Introduction

AN EMPIRE STATE OF MIND

ON JANUARY 20, 2009, Barack Hussein Obama was inaugurated as the forty-fourth president of the United States. On that day, perfectly planned to coincide with the national celebration of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, more people gathered in Washington, D.C., than for any other event or protest in the nation's history, eclipsing even the original March on Washington, which Dr. King made as the highpoint of American political theater. As hundreds of thousands of people gathered, tens of millions more watched on television to witness the inauguration of the first admittedly Black president in the nation's history.

Also present that day were other forces that were visible but unseen, felt but not heard. For the ghosts of America's past and present hovered all over the nation. The ghosts of Frederick Douglass and Ida B. Wells, of lynching and of slavery. There were also the ghosts of the silent wars of mass incarceration and the living dead in poverty, the ghosts of the nameless war dead in Iraq, Af–Pak, and other unnamed places, as well as the looming specter and the phantom figure of the Muslim. For many, Obama's election was a national exorcism, a purging of the past and a reckoning with the present, as the empire was reeling from massive discontent, economic anxieties, and the perpetual wars fought in its name.

While the spirit of Dr. King was already present, the figure of Malcolm X was also conjured, if only to try to exorcize him from the national past and the nation's future. A key and telling moment occurred when Senator Dianne Feinstein, of California, gave the introductory remarks at the inauguration, saying, "Those who doubt the supremacy of the ballot over the bullet can never diminish the power engendered by nonviolent struggles for justice and equality—like the one that made this day possible." Feinstein continued, saying that future generations

would "look back and remember that this was the moment that the dream that once echoed across history from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial finally reached the walls of the White House."[1]

Feinstein's roughly two-and-a-half-minute speech was emblematic of the larger frame through which the country and the world were now to view Obama and, by extension, the United States. With the ghost of King hovering, Feinstein celebrated King by mentioning the "non-violent struggles" that had made the day possible and declared that the "dream" King had expressed in his 1963 March on Washington speech had now come true and reached the walls of the White House through the election of Obama. But as the nation sought to commemorate and frame the election of a Black president through Dr. King and the Civil Rights movement, Feinstein also conjured Malcolm X in her reference to "the ballot or the bullet." Using the phrase that is the title of one of his most iconic speeches, Malcolm argued in it that Black electoral participation was futile, that the United States posed "itself as the leader of the free world," and that this contradiction led him to conclude that Black freedom would come only by using what he called "new methods," one of which was internationalizing the problems of Black peoples in the United States by moving from a civil rights framework to a human rights one and getting out of "the jurisdiction of Uncle Sam" and into the Third World, "where our African brothers can throw their weight on our side, where our Asian brothers can throw their weight on our side, where our Latin American brothers can throw their weight on our side."[2]

Not surprisingly, on the inauguration day of a Black president, both King and Malcolm X—the twin poles of Black redemptive possibility— were conjured and invoked. And the stark choices they purported to represent no longer seemed relevant with the election of Obama. For the choices between integration and separation, dream and nightmare, Civil Rights and Black Power, patriot and internationalist were now seemingly irrelevant, for as Feinstein suggested, King's and Civil Rights' emphasis on the ballot and nonviolence in contrast with what was assumed about Malcolm and the bullet was vindicated by history through the election of Obama to the White House.

But in celebrating King and Civil Rights that day, Feinstein not surprisingly viewed King through a narrow interpretive lens, invoking a frozen and ossified memory of him—one in which he is remembered as

the "I Have a Dream" American, not the insurgent anti-imperialist who changed his views in 1967 and linked racism and U.S. militarism, vehemently protesting the Vietnam War and calling the United States "the biggest purveyor of violence in the world," only to be assassinated in 1968.[3] While King's internationalism and criticism of U.S. society were ignored in favor of a more accommodating image of him, Feinstein invoked Malcolm in order to dismiss him not only because of his call for a Black internationalism that tied the fates of Black peoples with decolonization in the Third World but also because of his penetrating critiques of U.S. foreign policy. In celebrating that pacifist memory of King and ignoring and dismissing the penetrating depth of his and Malcolm's thought, not only did Feinstein and the political establishment frame Obama's victory with the triumphalist narrative of Civil Rights, but more important, Obama's victory also served as a vehicle to co-opt, contain, and strip away any of the remaining vestiges of internationalist impulses emanating from Black political culture.

