (particularly segregationist the burgeoning force of Afrikaner nationalism) to present the church as part of a collective spiritual struggle (Cobley 1991: 362).

By the 1950s and 60s particularly during and post anti-colonial nationalist struggles, “the search for an African Christianity was already enveloped by the themes of cultural authenticity and independence” (Mudimbe 1988:57). Following Mudimbe we can thus say: African criticism of Christianity may be understood at three levels: first, as a methodological criticism tending to bring about a more comprehensive link between Christian faith and the present-day life of the African peoples. Second, as an ideological criticism of the Western process of integrating Jesus' message into its own historical experience and upholding this particular cultural model as a sign of Christian universality. Third, as a philosophical criticism of the significance of the faith itself. That is, Pan Africanism and the goal of independence in the colonies played an essential role in the overturning of scientific paradigms such as the antagonism against the missionaries and anthropologist's interpretation of African culture and history. Ideologically the premises of this new scientific method of Christianity presents new mediators and aims: The new premises “negritude, blackness, African heritage and experience. It tends to present conversion in terms of critical integration into Christianity; that is, on the one hand, asserting cultural autonomy and, on the other, defining Christianization as a way of accomplishing in Christ a spiritual heritage authentically African” (1988: 60). Here it is easy to see why the development of theories of Otherness or the acceleration of the critique against anthropology was gaining ground amongst African and Oriental scholars (Asad 1973; Mafeje 1986).

This in turn accounts for the phenomena of eliciting African culture and history to be clearly developed in the 1950s and 70s where the reconsideration of classical grids was wide spread among African scholars⁹⁶. African scholars in the 1970s were already taking for granted the

⁹⁶ The relevance of the Jewish-Christian tradition to the situation of colonial Africa, where Africans saw themselves replaying the role of the Christian drama, had much to do with the religious aspect of nationalism. The extreme form of this development was the purely nationalist endeavour to reject Christianity as a European religion (Oosthuizen 2010: 79).

evolutionary epistemology of Christianity and scientific discourses of colonialism that is “African scholars now preferred to deal with the issues that involve African responsibility in theology and social sciences, as well as in the humanities” (Mudimbe 1988: 61).

In 1966, Vincent Mulago launched his Centre For The study of African Religions — le Centre d'Étude des Religions Africaines. It was organized within the School of Theology of Lovanium University. Mulago's objective was twofold : on the one hand, to promote analysis and interpretations of African traditional religions and, on the other, on the basis of the most stable and positive figures and values of these religions to propose methods for integrating Christianity in Africa. The objective seems ambiguous, not least because it is fundamentally straight forward ideological reversal of colonial anthropologic and religious policies. It posits disciplines that it challenges — anthropology, history and philosophy — as auxiliaries of a new but does not directly interrogate them about the reasons for their incapacity to unveil the reality of traditional beliefs (Mudimbe 1988a:86).

Black Christian Liberation Theological thoughts

This is particularly the case with Black theology of South Africa, a liberation incarnation theology that emerged in Latin American theology and North American civil rights movement of the 1960s and taken up in the struggle against settler colonialism in South Africa under the guidance of the Black Consciousness Movement from the late 1960s (Goba 1988; Boesak 1977; Cone 1970; Mosala 1986; Moore 1973). According to Jackson (2009) Black Theology as a movement in America was initiated by Joseph Washington junior's article entitled “Are American Negro Churches Christian?” suggesting that they were not “theologically” Christian rather they subscribed to “Black religion- a folk-oriented, holy protest against antiblack racism” (2009:13). This sparked the effort to biblically establish the credibility for “Black power, which by then, had emerged as both an expression of and competitor with Black Religion.” Suggesting that Black Theology had to succeed in constructing a theology that will confront the historical role of black suffering and “produce an understanding of the Faith that might subvert this implication and show the way to black liberation (2009: 13). This theology developed in the midst of the violent colonial situation in Southern Africa and having an

ambiguous relationship to the African Independent Churches largely because of the relationship between traditional authorities and the settler colonial state (Mamdani 1996).

Indeed, the relationship between independent churches and the new incarnation theology presents challenges for those seeking a clear genealogy of theological, cultural and historical resistance against colonialism that is in the attempt to construct an African theology. In this sense it was important to discredit the past tradition as it has been accommodated by the colonial state and hence why Buthelezi could caution against the theology of indigenization because “in the past there was no clarity on what the protagonist for Indigenization Theology meant when they stated their case” (Moore 1973: 30). This is because “Indigenization has always been the term to describe a white, Western version of “African Theology” and Black theology “is a situational theology. It is the black person’s attempt to come to terms theologically with his black situation (Boesak 1977: 17). The ground for a new Black Theology has to involve a hermeneutic of what comes before it, clearly indicating and designating the construction of both African independent churches and its own Black Theological construction. For Buthelezi the ethnographic approach to the past or indigenous theology falls short because for “theology to be indigenous, it is not enough that it should deal merely with ‘African things’ like the African world view” (Moore 1973: 33). This is clearly a critique against anthropological and missionary episteme and their understanding of the modern African initiatives; this is where the liberation theology of South Africa echoes the epistemological mutation of the 1970s African critique of social sciences and the humanities. Using revolutionary concepts of Black Consciousness, Marxism and the critique of colonial capitalism on the culture and history of African societies or African traditional religions, Itumeleng Mosala (1986) rearticulated the need to suture the broken claims to connection with history of African religion. For him, “Without a creative re-appropriation of traditional African religions and societies both African and black theologies will build their houses on sands.” More importantly as Boesak elucidates.

In South Africa, white theologians have declared themselves prepared to “accept” Black Theology if it means “indigenization” (veerinheemsing) of Christian faith – something they contrast with “revolutionary”, “anti-white” and “unchristian” elements in Black Theology. Because indigenization has always meant isolation and fragmentation of groups, we fear that within the apartheid context such a theology

would become nothing more than “homeland theology.” Indigenization has too much of a colonial aura clinging to it and has been used too one-sidedly in the sense of “response to the gospel in terms of traditional culture”. Contextual theology takes this aspect fully into account – Black Theology is after all, profoundly African (1977: 17).

Clearly, the ambiguity is caused on the one hand by the colonial policies of divide and rule through the creation of the Bantustans or homelands where Africans could develop on their own tribal allocated territories and outside of the racist white colonial state⁹⁷. On the other hand, it is an attempt to define on their own what African culture and history would entail outside of the white epistemology. Hence for Boesak one does not dismiss the definition of indigenization on its own but as it is used and accommodated by the white Church, signalling that there is a continuity with Indigenous churches so long as they partake in the struggle for liberation, “this narrative provides a good example of how Black Theology can be grounded in the African independent churches and their theological protest against missionary churches” (Mothlabi: 1979:51). Here we can contest Mudimbe’s claims about the development of African independent churches particularly in 1950s and 60s precisely because of the colonial situation in settler colonial South Africa at that time and contrary to the road to and independence of most African states in the continent. However, we agree with Mudimbe’s criticism of native churches and their prophets that is “their inspiration may be less than divine and more like astute correlations of fantasies with a psychological urge for power”.

At any rate, the deployment of their bewildering discourses, along with the interpretation of mainstream church theologians, both of which spring from beneath

⁹⁷ Since the period from the Union of South Africa in 1910, “there were a series of legislative Acts which had a common purpose to group South African society into cultural regions. The Land Act, Act No 27 of 1913, initiated the territorial segregation between Black and White South Africans. No person who was not Black could be granted rights on land defined as a scheduled area and, conversely, no Black person could obtain land rights outside the scheduled Black area. The areas which constituted the former homeland of Lebowa were demarcated by this Act. The creation and establishment of the national states were not only due to the Land Acts (The Development Trust and Land Act No 18 of 1936 included) but also to various Acts that were passed by the National Party Government. According to the Bantu Authorities Act No 68 of 1951, and later the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act No 46 of 1959, provision was made for the gradual development of self-governing states to the national or ethnic units” (Seroto 2000: 80)

the surface of the orthodox discursively of the Christian message, show the ambivalent valence of what they comment upon and clarify: revelation is fundamentally a political performance (1991: 31).

I would want to complicate the issues for Mudimbe, the African Independent churches and Black Theology precisely because it is the political performance of revelation that guides African theology in its episteme and methodology and the human cause of liberation. Black Theology, then, in the case of South Africa seeks to re-symbolise blackness as a sign of horror, subjugation, aesthetically unpleasant, Satan's darkness and an existential manqué in the socioeconomic and political circumstances and yes this "radical understanding of theology" goes against the adaptationist theology of the African independent churches in other parts of the continent. As Mudimbe noticed the Liberation Theology of South Africa "expresses itself in terms of the Exodus theme played out in a modern setting" (1988:63), this theme appropriates the Deus Israel in order to account for the suffering of Blacks in a settler colony. That means the theology accounts for the socio-political context; the human suffering thus proposes that theological practice should meet political praxis, and dismissing the culture and history of the West or white colonialist signalling that Christianity does not transcend ideologies. Here Christian ideology is put under scrutiny and contextualised according to the Black Consciousness ideology that is "Black consciousness is defined as a programme of black political self-awareness Black consciousness is an attitude of mind and a way of life (Goba 1986:59). That is Blackness as it has been constructed to be a negative signifier by white settler colonialist, including and particularly by liberals is used then as a liberating tool and moment of creative existence/resistance⁹⁸ or a radical refusal (Maxaulane 2022). Blackness "is a reality that embraces the totality of black existence" and it's "a bold and serious determination to be one's own person." And in relation to Black Theology, Black Consciousness "means that being black becomes a decisive factor in black people's expression of their belief in Jesus Christ as Lord" ultimately Black Theology "seeks to interpret the gospel in such a way that the situation of blacks will begin to make sense (Boesak 1988 17-26;111-112).

⁹⁸ Mofokeng sees BC as having "historical links with the ideas of Lembede of the Youth League as well as those of the PAC without being identical with them. We can speak in regard to the Black Consciousness of a differentiated continuity" (1986:121).

We should not let go of the idea of a Deus Israel and Deus Africanorum or particularly in the case of Blacks in North America and South Africa, we have every right to speak of a Deus Noir as introduced by militant theologians. Writing in the state of emergency in 1985 in his article, “Following the Trail of Suffering” Takatso Mofokeng tells us that in the systematic development of Black theology two poles stand out “the Exodus and the praxis of Jesus the Messiah (Christology). Much of the earlier black theology revolves around themes and events that provide a powerful paradigm of liberation” (1987: 32).

That is Black Theology relies, like African independent Churches, on the Universality of a Deus Israel and Deus Christianorum to make a case for the Black Messiah. In his attempt to think of the theological practice and political praxis and the influence of Judaism, Bonganjalo Goba introduces the concept of a ‘corporate personality’. We are told, “Corporate personality means the embodiment of the community to the individual” it is “vividly illustrated in Israel” (1973:65). This concept aim to rid the oppressed population of the crass individualism that is associated with capitalist and materialist conception of kinship that is as it “manifests itself in Israel and Africa [precisely because kinship is also practiced in Africa] is the unique idea of solidarity, a social consciousness that transcends individualism” (Ibid: 95). One would not forget that social consciousness is at the core of BC’s political strategy that arises out of the need for black solidarity. Goba is universalizing and historicizing this theme in order to complement the Deus Noir and Deus Christianorum through Deus Israel. Boesak following on this theme and symbol of Black liberation theology states that.

The theology of liberation is thus not merely “God-talk”, theoretical reasoning, a *logos* about the *Theos*. It proclaims the word of which has always been a liberating, creative deed. It is participating in the liberating activity of Yahweh who has revealed Himself in Jesus the Messiah. The description of Black Theology as a Christological theology, meaning that Jesus Christ is at the centre, is correct. It means that the passion moving black theologians is essentially a *Passion Jesu Christi* (1988: 17).

What we cannot dismiss is the fact that these reinterpretations of cultures and history occur in the background of western secularity and ideologies of modernity. This theme is uncriticised in the attempt to think about African and Black theology, instead what is criticized is western culture and theology but not the western secularity and ideologies of modernity. Proponents of Black Liberation Theology use the ideas and western episteme to talk of a new

God; this is what Black African Muslims should use as a point of critique. In this sense these theologies continue the Judea-Christian transcendental or colonial socio-symbolic paradigm introduced by the missionaries. Mudimbe is correct, perhaps in taking stock of the failures of the post-colonial African states and their African theologies when he states that.

De facto, this trend sees itself as applied theology and explicitly submits politics of those who would become princes of a new organization of power. In doing so, it joins in the service of new political chauvinisms and idols, repeating the missionary's dream of conciliating God's glory and Caesar's power.

Black Islamic Theologies: Indigenous Knowledge & Resistance

The hegemony of Christian missionaries in the South African spiritual/religious sphere, closed down any alternative identity for the Black-colonized except conversion to Christianity or an African "traditional religious identity" that also produced indigenous forms of Christianity. We have seen how missionaries and anthropologists constructed this indigenous or traditional theology. Hence, we have to understand the radical articulation of a "Black Theology" under the ideological supervision of the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s as seeking precisely to continue the moment of rupturing this legacy of White Christian theological methods and address the problem of Black suffering by introducing a new subject of politics and theology. However, it has proven insufficient to initiate a decisive "break" with the transcendental colonial socio symbolic reality of black people in South Africa⁹⁹. Theological discourses are ultimately discourses on culture and history responding to the cultural genocide initiated by settler colonialism and the deeper thought structures of sovereign modernity. Hence, the colonial library or Africanism as a scholarly discipline and political power becomes a modern standard and it continues the dominance of the settler colonial status quo in the postcolony.

⁹⁹ Here we might add the rearticulating of Black Theology in the Postcolonial post-apartheid time in South Africa in light of student's protests for a Decolonial education (Dalamo 2017; Kobe 2018). We stand to be vindicated. If Black theology initiated a break with the colonial socio symbolic, then there would be no need to espouse this theology in services of the masses of Black people who are in a state of alienation and dehumanization. Because of the colonial heritages i.e. landless, anti-black racism, the continuance of the Judea Christian socio symbolic, poverty, colonized knowledge, sabotage of the black public school system, neoliberal unequal economic possibilities, white monopoly capitalism, state violence by the "Black princes" of the independent postcolonial postapartheid state.

It is here in this limit of thought and action as it has been judged by history of subjection and the existential reality of the black colonized subject where we can articulate or fathom the emergence of the *new* in the situation, which is the Black African Muslim subjectivity or theologies. I am not suggesting that Islam aims to do precisely what Christianity has done for black and native theologies, it is particularly in this instance of discourse where an Islamic African episteme raises its head because of the omission of these two discourses of missionaries and resistance and its anti-Cartesian methods. During the struggle between Christianity and indigenous material spirituality, other discourses are precluded precisely because they are not imagined and are unknown to the colonial universe. We can only gesture towards these discourses and practices for example of Islam, precisely because they have not formed any part of the discursive formation of anticolonial resistance and acquiescence from the point of view of the settler colonial Enlightenment episteme. It is also significant to highlight a strand of thought that questioned and rejected the efficacy of the civilizing mission.

Whilst discursively colonial discourses have muted this strand of thought and action, Zine Magubane (2004) has highlighted how next to the discourses about “Africans possessing their love and respect to Europeans” there is a “powerful, although much more muted, strand of thought within indigenous thought” (130-131). Far from blackness, being determined by whiteness, at least in its representation of the (non) human, resistance through refusal has been the symbolic mark of the African subject’s contradiction and antagonism to colonial agents and its order. Magubane argues, “refusal took much more subtle forms, like avoidance, deferral, or laughter. Chief Maqomo employed avoidance ...other Africans responded with either bemused silence or, more frequently, outright laughter” (131). Refusal to accept missionary message were sometimes greeted with laughter, “David Livingstone described how his efforts to teach Tswana to sing and praise were greeted with “fits of laughter” (Sedgwick and Monk 1858: 156).

One of the leading missionaries reverend William Shaw “recalled trying to instruct a group of Xhosa on how to kneel on the grass and speak to God.” His pupils collapsed into such fits of laughter and “worship was rendered impracticable” (1874:30, 112 quoted in Magubane 2004: 131). It is with all seriousness and sacrifice that the missionary enterprise gained ground, but it is also the Africans insistence that missionary performances were but veil of the military

drills against them that inspired these acts of refusal. Whilst Magubane is concerned with “unmasking and unveiling the meanings of whiteness” to discredit the modes of humanity the white settlers have always claimed to have gifted Africans in the colonial context, she sees these acts as having a bearing on the psychological revolt “denying the colonizer that validation” (2004:133). Furthermore, unmasking could take the form of renarrating the history of settlement most central being the helplessness and dependency English and Dutch settlers faced caused by their reliance on African generosity and government aid. Recalling how Africans of Khoikhoi descent “were clearly aware of the importance of this history to the settlers’ sense of personal identity, and therefore challenge settlers’ dominance” (2004: 135).

Challenging the notion of African servility and White mastery one “Andries Stoffels, a Khoikhoi resident” tells us that the “settlers were then without horse or cow or sheep or hen-built the Hottentos lowered the prices of their horses, their cows to 12s., the oxen to 22s. Out of compassion for them” or “Martinus Van Bulen expressed his desire to remind the British emigrants that he had “assisted some of them greatly. I plowed for them. I used to shoot game for them. I used to lend them my old horse”” (2004: 135). The strategy of refusal took into consideration the need to aesthetically assign whiteness with its corresponding symbol of terror, barbaric humanity in the colonial context. Refusal could also be revolutionary and radical in the colonial context even with humour, Biko speaking about the black subject notes how “... in the privacy of his toilet his face twists in silent condemnation of white society but brightens up in sheepish obedience as he comes out hurrying in response to his master’s impatient call” (2004: 30). However, we should not mistake the toilet, as an autonomous space of resistance, for there is reason the black subject to go into the toilet to express his discontent with the status quo, precisely because social reality is a space of symbolic death.

Not that in spaces like the toilet the colonised subject gets rejuvenated with the ‘spirit’ of pure subjectivity through a rationalist process of internalisation like Sartre’s transcendental subject because it is somehow able to escape from the grip of colonial power. To the contrary, the toilet also remains a place of limit for colonial power. In a sense, even in the toilet, he or she still bears the image of aberration that is assigned to him or her by the apartheid legal registers. Or, to use Achille Mbembe (2019), like the township and the Bantustans or any other black enclave and space, the toilet was still within the horizon of the biopolitical power and necropolitical strategies of the

apartheid regime of violence. That is, although the toilet sometimes seemed to be independent of the colonial gaze or colonial systems of control and surveillance, it does not necessarily mean that it was able to function as a space of marginality which remained inaccessible to this machinery (2023: 4-5).

A radical refusal “becomes the only available resource for generating a productive process of political practice.” A political practice realising that, in the case of both Biko and Magubane’s resisters, “how the colonised subject has no potential of being duped by the symbolic order or sociogenic condition of the colonial social structure” (2023: 5). Maxaulane’s radical refusal echoes Magubane in the sense that both these conceptions of refusal that are ultimately sources of black revolutionary resistance which is borne out of the muted discourses and acts of indigenous thought which refuses the colonial symbolic structure, its discourses and creates the ability for the colonised to descent ‘into real hell’¹⁰⁰ or death¹⁰¹. I want it to position the Black Islamic subject in between both Maxaulane’s and Magubane’s conceptions of refusal, indeed our subject emerges from the black or indigenous strand of thought that evaded colonialist enframing, discourses or historiography. Whilst Islamic praxis has not formed part of the corpus of anti-colonial discourses in South Africa, it emerges out of this indigenous strand of occluded discursive and existential-phenomenological resistance. Together with Sherman Jackson, we are contributing to the expansion of the concept of Black religion by including Islam in conversation with Black liberation theology¹⁰². By firstly defining black religion as having to do with a spiritual protest against anti-Blackness in the world, Jackson is trying to dislodge or decenter Christianity or Judaism from the episteme of black spiritual resistance. In this disarticulation Jackson wants “Blackamerican Sunni Islam” to look “to Sunni Tradition not as an end but as the beginning of religious deliberation” this is because there is a need to eliminate conflation of the “East” with “Islamic” particularly in situation of settler colonialism and anti-Blackness. For Jackson what is important is to bring “the classical

¹⁰⁰ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*. (London: Pluto Press, 1967), p. 2.

¹⁰¹ That is, by taking death as a social historical reality of the colonised subject, Biko comes to realise that political practice is not primarily a qualification of rational humanist actions which are embedded in the dynamism of a self-conscious identity.

¹⁰² See Sherman A. Jackson in *Islam & The problem of Black Suffering* (2009). By Black religion Jackson is suggestion “a folk oriented, holy protest against antiblack racism” (p. 5).

Sunni theological tradition to bear on the modern debate over black theodicy¹⁰³” (p.4) signaling that black theodicy does not belong to the Judea-Christian transcendental. This means the concept of theodicy takes a different turn for the black subject, different from what Jackson calls traditional theodicy which means white theodicy that tends to “focus on suffering in a more abstract and neutral forms of physical illness, broken relationships, bereavement, natural catastrophe, or war” (Ibid:5).

The tendency of this white form of suffering which is hegemonic in the modern world assumes that suffering can be “random and meaningless” and in fact if it is directed at a particular group let us say the “children of God” then, it is assumed that they will participate in changing their situation if not them “certainly the[ir] sons and daughters of, say, Christian martyrs or Jews at Auschwitz, might be able to avoid future persecution by simply ceasing to be Christians or Jews” (ibid: 5). As he says

Black theodicy rejects this impersonal, “voluntary,” random framework as being oblivious to and incapable of accommodating the reality of “ethnic suffering,” where a “discrete and insular” group is singled out for suffering that is at once enormous, mal-distributed, and transgenerational.... On the contrary, it is directed, highly “personal,” and, in its transgenerational persistence, suggestive of something like a cosmic apartheid. In this regard, black theodicy also parts with the main concerns of theodicy as traditionally treated by Islamicists, in whose work the focus has been almost exclusively on God in light of the more abstract question of “optimism,” that is whether this is the best world that God could have created and why God did not create a better one.

Jackson wants to give a different conception of the omnipotent and omnibenevolent God because he sees a shortfall in the way black theologians discuss these issues and their impact on the liberation of blackness. Blackness here is understood in its physical traits, and as an

¹⁰³ Theodicy here is understood “(from the Greek Theos, God, the divine, and dike, justice)” and “refers to the attempt to reconcile the presence of evil in the world with the existence of a God who is unlimited in power and goodness”. “As for black theodicy, as a unique and specific genre of theodicy, it focuses on the problem of evil in the more specific context of the historical, communal suffering of Blackamericans. It begins by asking how an all good, all-powerful God could sponsor or allow morality that is as grand and sustained as the evil of American slavery and all that has come in its train”(2009:11).

ontological blackness conceptualized by jingoistic and fundamentalist white supremacists. Blackness as conceptualized by blacks is framed as a liberatory instrument which rejects the ontological blackness as propagated by white supremacists' formulation. That this conception of blackness is predicated on resistance and suffering has a bearing on theological speculation on the importance of theology of liberation. The problem of black theodicy as we have encountered it has been the justification of black suffering and the reduction of this suffering; I mean to suggest that black theology has been preoccupied with justifying the resistance to black suffering without impinging on God's omnipotence and omnibenevolent. This seems to be the case in William R. Jones' *Is God a White Racist?* (1973) and A. B Pinn's *Why Lord?* (1995) that Jackson symptomatically reads. Reading Jones, Jackson argues that what was important for Jones was whether God cared as opposed to being preoccupied by the question whether god does exist.

This question should lead the black theologian to the second question that asserted but failed to prove "God's benevolent predisposition towards blacks". This question having failed to lead to a curative to black suffering it could no longer become an effective "prescription for black liberation both theologically and practically." If this is, the case Jones critiqued black theologians precisely for committing to the construction of God's omnipotence (God's all-powerfulness) and divine omnibenevolence (God's all-goodness). I suspect that what Jones is up to is to question the lack of criticism of this traditional theological conception of God, which in our case together with Mudimbe we have identified as originating with the missionary doctrines, and the advent of colonialism. The consequences for black theology are; if God is omnipotent, then why does black suffering, not end? The failure of eradicating black suffering leads to the charge of divine racism. Then if God is omnibenevolent this must be seen to mean black suffering operates to the benefit of blacks, leading to a charge of pacifism which "implicitly binds God fearing Blackamericans to accept their suffering and not oppose it" (2009: 14).

This static conception of God perpetuates black racism and quietism, moreover for the militant theologians, the black theologian it does not resolve the practicality of black liberation. Hence, it becomes difficult to hold on to these two static and immobile conceptions of God precisely because they advocate for a sort of resignation, if not, then they invoke a praxis that is based on a Deus Israel and Deus Christianorum and the occlusion of the

specificity of black suffering. To deal with this lack of criticism in Black Theology, Jones proposes two conceptions that might be an alternative: secular humanism and humanocentric theism (1973: 177). As Jackson argues, “Jones insists that Blackamericans must come to see all suffering as something to be eliminated and rely entirely on their own powers and commitments in their effort to eradicate it” (2009: 15). This humanocentric theism aims to deal precisely with divine racism and quietism by putting the onus of the removal of black suffering on humans who are being faced with the situation. Introducing Pinn’s book Jackson argues that “while he applauds Jones’s move to denude God of God’s all-determinative power,” Jones according to Pinn is “retaining the blind commitment to omnibenevolence that he purportedly set out to refute” (2009: 16). Unlike Jones’ humanocentric theism which Pinn sees as weak humanism, he proposes “Black humanism” which is a “humanism that is devoid of any theological commitment to the necessity of God’s existence” Jackson continues

Approaches to Black suffering that leave intact God’s goodness and existence are doomed to collapse into redemptive suffering apologetics. Theistic approaches to this question are inherently trapped within a theoretical game (i.e., compromise with evil/suffering). Only a questioning of God’s existence provides a working resolution (i.e., a full rejection of redemptive suffering).

This leads Jackson to assert that the problem with Jones, Pinn and the black theologians is their assumption that omnipotence and omnibenevolence are represented only by such meanings because for them all theodicies “virtually silence all those who suffer, because their suffering is seen as good” (Ibid: 17). This of course is not the only meaning and understanding of omnipotence and omnibenevolence that exists precisely because these are elastic concepts that vary with different theological/cosmological traditions. Jackson goes on to compare Christian Black theological debates with classical schools of Sunni Muslims¹⁰⁴ (Mu’tazilism, Ash’arism, Maturidism, and Traditionalism).

¹⁰⁴ According to Fazlur Rahman (1987) “The first schism in Islam started very early, about two and a half decades after the Prophet’s death, when the third caliph ‘Uthman was assassinated in his home by rebels who accused him of nepotism and grave maladministration. Debate ensued as to whether ‘Uthman’s murder was justifiable....But others thought that the killing could be justified because ‘Uthman had committed grave errors. These people were later called Kharijites, held that any Muslim

The Mu'talizilites, for example, while holding God to be omnipotent, saw no problem with human beings having both freedom of choice and the independent ability to instantiate their choices to literally create their own acts. The Ash'arites, meanwhile, like the Maturidites and Traditionalists, flatly denied that this kind of complete, independent human (moral) agency could be reconciled with God's monopoly on effective power and or God's inextricable enterprise. Yet even if they generally upheld human choice, even as they imputed to it various and not always unambiguous degrees of independence. In sum, despite their emphatic and explicit endorsement of divine omnipotence, none of the schools of classical Muslim theology embraces as their going opinion the denial of human choice. At the same time, none of them, certainly not explicitly, deny human agency. Ultimately, all of them insists that human beings are responsible for human actions, especially the evil they wreak (Jackson 2009:160).

Signaling that human beings are the "chronological "first causes"" of all intentions of human acts, which is human beings have the capacity to will evil/good already without any additional grant from God. However, notice how this human can also turn to God "for assistance in avoiding the ravages of this inherent agency." This gives us a chance to see how the Sunni classical schools disagrees with Jones' charge of divine racism and quietism because the Muslims any revolt or rebellion against evil of suffering is not tantamount to rebellion against God. Outside of the Mu'tazilites, all schools seem to disagree with Jones on the relationship

who commits a grave sin or error, but does not repent-that is, does not mend his actual behaviour-becomes an infidel no matter how many time he/she professes the faith of Islam, prays, and fast... This stand was soon countered by the Murijites, who held that any sane person who, without trying to deceive others by lying, professes the Islamic faith is a Muslim and may not be excommunicated" (p.87). As for whether his/her deeds are good or evil, the final judgements will be passed by Allah on the Day of Judgement, and it is not up to a human to judge another human in an ultimate sense.... After these early sectarian opinions, the first systematic school of Islamic theology was that of Mu'talizilites, which arose in the first half of the eighth century. The Mu'tazilites held that a Muslim who is guilty of some heinous crime (like theft, murder, or adultery) ceases to be Muslim but does not become an infidel either. The Mu'tazilites called themselves "people of God's Unity and Justice." By God's Unity, they meant that God is only an essence without attributes; if one conceives of God as having attributes then one is guilty of polytheism....Against the extreme Mu'tazilite rationalism a reaction arose, spearheaded by the theologian al-Ash'ari (d. 942). Ash'arism, however, in its opposition to Mu'tazilitism, went to the other extreme... (Rahman 1987: 1-10).

between omnipotence and omnibenevolence, precisely because God is pleased or simply incapable of eradicating black suffering. For the “Ash’arites, Muridites, and Traditionalists all embrace the concepts of divine power that challenge the notion that the only reason to have power is to place it in the service of desire, in order to translate wants and preferences into reality (ibid: 159).

The theological debate about the goodness of God, following Jackson we might say, “is ultimately a negotiated product, the medium through which religious communities conceptualize and talk about God in the public space where the only valid knowledge is objective knowledge to which everyone has access to.” It is this conception of God, of theology that has plagued Black Theology of liberation and African independent churches, as seen through their static conceptions of the omnipotent and omnibenevolent God. That is, they can and have only thought about theology from the western Christian perspective because of colonial missionary churches and education as well as slavery in the context of America. The results have been that existentially Islam is a different material transcendental from Christianity and modern science in the Black communities in the context of settler colonialism. The conception is bound to reverberate differently because “Time and again we witness in Qur’anic depictions of the prophets and their communities ...It is God’s relationship with (the black subject) that informs God’s actions towards them, not a fixed list of names and attributes, even if such a list might rightfully apply to God” (2009:160-2).

Islamic theological debates are as interesting for they are outside the conceptions of God encountered by the black-colonized as proselytes to Christianity. What is important for Black Islamic praxes is to demonstrate how Islamic cosmologies are dependent on indigenous thought at least in the context of South Africa. Islamic cosmologies and indigenous thought cannot be divorced because the discourses of theology in Islam differ radically from African Christian thought and the traditional religions constructed by colonial sciences. What becomes revealing here is that the archaeology of blackness is not merely concerned with seeking origins or historical events, what should become a lesson to the student of African theologies, in this instance, is that discursive formation tells us about what has not been included in the “discursive formation” of African intellectual and radical tradition. In our case, I used the situations and circumstances where the episteme reaches its limits and breaks under constant pressure of articulation or interpretation. Black African Muslims can be

articulated or identified in discursive practices because they are situated outside colonial and anti-colonial discourses in settler colonial South Africa. The *raison d'être* of any Islamic emergence in Blackness is based upon omission.

Chapter 2: Bio-Cultural and Discursive Engineering: The making of the modern, Black-colonized subjects

So, we have finally to consider the symbolic representation of death, the silence of the conquered, who, on the psychoanalyst's couch, represent another silence, the massive and shameful silence of men who discover themselves incapable of explaining to their children what happened (Mudimbe 1994:183).

When Goebbels, the brain behind Nazi propaganda, heard culture being discussed, he brought out his revolver. That shows that the Nazis—who were and are the most tragic expression of imperialism and of its thirst for domination—even if they were all degenerates like Hitler, had a clear idea of the value of culture as a factor of resistance to foreign domination (Cabral National Culture).

The colonisers themselves demonstrated little scientific or creative talent (Mazisi Kunene: SOME ASPECTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN LITERATURE 1996)

Hence, the notion of God does not seem to make sense any longer out of the particular history of an environment and the human culture which produces it and then colonizes it (Mudimbe 1991: 21).

“Malinke are full of duplicity because deep down inside they blacker than their skin, while the words they speak are whiter than their teeth. Are they fetish –worshippers’ or Muslims? A Muslim heeds the Koran, a fetish worshipper follows the Koma; but in Togobala, everyone publicly proclaims himself a devout Muslim.” (Kourama 1981:538)

The Black Islamic Imaginary

In contexts of subjugation and exploitation, narrative and the imagination also become crucial sites from which the black radical imagination could embark on a wide range of personal and social imperatives aimed at making sense of and alleviating experiences of disenchantment (2017: 348)¹⁰⁵.

The black Islamic imaginary in a settler colonial south Africa, as Peterson precisely points out, is “a personal and social imperatives aimed at making sense of and alleviating experiences of disenchantment.” One way of thinking about the imaginary is as “the register with the closest links to what people experience as non-psychoanalytic quotidian reality. Who and what one “imagines” other persons to be, what one thereby “imagines” they mean when communicatively interacting, who and what one “imagines” oneself to be, including from the imagined perspectives of others—all of the preceding is encompassed under the heading of this register. Such a description indicates the ways in which the Imaginary points to core analytic ideas like transference, fantasy, and the ego” (Johnston 2022).

As an exploration and contribution to the narrative and black radical imagination, the black Islamic imaginary is a rupture or break with the ideological narrative of colonial modernity and its assimilatory mode of being or subjectivation. And as demonstrated in the previous chapter, the making of the Muslim African imaginary in the antislavery revolts is a revolutionary break with Arab-Mediterranean or Indian-Malay Muslim antiblack logics and ideological narratives. The black Islamic subjects’ refusal to be assimilated to the antiblack logics of Arab-Mediterranean Islam and modernity’s sovereign thought structures (the

¹⁰⁵ Bhekizizwe Peterson (2019) Spectrality and inter-generational black narratives in South Africa, *Social Dynamics*, 45:3, 345-364.

current post-colonial dominant status quo) and its postcolonial others is what reveals these African Muslim subjects as a tangent and therefore calls for an invention of a narrative using theories of education and literature.

To be very clear the black Islamic imaginary cannot be enclosed within the bounds of the modern nation state territory or intellectual conceptions. This invention of a black Islamic narrative is located within the experience of “black social life, which is to say the social life of the alternative” (Moten 2016: 13), and or as Wally Serote writes, “What’s in This Black “Shit”” (1972: 8). Choosing the text as a site of struggle in this chapter, we will demonstrate how the black Islamic imaginary is located at the site of the real, the site specific of a historical poetic and educational embodiment that articulates a revolutionary culture of existence.

If the previous chapter dealt with eliciting the long durée of the Muslim African discourses and therefore the imaginary, this chapter will take seriously how this imaginary is a decisive and poetic mode of literary and educational narrative aimed at making meaning outside the current modes of language and interpretation or literary criticism¹⁰⁶. That’s because the text has played a significant role in the embodiment of civility in the colony as a way of fashioning subjects or as a way of engendering an intellectual space amongst the colonised black subjects.

If conversion to Christianity served to initiate a cut or break¹⁰⁷ in the *real* symbolic conception of life by introducing a Cartesian mode of epistemology through colonial violence, then it is the formation of the text, writing and reading that enables us to witness the cultural expression or the engineering of the transformed colonised subject’s imaginary. The text having had an important role in the propagation of Christianity and the structural genocide of native culture, should be subjected to inquiry specifically because it gives rise to colonial discourses and performances that will be embodied and then resisted by the colonised African subject situated in the same epistemological grid. As Hallaq has pointed out, history

¹⁰⁶ In his essay “Reflections of Recent American ‘Left’ Literary Criticism” (1979), Said argues that American literary criticism had undergone processes of deliberate technical specialization, which valorised methodological refinement and style, but without any investment in the study of authority and power in literary production (20-21).

¹⁰⁷ Fred, Moten (2003) *In The Break: The Aesthetics Of The Black Radical Tradition*. University Of Minnesota Press.

and Orientalism are methods of re-defining the “Orient’s” temporal location, giving it a new identity and forming its colonial subjects who no longer can imagine their own past outside the purview of modern historical” or literary narratives (2018: 114). We want to argue that the black Islamic subjects’ imaginary veers away from such performative subjugational acts, making them the *new* Black and Islamic subjects¹⁰⁸.

Epistemic sovereignty leads to discursive genocide.

To begin with the Black African colonized subject, tracing the roots of the discourses of African otherness Mudimbe argues that the “idea of Africa” is a “product of the West and was conceived and conveyed through conflicting systems of knowledge. From Herodotus onward, the West’s self-representations have always included images of peoples situated outside its cultural and imaginary frontiers” (1994: xi). Narrative fiction becomes crucially important, the point being as Said argued, stories are “at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method the colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their history” (Said 1993: xiii). From antiquity, the medieval, and the modern era, Euro-American discourses of black otherness and orientalism have persisted in the West and gained status among Enlightenment and post Enlightenment writers, travellers, missionaries, soldiers, mercenaries, scientists, thinkers or philosophers who all contributed to the idea of Africa and therefore of blackness and the Orient as an Other of the West.

They produced their writings in the intellectual and imaginative territories of Empire and assimilated the African as a paradigm of difference (1994: xii). *This difference catapulted the formation of education and literacy in the settler colony alongside religious conversion.* Precisely because it is mission education that gave rise to what we call modern forms of African Literature in English and in African languages, dramatic arts and performance in

¹⁰⁸ What is important for us in this section of the chapter is to elucidate the methods of textual production hinging on the argument that the text and discursive performances have a socio-historical and epistemological context. This will allow us to demonstrate how the aim of the colonialist text is to transform the native’s minds and reality by manipulating the three registers of the psyche (the imaginary, symbolic and real)¹⁰⁸.

theatre. Missionary activities gave rise to class formation between Africans¹⁰⁹, to ideological narratives of the nation(lism)¹¹⁰, imaginary as it is *a la* Anderson (1984), and the contradictions of the literary and reading public in the socio-political structure of the colony. From a black Islamic imaginary, Blackness has come to be imagined and articulated using the Christian-secular transcendental thought structures. It is our contestation that what is revolutionary about the Black Muslim subject is this distance created with the western transcendental socio symbolic structure. This is to insist that the broken claim to connection to the black radical tradition through Islam is the novelty. All the while maintaining our argument that literature and culture were not neutral in the colonial adventures and they engendered a particular Pan African/black thought that displaced other non-Cartesian and non-western traditions such as Islamic learning for example. Our archaeology has to begin with the missionary enterprise and its subjectivation of the colonial subject.

Written literature amongst black South Africa's owed its emergence to the spread of mission education and its concomitant endeavours with studying, classifying African languages in the nineteenth century. The new African intelligentsia were the products of mission schools, and they exhibited well into the twentieth century ambiguous and paradoxical relations with missions, Christianity, the 'civilising mission', the 'Enlightenment' and colonial modernity (Peterson 2012: 292).

What made Christianity seem like the superior culture was/is its bond with the secularism (theology of progress) that displaced Christian thinking in the first place. It is why in the colonies Christianity cannot be dissociated from western culture or what we call secularism, if this epistemological differentiation did not appear to make sense to the early-colonised subjects it is because it was entangled with discourses of civility or colonial discourses of progress. One of the ways of exhibiting this civility was in the implementation of schools in the mission station as a way of enabling the colonised to imbibe Christian thinking and foster a native intellectual movement. However, before we analyse this phenomenon particularly in South African settler colonialism, Wael Hallaq (2018) following Michel Foucault, insists that

¹⁰⁹ See (ed) Karin, Barber (2006) *Africa's Hidden Histories: Everyday Literacy and Making the Self*. Indiana University Press.

¹¹⁰ See Manu Goswami "Rethinking the Modular Nation Form: Toward a Sociohistorical Conception of Nationalism" (2002).

we should see modern education as part of the sovereign thought structure of modernity that worked internally in Europe first before it was modulated in the colonies and meant as a disciplinary technique to engender “docility and obedience.”¹¹¹ For Hallaq modern education

¹¹¹ Colonial roots of modern education demonstrate this reality, according to Seroto the beginning of education in the Cape Colony “was established in 1658, and this focused mainly on the slaves’ intellectual and moral welfare”¹¹¹ by the Dutch East India Company. The reason for this education stemmed for the fact that “the missionaries came to (South Africa) with the aim of spreading the Gospel of Jesus to a heathen population” (1999: 40). That education was meant to construct a slave subject that is obedient and true to the ideals of civilization of the Dutch and later the English settlers is contained in slave-colonial history. Hence, it was important to control the movement of the slave bodies and the construction of legislation, “In 1754, a Batavian slave code known as statue of India was instituted as the Cape to control the perceived dangers posed by the population (Baderoon 2018: 4). Fearing resistance and rebellion, the congregation or “the gaze of large numbers” of slaves inspired fear to the settlers. In the Eastern Cape, the first school was built in “1799 the first school for Black people was established near what is now called King Williams Town, by Dr J T Van Der Kemp of the London Missionary Society” (SA [U] 1936:9 quoted in Seroto 2000: 20). It was not until the British colonialists settled when the missionaries began playing a significant role in the education of the natives in the rural areas. A turning point in the education of Black people came when Sir George Grey was appointed Governor of Cape in 1854. Grey regarded education as an important factor in the subjugation of black people, and persuaded the British Government to subsidise missionary institutions so that they could train the black youth to act as interpreters, evangelists and schoolmasters amongst their own people, which were largely in the rural areas (SA [U] 1936: 10). The education of black people was to be in accordance with the roles they were to play in the rural areas (Seroto 2000: 21). Between 1886 and 1903, the missionaries in the former Transvaal administered, controlled and financed their schools¹¹¹. In all the four colonies (the Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal), the administration of the schools was controlled by the Heads of Provincial Education Department¹¹¹ individual schools were generally under the charge of multiple missionary societies. The reasons for Black schools to have their own administration was nothing but the Manichean delirium à la Fanon of the colonial context and most importantly as laying the long-term vision of an asymmetrical relationship between the black colonized subjects and white colonialists’ imbeciles. Charles Loram one of the most racist educators of the twentieth century in South and East Africa further argued that black people needed an education differentiated from that of White people and that therefore their school system should have been administered separately from that of the White people (Loram 1917:80-83). It is no coincident that it was the missionaries who implemented the colonial strategy of educating the natives for the sake of constructing subjects geared towards the civilized and progressive colonial status quo. A subject who could be assimilated through difference that is, “the foundation of Western education in Africa was laid by Christian missionaries who were eager to use literacy training to introduce Christianity and win converts to their religion” (Omolewa 2006: 267). Education and the theology of progress were handmaidens *signalling a rupture in African cultural expressions and the inauguration of a new ontology and cosmology*. Relying on evolutionary assumptions or taxonomy, education was supposed to transform the backwardness of the native to the theology of progress inaugurated by secularism and Christianity. Social Darwinist racial theories

supported by Eugenics¹¹¹ were at the forefront of advocating for separation between white and black schools in order to assign races to their rightful position in society. This division in education as well as in colonial institutions in South Africa has left a remarkable legacy that continues to pose challenges in the post-colonial present¹¹¹ particularly in the field of education haunted by the persistent problem of settler colonialism. *Notice how the transfer of educational authority through legislation in the colony shifts together with issues of land dispossession and territorial sovereignty.* In 1948 the National Party, under the leadership of Dr D F Malan, triumphed at the colonial polls and they immediately enacted the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959, and the Bantu Education Act of 1953. To understand why racial theories of eugenics continue to be detrimental to the black subjects in the educational sector one has to analyse the contemporary South African university [which] may be said to come in five “types” that have been brought together to reflect the differentiated tiers inherited from apartheid: (1) Formerly white and English (also referred to as open or “liberal”) universities, started between 1829 and 1904 (the Universities of Cape Town, South Africa and the Witwatersrand¹⁶ and Rhodes University); (2) Formerly white, Afrikaans universities, founded between 1866 and 1908 (Universities of Pretoria and the Free State and Stellenbosch University); (3) What were sometimes referred to as “bush” universities, each largely intended for a particular black ethnic/racial group and often located in the homeland or Bantustan designated for that group. These emerged from 1959 through the 1970s (the Universities of the Western Cape, Venda, and Zululand and Fort Hare¹⁷ and Mangosuthu University of Technology); (4) Universities that amalgamated two or more of the previous three types in the 1990s through “mergers” (the Universities of Johannesburg, KwaZulu-Natal, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Walter Sisulu University, Tshwane University of Technology and Vaal University of Technology); and (5) Universities formed post-apartheid, largely in the 2000s (Universities of Limpopo and Mpumalanga, Sol Plaatje University, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Durban Institute of Technology and Tshwane University of Technology) (Collis-Buthelezi 2017: 9).

These institutional demarcations have to do with how the structure of education has been constructed in South Africa particular demonstrating how primary and secondary, private and public schooling follow this structure of thought. The university in South Africa since the 1994 civil rights reform has been implicated in this sovereign thought structure of modernity, where “instead of [being] the powerful centres of production of, and involvement with, ideas they were supposed to be, every successive reform since 1994 has aimed at transforming universities either into appendices of the corporate world or mere ‘factories’ in the service sector of the economy” (Mbembe 2012: 8). For us, the genealogy of this desire for post-primary school and post-secondary school is not separated from what Omolewo argues in his article “Educating the “Native”: A Study of the Education Adaptation Strategy in British Colonial Africa, 1911-1936.” That is “Africans also gradually began to recognize the advantages and the attractions of post-primary education, especially the increased salaries and wages, and improved conditions of service” (2006: 268). Seroto for his part argues that there was little correlation between the education that was provided at schools and the culture of the general populace of the Black people. There was little interrelation between social structures such as the home and the school (2000: 49). Furthermore, the educational content of any institution is dictated by the aims of education as conceived by the authorities concerned, which is the sovereign thought structure of modernity with its uncontrolled desire for domination. One of the teacher training colleges in the Transvaal rural areas (now Limpopo province) was built by the Swiss Mission society named Lemana teachers’ training college¹¹¹, and it had Lemana Practising School that was attached to the Lemana

Institution. It was a small primary school with a low pupil enrolment. Students from Lemana normally did their practice teaching at this School (Mabunda 1995:103). The curriculum was firstly composed of religious instruction the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic. The precise embodiment of the Bible was seen as a gateway to moral training, which would ensure obedience, respect for authority on a continual basis (Transvaal Missionary Association 1907[a]:10)¹¹¹. Expanding on the theory of the teacher curriculum, Seroto opines "Native Lower Primary Teachers' Certificate (NTL) The Lower Teacher's Certificate was a two-year course. Applicants for this course were required to have passed Standard Six (SA [U] 1936:122). Teachers who managed to complete this course were allowed to teach up to Standard Two. Professional subjects such as blackboard work and drawing were included in the curriculum" (2000: 21). Native Higher Primary Certificate (NTH) The Higher Certificate was also a two-year course, but applicants were expected to have passed Standard Eight (Form III), with the following subjects in their curriculum: a Black language, English, Afrikaans, arithmetic, geography or history. Professional training included blackboard 52 work, and drawing (SA [U] 1936:38-39). These inferior courses were aimed at producing teachers who would serve a particular region, in this case, a rural region. For Omolewo, before the implementation of adaptation educational programs the "special overseas examination" by the colonial official and the infamous Phelps-Stokes philanthropic foundation. The subjects that were offered at the secondary level were: Group I had English, Group II had Religious Knowledge, History, Latin, Group III had Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra, Geography, Physics-with-Chemistry and Group IV had Drawing (2006: 276). Significant in these educational adventures in the settler colony, was the construction of higher learning for the cultivation of a native intelligentsia or 'elite'. Whereas in Nigeria the British colonial government was reluctant to promote secondary schooling for the native as one official of the U.S. foundation Phelps-Stokes published in a report, "Western education had little prospect for success in the African colonies because it was transplanted to a soil that was unwilling to let it grow." Eventually the British officials capitulated following the "establishment of colonial rule and the subsequent increase in the demand of clerks, messengers, interpreters, and other administrators needed to maintain control in the region (2000: 267-8). Meaning that Africans were to be consigned to the position of overseers of their own people and therefore classifying and dividing the community. However, in the settler colony, as Sundkler opines.

