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Beyond Good Muslim, Bad Muslim:
A Decolonial Critique of Postcolonial Muslim Ontology

by

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to redefine 1) how decoloniality relates to the figure of the Muslim and 2) how decoloniality relates to postcolonial Muslim thinking. The field of Decolonial Studies has done substantial archival work on revealing the underside of modernity; what decolonial scholarship calls coloniality. Many of the thinkers whom have formed the canon of Decolonial Studies have been located in Latin America, the Caribbean and North America though, and have not fully explored the depth of the Muslim Question in relation to coloniality. The first half of this work deals with redefining the narrative of coloniality with regards to systems of Islamophobia and anti-Muslimness which shed further light on the complexities of Western ontology. The second half deals with postcolonial Muslim thinkers who have provided necessary decolonial insights into the ways Muslims have sought to resist and move beyond the confines of coloniality while also perpetuating neo/colonial divides. This work argues for a process of critique and appraisal of postcolonial reflections on Muslim ontology with the ultimate aim of decolonizing Muslim being. The concept of the good Muslim – bad Muslim binary is also investigated as one of the main ways which the political disciplines Muslim ontology; by making Muslims friends through Islamophilia or enemies through Islamophobia, the good Muslim – bad Muslim binary is a discourse and function of power which must be reconceptualized in order to account for the longue durée of coloniality and the persistence anti-Muslim/Islamist social orders. Ultimately, I argue that in order to move beyond the good Muslim – bad Muslim binary and the neocolonial snares of postcolonial Muslim thought, we must more deeply reconstruct what it means to decolonize Muslim political ontology.
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### Conclusion – The Muslim Question: A Decolonial Response

Islamic Decoloniality: Beyond the Atlantic-centric Narrative
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Introduction

...I went on to tell him of a theory I had conceived some years ago – a theory that might perhaps help one to understand better the deep-seated prejudice against Islam so often to be found in Western literature and contemporary thought. ‘To find a truly convincing explanation of this prejudice,’ I said, ‘one has to look far backward into history and try to comprehend the psychological background of the earliest relations between the Western and Muslim worlds. What Occidentals think and feel about Islam today is rooted in impressions that were born during the Crusades.’ – Muhammad Asad (2004: 5)

Muhammad Asad (d. 1992) was a Jewish born Austro-Hungarian Muslim thinker who viewed the West’s relationship to Islam as one rooted within a *longue durée* historical encounter. He theorized that Western civilization’s relationship to Islam and Muslims stems from what psychoanalysts would call childhood trauma.¹ He holds that the West’s orientation towards Islam was due to the experience of Western Christendom during the Middle Ages in forming its sense of self in opposition to and in conflict with Muslim peoples to their south and east (2004: 6). For prior to the era of the Crusades (1100 - 1300), Asad notes, there had been

...Franks and Saxons and Germans, Burgundians and Sicilians, Normans and Lombards - a medley of tribes and races with scarcely anything in common but the fact that most of their feudal kingdoms and principalities were the Roman Empire and that all of them professed the Christian faith; but in the Crusades, and through them, the religious bond was elevated to a new plane, a cause common to all Europeans alike – the political-religious concept of ‘Christendom’, which in turn gave birth to the cultural concept of ‘Europe’ (6).

What Asad points towards is a not a *break* between the medieval and modern forms of Western anti-Islamic/Muslim prejudice, but a *continuation*, much in the same way a child grows up and matures according to the social conditioning that he or she experienced from birth to adulthood.

¹ The rest of the quote which begins the introduction follows here, pointing to Asad’s diagnosis of the West’s negative relationship to Islam having its root in its childhood, “‘The Crusades!’ Exclaimed my friend. ‘You don’t mean to say that what happened nearly a thousand years ago could still have an effect on people of the twentieth century?’ ‘But it does! I know it sounds incredible; but don’t you remember the incredulity which greeted the early discoveries of the psychoanalysts when they tried to show that much of the emotional life of a mature person – and most of those seemingly unaccountable leanings, tastes and prejudices comprised in the term “idiosyncrasies” – can be traced back to the experiences of his most formative age, his early childhood? Well are nations and civilizations anything but collective individuals? Their development also is bound up with the experiences of their early childhood. As with children, those experiences may have been pleasant or unpleasant; they may have been perfectly rational or, alternatively, due to the child’s naïve misinterpretations of an event; the *moulding* effect of every such experience depends primarily on its original intensity. The century immediately preceding the Crusades, that is, the end of the first millennium of the Christian era, might well be described as the early childhood of Western civilization...’ (2004: 5)
In the War on Terror era (2001- present), the conflict between the West and Islam has resurfaced as a more visible and vibrant dialectic that organizes world order. While certain authors dismiss the theory of the “clash of civilizations” as more of a by-product of post-Cold War tensions (Mamdani 2004), Asad’s theory provides a psychoanalytical and historical approach which alternatively argues that the conflict between Islam and the West is not contingent but foundational.

One aim of this work is to probe the longue durée relationship of Islam and the West in conversation with the field of Decolonial Studies. Decolonial scholarship largely argues that the relationship between the West and the Rest\(^2\) is rooted in the long 16\(^{th}\) century, in which the West expanded from the European continent through massive colonization, enslavement and conquest of non-Western life worlds in modernity (Grosfoguel 2011, Mignolo 2012). They argue that the underside of modernity has always been coloniality; that is, a type of existence marked by the negative effects of Western domination which ontologically categorize non-Europeans as sub or non-human (Maldonado-Torres 2007). Decolonial scholarship questions the Eurocentrism in modern/colonial systems of knowledge, being and power, and charts alternative geographies of knowing and being from the loci of those in the Global South. While decolonial scholars - mainly coming from Latin America, the Caribbean and North America - have developed substantial bodies of literature pertaining to the longue durée historical relationship between the West and the Rest, their engagement with Islam has notable gaps which need to be filled. The Muslim Question\(^3\) shares similarities with many of the concerns of decolonial scholarship, yet Islam’s historical relationship with the West uncovers differences as well. One of the main aims of this work is to uncover and better integrate those particularities of the Muslim Question into the wider framework of coloniality/decoloniality.

The other aim of this work is to deal with Muslim ontology in the more contemporary postcolonial era. One of the main ways that Muslim subjectivity has become defined in the neo/postcolonial

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\(^2\) The concept of the West and the Rest is premised on the planetary social divides that arose due to the onset of Western imperial expansion in modernity (late 15\(^{th}\) century – present). See Stuart Hall’s “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power” in Formations of Modernity (2007) for a more detailed analysis of this concept.

\(^3\) Salman Sayyid defines the Muslim Question, a topic I turn to in Chapter 1, as follows: “The Muslim question (with its echoes of the Jewish Question and the Eastern question before it) refers to a series of interrogations and speculations in which Islam and/or Muslims exist as a difficulty that needs to be addressed. Thus, the Muslim question is a mode of enquiry that opens a space for interventions: cultural, governmental and epistemological. How a fifth of this planet’s population comports itself in the world depends on its answers. The Muslim question encompasses the difficulties associated with the emergence of a distinct political identity that appears to be transgressive of norms, conventions and structures that underpin the contemporary world.” (2014: 3)
era is through the “good Muslim-bad Muslim” binary. The good Muslim-bad Muslim binary deals with how systems of Islamophobia and Islamophilia respectively mark the Muslim as enemy or friend (Shryrock 2010). It is through this anti-Muslim racist political divide that Muslim ontology becomes organized and defined according to the disciplinary logics of coloniality. Decolonial Muslim thinker Salman Sayyid has argued in his works (1997, 2014) that rather than submit to the processes of Westernization in the 20th century, Muslims have engaged in a process of clearing and dreaming beyond the confines of Western supremacy through the language of Islam, or Islamism (Sayyid 2014: 1). Two other postcolonial Muslim thinkers, Hamid Dabashi (2008) and Sohail Daulatzai (2012), have also reflected on dimensions of Muslim ontology that challenge the ways that Eurocentrism has problematically defined Islam and Muslimhood by formulating respective conceptualizations of Muslim political identity. While Dabashi’s and Daulatzai’s insights into decolonizing Muslim ontology are valuable, they also exhibit neo/postcolonial tendencies which must be subjected to decolonial critique. Thus, the main aim of this work is to provide a decolonial process for clearing and dreaming beyond both the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, as well as dominant postcolonial approaches to defining Muslim political ontology.

Structure and Chapter Summary
The theoretical aim of this work is two-fold, and thus divided into two thematic parts. The first half - chapters 1 and 2 - deal with a critique of the coloniality from a decolonial Muslim perspective. The second half - chapters 2 and 3 – is concerned with a decolonial critique of postcolonial Muslim ontology. The end result is a reformulation of decoloniality in relation to the Muslim and of the postcolonial Muslim in relation to decoloniality. The research methodology employed in this works is based on comparative textual study and analysis. Other than surveying primary literature produced by postcolonial and decolonial scholars on the main topics of my dissertation, this research will also involve studying secondary scholarship in the fields of religion, race, theology, political philosophy and sociology. The theoretical framework engaged in this work deal mainly with the canons of Decolonial Studies, Islamic Studies and Islamophobia Studies.

The first chapter largely deals with Latin American decolonial thinker Nelson Maldonado-Torres’ concept of the “coloniality of being” in his work “On the Coloniality of Being” (2007). There are a number of ways in which Maldonado-Torres – a leading thinker in the field of Decolonial Studies,

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4 South African thinker Sabelo Ndlovu argues in his work Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization (2013) that the postcolonial is inextricably linked to the neocolonial; meaning, the underside of the postcolonial moment has always been neocoloniality. Hence, he uses the term neo/postcolonial to reveal the visible and invisible sides of power and discourse in the postcolonial period.
who displays normative tendencies similar to other Latin American and Caribbean decolonial scholarship - downplays or misinterprets the role of Islamophobia and the figure of the Muslim in defining the coloniality of being. Decolonial thinkers, such as Maldonado-Torres, argue that there was a strong break in ontological hierarchies between the pre-modern religious Old World and modern secular New World. In contrast, I will show how the formation of the coloniality of being and theoanthropological racial hierarchies in the long 16th century was a process deeply inflicted by the West’s past just as much as its new realities from the 16th century onwards. By questioning some of the foundational arguments of modernity/coloniality/decoloniality in relation to the Muslim in this chapter, the Muslim becomes better integrated in the framework of decoloniality.

The second chapter deals with defining the historiographical and theoretical framework of what I call the crusading spirit, or the coloniality of the spirit. I interlocate such works as Tomas Mastnak’s Crusading Peace (2002) and Gil Anidjar’s Blood (2016), which deal with the ways that Western ontology has treated its racial Others, and namely the Muslim, in its transformation from Christendom to Europe. By providing a genealogy of the long-term effects of the anti-Muslim crusading complex of the Middle Ages on modernity/coloniality, I argue the crusading spirit is central to further understanding the complexities of the anthro and cosmos of Western Man’s mind, body and spirit. Additionally, the crusading spirit is presented as an indigenous Muslim unit of analysis which has been used by generations of Muslim thinkers to theorize the rise of the modern/colonial world-system over that of the Islamicate. By legitimating the units of analysis which Muslims have used to define and resist coloniality and the crusading spirit, the language of Islam becomes a resource for critical thinking in the present, and not an artifact of past.