But in the logic of Civil Rights, Feinstein was suggesting and reaffirming that, yes, Black peoples do have a stake in this country and that the feeling is mutual—that not only does their vote count, but it also matters. The narrative of Civil Rights has tremendous purchase and traction in the United States, because it has been used to rewrite the 1960s, underwrite the white backlash and the "culture wars" of the 1980s and '90s, and cement the politics of the New Right, which assumes that race has been transcended and that the United States has fulfilled its national destiny. Most important, the Civil Rights narrative has assumed that Black freedom could be achieved within the legal frameworks and political institutions of the United States.[4]

As scholars and historians have shown, Civil Rights has also had a flip side to it that has had to do with its assumptions about U.S. foreign policy and Black peoples' relationship to the rest of the world. When it emerged from the Cold War and the Red Scare of communism in the aftermath of World War II, Civil Rights assumed that the United States' moral standing in winning the hearts and minds of the decolonizing nations of Africa and Asia (which includes what is now the "Middle East") was linked to its treatment of Black peoples in the United States. In exchange for legislation on education, interstate transportation, voting rights, and other measures, the Civil Rights establishment

supported an aggressive U.S. foreign policy in the name of anticommu-
nism, including U.S. covert interventions and wars in Africa and Asia to
prevent Soviet influence from spreading there, because communism was
viewed by the United States as a bigger threat to the Third World than
colonialism.[5]

But while Civil Rights has assumed that Black freedom is attain-
able within U.S. legal frameworks and political institutions, critical Black
internationalists have historically questioned that assumption, seeing
white supremacy as a global phenomenon and looking to international
struggles in the Third World as lenses for their own battles with white
power, exploring the tactics and strategies of those struggles, and also
seeking solace and solidarity by expanding their racial community of
belonging. And while Civil Rights has assumed that the United States
has been a force for good in the world, whether it be through fight-
ing and eradicating communism or any other perceived threats to U.S.
national security, Black internationalists have been skeptical and have
even outright challenged U.S. foreign policy, viewing it as similar to
European colonialism, as an extension of Manifest Destiny and a racist
logic that it practices at home.[6]

The election of Obama only served to further intensify the eupho-
ria around the narrative of Civil Rights, as his election suggested to many
that white supremacy no longer exists in a "postracial" America and that
Black freedom not only *can* be realized in the United States but already
has been. In affirming the triumphalist narrative of Civil Rights and
seeking to create domestic consensus of racial harmony, Obama's elec-
tion also sought to project the United States as a force for good in the
world, making Black internationalism irrelevant or, through the Kenyan-
descended Obama, as now being embodied in the larger narrative of
American universalism. In contrast to what many perceived to be a reck-
less and rogue unilateralism of President Bush in the post-9/11 era, the
election of Obama was seen as a calming balm, a kind of national heal-
ing, as the United States could now be presented as a moral beacon to
the world that spreads democracy and freedom while restoring faith to
those at home.

The containment of Black internationalism and the attempt to
erase the possibility of it are recurrent features within U.S. political cul-
ture. In the post-9/11 climate, this containment has had to do with the

current moment of U.S. empire, which views "Islam" and "the Muslim" as the defining threats to U.S. interests and to the global order that the United States has assumed to defend. With Blackness now the face of a U.S. empire in a state of permanent war with the Muslim Third World through occupation, overt war, drone attacks, the gulag at Guantánamo, and other covert means, Obama's presidency raises compelling questions about not only the relationship of Blackness to U.S. imperial power, but also of the relationship of Blackness to Islam and the Muslim Third World. Not surprisingly, it was Malcolm X who Feinstein conjured, only to dismiss. Why? Because not only is Malcolm's "Ballot or the Bullet" speech his most well-known meditation on the futility of Black electoral participation and the urgent need to internationalize Black freedom dreams, but also because it is Malcolm X whose legacy reveals a rich and compelling history between Blackness, Islam, and the Muslim Third World, a history and legacy that has not only profoundly shaped Black radical thought, but a history and legacy that provides a powerful challenge to the post-9/11 era and the election of Obama.[7]

Through Malcolm's conversion to Islam and his critical Black internationalism, he has become a historical lens and a contemporary frame for understanding U.S. power, the global dimensions of white supremacy, and the relationships between Black freedom struggles in the United States and those in Africa and elsewhere in the Muslim Third World. *Black Star, Crescent Moon* explores this political and cultural history of Black Islam, Black radicalism, and the Muslim Third World in the post–World War II era, when Black freedom struggles in the United States and decolonization in the Third World were taking place.[8] In probing ideas about Black identity, tactics and strategies of liberation, art and aesthetics, questions around national belonging and citizenship, and the global nature of white supremacy, *Black Star, Crescent Moon* examines the history of Black Islam, Black radicalism, and the Muslim Third World within the context of the Civil Rights and Black Power eras, the post–Civil Rights era of mass incarceration, and the post–Cold War and post-9/11 eras.