The centres of higher learning were instrumental in forming a numerically limited, highly educated class, an elite. Some of the missionaries among the Xhosa, Hlubi and particularly Mfengu, had precisely this aim in mind. William Shaw's generation of missions did not use the term 'elite', but like the concept, emphasizing that ambitious schools were designed for the sons of chiefs. The Watson Institution outside Grahamstown was 'established for the purposes of training young men for School Masters and Native Assistant Missionaries', with a view to creating 'a selected class of natives thereon' These should be instructed in the 'Three R's' and the Bible, and thus equipped could go forth 'to announce to their own countrymen the glad tidings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Christianized chief as agent of evangelization was an ideal not only of Cardinal Lovegerie and his White Fathers for missions in Central Africa, but also for nonconformist British preachers in the Cape" (2000: 359). Here it becomes important to pay attention to the modalities of engineering a subject into a colonized subject, if settler colonialism functions to annihilate the native culture, then here we see a strange phenomenon among Africans who have gained access to higher learning, Omolewa puts it thus.

as an aspect of the modern state's sovereignty developed in parallel to the industrial revolution which "replicated and intensified earlier forms of exploitation that had prevailed in Europe during the preindustrial and premodern periods" (2018: 100). This form of exploitation exacerbated socio-economic and political conditions and "gave rise to mob violence, especially amongst the urban population" which then, prompted the state to intensify the layers of surveillance. To deal with the level of violence stemming from this condition, one can think of the police apparatuses and an "unprecedented, vast prison system [that] was created. But crude physical force was not enough, and this the European rulers understood it well enough" (2018: Ibid). If brute force was/is not the answer for the arrangement of the order of things or for normativity, one would have to engage in a host of discursive and material constructions or engineering of the population to enforce the particular ideological normativity¹¹². This naturalised normativity will imply a coherent social order through the power of the state's legislation and regulation for the purposes of transforming individuals. Instead of using force as the everyday coercive institution, sustained discipline ensured the engineering of the individual and population and here the school was the first regulative mechanism.¹¹³

The workshop, the school, the army were subject to a whole micro-penalty of time (latenesses, absences, interruptions of tasks), of activity (inattention, negligence, lack of zeal), of behaviour (impoliteness, disobedience), of speech (idle chatter, insolence), of the body ('incorrect' attitudes, irregular gestures, lack of cleanliness), of sexuality (impurity, indecency). At the same time, by way of punishment, a whole series of subtle procedures was used, from light physical punishment to minor deprivations and petty humiliations. It was a question both of making the slightest departures from correct behaviour subject to punishment, and of giving a punitive function to the

¹¹² The population had to be educated in the ways of good conduct, and good conduct meant social order and, in a thoroughly capitalist system, an ability to work and produce. This was governmentality, elevated from to a household term to a state-managed project (Hallaq 2018: 100).

¹¹³ Systemically concomitant with the consolidation of the police apparatus, the school became a standard social institution by the end of the nineteenth century. The laws of education coerced parents to send their children school as the alternative was imprisonment. Primary education forced the great majority of Europe's children into a regimented system, mostly stern and punitive, where certain ideals were inculcated (Ibid 2018: 101).

apparently indifferent elements of the disciplinary apparatus: so that, if necessary, everything might serve to punish the slightest thing; each subject find himself caught in a punishable, punishing universality. 'By the word punishment, one must understand everything that is capable of making children feel the offence they have committed, everything that is capable of humiliating them, of confusing them: . . . a certain coldness, a certain indifference, a question, a humiliation, a removal from office' (La Salle, *Conduite* ' ', 204-5 quoted in Foucault 1995: 178).

Epistemologically, coercive institutions like the hospital, prison and school function to colonize the body through “extensive regulations, shaped by empirical, calculated and calculating methods were applied to these institutions for the purpose of disciplining of the body, producing submission to regulating and systematic training techniques” (2018: 101). This epistemic sovereignty ushers in a new mode of the human, the citizen and indeed the student, because it’s ushering of the theology of progress is also an exclusion based on the paradigm of difference. We can go further and argue that for the settler colonialist’s modern education was precisely suited for the black colonized subject. For Fanon “[T]his is because, as he argued colonization is also manifested by its means of implementation” (Gordon 2010:200). It is the mode of implementation that is violence *par excellence* that is not deliberated by scientific methods according to both Fanon and Gordon and that makes blackness exceed western rationality and we can add by making the African Other a nonhuman according to the epistemic sovereignty. This knowledge is sovereign because of its capacity to determine the techniques that ensure whether one is beholden to the living or dying in the colony (Mbembe 2019: 68). Because the body is a site of both empirical analysis and intelligibility, we can thus deduce that it was not only for control but also for the sake of training, “for the sake of remoulding, refashioning, and in short, re-creation of subjectivities though sovereignty unfettered by social concerns or ethical consequence.

Rather than enlarge the moral imagination and critical capacities of students, too many universities are now encouraged to produce would-be hedge fund managers, depoliticized students, and modes of education that promote a ‘technically trained docility.’; ... Corporate gifts flood into the universities making more and more demands regarding what should be taught. In emulating the corporate world, and being embedded within the state structures of education, the university is the institution

that cultivates the national-cum-economic subject who internalizes and reproduces modes of existence governed by sovereign domination and exploitation” (Hallaq 2018: 102).

Hallaq argues that inasmuch as modern education was introduced in the colonies, we firstly have to see this phenomenon as European in origin (to cast doubt on the certainty of the White subject) in a sense that before “the modern European subject was formed as a deployable colonist, he was already colonized as an epistemological subject who could think the world as a generic Orientalist” (2018: 103). This argument is meant to displace the certainty of European consciousness or presence in colonial discourses; it is an anti-colonial critique of European history of civility or the theology of progress through violence in the colonies. Hence, academia as we know it today is a domesticated structure of learning made possible by the necessary conditions of “sovereignty over nature- including over man” and “the rise and operation of the modern state.” So, the European colonized human through epistemological sovereignty of modernity could not help but see the world according to his colonization and hence the transposition and extension of this “structure and act of sovereign knowledge-of power” to the colonies in order to change the reality of the Other or the Orient and impose a history of subjection. It is the reason ethical doctrines in education concentrating on premodern Western traditions are “utterly useless for the modern state and for any type of such political power, even in its rudimentary form” (Ibid: 102-4).

This issue of an ethical subject in modernity is a catastrophe in a sense that Gordon following Sigmund Freud (2010) argues, “The response in the modern world has been the prioritizing of ethics as the condition of the better possibility of a more just world. The additional problem, however, as Freud has argued, is that ethics and justice, two expectations of modern liberal social and political thought, often have the consequence of producing more radicalized forms of alienation as cultural equivalents of an aim-inhibiting, neurotic, guilt-laden super ego (207). Hence, for the nationalist’s anti-colonial project of decolonization, ethics and justice represents and embody the continuation of the status quo for to seek justice in an unjust and

evil system is a contradiction,¹¹⁴ at best it is the normalization of the sovereign ontological reality.

In the colonial context, the situation was, as Aimé Césaire and Fanon observed a matter of microcosmic portents of the future: colonialism made it stupid for colonized people to act according to the ethics of the system, since ethics in such a system demanded the preservation of that system (Cesaire 2000). Secondly, modern education is an ethical project of assimilation and differentiation, and it is in the colony that we see the procedures of this discursive and material construction of the native subject, a slave to civility and the theology progress as part of western Christian culture¹¹⁵. This is nowhere more embodied than in the preservation of the colonial epistemology and its material gains by the colonised subjects (Said 1993; Wa Thiongo 2018; Hallaq 2018). We have to take seriously academia and its central domains as initiators of a discursive genocide with its genealogical roots embedded to (a philosophical worldview and culture) the hatred of nature-man and ultimately the Other and the Orient. The Black Islamic subject is able to launch a critique precisely because it is a new imaginarium in the colony.

The reality of Muslim Africans is that “classical Qur’an schooling and its contemporary manifestation are based on broadly held Islamic ideals about educating the whole of the human being rather than the narrow transmission of discursive knowledge. Islamic education is embodied knowledge” (Ware 2014: 4). Reichmuth adds that “Islamic first and foremost is supposed to provide the believer with access to the Qur’an, the Word of God, and the specific rituals, ethical norms, and patterns of behaviour that are derived from God’s message and

¹¹⁴ A contradiction that gives rise to challenging the antagonism that inheres in a colonial situation and it is precisely this antagonism that enables us to confront the project of ethics in order to smash the colonial status quo and give rise to a different understanding of the ethical within a different structure of thought, event and phenomena.

¹¹⁵ In 1863 Sir Langham Dale, the then Superintendent General of Education, further advocated this policy of "peaceful subjugation" by urging the British Government that the spreading of civilisation, by school instruction and the encouragement of industrial habits among the Black people in the rural border districts, were of primary importance to political security and social progress of the Colony (SA [U] 1936: 12). The British Government used schooling for Black people as an instrument to maintain peace and stability in the border districts (Seroto 2000: 21).

from the words and deeds of the Prophet” (2000: 419). This means that the Muslim body is an archive that is used to transmit, decode and actualize Islamic knowledge.

The body is seen to be an embodiment of lived practice, “this act engaged not only the tongue, the heart, and the intellect but the limbs as well” (2014: 1). As Ware points out these educational methods have changed throughout the Muslim world over the past 150 years as a result of the colonial incursions¹¹⁶, “secular education and new kinds of Islamic schools have come to prominence. Many-both within and without Islam- have come to look at the Qur’an schools across the vast epistemological divide (Ibid: 3). Furthermore, Islamic education “transmits much broader patterns of learning, which, beyond basic literacy, equally include a range of subjects: law, theology, and mysticism, Arabic grammar, poetry and literature, Islamic history, and finally a good deal of arithmetic, astronomy-cum-astrology and medicomagical therapeutics” (Reichmuth 2000: 419)¹¹⁷. Let me quote Ware on the beginnings of Qur’an schooling.

In Qur’an schools, children memorize and recite the Holy Book of Islam and learn to read and write the Arabic script. They are also introduced to the basic precepts of the religions [din]. Formal schools of this kind may date to the times of Islam’s caliph, ‘Umar b. al-Khattab (r. 634-44), who is sometimes credited with instituting the

¹¹⁶ Islamic learning and education came under new challenges in the colonial and postcolonial period. The colonial powers oscillated in their policies between suppression of Muslim resistance.... This also affected the position of Islamic scholars and educational institutions. For the Muslims themselves, Islamic learning and its reform became of primary importance, especially since new types of school education were being introduced by colonial administrators and Christian missionaries. As the political and military leaders of Muslims lost power, the Islamic scholars on the whole gained in communal influence and public reputation. In most Muslim regions, Muslim schools continued to run as private institutions, with or without recognition by the government, thus creating private school sector subsidised by the Muslim communities. This sector existed alongside public school system that was taking shape. Muslims also became increasingly committed to Western forms of education. Tension between the two systems found expression in different legal and organizational ways. Some countries ignored the Islamic sector; others gave it some recognition and tried to integrate it into the public educational system. From two systems, and shaped by the tensions between them, a new class of younger Muslims came up” (Reichmuth 2000:422).

¹¹⁷ The scholars, thinkers, and intellectuals, from East to West of Islamdom, were those whom we call ulama, jurists, judges, professors, Sufi Shaykhs, Quran specialists, hadith expert, writers, linguists, historians, biographers, travel-scholars, *kalam*-theologians, philosophers, astronomers, Tasawwuf philosophers, chemists, vision scientists, logicians, mathematicians, scholars of instruments (“technology specialists”), and a host of other scholars (See Hallaq 2018).

school's traditional weekend, which begins on Wednesday after noon prayer and ends after the noon congregational prayer Friday. Other reports suggest that children (like adults) memorized verses of the Qur'an during the lifetime of the Prophet himself (570-632) perhaps with the aid of inscriptions on wooden tablets (*alwah*) and the wide flat shoulder blades of camels and cattle. It is not clearer when the Qur'an school first came to sub-Saharan West Africa, though likely arrived with the early Muslims who crossed the Sahara in the eighth century. Qur'an schooling has played a fundamental role in building the Muslim societies of the African West for at least a thousand years. Nevertheless, little has been studied and is often fundamentally misunderstood (2014: 1-2).

Classical Islamic learning and schooling functions at different epistemological level as the current secular schooling, which is steeped in colonial capitalist ideology of destruction, the unbounded desire to dominate. Islamic subjectivation through knowledge of the practice of truths, or the "moulding of the human being" (Ware 2014: 49), which is important for the construction of the radical Black Islamic imaginary is grounded in a "cross-fertilization through what may be called dialectical traditions" (Hallaq 2018: 74). This dialectical tradition, as Hallaq shows, enabled a proximity between different fields and it was a subject of study that not only eludes modern secular education but was *predisciplinary* or in contemporary parlance an *interdisciplinary* approach to cultivating a moral subject (2018: 75). That is the proximity of these fields demonstrated that "the entire system's telos made such a proximity both necessary and inevitable, and stood behind the underlying ethos of moral instruction" that is it "connected abstract thought to modes of ethical conduct." As an example of such dialectical process of subject cultivation or the cultivation of knowledge:

This trenchantly "interdisciplinary"-or indeed *predisciplinary* education also explains certain modes of academic training and learning: it was often the case that a professor (*shaykh*) of hadith might sit as a student in the study circle (*halqa*, somewhat like a classroom) of a professor, at times his junior in age, who taught, say, logic, or that a logician might attend, as a student, the teaching circle of a law professor or linguist. Such practices were not just external forms; rather, they were indicative of a profound dialectical relationship between various fields of knowledge" (Hallaq 2018: 74).

Knowledge cultivation for ethical subjects in such a manner that the discursive and theoretical methods helped or aided in the pursuit of a spiritual or mystical life could be used to formulate modalities revealing how the Black Islamic imaginary subsists. What is impressive about Islamic schooling is an education that goes against the injustices in a society; the whole structure of knowledge cultivation is constructed in such a way that injustice becomes a challenge to societal functional structure. This explains why Islam legislates in the Qur'an against the wealth of the well-to-do, since it is the God's wealth the Muslims requires. As Reichmuth observed, not infrequently Islamic scholars and their students "stood at the centre of opposition and political change. This can be observed with particular clarity for the larger Islamic movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth century in West Africa. Such movements often started out as religious-reform and preaching movements before they became directly involved in political and military struggles" (2000: 421).

The reader will correct the ongoing argument if it is contradictory to what we have been illustrating, for we showed in the previous chapter how this revolutionary interpretation was derived and consolidated. Two of the approaches that Hallaq privileges are the Shari'a and Sufism, whilst the Shari'a is concerned with various technologies of cultivating subjects, Sufism, is "a highly individualized philosophical spirituality, navigated at a higher level of pious formation, and at times argued for the dispensability of the Shari'a for the true Sufi." Or as Ahmed as Amed defines it Sufism is "the theory and practice of holistic, experiential knowing of Divine Truth"(2016: 20).

Ultimately unlike western secular education which seeks to externally train, coerce, subjugate individuals and assimilate them to its epistemological desire to dominate, the black Islamic imaginary embodied education is "designed to operate internally, through deliberate and self-conscious choices of conduct and belief that the autonomous subject exercises upon his or her body." In this way Sufism and the Shari'a produces moral technologies that align with the cosmologies of Islam and put an emphasis on private or the psychoepistemic which no modern state could regulate or impose. In contrast the modern discursive tradition and its western Man possesses an *a priori* will that "grows out of an innate drive impulse" that culminate in an inclusive "thought structure which has been the basis of all realistic thinking since the Renaissance (Hallaq 2018: 89).

My argument is that education responsible for constructing an African imaginary is largely concerned with temporality in that the individual is regarded as originating from the terrestrial (land/terraqueous), but is also understood to be alienated from the extraterrestrial (celestial/heaven), and therefore requiring a hieratic revelation to find transcendence to attain celestial identification that would integrate the individual's time and space reality with the Decalogue manufactured supreme good of the Judeo-Christian revealed religion. Africans were conscripted to the Christian-secular western transcendental symbolic by entering and engaging in missionary or western education; the black intellectual tradition has been structured by this western consciousness phenomenon. From adult education 'night schools', elementary schools, primary and secondary, to teacher training colleges, the mission schools have been central in overturning or the metamorphosing of African imaginary and reality in the capitalist socio symbolic structure.

Theoretically, the Black Muslim subject is not governed by the epistemic sovereignty of Christianity and secularism, which has been central to African resistance and disciplinary techniques of the colonised subject. We are then not surprised to learn that "Africans perceived education to be an alternative source for economic security in a time of land dispossession¹¹⁸. These are the colonial discourses of embodiment that postcolonial and anticolonial theorists have taken for granted and continue to fail to identify as major exponents. Indeed, Scheler is correct to point that the *a priori* will since the Renaissance and its value structure are centred on the desire to dominate the material world.

This 'will' dominates the material world through innate struggle for knowledge could be observed in the subjects of colonialism or the postcolonialism subjects. It becomes plausible to create an African elite that will stand apart from the rest of the school leavers as well as the illiterate. The enlightenment episteme "claimed that the book was capable of reforming a society, that educational popularisation could transform manners and customs, that an elite's products could, if they were sufficiently widespread, remodel a whole nation" (de Certeau 1988: 166). We could say that the creation of an elite class amongst the colonised

¹¹⁸ Andrew Peterson, "'The Gospel of Work Does not Save Souls': Conception of Industrial and Agricultural Education for Africans in the Cape Colony, 1890-1930," *History of Education Quarterly* 45 (Fall 2005): 377-404.

and the authority conferred on them by their new status created a sense of alienation¹¹⁹ and different social stratifications and yet this elevation did not annul their blackness/Oriental status nor did it destroy the colonialism's pervasive racial theories. The Oriental or the black colonised subject is black regardless of their education in the face of racism, hence according to Omolewo colonial officials could cynically exclaim, "Some products of the educational system overestimated their own achievement and worth" (2000: 273). That Africans were seen as evolutionary products that can be measured by their adaptability and embodiment of western standards of education in order to be accommodated in the colonial society demonstrates the excesses of colonial and missionary strategies.

...the new educational system produced unexpected outcomes by conferring rewards such as jobs and social status on successful students. This drove some African students to do almost anything to achieve success, including rote-memorization of the material, cheating, or even buying their way to examination success. Unlike traditional education, which was interwoven into communal life, Western education produced a new breed of Africans who were at times alienated from their own community because of the power and authority conferred on them by their new status. As one colonial official observed, "Some products of the educational system overestimated their own achievement and worth" (Omolewo 2000: 274).

What missionaries were able to do successfully at least, was to mould the "African body, consciousness and environment" (Peterson 2021: 26) whether of elite or non-elite taking for granted that the non-elites were moulded by the coercive colonial state's technological or disciplinary techniques. In contrast, Islamic knowledge focused on a bodily practice to transmit knowledge, because in the Islamic tradition knowledge inheres in the body, that is knowledge was produced as pointed out earlier, by the limbs as much as by the mind meaning that imitation of the teacher's gestures and memorization allowed for the personal possession of the text "without recourse to a written source external to the self" (Ware 2014:

¹¹⁹ For discussions on alienation in the colonial context or the context of blackness, see Hook, D (2004) "Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, 'psychopolitics' and critical psychology" [online]. London: LSE Research Online. Also see Marcello Musto, ed., (2021) *Karl Marx's Writings on Alienation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan). See Chabani Mangani (2019) *Being-Black-In-The-World*. Wits University Press; See a recent article by Gregory Maxaulane "Fanon on the Dialectic of Madness and Struggle, " in *Theoria*, Issue 172, vol. 69, No 3 (2022): 86-106.

49). The reader can imagine the impossibility of this bodily knowledge in modern secular education where the body rests on a “Cartesian divide, between the mind and the body. A teacher acts primarily on the intellect ... the mind orders the body, and the body responds” (2014: 67). The relationship between the teacher and student in modern secular education posits them as separated not only according to the divisions of labour of the modern world but also as a distinction between the private and public.

The educational and intellectual disciplines were textually oriented, which is to say that the genealogies of their bodies were governed by the practice of commentary and study, in short, a Black Islamic praxis. Before the act of writing which is a physical act, “the entire mechanism of learning rested directly on the intellectual and spiritual contact between the master and “searcher” between student and teacher” (Hallaq 2018: 75). And as Kane shows as well “a system of mentorship linked master’s to a smaller number of promising students to whom they imparted knowledge on an individual basis (2016:13). Only after memorization and internalizing the Qur’an and reshaping one’s bodily department to resemble a living carrier of the Qur’an did one go on to study the religious sciences, geography, mathematics, or medicine (Ware 2014: 54). This meant the presupposition is that knowledge/truth does not reside in documents, however authentic or well preserved but truth resides in authentic human beings.

The standard model in West Africa was an ijaza (permission to teach a specific text) was not issued until it was not only understood (and often memorized) but also actualized or embodied. When the master saw that the disciple’s character and behavior had been shaped in light of the knowledge acquired, permission was granted. The possession of knowledge was inseparable from its actualization in character and deeds. *‘ilm* was inseparable from *‘amal*. Understood in this way, knowledge could not be separated from the person of its possessor; it was personified- or embodied- knowledge. The authority to knowledge resides in this kind of human connection between the master and the disciple, a relationship that supersedes that of the student to the text” (2014: 55).

Now contrast this with the genealogy of education in South Africa. Analysing the finding in his PhD thesis Seroto (2000) takes up the Latin American decolonial theory of coloniality. He does this in order to amplify the consequences of his findings for the purposes of contributing to

“anti-colonialism and decolonisation” (2018). The aim Seroto, he tells us, is to examine the historiography of the education provided for indigenous and non-European peoples during the 19th century in South Africa and to point out how the mission project used colonialism to undervalue indigenous people’s culture, reality and imagination. Whilst I want to deal with the structural dismantling of the imagination and the acquiescence of African intellectuals into English adoption in literary and cultural production, it is important to acknowledge that Seroto uses three concepts that are fundamental to our discourse viz: coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being (2018: 2). Concretely, the missionaries at Lemana Teachers’ Training college insisted on racial hierarchy, the “portrayal and emphasis of “race” at the Lemana Training College dictated relations of superiority and inferiority that are the product of domination and power and turned the racialised hierarchy into a natural and acceptable phenomenon (Quijano 2000a).

Secondly, colonial knowledge displaces African intellectual culture, “knowledge production at Lemana Training College was Euro-centrally imbued and hegemonically installed within the structure and consciousness of the curriculum offered by the Swiss Mission to the indigenous people.... Missionary education at Lemana was designed in such a way that indigenous people were denied the space to develop mentally; and this denial, which was race based, was internalised by some students”.

Finally, “how the humanity—their being—of indigenous people was portrayed in the history syllabus offered at Lemana Training College, was problematic. The history of South Africa excluded indigenous people, attributed achievements during this period to Europeans and placed the Europeans at the centre of history. The glorification of European history alienated indigenous people and made them feel irrational and primitive” (2018: 10). Here we can think of Bhekizizwe Peterson’s discourse on missionary education and theatre performance as part of the curriculum constructed and expanded by the missionary Bernard Huss (2021).

For Huss theatre was important for quelling the social dilapidation of the community on the individual, “where he promoted the use of theatre in education and recreational activities with Africans” (2021: 23). This Peterson called the theatre of power, signalling that theatre was not neutral in the colonization of Africa but was a stage to show how Christian epistemology triumphed over African cultures. Hence, Huss and company could use the biblical stories to stage plays that would talk about the Christian missionary civilization and at

the same time this kind of civilisation was presented as the *sin qua non* for the new African converts. Seroto's critique parallels our conception of the sovereign thought structure of modernity as the overarching system of knowledge that made colonialism possible and this education system is still dominant in our current late post-colonial period. The critique against the black intellectual tradition including its radical variants cannot be fully fathomed without an exploration of African Muslims imaginary since the dominant black intellectual tradition is that of the transcendental socio symbolic and imaginary stemming from the discursive and material technologies of subjectivation of Christianity and Western secularity, to the exclusion of African Muslims intellectual tradition.

Tracing the Language of the imagination in African Intellectual & cultural expressions

The sovereign thought structures of colonialist modernity have constructed the Other and the Orient in a way that allows the Other and Orient to embody the culture of modernity (including its resistance) through education and an intellectual tradition that has naturalised this historiography in a psychoepistemic performance. This historiography was achieved through dismantling previous modes of education and therefore of the world that belonged to the premodern episteme and habitus. This is why we argue that modern sovereign culture and its various expressions in the colony and postcolony were and are not neutral but were actively involved in expanding the imperial imagination in the colony. The imperial imagination allowed for a development of the new episteme which became the norm in South African cultural (imagination and aesthetics) and intellectual experience.

Simon Gikandi asks, "Why did formerly colonized people, many of whom had spent generation fighting against colonial domination, seem to invest so much in cultural institutions [. . .] that were closely associated with imperial conquest and rule? He expounded that the anticolonial struggle was directed towards a greater access to colonial institutions and structure (Preface 1996: xx). Now that we have agreed that the black intellectual and radical traditions have psychoepistemically, embodied western religious and secular thought structure (Enlightenment and evolutionary episteme) we have to interrogate the formations of discipline of African literature and its intellectual movement.

As I have just noted above one of the ways in which the black colonized subject responded to colonialism and its material culture was by accepting the introduction of the printing press by the colonialist missionaries. The emergence of creative literature, the novel, short stories, poems¹²⁰, journalism, (plus the formation of reading publics of the so-called elite and non-elites' clubs -however, both have been subjected) was encouraged firstly by the Bible and Bunyan's *Pilgrim Progress* as the epistemological locus printed by British and American missionary printing presses. If most missions acquired printing presses mainly for devotional literature and "manipulation of literate culture" then "Newspapers and periodicals would issue from these presses, originally under missionary editorship but increasingly, as the century progressed, under black editorship" (Woeber 2012: 205).

"Written literature amongst black South Africans owed its emergence to the spread of mission education and its concomitant endeavours with studying, classifying and codifying African languages in the nineteenth century." Lovedale launched Ikhwezi (The Morning Star, 1844-5) and Isigidimi (The Herald, 1870-88). Morija Press in Lesotho started Leselinyana la Lesotho (The Little Light of Lesotho) in the 1860s. The Eastern Cape witnessed the appearance of Imvo Zabantsundu (2012: 294).

Peterson argues that to understand the making of the first literary productions or, a tradition by the first generation of educated black intellectuals, the use of genre conventions that range from the epic, romance and historical novel would enable the achievement of knowledge concerning the "persistent interest in drawing on key historical experience, events, and characters as the new raw material for fictional endeavours" (2012:295). As Said noted in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) his study of the formations of the culture of Imperialism and the culture of resistance by the colonized, "I have looked especially at cultural forms such as the novel, which I believe were immensely important, but that I consider it the aesthetic object whose connection to the expanding societies of Britain and France is interesting to study (p. xii).

If these novels were written at the height of settler-colonial subjection that is the nineteenth and twentieth century then, their preoccupation with events, historical narration, or using

¹²⁰ See Michael Chapman (2022) Poetry in South Africa: Towards a Language of Aesthetic Response, *Current Writing, Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 34:2, 99-139.

narration as an ideological tool, “a dialogic representation of the past, present and future” is not surprising. These creative endeavours had to come to terms with the impending present colonial situation of the writers in the formation of literary and cultural theories. The hallmark of the emergence of the historical novel were, largely, to construct a nation in political and cultural expressions, hence Peterson could assert that by interrogating “preconquest African polities” through the use of “allegory and a complex marshalling of aesthetics and strategies drawn from orature and not simply through realism and social realism” (p. 296) writers could reconnect with the pre-conquest and get a panorama of the colonial context. The tenacious stance of interpreting the destructed African realities in the midst of colonial modernity allowed the political and the cultural to be premised on the idea of an embryonic nationalism which would regard race and geography as the locus of the contestation for freedom and independent intellectual thought (Mbembe 2002: 246).

However, Peterson reading Gerald Moore has argued that in order to understand the historical novel one would have to analyse the relationship between the missionary presses and the new African writers “where he suggests that the delay in the publication of *Chaka* [Thomas Mofolo’s first novel] was due to its negative reception by priests such as Revd H. I Dieterlen (2012: 297). I have also theoretically and discursively demonstrated in the first section of this chapter, the murky, antagonist and contradictory relationship between the missionaries and the leaders of African Independent Churches and that this rough fraternity was encouraged by the Manichean delirium that characterized the colony.

This had much to do with the fact that the missionaries could not help but experience themselves as having the authority to “own and codify African languages” (Wober 2012: 207). I argue that there was nothing untoward considering the fact that missionaries saw themselves as having authority of what was to be published, seeing that they owned the printing presses, they taught the orthography of translating African languages, they taught the three R’s, and they constructed the general pedagogical direction of literary production or imagination in a colonial society. Indeed, this is the logic of colonialism or discursive genocide, and the missionaries were but a significant cog in the *deus ex machina* that the

colonised black subjects were experiencing¹²¹. We shall shortly attend to the issue of language and black cultural productions. These literary themes and forms in the construction of the African writer were to use ideological narratives to dispel and counter colonial discursive history, the use of allegorical evocations of the past as “an object worthy of knowledge,” hymns, depiction of precolonial life in contact with western modernity. The use of orature, legends, fables, clan-names or in short, what Peterson calls cultural repertoires and finally the “treatment of urbanisation and its discontent” were attempts to make sense of the state of defeat and the adaptation to a humbled culture.

What Peterson is eager to show is the process of subjugation, the various attempts to forge an intellectual community, the insistence to write back against empire signalling the emergence of the black radical tradition and the contradiction of blackness between the western educated and those who were not educated through a western curricula. These processes are significant and revealing precisely because they exhibit a layered attempt to build a tradition that is not predicated on mimesis only. What Peterson aims to demonstrate is the intellectual and creative capabilities that the New Africans were engaging with under conditions that produced contradictory phenomena, that is settler colonialism.

For us what is crucial is to take note that Peterson’s reading and interpretation of the black intellectual tradition does not question the possibility of responding differently. That is, it is taken for granted that this is the only response that could come from an elite intellectual class and its embryonic power, further conflating the possibilities of this tradition. I am alluding to the fact that there is no other imaginary that is considered outside of the intra-class division that blackness exhibits in the colonial period, and this insistence fails to analyse colonialism as a structure rather than an event that gives rationality to orthodoxy and resistance. The Muslim scholar studying African cultural expressions and productions should understand blackness as constructed by the sovereign thought structures of modernity that do not only

¹²¹ Woeber argues that “Both Lovedale (1861) and Morija (in 1871) would become fully fledged commercial printing and publishing concerns, comprising a book-binding department, book depot and distribution agencies. Morija Printing Works eventually produced publication in forty-five African languages for countries across the continent... Lovedale Mission Press initially concentrated on religious and educational publications, such as hymn books and devotional books, primary school Readers, grammars and dictionaries.... Under R.H.W. Shepard, Lovedale became the major publishing centre for African literatures in subcontinent, mainly in English and isiXhosa” (2012:207-8).

assimilate the subject based on their difference but aims to continue this course of action through a psychoepistemic embodiment of the theology of progress and resistance.

The subject of resistance takes it for granted methodically that resisting against the colonial status is to insert into the colonial library indigenous elements in order to accommodate a western aesthetic or imaginary, particularly through the form. The concern with intercultural or what we called adaptationist responses when we discussed modern education and theological performances seems to be itself a statement on the ontology of blackness that is, its subjection. Instead of subjection Peterson seems to want to hold on to the idea of history as a system of production because it is the intellectual tradition that is henceforth constructed. I want to insist that if Peterson as well as the African intellectual tradition or should I say authors of the colonial library constructed an archive of blackness that precludes other experiences of the black colonized subjects. One of the major problems for the perpetuation of colonialism is precisely the nationalism that was adopted by the new Africans or the colonised black subjects in the colony (Mbembe 2018: 87-89). Nationalism is an ideology that helped propel pan Africanist connections throughout the black colonized world. Furthermore, it is nationalism and its Marxist variant that inspired the unity to challenge the colonial status quo “that coalesced into resistance against an alien and occupying empire on the part of people possessing a common history, religion, and language” (1990: 74).

The currents of thought that develops out of this theology of progress is nativism and afro-radicalism as a product of the resistance and secular thought. That it is this tradition that represents or is positioned to be able to make sense of the black experience particularly its modern cultural productions has become emblematic. Unlike the black subjects who uses the archive in forgetting and remembering the past, the future and the present, it is this conception of the archive that gives to the Black Muslim subjects a sui generis route in the dismantling of the colonial symbolic structure.

The colonial symbolic and imagination or an aestheteme (the order of aesthetics) was significant for the cultural productions of the colonised subjects as a determining imprint because written literature’s emergence was signified by the readings and translations of the Bible and Bunyan’s *Pilgrim Progress* as we have noted. Because “the *Pilgrim’s Progress* encapsulated the evangelical message, the book virtually became a fetish in the missionary system and was widely considered as substitute for

Scriptures themselves” (Woeber 2012: 205). As the literary scholar Abiola Irele noticed

...the first African novelists were products of missionary schools, so that a didactic and evangelical purpose came to predominate in this early literature, intent as the writers were on producing works of moral edification, as part of Christian teaching. Beyond this this limited purpose of the writers, these mission inspired works came to contain a larger cultural effect, for they bore witness to the profound transformation of values that the impact of Christianity set in motion in Africa, a process in which the traditional religions and systems of belief came to exist in a state of tension with the new religion with structures of mind associated with western civilization. These texts were thus instrumental in the construction of a new mental universe indisputable for the emergence of Africa of a western-inspired modernity (2009: 4).

The apprenticeship Africans were serving under the missionaries and they should be taken as the psychoepistemic embodiments of western notion of creative imaginations particularly in the case of literary and let us say theatre productions. The mental universe that Irele mentions is crucial because it directs attention to our argument which is that the inclusion of African or local cultural forms within the western modern paradigm represents only one instance of the native encounter with this epistemology. Black African or non-western cultural forms are silenced and reduced to an appendage of a western inspired African form of consciousness.

This is seen in the intentional attempt to construct a literary tradition particularly of African or bantu literature, which will face the antagonism of writing in either English, or vernacular/indigenous tradition and only later to be abandoned by the anti-colonial African Literature tradition. Mukoma Wa Ngugi (2018) also asked a similar question we are interested in when he noticed firstly the privileging of English in African literary productions at the expense of African languages and secondly the omission of colonial or New African literature in South Africa. For us this impetus is reflected on the politics of conversion (bearing in mind that the goal of Missionary and Anthropological discourse was to convert the African subjects, landscape and knowledges) where converted Africans, or as Mudimbe calls them Europeanized and assimilated Africans, reflected and apprehended the evolutionist epistemology by arguing for the regeneration of Africa through westernization and Christianization.

However, this new way of talking about primitive peoples and mentalities also relied heavily on the same methodological rules: an evolutionist and functionalist “focused on African structures in order to integrate them into the new historical processes” (Mudimbe 1988: 76). This overriding of non-Western difference or otherness into the assimilation of western sameness runs in tension with the emerging perspective of African consciousness at the turn of the twentieth century. Regardless, this universal theory (theory of progress informed by evolutionary allegories with regards to everything that is organically relatable) had long presupposed that each society has its own conditions of development outside of other influences. Thus, Africans aware of their traditions began composing their monographs, launching a “postprimitive era”, particularly in British colonies (Asad 1975; Mafeje 1976). In law and customs, on local cultures, the promotion of African languages written and oral “the most prosperous literature is surely in South African languages (Sotho, Tswana, Xhosa, and Zulu) and was produced by writers such as J.K. Bokwe (1855-1922), H.I.E. Dhlomo (1903-1971), (M.O.M. Seboni 1912-1972), and B.W. Vilakazi” (1988:77), I would add S. E. K. Mqhayi (1875-1945). We then get a sense of the archaeology of African episteme being dependent of the western episteme and as a radical innovation precisely of its critique of the culture colonialism.

Mukoma wa Ngugi echoes Mudimbe in recognising the importance of African Languages in the creation of an African literature tradition in settler colonial South Africa; what both theorists question is the prioritising of English and French in this literature in modern African literature in general (Mudimbe 1994: 106-7; Ngugi 2018:39-43). That the missionary epistemology and the political situation of the colony were significant markers in the invention of African literature is confirmed by these authors. What they do not question for the sake of enriching the debate is why the New Africans, in South Africa chose to signify their literary productions written in English and almost completely ignored and dismissed African languages.

One would venture to ask Ngugi whether he thought about the reasons why significant authors in the Makerere generation like Eskia Mphahlele chose English over the indigenous African languages since Ngugi’s claim that South Africa had a rich tradition in this regard. For the student of Islam in Africa there is a continuity that Ngugi is missing and did not pay attention to, and this overlapping is worthy to analyse for it had an impact on political

ideologies of the colonised African intellectuals, the pan-Africanist connection, the formation of black consciousness, the assimilation to the English language, and the vigorous debate between Anglophone and Francophone African literary intellectuals. Most importantly, as African literature particularly in the 1960s period was mostly concerned with the theme of Anticolonialism, symbolic and imaginary transformation, it was to further exclude the African languages whilst in South Africa such themes were used as anthropological oddity and political instrumentalism against the colonized.

For Masilela (2012) one of the contradictions of colonial modernity and new African modernity was that even multilingualism served as an advantage for the anticolonial sensibilities of those educated through the missions regarding their appeal for the acknowledgment of their humanity. There were also the aboriginal articulations of humanisation expressed through vernaculars, which did not receive authority and force of influence to either the missionary-educated Africans or the colonisers, instead these aboriginal articulations of humanism were regarded as fossilized and dispensable. Nonetheless conquered by European colonial imperialism, language (African languages) offered a way of constructing this new African modernity and at the same time was significant in enabling the “participation of the New African masses into modernity” (327). However, European languages were assimilatory and the new African intellectuals might have encouraged cultural imperialism and domination or for the masses to be incorporated into the colonial epistemological structure or the historical experience of modernity¹²². Writing about the conditions of possibility of African writing or letters in South Africa Eskia Mphahlele in a chapter titled “The Black Man’s Image of Himself” in *The African Image* (1962) excavates this self-representation by the colonised black subjects.

In the 1870’s the South African Negro in the Cape Province was already writing creatively, to say nothing of the journalistic writing he was producing. While the whites were writing gloatingly about their victories over the blacks and over each

¹²² What I hope to demonstrate is that the African elite saw the mission of mastering reading and writing as involving much more than simply mimicking “civilization” or writing against discrimination or colonialism. The new African intelligentsia drew on their mastery of literacy and African orature in order to claim and defend their rights as modern citizens (Peterson 2008: 80)

other (English and Afrikaans) and Afrikaans writers were spitting vitriol, the Negro was protesting; but at the same time, he was trying to reconcile the white man's violence with the Christianity he (the White man) was preaching. Although he was bitter against the whites as the Afrikaner was bitter against the *rooineck* (English), the Negro simply couldn't release as much vitriol in his literature as the Afrikaaner. His image of the white man was charged with prejudice and hate, in the same way the white man's image of him was. But because of the other preoccupation (with the impact of the new religion) the Negro was inclined to be introspective. The white man seemed too huge a reality to fit into his spectrum. And then the nineteenth century black writer was not a member of a coherent nationalist-minded group. The Afrikaner was. Everything the latter did was in the interests of the *volk* and a cultural political body.

What is the literary image of himself? We are dealing here with the African who emerges as a writer because of the presence of the white man (sometimes in spite of him). In Southern and East Africa, who brought the formal classroom education with him. Southern where the white man is a settler and therefore influences the black man who in turn influences him, the African writer appears in a number of roles. First, there were the writers who wrote religious stories or verse with a strong moral bent. These men were the products of missionary teaching, and they wrote in the Bantu vernaculars. Such writers appeared in Basutoland, where the Paris Evangelical and Roman Catholic missions printed plenty of religious matter. In the Cape Province where the Presbyterian Church was strongest and North Eastern Transvaal, where the Lutheran Mission operated, religious writing was encouraged among their communities. And then there were the American Board of Missions in Natal and later the Anglicans and Methodist churches there and elsewhere (1962: 202-3).

Secondly, it is the politics of settler colony that shifts the literary direction from one that Mphahlele calls assimilation by missionary theology and education and the creative response "between romantic escapist at the end and protest literature at the other" (Mphahlele 1964: 203). We can thus say to Ngugi, Mphahlele's theoretical views on the English language at the Makerere conference are not only inspired by the spirit of the time rather by the legacy of debates in South African Black literary and political traditions since the inception of settler colonialism and missionary education. We could point out the debates throughout the

trajectory of the New African Movement from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century contrasting values of language and politics. The debates between Elijah Makiwane and Pambanani Jeremiah Mzimba in the 1880s; S.E.K. Mqhayi against William Wellington Gqoba in 1910s; Clement Martyn Doke against Solomon T. Plaatjie in the 1920s; Bennedict Wallet Vilakazi against H.I.E. Dhlomo in the 1930s; Mazisi Kunene against Drum writers in the 1950s (Masilela 2012: 327).

The development of African literatures in English as well as in African languages was predicated on the acceptance of the secular theology of progress, the expansion of the meanings of modernity for Africans and blacks alike in the continent and the diaspora. Masilela sees a difference between the development of African literature in English as a result of the “political hegemony of Europeans” and the development of African literatures in African languages as a result of “the contradictory democratic impulse of New African modernity”(ibid).

One of the most impactful relations that made English the modern standard of African literature was the impact of Pan Africanism and the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s on the New Africa movement in the 1930s. Mphahlele’s exposition of this relationship is as crucial not only for our discussions with Mudimbe and Ngugi but precisely because it reveals some of the reasons why African literature uses European languages today (Saro-Wiwa 1992). In his *African Image* in a chapter titled “The Blacks – dialogue across the sea” he penchantly notes that “nowhere in Africa does one find such a strong fellow-feeling towards the American Blacks as there exists among Africans.” This is because both these peoples and communities, “their history is written in blood: it is a history of pillage and plunder; fire and murder; dispossession and humiliation” (1964: 96). We begin to get a sense of why this relationship is particularly striking because the “youth in South Africa are irrepressible collectors of jazz records and literature.

African writing in South Africa has for this reason been inspired by Afro-American literature rather than by writers of the Queen’s English. It is experimental, passionate, and impressionistic. Peter Abraham tells us in his autobiography *Tell Freedom* how overawed he was when he first heard Paul Robeson on record in Johannesburg; how in a community centre for Africans he read Du Bois’ *The Soul of Black Folk* and identified with it. Then followed readings from James Weldon Johnson’s *Along This*

Way; Alain Locke's *The New Negro*; from Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer. We were contemporaries with Abrahams in High School in 1935 (1964: 97).

I am arguing that Mphahlele's turn, or favour of English African literature is borne out of a long intellectual tradition or movement and was not an instantaneous moment at the Makerere conference. If R.V. Selope Thema, according to Masilela, was the purveyor of this movement with his allegiances to the New negro modernity in America and his insistence that African traditions should be discredited because of their backwardness, Thema was following the script of modern evolutionary theories in which the backwardness of a tradition was the opposite of modern theology of progress (Hallaq 2018). The impact of Thema's *Bantu World* on H.I.E. Dhlomo and Peter Abrahams ensured the dominance of English in African literary culture and at the same time made explicit connections with the Pan-Africanist (black African consciousness) world whilst ensuring the capsizing of African literatures in native languages. If Dhlomo insists against B.W. Vilakazi that "he would not write creative literature in an African language (Zulu specifically) but would do so in the English language since it would afford him a much bigger audience, especially overseas" (Masilela 2012: 333), but the content of the cultural and aesthetic productions would not mute the socio-political struggles.

Indeed, African writers in South Africa demonstrate a tradition that pays allegiance to the "metaphysical empire" that is the 'metaphysical empire' operates and subsists on invasion of the mental universe of the world and the conscription into the English language- culture (Ngugi 1986: 3; Gatsheni 2018: 100; Ngugi 2018: 16). Dhlomo's *Black Bulls* plays, attempt to order history out of nonsense and fragmented South African landscapes. Peterson tells us that as "a member of the African elite Dhlomo initially shared its aspirations towards gradual assimilation into the important spheres of white society, a process, the African middle class thought, that could only be achieved by adopting a 'progressive' ideology that affirmed, among other things, the 'retrogressive and reactionary' nature of traditional and lower-class life and cultural practices" (1991:26).

What we should not forget to mention is that whilst these intellectuals were promulgating the necessity of a modernist secular approach as a way to empower the black colonized subjects, it is the failure to take seriously the flawed nature of theology of progress as a sovereign thought structure bent on imposing a linear development and history that is

problematic. However, it is the creative impulse that these writers exhibited in their work that resolved the contradictions of modernity by insisting on the African modes of writing or the reinterpreting of the ideological narrative of colonial modernity.

These contradictions that the New Africans confronted through Christianity, Pan-Africanism, and cultural anthropology as Masilela argued, “Pan-Africanism, an invention by black diasporan intellectuals, whose object was the liberation of Africa, was par excellence the fundamental political philosophy of black modernity in the 20th century (1996: 90). Pan-Africanist connections or the collaboration in both American and Europe between black Africans and black Americans intellectuals contributed to the emergence of a black African consciousness (1988:77). As Said has argued the failure and absolute necessity of nationalism, including its various expression in Pan Africanism was the formation of a new culture, a culture of resistance called forth by nationalist anti-imperialism and an era of liberationist anti-imperialist resistance that often followed it (1990: 76). Whilst Mudimbe has argued that up “to the 1960s, anthropology, Black American ideology, and Marxism had a significant impact on the African intelligentsia” (1988:88). Again, here South Africa presents an earlier case of these connections where the necessity of transformation and the historical imperative of identifying with African Americans was a result of the fact that we Africans experienced the entrance of European modernity into African history as a great historic defeat. Invariably, “forced” modernization meant Westernization in our instance.

We encountered European modernity as a process of the “colonial system and imperialist projection” (Peterson 2008: 90). At the same time, it is argued (see Peterson 2008; 2000; 2016; Masilela 1996; 2013) that what the elites, the “New African Movement” intellectuals were contending with was a reconstruction or a counter narrative of European modernity by inventing a New African modernity based on the inclusion in the colonial society where the most progressive of Africans were to be placed in the leadership service of the people. This meant that these intellectuals particularly at the turn of the twentieth century needed to wed their praxis by taking as inspiration the New Negro Movement in the United States of America¹²³.

¹²³ Ntongela observes that: “The actuality of the New African Movement was constituted or brought into being by New African intellectuals through the process of appropriating the historical lessons of

As Masilela argued against Paul Gilroy's black intellectual connection, mainly that black intellectuals were crucial in the making of western modernity and this is exemplified by the intellectual connections in the Americas, Caribbean and Britain in his *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993). In addition, omitting Africa in the making of the black Atlantic occludes the construction of South African modernity by New African intelligentsia who modelled themselves on the New Negro Talented Tenth as inconceivable with/ without the example of American modernity. As Masilela complained against Gilroy

Gilroy defines the "Black Atlantic" as essentially a dialogical intellectual system of discourse between the United States and Europe about the nature of modernity concerning cultural and national identities. The very fact that cultural and political formations of whatever kind are historical products of hybridization and syncretism.... excludes AfricaIn a deeply saddening way, The Black Atlantic expresses an unremitting disdainfulness for Africa, for things African, and for things that come from our "Dark Continent." In these refusals, the book is reflective of late European modernist experience, even though it seeks to locate itself in the black diasporic modernist articulation (1998: 88-9).

The New Africans appropriated the historical lessons drawn from the New Negro experience within American modernity to chart and negotiate the newly emergent South African modernity: the Africans learned from African Americans the process of transforming themselves into agencies in or of modernity (2008: 93). Let us say, the connections between Black South African and the Black or African Americans struggle abound and that one need only to think about the importance of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association and the mutually creative rapport of Jazz artists in South Africa and the US as

African American modernity within United States with the intent of displacing and decentring the hegemony of European modernity in South Africa. This appropriation and imparting were to bring about very deep and complex affinities between African Americans and African people in South Africa from the late nineteenth century throughout the twentieth-century. The historical construct of the regeneration of Africa developed and articulated from the middle of the nineteenth-century by African Americans such as Martin Delany, Alexander Crummell, Bishop Henry Turner of African Methodist Episcopal Church (A. M. E. Church) had a pronounced effect on New African intellectuals such as Pixley ka Isaka Seme, Solomon T. Plaatje and R. V. Selope Thema in the first two decades of the twentieth century" (2012: 329).

concrete historical examples¹²⁴. However, Gilroy is very instructive because his recovery of blackness in modernity, that is black subjects were constitutive of modernity and hence the recovery of this intellectual roots and routes disrupts the west's ideological narrative of modernity.

Centralizing black subjects in the formation of modernity and its constituents speaks to how black intellectuals appropriated the Enlightenment's theology of progress ideal. Pan-Africanism is one of the vehicles that made possible these intellectual connections mainly predicated on the settler colonial racial injustices in both the United States of America and South Africa and the making of an imagination of a connected African empire composed of both indigenous and diasporic Africans. In fact, according to Kwame Nkrumah, "Pan-Africanism has its beginnings in the liberation struggle of African Americans, expressing their aspirations of Africans and peoples of African descent (1968: 412). The development of the negritude movement is yet another pan Africanist moment, calling on modern black subjects transformed by the thought structures of modernity to intellectually and culturally overthrow the dominance of European culture of imperialism. The similarity between the New African movements in South Africa together with the developments in the African colonies subjugated by France shows precisely how modern education rallied the elite colonized blacks.

Discussing the two historical moments of anti-imperialism and focusing on the imaginative writing of the theorists, writers and poets of the anti-imperialist culture of resistance, Said is very much aware of the paradoxes and contradictions that necessitates the response to western colonialism. Charting first the havoc wrought by the geographical expansion of western imperialism, its change of the local habitat, as this was a never-ending process "as a huge number of plants, animals, crops, and farming as well as building methods invaded the colony and gradually turned it into a new place" (1990: 77). Therefore, the anti-imperialist literature develops out of the need to separate the native from the colonialist, taking seriously

¹²⁴ See Hill & Pirio, "Africa for the Africans: The Garvey Movement in South Africa, 1920-1940." In *The Politics of Race, Class, and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido, eds., 209-53. And in terms of contextualising the South African national question in International Communist circles see Robin D.G. Kelly, 'The Third International and the Struggle for National Liberation in South Africa' (2014).

the recovery of the land; this had to be done through the imagination because of the presence of the colonialist. This obsession with the recovery of native geography, environment, and land reacts to the geographical violence of the colonizer.