In the third chapter, the good Muslim-bad Muslim framework - made popular by Mahmood Mamdani’s Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror (2004) - is subjected to critique. Mamdani argues that it is only in the post-Cold War era when the Red Scare of Communism was defeated that the Green Peril of Islam comes to the fore as the enemy of the West (2014: 21). His historiography of the Cold War, as well as his empirical framework for analyzing the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, are problematic for the ways in which they erase the racialized colonial ontological difference between the West and Islam (including long-term Russian Islamophobia) prior to, throughout, and after the Cold War. I argue that instead of Mamdani’s problematic historiographical framing of the Cold War and unclear theoretical understanding of the political, the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary needs to be understood as a disciplinary paradigm at the level of Muslim political ontology, and reapplied to a new Cold War
historiography that reveals the gaps in knowledge in Mamdani secular Leftist approach. The counter-hegemonic rise of Islamism in the recent past, and the challenges it has posed to the coloniality of being and knowledge on both the secular Left and Right, is one that must be more deeply interrogated in order to move beyond the binary of good and bad Muslims.

In the fourth chapter, I interlocate the works of postcolonial Muslim thinkers, specifically, Hamid Dabashi’s *Islamic Liberation Theology* (2008) and Sohail Daulatzai’s *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (2012), in order to both appreciate and critique their contributions to decolonizing postcolonial Muslim ontology. Dabashi’s concept of the Muslim Revolutionary and Daulatzai’s Muslim International are two political identities which contain both colonial and decolonial characteristics in regards to the pursuit of autonomous Muslim agency. By focusing on these respective political identities through the lens of historiography and language, I argue for a process of clearing and dreaming through what it means to go beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary and decolonize Muslim being. Essentialist paradigms within Eurocentrism and secular Left ontologies have been internalized by postcolonial Muslim thinkers such as Dabashi and Daulatzai. Their problematic or even non-engagement with Islamist language and histories reflect an urgent need for a post-secular approach in creating post-Western futures that transcend the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary and decolonize Muslim being.

Throughout all of the chapters, I argue that there is a need to redefine the decolonial in relation to the Muslim, as well as the decolonial Muslim in relation to the postcolonial. Current discourses in the fields of Decolonial Studies, Islamic Studies and Islamophobia Studies are in need of interventions which bridge the gaps between these various fields. My work aims to fill such a gap by transcending the boundaries of post-coloniality, in addition to clearing space in Decolonial Studies and contemporary Muslim thought for conceptualizing what a decolonial critique can provide to studies of Islam and Muslims. Muslims’ resistance to intellectual reckoning with coloniality has been long and complex. And Islamic thinker’s and movement’s contributions to the decolonization of knowledge, being and power provide an archive which allows for the flourishing of a post-Western pluriversal future.

**Note on Transliteration**

In instances where Arabic words have been used I follow the IJMES system for transliteration. However, for convenience, I have not made use of diacritical markings except to indicate the
*hamza* (‘) and *’ayn* (‘) unless the diacritical markings are found in the sources. Where applicable I have inserted English translations in parenthesis, or vice-versa.
Chapter 1

Reframing the Coloniality of Being in Relation the Muslim: An Appraisal and Critique of Maldonado-Torres

I think (others do not think, or do not think properly), therefore I am (others are-not, lack being, should not exist or are dispensable). – Nelson Maldonado-Torres, “On the Coloniality of Being” (2007: 252)

1.0. Introduction

In “On the Coloniality of Being” (2007), Latin American decolonial thinker Nelson Maldonado-Torres develops a framework for analyzing racial figures in modernity who have experienced what he describes as the “darker side of being”. Maldonado-Torres theorizes a concept of ontology for racialized peoples in modernity that shows that there are those without ontology; or, as he phrases it, they exist as non-beings and sub-human Others who dwell in a “zone of nonbeing” (2007: 254). In his work, Maldonado-Torres locates his discussion largely around the racialized experiences of Black and Indian/Indigenous peoples. He is a Puerto-Rican scholar who teaches at the University of Rutgers in New Jersey, USA, and is a well-known theorist of the emerging field of Decolonial Studies. His work is important to engage in that it shares motifs with the wider Decolonial Studies canon, while at the same time being novel in its contributions to understanding the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality discourse.

A number of Latin American and Afro-Caribbean decolonial thinkers (Maldonado-Torres 2007, Grosfoguel 2011, Mignolo 2009 & 2012, Gordon 2009 & 2011 and Wynter 1994 & 2003) have contributed to the discussion on the coloniality of being in relation to the Black and Indigenous by emphasizing that the rise of the modern colonial world-system is fundamentally linked to the moment of 1492 CE and the sixteenth century, in which Europe cemented its conquest of the Americas and control over the transatlantic slave trade. While they have done substantial archival work in revealing the depths to which Eurocentric knowledge and power has racially marked the ontologies of certain non-Europeans, the field is not without its inadequacies. One gap in their

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5 In this work, I will refer to the indigenous/native peoples of Turtle Island/the Americas by the names “Indian” and “Indigenous”, as these are common proper names in both the Anglo and Latin speaking contexts on the American continent.
knowledge production is how coloniality was formed in relation to the Muslim and Muslim Question.

My aim in this work more broadly, and in this chapter specifically, is to better intersect the figure of the Muslim utilizing the framework of the coloniality of being, as well as the narrative of the coloniality of power at large. The work of Maldonado-Torres’ is important in this regards in that 1) his arguments are part of a wider tendency of Latin American and Caribbean decolonial thinkers to center their own experience and questions, at times, at the expense of others, such as the Muslim and Muslim question and 2) his important contributions aid in better integrating the Muslim into the decoloniality framework and in creating a more nuanced Muslim-centric approach to the issue of decolonization, or Islamic decoloniality.

In this chapter I will be investigating two areas of concern: 1) how Islamophobia aided in forming the coloniality of being in ways that Maldonado-Torres and other decolonial thinkers are either unaware of or downplay and 2) rereading a number of the key events and figures that define the decolonial discourse, such as the Valladolid debates (1550-1551) and the figure of Christopher Columbus (d. 1506), so as to better reveal how active the figure of the Muslim was in the imagination of Europeans who created the coloniality of being. Ultimately, these areas of concern are explored in order to expand the understanding of the coloniality of being in relation to the Muslim, to further include the Muslim in the decolonial discourse, and to form a decolonial Muslim discourse that can critique other discourses, such as the postcolonial or even other decolonial trends. In order to begin the process of understanding how the Muslim informs and forms the coloniality of being, I will clarify a number of the key terms and concepts which decolonial scholars use in order to examine the coloniality of being.

1.1. Coloniality, Being, Power

What is meant by coloniality is not to be confused with colonialism. Colonialism is the full or partial control of the sovereignty of one nation or peoples by another, mainly by means of economic and political conquest, exploitation, genocide and settlement. Coloniality, on the other hand, refers to long-term patterns of power that emerged as a result of modern colonialism, capitalism and slavery that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, knowledge production and more beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations (Maldonado-Torres 2007:143):

[Coloniality] is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, aspirations of self, and
so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects, we breathe coloniality all the time and every day (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 143).

Another key aspect of coloniality is that it deals with a specific spatio-temporal period. A number of Latin American and Afro-Caribbean decolonial thinkers (Maldonado-Torres 2007, Grosfoguel 2011, Mignolo 2009 & 2012, Gordon 2009 & 2011 and Wynter 1994 & 2003) emphasize that coloniality is fundamentally linked to the moment of 1492 CE and the sixteenth century, in which the European conquest of the Americas and transatlantic slave trade were key in the birth and cementing of coloniality. Therefore, coloniality does not refer to other time periods or geographies, such as the medieval Islamic world or classical China, but specifically to the historical rise of Western civilization in modernity over the past five hundred years over the non-Western world. This means that race, while being intertwined with other systems of power such as capitalism or patriarchy, became the main organizing principle of the modern colonial world.6

Ramon Grosfoguel7 (2011: 8) further explicates that this colonial matrix of power – or what Anibal Quijano coined the “coloniality of power” (Quijano 2000) - is comprised of a number of interlinked hierarchies that have normalized Eurocentric fundamentalism in the modern world. These hierarchies of Eurocentric power include labor, class, inter-state and military systems, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, spirituality/theology, epistemology, linguistics, aesthetics, pedagogies, media/technology, age, ecology, and spatial boundaries between the urban and rural (Grosfoguel 2011: 8-10). These interlinked hierarchies of power have created a world in which coloniality, as Maldonado-Torres claimed above, is breathed in and out every day as the norm and dominating universal of all of humanity’s cosmos and being source.

Modernity is another key aspect that is linked to coloniality. Walter Mignolo (2012) and Maldonado-Torres (2007) argue that there is no modernity without coloniality. Coloniality is constitutive of modernity, and modernity cannot be understood without it. Coloniality is the underside of modernity as two sides of the same coin; therefore, decolonial scholarship uses the term “modern/colonial world-system” to describe the globalized structure of power by which the world is governed. While the European Renaissance and Enlightenment is often thought of as the

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6 While it is true that slavery, colonialism, war and conquest were common across civilizations and imperial polities in the ancient and medieval worlds of the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa, it is not true that they were all fundamentally organized by race, and they were not globalized into a world-system that socio-culturally and economically into European and non-European, the West and the Rest (Sayyid 2013).

7 Ramon Grosfoguel is a Puerto Rican scholar of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. He is one of the co-founders of the modernity/coloniality/decoloniality Latin American school of thought, and has written widely on the coloniality of knowledge, power and being.
starting point of modernity (Mignolo 2000: xiii), there were underlying conditions for the possibility for Europeans to claim their pinnacle of time and space called "modernity." The discussion on this early modern period is often missing in the analysis of post-colonial scholarship. Self-described decolonial scholars have critiqued postcolonial scholars - such as Edward Said (d. 2003), Gayatri Spivak (b. 1942), and Homi Bhabha (b. 1949) - for mainly dealing with European colonialism and imperialism in the late modern period (18th – 20th centuries), which does not thoroughly incorporate the experience and mechanisms of power that were laid in the Americas post-1492 or in the rise of the Atlantic Ocean world system in the 16th and 17th centuries (Grosfoguel 2011, Mignolo 2012). For decolonial scholars, the underside of modernity's longue durée development is where coloniality has always resided.