Largely due to Malcolm, but also because it is deeply rooted in Black resistance to New World slavery, the relationship between Blackness and Islam has raised a tremendous amount of anxiety within the larger U.S. national imagination, as it continues to circle and even haunt

contemporary ideas and debates around U.S. political culture.[9] In the post-9/11 climate, in which some are seemingly Muslim simply by association, Obama himself has been "smeared" with the "slur" of being Muslim. Throughout his campaign and even as president, the rumor and innuendo around Obama have created a climate in which 61 percent of Americans believe either that he is a Muslim or that he might be, according to an August 2010 PEW poll.[10] And there is so-called evidence to back it up, whether it is the focus on his middle name (Hussein), his father's identity as a Muslim, the short time he lived in Indonesia during his childhood and attended a madrassa (school) there, the famous *60 Minutes* episode during the 2008 primary in which Ohio voters expressed fear that he might be a "Muzz-lum," and the infamous *New Yorker* cover, the specter of Islam in the post-9/11 climate haunts not only U.S. national identity and the larger West but also that it has been projected onto Obama in interesting ways that reveal an even deeper anxiety about the history of the relationship between Blackness and Islam. For to be Black is one thing in America that marks you as *un*-American, but to be Black *and* Muslim is quite another, as it marks you as *anti*-American, suggesting that potentially Obama is not the Manchurian candidate of the twentieth century but an Arabian candidate in the twenty-first, an executive fifth column poised to overthrow the United States.

Black, Red, and Green Scares

Just as previous Black figures, political orientations, and intellectual traditions sought to challenge European and white supremacist authority on knowledge, truth, and history, Malcolm himself was deeply engaged with the historical record. Not only did he recount the history of European and U.S. atrocities against Black and Third World peoples, but also as his Pan-Africanist perspectives developed, he diligently cited the denial and theft of Black history and identity, the loss of language and name, and the vulgarization of Africa as "savage," as he implored Black peoples in the United States to reconnect with the African continent. As he said, "You left your mind in Africa!"[11] For Malcolm and for Black Islam more generally, a central part of this historical recovery had to do with conversion to Islam, which has reclaimed the power to redefine

oneself, to change from a "slave name" to the "X" (the unknown), and then to the "original" Muslim name. In this way, Islam became a vehicle for Malcolm and other Black converts to reject the master narrative of slavery—and by extension America—and to redefine themselves from property to person, and from slave to human. For these converts, Islam has become a vehicle for a kind of return to a preslavery past, a reclamation project that has sought to connect Black peoples in the United States to those on the African continent and beyond, restoring a sense of history and the past that was violently stolen.

When Black Islam emerged as a powerful force within Black radical circles and struggles in the post–World War II era, it challenged the dominant Cold War liberalism of the time through its critique of a domesticated framework for Black freedom, its aggressive anticommunist foreign policy, and its formation of the Christian-dominated Civil Rights movement. For many, Islam was seen as "the Black Man's religion," an alternative form of a radical Black consciousness that was fundamentally at odds with what was perceived to be the integrationist goals of Black Christianity, a consciousness that was internationalist in nature and aligned itself with the national liberation movements of the Third World.

Black Star, Crescent Moon explores the profound circulation of ideas that emerged between Black radical thought and the Muslim Third World in the post–World War II period, ideas that were inspired by the politics of decolonization and antiracism. From Harlem to Cairo, Mecca to Bandung, Algiers to Baghdad, and in places in between, it was through the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and others that the Muslim Third World has come to occupy a central place within the Black radical imagination. For Malcolm X and others, not only did Islam tie Africa to Asia, but it would also become the bridge between Black peoples in the United States and those on the African continent. As Malcolm X said, "Islam is the greatest unifying force in the Dark World today. . . . We here in America were of the Moslem world before being brought into slavery, and today with the entire dark world awakening, our Moslem brothers in the East have a great interest in our welfare."[12]

Whether it be through the interactions and alliances of Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and others with the Muslim Third World in the 1950s

and 1960s, or the ways in which Black Power politics, cinema, and literature have been influenced and inspired by the politics and culture of the Muslim Third World of Algeria and Iraq, or the ways in which Muslim artists such as Rakim, Mos Def, and Public Enemy have used hip-hop culture as a platform from which to speak truth to power against the violent forces of the post–Civil Rights era, in *Black Star, Crescent Moon* I explore the ways in which these interactions and imaginings have helped to map out and shape the contours of the Muslim International, which reveals the rich and shared histories among Black Muslims, Black radicals, and the politics of anticolonialism in the Muslim Third World. In mapping these intertwined histories and overlapping diasporas, I hope to reveal the ways in which these activists and artists have envisioned themselves not as national minorities but as global majorities, as they have poetically linked themselves with larger communities of resistance that transcend the limiting structures of the modern nation-state.

Part of my interest has to do with exploring the ideological similarities between the current "War on Terror" and the emergence of the Cold War in the late 1940s, both of which have radically altered domestic and international politics. Henry Luce's seminal 1941 essay "The American Century" and the more recent ideological manifesto known as the Project for a New American Century, put forth by the New Right in the post–Cold War era, have in some ways become the unofficial philosophical blueprints for U.S. empire.[13] And so in exploring the relationships between the Cold War era and the "War on Terror," I am interested in the kinds of alliances, imaginings, and possibilities that have been thought of, forged, and animated through politics and art (literature, cinema, hip-hop) by the relationship of Blackness to Islam and the Muslim Third World and what these might suggest about race and nationhood, being and belonging. In exploring these histories, I am interested in how they might reveal the logics between the Cold War and the "War on Terror" and how they expose the ideological rationales for the emergence and continuation of U.S. power in the post–World War II era and into the twenty-first century.