This changed ecology in the colony necessitated the change in the political system from which the poet sees the main cause of alienation for the native populace and hence a “great deal of myth making went into this retrospective decolonization.” This search for authenticity is marked by the contradictions and need to construct a nation created by alien forces and therefore the recovery of history, myth, religions, identifications, and most importantly language. Said noticed, “there always goes an almost magically inspired, quasi-alchemical redevelopment of the native language”. Here Said sees Yeats in colonial Ireland as specifically interesting because “He shares with Caribbean and some African writers the predicament of a common language with the colonial overlord” (ibid: 79). Here nativism is a resistance phenomenon that arises with the colonial encounter, and all of the anti-imperialist struggles are theorised as being insufficient because they are “compelling but often demagogic assertions about a native past, history or actuality that seems to stand free not only of the colonizer but of worldly time itself.” Said takes seriously nativist phenomenon in anti-colonial nationalist and independence movements, theories, ideas such as “Senghor’s negritude¹²⁵, or Soyinka’s exploration of the African past, or in Rastafarian movement or in the Garveyite solution, or all through the Islamic world, the discoveries of various unsullied, precolonial Muslim essences” (Said 96:82-3).

¹²⁵ According to the *Invention* (1989: 84), Negritude a student movement that emerged in the 1930s in Paris is a literary coterie despite its political implication heralded by Sartre’s introduction to Senghor’s Anthology of New Negro and Malagasy poetry, who transformed “negritude into a major political event and a philosophical criticism of colonialism (Mudimbe 1988: 83). In 1934 Césaire, Senghor, and Damas launched the pioneering journal *L’Étudiant Noir* (The Black Student), which aimed to break nationalistic barriers among black students in France. Crystallizing diverse expressions of Négritude by these so-called fathers, *L’Étudiant noir* was its most important political and cultural periodical. In this sense, we can locate the coinage of the term Négritude (blackness) by Césaire from the pejorative French word *nègre* within this broader aim of crystallising diverse expressions of blackness. Césaire boldly and proudly incorporated this derogatory term into the name of an ideological movement and used it for the first time during the writing of his germane poetic work *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (Notebook of a Return to the Native Land, 1939). At its core, negritude uses the evolutionary anthropological or ethnological theories to articulate an African ideology of Otherness through literary and poetic aesthetics to define a new history and culture.

Negritude emerges alongside and parallel the African will to power in conferences such as the Bandung, Paris and Rome in fifth Pan- African Conference, where the earlier criticisms of colonialism in India and North Africa from the 1920s emerged. Important for the Francophone intellectuals is the introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre, *Black Orpheus*, to Senghor's texts. Seeing this as an important historical intervention, Mudimbe argues that what Sartre brings to African resistance to colonialism was the imposition philosophically to the political dimension, "of a negativity in the colonial history", that is "*Black Orpheus*, says Mudimbe, is a major ideological moment, perhaps one of the most important. It displayed the potentialities of Marxist revolution and the negation of colonialism and racism" (p. 85).

Paradoxically it is Sartre the westerner, who symbolically becomes the first theorist of the negritude movement or francophone anticolonial intellectuals, an allusion for which we cannot help but question the negritude movement's sources of expression. Let us however take note of the fact that these political and philosophical criticisms of colonialism influenced the direction of African social studies of the colonial library, for Negritude was a "*literature engage*" a highly political literature particularly in the 1950s. What we can infer from Sartre's ideological moment is the impact of Marxist thought on African radical intellectuals and interpretation of African discourses and realities¹²⁶.

¹²⁶ Whilst in South Africa the relationship between Marxism and Nationalist thought were still at loggerheads or their relationship had not been solidified (Kelly 2014, Maloka)¹²⁶ plus the formation of the Pan Africanist Congress in 1959 further exposed Marxism to deep Africanist criticisms¹²⁶. Hence, we can see how anthropology, black American ideology, Pan-Africanism and Marxism were important to African intellectuals although as we have mentioned above, in South Africa the encounter between Africans and African American intellectuals had taken place from the late nineteenth and particularly in the twentieth century. Marxism in settler colonial South Africa emerges in August of 1921, with contradictions par excellence.

The white orientation of the CPSA (Communist Party of South Africa) was revealed less than a year after it was formed during the infamous Rand Revolt of 1922. The central grievance of striking white miners, walking off their jobs in February of 1922, was over the retention of the colour bar. White miners, especially unskilled Afrikaners from the rural areas, found Africans beginning to take skilled positions, which were hitherto the preserve of whites. Mining capital obviously wanted to reduce labour costs by extending skilled jobs to lower paid Africans (Kelly 2014: 248). In a settler colonial setting where the Manichean delirium is the structuring principle of the socius, the CPSA adhered to the logic of colonialist-racist divisions between the toiling black working class and choosing to align itself with imperialist logics of a fascist colonial government and exclude black workers. This is hardly surprising as Kelly notes, for we have only to think of what made the CPSA turn to the African masses. We have to look at the question of National independence, which was also articulated by elite African nationalists of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC). We need not doubt the influence of British liberalism and Pan Africanism in the stance taken by New African nationalists to avoid

It is the squabbles between nationalists and communists that characterise the relationship between the 1920s until the 1960s. Mudimbe would observe that “despite its problems of its adaptation to the African context, socialism seemed the most fashionable doctrine” (1988:96). This suggest that from the 1950s the attempt to transform anthropological narratives or interpretation of African realities was replaced by Marxist theoretical paradigm and the invention of African history. Hence, the contradictions of negritude formed by its anthropological sources and Marxist theory of new social organization’s incapacity to emerge from pre, colonial and post-colonial conditions. J Copans sees Marxism as a major theoretical event in the evolution of Africanism and the “use of concepts of imperialist system or modes of production was facilitated by the explanation in terms of unstable arrangements and dynamic contradictions” (1975: 25 in Mudimbe). Significant for us is the call to invent history in African studies in relation to the re-interpretations of Sameness and Otherness; a

communist or socialist discourses of uprising even though the events that took place in “1919, demands for increased wages and antipass agitation were widespread on the land. Strikes occurred in Natal collieries and at the Messina Copper Mine in the Northern Transvaal” (248). The SANNC did not organise the African proletariats and workers following the postwar disappointment and the failed attempt to petition the Land Act to the British Monarchy¹²⁶. The stance of national independence or self-determination was to prove vital to the CPSA turning to the African working class to organize. As Lenin puts it “The right of nations to self-determination implies exclusively the right to independence in the political sense, the right to free political separation from the oppressor nation. Specifically, this demand for political democracy implies complete freedom to agitate for secession and for a referendum on secession by the seceding nation. This demand, therefore, is not the equivalent of a demand for separation, fragmentation and the formation of small states. It implies only a consistent expression of struggle against all national oppression” (Lenin 2011: 146). First Kelly tells us that the issue of self-determination whilst the nationalists in the SANNC already supported it had to convince the newly formed International about the need to represent the white working class and tutor the African population into political consciousness, particularly at the Fourth Congress of the COMINTERN in 1922. Where the presence of a white man claiming to speak for Africans was challenged by two African-Americans: Claude McKay, a black poet who had been invited as an unofficial delegate, and Otto Huiswoud, a representative of the CPUSA and a member of the militant black nationalist organization, the African Blood Brotherhood (Kelly 2014: 252)¹²⁶. Indeed, the Lenin’s Theses had acknowledged the importance of the African struggles against “imperialist exploitation” that is slavery, colonial incursions and “thus the struggles of Black toilers were essentially anti-imperialist. Therefore, Africans throughout the world had to be organized in order to weaken imperialism” (1922:10). This was not the call that the white racists within the CPSA adopted, in fact failing to adopt the resolution of the comintern’s “Theses on the Negro Question” it was eventually ignored by party leadership. The eventual smashing of the Rand Revolt by Hertzog pushed the CPSA to adopt the Cominterns decision for Africans to be the vanguard of the party. Whilst it is important that the theoretical analysis of South Africa as a semi colony under the leadership of the British and the emerging bourgeoisie Afrikaners enabled the African native to be the vanguard.

remodelling of blackness concerning the European colonial history and a catalyst for anti-imperialism struggles.

The polemics against Negritude were also symptomatic of the division between francophone and Anglophone experiences of colonization as Mphahlele in the *The African Image* (1962) makes it clear. His argument regarding the South African socio-political and intellectual landscape is that Negritude may well be compared to the ideology of white racism in South Africa, “Would it be preferable to call a march back to indigenous culture and thereby help Government to reconstruct ethnic groups and help the machinery?” (P. 36). What is revealing for the literary history of African letters is both the turn to nativism and its utilisation by colonial forces. Mphahlele reads negritude’s nativist moment together with South Africa’s African literature in African languages as belonging to the political instrumentalism of colonialism and applied anthropology. That African languages and negritude exhibit the assimilation to the colonial politics of culture makes Mphahlele an important intellectual in outlining the theories of literary production and ideological constructions in modern African culture.

Let us not forget that Negritude literature was part of the realist and autobiographical novels that were published from the 1950s and 60s which exhibited an anti-colonial nationalist moment. This literature embraced differential ideological positions as embodied by the nationalist movements, the positivist discourse of liberation, progress, and historicism implicit in modern revolutionary movements such as Marxism and liberalism which had a stake in interpreting African realities. At the same time, Nationalism takes either ideologies of modernity or the pre-colonial social patterns in the postcolony. The motive is the attempt to merge the socialist and liberal theoretical positions, but this desired configuration has hitherto not eliminated the contradictions and antagonism in socio-political activities (Mafeje 1976; Gikandi 140; Mudimbe 1994; Mbembe 2018; Soske 13). This epistemological mutation particularly in the 1960s had an impact on literature as it did in other fields such as history (Liberal and Marxist historiographies), anthropology (Mafeje), Sociology (Magubane) and political praxis taking the course of Armed revolutionary struggle (e.g. Sharpeville massacre; see also ANC Strategy & Tactics 1969).

In effect, in the early 1960s, the African scholar succeeded the anthropologist, the “native” theologian replaced the missionary, and the politician took the place of the

colonial commissioner. All of them find their vocations in the dialectic of the Same and Other (Mudimbe 1988: 180).

The mutation of colonialist epistemology in South Africa has always been informed by the broken claims to connection, suggesting that the political actions have determined educational and literary activities. Mphahlele's or African literature as an imaginary that is a discipline, speech, and discourses forms part of this creative configuration of the thought expressed in Africanism and the reliance on nativist or Afro-radicalism discourses of liberation. This is because the contradictions of writing in English do not diminish the reliance on colonial epistemology introduced through the education system and the culture of the English language in South Africa. Mphahlele's criticism of black writers in the 1950s and 60s for poorly plotted novels, short stories, and following too strictly the African American model is based on modern literary conventions. We find the same argument being peddled by the literary critic Lewis Nkosi in 1967 in his essay 'Fiction by Black South African Authors', where he remarked that in most literary texts produced by black authors "the journalistic fact parade[s] outrageously as imaginative literature" (Nkosi 1981 :222).

What result from this, in his view, is that the 'social facts' are not, or only superficially, transcoded or transformed into the appropriately literary shape of "artistically persuasive works of fiction" (Nkosi 1981:222). This makes the *real* of representation to be eluded and in that sense this literature does not invent or create, as is the case with music, a creative synergy with the experience of blackness. The argument is that these representations are a baggage of political instrumentalism and an adequate failure of aesthetic innovation.

Our argument that cultures were not neutral in the colonization process and that the liberal tradition in South Africa had to await the late sixties and early seventies to be fully questioned and actively negated by the Black Consciousness movement (SASO) still stands. Note here that the Black Consciousness movement's theory of blackness in the 1970s and its epistemological break with the black intellectual tradition is not to be separated from the Marxist, pan-Africanist and nationalist epistemologies rather BC expands the questions and sources of the tradition in South Africa in relation to interpreting African realities. To be fair to Mudimbe's archaeology, I would argue that the singularly and unique emergence of BC recalls the 1950s and 1960s Africanisation of Marx, where the systematic theorisation of alienation by a certain class of the colonised emerged as the bedrock of an anti-colonial

epistemological break, resistance and liberation. Let us here note that the South African Student Organisation militants organized because of alienation theoretically and existentially in a violent adventurist settler-colonial society (Buthelezi 1987).

Of particular importance for us is the concept of alienation because it provides a means of relating experience to social conditions, of linking personal-subjective and sociohistorical domains, and of doing so in a way that produces criticism (Bulhan, 1985; Zahar, 1969). Fanon uses the concept this way, as thinking the connections – or articulations – between an individual's internal world, and the external world of the constraining social, economic or political structures that surround and contain them. It is significant that these were students' intent on a epistemological break in order to reformulate the hitherto dominant political praxis of liberation, and this is of course a radical trajectory compared to the new Africans' programme of the early twentieth century (Hook 2007: 93). Buthelezi noted this significant change.

In many subjects, especially in the social sciences faculty, which was numerically larger than the rest, many students were critical of the subject content which was regarded as an overdose of the dominant ideology of the oppressive ruling class. This was particularly the case in subjects like Anthropology, History, Theology, Sociology, Psychology. This resentment against the curriculum was galvanised by the fact that most of the reading lists, prescribed textbooks pamphlets and articles used as references were written by Afrikaans-speaking academics in South Africa and omitted known radical texts (1987: 24)

The cause of alienation is being in a white university that manufactured educated subjects for the purpose of slave wage under the trusteeship of a white fascist ideology that had an impact on black spaces where this education was synonymous with 'acquiring status' that the new African embraced with vigour.

In their various townships, university students generally became alienated from their own people, including their childhood friends who regarded them with awe as educated persons or felt inferior. It was partly for this reason SASO was later to help form various youth organisations, composed of both secondary school pupils as well as the unemployed youths. One of these was the National Youth Organization (NAYO) founded in 1972 (Buthelezi *ibid*).

Take note of what we have uncovered thus far, the relation between the petty bourgeoisie with the masses that they are already part of, elicited contradictions particularly for the nationalist New Africans and for the BC militants this rift was sutured through a practical political outlook and educative programmes such the Black Community Programmes. Notice, also, how this form of alienation, galvanised the BC movement to produce cultural texts that centred the new figures, non-elites, who were previously marginalized, as Biko pointed out referring to Aime Cesaire's letter of resignation from the French Communist Party

At about the same time that Cesaire said this, there was emerging in South Africa a group of angry young black men who were beginning to "grasp the notion of their peculiar uniqueness" and who were eager to define who they were and what" (Biko 1971: 6).

Biko's "Black Consciousness called for the psychological and cultural liberation of the black mind as a prerequisite for political freedom: mental emancipation as a precondition to political emancipation" (Biko, cited in Arnold, 1972, xx). The focus on subjectivity signals (a) the conditions from which the new epistemology should aim to subjectively eliminate the perpetuation of the colonial status quo. That this becomes (b) the precondition for black solidarity and (c) that this enterprise cannot be done without questioning of history and other modern disciplines (Buthelezi 1987) in order for a new culture of the oppressed to emerge. Here the focus is on overturning the epistemological order so as to smash the colonialist status quo; it becomes clear that we are dealing with issues of a particular political praxis. Political praxis in the era of anti-colonial revolt exerted a decisive influence on the creative use of language, publications, theories of education, creative imaginaries, interpretation of texts and realities of Africa and Africans.

What has been of interest to me is the gnosis of the black intellectual and radical tradition: the scientific and ideological discourses of knowledge and practice or interpretation as lacking invented imaginaires outside of the western centred episteme. From a Black Islamic imaginary, it is significant that the constant elision of Black Islamic imaginary in black thought should always be invoked for the purposes of expanding our imaginaire in theory making or epistemological construction and praxis. In this regard Ngwenya argues that the "poetry of Black consciousness had a direct impact on political mobilisation in the various sectors of the South African black community" (2012: 504). It is a praxis that controls and defines the

configuration of African interpretations or hermeneutics of not only scientific knowledge productions but also African reality.

Bear in mind that the transfiguration of the black subject, the imaginary and the real of the subject, what Mudimbe calls and terms “a critical consciousness” is reconciled with a black cultural text. What takes place in the 1950s and 60s in the rest of Africa is finally expressed in the settler colony of South Africa in the 1970s, hence this cultural text constructed the theologies of liberation. However, we should not forget that the BC movement specifically takes up the invention of history that took place in African studies in the 1950s with the arrival of Marxist theoretical positions. In this regard, cultural expressions such as sculpture, painting, music and literature “constantly reminds the reader of its status as both literary and historical text. Here the decision to invent Black African history is justified because.

“As Fanon puts it: Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content; but by a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it” (Biko 1971: 8).

That is this history has to criticize and debunk the anthropological myth since, “How can an African avoid losing respect for his tradition when in school his whole background is summed up in one word: barbarism” (1971:9). This new valorisation of history in Africanist discourses indeed re-enacts the shift that occurs from the 1930s onwards, remember in South Africa the 1940s and 50s take up more strongly (African nationalism and pan Africanism) nationalism against colonial control. The BC’s valorisation of empowering history birthed a new culture of resistance, a new aestheteme of revolution, “between 1967 and 1974 the cultural renaissance which accompanied the rise of Black Consciousness produced, at an unprecedented rate the literary history of South Africa” (Mzamane xx-xxi). Perhaps what is unfortunate is Mzamane’s use of the European historical period and concept to signify the *arrival of the new* in black cultural productions. Challenging history results in the birth of a new culture where epistemological transformation deepens political liberation and this is one of the reasons why the influence of negritude is called forth but dismissed for its sources in anthropology, here the aim of BC is political strategies and liberation.

We cannot in the same train of thought undermine the cultural expression and emergence that was inaugurated by the BC ideological praxis in cultural productions. SASO's Cultural Committee in the General Student Council of 1978 defined culture in these terms, reminiscent of Amilcar Cabral, "culture we believe is a way of life and also that culture manifests itself in different and myriad facets (1978: 2). The theory of blackness as it was articulated by the movement expressed itself culturally in women's cultural organizations, theatre, music, poetry, literature, fine arts, research journals, Black Community Programmes, and theological discourses. We can say Mudimbe was correct precisely because history as an invention itself shows itself to be dictated by ideological activities.

This is the case with the post Black Consciousness nationalist cultural productions in South Africa particularly from the 1980s to the 1990s during the time of revolutionary upheaval. This episteme takes over nationalist discourses in a vision of a non-racial post-colonial society and justifies using culture as a weapon of struggle. Whilst this episteme of the 1980s can claim to be new because of the climax of the political situation, its radical articulations in cultural productions was centred on articulating a wedge between race and class using theoretical positions of Marxist scientific socialism. Significant is the formation of a black trade union, the United Democratic Front in 1983 which acted "as a proxy for the banned African national congress" and as a mass mobilisation force, ended the revolutionary theory and praxis of BC in order to articulate a new subjectivity of non-racialism & capitalist exploitation through scientific socialism of Marxist thought and liberal democracy of the colonialists.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, White politicians had been radicalized by Black Consciousness' criticism of their liberal hypocrisy. But in the 1980s and 1990s they responded to this radicalization with sullen resentment of the "rejection", they had experienced at the hands of Black Consciousness the movement that had radicalized them. Rather than explore-and surrender to-the assumptive logic behind their radicalization, and allow Blacks to continue to lead, even if it meant that they (Whites) would be sidelined politically for another ten or twenty years-or, follow Biko's demand that they work with and against Whites, right where they are-they instead attached themselves to trade unions like COSATU, and to the UDF, and rode back into the center of political life on the wings of a "non-racial" class analysis (Wilderson 2008:101).

Non-racialism is said to be an unbreakable thread in South Africa if one is to take seriously its conceptualisation by the colonialist settlers in the British imperial imaginations. In this sense, non-racialism was re-installed as the ideological basis of an African/Black epistemology supported by white Marxists, liberals, the ANC led Charterist or Congress tradition and its allied political and intellectual formations. As Makone explains from the SACP/ANC perspective, the radicalisation of the liberation movement under different ideological positions but grounded in their sociohistorical formation, “a number of tactical questions came to the fore” (46). The answer to these tactical questions “was the development of the concept of a ‘people’s war’, thanks to the ANC’s politico-Military Commission” (47).

One of the historical misfortunes about nationalist history in general is its need to centre nationalism as the victorious force amongst the liberation movements. Let us say theoretically the ‘People’s War’ is an effort that arise from the culture of resistance which is not indebted to the ANC led Charterist and allied forces but recognises its activity in the act of liberation. This allows for the articulation of other forces and activities in the liberation movements to be central and centred¹²⁷. Cultural movements outside of the party structures productively enact this articulation. As Khumalo in his article “Gamakhulu Diniso and the Busang Effect: Arts and politics in the Vaal Triangle” (2021) critically corrects.

...in terms of South African art history, only a few art centres and artists have been made dominant or mainstream, whilst others are ignored. Those outside the urban centres of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, for example, are either excluded or marginalised from the written history of 1980s South African art. It is therefore necessary to revisit this literature in order to contribute to its (re)writing.

¹²⁷ During the last three decades, black performance culture has re-emerged in South Africa. Perhaps the most significant strand in this development has been the appearance of working-class theater in the 1980s. The social and political ascendancy of the labour movement provided the preconditions for the emergence of worker plays. These plays have generally taken two forms: The first comprises short educational pieces dealing with themes on workplace conditions, exploitation, and disputes. These plays tend to use only a few actors and they are created for specific in-house performances such as shop-steward's meetings. The second variant is more inclusive, comprising relatively large-scale productions which deal with labour, social, and political themes, and include public performances in their itineraries (Peterson 1990:321).

As we have seen political expressions prove to be inseparable from cultural productions and hence art does become “the visual ‘voice’ of the people, an immediate and direct -means of communicating the oppressive nature of apartheid” (Khumalo 2021) the state of the situation. Destroyed by the colonial state and the nationalist movement, the praxis of blackness by the BC movement was part of the epistemology of blackness that forms the culture of liberation for the black colonised subjects. In the 80s, concepts such as labour activism; cultural workers, worker poets, organic intellectuals amongst others emerge reflecting the Marxist/trade unionist revolutionary programmes. I am attracted by Thillet’s appropriation of the filmmaker Toni Cade’s conception of a cultural worker that resonates with the BC’s artists, revolutionaries, activists, writers, singers, actors, dancers, critical thinkers, and communities. Toni Cade Bambara in an interview says: “As a culture worker who belongs to an oppressed people my job is to make revolution irresistible” (2015: 482). The question of the role of art in the political emerged again in the turbulent 1980s, the epistemology firmly controlled by revolutionary praxis, not forgetting that this was not a new debate as we have seen in this tradition.

Literature appears not to have found a place in the development of contemporary African culture in South Africa. Instead, [...] literature has located itself in the field of politics. And it has done so without discovering and defining the basis of its integrity as an art form. Its form, therefore, has not developed, since to be fictional or poetic was to be political (Ndebele 1991:85).

Like Nkosi before, Ndebele complained that a literature of a ‘spectacle’ is ‘a literature of surface meanings’ (Ndebele 1991:35) where the roles of oppressor and oppressed are assigned on the basis of the all-too-well known political circumstance, where moral indignation structured the Manichean divide. What Ndebele calls the literature of spectacle is what Nkosi called a literature with “a general lack of ideas” (2006: 247). Hence Nkosi could ask whether it “might not be prudent to ‘renounce literature temporarily’ ...and solve the political situation first” (Ibid: 246). The question of literary techniques and the need to go beyond the surface representation of the black situation raises questions of epistemological importance. As we have argued literature in South Africa has been marked by broken claims to connection, if we take seriously only two events, one will have to be the Sharpeville massacre of the 1960s that initiated a ban on liberation movements. The second will be the

students' rebellions of 1976 and the subsequent banning of all Black Consciousness movement organizations, these events severed and undermined any linear conception of black African writing in South Africa, with the banning of literature being a significant tool. Did the revolutionary program that prompted strategies of resistance fail this episteme? In addition, is there something about literary writing that does not accommodate black culture? Zoe Wicomb has interesting thoughts on this issue, which we situate in an epistemological debate and African literature as one of its disciplines.

As for writing, the question is not simply how to transform our racially inflected chants, the fixed syntagms of we-the-oppressed-majority or we-who-fight-apartheid, the victims of title. The question is surely what to do with those real voices that intrude upon us as we sit down to write: how to continue the activity of writing disturbed by the beggars beating at our doors for food: how not to think of writing in this context as a shameful activity that does little of nothing about redistributing cultural and linguistic ideal....

How do liberal humanist assumptions about the function of art, of writing, relate to those who cannot read? What place could the dispossessed decently occupy our schema of representation. Is there really a case at all for giving writing a central position in our culture? (Wicomb 2018: 57).

Black Muslims imaginary raises these concerns precisely because of the tradition of illiteracy and a non-reading public of blackness, not to deride the literary tradition in fiction but to question print-based culture from the point of view of those who do not read. I want to suggest that any study of literary history and criticism in South Africa cannot ignore the issue of illiteracy and its socio political, economic and cultural influence. It becomes exasperating when Literature departments in South Africa particularly in the postcolonial world, divorce the teaching of literature to the socio-cultural context of illiteracy. These debates illuminate the broader experience of blackness, and the black writer is faced with these extra-literary experiences, are experiences not then transposed in the representation of social realities? The colonial library does not suggest for us to interrogate these questions, it is only from a different imaginary that they can arise. An imaginary that takes seriously the conditions of possibility of discourses and their performances, a Black Islamic imaginary.

However, it is interesting that the revolutionary moment of civil rights attainment did not dismantle this colonial library and episteme, meaning that culturally settler colonial culture dictates African realities. Political impossibilities of total revolution unfortunately had a hold on the culture of resistance. What I mean to say is that the cultural imaginary could not be separated from the liberation struggle because the political tends to shape cultural expressions. These are the challenges that the black radical tradition would have to interrogate for the purpose of change. Here we can critique the culture of resistance for its teleological schema under the direction of revolutionary theory-practices. That is, like the failure of revolutionary change in South Africa, cultural productions were geared toward a denouement of the colonial status quo in the post-revolutionary society. Modiri raises this point when he argues that “nearly three decades later since the formal end of apartheid, we cannot speak confidently in ‘South Africa of a sustained Black intellectual practice’” (2021:48).

That is because, “white people still constitute the socially dominant group in South Africa and because this social dominance then manifests in white demographic overrepresentation in academia, white ideological methodology, came to shape the social sciences and humanities” (ibid). Rather than being a moment of an opening of the imaginary of expressing ‘non-human’ freedoms, the white euro-american episteme dominates the higher education sector and directs the scientific and philosophical agenda. What these interests signify is precisely that white liberals and white leftists are the scientific, intellectual capital of this episteme as Wilderson, borrowing from the BC movement has articulated above. This has come to mean that academic research and disciplinary knowledge and intellectual tradition “derive their vocabulary, problems, criteria, methods, categories, and definitions from philosophical and scientific traditions born from and shaped by the cultural perspective and historical experience of colonial and imperial Europe” (Modiri: 2021: 47).

Hence, non-racialism becomes the main organizing principle of society at a racial level supported by liberal democracy. Consequently, alienation arises again in a post-revolutionary society, where the “problem of colonialism” arises in an unconscious form (Hudson 2019) or as Modiri advice, to critique the perpetuation of colonial imperialism by decentring whiteness as a culturally influential social group. As Pillay has noticed with the black radical tradition in post/settler-colonial South Africa

Those who have more recently been drawing from the well of postcolonial theory and those drawing on decolonial theory have turned to alternative theorizations of colonialism in the wake of a feeling that a certain kind of Marxist rendering of colonialism and apartheid that was influential in the academy was no longer adequate to thinking the problem and politics of race, colonialism, and becoming post-apartheid (2022: 399).

If missionary and colonial educational institutions have been the one of the pivotal moments in the constitution of a colonised subjectivity, then the alienation is the symptom in psychoanalytic terms that has continued to be a demonstration of the structure of colonialism. Precisely because it is in education where the disjuncture between social reality and the civilizational culture (education is civilization in a colonial context) encounter one another to form a ruptured subject. The inadequacy of previous revolutionary theories and programmes calls forth the emergence of a different episteme, “in an existential sense the experience of the university after apartheid as a culturally alienating space, with its pressures to assimilate into the dominant codes and mores, made legible through the reductive and overdetermining concept of class” (2022:ibid). Not only class but also ossified notions of race that emerged/s from the Marxist nationalist frameworks¹²⁸.

In a *Special Issue: South African Literature a Priori* (2022)¹²⁹ Skhumbuzo Mngadi reads *Scatterlings* (2020) as a way to understand the “post” of post-colonial apartheid South Africa

¹²⁸ Such disjunctures between the curricula taught at universities and the “backgrounds and experiences of black students inform the calls for decolonisation of curricula, the institutional cultures at tertiary institutions and South African society. It is the continuing practice and resonances of such forms of social exclusions and subjection, along with their epistemic violence that are behind the angst and rage of black students. Student activists, poignantly, have, at times, seen their revolts as a continuation or an affirmation of the battles that their seniors (particularly “progressive activists” who now occupy leading managerial positions in universities and the state) began but did not or could not finish. It is no wonder that the rebuttals that students received elicited a sense of bewilderment and of being betrayed by elites and the state. It is an anger that, in my limited understanding, comes from the students feeling that much of their estrangement and anxiety about the present and the future is regarded as lesser than that experienced by their elders under apartheid” (Peterson 2022: 357).

¹²⁹ The word “a priori” has its origin in late 16th-century Latin and means “from what is before.” While the aim of this special issue is to examine the shifts and continuities of South African literature after Marikana (2012), the phrase “South African literature a priori” highlights the historical currents that create present forms, at the same time as asserting that this new configuration of things is somewhat different from what was before. It is at this juncture of difference and continuity that we place this reading of contemporary South African literary studies. This special issue examines South African

in black literary writing. He suggests that the “terms that have served at various times to give the present shape and meaning—that is, “post-apartheid,” “transition,” “post-transition,” “post-post-apartheid,” “post-anti-apartheid”, “post Marikana”—could be symptomatic of the impossibility of transcending the time, place, and events to which they putatively refer” (12). Hence the usage of the trope “of what Manenzhe calls a “scatterling,” that is, “a person without a fixed home; a wanderer.” The trope of the “unhomely” is an already familiar one” in postcolonial theories.

The novel prompts a number of questions about South African writing in the present, particularly that which seeks to reorient the present through strategic returns to the past. One of these questions pertains to the status of such literature as Scatterlings in South Africa today, particularly to the conditions that have produced and sustained it. Indeed, what is becoming increasingly clear in black South African writing, both creative and critical, is that there is a substantial body of literature that, like Scatterlings, returns to the colonial and apartheid archives. In this article, I argue that this return to past archives in the present is symptomatic of the incomplete project of emancipatory humanism with which anti-apartheid literature was at different times preoccupied (2022:13).

The failure of ‘African humanism’ is a failure connected to the incomplete revolutionary moment as we have outlined just above. However, what is important for our undertaking is the lack of an imaginaire that theories and practices of African humanism express. It is this lack that enables the re-articulations of such humanisms considered to have a universal appeal, a moral authority to encompass the colonizer and the colonized. Collis-Buthelezi (2017: 12) has argued that blackness as a discursive and experiential embodiment should be understood in light of what “Michelle M. Wright identifies as the “epiphenomenal time”¹³⁰ of

literature and the theoretical conceptions that define South African literary production from 2012 onward, with each article in this issue reflecting a dominant concern. This article outlines the ambiguous operational logic of South African literature after Marikana, forming a new-old understanding of South African literary studies today (Frenkel 2020: 1).

¹³⁰ Epiphenomenal time contends the current moment, a moment that is not directly borne out of another (i.e., causally created) ... however, Epiphenomenal time does not preclude any and all causality: only a direct, or linear, causality ... the current moment, or “now,” can certainly correlate with other moments, but one cannot argue that it is always already the effect of a specific, previous moment. Read together, they underscore the depth and breadth with which these notions of

blackness in her (2015) *The Physics of Blackness: Middle Passage Epistemologies*. The argument is that “Many stalwart leftist South African academics/activists who came of intellectual age in the 1970s and 1980s argue, “to speak of race now [post-apartheid] is tantamount to the retention and promulgation of old apartheid classificatory categories.” Here Njabulo Ndebele’s 2014 African Literature Association keynote, entitled “*To Be or Not To Be, No Longer At Ease*,” is singled out for its displacement or transcendence of discursive blackness in the postcolony in order to support a new conception of the “human being”, “the citizen.”

For Ndebele “[I]t is time for South African ‘blacks’ to no longer put store on ‘blackness’. To continue to do so is to insist on living in a liminal space in which dream, and effort have become disentangled almost permanently” (2016: 26). What is needed instead is an Africa that will “restore the vital sense of its diversity, human and non-human, as a fundamental attribute of source of it’s being in the universe, and then to turn that diversity into a source for fresh social, political and economic visions” (Ndebele 2016:23). I would argue that the alienation of the colonised subject by colonial history best exposes the effectiveness of these discourses about a ‘universal black and African humanism’. Hence, Collis-Buthelezi argues that “blackness is neither fixed over time nor does it follow a linear progression narrative from type A to type B.” The implications are a breath of fresh air, “while Ndebele’s essay identifies that there is need for something new, I argue that the new need not involve denouncing blackness in order to attain the (African) universal or stop South Africa’s slide into a post-apartheid, racist abyss” (2014: 14).

What *Scatterlings* does is to expose the alienation of the colonised in the post-colonial state of affairs, “[I]n part, this is a function of the ways in which South Africa could be said to be “after” apartheid and, indeed, South African in terms of new modes of belonging.” In a sense, cultural productions particularly in black South African writing becomes the signifier of this state of affairs, of belonging to the experience of social death in the postcolony.

spacetime pervade Western expressions of collective identity, most especially Blackness. Even further, they underscore that while the linear progress narrative is an invaluable tool for locating Blackness, when used alone its very spatiotemporal properties preclude a wholly inclusive definition of Blackness, yielding one that is necessarily inaccurate. By contrast, Epiphenomenal time enables a wholly inclusive definition (appropriate to any moment at which one is defining Blackness).

From this perspective, it would seem that, given the persistence of the past in the literature of the present, another sense of apprehending the term “post-apartheid”—indeed “post-colonialism”—is that we are living in the wake of, rather than after, apartheid’s grand designs. In this view, the prefix ‘post’ may also denote what Kwame Appiah suggests for it, that is, a “space-clearing gesture” (149) from which the very assumptions of theory can be contested from the point of view of experience.

Without any doubt, we can argue that Ndebele is looking for what Mngadi using Kwame Appiah’s notion and concept of post-colonialism refers to as a “space-clearing gesture” in which new theoretical paradigms can be invented to accompany the new historical experience and political juncture, especially in cultural productions. Hence, for Ndebele, this is a “universal that is grounded in the modern African literary tradition that takes Achebe as its forefather” (Collis-Buthelezi 2017: 13). However, for us we can ground the theory of a new articulation and conception of the black lived experience in the tradition of African literature of the 1960s as we have argued. Precisely because this literature omits the tradition that comes prior to it (Ngugi 2018), prioritises English writing (Masilela 2012), and excludes traditions such as Islam in favour of sub-Saharan Africa and blackness that is constructed along Marxist/liberal nationalist paradigms. What we can do is use the post-colony or the present “as an endless chain of onto-historical ‘misfortunes’....” (Letsoalo 2016: 4). In this sense, we are able to use the present to articulate a new imaginary or the black lived experience that ruptures the certainty of the culture of the status quo.

Black Islamic Imaginary in Verbal Arts

Perhaps it is prudent to then turn to Wilson Harris as a way of demonstrating how the Black Islamic imaginary breaks away from and invent the Black & Islamic radical traditions. Further, by tradition we mean to say, “the depth of the inarticulate feeling and unrealized wells of emotion” of the African Muslims (1967: 28). This tradition is born from the “ruptures of colonialism, the decimation of native peoples, and the dislocations of migration, slavery, and indenturedship,” it gives birth to an imagination that enables what Harris calls an “unfinished genesis of the imagination” (2000: 19).

You may call it a resurrection, but it is equally a devolution of static privilege which the imagination needs to work for through elements and stones and music and echoes we brush aside. We brush them aside because they seem passive and inarticulate. Such passivity, such inarticulacy is broken. In such reality each ruin participates in the origins of consciousness even science seeks the origin of creation” (Harris 2000: 20).

The imagination re-oriented in this way is a “way of reading reality” (Harris 1981: 238), this reality exceeds the current western world system’s epistemological imaginative boundaries in order to call forth a uniquely revolutionary Islamic and native consciousness, that is why it undermines the certainty of finished modern consciousness of imagination. This imagination emerges as cross-cultural materiality of the Muslim Africans in South African cultural thought and practice.

David Scott in an interview with Stuart Hall is correct to think postcolonial time as a “problem space”.

“a “problem-space” (and obviously I’m severely compressing here) is first of all a conjunctural space, a historically constituted discursive space. This discursive conjuncture is defined by a complex of questions and answers—or better, a complex of, statements, propositions, resolutions and arguments offered in answer to largely implicit questions or problems” (2005).

This problem space encourages the capability to question as well as construct new statements and modes of non-discursive practices that arises out of the disappointment of revolutionary failure and postcolonial nationalism or the perpetuation of anti-black-anti-Muslim capitalist-colonialism in the postcolony. Given the intimate connection between individual and social structure as we have alluded in our understanding of alienation, we can hence understand Bulhan’s (1985) description of Fanon’s perspective on psychopathology as necessarily sociogenetic and Fanon’s conviction of ‘madness as organically linked to a situation of oppression’ (Maxaulane 2023; Bulhan, 1985, 188). The black Islamic subject is affected by “affective erethism: a pathological condition of hypersensitivity which arises in oppressive or colonial environments, and which involves both a sense of inferiority, and a constant nearness to anger and/or rage” (Hook 2007:100).

It is this symptomatic behaviour that effects a different socio symbolic transcendental structure from the one that privileges a Judeo-Christian and secular nationalist teleological schema evident in postcolonial time, precisely because of our first epigraph¹³¹. Meaning that unlike Ndebele, “[M]oving forward need not require disowning blackness” rather black colonised subjects have turned to embracing Islam as the *new* in the tradition of black literary and cultural productions as we have been charting in our archaeology.¹³² In this sense, we might remember Mudimbe’s archaeology of the invention of African history.

The whole conception of African history had to be defined anew on the basis of Islamic contributions (Ki Zerbo, 1972), which affect the classical historical *doctrina* by bringing new witnesses and documents. Islamic narratives enter the episteme. Some African enigmas are now examined with the aid of commentaries and descriptions by Ibn Hawkal (tenth century), El Bekri (eleventh century), Idrisi (twelfth century), Ibn Battuta, Ibn Khaldoun, Maqrizi (fourteenth century). The sociohistorical phenomenon of “Black Islam,” as studied by V. Monteil (1980) is a primary concept for some important periods of history, and the *tarikhs*, or chronicles, have become valued sources. Islamic sources have always constituted important dimensions for the search and invention of African paradigms (see, e.g., Blyden, 1967). Islamic culture has powerfully contributed to the passions of alterity, particularly in West Africa, where it still exposes schemas and lessons on social harmony and its philosophy (e.g., Ba, 1972; Hama, 1969; Kane, 1967).

What is important for black South African cultural productions and experiences is the opening of the imaginaire by taking seriously Islam. If Mudimbe, is correct to point out that Islam in

¹³¹ So, we have finally to consider the symbolic representation of death, the silence of the conquered, who, on the psychoanalyst’s couch, represent another silence, the massive and shameful silence of men who discover themselves incapable of explaining to their children what happened (Mudimbe 1994:183).

¹³² To be sure, there is no African identity that could be designated by a single term or that could be named by a single word or subsumed under a single category. African identity does not exist as a substance. It is constituted, in varying forms, through a series of practices, notably *practices of the self*. Neither the forms of this identity nor its idioms are always self-identical. Rather, these forms and idioms are mobile, reversible, and unstable. Given this element of play, they cannot be reduced to a purely biological order based on blood, race, or geography. Nor can they be reduced to custom, to the extent that the latter’s meaning is itself constantly shifting (Mbembe 2003: 272).

Africa was and still is important for the “search and invention of African paradigms” then we take seriously this culture as the radical imaginary of blackness. No doubt, Kenneth Harrow in his edited volume of *The Marabout & The Mus: New Approaches to Islam in Africa: New Approaches to Islam in African Literature* (1996), had the same idea by arguing that “[T]he list of what could be studied under the rubric of African Islamic literature is enormous” (xiii). Islamic African literature is taken seriously and inserted within the sociocultural history of the African literary canon, “the Islamic text is now presented as an essential component of an African cultural and social environment with which it enters into full dialogue (Harrow 1996: xv). However, I cannot help but sense the tension at play in this introduction of the Islamic imaginary in African literature, as Mudimbe already alluded, the introduction of Islamic history in the colonial library affects “the classical historical *doctrina* by bringing new witnesses and documents”. Our understanding of this classic historical *doctrina* suggests that the colonial library is built by both the experiences of the colonizer and colonized and has contributed to the imaginary of African and European realities. Meaning that anticolonial criticisms against western intellectual thought and colonisation is taken as a standard judgement of any history that does not express a purity of race/culture (Mbembe 2018: 90).

Harrow concurs by suggesting that the dialogue within African literature in the European imaginaries and languages and African Islamic text “has been misperceived as entailing either the imposition of a foreign presence (cf. Sembene’s *Ceddo* or Armah’s *Two Thousand Seasons*) or as the continuation of an original, traditional African epistemology” (1996: *ibid*). Firstly, the discourse of Islam as a foreign imposition that can be compared to Christianity and colonialism is one that has become unjustly cemented in the Africanist thought and societies. I want to use Mbembe as an example of the black African intellectual tradition. Conceptualizing black African cultural practices and ensembles, he demonstrates that “difference is constituted through a triple process of entanglement, mobility, and circulation. Let us take as an example the disciplines of Islam and Christianity” (2018: 95).

As one of the oldest containers for Black identity, at least in certain regions of the continent, Islam long preceded the Atlantic trade and the colonial period. It consisted of different traditions organized within brotherhoods in which the religious elites reinterpreted and taught the Koran, seeking to translate its protocols into a legal order that could be imposed on both believers and nonbelievers. From this point of view,

Islam functioned as a formal system of governance, as a producer of subjects and a figure of sovereignty. Despite their diversity, one element united the different traditions: the privilege that they accorded to faith in determining the relationship between identity, politics, and history. In many ways the authority carried by these traditions was a conquering identity that was sure of itself. The ways of governing, believing, and trading were linked according to the principle of communicating vessels. And if there is something that separated Islam from other religions in Africa, it was probably the way in which the act of piety responded, like an echo, to the act of war. In effect, in order to impose itself, the Islamic faith used both power and a certain aesthetic of violence. So-called holy wars and forced conversions were legitimized and authorized through invocations of the necessity of rectitude and salvation. When forced conversion overtook voluntary adhesion, a master–slave relationship superimposed itself on the ties linking believer to nonbeliever. With laws of religion defining the modes of belonging and exclusion, the observance of religious precepts (how to live morally in the eyes of God) became the condition of admission into an imagined nation whose physical and symbolic borders encompassed a wide-ranging community of believers. Outside of the domain of believers, outside of its towns, caravans, merchants, and scholars, there existed nothing but impiety. Everything situated outside the limits of the world of revelation (the *dar al-Islam*, or the empire of Islam) was destined to be raided and reduced to slavery. The new lands sought out for Islam constituted the *dar al-harb*, the land of war. As Islam penetrated Africa, it carried this bellicose intent, along with the appetite for luxury and brutality that was its corollary. Yet warring hardly prevented Islam from offering the proposition of a fully ethical life to the converted.

My argument is that cultural criticism in Africanist discourses has constructed Islam as foreign, Arab, colonizing and enslaving Abrahamic religion and thus, not “African” or “Black” and can be compared to Christianity. As Mbembe points out, “if there is something that separated Islam from other religions in Africa, it was probably the way in which the act of piety responded, like an echo, to the act of war”. I have already cautioned against conceptualizing Islam as religion, however Mbembe continues, “When forced conversion overtook voluntary adhesion, a master-slave relationship superimposed itself on the ties linking believer to

nonbeliever,” but he does not tell us where these forced conversions occurred, how and by who. My claim is that the hyperbolic language of violence and invasion is misplaced precisely because here the linkages between Christianity (religion), violence-imposition (colonialism), master-servant relationship (slavery) an “*dar al Islam* or the empire of Islam” and “*dar al-harb*, the land of war” alludes to civilizational discourses. Secondly it draws on the Mazrui’s Triple Heritage (1986), Nkrumah’s Conscientism (1964), Blyden’s comments on the necessity of Islam, Christianity and tradition (1887)¹³³. My argument is that African cultural discourses since the 1950s have constructed a history of Africa that makes race and culture, especially by intellectual from intellectuals educated in the western episteme, inseparable and determined by secularism and custom. Not only this, but it is also this intellectual strand that has claimed to be the intellectual direction of Africa in the modern period as I have been demonstrating in this chapter. Thirdly these ideas which borders or are reminiscent of anthropological discourse of “authentic Africans” have been taken for granted and that is why Black Islamic imaginary in South Africa, a radical invention, in African studies is exposing these divisions, biases of the modern African epistemology.

This colonialist framing of Islam exhibited by the European and Africanist imaginary and discourses is deeply entrenched that, as a final example, one cannot study Islam in South Africa without conflating Malayness, Indianess, Arabic language, religion, and therefore colonization. Unlike the statist conceptions of conversion, associated with a colonialist episteme, conversion, Diagne asserts, implies “a new self-appraisal” as well as a “radical change in the discourse of *individual* and *communal identities*”¹³⁴ (in Sitoto 2018: 168). For us conversion or radical change in the (post) colony can only yield a fidelity to the truth of that conversion as an event and structure of thought. Thus, it is a mistake to view conversion only

¹³³ For a thorough reading of Blyden’s thought see Mudimbe, V.Y. (1989) *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*. Indiana University Press. P98-135.

¹³⁴ As Fanon puts it in *Towards the African Revolution* (1964) “technique[s] which aim to enable human beings to no longer be strangers to their environment ... [then] I owe it to myself to affirm that [the colonized subject] ... permanently alienated in his [sic] native land, lives in a state of absolute depersonalisation ... [of] systematized de-humanization ... The function of a social structure is to set up institutions to serve man’s [sic] needs. A society that drives its members to desperate solutions is a non-viable society, a society that needs to be replaced” (53–54).

as a sociocultural compromise or a once-off event and hence limited to the adoption of a new religion.

In theoretical terms, therefore, as articulated and embodied in Bofelo's writings (most especially his poetry and essays), there is no paradox in being Black, African and Muslim. On the contrary, Muslim subjects like Bofelo do not just enrich the cultural content and understanding of what it means to be Muslim, they also enrich what it means to be Black and African in the world. In short, the Black African Muslim subject as exemplified by Bofelo is not a voiceless subject fit only to be objectified as a convert. Rather, he or she is a thinking subject capable of self-understanding beyond the spectre of conversion. (Sitoto 2018:178).

As I have argued somewhere, "Islam at least from a black African perspective has the capacity and the capability for revolutionary spiritual, intellectual-social change and or political cadences" (2023: 17)¹³⁵. Bofelo's¹³⁶ Islam does not strip him of, and thus delink him from his roots and cultural universe. Rather, the poet and critical essayist strikes a balance not only with his Black African sense of self but also with the Black world and its cultural experience worldwide (Marriott 2018: 177). The Black Muslim subject is located within the present "problem space" or sociogenic condition as a new discourse and practice in both the "Black and African" as well as "Muslim" cultural experiences. The ground/materiality and cosmology of this subject is able to halt and quell the perpetuation and dominance of the current state of affairs, understanding that to be 'non-human' is a creative force that exhibits an alternative cultural approach rooted in the real of the Black Islamic imaginary.

¹³⁵ Forthcoming (submitted) "Islam in the Colony: Ideologies of the Ummah", in Social Dynamics.

¹³⁶ Bofelo adopted Islam in the 1980s while still a student and political activist against apartheid (more about this later). Certainly, other possible candidates besides him could also be investigated. There is, for instance, the iconic seasoned poet Don Mattera, who has been a Muslim since the 1970s, and the legendary pianist Abdullah Ibrahim who embraced Islam in the late 1960s.

Chapter Three: The Black Muslim is a figure of radical and revolutionary intervention in the “postcolony post-apartheid” situation – political discourses of the subject - تغيير ثوري.

“The policeman held in his hand a revolver with its mouth pointing into the man’s terrified, blinking face. ‘I can shoot you now, now and there’s nothing you or anyone can do to me!’” (Mariam Tlali 1980).

Kimathi: Give! Given! Give! Given! Given! Beggars. Hands outstretched. Ten cents. Thirty pieces of silver. Independence on a silver platter? Away. Vile creatures. Rats. Bloodsuckers. What? Blood? Yes. Your people’s blood. Our peoples’ blood. The blood of us workers and peasants. Yes, those are our people. And you, New Farmers, New Settlers: Black skins, colonial settlers’ hearts....

Business Executive: Plead guilty. Save your life. Save lives. Join us.

Kimathi: Cursed minds! What revolution will unchain these minds! Out. Out. Neo slaves (Ngugi wa Thiongo & Micere Githae Mugo 1976: 46-47).

The notion that African people have forgone, or are likely to forgo, have alienated, or are likely to alienate, their indigenous rights to their land, is as unfounded, as misguided, as outrageous, as it is nonsensical (Mokonyane 1994: 44).