The philosophical foundations of modernity/coloniality are important for understanding the coloniality of being as well. Enrique Dussel (2006: 133) argues that the philosophical foundation of modernity/coloniality was produced by early 16th century Spanish conquistador, Hernan Cortes (d. 1547), who gave expression to an ideal of subjectivity that could be described as the ego conquiro (ego of conquest, lit. “I conquer”). The ego conquiro predates the Cartesian 8 ego cogito (lit. “I think”) by a century. (Maldondado-Torres 2007: 244-245). The underside of Cartesian epistemology’s “I think” is the coloniality of knowledge who those who “do not think” (252). Along a similar vein, Maldonado-Torres’ conceptualization of the coloniality of being reveals the hidden side of modernity’s ontological foundations. He does so by engaging with Lithuanian Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas’ (d. 1995) ethical critique of German Nazi-sympathizing philosopher Martin Heidegger’s (d. 1976) conceptualization of Dasein (German for “Being”) (ibid.). Maldonado-Torres reads Levinas’ critique of Heidegger as revealing the Heideggerian concept of ontology to be lacking an engagement with the face-to-face of ethics that racialized subjects have experienced in their ontological conditions under modernity. By combining Levinas’ ethical Jewish reflections on Heideggerian Being, and Fanon’s insights into the existential experience of the Black being trapped in the zone of nonbeing in modernity, Maldonado-Torres argues that the underside of Heideggerian Being is the coloniality of being; meaning, there are those who “are not” (252 – 253).9

8 Modern French Catholic Theosopher, Rene Descartes, lived from 1596 – 1650 CE. Descartes’ methodic doubt radically transformed the concept of truth in the concept of certainty. The guarantor of truth was no longer God or the Church, but became Western Man’s subjective judgement (Alexander 1931: 484-85 & Heidegger 2002: 66).
9 Maldonado reinterprets Cartes’ famous “I think, therefore I am” to show how the coloniality of knowledge and being operate in relation to the racial victim of modernity: “I think (others do not think, or do not think properly), therefore I am (others are-not, lack being, should not exist or are dispensable).” (2007: 252).
Both Grosfoguel and Maldonado-Torres, follow Dussel’s conceptualization that Descartes cogito ergo sum (“I think therefore I am”) in the 1640s was preceded by one hundred and fifty years (since 1492) of the European ego conquistus - “I conquer, therefore I am.” For Grosfoguel the Cartesian rise of the ego cogito replaced the theo-centric politics of knowledge in the European Middle Ages with an idolatric Western Man-centric\textsuperscript{10} politics of knowledge in European modernity (2011: 5). Grosfoguel writes how the development of the ego cogito/conquiro contributes to the imperial ethos,

The social, economic, political and historical conditions of possibility for a subject to assume the arrogance of becoming God-like and put himself as the foundation of all Truthful knowledge was the Imperial Being, that is, the subjectivity of those who are at the center of the world because they have already conquered it. (2011: 6).

It is through the epistemological, ontological and necropolitical\textsuperscript{11} relationship above that modernity/coloniality promotes an imperial attitude that normalizes genocide, conquest and war as the normal state of being for racialized people. Coloniality continuously promotes a preferential option for the ego conquiro, which explains why “security” (or progress, history, rights, democracy, etc.) can conceivably be attained at the expense of the lives of modernity’s Others. These racialized subjects, or even objects, are marked as dispensable and disposable (Maldonado-Torres 2007: 246).

1.3. The Muslim Question

As demonstrated above, the discourse of modernity/coloniality/decoloniality by Latin American and Caribbean decolonial thinkers has created a framework for understanding the longue durée framework of modern/colonial power relations between the West and the Rest. The discourse of

\textsuperscript{10} Emphasis on “the Man” as this conception was also patriarchal, as Western men have been privileged over Western women even while both Western men, women and gender non-conforming folks share a racial privilege over non-Western peoples. Maldonado further elaborates on the sexist relation that coloniality produces, “Coloniality is an order of things that put people of color under the murderous and rapist sight of a vigilant ego. And the primary targets of rape are women. But men of color are also seeing through these lenses. Men of color are feminized and become for the ego conquiro fundamentally penetrable subjects” (2007: 247-48). The point here is to tie in that racialization is very much tied to gender and sex hierarchies in modernity, so that the ego conquiro must be recognized as being constituted by a phallic ego (2007: 248).

\textsuperscript{11} Achille Mbembe’s concept of necropolitics is a critique and counter to that of Focault’s concept of biopolitics. While Foucault’s concept of biopower analyzes the domain of life in which power has taken over (Foucault 2009: 140), Mbembe’s necropolitics analyzes the domain of death in late modernity in which power has taken over: “…I have put forward the notion of necropolitics and necropower to account for the various ways in which, in our contemporary world, weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead” (Mbembe 2003:40).
these thinkers is not without its inadequacies though. By focusing mainly on the formation of the modern/colonial world through the lens of an Atlantic Ocean-centric exchange between Europe, the Americas and Africa, decolonial discourse has not fully integrated all aspects of enduring power relations worldwide whether during the long 16th century, before or after. For example, there is relatively little discourse from decolonial thinkers concerning the issue of the Brahmanist caste system in South Asia. Casteism is a several thousand-year-old system predating European conquest in the region that organizes South Asian societies in ways that many argue is more principle than Eurocentric racism (Ambedkar 2016 & Bandyopadhyay 2004). How does one understand the discourse of coloniality when many in South Asia argue that caste, which predates coloniality by over a thousand years, is just as if not more primal than modern racism as an organizing principle in the South Asian sub-strata of the modern/colonial world-system? Answering this question is not the subject of this study, but it does point to a gap in knowledge about how to understand coloniality beyond the Atlantic-centric approach of Latin American thinkers.

Another example of a gap in knowledge in how to understand coloniality before and beyond the Atlantic-centered approach is the Muslim question, which is the concern of this dissertation. The Muslim question is described by the decolonial Muslim thinker, Salman Sayyid, in the following terms:

The Muslim question (with its echoes of the Jewish Question and the Eastern question before it) refers to a series of interrogations and speculations in which Islam and/or Muslims exist as a difficulty that needs to be addressed. Thus, the Muslim question is a mode of enquiry that opens a space for interventions: cultural, governmental and epistemological. How a fifth of this planet’s population comports itself in the world depends on its answers. The Muslim question encompasses the difficulties associated with the emergence of a distinct political identity that appears to be transgressive of norms, conventions and structures that underpin the contemporary world. (2014: 3)

Sayyid argues further that the Muslim question largely concerns the place and space of the Muslim in relation to the modern/colonial world-system, coloniality and the process of decolonization (2014: 13). Junaid Rana also explicitly positions himself as dealing with the Muslim question in his work on the racialization of the Muslim (Rana 2011:27). Defining what I mean by the figure and signifier of the Muslim is key for purposes of my work. Rana, and by extension myself, understands “the Muslim” as a unity of analysis that is central to the examination of Islamicate societies, cultures and communities. For Rana,

The Muslim [...] is a diverse figure that is differentiated by its national, transnational, sectarian, ethnic, racial, gendered, and classed meanings. The Muslim is a transmigratory, global figure that enters
and exits multiple terrains; thus, we can speak of the Muslim in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere. (2011: 29).

In this work, I will refer to both the Muslim and Muslim question as defined above, and later in this work will expand on these definitions to further define and interpret the ontological aspect of the Muslim and Muslim question.

While some Latin American decolonial thinkers, such as Maldonado-Torres, do comment on the impact of the Crusades (1000-1300 CE), conquest of Al-Andalus (1492 CE) and the destruction of Islamicate civilization post-1492 on the formation of coloniality, they more so emphasize the experience of the Americas and Africa; and at times, deemphasize the importance and persistence of the Muslim question in the formation of modernity/coloniality. They argue, as I briefly alluded to in their arguments in the section above, that there is a sharp and unprecedented shift when Europeans start to arrive in the Americas in terms of world-system and globalizing power relations. Yet, I would like to question whether this “paradigm of war”12 – initialized by European intellectuals and conquerors such as Juan Gines de Sepulveda (d. 1573) and Christopher Columbus – can be better understood and theorized by extending this conceptualization through a deeper and more nuanced engagement with the Muslim question.

In questioning and reframing the narrative of modernity/coloniality I will be asking: was the formation of the Atlantic world between the Americas, Europe and Africa not also informed by previous and ongoing power relations and structures elsewhere?; Did the Spanish, other Europeans and by extension modernity/coloniality more broadly, come with a bit more baggage that actually laid the conditions for defining and redefining the Black and Indigenous?; How can an analysis of the Muslim and Muslim question broaden the scope for understanding the coloniality of being? In this section, I argue the following: 1) That the precedent and preexisting intersubjectivity that Europe marshalled in its arguments and policies regarding the Indigenous and Black were largely based off their ontological engagements with the Muslim and Islamicate world, and 2) that the Muslim question never dies down but transforms and intensifies in ways old and new as the wave of modernity/coloniality expands toward and away from the Atlantic Ocean.

1.4. Islamophobia in the Old and New Worlds

12 Maldonado-Torres frames modernity/coloniality as a “paradigm of war” and largely theorizes this concept in his work Against War (2008).
What does the Muslim have to do with the story of modern racism and how has Islamophobia played a role in forming modern systems of race and coloniality? Both Rana (2011) and Maldonado-Torres (2014) show that the foundations of modern Eurocentric racism are genealogically linked to the medieval Iberian Peninsula and the figures of the Muslim and the Jew. The Muslim and Jew in the medieval Iberian Peninsula were marked as beings with raza, or “race”; which, in medieval Spanish and Castilian, meant “blemish” or “defect” and had to do with biological notions of purity of blood (limpieza de sangre) (Rana 2011: 35). Those with raza had impure blood and were dirty, monstrous and inferior beings placed within castas (castes) and hierarchies of being that demarcated between people at the top with pure Hispanic and Catholic genealogies above those with mixed or “tainted” heritage. This raza system marked bodies of Jewish and Muslim heritage - including bodies of conversos and moriscos who had converted due to the Reconquista and Inquisition - as sites outside of the body politic of Hispanic Catholic feudal states (and later the nation-state of Spain), making them susceptible to war, enslavement, colonization and ethnic cleansing (Ibid.). Many studies have been done to demonstrate the anti-Jewish character of the Reconquista and Inquisition, but scholarship until recently has been largely silent on the anti-Muslim character of these events – even though Muslims given their size were the main and larger target (2011: 31-33).