For in many ways, American imperial culture is really a struggle to define how race is going to operate in any given historical period, whether as in the anticolonialism and national liberation movements that defined much of the twentieth century or in the neoliberalism that has

come to define the twenty-first. So when the United States, a country so ambivalent and unresolved regarding its own troubled past around Native genocide and African enslavement, became the new superpower, supplanting Europe in the post–World War II era, the unaddressed questions around race and the fissures and fractures that had been created domestically played themselves out within an international context as America had to contend with the racial realities abroad—a complex dynamic in which the sins committed at home sought redemption globally.

In the current global order, which has long been structured along the lines of race, the "War on Terror" continues to replay the unresolved racial dramas of U.S. power, as a Black president and an imperial multiculturalism project U.S. power as a benevolent force, simultaneously silencing antiracist movements domestically. But this is not the first time this tension has occurred. In fact, with the end of World War II and the dawning of the Cold War, the United States used the threat of communism as a proxy for race when it sought to replace Europe as a global power in the era of decolonization and national liberation movements. Using "anticommunism" (via the Truman Doctrine) to fulfill American imperial desire through interventions in the Third World, the United States destabilized the burgeoning anticolonial and anti-imperialist movements taking place in Asia and Africa. The "communist threat" also achieved its domestic goals around race by fracturing very powerful alliances being forged by U.S.-based Blacks who sought to tie their claims for racial justice to those within the Third World. As a result, the rhetoric of "anticommunism" birthed a heightened American nationalism, as influential Black liberals who sought to gain concessions on domestic civil rights supported violent American foreign policy throughout Africa and Asia. This fractured an emergent Black internationalism by containing antiracism within a national framework, and it created new kinds of imperial citizens during a new period of empire building. But it also isolated and increased the domestic repression of Black activists such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Paul Robeson, among others, who linked the legacies of slavery to colonialism in the Third World as a means for systemic change rather than reform against Jim Crow segregation, disenfranchisement, and civil death.[14]

Similarly, in the current "War on Terror," the rhetoric of "terrorism" has also become a proxy for race, generating tremendous political

and ideological capital. As the embodiment of the "terrorist," the Muslim haunts the geographic and imaginative spaces of U.S. empire, a specter and menace not only to U.S. national identity but also to the global community the United States claims to defend. The tortured figure of the Muslim mobilizes a variety of constituencies both nationally and internationally in the service of American imperial designs. Whether the United States is sanctioning perpetual war, subverting any remaining due process, legalizing torture, "freeing Muslim women," or mobilizing Christian evangelicals, liberal multiculturalists, right-wing extremists, New Right culture warriors, and anti-immigrant xenophobes, the figure of the Muslim has been used to cultivate tremendous ideological ground by containing and limiting the scope of dissent, forging an imperial citizenry, masking structural inequalities and massive economic instability through the creation of a global security state, and reinforcing the philosophical basis of "color blindness" by promoting an American triumphalism in which a pan-racial enemy (the Muslim) threatens a multicultural America.

In many ways, as Anouar Majid, Gil Anidjar, Talal Asad, and Junaid Rana write, the very idea of the West emerges from and through the figure of the Muslim, which was Europe's archetypal Other before 1492, the year of Spain's expulsion of the Moors. For it was through the Muslim that the modern concept of race and its structuring of national identity was born. As Europe and the idea of "the West" began to cohere around concepts of whiteness and Christianity, race and religion deeply informed each other, so as European expansion led to colonialism and slavery, "the world's non-European natives or religions were stamped with the taint of Muslim impurity."[15] As a result, the idea of Islam and Muslims has represented a perpetual strangeness to the West and to whiteness, occupying a set of meanings that has continued until today. Although 9/11 is what seems to have raised the specter of Islam in relation to the West, a genealogy of the idea of race reveals that the Muslim—as the Other to a normative whiteness—has not only haunted the very the foundation of the West since its inception but has also given the West (now Europe and the United States) meaning, defining who is civilized and who is savage, who is democratic and who is autocratic, who is peaceful and who is violent, who is human and who is not.[16]

Lending truth to Fanon's claim that "Europe is literally the creation of the third world,"[17] one could argue that in the current moment, Europe and the United States are creations of the Muslim Third World. Whether we consider the centuries-long project of Western modernity and conquest, or the current wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere, or the "culture wars" and rampant Islamophobia in Europe and the United States around immigration, the banning of the veil, the controversy over the building of mosques (including the "Ground Zero" mosque), the hysteria over and fear of "terrorism," or congressional and parliamentary hearings and investigations on "radicalization," Islam and the Muslim Third World clearly provide tremendous political, ideological, and material capital for Europe and the United States.