The nonsensical notion of African people forgoing their indigenous rights to the *real* (truth & Knowledge) land, wealth and emancipatory politics provides this chapter with the political materiality to engage in a protracted struggle and interventions in the postcolony, “the territory called South Africa today.”¹³⁷ As we have been demonstrating in this thesis Black

¹³⁷ Here I am following the Azanian black radical tradition in contesting the name of the territory we know today as “South Africa”. In his article, Modiri argues that the “[T]he provenance of the term Azania is a long and protean one, but for our purposes it served as a political and philosophical signifier introduced by the Pan-Africanist Congress and then adopted also by the Black Consciousness Movement as the true and liberated name for the territory currently mapped as ‘South Africa’ (Dladla 2018: 2–7). It is a key term in the lexicon of the Africanist-black radical tradition because it reflects the view of ‘South Africa’ as an artefact of colonial sovereignty that came into being in 1910 through the racial contract between the two European conquering powers that had subjugated the indigenous African population and other oppressed groups and racialised them as ‘Blacks’ in the process of inventing the political category of whiteness (2021: 43).

African Muslim subjects are revolutionary figures armed with novelties to rupture, and are, positioned outside the Western world biontological/transcendental-epistemological structure that dominates our current political situation. In this chapter, we continue with our thesis analyzing the political discourses of the Black Muslim subject in the concrete (*real* and *existential*) conditions of the postcolonial post-apartheid political situation in South Africa. This chapter argues that Muslim political discourse in South Africa has been plagued by a lack of concrete articulation of conditions of liberation for Muslims and ignoring blackness as a force of rupture in the current status quo of the settler-colonialists and charterist congress alliance (ANC/SACP/COSATU). Without proceeding from the critique of the old, that is our reality commanded by western liberal and capital-parliamentarism then rupture is impossible.

Consequently, theories of revolutionary change have been sidelined in favor of accommodation and inclusion that is in a modern capitalist, anti-black and Muslim, liberal democratic, settler colonial structure in the national question of the postcolonial state in South Africa. This position is not divorced from similar discourses of anticolonial resistance and its capitulations in the Muslim world since the inception of colonial modernity; and this is why we try to show that without taking seriously Black Muslim subjects as revolutionary militant figures of politics, Muslim discourses and practices will fail to contribute to liberation practices and discourses. This is because without introducing antagonism and contradictions as the structuring principle of emancipatory politics, and without taking seriously African Muslim praxis of liberation. I mean to say the multidimensionality of blackness (Wright 2015), particularly in South Africa where black African Muslims are a minority in a country with a minority Islamic population, when unfiltered by contributions of the African Muslims in the formation of an inclusive but pro-blackness political order it may result in the perpetuation of the domination of a secular western transcendental structure of politics.

This chapter provides an anticolonial praxis critique against political theory, science and philosophical transcendental-epistemological structures of domination and it introduces a militant intervention and invention suited to think and act revolutionary politics in our late modern colonial/imperialist time. As Sylvain Lazarus has warned, we have “worries that social scientists tend to subordinate political thinking to its relationship with our extant social reality” (2012: 19). That is for Lazarus, the social scientists’ methodological assumption that

thought has requisites leaves them with a limited ability to adequately study and understand the thinking that happens during moments of direct contestation against “the existing social and political order of things” (Lazarus 2016: 113). The stress on a different transcendental understanding and structure stems from the concrete *real* and *existential* situation of African Muslim subjects and it denotes the constructing of a different order of existence. Muslim Africans in the postcolony must begin to understand that without novelties, introducing the *new* in a situation change will not occur. This militant invention and interventionist approach is central to the theory of the militant Black Muslim political subjects.

Transcendental & ontological-epistemological orders of reality/power-Islam-Defeat-Revolutions-State

To take seriously Islamic political discourses we analyse the theories of revolutionary change in the colonial modern period because of the history of the “reconfiguring of the world along the lines of a violent hierarchy between the West and non-West” (Sayyid 2014: 2). This history of “the military and political defeats experienced on a grand scale over a *longue durée*” and the “planetary colonial political economy” has positioned Muslims in a situation structured in dominance (Badiou 2001; Hallward 2008). It is this dominance that shaped Muslim revolutionary and political conceptions of emancipation, whether conceptualising the political discourse of resistance or liberal democratic accommodation, or both. These discourses emerged from two longstanding debates that sought to make sense of the antagonism and contradictions of the modern colonial conditions of subjugation and they rest on the premise that either Islam is constituted by a lack of separation between the state and religion or it is not (Ahmad 2009; Tayob 1995; Hallaq 2014; Sayyid 2014; El-Affendi 2008). The predominance of this view and discourses relies on the assumption that the idea of an Islamic state flows from the theological character of Islam. In this sense, the vast literature on Islamic fundamentalism (Ahmed 2009) or Islamic resurgence (Tayob 1995) testifies to such practices and epistemological assumptions.

Tayob thinks that the modern Muslim situation or Islamic resurgence has provided an Islamic paradigm that is structured by the Foucauldian method of knowledge and power because “Scripture-based religious traditions, such as Christianity and Islam, possess tangible textual origins for the derivation of religious knowledge,” and here religious knowledge supposedly could be treated as political knowledge. Here it is argued that the new paradigms of religious

studies helped propel or give a clear understanding of Islamic resistance against colonial modernity

“The political power of European colonialism, and the hegemony of European sciences, created a crisis in the Muslim world. In this conflict between tradition and modernity, however, even new “westernised” elite, which was alienated from indigenous culture and institutions, nevertheless turned to the originating textual sources of the tradition for legitimation. By appropriating and reinterpreting those sources, they sought a religious authenticity that based upon a new understanding of Islam in the modern world, they sought an Islamic paradigm” (1995: 19).

As Tayob argues these crises of modernity, what we have termed subjugation and domination through violence and epistemological configuration, informed three approaches to articulate Islam anew. The revivalists “neo-Sufi movements” of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Muslim world “emphasized,” unlike the past Sufi doctrines, “emulating the practices of the Prophet as recorded in Hadith,” whilst the past Sufi order “sought mystical union with spiritual reality” (21-22). These ideas occurring in the early colonial period redefined the political project by using the Prophetic tradition as the basis of launching resistance against the impending colonial forces and also played a role in developing Islamic resurgence in the modern colonial world. The end of the nineteenth century solidified the dominance of European colonial projects, with the assimilation to the modern episteme through colonial education,

“new economic and political elites emerged, including religious scholars who formulated a new understanding of Islam under the influence of their exposure to Europe and European thought,” that is the modern Islamic understanding of nationality and nationhood (Tayob 1995: 22-23).

One could argue that these conceptions of Islam were/are predicated on European models of social organization and power, hence the anti-colonial movements and theories were aimed at state power for Islamic emancipation. This is because colonialism constructed new classes that benefitted materially from the cultural involvement in European civilization. Islamic reformism “was not a religious response to the West, but a local strategy of wresting political control from absolutist monarchs” (Choueri in Tayob 1995: 25). The anti-colonial movements

gave birth to new and independent nation-states and in their wake, the ideology of Islamism emerged.

Advocating a vision and ideology for a Muslim society, Islamism combined the two previous approaches to argue for an Islamic state (Khalifa) and a Muslim society based on Enlightenment ideals of rationalism and the emulation of the Prophet. These rationalist explanations of society foregrounded the state as an emancipatory vehicle for establishing authority and the harmonious Islamic *ummah*. Whilst Tayob's concern is mainly to understand the transformation of religious discourse and its political implication, the argument relies too much on the conception of the political that is enframed within the theology or religious discourse that transforms and assimilates the European historical experience of religion. Indeed for us, it is, as we argued, unfortunate that Muslims continue to compare Islam and Christianity, we implore the reader to again suspend this sort of epistemological assumption. It seems to me that Tayob relies on the sovereign thought structures of modern binaries between tradition and modernity and in this sense religious discourses and as a consequence on the political phenomenon *act* as a meaningful resolution of contradictions and antagonisms constructed by Muslims. In actuality we can say the aim of this religious discourse, charting its transformation as it has been done in the past (Greek, African, Arab, and Asian encounters) is to resolve the representation of Muslims in modern liberal democratic states, to include Islam in civil society.

For Ahmad, the argument for authenticity that is based upon re-interpretations of the modern colonial situation has enabled two kinds of frameworks for thinking politics of emancipation. More precisely Islamic fundamentalism firstly, a fusion framework that is shared by many modern Islamists such as Sayyid Ala Maududi and Sayyid Qutb, assumes that "the classical paradigm of politics was founded on an image of the state that presupposed religion as the source of power and Khalifah [caliphate] as the framework of government" (Ishmael 1991: 25). This view was articulated by Bernard Lewis, whom Edward Said labeled an orientalist (1978), that is his knowledge of Islam contributed to the continued domination of Islam. For Lewis, "in Islam ... there is from the beginning an interpretation, almost an identification, of ... religion and the state" (1996: 61).

From the beginning of the Prophet's revolution/revelation religion and state were one and this remained a characteristic of Islam down to the modern period "[T]he sharia, the divinely revealed law of God, has absolute authority. It precedes the state and was its law" (Lambent in Ahmad 2009). For those such as Gellner, Islam was the state from the very start, that is Islam has always been opposed to secularization because of its fusion of state and religion (1992: 5- 9). If this is the fusion framework, the anti-fusion framework argues that there is indeed a separation between state and religion. Islam indeed makes a separation between religion and the state. Theologically, "it does not entail an Islamic state. In the nineteenth century, Sayyid Ahmad Khan of India (d. 1898) was probably one of the first scholars to argue that Islam asked its believers to be loyal to whatever state they were part of, no matter whether it was Muslim or non-Muslim" (Ahmad 2009: 146).

Let us call Al-Ashmawy's line of argument the 'anti-fusion framework'. Evidently, the conclusions of both fusion and anti-fusion frameworks are radically different, even antagonistic. However, there is an arresting unity in the methods they employ to arrive at their respective conclusions. Their approach is theological. That is, they employ a method which accords centrality to canonical religious texts, particularly the Qur'an and hadith (the Prophet Muhammad's statements and actions), to derive a given conclusion. Central to this approach is a philological way of deciphering the meanings of keywords in the texts.

Both fusion and anti-fusion frameworks are radically different, even antagonistic. However, there is an arresting unity in the methods they employ to arrive at their respective conclusions, their approach is theological or secular. Ahmed shows how the theological approach reaches its limits because it believes in the neutrality of interpretation, which is an "ideologically de-historicized abstraction. It helps us understand neither the modern nature of the state nor the complexity of sharia, including how the meaning of sharia itself changed over time and how it was humanly recast" (2009: 147). Like the Black Islamic subjects, Ahmed argues that the idea of an Islamic state is "distinctly a modern idea." It is especially "conducted mostly in the field of Islamic studies and area studies" (Ahmed 2009: 148).

In arguing for a "historically embedded anthropological approach to the idea of the Islamic state - a subject that anthropology has been even more disinterested in than in the notions and practices of the state in general" (Ibid), Ahmed concurs with Soares and Osella (2010).

For them anthropology, that is western discourses (academic), and the media has been responsible for the production of “reified views of Islam and Muslims in abundance, such views have also emerged from within Islam itself, via Muslims’ interpretations and representations of their own religion as unitary, timeless, and unchanging.” They confess, “Like many other anthropologists,” Soares and Osello tells us, “We are also cognizant of and increasingly weary of stepped-up attempts by governments, their militaries, and security apparatuses to appropriate anthropological methods and insights into Islam and Muslim societies by nefarious ends in ongoing wars, including the so-called ‘war on terror’” (2010: 2).

Ahmed’s alternative historical anthropology directly gives “primacy to the political factors and historical context in which philological interpretation is made and unmade” (2009: 147), not to completely abandon theology but to focus on the historical and political construction of interpretation. However, Ahmad seems to want to argue that the modern state is a logical development of colonial modernity, it could not be avoided or had/s no alternative hence his interest in the leading anti-colonial Islamist, Maududi’s response to the structural destruction/genocide of the Mughal empire and by consequent Muslims and the elevation of Hindus by the Company and the Crown (British colonialism)¹³⁸. For the black Muslim subjects as Soares and Osello have aptly demonstrated, colonial modernity is structured by contradictions and antagonisms or conflict and struggle, hence the aim is not to, against Tayob and Ahmed, to make meaning of the modern condition or to argue for the inevitability of the state in emancipatory politics.

All the preceding discourses and conceptual frameworks of emancipatory politics of anti-colonial militants has been for the integration of Muslims, or specifically Islam, into the colonial modern status quo. For the Black Muslim subjects, the “History of the Muslim World, determined and written by Orientalism and now normalized by Orientals, has been a story dictated by modernization theory and the theory of agency” (Hallaq 2018:107). The inevitability of the state or the theology of progress is because it structures the subject in such a way as to dominate its [the subject] *order of reality*, to make the order of reality appear as

¹³⁸ Hallaq argues that “there is no doubt that the colonial powers learned some of the lessons from their political and legal experiments in colonized lands, particularly the British in their conquest of India (2013: 24).

if inevitable. That is why we argue that meaning-making is thus impossible within colonial modernity for the colonized. As Hallaq points out in this long quote

...the Orient, including and especially its Islamic part, did not know anything like the modern state. Put more precisely, the Islamic world (our case study) developed a form of governance that, until its encounter with modern European colonialism, did not know the concept of political sovereignty that modernity introduced. Political organization and constitutional arrangements were driven not by politics, since, like the state, politics, in the normative meaning we have come to know, did not either exist. Rather, it was the moral law of Islam, the so-called Islamic law that determined the meaning of sovereignty, and this law was a temporal-spatial phenomenon, as I earlier explained. This law stood resilient against political manipulation and could not be placed under the wilful command of any single branch of government, not even under the command of all of them (legislative, judicial, and executive) had they decided, inconceivably, to collude against it or subject it to a state of exception. The moral law, a dispersed doctrinal and sociolegal phenomenon over time and space, was beyond political reach, depriving any branch, including the executive, of the right to sovereignty. This was possible by virtue of the stark fact that the “law” was the work of a collectivity of grassroots jurists, whose learning and piety combined gave them authority to engage in atomistic contributions of the law. No single jurist, not even a founder of a school, could claim ownership of the law. And since the source of all moral-legal authority was an anthropological-hermeneutical engagement with authorized texts by a countless, unidentifiable number of men of piety, across regions, decades, and centuries, the law not only was beyond political reach but also stood above all human institutions (notwithstanding its built-in structures of legal change) (2018:110).

Both Ahmed and Hallaq give us extensive analysis of the destruction of Muslim empires both the Mughal¹³⁹ and the Ottoman and subsequently the Muslim individuals by modern

¹³⁹ For a brief analysis of the Mughal state, see Subrahmanyam (1992). The volume edited by Alam and Subrahmanyam (1998) offers a comprehensive treatment of the Mughal state. The main poles in this debate are the 'Aligarh school', with its left-nationalist leanings, and the 'Cambridge school' (see Moosvi 2005; Subrahmanyam 1992)

European colonialism. It is important to notice the changes that occur in order to understand how postcolonial states are inherently antagonistic and driven by contradictions. Hallaq makes a crucial observation that the interventionist character of the colonial state enabled anti-colonial Muslims to accept the state as inevitable and as a redress to the structural genocide of the Khalifate. It is this inevitability that today disables Muslim resistance to their domination. We should also notice that the history of Muslim's subjugation has been written and determined for the Muslim as the only history. It is urgent for Muslim militants, the Black subjects of Islam, to subtract themselves from the history and narratives of modernity.

One attempt to evade this historical and political domination according to Ahmed, amidst the intervention and imposition of the colonial state on Muslims was Sayyid Ala Maududi's invention of the Islamic state, invented because the Mughal empire was not an Islamic state, and colonial Muslims did not support his invention (2009). As Hallaq shows, Muslims "did not know anything like the modern state", hence Maududi reacts to the intervention of the colonial state against the Mughal empire, which was (i) 1757 as the formal start of colonial rule, when the Company conquered Bengal after the battle of Plassey (ii) the right to collect revenue from three provinces (iii) passing the Permanent Settlement Act in 1793.

The Act introduced the notion of private ownership of land (Desai 1946) and created a new class of landlords loyal to the Raj (iii) the takeover of commercial agricultural sectors, dealing a further blow to Muslim lower classes. This shift in the mode of economy, however, benefited bankers and moneylenders, who were mostly Hindus (v) Another crucial result of the Company's rule was the overnight change of court language. The circular of Lord Macaulay replaced Persian with English in 1833¹⁴⁰. And (vi) most importantly the

¹⁴⁰ For Muslims it meant the further closing of doors to administrative posts. The middle layers of Muslims received yet another blow when the Company introduced the modern criminal law replacing the traditional legal system, which provided jobs to Muslims in the judiciary. As a result of the transformation of the legal system, in 1869, there was not a single Muslim among the attorneys, proctors, and solicitors of Bengal's High Court. Summarizing the impact of the first seventy-five years of colonial rule, Malik writes that 'the Moslem upper and middle classes either disappeared or were submerged beneath the new Hindu upper classes which developed as a result of the English policy' (1963:146; Ahmed 2009).

Resumption Regulation of 1820, whereby the Company assumed *lakhiraj*, the revenue-free land granted to Muslims. Even the Muslim *waqfs* (endowments) were not spared. This gave a further blow to Muslim elites as it led to the virtual collapse of their traditional educational system, which was based primarily on *waqfs* (Kabir 1969).

Furthermore, it is the Government of India Act of 1935, under which for the first-time elections were held, in 1937, to form provincial governments (Brass 1994). These historical defeats induced by the “radically interventionist role of the modern state and the manner in which it shaped the daily lives of Muslims, forced Maududi to equate Islam with the state. Hence why, in 1941, he founded the *Jamaat* to attain an Islamic state” (2009: 155). This is what sets forth Maududi’s revolutionary theory of change, his political theology, directed at state power and the formation of the Muslim political party. That is, many of his theorizations “echo the spirit of modern politics: for instance, the conceptualization of Islam as a movement and Muslims as a party” (see I. Ahmad 2003). This is done to distinguish Islam from the modern state, which was held in high regard by all anti-colonial movements¹⁴¹ and activists including the Leninist call for “self-rule.” The contention is that the idea of the Islamic state as would be articulated by Islamists after and following Maududi, is not an inherently Islamic concept, or the historical order of rule and governance that began with the Prophet of Islam (El-Affendi 2008; Sayyid 2009; Hallaq 2018), it is a condition of modern colonialism and its Enlightenment rationalist origins.

The state is a specific historical product... The modern state represents a process of becoming, the unfolding of a novel and particular political and politico-cultural arrangement that is distinctly European in origin. This is to say, no other part of the world produced, on its own, this particular political arrangement (Hallaq 2013: 23)

The attack on traditional Ulama by modern Islamists should also be put into context for it is the reactionary nature of the *Nizams*¹⁴² in Maududi’s case, “worried about the decline of

¹⁴¹ Given the centrality of the state, all social movements in colonial India related to the role of the state, even if their target was non-state actors. The anti-colonial movement, spearheaded by the Indian National Congress (formed in 1885; hereafter the Congress) under M.K. Gandhi's leadership, was the largest (see I. Ahmad 2009).

¹⁴² The etymology of this ubiquitous title reveals a great deal about his actual function in the realm. “Nizām is derived from *naẓm*, which is often associated with lending systematization, structure, and ordering as a secondary connotation it refers to the whole genre of poetry. The original meaning of

Muslims, he offered a blueprint to the *Nizams* to revitalize it. It called for overhauling the educational system and propagating a pure 'Islam.' To his dismay, the *Nizams* showed no interest in it" (Ahmed 2009). As Tayob also adds "[I]n advancing an Islamic ideology, Mawdudi appealed to rational arguments..." he was "opposed by traditional 'Ulama, who accused him of distorting the teachings of Islam" (1995: 27). So Maududi's Islamist theorizations of the Islamic state comes at the moment the Ulema or the Nizams align themselves to the royal house, accepting the legal catastrophic changes that came with the modern colonial state instead of defending the rights of Muslims, this is what fuels the emergence of the modern Islamic discourses against Muslim traditional knowledge. At the same time, we should not be oblivious to the fact that as Maududi's ideas spread, "Mawdoodi's writing inspired Sayyid Qutb, forging an ideological link between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jaamati" (Tayob 1995: 27). So according to Ware (2018), "how meaning is made in contemporary Salafism, Wahhabism, and Islamism owes much to the Enlightenment rationalism as to the scholarly tradition of Islam" (14).

Proclaiming Islamic purity is essential to Islamist ideologies, but their understanding of what knowledge *is* are plainly hybrid constructs, born of the colonial encounter (Ware 2018:15). Islamic contemporary discourses fail to comprehend the contextual basis of the development of Maududi's revolutionary thought in its attempt to dismiss earlier Islamic intellectual practices and appealing to European rationalism to articulate a new Islamic imago. What is revolutionary in Maududi, although I have been and will continue to show its weaknesses, is the idea of articulating Islam as a different transcendental structure (Dovutoglu 1994) outside of European colonialism and it should be defended as such. Here we should treat the Western transcendental regime, its ideology, political philosophy, or modern colonial domination with

naẓm, however, came from stringing together pearls: "Joining (pearls) in a row; composing (verses); order, arrangement; a string (of pearls); poetry, verse (opp. to *nar* [Arabic: *nathr*], 'prose composition') . . ." This etymology has led scholars to suggest that poetry "strings" along verses (i.e., pearls) along the "thread" of rhyme. The ordering-stringing is contrasted with the "scattering" (literal meaning) of *nathr*, or prose... This poetic image is a most fitting description for understanding the significance of Ḥasan ibn

Alī al-Ṭūsī, Niẓām al-Mulk. He embodies the order and arrangement of the realm. He is the *niẓām* of the *mulk*: the "thread" that "strings" together various Saljūq institutions to achieve a harmonious operation" (Safi 2009: 45). However, in Mawdudi's case we are referring to the Nizam al Mulk of the Mughal empire not the Saljuq's.

utter disdain and a systematic militant intervention to warn and dissuade those who might want to construct their emancipatory theories/praxis in the image of the Enlightenment movement's secularism philosophy of the human.

To understand transcendentalism, as a materially and imaginatively experienced order of reality, Dovutoglu argues that we must differentiate between the Western intellectual tradition and the Islamic tradition. This is because the Western philosophical tradition is directly geared towards the formation and practice of political theories and images of domination, "namely epistemological particularization of knowledge as the origin of the secularization of knowledge" (34). From this basis, we can then understand how the authoritarian character of Western philosophical tradition is guided by questions such as "On what grounds do you believe that? How justified is your belief? How do you know that? And so on."

These questions reverberate the dualistic foundations that justify claims of epistemological sources in Western thought and political practice. This authoritarian ability is enabled by the history of justification using "rationalism which is the view that only an appeal to an intersubjective authority is allowable", then secular knowledge will be the "declaration of reason as the ultimate epistemological source against the others, especially against revelation, within the context of the particularization of truth" (35). So reason and revelation are alternative to each other rather than complementary. For Dovutoglu the history of this dualistic structure of philosophy and theology in early Christianity was influential as a "pre-Christian legacy to the formation of a specific medieval mind based on a dualistic particularization of epistemology" (1994: Ibid).

The essence of this dualistic structure goes something like this, "there are two kinds of education the one divine and the other human ... has survived in the Christian educational systems and has been turned over to modern secular education." This is because this dichotomy has its roots in the imagination of ontological proximity, that is, it is the transcendental structure of Christian and secular subjects of the West, which is the epistemological subordination of revelation by rationalism.

For Hallaq (2018), and with us to understand domination as a Western transcendental structure one would have to analyse the narrative for the spatiotemporal birthplace of

modern colonialism and racial genocide or modernity's inextricable relation between knowledge and power that predates "the long sixteenth century" anticolonial narrative presented by Wynter and particularly Dussell. Rather for Hallaq, and with us to get to the crux of the western modern matrix for domination in which racism is an inseparable part, we should analyse the sovereign "deficit" in Christianity, that is the conditions under which Christianity was "*reinvented and expanded* as secularism" (p. 86). We do this to analyze firstly, the unique rise of the domination of the modern state which came to rearticulate and incorporate old forms of governance/rule under Feudalism, monarchical absolutism, and the Catholic Church. Secondly, the doctrine and practice of domination over nature (in its widest meaning), represented by the distinction between fact and value and philosophically expounded in the respective divorce between Is and Ought (p. 85). This transformation of Christianity to secularism meant the transformation of sovereignty from the Monarchs (Divine right of Kings) to the state (democratic power).

Hallaq's analysis lands us in the same position as Dovutoglu, which belongs to the Islamic intellectual tradition, and we have been insisting that this analysis is separate, different, and indifferent to the Western ontological proximity, which pits the transcendent with the human, or epistemologically, the dualistic structure of philosophy, which pits revelation to rationalism as a justification for a sociopolitical formation. The modern forms of domination can be traced before the sixteenth century and its transformation into the present-day modern colonial domination forms a specific transcendental structure of the world. This transcendental structure or the ontologically determined episteme of the West, the distinction between the divine and being, and the struggle to suture the two forms: the cosmological-ontological foundation and justification of the state as a socio-political system in western philosophy.

Indeed, for Dovutoglu (1994), the difference between the Islamic theocentric cosmology and Western ontological proximity is that for Islam the imagination depends on a very clear "ontological hierarchy based on a cosmological-ontological unity and transcendence" (1994: 49). This hierarchy structures the transcendental order between Allah-man-nature, it is this unity that determines the justification of the state as a socio-political organization and we will continue to show how this aspect has been a source of confusion and debate in Islamic political thought-discourses.

At the same time, the Western biontological proximity is based on a “cosmological-ontological particularization and fusion” that promotes a relationship of identification or proximity between man and the absolute or God and created beings. This is the methodology of modernity, inaugurated by disciplines such as physics to political philosophy as the justification of the origins of the sociopolitical systems, namely the state as a new transcendental (Wynter 2015; Ferry 2010; Dallas 2006). As Williams has penchantly observed with the concept of the subject, its onto-epistemology and sociopolitical link.

The theoretical construction of subjectivity has significant historical roots and is bound up with the collapse of the ancient world and the development of the modern, scientific, bureaucratic, rationalist society. The concept of the individual subject as subjectum is a distinctly modern formulation, which is tied to the commencement of an age where the self becomes the Archimedean point from which the world achieves meaning. It is the subject that is posited as the focal point, the origin of truth claims, and knowledge becomes specifically human knowledge. It is also the subject who becomes the central reference point for political theory as questions of contract and right, submission and consent, sovereignty and freedom take on an explicitly human dimension, that is, the concept of the subject is politicized, it becomes subsumed by the political. These two moments, epistemological and political, could not have taken place without the structural transformations which, broadly speaking, mark the late seventeenth century (2001: 2).

As Blunschli noted, these philosophical speculations are fond of imagining the origins, the primitive state of nature with no government, or authority of socio-political organizations, “and then asking how from that condition mankind has arrived at the state” (1901: 283). This methodology as we have been critiquing, from our introduction to the present chapter, is founded on the premise of the Same and Other as its epistemologically derived ontology. One cannot help but be aware of the Platonic and Aristotelian models of all Western political theory and the fidelity to it embodied in the Enlightenment movement slogan of freedom, social justice for all and the “poetic exaltation of the individual and his independence (Abdulqadir As Sufi 2005:10).

In this case as Dovutoglu argues, Hobbes’ epistemological method of man and state, the priority of the individual to the state is derived from speculations of “human nature and on

the state of nature is a consequence of his time in an age of civil war ...the condition of life among the American Indians.” His theory of the state of nature is part of the Christian-modern paradigm, which far from being objectively scientific relies on subjective empiricism or the will to power and knowledge ala Nietzsche and Foucault (see 1901; 1976 respectively). Politically and ideologically, sovereignty is constructed around the fictitious concept of will to representation. European in origin (which is to say, specifically European conditions had produced it), the concept of sovereignty is constituted by the idea that the nation embodying the state is the sole author of its own will and destiny (2013: 25).

The thoughts that Hobbes and Locke present on the political origins or order reveal the unsustainability of the state of nature, both theorists as the foundation of liberal political thought give us a modern method of political philosophy and the law based on Western thought experiments. Hobbes’ epistemologically determined ontology constructs theories of the state of nature in conflict with Christian theology, that is when all men were free to be what nature made them to be, they were essentially selfish and cruel. Each man would defend himself and his liberty against every other man, each man would seek to dominate another, and there would be no peace, no respite, no calm. The state of nature would be, in Hobbes's words, nothing but 'a war of all against all.'

So that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First, competition; secondly, diffidence; thirdly, glory. The first, maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation. The first uses violence, to make themselves masters of other men's persons, wives, children, and cattle; the second, to defend them; the third, for trifles, as a word, a smile (Hobbes 1914: 84).

These theories of modern liberalism had an influence, for Locke in a polemic with Hobbes on what constitutes that state of nature or the state of nature as a violent experience of society. Locke suggested that based on the assertion of human equality life in the state of nature was surprisingly pleasant. People left each other alone. Families and small groups of people cooperated by choice - rather than by necessity. People could choose independence and freedom or they could choose to cooperate - perhaps to raise children, perhaps to work on small patches of land, or to create something that they could hold, and pass on. In both thought experiments, the authors suggested that the end of the state of nature would come from the desire of ordinary people to establish rules that would regulate their interactions

with each other. These rules would form the basis of a 'social contract' that would structure society and permit people to live together in peace, and security (143). Here the state becomes the sole legitimate arbiter of compliance with the foundational agreement, and the sole legitimate enforcer of the rules that regulate all formal social life.

That is, they posit society as a whole, their euro-cultural notions of the human as if universal, as with most liberal political thinkers (such as John Stuart Mill and John Rawls) who view the social order as a whole, as divided by conflicts but not by a fundamental antagonism. For the individuals "can resolve conflicts through mediation and negotiation, but antagonism implies the impossibility of resolution" (McGowen 2018: 7). This is what Schmitt and Agamben call the "state of exception" and for Wael Hallaq reading the settler-colonial state this becomes a "state of extraordinarity," that is in the colony the state is already exceptional in its monopoly over violence and the psychoepistemic performativity of its subjected citizenry. Hallaq cautions Mbembe's understanding of "colonial practices as standing outside the law" or that "the sovereign right to kill is not subject to any rule in the colonies."

For Hallaq we should be thinking of the state of extraordinarity as "integral to the *ordinary* legal and political order of the modern state (2018: 211). Hobbes describes the institutions of political authority (i.e., the state) as a 'leviathan' - which is a Biblical term for an enormous creature, a monster made from other monsters. For Hobbes, the leviathan was a model of the modern state: from the original purpose of political authority and institutions (to defend the founding agreement that ended the state of nature) it had grown and incorporating new powers and purposes until it was society.

For Black Muslim subjects, the social does not exist (Mbuso 2023: 97) in the sense that those who constitute the social have a relationship to the state that sees them as citizens, or the civilized and not as the uncivilized colonized (Mamdani 2018). The relationship between the state and blackness does not function at the level of equivalence, seeing the state as a provider of material care, instead the state "concealed the tyranny of white society in South Africa" (Mbuso 2023:109). Hence as El-Affendi observed with "Hobbes" and the Enlightenment thinkers, "postulated self-interested man, with his 'perpetual restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in Death,' as the basis of his system (2008: 57).

For Black Muslim subjects these thought experiments construct false dichotomies between the origins of law based on social contract and the development of society and politics as independent to construct the law. The construction of these false dichotomies between the law and politics or society is to hide the antagonism and contradiction of modern secularism and medieval religion demonstrated by the “voyages of discovery.” As Hallaq pointed out and argued, we cannot rely on Locke’s so-called status as a “freedom philosopher” because his “advocacy of freedom and constitutional guarantees to protect freedom applied to the White Man, affecting no part of his own business as a substantial investor in the slave trade (2018: 96). What Davutoglu argued above concerning the preoccupation of modernists with origins began with, as Ferry argues, the publication of “Copernicus’s work *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies* in 1543, continued with that of Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* in 1687, and took in Descartes’ *Principles of Philosophy* (1644) and Galileo’s *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World systems* (1632) (Ibid: 94), I would significantly add Hobbes’ *Leviathan* in 1651. This is where Sylvia Wynter intervenes, by guiding us through the voyages of discovery and the bionto-epistemological construction of the “order of knowledge and rules of power,” according to Da Silva (2015). Let us be once again clear about our task, the contemporary Western world system of domination cannot hide from our Black Islamic anticolonial critiques and intervention. What Wynter does is link the emergence of the secular ontology with the Voyages of discovery and therefore dismiss and positions Hobbes’ and Lockes’ “accounts of the civitas as the Empire of Reason” as a political act underwritten by the new descriptive statement or the production of the human, Man.

In the first description of Man (referred as Man1), she links the epistemological transformation of the Renaissance to the reconfiguring of civitas-a reconfiguring that was underwritten by conquest and the architectures of performance and procedures of colonial power it endangered. How did Conquest perform this feat? Citing Jaques Le Goff, Wynter reminds us that the medieval, Spirit/Flesh pair established two distinctions, a nonhomogeneity between the “spiritual perfection of the heavens ... as opposed to the sublunar realm of the earth.” With this, “the geography of the earth” is also “being divided up between ... its temperate regions centred on Jerusalem ... and those realms that, because outside of this Grace, had to be uninhabitable.” This spatial and ideological narrative would be disproved by the Portuguese travels to the

Americas and the Caribbean yielded an “epochal rupture.” Wynter argues, then, that this rupture “was to lead to the gradual development of the physical sciences ... made possible only by the no less epochal reinvention of Western Europe’s matrix Judeo-Christian genre of the human, in its first secularizing if still hybrid religio-secular terms as Man as the Rational self and the political subject of the state ... This is to say that travels of colonial conquest were entwined with the ideological shift away from medieval Christian man and the shift toward secularized rational man as the inhabitants of the Americas, those residing in what formerly considered to be “outside Grace,” were rendered irrational. From then on, the rational/irrational pair would then remap the “space of otherness” and, significantly, be represented by the bodies and territories subjected to colonial power (Da Silva 2015: 93-94).

In this sense, then, Wynter’s intervention shows the relations between ontological and epistemological questions to the process of colonial subjugation, enabling us to construct an antagonism between ‘descriptive statements.’ Man2, homo economicus then remaps the rational/irrational in the evolutionary terms to differentially “all the darker-skinned natives of the world and the darker-skinned poorer European people” (2015: 95) for a new master code or descriptive statement in the syllected/dyselected Darwinian pair. This pair symbolically constituted the division of the “color line” and “enforced at the level of social reality by the law-likely instituted relations of socioeconomic dominance/subordination between them” (2015: *ibid*). In this sense, Wynter’s interventions put into perspective the development of an onto-epistemological figure of the human, Man as constructed based on the desire to dominate, the “Formation Transcendental (universal/pure) reason became the Living Transcendental (universal/teleological) subject” (*Ibid*). The narrative of the human is troubled in as much as the separation between the order of knowledge and the rules of the colonial or imperial power is also untenable.

Against Political philosophy, and Political studies of the academy-Event-interventions-Militant revolution or leaps

Following one of their emancipatory political theorists, it becomes clear that the preoccupation with the break or origins in Western epistemologically determined ontology or political philosophy for our purposes is “to conceive the state as an independent entity, to make politics *sui generis*, and to relegate religion to the domain of private belief.” This has to

do with a new transcendental regime of the emerging “bourgeois spirit – with the spirit of a bourgeoisie which has become politically dominant” (Lefort 1988: 214). It is this bourgeois spirit that Dallas (2006) argued has instituted a version of reality that represents the will to power of the “elite’s programs of the expropriation of personal wealth, and its relocation in inter-connected corporate and statal structures” (14). In this sense, the modernist political theory or the modern transcendental structure has divided and invented history that split society into two stages

The first stage of history (from this viewpoint) was the natural and primitive society. From the moral point of view, everything about it was dreadful. It was presented as static. Its dominant condition was inescapable poverty for ‘the people,’ It was controlled and dictated by hereditary rulers, kings, and princes. They were by definition - that is, as princes and rulers – tyrants and oppressors. They taxed and made wars entirely for their dynastic benefit. Kings were despots, ‘the people’ were their helpless victims, poverty-stricken, famished, and ground under by the pair of boots that trampled them – the Monarchy (the aristocratic elite) and the Clergy (also landowners).

The second stage of history (from this viewpoint) was the willed and legislated society. From the moral point of view, it declared the emergence of the New Man, virtuous and imposing the good. It was presented as dynamic. Its dominant condition was the smashing of the enslaving monarchic and ‘divinely’ ordained system, and the creation of the new rule of man in a post-Christian, that is, atheist condition. ‘The people’- power had passed to the formerly enslaved masses. The new leaders of society were liberators, dispensing justice, and freedom. The first stage of history (the *Áncien Regime*) was ANCIENT. The second stage was of history (la Revolution) was MODERN. From this point on we are in the modern world. 1789 is the new Dawn of Mankind. Indeed, there is the historical sense of a new beginning with the creation of a new calendar, a new supreme Deity unifying all previous religions, and the inauguration of Year 1 (2006: 14-15).

The Black Muslim subjects demonstrate that what is implicated in the modern and religious political theories is a continuation of a Western transcendental structure that has shaped political philosophy and its colonial domination of the world. In this sense to adopt Western

political categories of emancipation such as freedom, liberty, and “the people” in order to govern society under the so-called social contract is to fall prey to the artificiality of the Western bourgeoisie construction of historical progress and mirroring non-western societies in the image of the western epistemologically determined ontology. The Black Islamic subject, a militant revolutionary emerging from a different order of existence or transcendental regime, undermines the attempts by philosophers or Western philosophy to be precise, at making “fundamental designs to indicating how human society should be organised” (Abdulqadir As Sufi 2005: 13). What the Black Islamic militant figure reveals is that the philosophical organization of society, we can call it political philosophy because it pays fidelity to the history of the bourgeoisie revolutions of the seventeenth century and therefore defines politics according to the transcendental regime of the modernists/elites, and in political parlance we can call them democratic principles.

The ambiguity of the term should not be left unturned, for the philosophical categories of political philosophy that define itself as the act of bringing this democratic principle to life constitutes its own reality and history. In this sense, Lefort (1988) is correct to stress that, discussing the difficulty of political philosophy to break away from its religious sensibility, we should relate political democracy to the “historically and culturally determined phenomena” of the French Revolution or the European bourgeoisie realities. Then the category of ‘the people’ as enshrined in parliamentarism or political democracy observing that it is central to political philosophy, we can then argue is a “great lie”... “when no such an entity had a biological or historical existence” (Abdulqadir As-Sufi: 2005: 16). However, from the point of view of political philosophy the people cannot be a lie for it is the concept of the people that allows for the philosophical categories of “plurality,” “community”, public or in Heideggerian sense the “being-together” of men and this is the foundation of the *demos* to wield or exercise sovereignty outside of the monarchs, for the colonized we can say ‘the people’ wield power not the sovereignty of the colonial potentate. Anyhow, let us not get ahead of ourselves, for Badiou (2005)

One of the core demands of contemporary thought is to have done with 'political philosophy'. What is political philosophy? It is the programme which, holding politics or, better still, the political - as an objective datum, or even invariant, of universal experience, accords philosophy the task of thinking it. Overall, philosophy's task would

be to generate an analysis of the political and, *in fine*, quite obviously to submit this analysis to ethical norms. The philosopher would then have the triple advantage of being, first, the analyst and thinker of this brutal and confused objectivity which constitutes the empirical character of real instances of politics; second, the one who determines the principles of the good politics, of politics conforming to ethical demands; and third, in order to meet these demands, the one exempt from militant involvement in any genuine political process. Whence the philosopher could keep the Real at arm's length indefinitely in the manner most dear to him: that of judgement (Badiou 2005:10).

Therefore, here begins the polemic against Hannah¹⁴³ and Immanuel Kant¹⁴⁴ *stricto sensu*, we can follow Badiou seeing that our goal is to embarrass the emancipatory concepts and history constructed from the ancient regime to the modern era from the position of the Black Muslim militant. Political philosophy, as the category itself imputes, is the occupation of the philosopher, the one who judges but does not participate in the political process, Badiou says of this spectator perspective, “[A]s a public spectacle the Revolution is admirable, while its militants are contemptible,” of course this is Hannah Arendt’s Kant. You will notice here that when Arendt invokes Kant’s “‘boundless admiration’ for the French Revolution” and contempt for the militants of the event, what Badiou is trying to demonstrate is that Arendt’s and Kant’s politics are politics of the demos as prescribed by the status quo or public opinions, and here we can continue to say that the perspective is from a spectator (contemporary academics and most disappointingly social scientists¹⁴⁵) and not the authors, actors and

¹⁴³ Badiou precisely takes issues with Arendt’s conception of the political in both *On Revolution* (2006) & *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1973).

¹⁴⁴ In Badiou’s works Kant is always paraded as an idealist figure, an intellectual that belongs to the status quo, a reactionary in other words and there seems to be an ambivalent relationship between Badiou and Kant. In this following discussion, the militant student should see Immanuel Kant’s *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (2015).

¹⁴⁵ For Lazarus, the social scientists’ methodological assumption that thought has requisites leaves them with a limited ability to adequately study and understand the thinking that happens during moments of direct contestation against “the existing social and political order of things” (Lazarus 2016, 113). For example, amidst workers’ strikes and uprisings, people often refuse to remain beholden to the way in which bosses, policemen, politicians, and capitalists have already defined their social position. During the strike, people think otherwise. Their relationship with the existing historical and social order is one of direct challenge and antagonism. The social scientists’ mistake is to wrongly

militants. Politics for Kant and Arendt has to do with “the faculty of judgment, which is a condition for the exercise of judgment since to judge requires the plurality of men or the public space of opinion.” In this sense, politics is an act of plurality of opinions, of being-together and establishing common sense, in this way, the criterion for politics is determined by the philosopheme of judgment of the plurality of opinions. Indeed, we cannot help but notice how this idea calls forth the individuals who then become a multiplicity that can be placed under the name of a demos or ‘the people’ as we demonstrated above, “It is clear, then, that what politics is the name of concerns, and only concerns, public opinion”(2005: 12). You will later on in the essay, see how, in the case of the postcolonial state in Africa, particularly South Africa, the principle of parliamentary politics is not that ‘people think’ but rather that people have opinions regarding government. This normative conception of politics, a conception of politics as recognition of individual autonomy by a demos is, at the same time, cautioned by Mbembe (2019) against critics of modernity

Disregarding this multiplicity, late modern political criticism has unfortunately privileged normative theories of democracy and made the concept of reason into one of the most important elements of both the project of modernity and the topos of sovereignty. From this perspective, the ultimate expression of sovereignty is the production of general norms by a body (demos) comprising free and equal individuals. These individuals are posited as full subjects capable of self-understanding, self-consciousness, and self-representation. Politics, therefore, is doubly defined as a project of autonomy and reaching of agreement within a collective through communication and recognition (2019: 67).

Within the configuration on offer to us here, what 'politics' is, is not in any case quite clear for Badiou since, “'Politics' is neither the name of thought (if one admits that all thought, in the realm of its philosophical identification, is in one way or another bound to the theme of truth) nor the name of an action” (Badiou 2005:). It is forever devoted to opinion, forever disjoined from all truth of the Black Islamic subjects as militants.

assume that our thinking in moments of strike, uprising, or revolt remains subordinate to our current social arrangement (Doniger 2021: 19).

Categorically Badiou is attacking Arendt and Kant but let us be frank, the whole establishment of political theorists that base their political philosophy as a discipline of Enlightenment rationalism and that hides the emergence of politics behind communication, franchise = opinions, expressed freely by the citizens of the state, is propagating theological ethics. Then the question of a possible political truth must be examined not only on the basis of “‘debate’ which, in isolation, turns ‘politics’ into mere passive commentary on current affairs, a kind of collective extension of reading newspapers.” The questions Badiou raises against Arendt remain instructive to the Black student or Black militants of politics.

how can the innate plurality of men and opinions be allied with the exercise of judgement? According to which procedures are the objectivity of the multiple and the reflexive subjectivity of judgement on the phenomenality of this multiple articulated? This question presents a twofold difficulty, and both Arendt and Revault d'Allonnes excel in unfolding its duplicity. If politics constitutes the instance of judgement over an unbound phenomenal multiplicity i.e., a multiplicity undetermined in its objective form what stable faculty is responsible for forming opinions which bind this diversity, or give a verdict on the unbinding? This is the question of the formation of opinions. If nothing exists apart from the public space of opinions, how can these opinions enter into the debate? And what rule drives this debate in a way which might suppose that the resulting judgment has any significance, even if only the averting of disaster? This is the question of good and evil, or of the value of the adjective 'democratic' (providing 'democracy' names the freedom to form and discuss opinions). Let us call 'community' plurality as such; the being-together, or in common, of the plurality of men. Let us call 'common sense' the resource of judgement directly bound to this plurality. Arendt's formula is then the following: 'The criterion is communicability, and the standard of deciding about it is common sense' (Badiou 2005: 20).

Then political common sense, or public opinion bases politics upon the good/evil split, “‘the power of thought is bound to the capacity to distinguish good from evil’” and here we can recognise what should follow. Politics is the act of goodness, upholding and judging the good against evil, so politics is the judgement of radical evil, evil here is presupposed or is assumed a priori, has more to do with the basis of Kantian philosophy or to revert to Lefort we can say: it has to do with the inseparability of western political philosophy to theology. One would

venture to ask if the point of politics is to avert or judge this evil, then according to what criteria if not that of the modernist political philosophers?

I believe it to be inescapably theological and, moreover, politically inoperative. For every real figure of evil is presented, not as a fanatical non-opinion undermining being-together, but on the contrary as a politics aiming to ground authentic being-together. No 'common sense' can counter it; only another politics can do so. For all one will recognize in the reduction of political judgment to pure negation ('resisting what has always been said about parliamentary democracies: that, while admittedly not good, they were 'the least bad' alternative (Badiou 2005: 24).

In this sense, then, political philosophy fails again to operate outside of its religious sensibility, which is if opinions and judgements as the basis of the knowledge of the political, then whatever opinion that goes against this 'being-together' of the common sense of public opinion must be evil. The religious sensibility might seem removed from this statement, however if we are to consider that the good is politically considered from the realm of the state or the status quo of liberal democracy, as Mbembe has provided as well, then it is God who desires the good; Badiou calls this phenomenon 'ethical ideology' (2006: 5). The a priori assumption of an ethic of the Good/Evil that underlies political philosophy assumes the Good/Evil to be self-evident, a "natural law, founded in the last analysis on the self-evidence of what is harmful to Man" (Badiou 2006: 58). Here Man is the overrepresentation of the phallic Enlightenment individual subject, from the situation of the Black Islamic subjects it is the colonialist, the White Judea-Christian Man, the subject who embodies the dominant transcendental structure.

For Badiou, truth is the name of the militant subject of the event (Hallward 2006: xi). It is "the ethic of truth", and truth here implies and means the effective devotion to a cause, the ethics of truth is what helps preserve a subjective fidelity, that is commitment. Here we can see that the truth evokes the logic of being truthful towards something, of holding true to a principle, person, or ideal" (Hallward 2006: x). Unlike judgements and opinions which belong to the political philosophy of the status quo, of the state of the situation (according to Althusser, a/our situation is always structured in dominance), truth implies a break with the current running of the state of the situation, that is the theory of the event for Badiou.

An event for Badiou, any genuine event establishing a political sequence, marks a moment of “rupture” in relation to the socio-historical terrain within which this evental detonation occurs (Badiou 2005c: 7; Badiou 2004a:18). An event is the truth procedure of the Black Muslim subjects who pays fidelity to the evental rupture of political philosophy or the state; it is a political sequence that subtracts, evades from the continuum of the socio-historical movement. This is because an event cannot be proved or confirmed however it can be affirmed and proclaimed, “event, subject and truth are thus all aspects of a single process of affirmation: a truth comes into being through those subjects who maintain a resilient fidelity to the consequences of an event that took place in a situation but was not of it” (Hallward 2006: x). Emancipatory politics of the Black Islamic subjects as Badiou suggests direct its attack on the ethical ideology of the transcendental structure of domination, Evil according to the modern usage in ethics:

We presume a consensus regarding what is barbarian, and as the ultimate principle of judgement, in particular political judgement: good is what intervenes visibly against an Evil that is identifiable a priori. Law itself is first of all law ‘against’ Evil. If ‘the rule of law’ is obligatory, that is because it alone authorizes a space for the identification of Evil (this is the ‘freedom of opinion which, in the ethical vision, is first and foremost the freedom to designate Evil) and provides the means of arbitration when the issue is not clear (the apparatus of judicial precautions) (Badiou 2006: 9)¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁶ Badiou continues to reveal the presupposition that lays behind political philosophy and the doctrine of Natural Law, a Law of the modernist transcendental structure of domination in the world today. 1. We posit a general human subject, such that whatever evil befalls him is universally identifiable (even if this universality often goes by the altogether paradoxical name of ‘public opinion’), on the one hand, a passive, pathetic, or reflexive subject – he who suffers – and he who, in identifying suffering, knows that it must be stopped by all available means. 2. Politics is subordinated to ethics, to the single perspective that really matters in this conception of things: the sympathetic and indignant judgement of the spectator of the circumstances. 3. Evil is that which from the Good is derived, not the other way around. 4. Human rights are rights to non-Evil: rights not to be offended or mistreated with respect to one’s life (the horrors of torture, cruelty and famine), or one’s cultural identity (the horrors of the humiliation of women, of minorities, etc.). Indeed, it would seem that from our militant perspective of the black Muslim subject, the problem of these ethical ideological discourses, is that they have been persistent on the prescription of what is Evil/Bad, they have for centuries now prescribed what is evil to derive the category of the Good, this ethical ideology is not sustainable for the revolutionary subject (Badiou 2001: 9).