To stay silent on the Muslim question in relation to the conquest of Al-Andalus, the Reconquista and the Inquisition while only mentioning what happened to Jews is akin to only describing the racial discrimination faced by Indians (i.e. people of South Asian decent) in the context of European colonized South Africa – both prior to and during the period of formal apartheid - without any reference to Black Africans. While Indians in South Africa did indeed suffer during this period, it was the Blacks in their numbers and majority presence who were the primary target of white supremacy and anti-blackness. Similarly, without denying the existence and interconnected nature of anti-Semitism that affected Jews in the Iberian Peninsula, Muslims in Al-Andalus and

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13 As opposed to other forms of ethnic or racial hierarchy in other space-time periods (i.e. Classical Greece, Medieval Islamicate World, Pre-monder Aztec Civilization, etc.).
15 The field of Morisco Studies has recently begun to fill in this gap, but its influence and size is far from matching the level of influence studies of Jews in the Iberian Peninsula have received. Kindly see the book series by Brill on Converso and Morisco Studies, and the edited series by Kevin Ingram entitled The Conversos and Moriscos in Late Medieval Spain and Beyond (2009, 2012, 2016) for more information on this emerging field.
16 See Indians in Post-Apartheid South Africa (2005) by Anand Singh for more insight into the dynamics between racialized groups such as Indians and Africans in South Africa during and after formal apartheid.
the Iberian Peninsula were the main and larger targets of Hispanic racism, and Islamophobia was the larger and main organizing principle at play.

Before proceeding, some clarification on Islamophobia is required. Islamophobia, as one strand of racism within the wider category of racisms (i.e. anti-blackness, anti-indigeneity, anti-Semitism, etc.) is a relatively new term that gained prominence in struggles in the 1970s and 80s in Europe in which Muslim migrants where addressing a system of racial exclusion they were facing in various European countries (Rana 2011: 29). Given long-term antagonisms between the West and Islamic civilization due to such histories as the Crusades (1000-1300 CE), Reconquista and Inquisition (1492 CE), and modern European imperialism and expansion (post-1492 CE), the figure of the Muslim has been negatively marked as a sub-human Other in relation to the Western. Islamophobia, beyond the literal etymological meaning of “fear of Islam”, has become established as a term that means anti-Muslim racism and anti-Muslimness, which collapses numerous groups under the single category “Muslim” (Rana 2011: 30, Sayyid & Vakil 2010). Racism and Islamophobia can be understood as reflexive processes that change across time and place according to racism’s needs, and as processes which are relational as opposed to occurring in silos (Rana 2011: 30). The intersection of race and religion within the systems of modern racism is complex and there are differing approaches as to understand how religion and race (not to mention class, gender and sexuality) have interacted to create modern racisms and Islamophobia.

The conversation concerning the similarities and differences between religious and racial difference, and theological and anthropological exclusion are important as they highlight the ways modern racism has been constituted. After all, it is from this interaction between the Old World and New World that the raza of Andalusian Muslims and Jews is transferred onto the Indian, Black and rest of the non-European world through European conquest, colonialism and slavery in modernity. Maldonado-Torres, in his conceptualization of the progression of racial and religious difference between the Old and New Worlds, makes a sharp distinction between what he calls the “religious difference” of the Old World and the “anthropological difference” of the New World (2014: 651).

17 Placing Islamophobia in relation to other forms of modern racism is not intended to diminish differences. Several scholars have noted the peculiarities of anti-blackness, anti-Asian or anti-indigenous forms of racism through such academic disciplines as Critical Race Theory, Ethnic Studies, Black Studies and Indigenous Studies. In this work, I, too, am showing some of the unique aspects of Islamophobia as well as its relationality to other forms of racism that place peoples into ontological hierarchies.
For Maldonado-Torres, there is a sharp shift that occurs between the Old World “religious polemic” between Christendom and Islamdom, and Spain’s “racist” encounter with the Indian and Black (2014: 646). His argument centers around the idea that Columbus and the conquistadors did not only view Indians as people with the “wrong religion”, as they did with Muslims and Jews in the Old World, but as people with “no religion” who were “soulless.” For Maldonado-Torres, this shift to a people with “no religion” and “no soul” means that the Indians were treated in a fundamentally new way that makes for an unprecedented break from relations to the Other in the Old World (ibid.)

While there were indeed new discourses and approaches to the Other that emerged in the New World, I am not quite convinced that Maldonado-Torres’ reading of the situation as a sharp break which “created something entirely new” (2014: 646) is accurate. I argue that the exchange between forms of difference and exclusion from the Iberian Andalusian world to the Americas is more of a process of including new Others in a pre-existing pot of Others, similar to a process of inclusion, extension or even sedimentation as others have argued (Mastnak 2002, Majid 2009 & Ali forthcoming), rather than a supremely different and unprecedented event. I will tackle several aspects of Maldonado’s reading of the foundational moment of coloniality; namely, 1) his understand of the religious and secular in relation to the process of the racialization of Muslims and other non-Europeans and 2) his reading of several important intellectual figures and debates during that time, such as the Valladolid debates (1550-1551) and European conquistador Christopher Columbus (d. 1506). I will instead argue for a postsecular theoanthropological reading of modern racism which better understands the continuities and changes between the Old and New Worlds and formation of the coloniality of being.

1.5. The Religious and Secular in the Racialization of the Muslim

A major issue in Maldonado-Torres’ work is the secular approach he assumes with such binaries as the religious vs. racial, and theological vs. anthropological when dealing with the racialization of the Muslim (and Jew). This approach to understanding the formation of modern racism is one that is not uncommon in other analyses of the race question. As Rana has commented, many scholars of race assume a secular framework that deemphasizes religious difference as a simpler form of cultural prejudice or irrational religious discrimination, thereby dislocating it from an analysis of systemic power, ontology and race in the pre-modernized world (2011: 30). Maldonado-Torres is complicit in this secular approach when he deemphasizes and mischaracterizes religious difference to simple battles between “truth and falsehood” and as
sharply different from the racial system in the Americas. In the abstract of Maldonado-Torres’ “Religion, Conquest and Race in the Foundations of the Modern/Colonial World”, we begin to see this secular framework emerging:

This article explores the entanglements between the emergence of the anthropological conception of religion and the logic of race in the modern/colonial world. This entanglement is also one between traditional religious categories such as Christian, Muslim, and Jew, and modern ethno-racial designations such as white, indigenous, and black that point to a co-implication between race and what we call religion in modernity. (2014: 636)

In Maldonado-Torres’ abstract we already see a binary between “tradition” and “modernity,” and “religion” and “race” when describing “traditional religious” difference and “modern ethno-racial” difference. Scholars such as Talal Asad (2003) and Saba Mahmood (2005) have demonstrated that the binary between “tradition” and “modernity” broadly and especially in relation to the Muslim is problematic in that it assumes that (superior) secular modernity itself is not a product of the (inferior) religious tradition that came before it. In reality, modernity and postmodernity continue to be fully animated by the logic of its Western religious and secular traditions past and present. In certain ways, Maldonado-Torres appears to be congruous with the likes of Asad and Mahmood, by attempting to show the interrelated nature between tradition and modernity, and race and religion in his article. Yet, when examined more closely, we see how he nevertheless internalizes secular assumptions about race which are problematic, especially in relation to the Muslim and formation of the Indian.

Maldonado-Torres provides a history that locates the Christianization of the Roman Empire in the 4th century CE with a “fight for empire” fueled by the ideology of expanding “the true religion” of Christianity (2014: 642). This project had global ambitions which became increasingly intolerant beginning as early as the 11th century. From the 11th century forward, Christendom’s clergy increasingly conceptualized Christendom’s identity as a unitary whole with Rome at its center and saw itself as needing to defend and cleanse itself from “heretics,” “pagans” and “infidels” that agitate its internal and external borders. From this point onward, it was of the utmost important to affirm difference with those who did not fit Christendom’s view of the world. The Church of the 11th and 12th century was attempting to create an expansive utopia which would culminate when Christianitas (Christianity) became the Universitas (Universal) across the globe (2014: 642). Maldonado-Torres comments on how the polemics and politics of medieval Western Christendom throughout the Crusades intensified and gradually politically centralized preexisting anxieties and general hatred of Jews, Saracens, Moors, pagans and heretics. According to Maldonado-Torres these attitudes and practices dealt with notions of non-Christians lacking rationality, regarded as
less than human and, inevitably, as enslaveable (2014: 642-646).

Notably absent from Maldonado-Torres’ analysis is that these systems of otherization in medieval Christendom also largely dealt with notions of color, culture phenotype, physiognomy and ethnic hierarchy that go beyond religious difference. As Sophia Arjana (2015: 28) shows in her study of monsters in the classical and medieval Western world, skin tone, ethnicity and biology were central to describing Western Christendom’s Others long before modernity:

Christian identity was based on what was perceived (sic) to be normative, and because black skin functioned as a symbol of sin and evil, light-colored skin was privileged… Anxieties around ethnicity and bodily differences were imprinted on non-Christian bodies, in particular, on Jews, Muslims and Africans (ibid.).

In Arjana’s *Muslims in the Western Imagination*, she provides a panoramic view of the non-human creatures and monstrosity that outlined the epistemic and cognitive mapping of Western Christendom: from the ancient figure of the Arab and Black Saracen (which predates Islam); to medieval Jewish-Muslim blood-sucking vampire baby-eaters; to hook-nosed big-lipped purple Ethiopian demons; to greedy Lucifer worshipping and sexually deviant well-endowed Prophet Muhammad (as *homo totus lubricus* or a sexual monster); to Christ-killing Muslim, Jewish and pagan *cynocephalie* (a dog or jackal-headed monster); and numerous other distorted male and female sub-humanized monstrous non-beings (Abbasi 2016: 243). While Arjana focuses mainly on how ethnic/racial divides created male Muslim and other non-European monsters, she also underscores the sexist and trans/homophobic nature of Europe’s monstrous approach to the land and life of the Islamicate and wider non-European world. She unsettles the rape fantasies of white colonizers toward females of color and land, and the way Europeans demonized polygamy and queered Muslims and other non-Europeans as sexually deviant for their body affirming sensualities. Arjana bases these findings on an impressive and comprehensive archive of primary sources in classical and medieval Christendom that range from art work, theatre and poetry, to theological treatises and legal documents (ibid.). Arjana concludes that medievalism continues to have aesthetic, political and sociocultural agency that continues to survive into post-modernity (2015: 20).

Similarly, Cedric Robinson argues that the formation of racial capitalism in modernity was directly informed by pre-existing ethnic/racial hierarchies *within* (emphasis mine) feudal society in Christendom and Europe (Robinson 2000: 9-28). Commenting on Robinson’s work, Robin D.G. Kelley writes:
The first European proletarians were racial subjects (Irish, Jews, Roma or Gypsies, Slavs, etc.) and they were victims of dispossession (enclosure), colonialism, and slavery within Europe. Indeed, Robinson suggested that racialization within Europe was very much a colonial process involving invasion, settlement, expropriation, and racial hierarchy. (Kelly 2017)

Robinson takes into account that migrant, colonial and slave labor from Christendom’s internal Others also directly informed the way it approached its external Others in the non-West during Europe’s expansion in modernity. For Robinson, racial hierarchies within and outside of Europe directly informed each other in the rise of modernity and racial capitalism (Robinson 2000: 25-26). Pagden also underscores how Europeans, such as 16th Spanish scholar Bartolome de las Casas (d. 1566), compared the Indians to the Others of Christendom’s “primitive” past – such as the ancient Celts and Iberians – as well as to peasantry across early modern Europe as synonymous examples of barbarity and incivility (Pagden 1982: 122 & 130).