Be that as it may, in *Black Star, Crescent Moon* I am interested in a very different history of ideological and political influence, one in which the Muslim Third World framed and inspired a radical anti-imperialist *challenge* to American and European power and the ways that this has shaped other histories and narratives and constructed other worlds and worldviews, particularly within the Black radical imagination. But Black engagement with the politics of the Muslim Third World carries with it both potential pitfalls and possibilities, in particular because of the specter of Orientalism. In his magisterial tome *Orientalism*, Edward Said argued that Europe and the West have constructed ideas about "the Muslim East" as irrational, savage, uncivilized, and despotic, not only to justify Western control over these regions and their resources, but also to define the West as rational, civilized, and democratic. As a racial discourse that has defined the white Westerner as superior to the nonwhite Muslim Other, Orientalism carries with it a will to power that was closely and intimately tied to continued Western colonial control and imperial domination over the Muslim Third World.

But as Black writers, artists, activists, and others have connected themselves in various ways to "the Orient" of the Muslim Third World, they have not had the same relationship to imperial power and, in fact, have been victims themselves of European racial discourses and New World slavery. This relationship of Blackness to white power, however, has not meant that Black artists and activists have not participated in the logic of Orientalism and have not employed Orientalist rhetoric in their travel diaries, slave narratives, political writings, and art. In fact, as

numerous scholars have shown, what might be called Black Orientalism and the embrace of the tropes of "savage" and "irrational" Muslims have occurred over centuries in a broad range of the writings and ideas of Pan-Africanists, Black Christian evangelicals, the Civil Rights establishment, the Black Left, and into the present-day imperial multiculturalism where the Black political establishment has embraced the rhetoric of the "War on Terror."[18]

Though Black writers, artists, scholars, and activists have mobilized and invoked Orientalist tropes and ideals, unlike the white West, they clearly have not had the will to power over the Muslim Third World or the brutal means to achieve it. And though Black Orientalist discourse clearly does not have the same intention or impact as classical Orientalism, it does in some ways serve to legitimize the Orientalist project more broadly. For just as a Black president is thought to be "proof" of a "postracial" United States, which erases the stigma of whiteness from U.S. empire, Black participation in Orientalist tropes can suggest the erasure of white supremacy as well, while also suggesting that these racist ideas about the Muslim Other contain some "truth" that justifies the West's violent control of the Muslim Third World.

Black Star, Crescent Moon explores an alternative cultural and political history of Blackness, Islam, and the Muslim Third World that complicates any simplistic view of these histories, narratives, and ideas. For in these pages are found redemptive visions in which Black radicals—both Muslims and not—have linked themselves, their art, and their activism politically and symbolically with the decolonization taking place in the Muslim Third World. Unlike the white West, which has used the Muslim Third World as an exotic locale or a timeless place serving as a backdrop to resolving white anxieties, the histories of resistance in *Black Star, Crescent Moon* reveal powerful forms of Black agency that have not legitimized Orientalism or concealed its racist origins. Instead these Black thinkers, activists, and communities have sought to *reveal* white supremacy as a global phenomenon that not only has subjugated the Muslim Third World but has also perpetuated the continuing legacies of slavery and genocide in the Americas.

Numerous scholars have written about the deep and enduring history of internationalism and solidarity between Black activists and organizations in the United States and those in the broader Third World

of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[19] Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century internationalists such as Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, Edward Wilmot Blyden, Marcus Garvey, the African Blood Brotherhood, and the first Pan-African Congresses expressed what could be viewed as early Black Nationalist sentiments and Pan-Africanist hopes that imagined Africa as a promised land of redemption for the diaspora. And as the twentieth century witnessed a rising U.S. expansionism and deepening engagement in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, U.S.-based Black activists, such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, Claudia Jones, Robert Williams, Malcolm X, and Angela Davis, and organizations such as the Council on African Affairs, the Revolutionary Action Movement, and the Black Panther Party continued to wave the banner of internationalism with the Third World, viewing their own plight of Jim and Jane Crow segregation and racial violence as part of a global struggle against white supremacy.

In linking the struggle for Black freedom in the United States with the anticolonial struggles of the Third World, Black political culture has situated this solidarity within the crucible of the centuries-long colonial violence and racial slavery of the West. As Nikhil Singh suggests, it's important to see Black liberation struggles in the United States, particularly after World War II, as part and parcel of the broader global struggle for decolonization that consumed Africa, Asia, and Latin America. For to see the Black Left during the 1950s or the freedom struggles in the early 1960s and on into Black Power as distinct from Third World decolonization and a global struggle of antiracism is to replicate the very idea that these movements sought to challenge and tear down: the mythic idea of American exceptionalism that presents the United States' position of global supremacy as distinct and separate from European expansion and colonialism. Instead, what radical Black political thought in the post–World War II moment sought to claim was a terrain that laid bare connections between the United States and Europe to a history of racist domination, colonialism, and control throughout the world. For as Singh argues, the failure to recognize this link "further prevents us from recognizing that perhaps the most consistent and enduring strand of modern black activism has been the opposition to imperialism and colonialism."[20] In tying Black freedom to a global struggle against white power and capitalist control, *Black Star, Crescent Moon* situates

U.S. imperial culture not simply as tangential to the rise of European colonialism but vehemently and violently complicit with it.