That this doctrine is universally applicable or should we say accepted in a global consensus and can be strongly imposed for the sake of universal human subjects, is what emancipatory politics should elucidate in its attempt to break with the status quo. If subjects are the irreducible singularities of the truth process, that goes beyond the law, then, the fidelity to the event legitimizes speaking on the ethic of truth, that is the continuation or consistency of the process. Evil for us, will be the absence of truth, Evil “arises as the (possible effect of the Good itself). That is to say: it is only because there are truths, and only to the extent that there are subjects of truth, that there is Evil (Badiou 2006: 61) there is no a priori setting in this process. Evil is only possible through an encounter with the truth, not the a priori morality of ethical ideology. In this sense, Evil can be ascertained in three movements: “the simulacrum (to be the terrorizing follower of a false event); betrayal (to give up on a truth in the name of one’s self-interest); the forcing of the unnameable, or disaster (to believe in the total power of truth)” (2006: 91).

Against Kant, Arendt, the followers of both, and the Enlightenment intellectual movement, the ethics of the militant Black Islamic subjects of emancipatory politics encourages the subject to proclaim the maxim “Keep going! Continue to be this ‘some-one’!” is a break with the existing state of the situation. Political opinions and judgements serve the perpetuation of the transcendental order, whilst for Badiou transcendentalism is defined as the “structure of order that measures the identities and differences in this world by assigning varying degrees of greater or lesser intensity to the existence of its objects” (2003: 141).

The transcendental regime, then, would serve to assimilate its subjects, the subjects subjected to a greater existential intensity and thus excludes the in-existent that is Black Islamic militant subjects of the truth, for “every truth also involves the constitution of a *time*. So, there are times not one time” (1994: 118). This is because the time of the truth of the event, its Good constitutes a different temporality, it is a fracture of repetition or static inertia/time (of the already-existent state of the situation or transcendental regime) by the kinetic gesture of the event, the abrupt break or explosion of ethical ideology’s category of the Good/Evil. To focus on the transcendental regime should teach the anticolonial militants that one does not need to subscribe to the knowledge that forms the modern state, parliamentarism, and the logic of Capital. That is, one does not need to revive the categories of history, political philosophy, and science that currently fixes existence into a normativity

best embodied in political opinions and judgments. However, an effective critique of political theory has to prioritise fidelity to the truth process and consistent commitment to the event of emancipatory politics to which the Black Muslim is subject according to its logic of being.

As Abdulqadir As-Sufi, has shown, the history of modernity was assumed and concretized in the birth of political democracy or modernity or the destruction of Monarchic and Church rule, for him, since the seventeenth century, particularly with the French-American revolutions, what we can call domination, results in genocide. This history establishes a religion, a religion that Wael Hallaq has termed the theology of progress (2018). Furthermore, because this new religion, a religion without religion, or an atheistic religion, is a religion that is driven by progress in as much as it is driven by rationalism. Now that we have seen how this history, which supports a politics of domination through disciplines such as political philosophy and science, cannot establish an emancipatory break for the Black Muslim subjects, instead those who continue to articulate revolutionary politics in this fraught history will continue to restore and perpetuate human servility. To avoid betrayal of the truth procedure, our political discourse recognizes calls from non-western thinkers that have argued for the decolonization of political theory citing its Western history as the cause for domination and expansion in the world, particularly with the “voyages of discovery” that led to enslavement and colonial adventurism (Getachew & Mantena 2021; Omar 2016; Pillay 2021).

For Getachew & Mantena decolonization “challenges disciplines to reckon with the implication in histories of imperial domination and racial hierarchy and to reckon with the continuing ideological imprint of this past” (2021: 359). Omar echoes the same sentiments, reckoning with the South African student’s call for the decolonization of curriculum especially because “it is within the discipline of political theory, that a eurocentrism of ideas is more apparent and evident as opposed to elsewhere in political science as both our research and pedagogical objectives have been confined almost exclusively to the Western ‘canon’” (2016: 154). All three theorists argue that political theory as it has been practiced has relied on western concepts and arrogant universal ideals, whereas Western political theory is superior and does not engage with other geographic localities for broader comparative politics in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, etc.

These theorists warn that however, decolonization or deimperialism does not only have to do with inserting African, Islamic, or other non-Western traditions in the canon as if to make them normative within the field of political theory. Rather if we continue to think of decolonization only as a critique of the West then we “lose track of what arguably was the primary context and aspiration of anticolonial argument: an attempt to reconstruct viable political futures in the aftermath of European domination” (Getachew & Mantena 2021:361). This is what we have been doing in this research. The latter argues for conceptual innovation and conceptual reanimation, which can be said to be the generation of new concepts amid our specific concrete experience and the reformulation of existing concepts to reckon with the postcolonial context.

As I have just shown, our anticolonial critique by the Black Muslim subjects is radically innovative for it goes to the heart of the transcendental regime which is derived from the philosophical and political basis that constructs a particular reality of the world that most scholarships and militant practices can take for granted. In our case, what is important for the radical emancipatory project is to take seriously, what Davutoglu argued in relation to the epistemologically determined ontology that distinguishes the Judea-Christian modern transcendental regime from the Islamic and Black ontological determinations. The real of politics here is to precisely identify how political philosophical concepts construct and perpetuate a Western modern sovereign reality on the subjected, and to destroy this reality quickly and drastically.

Now I think we can turn our full attention to the novelties of Mawdudi’s invention of the Islamic state. This is important, for the idea and concept of the state as we have been trying to show, develops from the Western political theoretical, historical, and epistemologically determined ontology witnessed in the domination embodied in genocidal colonial adventures, and cemented by the settler-colonial state. At the same time, we want to show Islamic militants how misleading it is to argue for an Islamic state mirrored in the image of the Western modern political order, for the matter does not only concern political opinions and judgments but it concerns a political order that is an epistemologically defined ontology that establishes a clash between man and the divine. Stated differently, trying to assimilate Islam in state form, reproduces nothing but the violence of an elite program, usually guided by the dominant liberal democratic dispensation (Agamben 2003; Abdulqadir As-Sufi 2005; Schmitt

2007). For the Muslim militant this is important precisely because Islam is indifferent to the western world-system of transcendental regime: let us not take this theoretical clarification lightly. Given the radically interventionist role of the modern colonial state and how it shaped the daily lives of Muslims, Maududi equated Islam with the state.

I want us to establish how he constructs an Islamic revolutionary transcendentalism by theorizing the revolutionary process of the Prophet of Islam. Important for Mawdudi is also how Islam comes to be articulated in the break with the Quraish (pre-Islamic) status quo by the revolutionary Prophetic subjectivity in seventh-century Arabia. This is important because to think seriously about the time of rupture one would have to follow the prophetic fidelity to the truth process as Badiou has also demonstrated to us or what (Moten & Harvey 2004: 102) calls a “prophetic organization” of the undercommons. Then we can begin by asking how the Islamic revolution or transcendental regime came about. For Mawdudi, we have to look at the “life and work” of the prophet or his Sunna “in the context of not only the Arabian society but also of the entire world as it stood in that period” (42). What we find is because of the existing status quo, his life is indifferent towards the society and the world, “In all his dealings with the people he always follows the principles of justice and fairplay.” That is why the “entire nation calls him “*Al-Ameen*” (the Truthful and Trustworthy)” “He is the very embodiment of modesty in the midst of a society which is immodest to the core” (42-43). Mawdudi continues to elaborate on this subjectivity.

“He does not bow before any created thing and does not partake of the offering made to idols, even in his childhood. Instinctively he hates all kinds of worship of all creatures and beings beside God” (Ibid: 43)

And “Lo! A remarkable revolution comes over his person” and he addresses the people.

“The idols you worship are a mere sham. Cease worshipping them from now onwards. The entire universe with everything that it contains belongs to God Almighty alone. Leave your evil ways. He hates them all. Distinctions of birth and glory of race are no criteria for greatness and honor. True faith and good deeds alone will stand you in good stead at that time” (45).

Mawdudi sets up the prophetic model against the modern transcendental regime: rupture is the practice of the prophet, and worship of human beings, as we will see just now, is not the

purpose of Islamic subjectivity; the clash of the divine and rationality does not form the basis of an epistemologically determined ontology. Instead, what we get from this prophetic model is precisely those maxims that form the event, the cut of the state of affairs as it exists, a change of static time to kinaesthetic time. Here we can go back to Badiou's theory of the event and his detractors. However, before we do that, we must be clear about the specifications of the emergence of these militant thoughts. Badiou and Mawdudi's prophetic model or event comes from two different conceptualizations, one from an Islamic transcendental regime and the other from a purely atheist and secular revolutionary thought. For Badiou, as we have been showing the event can only be thought of firstly by philosophically positing the 'new question,' the new is conceived only out of an immanently specific situation. An event is something that emerges out of a given 'situation' (Badiou's term for a state of affairs, or a given historical moment that is relatively static) and has the effect of creating a static temporal mode, which always appears as stable, natural, and necessary to those living in it, to exhibit its normally hidden fragile instability (Badiou 2005).

As we have shown Maududi is also concerned with the moment of the interventionist colonial state that subjugates the Muslim, for the Prophet of Islam, the specific conditions we have just spelled out induce an eventual explosion in the situation. So that a militant should take it seriously that change does not occur from "some unspecified transcendent other place in order externally to modify the coordinates of a particular status quo reality" (Bosteels 2004a: 152). Badiou's discourse is coordinated around the concepts of truth, event, and subject: a truth is sparked by an event and spreads like a flame fanned by the breath of a subjective effort, the fidelity to the event, maintains the post-evental continuation of the truth.

As Daniel Bensaid in his "Miracle of the Event" (2004) notices, "[A]s 'wholly subjective' and a matter of 'pure conviction', truth henceforth pertains to the realm of declarations that have neither precedents nor consequences. Although similar to revelation, truth remains a process but one which is entirely contained in the absolute beginning of the event, the event which truth faithfully continues. For Mawdudi the prophetic imaginarium is the subject of the event with a pre-evental status, that is the conditions under which induce the subject to distinguish themselves or subtract from the order of things "[H]e had inveighed against all distinctions of high and low between human beings and had condemned the prejudice of clan race as sheer ignorance" (Mawdudi 2007:45).

I agree with Hallward (2003), Bensaiid (2014), and Johnston (2016), that Badiou's theory of event ignores the pre-evental figure that constitutes the subject of the event, the "figures that anticipate the event prior to it happening (Johnston 2006: 11)." Because of Badiou's insistence that an event is a "lightening-flash cut or punctual encounter" leaving no room for an elaboration of the pre-evental inducements of the militant Black Muslims. For Mawdudi the prophetic model is constructed precisely from the need to change the given situation, what Badiou and his detractors call a pre-evental figure, which gives us the *raison d'être* of the event (this will be best exemplified by the Muslim African revolutions as we will provide below). It is in the prophetic model to "change the whole structure of society handed down to them (those who govern over the state of the situation) from time immemorial" (Mawdudi 2007: 45). So that we can say together with Johnston that the prophetic model conceives of "situations as containing within themselves pre-evental figures/symbols heralding the possibility of truly evental change (indicating that the state-of-the-situation can be internally subverted using resources of its own pre-existent spaces)" (2016: 16).

How does the Prophetic organization make this contravention possible, it is through acknowledging that in a given situation, in static time, there is an overrepresentation of Man (Wynter 2003), the worshipping of the human, or created beings such as idols or the state. These references are metaphors for the transcendental regime in the form of settler colonial domination, that makes it conducive for pre-evental figures/symbols such as the Black Islamic subject to rise against and break away from. This theory of the prophetic and Badiouan event shows us the difference in the two temporalities, the unchanging relatively static world prior to the event, in which there existed many differences that were conditioned by the existing historical situation and the quick, revolutionary change that follows on the heels of that event, in which those differences no longer make sense, at least, for those who became the event's subjects (Pfeifer 2010). For us, Mawdudi reads the prophetic model similar to his predecessors particularly in Muslim Africa like Shehu Usman Dan Fodio, the Almaami Abdul Qadir Kan, and those who argued for an indifference to the historical processes of subjection. Mawdudi goes further in trying to distinguish what he calls 'pure Islam' from the modern colonial project against the colonialists and the Muslims, especially the Ulema (scholars) who have agreed to be the subjects of colonialism. In his essay, *Four Key Concepts of the Qur'an*

(2007), Mawdudi argued that to know the 'authentic objective' of the Qur'an it was crucial to grasp the 'real and total' (7) meanings of the four Qur'anic words:

(Allah), rabb (Lord), ibadat (worship), and deen (religion). Did not ulama know their "real and total" meanings? Mawdudi claimed that they did not, for soon after Qur'an's revelation, their real meanings were lost. Of the four Qur'anic words, Mawdudi considered 'Allah' the most important one because one becomes Muslim by reciting the kalimah, there is no God except Allah and Muhammad is His messenger. The crucial word in the kalimah is Allah; unless one understands its real meaning the very declaration of one's faith would be in doubt. Mawdudi's exposition on Allah is premised on a distinction between the 'metaphysical' and 'worldly political' life which together constitute an indivisible organic whole. To be a Muslim is to worship Allah alone not just in the metaphysical realm but also in the political realm because He is the master of both. Accordingly, Mawdudi contended that Allah must also be the 'Ruler, Dictator (aamir), and Legislator' of the political domain (28). Consequently, if someone claimed to be the ruler of a country, his claim would be equivalent to a claim to be God in the metaphysical realm. Thus, to share political power with someone who disregards the laws of Allah, he declared, would be polytheism in the same sense as someone who worships an idol (29). Elaborating on the meaning of rabb, a cognate term for Allah, he wrote that it was 'synonymous with sovereignty, sultan? (79). Since he viewed sovereignty in political terms, he argued that Allah is also a 'political Rabb (73). Thus taghoot, another Qur'anic word, does not just mean Satan or idol. It means a political order not based on Allah's sovereignty. Mawdudi chided the 'ulama for reducing the meaning of taghoot to a literal idol. For him, the Qur'anic injunction to worship Allah and shun taghoot meant securing a sharia state and rejecting any non-Islamic polity. Like Allah, worship also meant obeying the political authority. Mawdudi lamented that Muslims had squeezed its meaning to worshipping Allah in metaphysical life and banished Him from their political life (81-98). Elsewhere, he equated rituals like prayer to military training and considered them as bare means to achieve the goal of an Islamic state. He wrote, 'The prayer, fasting ... is indeed a ... training precisely for that purpose [installation of an Islamic state]' (1968 [1940]: 315). Mawdudi interpreted deen, religion, similarly. 'The word of the contemporary age, the

state, has ... approximated it [the meaning of deen]' (108). In a different text, he wrote, 'In reality, the word deen has approximately the same meaning with the word "state" has in the current age" (Ahmed 2009: 155-6).

The points that make Mawdudi important for us here, to recognize that Allah as the transcendental regime of the Muslim, is not compatible with the political order of the West, or as he says "if someone claimed to be the ruler of a country, his claim would be equivalent to a claim to be God in the metaphysical realm. Thus, to share political power with someone who disregards the laws of Allah, he declared, would be polytheism in the same sense as someone who worships an idol." What Mawdudi is doing is taking us back to Dovutoglu's theoretical clarification of the position of Islam's ontology, that is Allah-man-nature. Hence, Allah is the most significant encouragement of Muslim subjectivity, not the will of the individual as Abdulqadir As-Sufi has shown in the development of modern Western political democracy. The contemporary Muslim paradigm makes the mistake of assuming that Allah can be subjugated by the will of a constitutional democracy (Hallaq 2018; Effendi 2008). Hence, taghoot did "not just mean Satan or idol. It means a political order not based on Allah's sovereignty."

For the modern state is nothing other than a degoded sovereignty, it does not give space for any transcendental order than that of the state itself. By degoded we do not mean to resurrect, through the back door, the Western notion of God or theology, however, we have in mind an animist materialism (Garuba 2010; Hallaq 2018) and an epistemologically determined ontology outside of the Judea-Christian symbolic. The State cannot be Muslim, there is no Islamic state, and however, Islamic governance will be a revolutionary explosion of the state, for the Black Islamic Militants.

This is because according to Wael Hallaq (2018: 113), the "direct or indirect imposition of the state on the Muslim world has gone unnoticed as a field of inquiry" or as El-Affendi argues "whatever one might think of the moral basis of Western political systems, they still show a definite superiority over most political systems in the Muslim world" (2008: 59). This is precisely because Muslim conceptions of the state are rested on the idea that the state can be humanised using Islamic "religion" or ritual observance, the Qurán and the Sunna of the Prophet, without taking seriously the structure of thought that lends the state its ideological formation. That the state cannot be conceptualized outside of the epistemological shifts and

the consequent political practice of this shift in the overturning of Christianity into secularism with the penchant theology of progress as the basis of its rationalism, is a crucial marker that is missed by Muslims.

The state rested on the idea that civilized Man could be nourished by state systems and those who were not civilized were considered the Other, outside of the grace of civilization because they were considered “stupid like nature” and were not to be categorized as human (McKittrick 2015; Mbembe 2003). This ideological formation necessitates the practices and discourses of the modern colonial state, here we can think of the imposition or interventions in British India ala Mawdudi and the Ottoman Empire, as a case in point of how state institutions and their ideological narrative practice legitimized itself. Indeed, for Hallaq (2018: 114) the so-called Muslim state is a result of these interventions, as we saw with Mawdudi in British India and the “reforms of the nineteenth century that created the state structures, not the other way around.” It is through these reforms that Hallaq understands the modern state as having its primary task as not being the transformation of the sociopolitical arrangements of the Orient but the forming of new subjects, better illustrated in the reforms of the Ottoman Empire which ensured that the state developed or was raised to exhibit monopoly over violence and the threat to use violence, hence the structural genocide that was foundational to the emergence of a new transcendental order.

It was not a mere chance that the culmination of the Ottoman military reforms in 1826 coincided with an act unprecedented in the entirety of Islamic legal, social, and political history. Once the traditional army units were eliminated, the Istanbul government decreed that the major *waqfs* of the empire were to be placed under the control of a new Imperial Ministry of Endowments, which meant, within a few years from that act, the incomes of all these *waqfs* were seized.

The same ministry also seized the Water Works Administration, since public fountains and the public water supply were largely constituted as *waqf* endowments. Having been effectively owned by the public for centuries, water and its distribution had now become subject to the will of governments. Before proceeding, it is important to understand the magnitude of this phenomenon. The institution of *waqf* in Muslim lands had over centuries effectively cemented the relationships between human, physical, educational, and economic elements within society and, to some extent, the polity.

A thoroughly pious institution, it formed the substrate and matrix of philanthropy in Islam, playing an important role in the redistribution of wealth. One gave up one's property "for the sake of God" a charitable act that meant offering aid and support to the needy (this latter defined in a broad sense and ordained by the Qurán as integral to the ethical formation of the individual). It also provided distribution of wealth within the family, affording care for its members, and preventing the fragmentation of family property.

The promotion of education through waqf represented one of the best forms of engaging in good works, essential for Islam's social welfare and ethos of cultivating the moral technologies of the self. A considerable proportion of charitable trusts were thus directed at Madrasas (colleges), although waqf provided significant contributions toward building mosques, colleges, Sufi orders, hospitals, public fountains, soup kitchens, travellers' lodges, street lighting, and a variety of public works, notably bridges. The list of social services provided for by waqf is expansive. A substantial part of the budget intended for such philanthropies was dedicated to the maintenance, daily operational costs, and renovation of waqf properties. A typical waqf consisted of a mosque and rental property (for example, shops) dedicated to it across Islamic regions. By the eighteenth century, it is estimated, more than half of real property in the empire was consecrated as *waqf*. Depending on the region, an estimated 40 to 60 percent of all real property across the Islamic world was constituted as waqf by the time Europe began its colonialist encroachments.

The salarization of *waqf* administration constituted the first step toward the salarization of the entire legal profession, which was to take effect in the wake of the decree from 1839. There also was a series of minor but important judicial reforms that aimed at instituting new policies for judicial appointments, including entry exams, and the regulation of court practices. A series of laws were replaced by European codes, and new European-style institutions were raised to replace their *shar'i* equivalent. Which is to say that these fundamental changes were made to be concomitant with institutional restructuring, within a policy of demolish-and-replace... implemented in a detailed way in the formally sovereign Ottoman Empire, was the hallmark of colonialism in general and settler colonialism in particular (2018: 113-116).

The fundamental reforms that took place in the Ottoman empire amidst colonial intervention, as Mawdudi also observed when the same was being done to India by the British Orientalists,

were aimed at manufacturing new subjects, the citizen “who sees the world through the eyes of the modern state” (Ibid). In actuality one can study the structural similarities in all settler colonies, including Algeria, Indonesia, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, America, Palestine, and the list is endless. What Hallaq is trying to show to the militant subjects is that these reforms, or transformations cannot be understood outside of the epistemic shifts, or the Distinctions that belongs to European theology of progress that has assimilated the Other into the sovereign thought structures of modernity. The destruction of *waqf* was precisely to “discredit the institution among Algerians (Muslims) themselves” (Ibid).

The effect of these foundational and structural decapitations of *waqf*, the instrumentalization of the law, was not only meant to displace the Shari’a and the traditional institutions of Islam or just secularize them but, and this is very important as it pertains to some of the additional justification for the abandonment of the Islamic state, to create a new subject (2018: 116). So that to discredit the Muslim or Black African institutions is tantamount to a psychoepistemic domination, that is through these similar displacements “the subject was given a new formation, a new epistemology for living and for dealing with social others” (2018: 118).

This is what the Islamists, including Mawdudi, do not comprehend, and to answer El-Affendi’s (2008: 59) question why Muslim faith has been unable to progress using either the pre-colonial political or the modern European immoral state model? It is precisely because you cannot implant Islam in the modern state, which means that the purpose of the emancipatory subjects is to intervene to construct a new socio-political organization epistemologically determined by a Black Muslim ontology. The elimination of *waqf* demonstrates how juridically was a means to refashion the Oriental subject using new technologies of “the state, discipline, training, and control” (2018: *ibid*) over and above to establish sovereignty over the body of the Other/colonized. More importantly, this colonized being or subjected was to be a “replica of his European forerunner,” to transplant the Muslim subject “out of a technology of care of the self and its inner psychological operations into an internally disciplined but externally formed citizen” (Hallaq 2018: 117). As Foucault noted, the

Human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A “political anatomy,” which was also a “mechanics of power,” was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that

they may do what one wishes, but also so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines (1995: 137).

Here the purpose is to turn the Oriental subject's body into submission and utility through what the French Marxist Louis Althusser (1971) calls the state repressive apparatuses, "the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc., which constitute what I shall in future call the Repressive State Apparatus. Repressive suggests that the State Apparatus in question "functions by violence" – at least ultimately (since repression, e.g., administrative repression, may take non-physical forms)" (79). These institutions of coercive surveillance, ensure the complicity of the subjected, in this case, the Muslims at an epistemic and performative level.

The argument here is that colonial modernity cannot be inverted as per the 20th-century revolutionary discourses (Wynter 2015) this is because what is involved is a sovereign thought structure of domination; by sovereignty, we maintain the definition of the right over life, and death. Here we can go deeper still, what was ushered through a different rationality of government (Scott 1996) is a result of discipline and practices, discipline of the scholars, administrators, and politicians who then practice the doctrine of the desire for domination. Sovereignty epistemologically structures the performing subject. The Black Muslim subjects emerge not from a differential relationship as per the Saussurian structural linguistics, as if there is a coeval relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, but from an antagonistic relation (a death struggle) that takes seriously the epistemological nature of politics, that is a thought-practice geared towards sovereign domination.

This sovereign domination for the Black Muslim militant is the foundational and structural changes imposed on the colony as a product of academic discourses and political theories that are practiced by "politicians based on the knowledge that European scholars articulated" (Ibid: 123). This episteme or transcendental order cannot be overturned so long as the revolutionary subject does not clarify its processes.

Hence it becomes important to further demonstrate how the sovereign colonial modern state is not only immoral, violent, coercive, or assimilationist according to the political philosophy of the desire to dominate. To do this we have to differentiate the sociogenesis of the black subject in modernity in order to think of its Islamic African intervention. For the Black subject,

the state is not the goal of emancipatory politics or subjectivity but rather to overturn the transcendental regime, the mode of Reality today, in order to fashion an alternative political praxis of militancy. Mawdudi is useful only for innovation in the face of Muslim defeat, assimilation, and a continuum of modern sovereign reality. What the Islamic Black subjects seek is to turn defeat into victory, to insist on Mawdudi's conceptual innovation in the face of defeat and contemporary Islamist thought, to avoid "being fooled by the propaganda of one's enemies" or we should proclaim: "you should not mourn your enemies!" (Huang 2015: 38). It is precisely the logic of capital in a liberal democratic state that presents a false dialectic to the Muslim subject and hence our fidelity to the events that constituted oriental and black African defeat in order to chart our unique way to victory. However, we will see in the next section how Muslim militants followed Mawdudi or Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and ended with a revolutionary prescription that equated Islam with the state, or that religion and state were at the foundation of Islam. Removal from the context of these debates has misled and informed Islamism and other offshoots of emancipatory discourses within Islam. To subscribe to Western political philosophy as the basis of emancipatory subjectivity is to fall prey to the perpetuation of the status quo, a static scene of history, or to insist on opinions and judgements as the fulcrum of revolutionary politics.

Enter the Black Muslim subjects-Islam-ism-resistance-ANC-SACP–Congress alliance – intervention is an invention!

"In a war of revolutionary character, guerrilla operations are necessary" (Mao-Zedong 2017: 41).

Islamic resistance to settler colonialism in South Africa has struggled to articulate blackness as a revolutionary force and it has struggled to articulate an Islamic revolution that follows the sequence of the 1776 Muslim African revolution against slavery and colonial encroachments in Senegambia. The question of the sequence instead of the time of the events according to the logic of political inquiry should be taken seriously by Muslims precisely because sequences "are meaningful because they allow us to inquire into thought, into the spaces of politics as a kind of thought that often shows up in such spaces an" inner experience" of political thought (Lazarus 2018: 227).

The question of Muslim involvement in the struggle for the elimination of (colonial) apartheid, and therefore discourse surrounding it, must be weighed in light of the favorable economic position of Indian and Malay Muslims in South Africa. The evidence of 'vested interests' as Lubbe pointed out 'could represent a major stumbling block to Muslims for putting into practice (Islamic) principles of justice and peace (Tayob 1990: 33). The asymmetrical relationship between Muslims, particularly between Africans, Malay & Indian, what Sitoto terms the "Asian diaspora" (2018), influenced the ideological and revolutionary conceptions of change. That is Islamic movements that developed in the height of anticolonial revolts in South Africa articulated by Muslims who struggled with aligning with the real that is blackness firstly because Islam was "seen and experienced through Malay and Indian lenses" (Langa 2022: 79) is because historically this 'Asian diaspora' feeling is structured by white settler colonialism.

Muslims in the 1880s were therefore prepared to riot for their faith, and faith in this context was interpreted in a narrow manner. There is no evidence to suggest that at this point they identified with the struggles of the indigenous people or that they were ever interested in spreading a more comprehensive, 'political' form of Islam. Indeed, oral evidence suggests that the community was contemptuous towards blacks. It was a matter of tremendous social honour for example if one's wedding was graced by people of European origin (Essack 1988: 474).

It is only in the height of anticolonial revolts in "(1982-87)" that "Muslims as Islamists also made a most significant contribution to the struggle for justice in South Africa for all South Africans-particularly in the struggle against apartheid" (Essack 1988: 437). Muslim resistance to colonial-apartheid varied on how it sought to follow or avoid the tragic path of the national liberation movement – the ANC Congress Alliance (Modiri 2022). This was followed by the attempt to make Islam relevant following the Islamist conception of politics premised on the seizure of the state; this was the "'relevant' Islam- borrowing from the writing of the Pakistani thinker and activist Abu al-'Ala Mawdudi (Tayob 1990: 35).

This is interesting, for some Muslims found themselves in a critical juncture where they were assimilated to the colonial-apartheid status quo and thus became worried about their minority status and the impossibility of the seizure of the state hence the justification of an alliance with the resistance movement (Essack 1988: 438). The formation of 'The Call of Islam'

in 1961 represented the “first attempt to organize Muslims as a community within South African society, against social and political, as opposed to purely religious oppression” under the leadership of Imam Abdullah Haroon (Essack 1988: 475). In opposition to these developments was the reactionary “ulema, the traditional Islamic leadership organized in the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC), regarded these moves as youthful impetuosity which threatened to usurp them as the leaders of the community.¹⁴⁷” The reaction of the ulema, reflects the same tendency that Mawdudi in India as we have shown was subjected to, the attempt to silence Muslim revolutionary radicalism as *fasaad* (evil), not conforming to Islamic religion of obeying authority (the state). An extreme and uncommon approach is to view the whole South African political scenario as *'kuffaar* (disbelieving) politics (Tayob 1990: 37).

As seen in the “post-colonial post-apartheid” in South Africa and role of Muslims in it, “among the elite of Cape ‘ulama’ as being loyalist (‘my country first’) and accommodationist” (Bangstad and Fataar 2010: 820), the Islamist turn as it developed from Mawdudi to the rest of the Islamic world, was premised on the idea of articulating Islam in the State, that is an intervention that sought to transplant a new transcendentalism in the existing colonial status quo. In the anti-colonial struggle in South Africa from the 1950s there developed “[T]hree Islamic Strands in the South African Struggle for Justice” according to Essack’s article, one of the few available sources that analyze in depth Muslim ideological role in the revolutionary struggle.

There are three movements or groupings which actively embrace the struggle against apartheid. These movements are, in chronological order: a centrist grouping under the leadership of the MYM ¹⁴⁸; a Pan-Africanist trend-whose most active and strongest

¹⁴⁷ The Muslim youth were becoming acutely aware that this kind of exclusive religio-moral orientation of the leadership was falling short of appreciating the relevance of Islam in apartheid South Africa. Moreover, the 'official ulama's silence on politico-social matters led to the emergence of what is regarded as socially and politically relevant (Tayob 1990: 35).

¹⁴⁸ The interaction of senior MYM officials with Islamists from other parts of the world in the mid-1970s was an important factor in its transformation from an organisation to a movement. A close affinity developed between the MYM and what has been referred to as the international Islamic Movement. This was reflected in the frequent visits to South Africa by luminaries of the Jamaati Islami of Pakistan-such as Khurshid Ahmed and Khurram Murad-and others with a Muslim Brotherhood background such as Jamal Badawi and Ahmed Sagr. The MYM'S theoretical development was also

component is Qiblah¹⁴⁹; and a South Africanist grouping whose most active and strongest component is the Call of Islam¹⁵⁰ (1988: 477).

Intentionally Essack sidelines the ulema represented by the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) precisely because of their reactionary position, alignment with the state and “Mass Democratic Movement” represented by the UDF (United Democratic Front). Muslim middle-class elites had affinities with the “new secular order in the new South Africa” (Bangstad and Fataar 2010: 825). At the same time, the arguments against building an alliance with the national liberation movements were centered on the refusal to be incorporated into the secular forms of resistance that are, as the argument goes against the Islamic religion. Here it becomes more interesting for us, that the UDF as we will show, under the leadership of the ANC Congress Alliance, was frowned upon by Muslim radicals and instead, they chose to follow the lead of Black and Africanist militant groups.

As Cassim the leading ideologue of Qibla was putting an emphasis on a uniquely Islamic revolution that would bring about an Islamic state in South Africa, argued against the “UDF

strongly influenced by the availability of an extensive literature from these quarters, including such works as Qutb's Milestones and Maududi's Towards understanding Islam. It also regarded itself as an extension of the renaissance of Islam pioneered by scholars such as Rashid Rida and Muhammed Abdu.

¹⁴⁹ The idea of an Islamic revolution a' la Iran in South Africa is essentially that of Qiblah. The president of ICSA, A Najaar, has dismissed the idea as a pipe dream, whilst a leading theologian, Armin Fakir, has rejected it as 'lunacy'. Qiblah argues that: 'Islam is a combative revolutionary force. Islam is the religion of the oppressed and will remain so despite any attempt at misrepresentations. For 22 and 28 August we propose Islamic Revolution as an alternative for the oppressed masses.'³⁵ The general, although undefined, idea among the proponents of an Islamic state of South Africa (Azania) is that it is just a matter of time until the masses become disillusioned with the 'lack of clarity, consistency and convictions' on the part of 'the general liberation movement' and that 'in this context of confusion the Islamic ideology with its comprehensive social and political principles and its balanced philosophy of life presents itself as an alternative model'. Mission (dawah) is therefore a key component in this process of Islamisation (Ibid).

¹⁵⁰ The Call of Islam is then a South African phenomenon owing little to international developments in the Muslim world. Its ideologues enjoy reading Shariati-the Iranian scholar who was martyred by Savak-and Taleqani, and they are the only Muslim group who quote from the literature of the Mujahedin i Khalq in Iran. (Qiblah and the MYM have adopted the official Iranian regime's description of 'Munafiqin i Khalq' when referring to this organisation.) Nothing, however, suggests that they have been moved by any of these personalities or organisations in the way that the MYM and Qiblah have been moved by Qutb and Khomeini (Ibid).

for representing a movement devoid of revolutionary method, revolutionary action and 'ideological clarity. He expressed his indignation at the 'enigma' of the UDF as a 'multi-racial, non-violent and ideology-less' groups" (Tayob 1990: 39). Muslims in South Africa have failed to bring about Islam as a new figure of resistance, indeed racism prevents any militant to occupy the second order of reconfiguring or effecting a destruction of the colonial state of affairs. Consequently, Muslim resistance will never cause Islam to destroy the social Whole of colonial oppression because of their alliances, as it has been proven by the black-lived experience in the current state of affairs. Islamism as we have seen with Mawdudi's invention cannot be inserted within the status quo, however Islamism is disadvantaged because even its resistance to the categories of political praxis remains within political philosophy, the State, democracy, and Capital. The radical Cassim of Qibla was drawing on the Universalist figure of the Iranian revolution in order to think about the Islamic state in South Africa but it was a pipe dream precisely because Muslims in South Africa did not take the real of blackness as their militant Islamic praxis. As Essack and Tayob have shown, the idea of a 'relevant' Islam was attractive during the anti-colonial resistance struggles however for us 'relevant' Islam is a momentary interventionist Islam of the normative order of existence, not the Black Muslim subjects second order of inexistence.

Let me demonstrate, for Shehu Usman Dan Fodio (Sulaiman, 2020) inexistence is the place for the subjectivation of the militant Muslim African subject. Indeed Islam's inexistence in the colony acts as an instantaneous lightning strike to the social political, moral, and intellectual order. Islam builds a movement focused on the rupture of the state of affairs, a movement that thinks not only about the event but also about its aftermath. For the Shehu ethics, that is ethics against the current reigning ethical ideology, "manifests itself in all spheres of life, since its basic objective is to create a totally new socio-political grouping-an ummah-which may be the formation of a new political order" (Sulaiman 2020: 15). The political materialism of the Black Islamic subject takes 'relevant' Islam to be concerned with the "renaissance of Islam pioneered by scholars such as Rashid Rida and Muhammed Abdu" of the MYM or Qibla's "Islamic revolution a' la Iran" or The Call's "South Africa centric phenomenon" that follows the Congress Alliance in the national liberation struggle, no! the Black Muslim understands that no "movement can be taken seriously if the character or the behaviour of the core members do not set them apart clearly"(2020:65).

The real of Militant Islam is more concerned with sustaining the longevity of the revolutionary acts, the creation of the social order that will prevent oppression, fungibility, and ferment the reversal of the imperialist order of servility. An Islamic revolution does not think of the consequences of the revolution after the acts or the event, its recreation of society, individuals and the community, since an Islamic revolution is also an event against secular notions of revolutionary outbreaks. As Sulaiman studying the *Jama'a* (the community of Muslims under the leadership of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio of the Sokoto Caliphate) asserts, the “ultimate objective of *tajdid* is the overthrowal of the corrupt prevailing order and the establishment of Islam” (2020: 197). Islam that is momentarily articulated will disappear as fast as it appeared, because of the consequence of being momentarily lived without subjective fidelity and its condemnation to disappearing without dealing a decisive blow to the logic of the State, parliamentary democracy, and capital. Islam served as the theoretical departure for the possible rupture of the colonial transcendental structure. A critique of the Black Islamic subjects is to see the politics of Islamist groups in the anti-colonial struggle and in the so-called post-colonial apartheid as one of accommodation, the need to be inserted in the historical order of the Congress Alliance.

As Tayob pointed out “since 1994, Muslims have begun to enjoy tangible benefits of this recognition and acceptance. Muslim leaders have been recognised by the state, and often invited to open important state functions like the inauguration of state presidents” (2003: 1-2). Muslims must take seriously the fidelity to Islam, which is “the future destiny of Africa is Islamic. It is important therefore that Islamic activists get their target right and do not waste energy in useless arguments and divisive doctrine” (Abdulqadir As-Sufi 2005: 430). Let us take the political militancy of the African Muslim subjects in South Africa, refusing to see the state as the primal desire of emancipatory politics. They engaged in one of the severe onslaughts of the banking system¹⁵¹ and their acts were classified as criminality, as Maxaulane aptly noticed that the “colonial order forecloses any relation of the encounter between the political demands of the colonizer and colonized” (2022: 92). That is, as a form of resistance or refusal,

¹⁵¹ Lenin argued in terms of the financial system “Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism at which this separation reaches vast proportions. The supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy; it means the singling out of a small number of financially ‘powerful’ states from among all the rest” (Lenin 2017: 41).

and as a figure outside of the “ontological system of colonial laws and forms of representation” (2022: *ibid*) the political acts of the Black Muslim combatants emerging from the Azanian People’s Liberation and Pan Africanist Congresses were classified as criminal and had some of their members arrested. As Langa (2022:79) relates to us.

Ghazwah is an Arabic word that means battles. According to Alhajj Malik Arafat ghazwah was the activity which some members of the organization got involved and it took the form of raiding/robbing banks since they were believed to be institutions of oppression that funded the apartheid government. Thus, the banks were seen as part and parcel of the reason why black people were poor and subjected to economic slavery. One of the incidents was the raid on a First National Bank in Silverton, Pretoria.

These were guerilla acts of violence, political acts sanctioned by the Amir of the Murabitun movement formed in Soweto (Langa 2022: 80), to deal a decisive blow to the banking system which is still at the heart of imperialist servility of the (post)-colonized¹⁵². As Abdulqadir As-Sufi has continued to show the militant Muslim, “bankers, called by Proudhon, the Sect, are a mystical fraternity of atheists, they operate a usury system lending interests using not substantive, i.e., real wealth, but rather in the instance using paper currency, itself a recipe for real wealth. Their power grew, and it has been growing since the French revolution” (2023)¹⁵³.

¹⁵² Branwen Gruffwyd Jones argues: “‘Marx’s historical materialist method and theory of capital explains why capital is necessarily expansionary; why the plunder of Africa was an integral part of the primitive accumulation of western capital; why the reorganisation of Africa’s human and natural resources to meet the needs of Europe’s developing industries required colonial occupation and domination’. Calling forth such explanatory power” (2003: 42).

¹⁵³ As Harveyh pointed out “The credit system and finance capital have, as Lenin, Hilferding and Luxemburg all remarked, been major levers of predation, fraud and thievery. Stock promotions Ponzi schemes, structured asset destruction through inflation, asset stripping through mergers and acquisitions, the promotion of levels of debt encumbrancy that reduce whole populations, even in the advanced capitalist countries, to debt peonage, to say nothing of corporate fraud, dispossession of assets (the raiding of pension funds and their decimation by stock and corporate collapses) by credit and stock manipulations – all of these are central features of what contemporary capitalism is about” (2003a: 75-6).

In this context, international and domestic financial markets in Africa amplify traditional forms of primitive accumulation, establishing new kinds of 'accumulation by dispossession' and maintaining other features of underdevelopment, particularly in recent years as commodification has spread more rapidly under neoliberalism. This process is co-ordinated by financial agencies, whose influence derives from Africa's crippling debt, capital flight, import dependence and the compradorisation process (Bond 2004: 147).

What Muslim militants took seriously was not the alternatives presented by the liberation movements of the Congress Alliance but rather the scission with an important element of the settler colonial system in South Africa. In other words, we can use Badiou's thoughts on the praxis of the proletariat "the project of the proletariat, its internal being, is not to contradict the bourgeoisie, or to cut its legs off. Its project is communism, and nothing else. That is to say, the abolition of any place wherein something like a proletariat could be situated" (2013: 25). *Stricto sensu*, the Muslim should be destroying the whole social edifice that perpetuates and structures an imperialist society, which places black African Muslims at the bottom of the social-political order.

The Black Muslim subject cannot not be the Marxist proletariat, because the project is to "contradict the bourgeoisie," to "cut its legs off" and if communism means bringing about a new egalitarian world, then charting a way out of settler colonialism is at the heart of the Black Muslim subject's meaning or political project. To achieve this goal native Muslims in contemporary South Africa should follow Fanon (1963; 2001) in the strategy and tactics of organizing a rebellion and the transformation of the concept of *ghazwah* into the knowledge of the practice of action. Fanon at first glance might not seem to be the candidate for articulating a Muslim revolutionary process of the real, to freedom as Abdulqadir As-Sufi has criticized (2005: 11). However, we would caution Muslims as well as black radicals to pay close attention to the myriad of ways in which revolutionary theory and struggles carry with them intentions of invention, that no one way guarantees the revolutionary goal of real freedom. This is because for black radicals and Marxists revolutionaries Fanon's strategies and tactics have been read in light of a secular episteme, an episteme that constitutes the thought structure of modernity as we have been cautioning throughout this research.

A secular episteme distinguishes or creates a binary taxonomy between religion and the rational, the sacred and the profane, by its very construction a secular episteme imposes a

mode of thinking of the binary. For us, religion is not to be imputed on Islam, and the secular exposes its own shortfall precisely because it takes itself as the starting point of discourse. In this sense, according to secular revolutionaries Black or White, the decolonial process cannot be predicated on theological or religious discourse or grounds, because there is no a priori that guarantees the liberation struggle. Here we can think of Fanon's discussion of the Manichean delirium that constitutes the colony, where in the (post)colony the difference between Black/White, the colonizer and colonized, is justified by moral philosophy, as Badiou has also been showing. It is the use of the conception: good and evil as "a reference to divine right... to justify difference (Fanon 1963: 5)" that maintains this Manichean delirium. It is the Manichean delirium with its dualistic philosophy that structures colonial reality and seeks to position the Black as evil. Hence, for the Black radical, secularism is linked with colonial ideology (as it is with religion). The criticisms against religion and secularism are, ironically, predicated on the influence of the western-secular categories informed by modern science (that stems from the euro-Christian history). Here I beg the reader to take seriously our critique of the culture of education as we elucidated in the intermission chapter.

A shortfall of contemporary revolutionary theories is precisely that they rely on the episteme that they criticize, this was the case for Fanon as well. That religion is understood in narrow secular terms is what I have already alluded to, however, the danger is that contemporary critical or decolonial theory critiques religion and secularism and ends with an oversight of both categories. Both categories take the notion of the hu (Man) as a normative ideal, this universalist epistemic framework becomes the foundation of knowledge. Of course, Sylvia Wynter has already suggested to us that the particular notion of the hu (Man) is a Western construction at the core and was the center of Fanon's re-articulation of the being black, undermining the universalist notion of the bourgeoisie descriptive statement of the human (McKittrick 2003). For Muslim Africans, Fanon's criticism of political theology, and his "turn to secularist language as an alternative to religion seems to suggest, in turn, an alternative notion of the sacred" (Yountae 2022). This alternative notion of the sacred using secular categories is what can be viewed as suspicious by a Muslim radical; rather we argue that Fanon like his contemporary heirs, understood religion as the opposite of the secular and therefore that created an oversight regarding both categories.

Marxist studies of the Algerian revolution have found it difficult to explain how the peasant class became the central component of the revolution. By neglecting the proletariat and mobilizing the peasants instead, as Fouzi Slisli has observed “Fanon’s supporters have been incapable of explaining what made the Algerian peasantry revolutionary” (2008: 94). Fanon was crystal clear in his condemnation of Christianity. He famously compared Christianity in the colonies to the pesticide DDT. “The church in the colonies,” he says, “is the white people’s Church, the foreigner’s Church. She does not call the native to God’s ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. As we know, in this matter, many are called but few are chosen” (2001: 32). For the Black militant Muslims, Fanon’s relation to Islam cannot be compared with Christianity (although he was a secular revolutionary); the revolutionary milieu that he immersed himself was Islamic. His conversation or letter to Ali Shariati gives us specific insights into his thoughts on Islamic anticolonialist stance and action¹⁵⁴.

The world of Islam has fought the west and colonialism more than all Asia and all Africa. These two old enemies [of Islam] have inflicted serious wounds on its body and soul. And it bears alone the hatred of these enemies, which have struck it more frightfully than they have others. And although I do not feel the same way towards it as you. I would like to emphasize, more than you do yourself, your remark that Islam harbours, more than any other social powers of ideological alternatives in the third world...both anticolonialist capacity and an anti-western character (2015: 668).

Like Fanon’s analysis of the Muslim peasants in Algeria, the Black Muslim militants would realize that their position in the post-colony is marked by inexistence because the socio-symbolic structure cannot name them or make meaning of their subjectivity and cosmology. The inexistence of the militants in the colony is nothing but a call to invent or chart a way to cutting off the legs of colonialism and its capitalist or ethical ideological perpetuity. In the

¹⁵⁴ However, he did edit the FLN’s organ, *El-Moudjahid*. The people he passionately supported in that uprising were called *moujahidin* and were engaged in jihad. Fanon’s negative attitude toward Christianity never extended to Islam. In fact, by editing *El-Moudjahid* and by championing a revolution that was fundamentally a jihad, one can say that he essentially endorsed the jihad against the colonizer (Slisli 2008: 103).

chapter on Medicine and Colonialism, Fanon lays out how the strategy of refusal to be treated by colonialist doctors is a struggle to death or confronts an atmospheric death,

For dozens of years, despite the doctor's exhortations, the Algerian shied away from hospitalization. Even though the specialist might insist that any hesitation would seriously endanger the patient's life, the patient would hang back and refuse to be taken to the hospital. It would always be at the last moment, when hardly any hope remained, that consent was given. Even then, the man who made the decision would make it in opposition to the group; and as the case would be a desperate one, as the decision had been too long delayed, the patient would usually die (1965: 124).

By refusing western medicine, by making western therapy into a clandestine struggle over life and death, the colonized know that it is through the promise of the cure that the law of colonialism reaffirms itself (Marriott 2006: 7).

Two not disparate versions of the source of the revolutionary outbreak are apparent in *The Wretched of the Earth*¹⁵⁵. In the first, "illegalists" figure. They are radicals forced out of the urban bourgeois nationalist political parties by the nationalist leadership and pursued into the rural hinterland by the colonialist police. There they come in contact with the peasantry, already thinking in terms of "violence" (Fanon 2001: 44). In this version, the illegalists perhaps perform a necessary role as catalyst and to some extent as educators, giving to the peasants' natural understanding of the colonial situation a theoretical grounding (Beckett 1973: 10). The peasants once aroused, the revolution is seen to filter into the urban sectors of the colonial society by way of the "lumpen-proletariat" - that portion of the urban sector which

¹⁵⁵ As Beckett puts it "It can be suggested that in Fanon's picture of the colonial situation, relations of violence are as much the essence as economic relations are for Marx. Already, therefore, Fanon's treatment of violence goes beyond the simple notion of a conditionally instrumental resort to violence. The essence of colonialism being violence, its contradiction is found in counter-violence. But Fanon adds another dimension; in his view the colonized man finds his freedom not only through violence (the traditional conception), but also in it. It is in violence that the "native" becomes a man; thus, the Césaire passage quoted by Fanon ends: "I struck, and the blood spurted; that is the only baptism that I remember today." In Fanon's own words: "At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair inaction; it makes him fearless and re- stores his self-respect" (1973: 8).

retains its cultural and social connections with the peasantry, and which has not been assimilated to the colonialist machine.

The second version simply eliminates the factor of illegalist intellectual action, leaving us with the peasantry itself. This "class" is described as "spontaneously revolutionary." Throughout most of the long essay "Concerning Violence," it is possible to see the peasantry as rising spontaneously without the benefit of catalysts from outside itself and its relationship to the colonial system (1973: 11). Fanon says, of revolutionary struggle:

In the revolutionary struggle, the immense, oppressed masses of the colonies and semi-colonies feel that they are a part of life for the first time. Life acquires a sense, a transcendence, and an object: to end exploitation, to govern themselves by and for themselves, to construct a way of life. The armed struggle breaks up the old routine life of the countryside and villages, excites, exalts, and opens wide the doors of the future. Liberation does not come as a gift from anybody; it is seized by the masses with their own hands. In addition, by seizing it, they themselves are transformed; confidence in their own strength soars, and they turn their energy and their experience to the tasks of building, governing, and deciding their own lives for themselves (1965:1-2).

Slisli argues, "[C]ontrary to Western conceptions, then, Algerian peasants did not rebel against French colonization out of instinctive, subconscious reflex mechanisms, as would a pack of wolves. On the contrary, Islam's social and political mandates provided an authentic anticolonial ideology capable of mobilizing the peasant as well as the urban masses" (2008: 102). What Fanon ascribes to spontaneity is actually a longer history of Islamic resistance and rebellions against invaders.