In contrast to the positions of Arjana and Robinson above, who argue that the medieval episteme of Western Christendom contained within it logics of color/ethnic hierarchy that made people sub-human through ontological and economic mechanisms, Maldonado-Torres makes a sharp distinction between the pre-modern racist logic based on religion (Muslim, Jew, pagan, etc.) and the modern racist logic based on ethnicity/color (Indian, Black). Maldonado-Torres calls the former “religious difference” and the later “anthropological difference,” and claims that that the former was moreso a questioning of religious and political loyalty that kept one’s humanity relatively unquestioned while the latter was a fundamental questioning of the humanity of the Other (Maldonado-Torres 2014: 646). He also argues that the notion of limpieza de sangre applied to Muslims and Jews would “only reveal one as a personal traitor or enemy, but not as a member of another species or as a formal exception from the human” (ibid.).

In making these claims, Maldonado-Torres not only contradicts his own arguments elsewhere in the paper, but maintains a secular assumption about what religious difference means in racialization processes and the impact it has on those processes. The downplaying of religious difference as somehow less impactful than secular difference masks the violence of religious differences in processes of racialization. A postsecular understanding of Islamophobia or anti-

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18 Maldonado-Torres repeatedly mentions (2014: 642-646) the “racist mentality” that excluded Muslims and Jews was a way of “questioning their humanity,” yet argues in the end that this type of logic is sharply distinct from than the logic applied to Indians and Blacks.

19 Following Habermas (2008), what I mean by postsecular here refers to the suspension of the assumption that secular logic is the only legitimate form of knowledge or legitimate standard for comparison. Meaning, broadly speaking, that
Semitism would recognize that religious discrimination is not simply a form of disagreement with the Other’s beliefs, practices and loyalty to theo-political projects, but is a more radical questioning of the naturalized essence of said person’s ontology (Rana 2014: 30). In the same way as the questioning of such secular differences as color, ethnicity or phenotype can be linked to questioning one’s essence and being, the questioning of one’s religious difference can lead to placing one within a species scheme of monsters, dogs, vampires and other non-human creatures.

1.5.1. Revisiting People without Souls and Religion

Maldonado-Torres’ main argument that the conquest of the Americas “created something entirely new” (2014: 646) is largely based on two main claims: 1) Following Quijano, that Indians were “soulless” or “people without souls,” which is assumed to be novel in the formation modern ontological hierarchies and the coloniality of being (2014: 652 and 2007: 244) and; 2) The Indigenous were not simply those with the “wrong religion” like the religious difference of Old World Muslim and Jews, but of “no religion” based on the anthropological difference of the New World (2014: 637-640).

With regards to the first claim, the argument that Indians were without souls is not novel. Maldonado-Torres cites Pagden who argues that Indians were placed in a category of soulless people.20 According to Pagden,

Some later writers, most notably Paraclesus, another doctor, Andrea Cesalpino, and the French Huguenot Isaac de la Peyrere held that such humanoids as nymphs, satyrs, pygmies and wild men (a category which included Amerindians) might be soulless men descended from another ‘Adam’ or created spontaneously from the earth (1982: 22).

Paraclesus’ classification of the Indians as soulless humans is part of a long history of teratological studies in medieval Christendom. As I mentioned above, Arjana shows how these classifications of monsters and abnormal creatures was part of the wider doxa of Western Christians that marked the ontological and human line along the borders of Latin Christendom. Even Pagden mentions how this discussion was part of preexisting Aristotelian arguments about placing people at various levels of the Hellenic Great Chain of Being; in this case, Pagden mentions that the characterizing

secular and religious mentalities must be understood without a hidden secular logic teleologically guiding the conversation.

20 This conclusion from Pagden is derived from a primary Latin source by Paracelsus, who was a 16th century European Christian scholar and physician. The source can be found in Paracelsus’ Liber de nymphis, sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris et de caeteris spiritibus.
of Amerindians as soulless placed them at the level of insects, which were under both animals and humans (1982: 23). What Maldonado-Torres and other decolonial thinkers fail to contextualize is that Paraclesus classification was not new, and that it was part of the wider mappaemundi of medieval Christendom. As Arjana shows in her work, Muslims (as well as many other “deviants” in the medieval world), were similarly classified as “giants,” “nymps” and a whole gamut of sub-human monstrous races, and therefore were already soulless too.21

With regard to the second claim, Maldonado-Torres’ argument that the category of “no religion” is a fundamental break from the past is historically not well-founded and overlooks the dominant framework that was used in relation to categorizing the Indian as ontologically inferior. This was, in fact, a continuation of Christendom’s theoanthropological difference and not something entirely new. Firstly, Maldonado-Torres, following Smith, does not prove that the concept of “no religion” was paradigmatically used in European ethnographies of the Indian post-Discovery. He does cite several primary source documents written by Columbus in which he describes the Indians as having ninguna secta (no sect).22 Yet, the only source provided which explicitly states that Columbus identified a people as having “no religion” is actually a statement made about the native inhabitants of the Canary Islands.23

There is one primary source that Maldonado-Torres cites in which “no religion” is actually used to describe the Indians, as opposed to secta or later translations from English. Maldonado-Torres cites Spanish conquistador and chronicler of Peru, Pedro de Cieza de Leon (d. 1554), in his Crónica del Perú (1553), which states regarding the indigenous people of the Northern Andes,

21 See Arjana’s Chapter 2 “Medieval Muslim Monsters” (2015).
22 Maldonado-Torres makes that argument that “sect” is synonymous with “religion” based on another writing of Columbus in which the words appear in a sentence together (2014: 639). Following Smith, he takes the liberty to translate their meanings as synonymous during that time period. The issue of sect and religion meaning the same or similar thing will be discussed later in this section.
16 The 16th century English alchemist and translator Richard Eden (d. 1576) translated a portion of German cartographer Sebastian Munster’s (d. 1552) Cosmographia from Latin to English; the Cosmographia being an early German language description of their known world (Hadfield 2004). Eden’s translated work is entitled Treatyse of the Newe India (1553) (Munster 1966) and contains the following quote regarding Columbus’ visit to the Canary Islands, “At Columbus first coming thether, the inhabitants went naked, without shame, religion or ‘knowledge of God” (Smith 2004: 269). It is recorded that Columbus’ statement was made in regards to his first encounter with the natives of the Canary Islands towards the end of a section entitled “Of the Iland of Medera, and the fortunate Ilãdes, otherwise called the Ilandes of Canaria” in Eden’s Treatysye translation (Munster 1966: np). There are two things to consider here – firstly, if this was Columbus’ “first coming thether” that means he encountered the Canary natives prior to encountering the New World, as Columbus’s first visit to the Canary Islands was on his first voyage to find a westward route to India (Bedini 1992: 93). Secondly, regardless of when this statement might have occurred, it was made in relation to the natives of the Canary Islands and not the New World, meaning the category of “no religion” was being made about peoples outside of the New World at that time.
“they had no religion whatsoever, from what we understood” (cited by Maldonado-Torres 2014: 637). Maldonado-Torres does note, in a fashion similar to that of European ethnographies of the Muslim such as those I shared from Arjana’s work above, that the indigenous Inca peoples were viewed as beasts, and that Europeans viewed the Incan peasantry as less superior than Incan kings who knew the more sophisticated “doctrines and teachings” of their people (2014: 639). Here, too, we observe a divide that Europeans used on their own people when describing European peasantry as barbaric for being illiterate and less civilized than upper classes, and even comparing European peasantry to Indians (Pagden 1982: 130).

While citing questionable and too few historical examples of the “no religion” concept, Maldonado-Torres also contradicts himself by stating “no religion” is a new category in relation to the Indian. Maldonado-Torres provides an example himself of “no religion” being used from the medieval context by the famous Jewish philosopher Maimonides (d. 1204 CE) when describing civilizational and ontological hierarchies of humans (2014: 640). Weltecke argues in her analysis of the concepts of atheism and unbelief in the central and late medieval world that Plato had argued that “atheists” were such a danger to society that their removal by death was the only appropriate remedy. The concept of rejecting a belief in a supernatural order, miracles, divine revelation or an Afterlife was institutionalized in epistemic paradigms in medieval Christendom and people were charged with it using various terms distinct yet interrelated terms; such as “heretic”, “blasphemer” or “infidel” (Weltecke 2008: 102). Furthermore, Maldonado-Torres argues that those “without religion” are deemed a tabula rasa (blank slate) whose lack of rationality made them subjectless objects to be converted, conquered and tailored to Spanish needs (2014: 639). Yet, in effect, this was not starkly different from the Old World logic of viewing non-Christians as those without rationality and, therefore bestial objects to be crusaded against, converted and tailored to Christendom’s needs, as Maldonado-Torres himself argues (2014: 642-645).

In relation to the problem of defining words and concepts anachronistically, allow us for a moment to take the concept of “no religion” as something novel, as Maldonado-Torres argues. Maldonado-Torres engages in an act of translation when he states that secta is synonymous with religion

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24 “No guardan religión alguna, a lo que entendemos, ni tampoco se les halló casa de adoración.” (Cieza de Leon 2005: 83).
25 I would add that this phenomenon also happened in Islamdom. Islamic categories such as “mulhid” or “zindiq”, translated as “atheist” or “one who negates religion,” were widespread in medieval Islamdom. See Freethinkers of Medieval Islam by Sarah Stroumsa (1999) for an analysis of how different Islamic sects and thinkers dealt with accusations of being mulhid and zindiq for their views or opposition to another sect’s conception of orthodoxy.
during Columbus life. If we are to do further comparisons to the word “religion” to see if it contains more synonyms, how does Maldonado-Torres’ conception of “no religion” being something drastically new hold up? How might comparing “religion” to other concepts at that time further place it within Christendom’s preexisting theoanthropological paradigm and hierarchies of ontological superiority? If one does an etymological search of the words “faith”, “belief”, “religion”, “sect”, “heretic” and “infidel” and what they meant across the Middle Ages in Latin Christendom, one will find that there are specific meanings to these respective words which changed across time and place; yet, they remained within the ambit of a theoanthropological paradigm in which their meanings were also similar and interrelated. The word “infidel”, for example, in the context of medieval Christendom meant “unfaithful” or “no faith.” Further, the meaning of “faith” correlated to that of “belief,” and one with a “sect” was defined as one with beliefs and faith in medieval Western Catholicism. If one has no sect, are we able to translate that as one not having belief or faith as well? If sect can mean religion, then can having no religion mean that one has no faith, or that that person is an infidel? Even if we take the category of “no religion” to be a new category in the encounter with the Indian, I argue that it nonetheless holds a very similar meaning in relation to preexisting theoanthropological concepts and paradigms of otherness in Latin Christendom as my questions raised above suggest. As Pagden, Mastnak and many medievalist authors would likely affirm, the Indian was thoroughly intertwined in the web of heretics, blasphemers, infidels and barbarians from the Old World, even if there did happen to be a minority discourse of them having “no religion”.