Between Enemy Lines: The Muslim International

In *Black Star, Crescent Moon* I examine power and resistance through a broad range of lenses and an eclectic set of practices, from social movement history and the prison to cinema, documentary culture, literature, and hip-hop, revealing what I am calling the Muslim International. Having shaped and been shaped by U.S.-based Black liberation struggles and Third World decolonization in the post–World War II era, the Muslim International is measured by what Aimé Césaire has called "the compass of suffering,"[21] connecting geographies of violence and shared territories of struggle against racial terror, global capital, and war.

In mapping a terrain in which the "First World" and the "Third World" have intersected, overlapped, and bled into each other through slavery, colonialism, migration, and war, *Black Star, Crescent Moon* reveals the beautiful struggles and poignant narratives of rebellion that have shaped the shared histories of Black Islam, Black radicalism, and the Muslim Third World through the Cold War and decolonization, the Civil Rights and Black Power eras, the post–Civil Rights era and mass incarceration, the post–Cold War 1990s and the "Clash of Civilizations," and into the post-9/11 era of the perpetual "War on Terror." As such, *Black Star, Crescent Moon* explores the Muslim International through artists, activists, movements, and popular culture, including Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, Third Cinema, Sam Greenlee, Black Power, Gang Starr, Public Enemy, the Black Arts Movement, the film *The Battle of Algiers*, and Muhammad Ali, to name a few.

In exploring and revealing the histories and narratives of resistance that have shaped and are shaped by the Muslim International, *Black Star, Crescent Moon* challenges Paul Gilroy's conception of internationalism and the Black Atlantic by viewing the histories between Black Islam, Black radicalism, and the Muslim Third World as part of the broader history of the Afro-diasporic imagination.[22] While Gilroy understandably examines the histories of slavery and Jewish persecution as central threads within the unfolding narrative of modernity and its attendant racial violence, he ignores the ways in which Black activists, writers, and

artists have sought alliance with, allegiance to, and affirmation from the anticolonial politics of the broader Muslim Third World. By exploring these narratives and legacies, *Black Star, Crescent Moon* reveals a fuller and more robust history of the Afro-diasporic imagination and the histories of Black internationalism.

For it is more than ironic that diasporas have been imagined as spaces that house and absorb those peoples who are what Partha Chatterjee has called the fragments of the nation—those who, along with their histories, are silenced by and excluded from the national community. But just as nations have their fragments and exclusions, so too do diasporas and imagined communities—silences that are revealed when we understand history through what Earl Lewis has called "overlapping diasporas."[23] In this way in *Black Star, Crescent Moon*, the political and cultural histories told of Malcolm X in Egypt, Mecca, and Bandung, of Black Power politics and culture in Algeria, Palestine, and Iraq, and of the poet–rapper Rakim Allah in Iraq, Mecca, and Medina, which, while silenced within the histories of U.S. nationalism and the Black Atlantic, are made legible through the Muslim International.

In this way, the Muslim International acts as a permeable contact zone, sharing territories of struggle with the larger Afro-diasporic imagination, in which ideas about community, resistance, and belonging can be engaged. And unlike Gilroy's conception of Black internationalism, which ironically replicated the very problem it sought to challenge by replacing one geographic entity (the nation-state) with another (the Black Atlantic), the Muslim International is not geographically located. Instead it is composed of not only multiple and overlapping diasporas that have resulted from slavery, colonialism, and migration, but also by communities and collectives that have been shaped by uneven and disparate relationships to nation-states, capitalism, and imperial power, a zone of struggles and solidarity in which new kinds of politics emerge.

Similar to how the Muslim Third World is composed of non-Muslims and nonbelievers, Black Islam in the United States—primarily through Malcolm X—has influenced and shaped non-Muslim Black radical politics in groups such as the Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM), the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and the Black Panther Party, as well as artists, writers, and activists within Black freedom struggles and beyond. The Muslim International, then,

shapes and is shaped by the convergent histories and narratives that are central to the shared struggles of these overlapping diasporas. For these diverse histories and narratives are what influence the various modes of resistance and forms of political mobilization that have continued to challenge power in enduring ways. It is here that the politics of the Muslim International is revealed and elaborated, a site of contact and difference, within and across territories, a perpetual border zone where ideas about justice, agency, and self-determination take root and are given shape.

As such, the Muslim International is not monolithic; it even resists homogeneity and encourages radical difference, for it is difference that not only reflects positions and subjectivities but also reveals the struc- tures and forces that seek to define and delimit resistance and opposi- tion, oftentimes along the lines of nationhood, gender, race, class, and language. As such, the Muslim International is not universalist, nor is it cosmopolitan in the European humanist tradition. Embodying and carrying with it a multiplicity of ideas and actors, the Muslim Interna- tional is not an ontological given, nor is it some transcendent, timeless ideal. Because it is produced by national boundaries, racial categories, class dynamics, gendered forms of control, legal constructions, imperial wars, and neoliberal contexts, the Muslim International does not ignore these powerful forces. Instead it represents a shape-shifting and fluid demand for subjectivity in the face of modernity's horror. Forged, cre- ated, and re-created by political activists, nonstate actors, artists, writ- ers, the working poor, women, exiles, refugees, and others, the Muslim International is a dissident and exilic space that encourages transgres- sion, applauds border crossing, and foments forms of sabotage and re- sistance not possible within European and U.S. discourses about indi- vidualism, the nation-state, "democracy," and the broader philosophical and juridical frameworks of the Enlightenment, modernity, and West- ern liberalism.