The opposition to the French that was active in the Algerian countryside throughout the nineteenth century and to which Perinbam refers, the warrior/resistance tradition that she says was alive as late as the 1940s and 1950s was entirely Islamic in ideology, in culture, in organization, and even in name. In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century North Africa, it was the Sufi brotherhoods that championed resistance to colonization. The Darqawiyya Muslim brotherhood, for example, mounted a stiff rebellion against Ottoman rule from 1783 to 1805, and again from 1805 to 1809. It was finally defeated

through a massive Ottoman retaliation and its member tribes retreated to the Medea region south of Algiers. Between 1822 and 1827, the Tijaniyya brotherhood resisted the payment of taxes to the Ottomans and fought them militarily in Western Algeria. They were defeated eventually, and the Ottomans displayed the decapitated head of their leader, Muhammad al-Kabir, in public as a warning to other tribes and brotherhoods. It also took no more than two years after the French invasion for the Algerians to develop one of their most formidable anti-colonial revolts. Led by Emir Abd al-Qadir, this rebellion also had a distinctly Islamic banner. From 1832 to 1848, Abd al-Qadir managed to confine the French to three coastal enclaves. In the interior of Algeria, he built an Islamic state based on the sharia that his followers widely respected. The mobilizing ideology was the jihad to free the land from the invaders. Abd al-Qadir was chosen because he had earned the respect of his co-religionists as a result of the sincerity of his Islamic convictions and his impeccable moral credentials. He was learned in Islamic law and earned the support of the 'ulamas (Islamic scholars). He organized a network of zawiyas (a school-mosque institution) through the Qadiriyya Sufi brotherhood and created a complex administration and a more egalitarian society than had existed under the French or the Ottomans. 'I hope,' he famously said upon his inauguration on 27 November 1832, 'to prevent strife among Muslims, to ensure safety on the roads, to protect the country from invaders, and to establish law and justice for both the powerful and the weak.' The inauguration ceremony was a literal reenactment of the one in which the Prophet Mohammad was given allegiance by his companions in AD 627.¹² Many similar anti-colonial rebellions were mobilized in the nineteenth century throughout north, east and west Africa, and they all were led by Sufi brotherhoods or Sufi sheikhs. Hadj el-Moqrani, Cheikh el-Haddad and Cheikh Bouamama were the most notable in Algeria after Abd al-Qadir. Elsewhere, Abd Allah Hasan fought the British and the Italians in Somalia; Al Hadj Umar Tall led the jihad in Guinea, Senegal and Mali; Mohammad al-Sanusi, founder of the Sanusiya movement in Libya, led the resistance against the Italians; Usman dan Fodio led the jihad in Nigeria; and Ma' al-'Aynayn in Morocco. These are only some of the most prominent anti-colonial leaders. They were all mystics, and most of them expressed their ideas in writing. They all demonstrated a great deal of intellectual independence and developed various ideologies of jihad and diverse methods of

resistance. These movements, as Martin Bradford shows, were not the expression of a stagnating Islam. On the contrary, they constitute a pattern of renewal and revitalization that is distinctly Islamic and that can be traced back to the practices of the Prophet Mohammad. Even after these movements were defeated, Islamic ideology was still able to mobilize anti-colonial resistance and rebellions. The reason is simply that Islam, unlike other religions, escapes institutionalization. Closeness to power compromises the independence of Islamic scholars. When that happens, the masses always look for more independent scholars to follow.

For the Muslim militant the theory of revolutionary struggle as in the case of Algerian peasants, requires Islam as an anticolonial framework from which to violently challenge any form of submission other than the submission to Allah as we have shown with Mawdudi. That Islam was already the backbone that Fanon alluded to spontaneity it seems to us has to be taken seriously in contemporary decolonial or emancipatory theories of change. The violence is the counter-existential act of being or subjectivation of the militant against colonialist violence. Black Muslims in South Africa should take these lessons as a way of expanding the imaginary of Islam in order to taste the real of freedom. The insistence on the secular episteme obfuscates the revolutionary thought processes that inhere in Islam and the inventions of blackness as the underside of the social theories of modernity.

This is where we need to deal with the implications of inserting Black Muslim subjects in the discourses of emancipatory politics according to Badiou at this point. As Toscano tells us Badiou seems to be reluctant and rather pessimistic about what he calls obscure and reactionary subjects of political Islamism. My argument is that emancipatory politics cannot only inhere in the Marxist or Communist political projects, that is if this is the case then the absolute claim to universality by the subject of the truth of the event is conditioned by its specific historical sequence. I am suggesting that what Badiou's emancipatory theory claims is precisely the exceptional universality that, from a non-Western perspective, settler colonialism and its Western world capitalist system continue to proclaim as universal, that is from a Western perspective.

Any genuine theory of revolutionary outbreaks should take seriously the different and specific concrete and historical situations, and these outbreaks do not have to belong to the Western or Marxist revolutionary heritage. It is an insult to think that revolutionary thought can be

thought only from the place of Marxism, this is because Badiou himself has cautioned against the liquidation of revolutionary practices by the Soviet Union and the post-Cultural revolutions anchored in Marxist interventionist revolutionary praxis. So we say, again, the theory of revolutions is not the exclusive purview of the Marxist militants as it is the case in South African oppositional politics, the Chinese Party-State, the Cuban Revolutionary State or any other Marxist aligned militant political discourses.

This is indeed the issue when Badiou discusses what we could refer to as ‘non-universal’ subjects. Remember for Badiou it is the irruption of a subject of truth that serves as the aleatory condition of possibility for the formation of other subjects. Suggesting that it is in projects such as Nazism or Stalinism where ‘Such a simulacrum is only possible thanks to the success of political revolutions that were genuinely evental (and thus universally addressed)’. This is why it is only from the standpoint of fidelity to events of universal address—‘the truth-processes whose simulacra they manipulate’—that these other, non- or anti-universal subjects, become intelligible (Toscano 2000: 77).

Being a betrayal or the reactionary (the thesis of reaction, at the base, is that all of the ‘results’ of a truth procedure (e.g. political equality in the French revolution) could be attained without the terroristic penchants of the faithful subject, and without the affirmation of a radically novel event subjects. Nazism or other ‘non-universal’ cannot be intelligible to us because of the subjective truth of the event; we can only name them after the event that is the fidelity to the truth of the event. This non-fidelity of the betrayal or reactionary subjects or this unfaithful subject pushes Badiou to accept or to take for granted other subjects of the truth that are outside these specific historical sequences. Badiou is quick to model these subjects as an exemplar of other subjects that do not belong to the truth of his subjects.

In this case, political Islam becomes the target as an obscure target (2009), rather than denying its novelty, the obscure subject is focused on actually negating the very existence of this new present, the post-evental present. Badiou is obliged to argue that if there is indeed an Islamist subject, then this subject is derivative (by way of occultation) of a faithful subject. Rather than a regurgitation of the past, Islamism is the contemporary politics of emancipation (which is why it is useless to engage in ‘genealogical’ explanations). Possibly the most important, and disputable, aspect of this argument is that the purpose (whether conscious or otherwise) of contemporary Islamism is ‘occulting the post-socialist present’ (Toscano 2006:

29). My appeal is that it is possible indeed to think of the multiversal emancipatory subject as an occulting of the post-socialist present precisely because socialism tends to operate within a capitalist liberal democratic order, and any attempts to reinstate socialism should be viewed with suspicion.

For Badiou's theory of the obscure subject to find its exemplification in Islamism it must be possible to argue that, in some sense or other, the relationship between Islamist obscurantism and the politics of emancipation is one where the purpose of the former is absolutely to negate the latter, through the production of a full subjective body and an archaic future. This archaic future, however, is precisely what I have been criticizing Islamists for, since the modern state cannot be overturned into the caliphate (Islamic state), and because it achieves archaism with its role of relating to the specific philosophical speculations of emancipation and as such, it cannot be an authentic driver of eventual change. Badiou and I agree here but he does not understand the extent of Islamic subjectivities and subjectivations. Rather as Toscano points out, Badiou thinks of Bin Laden because his movement is the emblem of political Islamism, and Toscano includes the Iranian revolution¹⁵⁶, its intellectual Ali Shariati, and Sayyid Qutb of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

Even if we accept that the 'purpose' of Iranian Islamism lay in the occultation (and indeed, the persecution and often slaughter) of anybody that carried a promise of immanent universality—in what Achcar calls 'a permanent revolution in reverse' and a 'reactionary retrogression'—it cannot be argued that it simply foreclosed the statements and organs of emancipatory politics. Rather, in a far more insidious and powerful move, it incorporated them, transcendentalizing, for instance, the concept of anti-imperialism into a religious duty bound to the defense of the umma rather than the creation of a truly generic humanity. Still

¹⁵⁶ Taking the paradigmatic case of 'political Islam', the "post-revolutionary Islamic Republic of Iran, we can see that the theocratic forces did not engage in a straightforward reaction to the mass revolts against the Shah—in which they, alongside the various groups of the radical left, instead played a mobilizing role—or in a simple occultation. It is certainly true that—as Badiou himself already noted in the *Théorie du sujet*—the Islamist superego in the figure of Khomeini played a role akin to that of the Mao, and the archaic and transcendent reference prepared the brutal occlusion of emancipatory trajectories. But the suppression of the left by theocratic forces worked, in the ideological arena, primarily by borrowing the left's prescriptions and 'Islamicizing' them, leaving the left the abject alternative of either abetting its own suppression or becoming traitor to the revolution" (Toscano 2006: 32).

remaining with the Iranian case, we can see that Islamism even produced a kind of revolutionary populism, in the figure of Ali Shari'ati, which, though posthumously manipulated by the clergy and its militias for their own rightist ends, is difficult to class simply as either reactive or obscure. In Shari'ati we find an uneasy combination of the popular principle of rebellion, on the one hand, and an organicist vision of religious society, on the other. Via the likes of Fanon and Sartre, he incorporates an emancipatory drive into his political theology (2006: 32-33).

Whilst one can read the same sentiments from Sayyid Qutb, what is troubling for Western revolutionaries is the culture-specific articulation of the universal that necessarily goes against communist ideas together with the dominant status quo. The situation is not made any better by the historical fact of Islamists articulating an emancipatory project using some of the communist categories, which for Badiou proves the occultation of his subject of the truth of the event or the fidelity to the event. For Toscano then "In this sense, the emergence of Islamism as a political subject does not necessarily represent an express reaction to emancipatory politics, but may rather constitute a capitalization on its absence, on the temporary incapacity of progressives to actually produce a present" (2006: 35).

That is why emancipatory theorists and militants need to take seriously the Black Islamic subject for it is these subjects that radically rearticulate the Islamic militant subjectivity without leaning on political Islamists and Badiou's revolutionary theory. This is because the Muslim African subjects in South Africa articulate a new space of subjectivity that inexists in the current dominant situation. It takes its energetics from the real of colonial dispossession of being and invents an ontological cosmology that is outside contemporary alternatives of blackness (decolonial theories) and Islam (political Islam). The Black Muslim subject does not aim to build a political theology or a secular theory of change, because this subject is concerned with articulating the immanence of the situation.

a grammar of suffering that ran from tepid—the ANC/UDF formulation in which the political subject is imagined to be dispossessed of citizenship and access to civil society, to lukewarm—the South African Communist Party's (SACP) formulation in which the political subject is imagined to be dispossessed of labor power. Neither formulation rises to the temperature of the Black's grammar of suffering (Wilderson 2008: 99).

The Black's grammar of suffering as Wilderson and the black radical tradition has articulated is not only the dispossession of labor power or citizenship but rather the ontological dispossession of blackness as the fundamental cause for the tasting of the real. Islam as an innovation in the situation of the black reinforces the emancipatory character by interrogating the causes of the situation to destroy its existence and unveil a new transcendental of the Black. Fanon and the Algerian case seems to us to be an example of how contemporary militants should praxis about the rupture of the current status quo.

Anticolonial interventions/Eclipse of the revolutionary perspective – NDR/CST, white settlers, black reactionaries, the impasse – force – destruction –Emancipation beyond statist conceptions Politics without party

“Marxism comprises many principles, but in the final analysis they can all be brought back to a single sentence: it is right to rebel against the reactionaries” (Mao Zedong in Badiou 2005:669).

One rebels against the reactionaries precisely because, the “South African transition” to democracy, or the “end” of settler colonialism and the ushering of parliamentary democracy, and its anchorage in liberalism and capitalism, has renewed imperialist servility targeted at the majority of Black people. It is therefore from an anti-colonial basis that we argue there was no transition: it does not exist. Failure by the Charterist or Congress Alliance under the ideological supervision of the South African Communist Party (SACP) ‘Marxist-Leninist’ creed has missed the real existence of blackness, its antagonism to settler colonial and the capitalist state, and here antagonism is not the liberal notion of conflict resolution but an internally irreconcilable position. Blackness does not need to conquer the state under the dubious colonialism of a special type thesis and the two-stage theory of a socialist agenda prescribed from outside¹⁵⁷.

As Modiri argued whereas the “Azanian tradition [Pan Africanist Congress, Black Consciousness anticolonial movements] sought to resist and dismantle settler-created racial

¹⁵⁷ “The early proponents’ Marxist proponents of the colonialism of a special type of thesis (CST) were Michael Harmel and Rusty Bernstein, who were the leading theoreticians of the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA). These activists were influenced by the international communist discourse on the transition to socialism in colonial underdevelopment (Mabaso 2018: 174).

polity, the Charterist/Congress tradition sought to negotiate for and demand equitable and democratic incorporation into it" (2021: 73). Briefly, the now well-known ossified colonialism of a special type thesis argued that South Africa is a peculiar colony characterized by two political societies, Black Africans who are dispossessed and White settler who happen to be highly developed, all of this is organized in a single colony (SACP 1962). South Africa was incorporated into the global market through its mineral and agricultural wealth but based on the oppression of the indigenous populace by foreign settlers.

For the socialist struggle to take place, there must be an overthrowal of race-based oppression and then proceed to solving the antagonism and contradiction of the working-class struggle against those who own the means of production, the white settler capitalist class (Maloka 2014: 179). Indeed, this revolutionary overthrowal takes seriously the national democratic revolution conceptualized by Lenin (1906; 1917) as the thesis of establishing a multiclass national democratic bourgeoisie struggle. This is the national democratic revolution, as Neocosmos (1993: 17) has observed, the first stage of the NDR is to develop capitalism, which has demarcated classes, and this will be done by the nationalist seizure of power to enable the black bourgeoisie supported by democracy to accumulate capital on behalf of the masses.

The second stage will then be a transition to socialism, characterised by the proletariats, and the working-class dictatorship. This would allow, firstly, the destruction of racism and then unmask the power relations established by capitalism. For the young Black militant focused on bringing about the destruction of the colonial state of affairs, we see why the present concrete conditions of South Africa are structured in the way they are structured. According to this theory of the NDR, the point is not to smash colonialism but rather to deracialize it economically with the help of the white capitalist class; this would allow market forces to operate freely without hindrance. As Mokonyane has penchantly observed

The Congress Alliance (SACP/ANC), on a rebound from Stalinism and Stalinist maneuvers, has fallen hopelessly and irretrievable in love with capitalism and more than ever cannot see the bush for the trees... people will find it difficult to know where they are now or what they stand for. If people saw them, they would not recognize them at all; they are chameleons moving from tree to tree, stem to stem, and buck to buck.... But worse of all if you see them mind the sell-out stench! (1994: 47)

The state will function to provide stability, remove racial oppression of the black majority, and incorporate some of them into the capitalist mode of production. The state of the situation will transform black servants of colonialism into subjects of capital, homo economicus. In the front line of these changes, will be proletariat-betrayers, “the rising black bourgeoisie and middle strata are objectively important motive forces of transformation whose interests coincide with at least the immediate interests of the majority (ANC 1997: 10). This wishful political thinking bets on this new bourgeoisie to align their interests with the masses and the bourgeoisie’s reward will be characterized as “patriotic bourgeoisie” (Netshitenze 1996). As the ANC says, it is charged with conscientizing this class in order to make social change meaningful and winning over the classes that previously benefited in order to make certain the national question or building a reality, to destroy racial asymmetry, in this sense the ANC is the vanguard of the NDR (1997: 12). The state is to be called “post-apartheid” an inversion of the colonial state and its temporality is signaled by the ideology of liberal democracy supported by constitutionalism and restoration of black servility.

What post-apartheid state politics in South Africa unfortunately also represents is a systematic political disorientation. Our usual political signposts (left-right, capitalist-socialist, state-market) seem no longer to operate, as familiar political distinctions have become blurred. When there is no distinction to speak of between state and market, when private accumulation is said to be in the public interest, and when all parties adhere consensually to the norms of neo-liberal economics and politics, it becomes difficult if not impossible to use those categories as subjective pointers for the orientation of political thought. Given the absence of clearly defined alternatives, it is not then surprising to find that ‘the working class’ of the townships is engaging in crypto-fascist political actions against outsiders (Neocosmos 2009: 3).

We cannot at the same time, as per the post-colonial state claims, that democracy is the sole preserve of the honesty of politicians when they are in power or democracy is to be defined by the group, the party or “individuals whose democratic credentials rest on their having fought a dictatorial regime (Depelchin 1993: 100). Rather than opening space for emancipatory politics we are told capital-parliamentarian is the only objective form of democratic governance at least compared to authoritarian or apartheid state forms. State

forms of subjectivity, supported by those who fought against colonial-apartheid, become the only alternative approach hence why emancipatory politics faces static inertia in South Africa

the material outcomes of colonialism, segregation, apartheid, and—most recently—neoliberal economic policies. South Africa continues to be characterized by sharply contrasting realities. Under the terms of the negotiated settlement of the early 1990s, the African National Congress (ANC) won political— but not economic—power. Less than three percent of the country's land has changed hands from white to black since 1994 (over 80 percent is still held by white farmers, corporations and the state); and four white-owned conglomerates continue to control 80 percent of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) schemes have created black millionaires in the thousands, making South Africa the fourth fastest growing location for millionaires, after South Korea, India, and Russia. But the vast majority of South Africans remain at the other extreme—these are the 45 percent of South Africans who are unemployed, the one in four who live in shacks located in shantytowns without running water or electricity (Mngxitama, Alexander, & Gibson 2008: 2)

Two modes of politics are identified by Lazarus (2007) which each make reference to an 'external invariant'. These are the Parliamentary mode of politics and the Stalinist mode of politics; both of these have been dominant in twentieth-century world history. For both these modes, political consciousness is subordinated to a consciousness of the state. If for Marxists, the state is the central question for politics suggesting that it is "the product of an irreconcilable nature of class contradiction and domination of one class over another" and therefore once in power, the proletariat will put an end to the existence of classes (Lazarus 2018: 230). This is why for Sylvian Lazarus "once in power, the so-called party of the "classes" became the dominant operator in/for the State, organizing the latter's perpetuation rather than its historical disappearance" (Lazarus 2018: Ibid). Left in the dust after its historical and theoretical blunders the SACP which drove the black majority to the bottom of the capitalist bin, was forced to renew its stagist strategy "and developed a third view on revolutionary stages. This was expressed through the slogan of 'socialism is the future, build it now'" (Mabasa 2018: 177).

Mafeje had already warned that the workers and the peasants can only guarantee their livelihood and social reproduction, to avoid begging, by “stamping the revolution with their own image and thus, prevail over the bourgeoisie and forestall its likely deviation” (1986: 118). This is a situation that as Fanon and Maxaulane (2022: 87) “says produces madness ...when the colonised subject agrees to be set free by the colonizer without actually demanding a conflict” aptly supported by the guerilla combatant (Field Marshall) and militant (in our second epigraph) in the *Trial Of Dedan Kimathi*. Instead of sounding the war drums with the prescription that “one cannot do anything with land one does not have *we must seize it from the conquistadores*” (Mokonyane 1994: 45). The elite negotiation for the freedom of the masses, and the failure to use mass revolutionary power to obliterate phallogocentric settler colonialism and capitalism has exposed the subjective weakness of nationalist and Marxist political discourse and made the ANC-SACP-COSATU alliance stand out as the restorers of human servility, the young Black militant should rebel against these reactionaries.

The arrogance of being a vanguard party has led the Charterist Alliance to mistakenly think of themselves to be “the only subject and represent the antagonistic class to themselves as an objective mechanism of oppression led by a handful of profiteers” (Badiou in Toscano 2006: 17). Contrary to this ideological vision of the dominant status quo, we see that the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has always been a relation of equivalence, unlike the Black Muslim subject who cannot be articulated within the ontology of the liberal democratic order.

For the Black militant student to comprehend the failure of the theoretical (strategic) and concrete (political) `tradition of the congress alliance one must not accede to the logic of economism, which argues that the “bourgeoisie and proletariat appear topologically exterior to one another.” The first is defined in terms of its ownership of the means of production, and the second in terms of its separation (alienation) from them (Daly 2017: 372). The result of this purely external topology is the paradox when rendering the proletariat’s interior or is the rendering of the proletariat as an immanent to the bourgeoisie. Reduced to alienated labour power, the proletariat is nothing but a cog in the machine or a piece in the apparatus of exploitation, whose identity is entirely heteronomous, dictated by the laws of capital. That is ‘Capital is the place of the proletariat’, Badiou deduces from this the possibility of Russian state-capitalism, for us the SACP Congress alliance, since it is perfectly possible, given this

arrangement, to do away with capitalists” or to ‘suppress capitalists, all the while maintaining the law of capital’ (Badiou 2013: 129).

The Black Islamic subject seeks to change the real of revolutions through the symbolic grip of which it assures the political subject of this real (Toscano 2013: 129). What the NDR in South Africa has done is to forget and ideologically veil the intricate relationship between the working class (proletariat) and the bourgeoisie, which means that the proletarian subject is born out of its bourgeois impurity, its being indexed to a heteronomous capitalist order, and only emerges by the ‘expulsion, the purging ... of the internal infection that, to begin with, constitutes it’ (2013: 130). In the case of South Africa, the betrayer-proletariats are neutralized precisely because they cannot absolve themselves from bourgeoisie impurity, they want to occupy the position of the colonial master, and the mask of equivalence traps them. Clearly, the SACP Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist creed learned nothing from the interventionist politics of Ma Zedong thought, which is that:

Three classes are included among the people: the proletariat, the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie. A class contradiction exists among these three sections of the people; this is both a contradiction among the people and a class contradiction. There is a distinction between the enemy and us. Contradictions among the people are non-antagonistic, while contradiction with the bourgeoisie has an antagonistic side (in Young and Woodward 1978: 920).

Let the Black militants be clear, the SACP inverted the correct handling of contradictions by deciding to create an antagonism between the people and established a non-antagonistic contradiction with the settler-colonial capitalist enemies. One of the reasons the SACP and its Chaterist allies do not know how to handle the contradictions of society (that’s why we say there is no society for Blackness) is precisely because of their position as the “New Settlers” or bourgeoisie and although they are a “handful, the bourgeois imperialists, the subjective effect of their force lies in the divided people” (Badiou 2016: 17).

This is to further expose the weak theorization of the new bourgeois and their social space wherein the force of revolutionary politics are contingent. Consequently, the new bourgeois as “captured, placed and instrumentalized cannot be envisaged in a purely structural manner, as an impersonal given, but must instead be conceived in terms of that counter-revolutionary

and reactionary subjectivity which carries its own project into the pre-subjective mass of the people” (Daly 2017: Ibid). For the Black praxes’ militants’ position, the reason to rebel against reactionaries is precisely because not only have they themselves been duped by the real of imperialist politics, no, but they are also perpetuating the same subjective status quo on the mass of the people, to desist revolutionary sequences for the continued hegemony and dominance in the “post-apartheid.”

Here the capitalist relations between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are structured by the equivalence, “under capitalism, antagonism is repressed by the exchange of equivalence between autonomous subjects” (Hudson 2019: 162). As we have already shown there is no equivalence between the colonizer and the colonized, the antagonism is the structural place in which both have to eliminate one another for the world to be presented again. The Black Muslim subjects cannot be assimilated into the structural dissymmetry of the bourgeoisie disorder, it must break with this structural dissymmetry, or otherwise, it might just be a mask or ruse of the bourgeoisie like with the political subject of the NDR. To depart from the compulsion to repeat and the allergy to novelty that characterize the ANC-SACP Marxist-Leninist theorems & economic frameworks, Badiou encourages us to think of the ‘interiority of the bourgeoisie to the working class (2013: 147). The Black Muslim should evade, and subtract themselves from this materialist transcendentalism of the state of the situation. Alternatively, we can say the Black Islamic subject is not a figure that is “a functional cog in the machinery of capital, but ... an internal ‘torsion,’ an ‘exceptional disorder’ within the political trajectory of the democratic bourgeois movement” (Toscano 2006: 18).

Perhaps we should advise the SACP Congress Alliance to follow a militant Marxist politics rather than the masking the desire to be an authority of capital. The problematic for Black Muslim subjects is that following the logic of the Leninists according to which “consciousness is the consciousness of (antagonism)” (Lazarus 2016: 108). That is to say consciousness of the state or antagonism as the “condition of the party, this major invention placed the form of organization (for Lenin the party) under the thumb of a politico-statist logic which limits people’s capacity.” To avoid the pitfalls of complacently quietistic, tailism and theoretical adventurism that has come to characterize the perpetuation of settler colonial degradation in “post-apartheid South Africa,” the young black militant student of politics should develop what Badiou & Lazarus term “politics without a party.”

‘The so-called “political” parties of the parliamentary mode, far from representing the diversity of opinions, they are the subjective organisers of the fact that the only thought deemed possible is an opinion regarding the government’. It follows that parties are not so much political organizations, but rather state organizations which distribute state positions. Thus for the parliamentary mode, there is only one recognized site of politics and that is the state. Similar functions are fulfilled in this mode by trade unions, which are also very much state organizations. Voting, as the institutional articulation between the subjective side of opinion and the objective character of government, is the essential political act of parliamentarianism.

There is also an insidious oppositional mode of politics of revolutionary proclamations that models the party on the Leninist-Stalinist posture of the twentieth-century. The Stalinist mode of politics refers to a political subjectivity that existed not just in the Soviet Union, but also throughout parties linked to the ‘Third International’. ‘The party is viewed as the condition of revolutionary political consciousness. Politics, in this mode, is thus referred to the party; the party is finally revolutionary politics and revolutionary politics is the party’ (Wamba-dia-Wamba 1994: 250).

Politics is confined to the party and the party is understood to be the very embodiment of that consciousness. ‘As the party is presented as the source of all political truth’, the Stalinist mode ‘requires the credibility of the party’ (ibid.). The party-state is the only political datum provided to subjectivity and the only practical domain of that subjectivity. The only site of politics is the state-party. The sequence of this mode begins during the early 1930s and ends with Gorbachov’s accession to power (Lazarus 2018: 94).

To think of emancipatory politics outside of state subjectivity and the classist categories is crucial for an invention of subjective politics, politics as thought-practice. As Neocosmos (2009: 18-20) points out the decline in the use of class categories is also reflective of the reality of social relations. While inequalities have increased throughout the globalized World in general and in Africa in particular, the number of ‘productive workers’ – Marx’s classical category – has drastically declined in South Africa for example, as subcontracting and casualization as well as the shedding of ‘non-core’ workers has drastically increased. The absence of political alternatives to statist conceptions of citizenship founded on indigeneity has so-gripped the consciousness of the poor generally in South Africa. The working class can

no longer be considered as a subject of history, and neither can ‘the multitudes’ (Hardt and Negri 2001).

This is because as we have warned repeatedly, Black Muslim subjects are not normal in the normative order; they are a destructive force against the veils of parliamentary democracy and the political party praxis of the state. The site of political prescription derives from the practice of a Black Islamic praxes as I have been arguing throughout the thesis. Furthermore, an emancipatory in South Africa can also be detected in the Black Intellectual praxes. A Black Intellectual praxes takes its sequence of revolutionary politics from Black communities from indigenous resistance wars in the colonial encounter with the aliens, the Alexander Bus boycotts of the 1950s, the Sharpsville massacre in the 60s, the Durban strikes of the 70s, the Soweto student rebellions to the township insurrections of the 1980s outside Congress alliance co-optation and the 2015 student rebellions.

It is a sequence of the subject who rejects the equivalence of the colonizer and colonized because they reject that the “only way out” [of the hostile and damaging culture of a racist environment] “leads into the white world” (Fanon 1986: 51). Therefore, leading to the white world has meant the perpetuation of racial inequality and the critique of social science strategies for veiling this real phenomenon in contemporary South Africa. The result of this amputation or in our case the suturing of the ego leads to what Fanon refers to as affective erethism or ankylosis. For Chamberlain “Ankylosis, is a rheumatological term referring to the inflammation that stiffens the joint and causes previously hinged bones to fuse” (2018: 122). Unlike the colonialism of a special type thesis which masks its suppression of the antagonism between the colonizer and colonized in the colonial situation of the current state of affairs, reading Fanon together with (McCulloch 1983), we can say affective erethism is a “pathological condition of hypersensitivity which arises in oppressive or colonial environments and which involves both a sense of inferiority and a constant nearness to anger/rage” (in Hook 2004: 100).

It is this place of the nearness to rage and anger that introduces “inventions of existence” (Marriott 2011), a parting away with the statist-nationalist historical order that the Muslim African occupies. Hence for us “politics without party means that politics does not spring from or originate with the party. It does not stem from the synthesis of theory and practice, that represented, for Lenin, the party. Politics springs from our situations, from what we can say

and do in these situations” (Badiou 1998: 113). So that for the militant, the political sequences and processes are not monopolized by the party which would be the representation of social forces and the source of politics itself. After having dismissed the fetishism of the party, for the Black Muslim subjects “Politics is a creative invention” because in the “absence of emancipative politics, the state problematic or the imperialist influence prevails in the treatment of matters of politics (wamba dia Wamba 2022: 12).

“To reduce every capacity to a state capacity is to abscond from politics” (Wamba dia Wamba 1993: 96). The task of contemporary politics is not, according to Lazarus, to find new “objects” for politics to identify with (to use a current example, to maintain that the site of politics is not the nation-State but in “global citizenship” or the “global society”), but to move toward a nondogmatic and praxis-oriented “politics in interiority” (Lazarus 2018: 228). Therefore, for us, the interiority of politics induces affective erethism, a break with the current liberal democratic order because it reinstates or reproduces the colonial capitalist state and its Judaeo-Christian transcendental structure.

It assigns the Black with a new subjectivity, which is not of the citizen, hidden behind this concept is the virulent antagonism of the Black Muslim subjects against settler colonialism and capital. The concept of the citizen, class, liberal-democracy, civil society and social sciences cannot be the determinant in the last instance because the “combination of capitalism with liberal democracy has the effect of repressing... antagonism under the democratic regime of individuality and equality” (Hudson 2021: 163). The *real existence* of the Black is to proceed from the political process of opposition to the over-dominance of the party and state and the knowledge of academia or political philosophy.

Social science today is unable to rise beyond a description or analysis of what exists and seems incapable of thinking what could be. This is why it is in crisis. This, I would suggest, is not primarily a question of epistemology, but because it has evacuated politics from its domain of thought, and politics has been evacuated from social science because it is absent from life. It is absent from life because it is systematically removed by liberal democracy which statises and technicises political agency (or reduces it to juridical agency) with the sole exception of the casting of the vote every quinquennium. The liberal state is a ‘de-politicizing machine’ to paraphrase the anthropologist James Ferguson, a fact which Rousseau in the Social Contract had understood long ago. People then become politically illiterate and lose their politike

techne, as the ancient Greeks knew full well. In a sense, they then lose their freedom properly understood (as this techne was an exclusive attribute of free people) - i.e. their capacity to exercise political agency over their immediate social environment. In this context, human emancipation can no longer be an object for thought. The system we have we are told, is the best there is, not perfect to be sure, but better than any alternative which can only be 'totalitarian' (see Zizek 2002). This amounts to a fundamentally conservative viewpoint which asserts that there is no better world than that which exists. Perhaps this should be loudly repeated to the fifty percent in South Africa who live below the poverty line and to the majority of the world's population in order to gauge their reaction. It should be the object of social thought to debunk this nonsense (Neocosmos 2009: 21).

Chapter Four: “The music you are about to hear, is only the sound of your inner ear”: Underground in Africa with Abdullah Ibrahim’s, Johnny Akhir/Mbizo Dyani and Zim Ngqawana’s Signature Sound

*‘My sole origin is sound.’ If any solid hollow sonorous body is struck it will answer back,
“I am sound.” (Inayat Khan)*

*When you cannot be deceived by men you will have realized the wisdom of strategy
(Miyamoto Musashi)*

*Sound Signature: A symbol or icon defined by things heard. No sound is wrong. No
sound is too elusive to escape arrangement, one’s signature.*

*Sound Signature: An event, emotion, or feeling described by sound, but not limited to
it. Expression given a direction. A focus through arrangement, our personal language
at any given moment. No one can duplicate your signature, your mark, your life.*

*The difference between imitation and emulation is specific experience. No one else has
walked your path, lived your vision.*

*There is no right or wrong way, only different ways, as there are different people. We
will learn reverence from each other through expressing our symbols, our hieroglyphs.
This is my attempt to share mine (Theo Parrish 1997).*

Method of Sound

Continuing with the argument of this thesis that is the interaction between Islam and blackness introduces a new mode of existence that makes Black African Muslims revolutionary figures in South Africa; this chapter contends that a Black Islamic sound subjectivity, in its radical revolutionary novelty, introduces an aural & sonic method of re-articulating and reinventing colonial knowledges from the position of an alienated history/reality through Black Islamic sonic aesthetics. Islam in South Africa has been practiced/studied without taking seriously the oral-aural & sonic medium, rather Islamic praxis has focused on the textual or discursive mode of knowledge production which is symptomatic of a larger problematic of enclosing and or tenuously engaging the Black Islamic imaginary and soundscapes or sound signatures in South Africa and the Islamic world. The same is true of the majority of major published works on music and jazz in South Africa, which

seem to miss most, if not all, of the spiritual and intellectual aspects of music making, listening, performance, and grooving of African Muslim waveforms. Our argument is that listening, reading, and grooving with the South African musician Abdullah Ibrahim by focusing on various works in his phenomenal corpus that see him weave together a Black Islamic sonic aesthetics that identify the intersection between blackness and Islam (including Indigenous and Japanese philosophy). That is, his Black Islamic sonic aesthetics is constituted by resistance and conversion to Islam in an anti-blackness modern colonial world; his sonic aesthetics provide the context for the praxis of Islam peculiar to Black African Muslims in South Africa. It is one of the factors, which qualify Ibrahim's sonic aesthetics as a layered site of mythical and experimental histories and enable us to identify his oeuvre as deeply connected with the articulations of exile, the power of the *duende*, and the political or subjective cadences of change.

Part of the source material that the essay uses to advance these observations is his live performance duet with Johnny Akhir Dyani Live in Hamburg, Germany, 1977; textual and audio interview, and most importantly his music. In albums such as, but not limited to "*Haji-The Journey*," "*African Sketches*," "*Water From an Ancient Well*," "*Echoes From Africa*," "*Black Lightning*," "*Mukashi – Once Upon a Time*," "*African Space Programme*". With these materials, Abdullah Ibrahim charts a sonic geography that traverses the African diaspora and East Asian philosophies, from the Chinese exploring expeditions in 1405 to 1433 to the incoming colonizing voyages from 1488 and slave sea routes/roots. To the areas of Mannenberg, Soweto, Sophiatown, and Marabastad, against the backdrop of violent colonial apartheid policies, through the provision of an African "sound scientist" account of early township music known as marabi and its development into indigenous avant-garde Jazz.

Our insistence is that, unlike the majority of writings about him, his philosophy of the sound subject in music making, practice and performances (memory, dreams, traditions, events, peoples & improvisation), Abdullah Ibrahim invents a unique existence to black subjectivity. That is, his cross-cultural sound and rhythmic orchestrations introduces or establishes the experiments and experiences of the Black African Muslim subject as a resistant and a tangent. This is an instant of resistant because of its horizontal transcendental contestation of colonialisms phantasmatic projections of its mystical foundation, as if, *it is the beginning of*

history¹⁵⁸. This is a conception or theory of the metaontology of blackness and Islam that evades the modern black African and Muslim intellectual traditions, particularly in South Africa. A tangent because his music, interviews, anecdotes and stories, underpinned by an anti-colonial (com)position(s) address as well as critiques racism as a discourse of time wherein black subjects and cultures are posited as decadent, belonging to an imaginary and time prior to western humanism (telos). As we have been at pains to demonstrate repeatedly in this thesis, the Black African Muslim subject has invented different avenues of challenging its *real* and *symbolic* constructions in modern periods of subjugation by appealing to Islam as a revolutionary human and historical phenomenon.

That is through aurality and sound we can establish conversion as a new self-appraisal in light of adopting a new cosmology, that is shifting or ‘othering’ or rupturing of the temporal register of a Judea-Christian-secular colonial modern episteme to an invented one of Blackness and Islam outside the colonial enframing of the world. Which provides, induces or summons a fractured and explosive narrative of the improviser-the Black African Muslim. This fractured narrative denotes the broken claims to connection that Ibrahim’s cross-cultural aurality and sounds seek to expose and suture through a nonlinear narrative, embodied by laborious acts of music making or black African musical performances.

Black Islamic praxes sonic aesthetics opens new geographies (land, discourses and the mind) and suture them as a cross culturally embodied narrative because it makes “room for accident and rupture within the system itself”¹⁵⁹. We advance these observations for, Ibrahim, presents us with an emic perspective of the Black African Muslim sound subject. Ibrahim’s Black Islamic sonic aesthetics opens the meanings of being Black and Muslim in South Africa in a unique manner that demands our immediate attention, this is why this essay is dedicated to Abdullah Ibrahim, Johnny Akhri or Mbizo Dyani and Zim Ngcawane.

¹⁵⁸As I have been arguing and demonstrating, “colonialism, far from being a final truth (*l’Histoire*) did in fact radically change the spiritual-otherworldly discourses about Africa and the Africans and as Fanon observed that colonialism is an all-pervasive act of domination, yet it is not totalizable, it can be overcome as in the case existence of black African Muslims in South Africa, that is what a resistant *is*. See David Marriott’s “Invention of Existence: Sylvia Wynter, Frantz Fanon, Sociogenic, and “the Damned”” *The New Centennial Review*, vol. 11, No. (3), Rodolphe Gasche’s Discipline (Winter 2011).

¹⁵⁹ E. B. Hayes *Epistrophies: Jazz and the Literary Imagination* (Harvard University Press, 2017), p. 40.

Black Islamic Sound Signatures

In a duet live performance titled “*Banyana – Children of Africa*,” with fellow Muslim, multi-instrumentalist, Johnny Akhir Dyani in Hamburg, Germany 1977, Abdullah Ibrahim opens the concert by stating to the audience, holding a flute with his left hand, and the mic with the right hand, “the music you are about to hear, is only the sound of your inner ear.” The insistence on aurality and sound as constitutive of an introspective study of the subject or sound and aurality as methods of understanding subjectivity calls forth to our attention Ibrahim’s sound as invested in a horizontal transcendence against the strictly metaphysical reading that has escaped cultural criticism and western musical theories of sound.

A horizontal transcendence, according to Nathaniel Mackey’s work, is a conception of transcendence as sociological or historical rather than theological or metaphysical - a human-to-human rather than a human-to-divine encounter (Burgess 2013). Therefore, we locate the sound signature (constituted by its cross-culturality), the music of Ibrahim, in a tangent to the western philosophical discourses in order to take seriously how both matter and spirit are embraced albeit in a dialectic by the music through an aural method. That is, Ibrahim’s sound advances the notion or the blurring of boundaries between transcendental and materialist/immanence conceptions as attested by his music and the call for the audience to ““hear””.

A work on *Mysticism and Sound* by the Indian Sufi mystic Hazrat Inayat Khan (1996), a text that Abdullah studied together with Jalal Rumi’s *Masnawi*¹⁶⁰ (2001), might give us another insight into Ibrahim’s statement, “the sound of your inner voice.” For Ibrahim, “the one who finds out from within, from what is hidden in this manifestation, is the mystic”. The externality of the sound, “the one who learns from the external gets the knowledge of the external, which we call science¹⁶¹” and these ways of knowing are embodied in the sound of the improviser. In an interview with Paul Naylor (2000), Nathaniel Mackey advances the idea of the mystic

¹⁶⁰ In various interviews Ibrahim has never been shy to state that he read the whole cultural section at the Cape Town Library, “so I decided to study on my own - I’m still studying. The quest for knowledge was insatiable in the ghetto.” He read everything in the public library “three times”. “We were reading Langston Hughes and Richard Wright, Shakespeare, the Bhagavad Gita, Confucius. We realised that though we were in bondage, our minds were not,” says Ibrahim.

¹⁶¹ Bush-magic in Jamaica...

that surrounds and informs his work by “juxtaposing mystical to reason” that is giving it, the “status of an alternative reason (645).” Mackey postulates that “my commitment to mystical traditions- my respect for the intuitive, the uncanny, the oneiric, the sympathetic, the coincidental, the intangible, the paradoxical, the oceanic, the quirky, the psychosomatic, the quixotic, the religio-erotic... has to do with temperament, experience and a good deal of textual reinforcement” (2000: 645-646). We will adopt Mackey’s notion in listening to how Ibrahim uses both music and “textual reinforcement” to open these orders of knowledge associated with the mystic, to address and critique Islam and black African modern epistemologies as concerned with the externals of experimentations and experience in the production of sound in the colony.

By sound we aim to mean many things incorporating a “song, a style of music or a sound system” (Chude-Sokei 2008: 11). That is, sound can also mean that the “most valued characterization is that a certain musician has her or his own, instantly recognizable sound, where “sound” means not only timbre, but also articulation, phrasing, rhythm, melodic vocabulary, and even analytical methods (Iyer 2004: 399). Sound establishes *style*. Giving rise to a unique embodiment or invention of a soundscape that belongs to the improviser and attained through the aural study of the external and inward knowledge of the subject in music making and performance. Improvisation is seen as crucial to sound production as it allows the improviser to tell a story that is not merely in the overall form of a “coherent solo, nor simply in antiphonal structures, but also in the microscopic musical details, as well as in the inherent structure of the performance itself” (2004: 399). The story dwells “not just in one solo at a time, but also in a single note,” the story belongs not to a linear narrative but a “fractured, exploded one” (Ibid). The contention is that Ibrahim’s cross-cultural Black Islamic sonic aestheteme (each society’s mode of representational arts) is capable of disrupting the models of rationalisation, which inform the Western humanist and metaphysical conceptions of sound and its narrative structure.

Taking seriously the language of the sound of *autophysiopsychic*, (we will explain the concept below) music Yusef Lateef, argues that there is a language in which to express the experience of this music. This is also not to ignore what Charles Lloyd when asked to “comment on a piece of his music by a radio interviewer, answered “Words do not go there,” (Mackey and Art 1993: x). That is sound language exceeds the grammar and meaning-making of language

in the dominant semantic structure of the world, the world of colonial modernity and its science of language ala Saussure's structural linguistics. No, words do not go to where improvisation of the sound of Black Islamic avant-garde conjures its meaning making or invention of black lives. Playing with Dr. Lateef is a way of bringing the listener and reader into a mythopoetic ritual and or the voice of our avant-garde trio (Abdullah Ibrahim, Johnny Dyani, and Zim Ngqawane). This would mean for this section of the essay and through the precedence set by Lateef (let us not forget that he was a Muslim as well), and the trio of Black African Muslim sound scientists there will be a deliberate act of opening up the register and theory in which to understand these revolutionary sound frequencies of the Black Muslim avant-garde.

1st) AUDIBLE VOICE: How much do we hear the person?

The distinguishing mark of good music is "the unique sound quality of voice somehow entangled in the tones and transmitted from the instrument for the ear of the imagination. Though music is literally sound, some sounds make us hear someone's character.

Sounds with audible voice give us the sense of a sound coming from the whole being of the musician--; and they touch us--they seem to give us energy, or a sensation, rather than requiring us to devolve energy in order to listen.

Perhaps the best example of audible voice is the absence of it. The classic examples tend to be music which does not hold your attention, i.e., inaudible voice. Although we hear it, it has no meaning. The best impression it can make on the ear, which includes the ear of the presentor, and the listener is: "Wow! Listen to how much technique I have." Technique, no matter what its limitations, is to project the ethos, the personal character of the presentor. Valid presentors use their technique, only to project their character, their vast array of experiences, thoughts, feelings, concerns and ideas that are entombed in their brain's memory--and more than that--I would say: they speak with their heart. It has been said that the heart is the seat of the intellect. And in the Bible, we read:

"for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (MATTHEW 12:34). And in the Holy Quran we read: "Aye! It is in the remembrance of God that hearts can find

comfort" (Cha 13, 29th verse).

You see, there is a relationship between the valid presentor and his/her presentations. The unique factor is that these particular musicians are able to transform the events of their mind and heart into sound. They are able to manifest into sound that which is meaningful to themselves. They are not unlike elegant rational scientists--they only operate with deeply different grammars.

(2nd) DRAMATIC VOICE: What kind of musician is implied in the presentor (and how vividly)?

The sound of the music seems to tell us what kind of person is playing. We feel that we can hear their character or personality in that which they are presenting.

Obviously this dramatic dimension of the music usually comes from the qualities of the music. In such situations the music implies a character who produces those sounds. Just as there is no life without death, however unpredictable, so there is no music without implied character, however nondescript.

(3rd) ONE'S OWN VOICE: What is the relation of the music to the actual musician?

Some people speak of instrumentalist as having found their own voice. People use this common phraseology to mean that the musician has attained a distinctive profile that sets him/her off from others. We must remember that to attain one's own profile is not easy. Miles Davis has said that it takes years to sound like yourself. This could be because the musical language we think of, and experience as private ideas are in fact constituted through the voices of other musicians that echo in our listening experiences. Nevertheless, when some other musician's ideological concept is internally persuasive for us and acknowledged by us, entirely different possibilities open up. Consequently, when a musician finds a profile that seems their own they often take on a certain added assurance or authority.

Through music, they are able to express their thoughts and feelings--and if they have lofty a character and their thoughts are filled with appreciation and love for all--their music reflects their love, and if the listener listens intently they will hear and feel that love. The listener, moved to a frame of mind by the music, senses the character of the musician. The result is that the listener, in listening to the music, experiences a sense of pleasure which is only the musician's character being communicated to the listener through the language of sound.

What I have postulated in the above is that even though Autophysiopsychic music is a grammar, which is not words, it serves as a voice which denotes character, which is the dramatic dimension of Autophysiopsychic music.

Listening to Ibrahim's autophysiopsychic method, taking seriously Nathaniel Mackey's reading of Victor Zuckerkandle's *sound and symbol* (2000) and Steven Feld's *sound and sentiment*, we observe that, "[T]he world, music reminds us, inhabits while extending beyond what meets the eye, resides in but rises above what is apprehensible to the senses" (2000: 233). The sound we are about to hear is the sound of how Abdullah Ibrahim managed to invent a cathartic musical vocabulary through tones and rhythms,¹⁶² and sound subjectivity in Black avant-gardist jazz tradition in the backdrop of the violence of slavery and settler colonialism in South Africa.

Studies of black musical forms and performances in South Africa have focused on the arrival of jazz music and its relation to conquest, colonization, and social change. Most white or "western anthropology and cultural criticism has seen black art as mere sociological, as evidence of either response or resistance" (Chude-Sokei 2008: 8). The contributions have underlined or appealed to the construction of urban communities in relation to the colonial South Africa's industrial development, spatial arrangements and the history of performance's unique hybrid innovations and creativity especially in urban-rural communities (Coplan 1985). The importance of the origins of jazz in South Africa is connected to the long historical tradition of native performances and musical productions in their contestations with the politics of the encounter between the settlers and natives (blacks), emancipation, with labour migration, and the reclaiming of pre-colonial ontological significance of the music (Ansell 2004; Ballentines 1994).

Black performance traditions range from nineteenth century minstrel shows in Cape Town to Basotho, Zulu, Macopi, etc migrants' dance culture and they represent the dynamic, layered, knotted narratives and praxis of political aesthetic struggles, spatial configurations, temporal (re) arrangements and performance innovations/inventions that parallel with the

¹⁶² Inayat Khan has this to say about rhythm, "Motion is the significance of life, and the law of motion is rhythm. Rhythm is life disguised in motion, and in every guise it seems to attract the attention of man" (1996: 50).

metamorphosis of consciousness of black South Africans. Sociologists or ethno-musicologist like Earlmann (1991) the paradigm focusing on economic class analysis and cultural practices did not particularly yield insights of the autonomy of symbolic dimensions of cultural practices and social relations, hence in his research for studies of “town music” he argued that the paradigms should be based on empirical data instead of a concern for urban decadence and industrialization. This means that primarily studies in performance should focus attention on the relationship between social structure and culture between historical process and consciousness as it is dialectically constituted in performance (Earlmann 1991:2). However, Earlmann’s project, underpinned by Marxists categories of class struggle, is not sufficient to account for the aural and sound dynamism of black musical forms or the Black Muslim sound signature.

For Titlestad in *Making the Changes: Jazz in South African Literature and Reportage* (2004) what has remained relatively unexplored in the history of jazz representation – is its appropriation and manipulation – by creative writers, reviewers and journalists articulated through performance practices and creative writing in the advent of modernity in South Africa. Furthermore, the representation of jazz in South African literature and reportage, for Titlestad is to commonly engage versions of history, a range of identities and a shifting set of cultural practices (240). In a chapter titled “‘reprobate seers & hip healers’: Jazz and Shamanic Poetics”, Titlestad (2004: 206) observes that Abdullah Ibrahim provides the most opportune example for exploring the relation between cosmology and the arts in the history of colonial modernity in South Africa,

“[W]hen we encounter representations of South African jazz that appropriate and manipulate elements of shamanic narrative, it will become apparent that they are derived from the black Atlantic economy of the symbolic reworking of African religions and from specific local practices”.