1.5.2. Towards a Postsecular Theoanthropological Understanding of Racism

Two further aspects of Maldonado-Torres’ religious vs anthropological schema stand that need to be considered in the light of reframing the colonality of the being in relation to the Muslim Question. First, as I have earlier stated, to only recognize the ontological exclusion of Muslims and Jews as theological difference fails to appreciate that there was an anthropological basis for their exclusion. As Arjana and Robinson’s works point out, there were centuries of works in law, theology and the arts that characterized non-Christians through a number of ethnographical lens outside of “religion” and firmly through an anthropocentric lens. On the reverse end, only viewing the ontological exclusion of the Indigenous and Black as an anthropological difference fails to

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26 All medieval meanings for the words mentioned above – “faith”, “belief”, “religion”, “sect”, “heretic”, “infidel” - were sourced from the Online Etymological Dictionary and their complete citations are located in the Works Cited under the same name, “Online Etymological Dictionary”.
27 Mastnak (2002) argues that the Muslim was the infidel par excellence during the Crusades, a point I will return to later.
include the theological basis for their exclusion. Maldonado-Torres’ main argument itself is based on a *theological* difference between supposed “religion” and “no religion” yet he overlooks that this is a theological difference when framing it solely as anthropological.

The divide between the European and Indian cannot be fully appreciated without including theological difference in this conversation. As Talal Asad has argued, concepts of anthropology, biology and scientific analysis are not only signifiers reserved for the secular modern Western context (Asad 2003) but they have existed across civilizations and cultures prior to modernity in ways similar and different to the modern world. Just as theology and religion are not exclusive to the “traditional” past, religion continues after the medieval ages even as it directly informs secular “theology” and notions of the human. While the White Male Christian God of the past was the center of the cosmos in Old World Christendom, the New World eventually gives rise to Western Secular Man as the *imago dei* and phallic arch of the modern/colonial world system. In both instances, anthropology and religion are interlinked and contribute to development of ontological exclusion in similar and different ways during the rise of the West over the Rest.

Secondly, and finally, Maldonado-Torres’ overemphasis on the “religious” in the pre-modern world is a secular approach to understanding the past and obfuscates that what was happening was not a battle of religious “truth and falsehood” as he repeatedly argues but a much more complex civilizational attitude that included within itself the logics of religion, race, politics and so forth. 28 The civilizational logic of Western Christendom saw itself as superior to the rest of the world prior to modernity, as Maldonado’s conversation on the desire for *Christianitis* to become *Universitalatis* above shows. On that civilizational epistemic basis, Christendom launched the Crusades unprovoked (Mastnak 2002:119)29, Reconquista, Inquisition, colonization of the New

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28 Civilizational theories existed across the Mediterranean in Christendom and Islamdom in similar and different ways. For example, geoclimatic theories about Mediterranean cultures being the most “temperate” and therefore most civilized were inherited in Islam and Latin Christian societies from ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman sources. These geoclimatic theories viewed those to the extreme north and south of this Mediterranean-centered world as less civilized and barbaric, and included ethnographies based on religion, race and politics as markers for being more or less civilized (Robinson 2011: 74-75). It is important to contextualize theories of race and ontological superiority/inferiority in different epochs as they do not all flatten out as exactly the same, nor completely different and incomparable.

29 Counter to Mastnak, Maldonado-Torres claims that Christendom’s negative view of Muslims was a defensive response to Muslim imperial growth in the Latin West (2014: 644). Mastnak would largely argue, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 2, that Maldonado-Torres overlooks that there was not a coherent notion of a Muslim enemy or threat until Latin Christendom sought on its own accord to create peace internal to its geopolitical borders by consolidating a more exclusive White/Christian identity against that of a non-White/Christian political enemy whom was to be fought outside its political ontological borders (Mastnak 2002).
World and mass enslavement of Black Africans amongst activities in other locations in modernity. A postsecular approach to understanding racisms, would go beyond the Eurocentric epistemic paradigm that views racial markers based on religion as less significant or less violent than racism based on secular markers (color, ethnicity, nation, etc.). It is clear that both religious and secular forms of racial exclusion have influenced each other and greatly contributed to forming the coloniality of being.

The arguments raised above regarding the limitations to Maldonado-Torres are not to suggest a disagreement with his conclusion that the Indigenous and Black were viewed as non-beings nor with his brilliant conceptualization of the coloniality of being. What is challenged is his attributing the development of coloniality to Indians and Blacks in the Americas, while dismissing the experience of the Muslim and influence of Islamophobia as circumstantial or less influential, when, it was just as present as a system of theoanthropological ontological exclusion in Al-Andalus, the Americas, Africa and elsewhere in the 15th and the 16th century.

1.6. Columbus, Las Casas and the Transfer of Islamophobia in Conquest

Maldonado-Torres’s conceptualization of Columbus is problematic for the ways in which the Muslim lays libidinally dormant. The Muslim and Islamophobia was very active in Columbus’ mind as a template for racist conquest and ontological Otherness. Maldonado-Torres mentions that central for Columbus mission was the “universal victory of Christianity” and that Columbus also planned to help finance a Crusade to rescue Jerusalem from Muslim hands. Yet, his analysis stops there and he delves no deeper into this intersection between Columbus’ anti-Muslim drive and how it influenced his encounter with the Indians. He employs his problematic separation between the “religious” Old World and “racial” New World to state that those with wrong religion are to be refuted while those with no religions are “discovered, indoctrinated, perpetually enslaved and colonized” (2014: 646). Maldonado-Torres’ bifurcation of religious and racial logics is put into question during the very transition conquistadors made from the Old to the New World by the fact that arguably some of the first slaves brought to the Americas were moros blancos (lit. white Muslims) on Spanish ships departing from the former Al-Andalus (Cook 2016: 47). The figure of

30 This is not to deny that civilizational superiority is anything new in history. Nearly all civilizations or imperial formations in history - Islamic, Aztec, Mayan, Chinese, Indian, Buddhist, African, etc. - carry with them certain types of exclusionary logics; that is not an argument to say they are all identical either. Yet, the specificity of pre-modern Western Christendom’s civilizational logic is important because it directly informed the rise of modern Europe. If we want to understand how modernity/coloniality was formed, we cannot view these projects as completely separate but as a continuation and fulfillment of the medieval spirit. This is particularly the case when the logic of medieval Christendom has never ceased playing a role in paradigms of war and conquest.
the Muslim and crusading spirit of Columbus and Spanish must be underscored to fully grasp how this paradigm of war interacted with and treated the Indigenous. As much as Maldonado-Torres attempts to disassociate or differentiate the Old World from the New, the reality is the process was an extension and sedimentation of Old World politics and conceptions of ontological Otherness as much as it was the development of something historically novel.

In addition to material and imperial gain, Abbas Hamdani argues that Christopher Columbus’ plan to conquer the New World must be seen as a continuation of the anti-Islamic Crusades from the Middle Ages. The Italian Columbus had already fought Muslim armies in the Mediterranean for a number of years prior to the Iberian Visigoth crown funding his mission to find Western access to India (Hamdani 1979). One of Columbus and the Spanish Crown’s main motivations was to unite Western and Eastern Christians in order to capture the casa santa of Jerusalem and defeat the Islamicate caliphates in between (Hamdani 1981: 323). According to Portuguese Prince Henry “The Navigator’s” (d. 1460) objectives, the Spanish/Portuguese motivations at the time were not only commodities such as gold, ivory, slaves, or spices, but also largely a politico-military attempt to overcome the might and threat of the Muslim civilizational Other. We should also consider the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottomans as laying the foundations on the eastern front of Western Christendom to revive crusading efforts to find western access to India in the early modern period (1981: 324-325). The pressure from the Ottomans in the East and Spanish enchantment with the wealth of the New World quickly intensified into a racist capitalist effort to procure gold, ivory, and spices, as well as Indian and African life and land. My point here is to emphasize the deep-seated psychological and cosmological drive to shape the world against Islam and other “monsters,” which then turns into a white supremacist capitalist exploit of nearly all of Latin America, Africa, and Asia’s life and land in modernity, in addition to the exploitation of labor, life and land within Europe’s proletariat.

1.6.1. Valladolid Debates and the Muslim
The anti-Muslim character of the Valladolid debates (1550-1551) is another aspect that has been largely unexplored by Latin American decolonial thinkers, including Maldonado-Torres. The Valladolid debates were scholarly exchanges amongst Iberian Catholic priests which discussed the humanity of the indigenous peoples of the New World. The debates were framed around the question of whether the Indigenous had souls and around the question of just war. During the debates, Juan Gines de Sepulveda (d. 1573) argued against Bartolome de las Casas (d. 1566) saying that the Spanish had the obligation to engage in just war against inferior peoples who
would not adopt the superior Christian religion and culture (Maldonado-Torres: 2007: 246). He continues to relate the Valladolid debates only to the humanity of the Indians being questioned, and how the attitude and forms of relating to the Indians had been established by conquerors in the Americas long before these debates crystalized (ibid.). Mastnak remarks that there is an overarching absence of the discussion of the Muslim in scholarship on the discovery of the New World and specifically the Valladolid debates (Mastnak 1994: 128). Mastnak addresses the Muslim question in the context of the Valladolid debates by showing that the figure of the Turk “functioned as an organizing principle in the internal economy of Las Casas’ and Sepulveda's reasoning” (1994: 140).

On one hand, Las Casas was the liberal humanitarian imperial “good guy” who argued for the rights of the Indians by saying that they should not be conquered and enslaved but converted peacefully to Catholicism. On the other, Sepulveda was the conservative humanist imperialist “bad guy” who argued that the Indians were an uncivilized people who deserved to be conquered and enslaved (1994: 135-136). Las Casas argued for the rights of the Indians by saying that they were different from the Turks; meaning, Las Casas affirmed that the Muslim should be subject to an eternal just war, enslavement and conquest. Sepulveda on the other hand fully extended European attitudes against the Turks to the Indian (1994: 127). Las Casas rejected the idea of the conquest of the Indians and affirmed it against the Moors in Africa and Asia (1994: 144). Mastnak describes Las Casas’ arguments against the Indians as “mild” compared to that of Turks; especially when Las Casas would cast anti-Muslim derogatory names at Sepulveda calling him a “Mohammedan” because of his support of “death and terror” against Indians, “death and terror” being Islamophobically associated with the practices of Muslims (1994: 141 & 144). In effect, it is clear Sepulveda’s harsher argument wins out as mass genocide, enslavement and necropolitical behavior was carried out against the Indians in the Americas. What is important is here, and missing in Maldonado-Torres argument, is that the figure of the Muslim and anti-Muslim logics and behavior was central to forming the very definition of the Indian.