Because a central part of the Muslim International is the formal political activities and state-driven initiatives of labor unions, student and worker strikes, women's rights movements, peasant revolts, rebel activity, armed struggle, and other forms of sabotage, the Muslim Inter- national recognizes that there is no space outside of domination and that power is omnipresent. And because universalizing and grand claims

of liberation and freedom have the potential to warp our sense of how power works and operates, the Muslim International also sees the local and the everyday as potential sites for movement, activity, and subversion. Indebted to the work of James Scott, Robin Kelley, and Asef Bayat, the Muslim International also includes informal and nontraditional spaces and forms of resistance, such as art and the unorganized forms of everyday agency. In what Scott refers to as "infrapolitics" and what Bayat calls the "quiet encroachment" of everyday practices in the informal economy, the Muslim International includes those who struggle for dignity by other means after being left at the margins by the violence of neoliberalism.[24]

Scott, Kelley, and Bayat present compelling portraits of these struggles, and I am deeply intrigued by what Bayat calls the "epidemic potential" of these actors to spread through communities and of collectives that operate in the shadows of the state. But these activities, instead of being viewed as a choice between reform and radical change, suggest that power, far from being static and top-down, is a process that is activated and actualized everywhere. If we are truly to understand power in order to defeat it, we must not stop at how it silences, contains, and destroys formal political and social movements and organizations. We also have to be attuned to how power contends with other forms of resistance that are outside its traditional orbit, because it is there where power is forced to extend and even overextend itself, giving us a more nuanced and sophisticated lens through which to see how it unfolds. Rather than seeing alternative forms of resistance, such as art and the everyday, as apolitical or even antipolitical, we should see them as powerful and productive sites toward power's undoing.

Because neoliberalism is rampant and has usurped the postindependence period of the Third World through global racial capital, the shift from welfare states to warfare states in the West and in the Third World has witnessed the emergence of new forms of resistance in which the state is viewed as, if not corrupt, then corruptible. For while the Muslim International doesn't privilege movement leaders, organizations, and cooperatives as the sole site of "true" politics, it does value them and see them as central to the constitution and creation of ideas about justice and equality. But by including both formal and informal modes of resistance that include art and the everyday, the Muslim International

seeks to be a space where ideas about the state can be reconstituted and alternative forms of governance and existence can be negotiated. Far from being a perfect equilibrium, the Muslim International is a space where the very idea of the "political" can come under scrutiny, revealing that there need not be a belief in politics per se but rather a recognition that all activity is *political*. In that way, at the very least, the Muslim International can be a shadow or parallel space to the state, a space that harnesses and seeks to transform discontent, agency, and resistance into new social movements dedicated to subverting power in enduring ways.

Though vital, for some the state is not the only site of struggle. And when formal political channels are shut off or seen as limiting, the realms of art and culture become vehicles to express what the official language of politics is incapable of translating. It is crucial then that we see activism and agency not only in social movements, labor unions, and other radical activity but also in song and cinema, vital that we see "politics" occurring not only in organizations and political gatherings but also in performance, on-screen, and on the page. Art and expressive culture can become sites for expressing ideas about identity, possibility, and even power itself. In this way, art and aesthetics, narrative and representation, are important means through which to explore ideas about resistance, helping us to imagine what is possible or, even sometimes more important, what is not.

History is replete with how the state and the powerful deploy popular culture as a means of generating and reproducing dominant ideas about race, gender, imperialism, and other forms of social inequality. But the socially excluded, the poor, and the oppressed are the ones who reclaim the power of art to truth-tell and bear witness. Borrowing from the traditions of the Birmingham School and cultural studies, in *Black Star, Crescent Moon* I explore popular culture as a powerful site for revealing the struggles over ideology and power, race and nationhood, and the politics of identity.

Although art and expressive culture have complemented, inspired, and given momentum to social movements in the past, I explore the role of expressive culture and art within the Muslim International as a site of struggle itself, a fruitful place to challenge and resist dominant ideas about race, class, gender inequality, and imperial forms of power. The cultural histories contained here reveal how, in the cinema from the

Muslim Third World, the camera became a weapon, how Black literature and film became spaces where the anticolonial struggles in the Muslim Third World were used to probe ideas about Black internationalism, and how Muslim hip-hop artists in the Reagan–Bush age of mass incarceration turned the possibility of prison bars into musical bars of rebellion and hope. This is a dimension of the Muslim International, a cultural and artistic space in which Black artists, writers, and poets have waged battles over aesthetics, narrative, and ideology as they challenge state repression and the containment of Black freedom within the confines of America.