Firstly, we can contest that the “symbolic reworking” that is suggested in shamanic poetics is derived solely from the appeal to the black Atlantic economy to be (re)appropriated in South Africa.¹⁶³ Secondly, whilst I do not actually reprimand Titlestad for using a “shamanic

¹⁶³ See Paul Zeleza. *Rewriting the African Diaspora: Beyond the Black Atlantic, African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 414 (2005), pp. 35-68 : “despite the proliferation of the literature, our understanding of the African

paradigm” with which to read Ibrahim, but my complaint is rather on his elision of Islam in favour of his reading of Mackey. That is, his refusal or lack of awareness, extends to his reading of Mackey, whilst he reads “Mackey's poetry in light of shamanism, linking the ideas of initiation, and the spiritual journey, as well as "wound[ing] and heal[ing]" however “few have attempted to explore the impact of Islamic mysticism on N.'s experiences of music” (Burgess 2013: 272) and Titlestad is one of the few. Unlike Titlestad we read and listen to the mystical in Mackey and Ibrahim’s music.

The portrayal of Abdullah Ibrahim as something of an esoteric, pianist fills the imaginary of a host of literature that has and continues to categorize and understand him to a point where it becomes difficult to talk about Ibrahim and his music without allusions to his spiritual grandeur/aura. However, the mistake that is most commonly made is to separate the material and the cosmological, failing to give us dynamism of his sound as evolving from the surface of the earth riddled with contradictions and antagonisms to the creation of beautiful soundscapes that has evaded theoretical thinking. Ibrahim’s music, it has been claimed, is a medium through which he sees life and it is an epiphanic realisation of immanence meeting transcendence.

Bessie Head described him as “a most surprising phenomenon in South African life” with his music classified as an access to the sacred and ineffable truth: “There is no mystery in this. Dollar Brand is as real as the universe!” (Head cited in Titlestad 2004:230). The layeredness of his “sound bank,” his realisation of exploring the South African material culture and spiritualism not only calls attention to variation and independence (of traditions of influence in the creative process of the artist) but also points toward the epiphanic in that the variation and layeredness of identity is at the same time political and metaphysical.

Political, because, Abdullah’s music is born out of orphic socio-political conditions, with orphic understood in the sense of being denied kinship and being ostracised by racist social arrangements. It is the “cut” that initiates the broken claim(s) to connections through the

diaspora remains limited by both the conceptual difficulties of defining what we mean by the diaspora in general and the African diaspora in particular, and the analytical tendency to privilege the Atlantic, or rather the Anglophone, indeed the American branch of the African diaspora, as is so clear in Gilroy’s text.” This study will move in a different direction. Focusing, particularly in a different imaginary, geography and history of Africa in Oriental scholarship.

black Islamic imaginary, the obsession of the insistence to previousness, the source of creation and angst. Most of the academic, journalistic, interviews etc. seem not to take the Islamic aspects of both artists seriously. In these writings the silences are indicative of how a Black Muslim subjectivity and difference is not studied whether in popular culture or the historiography of Islam in South Africa.

Islam seems to be outside the black South Africa popular socio-political and cultural imagination, a kind of ambiguous visibility. As Baderoon noted, “this conventional portrayal of Muslims enables certain histories to be forgotten” (Baderoon, 2016: 2). Most of the analytic methods pursued by the scholars who have recently explored the question of sound in the field of black studies tend to focus on how its transformation represents the movement, exchange, and translation of cultures. They are mostly preoccupied with revealing the ontological and humanist significance of black forms of music. These are the common theoretical and methodological consequences of most analysis of sound which are rooted in the fields of anthropology, history, literature, or performance art. My contribution will be in taking seriously Islam as constitutive of black performances or as invoked in black performances and as a contribution to the history, appropriation and interpretation of Islam in South Africa at the same time. Black aesthetics/performances cannot be extricated from their mystical, epistemological, political and ethical (pr)axis.

Abdullah Ibrahim, previously known as Dollar Brand, South Africa’s most distinguished pianist and a world-respected master musician, was born in 1934 in Cape Town and baptized Adolph Johannes Brand. His early musical memories were of traditional African Khoi-San songs and the Christian hymns, gospel tunes and spirituals that he heard from his grandmother, who was pianist for the local African Methodist Episcopalian church, and his mother, who led the choir. The Cape Town of his childhood was a melting-pot of cultural influences, and the young Dollar Brand, as he became known, was exposed to American jazz, township jive, Cape Malay music, as well as to classical music. Out of this blend and blurring of the secular and the religious, the traditional and the modern, developed the distinctive style, harmonies and musical vocabulary that are inimitably his own (Abdullah Ibrahim website). Discussions about Abdullah have also foregrounded the tropes of ‘Home and Exile’ (Ansell; 2004, Coplan; 1995, Titlestad; 2004).

In the 1987 documentary titled *"A Brother with Perfect Timing"* South African musician Abdullah Ibrahim charts a sonic geography that traverses the areas of District Six, Mannenberg, Soweto, Sophiatown and Marabastad, against the backdrop of violent colonial apartheid spatial policies. He advances the notion that Marabi music was/is an important sound for him. In the 1920s marabi music was developed and played only on piano, marabi was the name given to a keyboard style (often using cheap pedal organs) that had a musical link to American jazz, ragtime and blues, with roots deep in the African tradition.

"Bhekizizwe Peterson suggest that for whites and the elite African middle-class marabi 'was equally socially restrictive and infused with aspects of dehumanisation alcoholism, sexism, prostitution and violence. These qualities were seized upon by whites and the African middle class who exaggerated their presence and reduced marabi culture to being nothing more than "raucous, sex-charged ... [and] violent"' Because marabi music was characterised by base morality and the creative pursuits of lower-class African population shows us 'that the black elite was imbued with ideas and prejudices consistent with its education; experiences and its hopes for gradual assimilation and associations with white liberals' (Ramphalile, Manyike & Maxaulane 2023: 49).

Early marabi musicians were part of an underground musical culture and were typically not recorded. Still in 1920s, African Gospel was sung acapella. African Jazz and Jive was a fusion of marabi and swing. The other account of the rebirth of Jazz in South Africa is told by Todd Matshikiza. Matshikiza, (Drum August 1957), in reference to a tour with the Harlem Swingsters, late 40s, reminisces over the rebirth of African Jazz in South Africa. He says:

African jazz was reborn. The original product -- marabi -- had died when American swing took over. We recaptured the wonderful mood over an elevating early breakfast of corn bread and black tea in the open air after a bout of heavy drinking the previous evening. Gray [Mbau] put the corn bread aside and started blowing something on the five-tone scale. We dropped our corn bread and got stuck into Gray's mood...We syncopated and displaced accents and gave endless variety to our 'native' rhythms. We were longing for the days of marabi piano, vital and live...It was Tebejane's original material, but treated freshly with a dash of lime (Galane 2009).

In his study of *The Music of Phillip Tabane - An Historical Analytical Study of Malombo Music in South Africa* (2018) Sello Galane argues that the development of South African popular music in the twentieth century has been marked by a certain elision of indigenous forms of musical productions and a concerted effort at the bias profiling of jazz. His insistence is that Phillip Tabane is one of the few artists who refused to be labelled as a “jazz” artist through his innovative rearrangement of Malombo music, he says, “Malombo is not just music. It is a sociocultural institution that comprises song, dance, dramatic elements of performance, religion and a way of thinking, to unpack the depth of the intricate nature of the cultural, ritualistic, stylistic, historical, and musicological elements” (2018: 3). However, I am sympathetic to Galane, but he is not aurally attentive to the creativity and dynamism of the South African soundscape, and I argue that Ibrahim demonstrates it thus to us.

Jazz had begun manifesting itself particularly in the ethnic and cultural melting pot of Sophiatown, the legendary demolished suburb of Johannesburg. There for the first time in South African history black and white jazz musicians could meet on a regular basis and participate in common platform for jam sessions, and it was out of this context that Ibrahim’s first successful band, the Jazz Epistles, emerged (Ansell 2004; Ballentine 1993). Like pianist The Blue Notes¹⁶⁴ and his group, the Epistles insisted on progressive and experimental jazz as non-racial ‘free spaces’ in the music they made (Khan 2014). His African American influences have been widely acknowledged, starting with his apprenticeship under Duke Ellington which has been described as “an encounter that has been enshrined in South African jazz mythology” (Titlestad 2004: 233). With regards to the influence of Thelonious Sphere Monk, Ibrahim observed that “at a very early age, I was compared to Monk and Debussy. But for us, what Monk did was so natural; the rhythmic approach people found weird was totally in the African tradition. When I met him, I said thank you for all the inspiration. He was so surprised; he said, you're the first piano player to tell me that” (Jaggi: 2001).

Emulating Black American musicians like Thelonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, the Epistles drew mostly in modern jazz and avoided local music in public. The bebop of

¹⁶⁴ The Blue Notes were a South African jazz sextet, whose definitive line-up featured Chris McGregor on piano, Mongezi Feza on trumpet, Dudu Pukwana on alto saxophone, Nikele Moyake on tenor saxophone, Johnny Dyani on bass, and Louis Moholo-Moholo on drums. This is a revolutionary band that changed the musical scapes in Europe, bringing with them the genius of African soundscapes.

Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk arrived in the mid-50s. "It totally changed the picture of South African jazz," says Lars Rasmussen, Ibrahim's discographer and editor of *Cape Town Jazz: 1959-63* (2001). "The smaller combos started playing bebop; the scene exploded, and Abdullah was number one." The single they released might as well have been recorded in New York or Detroit, historian John Mason concludes. "The sound is pure bebop, pure modern jazz". However, Ibrahim would later deny the influence of American jazz on his own music. "There were many parallel developments," he argued, and while there was a "hard-core, basic musical literature that is common to both countries," it was Africa that was the fountainhead. Similarly, he would describe his relationship with Duke Ellington as "not a question of finding anything new, but rather of an analogous expression. It was like a scientist working in Los Angeles, and another working in Tokyo independently, and they came up with the same conclusions" (2001). As a sound scientist himself, in an interview at Duke University with Nathaniel Mackey in 2016 Ibrahim admits that "Duke (Ellington) was seen as the old wise man in the village," this was/is an attempt to establish an antiphonal relationship in terms of music making in both Black communities that has always been an underlying of the black radical tradition. Much work has been dedicated to tracing the development of South African and American jazz, whether as two separate indigenous art forms or a single transnational one, this conversation is important for tracing Abdullah's transformation of sounds through cosmopolitical thought, and this tension is one that I will return to later.

When the colonial apartheid state attacked modern jazz and other jazz styles during the repression following the Sharpeville Massacre, leading jazz musicians fled into exile and some jazz musicians, like Kippie Moeketsi, died an early death. Disgusted with South Africa's doomed jazz scene, Dollar Brand, as Ibrahim was known then, fled to Europe in 1962. With the help of American jazz star Duke Ellington, whom he met first in Zurich through his then wife the songstress, Sathima Bea Benjamin. Ibrahim was able to record and perform in Europe as well as the United States, where he met with substantial success. Ellington's patronage had been instrumental to his first few performances; increasingly, though, his own distinctive style spoke for itself and found him keen playing partners on the New York free jazz scene including Don Cherry and Ornette Coleman, as well as more mainstream gigs with Elvin Jones and others. This is evidenced by the 60s albums such as *Dollar Brand Plays Sphere Jazz* (1960), *Duke Ellington Presents the Dollar Brand Trio* (1963), *Reflections/ This is Dollar Brand* (1965).

There in New York Ibrahim was immersed in new American 'free jazz' and 'bebop' styles of the likes of Coltrane and Monk, but also to the emerging Black Power movement. Not only was Ibrahim living in New York City, the center of the movement for much of the era, but also many of the American musicians he collaborated with closely had ties to Black Power organizations and the Black Arts movement. Naturally, "Ibrahim drew analogies between the position of the black minority in the U.S. and the Black Africans in South Africa. Immersed in a foreign culture, Ibrahim was pushed to re-examine his own South African roots. Although his first return to South Africa came before Black Consciousness ideas had been fully articulated, and much before they had become popularized outside of a small group of activists, "Black", in the Black Consciousness sense, did not seem to have ever held any attraction to him" (Khan 2014). I tend to disagree with Khan for, in response to being labelled Coloured (Black and mixed race), Ibrahim noted that "There was heavy, simmering racism - anti-African feeling - in our communities. My grandparents gave me their name, so I'd be classified as coloured" (Jaggi: 2001) and it is precisely why the BC movement was critically essential to revitalise the African (Manganyi 2019).

His newfound Islamic idea of the ummah transposed into the African traditions, aligned itself with the colored and African working classes and embraced their cultures, and allowed him to slowly move away from the abstract free jazz of the African American avant-garde (Khan 2014) and toward construction of a more musical vocabulary that embraced both avant-garde and marabi musical symbols. Before Ibrahim became a Muslim, according to the late saxophonist Basil Coetzee, he was a "very arrogant, heavy character with no respect for anybody else". Ibrahim says, "what they saw as arrogance was my refusal to toe the line creatively. I said, 'I'm not fitting into any groove'." In Busby's view, Ibrahim would "hold his own in the company of gangsters or monks", and she suspects Musashi's samurai influence: "If you expect him to act one way, he'll act another" (The Guardian 2001).

"We grew up drinking alcohol and smoking pot, and I lost a lot of close friends to gangs and prison; they died of addiction or were murdered. The thing that saved me was the music. In all that horror it was at least clean; you were dealing with something beautiful," says Ibrahim (Ibid). Indeed, in the colony and especially in the native, black towns are to be found the "highest cumulative unfavourable social experiences" causing a "special risk, from a mental health perspective" (Manganyi 2019: 7). Whilst

the music is revolutionary for its transformative aspect not just of the individual but for the community as well, ¹⁶⁵ those black African Muslim who defected from the Christianity and embraced Islam belong to these “unhygienic” communities, to black communities that Islam has not precisely contended with.

“From a mental health point of view, the communities within which Africans have to live are some of the most unhygienic. This is easily appreciated since it has become commonplace to observe that they are characterised by a high morbidity rate, featuring alcoholism and other related forms of overindulgence, crime, a spiralling divorce rate, and associated problems in the sphere of parent-child relationships. It is also necessary to point out that in the majority of cases the work situations are just as unhygienic” (Ibid 14).

In a chapter on “Don Materra and Malcolm X, Islam and Black Experience in South Africa and North America”, Sitoto highlights that “Mattera’s and Malcolm’s stories of imprisonment, juvenile delinquency and being on the wrong side of the law remain crucial, the problem with such a one-sided narrative – as important as it is – is that it privileges a pathologizing narrative” (2018: 162). Whilst he is correct about the pedagogy of this narrative, it is also true as he himself agrees, and it gives us knowledge about their conversion to Islam. The comparison is vivifying in light of Manganyi’s psychiatric analysis of the black African community, of being-black-in-the-world shared by these three Muslim militant revolutionaries. And whilst Sitoto seeks to do away with or move beyond the conventional presentation of their philosophy “born out of protest and thus forever trapped in an oppositional discourse,” Sitoto wants to introduce a new hermeneutic which is that of transcendence instead of protest (Ibid: 159).

As for our purpose in this thesis, we realise that the modern tendency-episteme of a strict polarisation and distinction between transcendental and immanence, secular and religious cannot be maintained as they are ideologically constructed and do not suggest any rupture but a continual of the Christian colonial thought. To the contrary, we privilege the broken claims to connection as a way of apprehending this dialectic, to recover all the radical actional and sound power of the black Muslim that gives expression to new forms of knowledge about

¹⁶⁵ Uthman Dan Fodio’s community.

the present past and the “here and now” best heard in the conversion from Christian secularity to the improvisation of Islam in the colony.

Indeed, the continued reliance on the collapsing couplet transcendence/materialism by Sitoto (as for those in the religious and cultural studies) underlies most of the analysis of black subjectivity that does not take seriously the power of conjuring Islam in blackness. That is, the transcendence that Sitoto chooses to privilege might be taken as a quietist position that takes it for granted that we live in the ‘postcolony’ – “one of those periodizations based on epochal ‘stages’, when everything is reversed at the same moment, all the old relations disappear for ever and entirely new one come to replace them” (Hall in Magubane 2003: 131). This conception of the Muslim subject as discursive formation, particularly in South African Islam, advances the notion that “the intrinsically antagonistic colonial encounter was reconfigured as one of dialogue, complicity and transculturation” (Magubane 2003: 142).

The discursive reading of the black Muslim resistant, forgets that colonialism as a *long durée* of violence, a sociomaterial, is a system of total domination of power but not totalizable (Marriot 2012: 52). Islam, we may venture to add, in the (post) colony, aim to undermine the method of colonial structures which completely embraces the physical, human, and particularly the spiritual aspects of the colonizing experience (Mudimbe 1989: 15). However, as Fanon pondered, colonialism is not totalizable because being Muslim attentively enters the fray of resistance through an invention of existence, “Fanon’s references to invention are more akin to a kind of stricture (or endless deferral and complication) without being historical in any simple or strict sense” (Marriot 2012: 50).

So even if a hermeneutic of transcendence were to be postulated, it cannot be based on a telos that sees Islam as replacing the previous Christian transcendent towards a linear understanding of meaning or language, it cannot be enough to overcome the contradictions and antagonisms of the reproductive nature of colonialism. What Mattered, Malcolm X and Ibrahim demonstrate is the lack that is inherent in secular/religious ideologies of resistance-being and Islam as a continuous rupture of transcendence and materialism. It should also be stressed that these three revolutionary figures embraced Islam during and in the midst of anticolonial revolutionary struggles in the colony.

For Ibrahim, embracing Islam was the most transformative aspect and integral to his return to South Africa in 1968¹⁶⁶. Islam in the twentieth century has given Africana jazz musicians the opportunity to locate their subjectivity in a different prophetic salvation history, one that sidesteps the entire Christian *habitus*. At times, this process has actively reframed race and history. Perhaps Islam was the route to his reconnection with African music, Ibrahim would later describe his conversion as the ‘universal truth’:

"Music was part of the reason, because in Islam the music is naturally integrated; you don't just feel the Koran, you sing it, in remembrance of Allah. I had gone through a bad period, partly in New York. I stopped smoking, I stopped drinking, found an inner peace. There is nothing really, I want or need for myself now, because Allah has blessed me. My main concern is for others, for the liberation of my people, the establishment of justice. Music is just a means toward the end" (Khan 2014).

According to Khan, Ibrahim's new universalism (we call it Puri or Multiverses) surfaced not only in the composition of his music, which drew on local African, and particularly Xhosa, styles, but also in the new activism with which he approached his fellow jazz musicians. He implored them to end their imitation of American and Europeans, and instead “explore their own musical roots, the “sacred” and “beautiful” music that grew in the African soil”. The release of 'Mannenberg' in 1974, on the album 'Mannenberg is Where It's Happening', marked the culmination of Ibrahim's new approach. As he demonstrated in the documentary film, with great aural-sonic imagination and technical skill, he combined an old jazz mbaqanga melody composed by trumpeter Elijah Nkonyane in the late 1950s with marabi, Xhosa ragtime, and hymn township rhythms to create Mannenberg in 1974, a record which began a new trend with old materials in black South African urban music (Khan 2014).

Mannenberg's enormous success was due to its combination of “so many forms of South African music into a coherent and consistent whole, with which listeners of all kinds could

¹⁶⁶ “Invention in *Black Skin, White Masks* forces upon Fanon the representation of humanism the necessity of a certain readjustment. Because there is no invention without a leap, and no leap without unsettling the borders of self and history, for history to be meaningful it can never be completed, and precisely because truth is itself an event of endless revision and recovery” (Marriot 2012:). This is my take on conversion, it is a form of subjectivation, a struggle and contestation of being.

identify.” Ibrahim had finally made his message distinct to the South African musical world: “an authentic syncretism in tune with the cultural reality of black experience is potentially the most creative and marketable direction that contemporary black music can take” (The Guardian 2001). And marketable it was, as the LP sold more copies in 1974-1975 than any other that was produced in South Africa. After 1976, in a conscious attempt to reconnect with “home”, Ibrahim’s music made more overt use of marabi, swing, dance music, carnival, blues, hymns, gospel and spiritual than it had done in the 1960s”. His musical influences now spanned from traditional South African work songs to Arab melodies; his new approach was to absorb everything, stating “Indian ragas or Stockhausen; for us its music, it doesn’t matter where it comes from” (2021). Like Khan, in an article titled ‘Abdullah Ibrahim and the Uses of memory’ (2002), Christine Lucia argues that changes in his personal life were reflected in musical style, for example.

Thus, his music of the 1970s makes more overt use of marabi, swing, dance music, carnival, blues, hymns, gospel and spirituals than it had done in the 1960s, and additionally it brought gestures from Sufi traditions with which he was surrounded as a child but to which, as a newly converted Muslim, he reconnected on a different level (Lucia 2002: 129)

These two authors gesture to the idea that Ibrahim’s conversion to Islam brought about new sound theories or approaches to the music. However, they fail to see how the aural is integral to Ibrahim’s capture of and capability to cross cultures in order to create a new sound/subject. Instead, this confluence is read through a ‘moment of conversion’, what Sitoto has already complained about, that is Islam and black African subjectivity are seen incommensurable and thus therefore treated as outsiders or as the racial-cultural other of Islam (2018; Mputlhane wa Bofelo & Cajee 2009). Not only in the racial and cultural structure of South African Islam, but also in the silence with which the black African intellectual tradition with its insistence on a certain authenticity of blackness imagined to a time prior the aporetic “cut,” initiated by slavery and settler colonialism in South African cultural discourses¹⁶⁷. However, the aural and sonic methods will have us explain these sounds that Ibrahim heard during his childhood and

¹⁶⁷ As well as the nationalist genealogy that identifies the first African intellectuals educated by the colonial Christian missionaries in the 18th and 19th century as the origin of our intellectual genealogy (see Mokwena 2011 and Peterson 2000).

properly explored in his revolutionary tangential phase. In the documentary, the African, sound scientists argues that slavery and colonialism imposed a sense of time, more precisely that the theft of time initiated through colonialism engendered racism as a discourse of time, wherein African cultures and spiritual worldviews were disintegrated, and undermined, “they stole our time and gave us a clock” says Ibrahim.

However, we should continue to ask when does historical tragedy become traumatic? Herein lies the answer that has eluded most analysts and listeners-hearers of Abdullah Ibrahim’s music and philosophy of the subject. Racism as a discourse of time allows for the phantasmatic projections of its mystical foundation as the beginning of history (*l’Histoire*)¹⁶⁸ “because it is predicated on the idea of reducing human life to biological necessity, wherein the racial Other is labelled and expelled as prehuman” (Marriot 2012: 48). The realisation by Ibrahim of colonialism’s thievery of time gives him a sense of the need for reinvention, where what is perceived as decadent, outside of modern time, is precisely approached with a new a soundscape that begins to take seriously aurality-memory as a conduit to creating new sounds pallets. Because listening or hearing is not limited by physical or human geographical boundaries it demonstrates or precisely shows the lack, or crack in the totalization that colonialism mystifies.

It is upon drawing, after embracing Islam, on the memory of his childhood and the sounds of that memory that was intensified by reading “the cultural section three times” that allows Ibrahim to give to Wynter in an antiphonal strategy of resistance the “epistemic breakthrough” of the re-narration of the human outside the bounds of European/White Man (which stands four square with the bourgeois notion of race as the biological essence), that she needs but cannot sustain it through her conception of the “sociogenic principle.” That is the principle that ““would be the code, the law of the code, the principle, which functions as the ground of the history that will be narrated and existentially lived”” (Maxaulane 2022: 4). For Marriot and Maxaulane these codes cannot be historicized as they fall subject to the same

¹⁶⁸ Indeed “the reference to history in *Black Skin , White Masks*- better, its carceral logic- thus turns on the difference between, on the one hand, a confined, institutional meaning in which power is violently exercised on colonial subjects. And on the other, a space of endless self-creation, in which self and world can be reinvented, and in which, implicitly at least, “history,” for the subject, can be given another meaning, a fixture in which time, reference, and reality can acquire new values” (Marriot 2012: 48).

imaginary of the teleology of history that is being refuted, “further, that breakthrough is meaningful- to humanity, to history- only when a breakthrough is adduced to have reordered codes that cannot themselves be historicized” (Marriot 2012: 49), of which, I claim, Abdullah Ibrahim’s compositions does because they are not implicated in a teleology of history. Instead, what is being done by Wynter would posit these codes which she draws from “myths and history of events of the colonized subject that are reproduced in the present and projected into the future as narratives through a form of repetition, performance, figuration and signification” (Ibid) to arrange a new narrative of human consciousness. These codes and laws would come to function as a defense against a culturally imposed history or, for us, it would come to recognize that the time stolen is first imaginary and induced by the violence of the (post) colony through its institutions in the sociomaterial reality¹⁶⁹. For Ibrahim it is the contestation or rearrangement of time that seems to be of crucial importance to the creation of a sound signature, the dismantling of the colonial projections/illusions.

Our epistemic breakthrough, that we partly give to Wynter, to escape from Marriott’s criticisms, through aurality and improvisation ruptures and mines the sediments of the spiritual and sound cultures that are undermined in the colony and to intentionally use reinvention as source of endless resistance. For example, not only did black African Muslim abandon colonial Christian missionary apocalyptic discourses and its reinventions through African and Black liberation or reincarnation theologies, but they intentionally transitioned to Islam – accorded the same status in colony as belonging to a time outside history. Furthermore, it is also refuting the praxis of Islam accorded by those who see themselves as representatives of nascent Islam (Arab-Berbers and Indians & Malays), what I have termed black orientalism, the perpetual marking of the black African Muslim as an oddity constructed by legal epistemologies and social practices and conflates race and culture with the status of newcomer to Islam as we demonstrated in the first chapter. So, our sociogenic principle takes

¹⁶⁹ Giving way to antiblackness as a normal way of being – time of the colonised black subject because antiblackness informs, in the colony, “neurobiological and physiological drives, desires, and emotions and negative feelings because it underwrites a collective and normalized, racially coded, biocentric belief system wherein narratives of natural selection and dysselection of blackness, are cast as, and reflexly experienced as common sense” (McKittrick 2006: 63).

as constitutive the inventions that are part of the broken claims to connection and functions as both contestations and endless creation. Lewis Nkosi captures our train of thought.

Where urban African music, for instance, has responded to the challenges of the disintegrative tendencies of city life with an amazing suppleness and subtlety, black writing shows the cracks and tension of language working under severe strain. Where African music and dance have moved forward, not through renouncing tradition but by fusing diverse elements into an integrated whole (245).

The problem of imagining the present past in South African cultural discourses has been structured by the colonial modernist episteme that divides or creates a binary between traditions and modernity, writing against orality, and sidelining aurality and sound as Nkosi argues (Mudimbe 1989). This does not only suggest a privileging of conceptions of language that are inherent in colonial knowledges but has, too often, caused the devaluation of orality or an already present polemic in its defense. Against the rationalizations of language as word, written word/text, sound provides for what is unimaginable in the sphere of writing, that is a language to remember and construct. When Abdullah Ibrahim was asked in an interview about forced removals and if it had wiped out much of Black and Coloured culture as the colonial state had intended, he replied, “That can never be wiped out! It’s a people’s dream, and dreams can never be wiped out.” He goes on to say that “We musicians are the historians. We record our experiences and our history within our music. Some of the pieces we play are very old, in fact ancient traditional songs from the whole area” (Dan Morgenstern 2016), I hear the album title, *African Sketchbook (1974)*¹⁷⁰.

Listening, sound systems or sound waves provide and contest the (pre)modern narrative about black subjects, colonised subject’s pasts in a creative and liberative approach, “Music, then, is not only an invention that subverts and undoes commonsense workings of antiblackness; music, music making, music listening and performance, together, demonstrates the subversive politics of shared stories ... wherein one must participate *in* knowing (McKittrick 2016: 87-88). Much has been said about Ibrahim’s ability to attract and

¹⁷⁰ Released on LP by Enja Records, Germany. Mostly solo piano; one part solo flute; in concert; released 1974.

invent different soundscapes to his music, but few have been precise about them, especially with regards to Islam and Japanese philosophical embodiment. Furthermore, lack of attention paid to these influences that are not only materially experienced, or textually read, but also aurally heard, shows the lack of commitment to understanding the inner-workings of Ibrahim's music and philosophy of subjects.

Let me begin by drawing our attention to the geography/cartography of the mind that Ibrahim ushers through the reinvention of time outside colonial myths that is recreated by Ibrahim's aural & sonic cross-cultural method and I will follow by addressing and critique the lack of attention to Ibrahim's ability to attract and invent different soundscapes to his music¹⁷¹. Narrating the history of his cross cultural that is, his broken claims to connections, Ibrahim tells of the story of the Arab¹⁷² contacts prior to Europeans encounter with African indigenous people in Southern Africa and about Admiral Zheng He, a Chinese explorer who, "eighty years before Vasco da Gama's arrival in West India, a formidable Chinese navy ruled the China Sea and Indian Ocean, from Southeast Asia to the Persian Gulf and East Africa. Between the periods from 1405 to 1433, China's Ming dynasty launched seven voyages led by Admiral Zheng. He to explored these vast regions, known then to the Chinese as the "West Oceans" (Wei 2014).

Perhaps the album title, *Water from an Ancient Well* (1985)¹⁷³ alludes to this event, as Wei points out , "over 300 vessels, including a number of "treasure ships" over 400 feet long, accompanied by a legion of supply ships, water tankers, warships with canons; the total personnel on the fleet numbered over 28,000," he continues, "Rather different from the Europeans, the Chinese armada never sought to establish colonial rule over these oceans by

¹⁷¹ "The notion that geographical distance across space, cultural differences within space, and hierarchical differences of power could be projected onto the axis of time was essential for rescripting conquest as an act that was not only necessary, but also essentially humanitarian." –separate development apartheid (Magubane 2003: 136). For Burges, "Mackey believes that boundaries are only notional, and that music and experience transcend such limitations (2013:274).

¹⁷² See Vincent Thulani Langa's History and growth of Islam in Soweto, MA thesis, 2001. Similar assertions are made by the Amir of Soweto Muslims.

¹⁷³ Released on Tiptoe records. In Septet format, with Carlos Ward (alto sax, flute), Dick Griffin (trombone), Ricky Ford (tenor sax), Charles Davis (baritone sax), David Williams (bass), Ben Riley (drums).

military force” (2016: ibid). What Abdullah is doing is contesting the origins of South Africa as a colony invented by the Voyages of discovery that precipitated the “discovery” of the country. The time of colonialist discovery is trumped in order to continue the hermeneutic of African soundscapes, experiences and the material and spiritual cultures of Africans and their relationship with the other parts of the world, a narrative that was erased with the encounter with the European/white colonial potentate and slave owners. The narratives are explosive, broken as they are boundless, “Zheng was born to a Muslim family in Yunnan. The family had migrated to China from Central Asia and had served in the Mongol administration in this region. Both Zheng, his father and grandfather bore the title of *Hajji*, indicating that they had completed pilgrimages to Mecca” (2014: 26). This opens up the myth about Islam prior to European invasion/invention of Africa.

Islamic penetration from the north into the regions of beyond the Soutpansberg may have occurred sometime between the fifteenth century and possibly the late eighteenth century. It is also claimed that Swahili- speaking traders may have reached as far south as the St. John’s river on the Pondoland coast in the Transkei and accounts of "Islamised" Africans, members of different ethnic groups living among the Shona in southern Zimbabwe and the Venda, Sotho, and Thonga peoples in the Transvaal, called by various names, Lemba, Varembe or Balemba seem to confirm it (Moosa quoted in Valhanova 2006:64).

The time of the colony along with what came with it, is not only contested but the memory of knowledge is invoked to showcase the cross-cultural imaginary that is often not acknowledged or narrated in south African cultural studies and particularly in Islamic studies. In actuality it is these events and people that Ibrahim uses to compose and critique colonialism as a discourse of time. In fact, the album *African Sketches*, explores the multi-layered events, myths and languages of the African landscape, the song titles are revealing of the need to cross cultural and geographic imaginaries that are lacking in the academic study of Africa, imprisoned by the modern colonial educational episteme.

Ibrahim evokes through song title, “Machopi,” a southern eastern part of Africa Macopi, speakers and are part of the Rhonga Kingdoms and Tsonga speaking people who today can be found in Northern parts of South Africa, south western Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The resonance and the narratives concerning his encounter with Arab and therefore Islamic

cultures quoted earlier can be discerned -"Salaam-Peace-Hamba Kahle." Studies of geography, cultural studies, literature, Islam, and anti-colonialism should take seriously, listen and groove since (listening and grooving to black music provides the condition to intellectually engage and love ethically) Abdullah Ibrahim's broken claims to connection explosive, fractured narrative and music making.

Now to address and critique the lack of attention to Ibrahim's ability to attract and invent different soundscapes to his music, Lucia thinks.

One could push the argument a little here and contrast the "two sides" of Ibrahim's music of the 1970s and '80s in harmonic and rhythmic terms: the more contemporary and international his style became, the further it moved away from chords I, IV and V (the mainstay of much South African popular music since the early 1900s due in part to the influence of nineteenth-century hymnody) and predictable metre. But one could also push it the other way and say that for some people the American-ness of the music was what made it familiar in South Africa, while in the jazz clubs of Europe and north America Ibrahim's African roots made the music identifiably "different" from American mainstream (Lucia 2002: 130).

Whilst I do not agree with the statement that "the American-ness of the music is what made it familiar in South Africa" if we consider the fact that the development of Jazz occurred in the early twentieth century, and that prior to Ibrahim's conversion the performance and discourses about Jazz had already influenced differently his sound styles of music. However, taking serious Ibrahim's affinity to free jazz in the 1960's, against what Lucia sites as "the international style", there is "Ellington told me "You're blessed because you come from the source" (Peterson 2020).

Abdullah's music allowed him to contribute to tonal, harmonic structures and rhythmic patterns that added a different accent to improvisation and Muslim subjectivity. Free jazz is an experimental approach to that developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s when musicians attempted to change or break down jazz conventions, such as regular tempos, tones, and chord changes (Iyer 2002: 15). Musicians during this period believed that the bebop, hard bop, and modal jazz that had been played before them was too limiting. They became preoccupied with creating something new and exploring new directions. The breakdown of form and rhythmic structure coincided with jazz musicians' exposure to and

use of elements from non-Western music, especially African, Arabic, and Indian. It also shows how Johnny Mbizo Dyani insisted on the “fowl-run” as a parallel invention with free jazz in the South African avant-garde.

The atonality of free jazz is often credited by jazz performers to a return to non-tonal music of the nineteenth century, including field hollers, street cries, and jubilees (part of the "return to the roots" element of free jazz). This suggests that perhaps the movement away from tonality was not a conscious effort to devise a formal atonal system, but rather a reflection or refractions of the concepts surrounding free jazz. Jazz became "free" by removing dependence on chord progressions and instead using polysemic and polyrhythmic structures (Iyer 2002: 15).

The resonance with fellow Muslim musician Yusef Lateef abounds, a virtuoso on a broad spectrum of reed instruments - tenor saxophone, flute, oboe, bamboo flute, shanai, shofar, argol, sarewa, and taiwan koto – “Yusef Lateef introduced delightful new sounds and blends of tone colors to audiences all over the world, and he incorporated the sounds of many countries into his own music” (2023). Rejecting jazz as a term, Lateef coined the tongue-twister "autophysiopsychic" to describe music that comes from the physical, mental and spiritual self.

Jazz, in particular, allowed Ibrahim to ‘express himself freely’, partly because of the genre’s emphasis on improvisation. Musical patterns like call and response seem to allow performers to horizontally transcend structural limitations otherwise imposed in other genres. This imperative to cross cultures by adopting new sounds and instruments¹⁷⁴ in order to explore their subjectivity in a radically different manner that had been done before; for some it came

¹⁷⁴ Musicologists generally classify musical instruments into four categories (1) Idiophones – marimbas, xylophones, goings, rattles, bells, clappers, cymbals etc (2) Membranophones – drums with skin or membrane heads (3) Aerophones – flutes, whistles, pipes, trumpets and horns. (4) Chordophones – lutes, layers, zithers, and harps (Ali 2002: 280). The exploration of various instruments that were not usually considered in jazz expression and composition come to take center stage in the avant-garde or free jazz movement. Furthermore it is not only about picking an instrument but the narrative that accompany these instruments that will be important for the artists, for example Ali in tracing the music of Spain to Black Moors or Oriental Africa argues, “how music and musical instruments can be used as effective tools for studying people, very often showing how they live and where they live” (Ibid).

to symbolise rupture with the current socio-political and cultural status quo in order to “illuminate the interrelated praxes of inventing culture and reinventing black life through alienated histories” (McKittrick 2006: 86). The cathartic release of the music provided the accents of liberation and the polyrhythmicity of the musicians’ cross-cultural embodiment as revolutionary practice. Within black African aesthetics of jazz, the musical markers of ethnicity are treated as significant: they are part of jazz’s development but are not themselves subject to development. Ibrahim, arguing that “jazz more than any other musical art form allows us to portray our experiences freely,” described the beauty of jazz improvisation:

Every individual can paint his own musical picture, using whatever colors he prefers, and it becomes even more beautiful when we do it together in a group, and contrary to what we might expect the overall picture produced by the group is not chaotic or disorderly but harmonious and exciting because, firstly, while we are creating individually, we are listening to each other, complementing, extending an idea, inspiring each other. Oh, there are infinite possibilities (Iyer 2017: 17).

The latter is echoed in the need to seek one’s own voice outside of secular ideological imperatives that defined the political in the 50s and particularly in the 60s, for Lateef, “The fact is one’s own voice is not heard anywhere else. It’s a challenge to be yourself. It takes a lot of courage.” And for Abdullah Ibrahim “as a child I knew I had to find my own voice, I knew the sounds of everything around me, how the cars sound, the peoples, but what was my sound? So, I started researching – when you find your own voice you are free” (2016). One’s own voice is able to tell stories, myths, explosive and ruptural narratives with the music, particularly its reflexivity which encourages improvisation. Because music and performance is actional, one does not need to write protest lyrics to be understood as a revolutionary, most writing about Ibrahim argue that his contestation of colonialism was on a quiet mode, “in the absence of any direct criticism of apartheid, his “celebration of distinctive African cultures seemed to resonate with the apartheid state’s efforts to reinforce ethnic and racial divisions in order to keep blacks weak and divided” (Khan 2014).

We can respond to Khan by way of McKittrick on Wynter, to gesture that “black music is a revolutionary act that keeps heretical (nonmarket) time, negates black nonbeing by

honouring and recoding black life, repurposes and interrupts linear temporalities, and is expressed in the midst of violent and stigmatizing knowledge system” (2016: 88). Perhaps listeners and analysts alike should take serious, militant Sufi practices and Miyamoto Musashi’s Ways of strategy to which Ibrahim has been such a dedicated student. Indeed the ‘full circle’ knowledge of practice does not consist in only or merely investing one’s life in studying *trivium* and *quadrivium* courses, music, or listening to Abdullah Ibrahim’s broken claims to connection and his improvisation, it also advances the notion that knowledge of revolution, or cadences of change, can be aurally and practically sought in “cross cultural logics” (Sokei-Chude 2008: 16).

As Ibrahim, in an article published by the *Guardian*, “The Sound of Freedom” (2018), states that “Practising martial arts, one has a better sense of one’s own physical routine; I identified that something was not right.” In studying Musashi’s text and practice, where it is declared, “In strategy your spiritual bearing must not be any different from normal. Both in fighting and in everyday life you should be determined though calm (2015: 13). Whilst others were dedicating themselves to anti-apartheid secular ideologies of revolution and are disappointed in the so-called post-apartheid-post-colonial order (2nd epigraph), Ibrahim was engaged in practices that are still relevant for his musical composition and performances. Musashi does not only lay the strategies of spiritual or inner working of knowledge such as discipline, and psychological strength but has to do with winning in a struggle, in a duel, conflict or “cutting down an opponent”, that is, his is a strategic wisdom that teaches how to win life & death situations, perhaps this is amplified in Ibrahim’s “*Mukashi – Once Upon a Time*” (2012-13) album with his quartet, with Cleave Guyton (saxophone, flute, clarinet), Eugen Bazijan and Scott Roller (cello); Ibrahim is also on vocals and flute.

As Ibrahim has noted regarding his conversion and practice of Islam “Music was part of the reason, because in Islam the music is naturally integrated; you don’t just feel the Koran, you sing it, in remembrance of Allah” (2016) (1st epigraph). In addition, as Lucia has also observed, “Sufi traditions with which he was surrounded as a child but to which, as a newly converted Muslim,” without going into detail, we would do best by understanding what Sufism really is. Ahmed Shahab defines it thus: Sufism is the theory and practice of holistic, experiential knowing of Divine Truth (2018: 20). Sufis make “their culminating assertion that they are virtuoso “friends of God” (*awliya’ Allah*; singular: *wali*) who are at one-ness with the Real-

Truth, *al haqiqah*, are no longer bound by specific forms of strictures of Islamic law and ritual practice, *al-shari'ah*, that confine less spiritually and existentially developed souls.”

Ibrahim has always alluded to this aspect of Islam, in his interview with Larry Applebum at the Library of Congress in 2016, “we do not equate things through religion, through the exterior, we equate things through the spirit.” This is not Hegel’s spirit rather it is parallel with the Sufi idea, in which, “by a rigorous developmental exercise of the holistic faculties of knowing common to all human (as opposed to giving priority to the ratiocinative faculty alone), any individual can, potentially, develop his or her capacity to attain immediate personal revelatory experience (*kashf*)” (Rumi 2005: 83). According to Sufi thought, says Cherry, the value of *sama*¹⁷⁵, listening to religious music, is determined by the righteousness of the listener. As a means to explore the spiritual world, it is admissible; as entertainment or diversion, it is not” (2000: 556). Listen to Abdullah say, in more than one interview and occasion, “in western societies, musicians are miscast as entertainers, in our society musicians used to be drafted to the medical sciences.” In the next session, Zim Ngqawana will echo the same sentiments about *ingoma* as a healing force.

These ideas and practices are to be heard in Abdullah Ibrahim’s - *Africa Tears And Laughter* 1979 performed in a quartet format, on Bass -- Greg Brown, on Drums -- John Betsch, on Vocals, Piano, Soprano Saxophone, Composed By --Abdullah Ibrahim and on Vocals, Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophone -- Talib Qadr, particularly on a song titled “*Ishmael*” where “what we witness in the socially-prolific ritual practices of Sufi *dhikr* – the rigorous developmental exercises for the development of physical, spiritual, and psychological human capacities for experiential knowing of God,” it is the “performance of Sufis striving for the holistic perfection of being as the means to attain and access truth in the way of the prophets” (Ahmed 2018:20-21).

Listening to *Ishmael* cannot but remind me of the intentionality of the Sufi *dhikr*, its rhythmic motion or movement backed up by the chant of voices that calls upon “Allah! Allah!” this is precisely what Fredrico Garcia Lorca, the Andalusian Spanish poet, playwright, and theatre

¹⁷⁵ Refers to listening, to chanting, and singing of religious texts.

director described as *duende*¹⁷⁶ – “In all Arab music, dance, song or elegy, the arrival of duende is greeted with vigorous cries of ‘Allah! Allah!’ so close to the ‘Olé!’ of the bullfight, and who knows whether they are not the same?” *duende* for Lorca, is not in the throat: the *duende* surges up, inside, from the soles of the feet.’ Meaning, it’s not a question of skill, but of a style that’s truly alive: meaning, it’s in the veins, it’s of the most ancient culture of immediate creation.” Tune and rhythm “tend to produce inclination for dance, to sum up”, says Inayat Khan, “dancing may be said to be a graceful expression of thought and feeling without uttering a word” (1996: 78).

It is important to acknowledge as well as to uphold the resonance of the *duende* to Ibrahim’s philosophy of creation and performance that is not only heard and artistically seen on the cover arts of his oeuvre but also his cross-cultural experimentations and the inventions of his musical vocabulary that he introduces to jazz. One can list countless examples in Ibrahim’s music where dhikr or “you don’t just feel the Koran, you sing it” is musically expressed. In the album “*The Journey*” – *Hajj* (1977)¹⁷⁷ – an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the holiest city for Muslims, Hajj is a mandatory religious duty for Muslims that must be carried out at least once in their lifetime, we get the aural sense of *dhikr* without which there are no human voices singing rather it is the instruments that sets the listener “on the road. And when you are on the road: that journey is the Way [*tariqat*]; and when you have reached the destination, that is the Real-Truth [*haqiqat*]. It is in this regard that they say, “If the Real-Truths are manifest, the laws are nullified, as when cooper becomes gold, or was originally gold” (Rumi 2001:60). Whilst Rumi tells us that the Sufi’s ultimate goal is to rise through the

¹⁷⁶ This essay is accessed online as “Federico García Lorca Theory and Play of the *Duende*” <https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Spanish/LorcaDuende.php>, accessed 27/01/22.

¹⁷⁷ Released by Chiaroscuro Records and This studio recording was made the day after the 17 September 1977 Alice Tully Hall. The record HAS three songs The short "Sister Rose" begins things, Two lengthy improvisations follow—the first, "Jabulani", features an energetic rhythm section, soaring trumpet work, and atonal group playing. The 22-minute closer "Hajj (The Journey)" is an Oriental Africa work centred around a hypnotic piano riff, originally from "Eighty-First Street" on Ibrahim's 1968 album *Hamba Khale!* (with [Gato Barbieri](#)). On Piano, Soprano Saxophone -- Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand) on Trumpet -- Don Cherry Alto Saxophone -- Carlos Ward on Alto Saxophone, Oboe – Talib Rhyne Baritone on Saxophone, Clarinet – Hamiet Bluiett on Bass -- Johnny Akhri Dyani on Congas -- Claude Jones on Percussion -- John Betsch , Roy Brooks.

hierarchy of the truth to the Real-Truth freed from the strictures of the Shari'a law¹⁷⁸, the song Hajj (Journey) also opens with a hypnotic piano vamp that adopts a bit of a Middle Eastern flavour with a call and response between oboe and the rest of the band.

Perhaps I should say Oriental Africa, rather than put emphasis on the Middle East as the locality of Islam, Hajj also uses the memory of those "Blacks who moved across the sahara to North Africa" (Ali 2008: 6). One also hears in "Moniebah / The Pilgrim" in *Echoes from Africa* (1968), in duet with Johnny Akhir Dyani a fellow Black South African Muslim bass player-multiinstrumentalist that partly recalls Mansa Mūsā, in the 17th year of his reign (1324), when he set out on his famous pilgrimage to Mecca. This pilgrimage awakened the world to the stupendous wealth of Islamic Mali and devastating Egypt's economy. It is our argument that Ibrahim, crosses cosmologies/cultural boundaries as a habit of thought and uses music compositions in hearing these influences that, because of the broken claims to connection, has evaded analysis in cultural studies and Muslim praxis in South Africa.

Ibrahim's mystical exploration of Islam through black/African sound and aural aesthetics shows the black Islamic subject as a tangent to normative Islamic thought and a site of a resistant knowledge for black subjectivity. Now, I mention explorative authority, not mutually exclusive to prescriptive authority in Islam, because "Exploration is precisely the business of setting out into the unknown, the uncertain, the unexperienced, the unsettled, the new" and "In order to explore, one must take the view, first that one has the authority to do so (that is, that one is not trespassing one's limits), and, second, that there is something of *value* or *meaning* to obtained from the exploration- indeed, that *exploration itself is of value and meaning*" (2016: 283)¹⁷⁹. It is precisely my point that the capacity to explore wields truth of the "unknown, the "unexperienced and unsettled" that appear to have evaded critical studies of Black musical forms and the textual based, racial practice of Islam in South Africa.

¹⁷⁸ "The problem is that the pre-conceptualization of Islam as "discursive tradition" = "orthodoxy" (like that of Islam as "law/shari'ah, or as "religion") has the effect of privileging as constitutive of Islam those texts and practices whose purpose it is to *prescribe*" (Shahab 2016: 289).

¹⁷⁹ It is this latter mode of authority that is operative in human and historical Islam in the search of meaning and value in the projects of philosophy and Sufism, and in the prolific range of exploratory discourse and practices- poetry, art, music, *etcetera*- that these projects informed.

Islam in Black avant-garde tradition

Not only is Abdullah Ibrahim's exploration of anticolonial soundscapes the only Black African Muslim to reorient, as Wilson Harris has taught, the cultural and Islamic imaginaire in South Africa, however, it is the influence he has had on other musicians that should be viewed as anticolonial sound agitation.. In the same genealogy of the black avant-garde, that is the "idea of an avant-garde is embedded in a theory of history".

This is to say the avant-garde is not only a spatio-temporal concept but a spatial-geographical concept as well...Constraint, mobility, and displacement are, therefore, conditions of possibility of the avant-garde. Deterioration is crucial to the avant-garde, as well: as a certain aesthetics, as an effect of disinvestment, a psychic condition... (Moten 2003: 33).

Rasmussen reports that 1972 after embracing Islam Abdullah Ibrahim, previously known as Dollar Brand, "Persuaded Johnny to follow him" (2003: 9), that is Johnny Akhir or Mbizo Dyani.

"Converting to Islam has for people proven to be a way out of drug and alcohol abuse. This was not the case for Johnny who was fighting these habits until his last years. Johnny was religious minded, and some of his personal prayers to God I reproduced elsewhere in this book. Wherever he went, he kept with him a well-worn copy of the Penguin Books edition of N. J Dawood's English translation of the Koran".