In light of Mastnak’s claim above, he also argues that the conquista of the Americas should be seen as a continuation of the reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula, and as part of Spain’s “perennial crusade” against Muslims and other “infidels” (1994: 139). A number of scholars (Majid 2009, Arjana 2015, Rana 2011) have argued that in many ways the Indians were seen as “New Moors” by the Spanish and Portuguese. I have argued elsewhere (Abbasi 2016 Kan al-Hunud), that there was a wholesale transfer of Islamophobic systems and practices from the Iberian
peninsula to the New World: from intellectual debates before 1492 and up to Valladolid; to education and evangelization processes used on Moriscos and Indians by transnational Catholic orders such as the Jesuits; to torture technologies; systems of epistemicide (genocide of knowledge) and memomicide (genocide of memory systems); the names of Indian sites of worship being identified as mosques and synagogues; Indigenous cities being named after cities in the Islamic world (i.e., a Mayan capital identified as “Great Cairo”); the names of crusader saints such as St. James being changed from *Santiago Matamoros* (Saint of Moor killers) to *Santiago Mataindios* (Saint of Indian killers); to arts and theatre that staged the Christian conquest of Rhodes and Jerusalem where Indians played the role of conquered Muslims and even economic systems such as the encomienda system which had previously been used on cheap Morisco and Muslim labor in Iberia before being established in the Americas (Cardinal & Megret 2017).

1.7. Islamophobia, Black Muslims and Africa

While it is clear that Islamophobia directly informed anti-Indigenous racism, Islamophobia also influenced modern Eurocentric notions of the Black African and modern anti-black racism. Mastnak notes that African lands and islands were originally seen as instrumental for crusading warfare against Muslims. From the early to late 1500s, Portuguese expeditions established the first European settlements on the West African coast due to the economic desire for trade but also the psychosocial militaristic urge to continue crusading, find routes to conquer Muslims and recapture the Holy Land. This is all happened before Las Casas and other Europeans suggested exporting *negro* slaves to the Americas in order to spare the Indians heavy labor (Mastnak 1994: 127). Maldonado-Torres also comments on how Black Africans were largely categorized as Moors or Muslims from the perspective of Europeans. The term *moro* being etymologically linked to the Latin term *morus*, which could mean black. The Latin and Greek *maurus/mauros* were used since

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31 In addition to my article (Abbasi 2016 *Kan al-Hunud*), Mastnak also notes the occurrences of these play reenactments (1994: 140).

32 Maldonado-Torres, following Wynter and other Caribbean decolonial thinkers, notes that anti-black prejudice existed prior to modernity in Latin Christendom, Jewish discourses and the Muslim world. Maldonado-Torres distinguishes between pre-modern anti-black prejudice in various societies and modern anti-black racism in that modern anti-black racism becomes a global organizing principle for the first time in history (Maldonado-Torres 2014: 655-656). I argue that any attempt to analyze anti-blackness in a context prior to modernity/coloniality, including in the Islamicate world, must utilize a post-Orientalist framework. One reason being that Orientalist and Zionist scholarship has hegemonically produced a Eurocentric epistemological structure that distorts historical realities about systems of race in the Islamicate world in order to make Eurocentric modern racism appear less appalling (Jackson 2005). There are a number of scholars moving in this post-Orientalist direction, such as Blackamerican Muslim thinkers Sherman Jackson (2005) and Abdullah Bin Hamid Ali (2017), who have argued that while anti-blackness did exist in the pre-modern Islamicate world, those societies were not fundamentally organized by race like the modern/colonial nation-state.
the classical period to refer to the dark-skinned peoples of Mauritania or northwest Africa (Maldonado-Torres: 2014: 650). While Maldonato-Torres does mention the connection between blackness and Muslimness through the term Moro, he does not further conceptualize the connection.

Islamophobia was in many ways one of the main motivations in Europe’s Age of Discovery and Expansion\(^{33}\), and its effect has often been erased from the experience of not only Blacks from the African continent but of those enslaved and taken to the Americas. Slyviane Diouf writes how the papal bulls of Nicholas V in 1454 CE and Calixtus III in 1456 justified Portugal’s slave trade on the West African coast as a crusade for Christianity (Diouf 2013: 34). Cook writes that as early as 1501 the Spanish Crown released decrees prohibiting the travel or passage of Muslims (and Jews) to the New World, whether as slave or freed persons, so that they would not disturb the proselytization of the Indians (Cook 2016: 56). Diouf adds that a royal decree issued on May 11, 1526 specifically forbade Black Africans coming from Muslim lands in Africa. This was followed by at least five different decrees outlawing the introduction of Muslims to Spanish colonies within the next fifty years (2013: 36).

While there is evidence that non-black African Muslims were enslaved, free persons or bonded to labor in the Americas - such as Moriscos, North Africans or even Turkish Muslims (Cook 2016: 50) - Black African Muslims where the majority of Muslims in the New World. The efectives of these bans are a different question and, in most cases, they failed as people found ways to circumvent them legally and illegally. What is clear is that peoples of Muslim heritage were regarded as threat, and that Islam and Muslims were seen as a cultural, ontological and political challenge to the formation of an exclusivist Catholic Christian body politic in Spanish and Portuguese territories in the New World. Muslims were viewed as sources of inspiration for other nations to rebellion, and it was feared that Muslims would take Islam to the Indians (Diouf 2013: 33).

\(^{33}\) In Stuart Hall’s “The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power” he argues there are two main events which caused Europe to break from its continental shell and expand: 1) the first was early Portuguese explorations of the African coast (1430 – 1498), and 2) the second was Columbus’ voyages to the New World (Hall 2007: 281). I would add a third, which was the Portuguese explorer Vasco de Gama’s (d. 1524) rounding of the Cape of Good Hope, voyages across the Indian Ocean and arrival in South Asia in 1498 (Cliff 2013). What is unique about these three events is that Islamophobia was one of the main drives in each context. In each instance of the three aforementioned European expansions, the explorers, colonizers and their missions were guided by a desire of crusades, commerce and conquest that always had active the Muslim as a political enemy whom must be overcome and exploited in order for Western Christians to fulfill their spiritual destinies, economic imperialism and salvific goals of reconquering the Holy Land (Cliff 2013, Hall 1992: 283, Hamdani 1979 & 1981).
37). Rana argues it is at this crossroads of Muslimness and Blackness in early modernity that antecedents are set for the (racist) Semitic-Hamitic hypothesis in late modernity. Under this hypothesis, Semites as an ethnological category comprises Arabs and Jews, while “Hamite” were those of African “Negroid” descent (Rana 2011: 37). The racist Semitic-Hamitic hypothesis of late modernity (18th century) only crystallized after centuries of crusades and exploitation of Black and Muslim bodies on a planetary scale.

1.8. Conclusion

With these historical facts in mind, it makes sense when Mastnak argues that the discovery of a new world did not simply turn medieval Europe into “Old Europe;” rather, there was a prominent presence of the Middle Ages in the conquest of the Americas and the rise of the Atlantic world. Further, Mastnak, in contrast to Maldonado-Torres, provocatively argues:

The basic structure of the argument regarding the extra-European worlds and peoples, canonically formulated in the mid-thirteenth century, was not shaken by the discovery of America. The discovery was not a break with the past. The immediate impact of the descumbrimiento [discovery] on Europe was all but revolutionizing. Elliott has convincingly argued that, »at least so far as fundamental political transformations are concerned« - »[t]he refusal of states to accept the continuance of any form of subordination to a supra-national ecclesiastical authority; the absolutist tendencies of sixteenth-century princes; the development of new theories and practices to regulate relations between independent sovereign states - all these developments are entirely conceivable in a Europe which remained in total ignorance of the existence of America (1994: 138).

Mastnak’s claim that the discovery was “not a break with the past” and that the rise of resistance to feudal structures in Christendom and the formation of modern global inter-state systems could have happened without the encounter with or knowledge of the Americas is provocative. While I do not proscribe to such a view, I think it is necessary to put this view in conversation with Maldonado-Torres who argues that the discover of the New World is one that is marked by a totally different and sharp break from the past.

My own view lays somewhere between these two. I recognize that the systems of race and power that existed prior to the rise of the Atlantic-centered world directly affected and profoundly informed modernity/coloniality, specifically with regard to the Muslim and systems of Islamophobia. At the same time I recognize that the conquest of the Americas and rise of transatlantic slave trade were unique formations that birthed re-calibrations of formations of power.

34 There were a number of jihads fought by enslaved African Muslims in the Latin American colonies, such as by the West African descent Male peoples in Brasil and Muslims involved in the Haitian Revolution (1804) (Diouf 2013: 50, 217, 263). See also Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia (1995) by Joao Jose Reis.
and being that both settled themselves into pre-existing ones just as they transformed pre-existing ones in novel and renewed ways.

Based on my arguments above, I conclude that ontological notions of who was considered human or not according to exclusionary logic of first Christendom and then Europe, did not initially change much theoretically between the Old and New Worlds. Eventually, what did change drastically over a period of several centuries was the material and metaphysical effects of global power relations and how theories of ontological exclusion were applied. In my opinion, this shift throughout modernity/coloniality did not happen rapidly. It was only over the longue durée of five centuries of Western supremacy and hegemony post-15th century that the coloniality of power sedimented in ways that changed relations of power from being relatively symmetric between “competing” empires to asymmetric relations of power between the West and the Rest. For Maldonado-Torres, this change in power in modernity/coloniality would be reflected on the ontological level through the gradual normalization of the coloniality of being whose guiding logic crystallized as the ego conquiro.

In relation to the Muslim, I have shown how Maldonado-Torres specifically and the decolonial discourse more broadly must better integrate how Islamophobia laid the conditions of possibility for the rise of the modern/colonial world-system. I believe in expanding upon and complementing the Latin American Atlantic-centered approach to understanding the coloniality of being through the Muslim question, the discourse of decoloniality broadens its horizons and tools of analysis. Through this critical engagement and appraisal of Maldonado-Torres and Latin American decolonial thought, an autonomous decolonial Muslim discourse, or Islamic decoloniality, takes shape which both intersects with the concerns of non-Muslim decolonial thinkers while differing in certain areas as well. It is at this point that I would like to build upon my critical Muslim engagement with Maldonado-Torres’ work and the wider decolonial framework to further reveal dimensions of Western Man and Imperial Being which have thus far been undertheorized; specifically in regards to how the crusades, coloniality and conquest were ontologically contoured by Islam and the Muslims before and after European expansion in the 15th/16th centuries.
Chapter Two

The Crusading Spirit/ The Coloniality of the Spirit:
An Indigenous Muslim Unit of Analysis

The Crusades offered the European Civilization an opportunity to turn towards the exterior, and to reap a profitable harvest in the Muslim Civilization. The same tendencies pushed it to the discovery of America, and one could here discern the beginning of a profound rupture between a dominating Europe and the rest of humanity, that explains well the politics of the world for the last four centuries as well as its present disequilibrium. – Malik Bennabi (1979: 44).