Black Star, Crescent Moon

In examining the terrain of the Muslim International through political and cultural histories, chapter 1, "You Remember Dien Bien Phu," explores the history of Black Islam in the post–World War II era through the figure of Malcolm X and the ways in which the Muslim Third World became both a literal and an ideological backdrop to his unfolding narrative of resistance and internationalism. From Cairo to Harlem, Mecca to Bandung, Algiers to Palestine, and beyond, the Muslim Third World played a central role in shaping Malcolm's political vocabulary and grammar of resistance as he crafted an imaginative geography that connected Black liberation struggles in the United States to decolonization in Africa and the Muslim Third World.

Chapter 2, "To the East, Blackwards," explores how the Muslim Third World influenced and informed Black radical politics and culture within the Muslim International. This chapter examines how the anticolonial struggles in the Muslim Third World of Algeria and Iraq in the 1950s and '60s, not only shaped ideas about tactics and strategy, solidarity and political possibility, but they also informed ideas about film, literature, and cultural criticism within the Black Power imagination. By examining the influence of Frantz Fanon and *The Battle of Algiers*, Sam Greenlee and *The Spook Who Sat by the Door*, this chapter explores how the national liberation struggles in Algeria and Iraq became the literal and ideological backdrop for the redefinition of Black cultural practice, aesthetic developments, thematic concerns, and political orientations during the Black Power era.

Chapter 3, "Return of the Mecca," explores the aesthetic and political dimensions of the Muslim International through hip-hop culture during the hypernationalism of the post–Civil Rights backlash, when the "Black criminal" and the "Muslim terrorist" were viewed as the fundamental threats to U.S. national identity. Through the resurgence of Malcolm X and the embrace of Black Islam, hip-hop culture in the 1980s and 1990s tapped into a deep vein of Black internationalism to challenge racial domination, militarism, and mass incarceration, imagining Black freedom beyond the United States and into Africa and the Muslim Third World. As an embodiment of what Amiri Baraka called the "changing same,"[25] hip-hop culture—like jazz and the Black Arts Movement before it—became a space in which Black radicalism, Islam, and the politics of the Muslim Third World have had a powerful impact on the lyrical imaginations, sonic landscapes, and political visions that have been expressed by artists such as Rakim, Public Enemy, Mos Def, Ice Cube, Gang Starr, and Lupe Fiasco, to name a few.

Chapter 4, "Ghost in the House," explores the political and cultural history of Muhammad Ali and his embrace as a national hero in the post–Cold War 1990s, when the legacy of Black Islam and its relationship to the Muslim International that hip-hop culture had struggled so hard to rekindle and reinvigorate. The post–Civil Rights fear of the "Muslim terrorist" gave way to a full-blown ideological paradigm of the "Green Menace" of Islam, replacing the "Red Scare" of communism through Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis in the 1990s,[26] which forms the basis of chapter 4's examination of how Muhammad Ali's recuperation became a symbol for the fear and containment of Black Islam within a narrative of American universalism, stripping Black Islam of its internationalist impulses.

Because the "Black criminal" and the "Muslim terrorist" formed the twin pillars of U.S. statecraft in the post–Civil Rights era, chapter 5, "Protect Ya Neck," explores how, in the post-9/11 moment, the U.S. security state has collapsed these two figures into the Black Muslim. Combining the rhetoric and logic of the "War on Crime" and the "War on Terror" to assault and erase the history of Black Islam, this chapter explores the collapse of the domestic and foreign realms of U.S. power and views the prison as a site of violent containment for the Muslim International, revealing the intimacies between domestic U.S. prison

regimes and the emergence of imperial imprisonment in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantánamo, and other so-called Black sites.

Because the new "peculiar institution" of the prison has become the literal and even the metaphoric home for Blackness and Muslims on a global scale in the post-9/11 era, *Black Star, Crescent Moon* is not only where this "compass of suffering" gets mapped, but it is also where the prequel to the current "War on Terror" gets revealed—a set of stories and histories showing that this "war" did not begin on September 11, 2001, but well before. With Blackness, Islam, and the Muslim Third World front and center in the current political and popular debate within the United States and the West, U.S. power continues to silence and even erase the histories and voices of those who radically resist. The legacy and history of Black artists and activists who appear in these pages bear witness to a collective war against oblivion, a rebellion that has raged from Harlem to Mecca, L.A. to Cairo, Chicago to Baghdad, Detroit to Bandung, Oakland to Algiers, and beyond. Through radical activity, rhetorical rebellion, and insurgent ideas, these Black activists and artists sought to create a more just world for themselves and for others, as they hoped to alleviate injustice at all cost and by any means. That there exists a racial reality to their secular suffering still holds true today. But the question remains: how will artists, activists, and thinkers respond? Through these stories and histories, we get a glimpse of what that might look and sound like.

This page intentionally left blank