The South Africa pianist Kyle Shephard reports that Zim Ngqawane told him that "your pillars are Murray and Ibrahim, mine are Mbizo (Johnny Dyani) and Dudu Pukwana" (2018: 39). Zim Ngqawane for his part embraced Islam, "In 1993 he followed in the footsteps of his other mentor, Abdullah Ibrahim, and converted to Islam under the name Abdul Aziz. It was a religion whose roots he had traced from African belief systems. "After years of soul-searching I think I have finally found a spiritual home in Islam," he said" (Mathe 2011). My adding to Moten's explanation of the black avant-garde, his insistent on the spatial-geographic as well psychic conditions of this tradition, is the tradition's broken claim to connection (exile-loss, innovations-knowledges) that nevertheless undermine both the linearity of spatial contact and geographical imagination (exile-loss).

The relationship between these three musicians does not only seek to show the cultural repertoire of black Muslims in South African cultural practices but to demonstrate the extent to which sound and in this case, music connects beyond the material but to reach black truth (innovations-knowledges). Moten's insistence that "Part of what I am after is an assertion that the avant-garde is a black thing (that, for the sake of argument, Richard Schechner wouldn't understand) and an assertion that blackness is an avant-garde thing (that, for the sake of argument, Albert Murray wouldn't understand)" (Moten 2003: 33). It is our insistences that Black truths, suggests the inventions of soundscapes rooted in improvisation that ruptures the normal flow of history, of the dominant status quo by acceding for meaning of black subjectivity as constructed in layers of cultural imaginaires and spiritual assertions.

What Johnny Dyani, Zim Ngqawane and Abdullah Ibrahim demonstrate through black Islamic exploratory sounds and sentiments is that connections are not interesting for the sake of a particularistic style rather it is the search of what lies outside and beyond the dominant meaning in a sociocultural time and space. Perhaps Canham (2023) best captures our notion of a black Islamic soundscapes as a tangent to the particularist nationalist understandings of blackness to prioritise a deepening and exploration of blackness. Our trio of African Muslim sound-scientists demonstrates that "Africans are both black and indigenous" that is to, "think blackness from here is to take account of the complexity and dialogic relations of African lives" (2023: 23). When Rasmussen writes that Abdullah Ibrahim after embracing Islam persuaded Johnny to join him in Islam is because the avant-garde has the tendency to connect through familial relations, as with the trio. The familial in this sense invokes the truth of soundscapes as belonging to a tradition, and it is embracing and breaking away from the tradition that you come to invent it. This idea of tradition is brought to us by Wilson Harris, for him "[T]radition is native because it inhabits the broken, fragmented histories, and a landscape charged with the potential of the imagination that can reconcile the psychic and historical fragmentation of the colonial subjects (Edwards 1998: 5).

In an interview with Aryan Kaganof in 1985, Akhbar Dyani is asked about his older brother who was a pianist belonging to the same generation as Dollar Brand/Abdullah Ibrahim. Whilst

listening to a record by the Jazz Epistles *Verse 1* (1960)¹⁸⁰, a quintet comprising Makaya Ntshoko, Kippie Moeketsi, Jonas Gwangwa, Hugh Masekela, and Dollar Brand, playing on the radio station “Voice of America.” Johnny’s brother (Nuse) remarked.

¹⁸⁰ This is one of the most important jazz albums made in South African music history and Siddhartha Mitter wrote an insightful piece of this period of Black African music creations. “The session is only dimly remembered now. It took place in January 1960, in the midst of the South African summer, at the Gallo recording studio in Johannesburg. The album that emerged, *Jazz Epistle, Verse 1*, was the first full-length by a Black South African jazz ensemble. With a print run of just five hundred copies, it became an instant rarity.

“It was very quick,” the pianist Abdullah Ibrahim recalls of the gathering. “We had, I think, two days. But we’d been rehearsing the music, playing the music, injecting our affirmation of our culture.”

Had they ever. For just about a year, the Jazz Epistles, a sextet that formed as a kind of supergroup of top Johannesburg and Cape Town players, had shaken up South African music. Theirs was a resolutely modern jazz, as fluent and edgy as anything made in New York at the time. Night after night they packed venues, skirting the edges of apartheid rules against performing for mixed-race audiences.

The group’s elder, at the ripe age of 34, was Kippie Moeketsi, an alto saxophonist with an encyclopaedic grasp of Charlie Parker’s work as well as South African folk traditions. Ibrahim was a decade younger, but already a scholar of Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk. Trombonist Jonas Gwangwa was in his early twenties. Trumpeter Hugh Masekela was barely out of his teens but had experience in jazz big bands and had even toured the country backing a singing group called the Manhattan Brothers.

They could tell they were on to something. “Oh yeah, we knew,” Ibrahim says. “Because we’d all been working on it individually.” A penniless Ibrahim, then still known as Dollar Brand, had walked from Cape Town to Johannesburg to study with Moeketsi. South Africa had a busy jazz scene that shaded into the dance-hall music of the working-class townships, which in turn was rooted in the traditional rhythms mine workers and other migrant laborers had brought from different parts of the country. Moeketsi imagined an exacting modern jazz, on par with American bebop innovations, but one that made space for some of these rhythms and reflected South Africa’s own cultural mix.

Moeketsi recruited Ibrahim for his vision, then Masekela and Gwangwa after the four met while playing in the orchestra for King Kong, a popular musical detailing the rise and fall of a boxer named Ezekiel Dlamini. (The show also featured Miriam Makeba). To round out the Epistles, they recruited Johnny Gertze, a young bass player from Cape Town, and drummer Makaya Ntshoko – himself, as it happened, a former bantamweight prize-fighter.

Playing their first gigs sometime in mid-1959, the Epistles quickly caught on. “We were a talented group, and we were big scholars of the music,” says Masekela. “We sold out venues wherever we went. We became huge, and we were about to tour the whole country.”

But history decided otherwise. In March 1960, the Sharpeville massacre of protesters precipitated a hardening of the already repressive regime. A ban on public gatherings shut down all but the government’s favoured entertainers; the Epistles identified with the liberation movement. “We had to break up,” Masekela says. Within a couple of years, most had left the country for Europe or America to pursue individual careers.

Today Masekela and Ibrahim are among the grand elders of jazz – and its two most famous South African exponents. But given their differences in temperament and musical styles, the fact that the two men shared a start in a fierce bebop band akin to, say, Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers (a clear inspiration for the Epistles, down to the name) is scarcely recognized. “Many people have never heard that we played together, because we went on and charted our own roads,” says Masekela. “It’s a surprise for people who know us separately.”

All this makes the revival of the Jazz Epistles a historic occasion. Two shows in Johannesburg last year, with Masekela, Ibrahim, and Gwangwa, were red-letter dates drawing South Africa’s political and cultural elite. Now Ibrahim brings *Jazz Epistle, Verse 1* to New York City, with a concert at Town Hall on April 27. Gwangwa and Masekela will be absent (the latter recently suffered a dislocated shoulder, forcing him to bow out of the performance) but with South African trumpeter Lesedi Ntsane filling in, and Ibrahim’s longtime band Ekhaya rounding out the group, it’s an event in its own right.

The Epistles’ album was eventually reissued but remains hard to track down, although seven of the eight tracks can be found, out of sequence, on a widely available but mislabeled compilation. They reveal a band of rare prowess, with bold themes (“Dollar’s Moods”), broad loping swing (“Blues for Hughie”), and general all-out cooking (“Scullery Department,” which Moeketsi pointedly named for the only part of white clubs where the musicians could eat). Ibrahim even has a solo piece titled “Gafsa.” Elegant and careful, it presages his later direction.

Despite the album’s scant distribution, it managed to reach important ears. Ibrahim recalls that when he moved to New York, he discovered that free-jazz luminaries Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry, among others, were fans. “When I met Ornette and Don at [Coleman’s] Prince Street studio, they told me they had been listening to Jazz Epistles,” Ibrahim says. “And we found synergy. It was a natural development that happened between all of us.”

The story of the Epistles is, among other things, a testament to the sheer energy of jazz in the late 1950s, the way it sparked new thinking in the United States and South Africa alike. Though the young South Africans had not yet travelled, they were hip to every new development. Older musicians like Moeketsi stood in for the music schools where Black students weren’t welcome, and listening parties, known as “jams,” brought jazz heads together on weekends in the townships. “There was a fanatical following,” says South African jazz scholar Gwen Ansell. “There were lines around the block whenever a new consignment of American jazz arrived.”

But the political crackdown of the early Sixties scattered the scene and pushed its remnants underground. Modern jazz was regarded as suspicious because it was cosmopolitan and had formed an audience that crossed race and class lines. The regime was more comfortable allowing music that fit its notion of separate communities with their own “tribal” cultures.

Since the advent of democracy, in 1994, jazz has reimplanted in South Africa, with a major festival in Cape Town and a busy scene in Johannesburg in tune with current trends, such as experiments with hip-hop and electronica. Ibrahim and Masekela, though constantly traveling, have both made South Africa their home base. Sadly, Moeketsi would never know freedom; after an unsuccessful stint in Britain, he returned to South Africa, where he died in 1983, wracked by poverty and psychological distress. Bassist Gertze died the same year, also in South Africa.

But Moeketsi in particular lives on among South African jazz listeners and, most of all, his bandmates. Ibrahim places him in the same pantheon with Monk, Ellington, and his Japanese musical and spiritual teachers. Playing the music of the Jazz Epistles now, he says, is as much a point of connection as it is a pure experience in its own right.

“‘Ah this Dollar Brand!’ He said, ‘Hey you guys are famous man, they play you in America as well!’ So, I thought I misunderstood, and I said, ‘No that’s not us, its not the Blue Notes, its Jazz Epistles.’ He said, I know its that Dollar Brand, it’s a pity every time he came to East London I missed him, because I worry.’ So, my sister said, ‘what do you mean you worry?’ He said I worry because he puts too much into it””.

I am suggesting that Mbizo and Ibrahim’s connection is not only through an Islamic encounter, it is also through a local and familial indigenous sound of performances or improvisational music that is born out of orphic social cultural conditions. That Ibrahim and Dyani collaborated in exile underscores the avant-garde as a theory of history as Moten correctly pointed out and this is the history of a tradition of innovations embedded in a black radical sounds system and signature. Talking about meeting some of the major musicians in the tradition, a generation preceding him and being inducted in the tradition, this time meeting the legendary pianist Mackay Dvashe and Bra Kippie Moeketsi at the Pelican Club in Orlando, Soweto, Dyani says.

Yeah. Because brother actually is like Nick’s age, you know, but since my mother had this boarding house everybody, the King Kongers, African Jazz, they used to tour, they stayed at my house. So, he asks he [Mackay Dvashe] asked how is your mother, how is the old lady, how is your brother? So, he turned around and said ‘I’m afraid you’re getting too ahead of yourself. Your brother is not like you’. And he turned around and he laughed, and he looked on the floor and he looked on me again and said, ‘Anyway you could never be like your brother, but I hope you learn.... So, I left man and as we come out Kippie comes in. So, Kippie looks at me. Kippie is older, Mackay’s generation. So, Kippie looks at me again and says to Nick, ‘Nick is welcomed, he’s passed his exam.’ In other words you have to pass your exams with these guys here, right?... All the time he’s hugging Nick and he’s looking at me and he just passes, no word, cold! So, I thought fuck, what’s this man? And then he holds the door, he turns around, he says,

“I find hope and guidance from the people who survived and played music against all odds,” Ibrahim says. “When you realize there’s no past and no future, there’s only this moment. The moment of truth that cannot be recaptured. And that is what we respect and revere when we are playing this music” (Mitter 24 April, 2017).

'You, I want to have a word with you.' 'Yeah Bra Kippie, yea. 'As I go to the door he says, 'Not now, I didn't mean now... 'Maybe next week, next year, maybe when you come back from Europe. I don't know.' I thought what the fuck is this man. And they had a jam session at Dorkay for us, you know, everybody was jamming just before we were going to Europe. And I was playing, and Kippie hadn't heard me yet, right? So, I'm playing and then we finished playing. And Kippie comes to me and says... and this is the best compliment I ever had; he just looked at me and I'm standing there I want to hear, and he ignores me and goes. Then he comes back again and says, 'I love you.'" Phewww! It's funny because immediately I felt that from now on, because Kippie is the last of those days, I said to myself from now on I've got my diploma.' This is what I'm trying to say: all those guys, Kippie, Nick, you know, Bra' Mackay... I've got my diploma I don't need to prove anything.

That one is to be known through a unique sound, as a subject, a sound that is linked to generations of players expressed through a unique dramatic and one's own voice as a musician that belongs to the autophysiopsychic community as Lateef has demonstrated, is the connection we are after. Dyani and Ibrahim's connection connects at the interstices of marabi music knowledge, they intersect at the revolutionary sound cadences of the black radical tradition of improvisers. Zim Ngqawana, a onetime student of Yusef Lateef, is an exemplar of the attentiveness to the tradition of innovation (what Dyani calls SKANGA (black musical family) or the avant-garde by arguing that for this tradition, music conception breaks with the western meaning of music as entertainment.

"My purpose in doing and trying to understand music is first to provide some healing for myself, with the hope that in the process someone else will experience the same improvement," he said, noting that in southern Africa, the word "*ingoma*" refers simultaneously to a healer, a deeply resonant drum and a type of song -- "all of which have to do with healing. In fact, in traditional society, if you showed early promise in music, you were immediately drafted into medicine" (Chicago Tribune 1996).

Like Ibrahim before him, music as a healing force and method underscores healing as an invention of styles of music that calls forth cultural repertoires that are guided by local knowledges, encompassing Islam as an African sound. More than the text, sound is an expression of embodiment for the autophysiopsychic black Avant-gardists. It is this practice

of the music as an embodiment of healing which Ibrahim and Ngqawana embraced that made them to be able to recognise how colonial modernity transformed particular aspects of African social life. The music does not seek to suture but rather it seeks to articulate ancient traditions and contemporary improvisations/innovations of sound. In the *Chicago Tribune* of 1996, Zim notes that learning with Max Rach and Yusef Lateef armed “him with method and theory for the cultural archaeology he is now engaged in,” arguing that.

“As we do our cultural work, we’re uncovering connections to the rest of the world and are affirmed by the rest of the world because we see that the traditional forms such as Marabi contain the same scales based on a semi-tone progression that you find in (Thelonius) Monk and Trane (John Coltrane) and (Charles Mingus) Mingus. Those same progressions are also found in Mexican music and deep in South America as well as the Indian ragas.”

Ingoma or the Mackey’s long song is a testament to the cross-culturality of the ontology of any culture according to sound traditions. It is this idea that undermines the materialist understanding of sociocultural formations by insisting on stretching the imaginary of a tradition. This discourse you will notice is embedded in the ideas of African authenticity inaugurated by colonialist and orientalist taxonomy of differentiation, in this case being Muslim and Africa is thought less as a foreign element rather as a layer of a sound subjectivity. The connections that Zim is drawing and comparing enables a new vocabulary, a skanga sound.

This skanga or black avant-gardist tradition is not at the same time constructed in idealist conceptions of unity as Dyani tells us, what Americans called free jazz, they as the Blue Notes, called it “fowl run” (1985) “And we were doing the fowl run, now within that so-called, to them, free jazz. They would say, ‘What is the fowl run?’ We said, ‘You’ll find out later.’” The various encounters with African American musicians were also intense in the sense of the different conceptions of music and the competitiveness associated with skills and innovations or duende. Dyani recalling an encounter with the Ornette Coleman Trio, at Ronnie Scott’s in London, states:

“Dudu [Pukwana] said, at intermission, ‘There’s Ornette! Shouting. And you know Ornette is a shy guy, everybody turned around, the whole room, ‘There’s Ornette!’

Where's your horn man? C'mon bring your horn. You're Ornette Coleman, aren't you?' Damn Dudu's running the Cape Town thing...and Ornette is kinda panicking, so we said, 'Hey Dudu leave this guy, you are embarrassing this guy.' 'He's Ornette! And Dudu's saying it to us in Xhosa, 'I'm gonna blow his head off. I've been waiting for this guy.' That's what he said, I've been waiting for you!'

Or the encounter between the Blue Notes and Miles Davis band

"I remember Nick in Zurich at Dollar's party. Dollar invited to the Miles Davis group rhythm section, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter and Tony Williams, and Wayne Shorter. Nick told Wayne Shorter right in front of us when we were at the party, just pheww! Dollar said this is Nick Moyake,' Nick holds this guy's hand. He holds it, grips it and says 'you ain't shit. What you play I played it before.' And he holds his hand; the guy is pulling his hand! We were there in this party in Zurich. Dollar Said, 'How can you do this at my party, why you are so rude to my guests?' So, Nick said, 'He ain't shit I played this before. He's coming with an attitude.'

This insistence on uniqueness of a tradition or skills or embodiment of a sound signature is at the kernel of black Islamic sonic aesthetics. What Ngqawana has called *ingoma* is at the heart of the sound of blackness as a healing truth and creative rebellion or innovation. The confrontational nature of improvised music in this case is related to the figuration of "the blackness of blackness" that is the "impossibly originary black moment, the maternal origin of this universal doubleness" (Moten 2013: 70). It is the originary moment of settler colonialism and its aspect of exile which the Blue Notes and Abdullah Ibrahim experience as the impossibility of "the denial of freedom's connection with individual voice" (Ibid).

The confrontation is less about skill as Mackey reminds us of the *duende* but rather a claim to an articulation of the blackness of blackness, the spiritual claim to a tradition and a weapon of struggle and freedom. As Dyani tells us, "So while the other guys were into Duke Ellington or Monk, these other guys they didn't see no reason to say I am influenced by Ellington or Monk, they just saw it as one family, but they saw themselves as the originators. They accepted the other black family by accepting themselves, you know?" The articulations of freedom, of the originary is what antagonizes these sound scientists, not forgetting the very conceptions of blackness that separates the African and New World. It is

the blackness of blackness or improvisation in the form of “free jazz” or “fowl run” that not only plays to the listener the same genealogy of tradition but also the expansiveness of inventions that the sounds of blackness have brought about in the face of colonial modernity, slavery and its afterlives. This music and confrontations bear testament to practices of action or embodiment of a sound signature.

Improvisation is already an improvisation of improvisation: through the oppositions implicit in the etymology, through the proscriptive and differential temporality of those oppositions; on the one hand, anarchic and ungrounded, opening a critique of traditions and Tradition, and on the other hand, no simple and naïve unplanned and nonhistorically driven, inscription: on the one hand, the very essence of the visionary, the spirit of the new, an organizational planning of and free association that transforms the material, and on the other hand, manifest in and as the material (Moten 2013: 64).

An improvisation of improvisation suggests that it is through the study of creativity or creation, the study of the tradition and its spiritual and material conditions that enables foresight in the exploration of the unknown. Unknown because improvisation is precisely the study of eliciting the future through sound creations and spontaneous composition. Study is at the core of what the Blue Notes and Akhir Dyani see as the event of new creations, “there is no event, just as there is no action, without music” (Moten 2013: 64). As Dyani says “So I wanted to be a contributor. For my people. For South Africa. And yet I am proud” (Kaganof & Dyani 1985). The event is the cut or break that leads to exile, colonial displacements which is a way of or a method of skanga music.

The archaeology that Dyani for example in the creation of the fowl run cites (“we were doing something else way revolutionary this side because now we were really taking from Mra’s point of view, the fowl run, because we all said let’s do the fowl run on them...”), tells us that the sounds of blackness of blackness meet at the conjunction of marabi and African American Jazz or avant-garde. That he cites local pioneers, Dick Khoza, Eric Nomvete, Kippie Moeketsi, Mra also known as Christopher Columbus Ngcukana, the late saxophonist Basil Coetzee was quoted saying Ngcukana was dubbed Christopher Columbus for his unfailing ability to continue discovering new sounds (SA Online 2023). What Akhir Dyani and the Blue Notes demonstrates is that careful attention to the unfolding of a tradition, studying American Jazz

in the formation of his musical career, the advantage of studying with mentors which gives the apprentice an appreciation of the internal logics of exploration as a method of accounting for the blackness of blackness, is genius.

Exploration as an Islamic mode of meaning-making, imputing value in exploration, as an “exercise of the creative and explorative imagination” is what our trio of sound scientists give to us as statements or narrations of what it means to be Muslim Africans in South Africa, in the nurture and suture of indigeneity and blackness. This is most exemplified in a constant return to Marabi as Zim Ngqawana remarked about how as a resource of traditional inventions Marabi was able to connect black soundscapes in Africa and act as a cross cultural ear-imagination to black sounds or indigenous sounds of the world. Same with Dyani for whom

Marabi comes from traditional form, you know, folk song, marabi is just a... suddenly occurred not to divide the people because when they moved to towns, this modern society, which it started to destroy us, so the speakeasy, shebeens, where now everyone will go and sit and there will be a piano there, or there will be a guitar, whatever instrument, so guys would be singing, and they just put two guilders to support that entertainer, whatever it is, they would be betting, like at an auction. So, this guy would say, ‘So with my sixpence, play that song again!’ The other guy would say, ‘No play another one, my favourite for twenty guilders,’ whatever. So, the musicians had a lot of money, ‘cos all that money was going to him, so he just had to wait for whoever has hundreds, whatever. So, these guys they were keeping the conversation, that’s why you had all the political things, you sit there and talk about, drinking African beer. It was like at a jazz club, but much more advanced, because the musician now, he has to do what he has to do, the other guy who sitting in a corner, there’s painters there, there’s these guys talking about their wives, and then the politics here and there, the son-in-law, all that was kept in that shebeen...So the marabi musician is like a griot, storing information? Exactly, this is what I’m saying marabi was all about. And I grew up under that because, where I lived in the neighbourhood, you got all types, you could see a Pondo guy, wearing a Pondo blanket, you know, and then you see a Zulu, whatever, so the whole meeting it’s like a cultural house of some kind, even in traditional ways, like we, born in the city, and

we see this guy wearing, you know, say damn! Everything was just educational. Now what was good about this marabi thing was that you had to be quiet to be able to observe that (1985).

Marabi becomes the originary take-off for the ear-imagination of the African musician in the slumyards and shebeens, in the face of the threat and act of colonial dispossession, it is, for Ibrahim “the genius ingrained in the sonic and musical creativity of marabi considering that it is borne despite of and because of the most trying conditions” (Ramphalile, Manyike & Maxaulane 2023: 12). Like Dyani and Ngqawana, Ibrahim is content to show that “some of the musical traditions considered avant-garde/ experimental and modern in contemporary music have long been established in African cultural worlds” (Ibid: 49). The sound and sentiments of the black Islamic musical tradition, the blackness of blackness in the imaginary and aural narrative of these performers is to expand the cultural repertoire exceeding the limitations of colonial cultural discourses and notions in post-colonial articulations and post-apartheid South African imaginary.

Ngqawana’s conversion to Islam in 1993 is testament of a black Islamic imaginary and sound aesthetics that inaugurates a different alternative to the “democratic breakthrough” that is usually associated with the post-colony in 1994. Instead of converting to the symbols of the new state of affairs according to the abortion of the revolutionary struggles through negotiation, Zim’s conversion to Islam becomes a phenomenological and ontological reality of blackness improvisations of ingoma. Zim demonstrates the importance of a “holistic view of music that is not separate from its broader personal and social contexts” (Shephard 2018:42). Like his predecessors Zim constructs a unique soundscape of personal voice according to the autophysiopsychic music conception by grounding his sound and “performance simultaneously in tradition and exploratory sound that transcends tradition” (Ibid: 41).

He also draws from sources such as Sufi chants (as heard on the Collective Quartet recording), far eastern flute music (as heard on his composition “Resolution”) and among many others, Latin American music (as heard in his composition “Mozambique”). Despite an audible variety of influences, Ngqawana resists categorical descriptions of his music: “It’s not a question of Africa or America” he says. “The American masters belong to my people. Duke Ellington is my father. John Coltrane is my father. I have to connect with all people in the Diaspora who do

the same thing as me, who practice the same form of expression, based on the same social conditions. I don't want to discriminate or limit myself to South Africa. The world is not South Africa" (quoted in Kaganof, 2009).

Perhaps more than what social science discourses understood to be central to musicians of the black avant-garde is that social constructions of blackness cannot be limited to vulgar ontological claims but can be understood through the perspective of the improvisation that ushers in an innovation of being. The claim to connection to the tradition and originary is testament to taking seriously not only the skills but the "marrow of form" (Mackey 1980: 57) and the "very essence of the visionary, the spirit of the new, an organizational planning of and in free association that transforms the material" (Moten 2013: 64).

In a settler colony a reorientation of the imaginary is the only vehicle of constructing or of accounting for a revolutionary practice to rupture and to distance one from the dominant status quo (Badiou). Zim points out "I was brought up as a practising Christian and attended a Presbyterian Church, but for me converting to Islam was a matter of common sense. Islam is more than just a religion; it is, like music, the very essence of life." Islam in the (post)colony is a figure associated with rupture of the Judea-Christian socio symbolic structure, insisting that blackness of meaning cannot be attained unless one has recaptured their essence as Amiri Baraka has claimed about Black Music, "New Black Music is this, find the self then kill it" (in Mackey 1992: 52).

He constantly experimented, not only with sound and form, but with decolonising the landscapes where music could be made and learned – "The possible has been tried and failed; now we have to do the impossible." That was the genesis of the Zimology Institute, but also had its roots deep in earlier initiatives he willingly acknowledged, such as Geoff Mphakathi's struggle era community music organisation in Mamelodi (Sisgwen 2011).

Black Muslims in South Africa demonstrates the fallacy of secular ideologies for inscribing themselves in the colonial status quo and its symbolics of culture as seen and heard in nationalist discourses. One way of showing the revolutionary approach to improvisation, meanings that emerge out rupture, is Zim's conceptions of music and being "[H]e called this search to know himself Zimology – and found some answers in Sufi mysticism, a philosophical

branch of Islam that was defined as a “science through which one can know how to travel into the presence of the Divine, purify one’s inner self from filth and beautify it with a variety of praiseworthy traits” (Mathe 2011).

Zimology is the study of breaking the boundaries amidst the excesses of colonialism and the embrace of the new in a situation structured in dominance. This is a trait that the reader and listener have noticed from the African Muslims that takes seriously the intellectual and spiritual as the basis for innovation in situations of domination. Zimology as a practice of the uniqueness of sound creations through *ingoma* is what enables Zim to articulate an Islam that transcends the text or discourses of being a Muslim in South Africa. As Shahab Ahmed has noticed taking sound improvisations seriously “we are able to conceive of the location of Islam in terms of the larger communicative practices of Muslims speaking as Muslims about *being Muslim* (2016: 311). *Ingoma* as Zimology attests is the articulation of being Muslims by Muslims and it should be taken seriously in South African Islamic culture that sound creations inaugurate or reveals what has hitherto been missed in the Islamic praxis, that is sound is “bearing *din*” (Ibid).

This leads us to continue our appraisal of what Ware has studied in African Muslims society as the embodiment rather discourse. Zimology as a self-exploratory and teaching method inculcates an embodiment of an African Islamic imaginary, “Zimology was Ngqawana’s own personal method of self-discovery, and at the heart of the teaching was the idea that we were to develop our own personal “-ology” throughout our lives. This was a strong contrast to the formal tuition I received at a tertiary in Cape Town” (Shephard 2018: 35). As a teacher and mentor in his own right, he founded the Zimology Institute, whose primary objective was to teach young musicians essential skills and the workings of the industry. And when the institute was vandalised and priceless instruments were damaged, he soldiered on and organised a concert that highlighted the scourge of crime in our country (Mathe 2011).

Ngqawana’s teaching approach also challenged the authoritarian role of the teacher in the conventional model of music education. He referred to “us, his students, as “fellow travellers.” I found this attitude in his teaching to be particularly beneficial to our daily improvisation session (in Shephard 2018: 37). Zimology as an avant-garde tradition, and like the African Muslim approach to classical Qur’anic schooling, embodiment and improvisation, becomes as way of articulating being a black Muslim in South Africa. As a sound subjectivity,

the black African Muslims explore the real so as to articulate the suture of indigeneity and blackness outside of contemporary cultural discourses of the post-colony.

Black Islamic soundscapes remind us that outside of social science materialist conceptions of life or the lived experience, according Zikerkandle's assertion via Mackey "because, music exists, the tangible and visible cannot be the whole of the given world. The intangible and invisible is itself part of this world, something we encounter, something to which we respond" (in Mackey 1987: 30). Our trio of black African Muslim performers have demonstrated how music or sound can and is a way of inhabiting a world outside of the contemporary and dominant meaning making structure or a transcendental system. What to me seems exciting is that this work can be opened up in other media mediums such as a documentary film, or a seminar series, and a musical performance that will celebrate these artists and their affinity to African Islamic knowledge practices. These artists show that the materialist conceptions of the world that we have relied on seems to miss most of the black Islamic imaginary that we have been charting from the introduction of these dissertation. The insistence is that to fathom freedom one has to immerse oneself on the performance of unravelling the unknown through improvisation. Hence the black Muslim subjects, unlike black African or Muslim subjects who have been conscripted into the Judea-Christian and secular socio symbolics, can inhabit another world or ear-imagination.

This chapter has shown how important everyday discourses of performers, listening to their sounds and inventions became a way of undermining or embarrassing the colonial status quo in South Africa. Sound subjects show, unlike the Cartesian or post-colonial, post-Enlightenment subjects who value consciousness and rationalist humanist assumptions, that one can inhabit both worlds. The stories, anecdotes, performances, recordings of the black Muslim across cultural imagination, operate through "Sound and Sentiment together with Sound and Symbol in such a way that the latter's metaphysical accent aids and is in turn abetted by the former's emphasis on the social meaning of sound" (Mackey 1987: 5).

What we were after was a range of implications, which stretched from colonial dispossession, slavery including its afterlives, to exile, suffering and the accentuation of inventions to announce a new real or Black Islamic sound signature. Theo Parrish already accentuated that a sound signature is a "[A] focus through arrangement, our personal language at any given moment. No one can duplicate your signature, your mark, your life" (1997). Black Islamic

sound signature tells of omissions in the South African cultural imaginary, it tells of the insistence of studying and knowing Islam through modern textual experience, instead of embracing the exploratory improvisations of sounding a cross-cultural imagination and a racist cum textualist embodiment of Islam.

The black Islamic sound and sentiment shows how listening to the marrow of forms invokes the praxis of “musical inventions are anchored to associative sounds, lyrics, myths, rituals, songs, and experiences (Wynter 185–87, 191–97). Additionally, musical inventions do not only cushion “the shock of dispossession,” they “oppose it, by reminding, at deep psychic levels, of a potential return to humanity” (McKittrick 2016: 114) as Marabi and the fowl run have directed our musical experience. Black Muslims in South Africa should make the current secular postcolonial ideologies “worry”, as Johnny Dyani’s brother said of Abdullah Ibrahim because “he puts too much into it,” the “it” here is the range of rebellious acts that conjures the spirit of revolutionary fervour or “the horn spat enraged sociologies” about the insufficiency of the dominant meaning making in a society structured in dominance.

It is to say that the simultaneously inhabiting of the invisible and the visible has a mystic thrust that the social scientist cannot fathom or make sense unless one puts too much into it, and putting too much into it is precisely the work, I hope I have shown, of the African Islamic sound signature in the post-colony. The sound subjects undermine a “Social consciousness... across racial identifications,” which “...includes physiologically and neurobiologically feeling and sensing and knowing antiblackness as a normal way of life (2016: 114). The sonics that you have been listening to is the sound of the black Muslim ear-imagination, improvisation, creative-innovation, as Wynter writes “beats and grooves and waveforms as productive sites of resistance that are relational to revolution and the affirmation of black life” (2016: 90).

Coda

The study of any phenomena and culture is intricately framed by the scholar's cultural imperative and value system, this is what it means to take a position and at the same time, asserting that there is no neutral point of view, irrespective of claims to objectivity. Black Islamic praxes is a new paradigm of politics in South Africa, it details the new intellectuality of politics away from the state and modern epistemology to introduce a new subjectivity and thought. This invention of existence occurs because of the intersection between Islam and blackness as a new imaginary of the event and structure of thought. The concept arises because of the absence of an emancipatory political project in post-colonial South Africa and this absence of emancipatory political cadences has led to a lack of thought for a better world, reflecting a broader cynicism in social sciences and politics. Anti-colonial politics for this thesis is not only concerned with state subjectivities or the disciplinary limits of a biopolitical conception of power. Rather for Black African Muslim subjects politics gives rise to new thought and subjectivities with a different conception of knowledge and power in the modern era. The meaning of being a Black African Muslim subject is to invent a new existence in post-colonial South Africa.

Black Islamic practice as a new imaginary and epistemology critiques modern knowledge because it is at the service of power domination of the white-secular Euro-American modernity. This is why the essays in this thesis have demonstrated a different epistemological order to avoid the mechanical impulse to dominate man and nature. Hence the thesis intervenes in the reproduction and persistence of colonialism in postcolonial South Africa (this is true for contemporary Africa as well) after the 'democratic breakthrough' of 1994 which has left the space of radical political thought and practices and their associated hegemonic knowledge in a state of static inertia. Therefore, Black Islamic praxes, an anti-colonial practice, invents a new epistemology and ontology, outside of the modern structure of thought with its attitudes and behaviors of a dominating liberal human subjectivity, to call forth militant politics and politics of knowledge production. This is why it is important to study the intersections between Islam and blackness in South Africa today.

Black Islamic praxes challenges the prevailing forms of philosophy, politics, culture, and religion that arise because of colonial modernity, offering a new imaginary in political and cultural discourses. It exposes the racial association between blackness and slavery, as if

blackness is what represents race or vice versa. It argues that these racial discourses and practices, which we encountered with Arab and Mediterranean Muslims before the rise of Euro-American hegemony, should be taken seriously by contemporary Muslims to avoid anti-black logics within Islam. It shows how these somatic descriptions were adopted from a Greco-Roman scholarly tradition and interpreted to be instilled into legitimate Islamic worldviews using geographical and legal discourses. This latter aspect is important particularly for Muslims in South Africa because of the persistent racialization of Black African Muslims as cultural Others; this enables Muslims to be conscious of the roots of somatic discrimination. These anti-black attitudes and behaviours have not subsided but rather proliferated because of the reproduction of Western colonialism in our late modern epoch. The importance of the black and Islamic discourses in South Africa is to demonstrate that there is no incommensurability between blackness and Islam because they are multi-layered lived experiences of culture.

As Muslims in West Africa have demonstrated, because somatic discrimination manipulates and reconfigures Islamic knowledge, the reinterpretation of Islamic legal scholarship has to be accompanied by a violent revolutionary struggle because it undermines the freedom of Muslims. That is Black African Muslims launched an armed revolutionary struggle to contest that Blackness is not antithetical to Islam and that African Muslims should not be subjected to slavery because it undermines their Islamic status and their freedom. This armed struggle was simultaneously directed against the White colonialists in the Atlantic slave trade to demonstrate that slavery is not analogous to blackness and that Muslims are free by virtue of their Islam. These twin struggles as I argue introduce a new imaginary that is knowledge of the practice of action in African, Black, and Islamic studies precisely because it shows the productivity of studying the intersection between Islam and Blackness. Black Islamic praxes antagonizes subjugative racist discrimination and it offers an approach to analysing the longer roots of somatic discrimination, extending beyond the national state territory to explore experiences in varied Islamic cultures.

This study has demonstrated how race and dehumanization developed in the rise of sovereign colonial modernity as a structure of thought that governed the knowledge of how non-Western Others were to be dominated and represented. Black Islamic praxes shows how this structure of thought psychoepistemically relies on notions of being human that are

pervasively destructive, that is it dehumanizes Others, nature, or insentient life (Africans and Muslims) and elevates the White European modern human as superior. These ideas of the human, as Black Islamic praxes have developed, cannot be determinate for African and Islamic cosmologies or modes of being in the world because the category of the nonhuman is a resistance to the hegemonic knowledge of Man. That is if the nonhuman Other, Black Africans and Islam, have been the means and instruments that enabled the formation of colonialist and imperialist modernity, then it is equivocally through this Other that we launch a resistance against modern forms of domination. Black Islamic praxes as an anti-colonial theory is the attempt to build the inner thought structures that begin with the due consideration of the Other and build or pioneer a sustainable path for non-dominating nonhumans.

By centering the somatic discrimination and racism and their reproduction in the contemporary state of affairs as forms of human subjugation, this thesis studies how a new imaginary of the black and Muslim lived experience is taught as the figure of emancipation. A new imaginary challenges the contemporary political and social thought to introduce a new culture of being in the world that privileges thought-practices outside the Western world system orders of knowledge or thought structures. A new imaginary, or a Black Islamic imaginary is a problematic to the social structures that engineer subjects through cultural and educational systems and reinforces the idea that knowledge is not the order of the status quo. Rather Black Islamic imaginary is a truth, or knowledge of the practice that engineers the subject through embodied knowledge and makes the case for classical Islamic schooling against Christian-secular education. This research demonstrates that colonialist and imperialist epistemology has been central in forming a transcendental structure that governs the epistemology of what it means to be human. Our critique of Christian missionary discourses and theologies is because of the taken-for-granted epistemology in the postcolony, especially in a colony such as South Africa. Black Islamic praxes are against the modern African and Islamic discourses that assimilate to Euro-American modern epistemology of domination. This thesis argues that this epistemology governs our thought structures and therefore our mode of subjectivity and thought, hence the event of a rupture.

As a subject of rupture with the meaning-making structures of modernity, this research studied how Black Islamic subjects approach education and culture to introduce a new lived

experience of being Black and Muslim in South Africa. This experience or consciousness results in studying new intellectual genealogies that are not founded by the colonialist and missionary colonial library, this experience is a demonstration of how the Black and Muslim experience, draws from an intellectuality that is at the intersection of Islam and blackness in the postcolony. The literary history of South Africa tends to privilege intellectuals of the colonial library and we argue that it also forecloses other imaginaries of creating new literary works and a politics of emancipation. This is because the Black African Muslim's method of textual interpretation is wedded to the conception of corporeal knowledge that Islam insists upon to create a new culture of literary productions. It is this new culture of literary production that propels the new subject of politics to break away from the existing meaning-making structure and install a new one in 'post-apartheid' South Africa. Hence this thesis contributes to the studies of literature as an imaginary that aide emancipatory subjects in a situation that is conditioned by an absence of revolutionary thoughts. The narrative of a Black Islamic imagination also contributes to the layered culture of Blackness in South Africa and enhances the cultural practice of Islam.

The Black Islamic imaginary is an emancipatory subjectivity and thought that invents a new sound signature that takes sound and music as crucial in understanding Islamic praxis. Islamic praxis has been determined by textual worldview and interpretation of the world, the thesis argues that sound is a worldly and otherworldly phenomenon that is crucial in the instituting of a sound subjectivity and inculcating a new understanding of Islam. Black Islamic sound subjectivity is a new corporal knowledge that interrogates indigenous and Islamic narratives of black performers in the postcolony in South Africa. Abdullah Ibrahim, Johnny Akhbir Dyani and Zim Ngqawana demonstrate that Black Islamic sound narratives interrogate deep histories of how sound and music are composed in the midst of settler colonial modernity in the townships and in exile. This context demonstrates that a revolutionary subjectivity through sound excavates knowledge outside of the colonial spatial limitations in order to invent a sound signature and imaginary that breaks away from the nation-state territory.

The trio of sound scientists studied the history of Marabi and jazz music in narrating how indigeneity and diasporic connections constitute a subject of the Black avant-garde in its criticisms of societal structures. What is important for this thesis is how these discourses of sound and music are omitted in most discussions about radical subjective formations and

music in South Africa, particularly because Islam is part of the postcolonial cultural imagination. Islam teaches us that conversion should be seen both as an event and a structure of thought that is nothing short of an epistemology, a deliberate, conscious, and fairly consistent way of understanding and interpreting the world through the lived experience of Black African Muslims. This way of seeing and inhabiting the material world is indeed different from the Western conception of the humanist liberal subject whose desire as we have been demonstrating in the thesis is to dominate the material world. Black Islamic sound signatures demonstrate that emancipatory sound subjectivity does not take domination as a *ground-norm* or foundational epistemology and ontology.

Black Islamic sound signatures and narratives illustrate how conversion as an anticolonial practice invents a new existence that is grounded in the revolutionary notion of freedom outside of the liberal democratic state of affairs. Whilst South Africa was going through the ‘democratic breakthrough’ the sound scientist, Zim Ngqawana converted to Islam citing a more capacious understanding of freedom that was not in the purview of state power. Islam as we have seen initiates a radical imagination in the South African cultural space, it intervenes to exhibit the multispectral or multidimensionality of the Black lived experience. This is why Black Islamic praxes shows the different constructions of Black anticolonial subjectivity through Islam. The unique invention of Black sound signatures should propel more studies of Islam and Blackness; it should open the vistas of knowledge that inheres in studying the intersections in the Black Islamic experience, particularly in postcolonial South Africa.

Furthermore, Black Islamic praxes demonstrates how a Black Islamic sound signature develops the notion that Islamic praxis does not rest on textual authority over creative and exploratory authority. Islam is a historical and nonhuman phenomenon expressed in the worldly and otherworldly notions of a culture, hence Black Islamic praxes breaks away from the modern culture of domination. The different conceptions of music that these sound scientists invoke are antithetical to capitalistic forms of accumulation and privileges improvisory and ritualistic forms of music and sound. For future research on Black African Muslims sound signatures, music, and sound is where immanence meets transcendence and it is the foundation of new figures and imaginaries of an emancipatory subjectivity.

These new forms of figures and imaginaries, as I try to show in this thesis, are important for political interventions using the intersection between Blackness and Islam. This is because to fully understand the colonial or sovereign modern conditions of domination one would have to study the culture of Islamic and African subjugation since the fifteenth-century development of modern politics, the birth of the political subject of the state. It is this modern epistemology and practice of politics that the thesis identifies as the origin of the disastrous static inertia that plagues the world today. Black Islamic praxes demonstrate that the concepts that have been the backbone of this colonialist and imperialist politics should be interrogated for one to initiate the thought of militant politics. Indeed, African and Islamic movements since the nineteenth and twentieth century particularly after independence have relied on liberal democratic and state forms of politics in order to change the historical trajectories of their nation-states.

However, a Black Islamic militant praxis argues that politics exist outside of the state and its capitalist forms of governing. The absence of emancipatory political projects after the criticisms of existing socialism have been on a downward spiral and decline, this is also the case in South Africa. Politics is a creative invention in a situation structured in dominance, a state of affairs that particularly in South Africa promotes anti-blackness in the material and existential modes of being in society. The Black Islamic militant subject of the truth of the contemporary situation should engage in politics without the state, party, or nation, this is a politics that is organized based on the problematic of the lived reality and future anticipation. This politics is suited for the young Black militants and Black Islamic subjects in South Africa. It is this introduction of a new intellectuality of politics that will initiate a decisive break with the existing status quo governing the persistence of capitulo-parliamentalism and a white settler-colonial legacy driven by a white-Euro-American epistemology.

Muslim politics in South Africa will fail to accede to the level of breaking away from the status quo if Blackness is not taken seriously as a lived material-spiritual condition that will bring forth revolutionary change. Muslims in South Africa have to learn from this research to create conditions for Muslim unity and organizing based on the concept of Black Islamic praxes. Praxis has the advantage of exploring multiple practices without being dogmatic or orthodox about uniqueness as we risk following Western modernity's dialectics that enable genocide and colonialism. Indeed, Black Islamic praxes insists that racial taxonomy in South Africa was

initiated by settler-colonialism, however in the postcolony Muslims should seek to destroy these cultural, racist, ethnicist, factionalist, and capitalistic forms of Islamic organization and praxis. The imaginary of the Muslim in South Africa cannot be pigeonholed in the nation-state imaginary, the borders of a territory do not determine the Islamic world rather this Islamic imaginary is malleable, hence it adds to the capacity for unmentionable freedom or emancipation.

A study such as this one is important as much as it is foundational for Muslims, particularly Black African Muslims in postcolonial South Africa. Hence, I insisted in the introduction that these essays have a common thread of ideas guided by the concept of Black Islamic praxes, and because praxes suggest multiple praxis and thoughts, the essays should be read separately to delineate particular aspects of the intersection between Blackness and Islam. This research will yield a manuscript and at the same time suggest that further research will have to be done on aspects such as racist discourses and practices. Anti-blackness, contrary to what Indian, Malay, and different African Muslims in South Africa, racism is not only structured by somatic discrimination but because of the colonialist status quo it can undermine Black African Muslims' freedom. The capitalist structure in South Africa excludes the majority of Blacks particularly Africans, which means in terms of organizing Black African Muslims find themselves at a disadvantage and we cannot allow a situation where Indian and Malay Muslims control all Islamic institutions no matter what. Racism and capitalism are detrimental, that is what we mean when we advocate that Blackness should be taken seriously when Muslims are thinking about emancipatory change, and the Black African Muslim is the militant of this societal transfiguration. Research studies should proliferate as we have also provided a methodology of connecting Arab somatic discrimination and Euro-American racism and shown the difference and how Muslim Africans dealt with it.

This thesis provides further avenues for research, the study of culture is of importance particularly because in South Africa the nationalist imaginary and symbols have been occluded and engineered by the missionary and white secular thought structures and therefore dictate discourses of cultural productions. Hence, a thorough understanding of how settler colonialism instituted a culture of domination and why most Islamist, Pan-Africanist, or Black discourses are part of the colonial library is important to know for the student of Black Islamic thought-practices. Far from being a foreign religion for Black African Muslims,

Islam sutures indigeneity and Blackness, making cultural discourses inhere in the lived experience, their traditions, and the capacity to practice Islam. Here the Muslim scholar or researcher should not take it for granted that Islam is foreign or originates in Africa, rather it becomes important to delineate how the intersection between Islam and Blackness boasts the capacity to create cultural practices that are not exclusionary or extreme in representing their uniqueness.

The development of cultural thought-practices will ensure that no one Muslim group imposes its cultural understanding on another, rather it becomes important that we analyse the Muslim World in order to see how cultural coexistence should be built and organized. Indeed Black Islamic Praxes is particularly interested in these solutions because it is only in an attempt to free Muslims and Blacks or the whole of (non)humanity in the world that cultural coexistence can be approached. It is from an emancipatory project that real Muslim culture can flourish in a world dominated by the Western modern structure of epistemology and ontology. Black Islamic praxes is a restructuring critique of modernity.

The intersection between Blackness and Islam must also challenge Black African Muslims in South Africa to create literatures that will form part of cultural interpretations of Islamic legal, poetic, historical, sociological, and political texts. This literature will be a significant addition to the practices of Black African Muslims, the opportunity for further research is indeed conducive in this aspect. One may think of some of the texts that I have used in this thesis: *Beyond Timbuktu: Intellectual History of Muslim Africa* (2016) by Ousmane Kane a scholar who attended Madrasa (Islamic schooling) and secular education and thus provides a brilliant intricate detail on the history of knowledge transmission in West Africa.

I have in mind Rudolf T. Ware's *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge in West Africa* (2014), Ware III was trained in History and uses Anthropology methods. This text I have relied on because of Ware's wonderful study of the Senegambian Revolt combining it with classical Islamic schooling, he shows how an embodiment of knowledge is significant in a struggle for freedom, that is being Black and Muslim, he is an African American scholar who focuses on Africa. Also, Shahab Ahmed's existential-phenomenologist and postmodernist study, *What is Islamic: The Importance of Being Islamic* (2016) researches the cultural space he calls from the Balkans to Bengal complex, that is "from the Balkans through Anatolia, Iran, and Central Asia down and across Afghanistan and North India to the Bay of

Bengal” (2016: 71). The three will only suffice for now, and I am not suggesting these studies or proposing a heavily reliance on their influence. Black African Muslims in South Africa could produce similar texts but what is important is to pay close attention to my thesis in order to analyse and cultivate cultural practices that will lead to producing such texts. We live in a secular-liberal democracy, the point is to transform this society at the level of subjectivity and thought, and in this process, the researcher will find plenty of material and phenomena to work through.

Furthermore, those Muslim militants hell-bent on restoring the dignity of Black African people and Muslims in the world, including university scholars and intellectuals working on emancipatory projects will greatly benefit by extending the theoretical and philosophical contributions of Black Islamic subjects. As we have argued politics is in need of a new intellectuality from thought to subjective actions, and organization of politics without party will have to take seriously other imaginaries that are not always represented in the world; new subjects are a must for any Revolutionary change. Social sciences are guided by modern epistemology, it will not yield any results for the revolutionary subject precisely because they analyse what exists instead of advocating what should be. In other words, social sciences have contributed to state subjectivities, which is why there is a political and theoretical disorientation in the world, Africa, and particularly in postcolonial South Africa of emancipatory political practices.

Lastly, because Black Islamic praxes is an anticolonial theory that inaugurates an invention of existence or a new materially and spiritually grounded imaginary, the approach or method as well as the aims of this thesis must be used to build our schools for our children. No Muslim school is going to function unless we think very clearly about the intersection between Blackness and Islam, Africa’s rich Islamic heritage of Islamic learning, and the contextual-existential, and material challenges we face. This is of importance, for the Black African Muslims in South Africa whether in the rural, township, or suburban areas must initiate a process whereby our critique of the modern-secular status quo will work along with Islamic learning from an indigenous African perspective. In this way, we stand a good chance of *establishing Islam* as it is incumbent on any Muslim who lives in a world that is hegemonically against Africa, Islam, and all those who are dominated, to bring about emancipatory change.

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