All these opinions overlook one vital element in the question, which must be added to all other elements - the Crusader spirit that runs in the blood of all Westerners and lies deep in their minds, to which is added imperialism’s fear of the Islamic spirit and the effort to destroy the strength of Islam, whereby Westerners are linked by a single feeling and a single interest in destroying it. This unites communist Russia and capitalist America. – Sayyid Qutb (Qutb 1996: 287).

2.0. Introduction

In order to more fully understand the ontology of Western Man and the coloniality of being we must turn to a discussion on his victims. The social location and body from which one speaks always reflects upon that which comes out in their thoughts. Decolonial thinkers, such as Grosfoguel (2011) and Mignolo (2012), refer to the need to challenge the coloniality of knowledge by revealing and being explicit about one’s locus of enunciation (i.e., the positionality one speaks from). They speak of the need to move from an unsituated ego-politics of knowledge, which is the God-eye view of Western Man and Imperial Being, to a body-politics and geo-politics of knowledge which reveal the location from where subject speaks. Decolonial Latin American and Caribbean thinkers themselves are situated by their geo/body politics and loci of enunciation. They often invoke the question of how might we describe the rise of the modern world if we moved the locus of enunciation from a European man, for example, to an Indigenous woman in the New World (Grosfoguel 2011: 7). How would this shift our thinking from the Imperial Being of Western Man to that of the Other in the zone of nonbeing? For the sake of reimagining the rise of the modern/colonial world-system through a lens that sheds light on another dimension of its underside, how might we describe the rise of the modern world if we experienced it through the

35 Decolonial Studies is not the first field to consider the politics of location, or one’s position in relation to power and the social system. A number of fields, such as Feminist Studies (Boras 1990) and Liberation Theology (Esack 2006), have long produced a discourse and praxis that centers the idea of unveiling one’s position of power and privilege when interpreting the world, texts or other phenomena.
lens of a Muslim woman? Specifically, I am thinking of the Muslim women who lived during the fall of Al-Andalus in 1492 CE and were taken as slaves to the Americas.

Some of if not the first slaves to arrive on the shores of the Americas were *moras blancas*, or white Andalusian Muslim women. Karoline Cook describes how in 1512 CE a Spanish man named Hernando de Peralta was granted a license to bring with him to the island of San Juan two *esclavas blancas* (white slaves), which at that time was a term applied to *moriscas*, so long as they were baptized (2016: 47). Let us assume, for argument’s sake, that this Morisca woman’s name was Maria— which was her New Christian name as opposed to the old Muslim Maryam name she used to be called in the winding hills and streets of Granada before she was forced into Hispanic captivity. Maria was a gendered and racialized Muslim woman that experienced the Reconquista and ethnic cleansing of Al-Andalus. She would have also contained within her imagination the ongoing experience of the Crusades, as, in many ways, the Reconquista was framed as an affirmation and continuation of the failed capture of Jerusalem and Christian holy lands (Robinson 2004: 36 & 78). From the view of Hispanic Catholics, even though Maria had converted, she would have carried within her “dirty” ancestry impure blood, an irrational mind, and an ontology negated by teratological theories that made her and her people out to be militant and sexually deviant sub-human beasts. From the view of her Hispanic Christian male slaveholder, Maria was a simple sexual deposit and concubine (Cook 2016: 48); her main purpose in life being to please her White Christian master as he went on to settler-colonize and wage war against a new group of non-Christians. From Maria’s perspective, what would this unfolding of the modern world mean to her? Or to the community and Islamic *ummah* she belonged to?

In order to understand the coloniality of being from Maryam/Maria’s perspective, it is necessary to understand how the paradigm of the Crusades as an “endless holy war” against all infidels (Mastnak 2002: 124) has enduring effects on the modern/colonial world system. So much so that Mastnak notes, “Indeed, what we may call the crusading spirit— the epitome of that fundamentalist anti-Muslim attitude—appears to be still alive in our own days” (2005: 208). The Crusades, like racism and myths of Hamites, Semites, barbarians and Amazonian jungles, has

36 Maria was the name of an actual *berberisca* (Berber/Amazigh) who was taken by her Spanish slaveholders to the New World in 1624 CE (Cook 2016: 47).
37 Maryam is the name for Maria or Mary in many Islamicate languages.
38 We might also ask about how “Maryams” in West Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia all experienced the rise of coloniality, all of these regions being Islamicate contacts that experienced colonization and slavery by European powers in the 15th and 16th centuries. This was not only a Maryam stuck in the Iberian Peninsula – anti-Muslim encounters may very well have been the first globalized form of coloniality in terms of geographical reach.
had a powerful and lasting effect on the modern/colonial system. The *ego conquiro* and Imperial Being have been dealt with by Maldonado-Torres and others, yet this *espiritu cruzado*, or what I call the “crusading spirit” in this chapter, remains unincorporated in our understanding of coloniality. In this chapter I will focus on three dimensions of the crusading spirit: 1) firstly, I will build a genealogy of the crusading spirit that provides a historical archive for which to theorize Western ontology and the crusading spirit, 2) I argue that Muslims have indigenously conceptualized a theory of the crusading spirit in their own languages as a unit of analysis to name the rise of the coloniality, and 3) I argue that the crusading spirit is simultaneously a coloniality of the spirit, which reveals further dimensions to the cosmos and anthrop of Western Man.

2.1. 10 Centuries of the Crusading Spirit – Situating the Crusades and the Muslim
The rise of Western Christendom and the *espiritu cruzado* during Middle Ages as a unifying civilization and universalizing mission lays the foundation for the modern/colonial world system. Again, this is not to say there has not existed other non-Western exclusionary civilizational logics throughout human history. Although important for scholarly inquiry, I am not focusing on those, but am specifically focusing on the development of Western civilization. More importantly, the formation of the West over the Rest complex and historiography of the Plato to NATO\(^{39}\) complex cannot be understood without analyzing long-standing logics and thrusts that continue to girdle it. This undead medieval archive is not a thing of the past, as Eurocentric linear chronological history tells us, but an ongoing reality that continues to be resurrected in the postmodern present. Therefore, its excavation and examination aids us in shedding light on the Muslim question as well as the coloniality of being. This section provides a genealogy of the crusading spirit which builds a historical archive for theorizing Western ontology and identity formation further.

I argue that this genealogy of the crusading spirit\(^{40}\) is comprised of several key aspects – a move from an inclusive or more ambiguous medieval Western Christian identity in relation to Islam to an explicitly exclusive one; a shift from defensive to offensive military action through crusades; the consolidation of Muslim ontology as Other to Western Christendom; the prevalence of

\(^{39}\) The story of “Plato to NATO” is a popular expression that is used to describe the historiographical formation of Western civilization in modernity. See David Gress’ *From PLATO to NATO* (2010).

\(^{40}\) The crusading spirit should be differentiated from the medieval Crusades (1100 – 1300) themselves. While I will demonstrate how the crusading spirit is birthed through the medieval Crusades, its lasting logic, affect and systemic effect in forming the modern/colonial world-system takes on different shapes and forms as it progresses alongside the West’s expansion over the Rest.
crusading logic in the early modern and late modern periods, whether secular or religious; the immanent existence of crusading symbols in Western cultural production such as film, fiction and fanfare; and the prevalence of the crusading spirit in wars of terror in the last several postmodern decades. In making these arguments, I will ultimately establish a historiography of the crusading spirit which proves valid Muslim thinker Roger Garaudy's paradigm of “Ten Centuries of Crusades”, which began by Pope Urban II’s inaugural call to crusade by proclaiming Deus Vult! (lit. “God wills it”) in the 11th century (Garaudy 1999: 3). 41

2.1.1. A New Millennium - From Inclusive to Exclusive Western Christian Identity
Mastnak argues that the birth and initial rise of Islamicate civilization from the 1st – 3rd AH (7th – 10th CE) and its first encounters with the Western Christian world did not produce the antagonisms that defined medieval Christendom and the Crusades (Mastnak 2010: 30). Initial Muslim expansions into Western Latin Christendom’s southern territories (Iberian Peninsula, southern France, southern Italy, Sicily, etc.), and Eastern Greek Christendom’s Mediterranean territories (northern Africa and the Levant) did not produce a solidified notion of the Muslim Other. Seventh and eighth century Western Christian pilgrims to the Holy Places could not notice religious differences between Eastern Christians and Muslims, and often lumped them all under the religio-ethnic label of Saracens that was later used more exclusively for Muslims. Eastern Christian religious life was so undisturbed and vibrant that some reports even stated Christians and Saracens “shared a church.” Latin Christians saw Muslims as one amongst a wider taxonomy of pagans, infidels and barbarians, and were assigned no privileged place. Muslims as “Muslims” and Islam as “Islam” were not viewed as the main threat to Christianity (ibid.). 42

41 My interpretation of Garaudy’s idea of “Ten Centuries of Crusades”, like the idea of the crusading spirit I briefly clarify above, is not a transhistorical empirical statement about the linear progression of actual Crusades from the 11th century until the present day. Rather, it is a metaphor for analyzing how the crusading spirit, which is birthed through medieval crusades, remains a historic force and perpetual reservoir for shaping the coloniality of being in relation to the Muslim and other victims of modernity. Garaudy describes how the introductory moment of the First Crusade lays a certain foundation for treating Western Christendom’s enemies, “Deus Vult!’, Thus began the first crusade when, at the request of Saint Bernard, the Christians of Europe set out to conquer the “Holy Land” by massacring, on their way, the Jews of Eastern Europe, the Christians of Byzantium, [and] afterwards, burning in Jerusalem the Jews in their synagogues and watering with Muslim blood the streets of the city” (2009: 3). Garaudy’s historical description of the birth of the First Crusade lays the historiographical groundwork for a paradigm that can theorize how the ontology of the West is shaped to treat the Rest as those with a lack of being.

42 There were however, Eastern Christian polemics against Muslims which started within the century after Muhammed’s death in 632 CE, such as from the Syrian Yuhanna (John) of Damascus - whose family members and probably himself served in the government of first Umayyad Caliphs - but their transfer and potential relationship to Western Latin Christian views of Muslims has not been well recorded according to Mastnak (2010: 30). When placed amongst wider accounts from Eastern Christian sources, John’s views make sense. The first several centuries of Eastern Christian writings regarding their encounters with Muslims had to do more with Christians making sense of their own salvation in apocalyptic terms and to interpret why God would send the Arabs to conquer Byzantium. They
Even the battles with “Saracens” in what is now Southern France were not described in particular relation to Islam and their Muslimness by the Frankish Carolingian chroniclers who fought them at the border of the Pyrenees mountains. The mid-9th century confrontations in the Iberian Peninsula and Southern Italy did produce negative and monstrous views of Saracens in relation to their Muslimness from the likes of Pope John VIII (872-82 CE), but again this did not differentiate Muslims from other putative pagans and infidels. Up until the end of the 11th century, Muslims remained one of a large number of threats to Christendom, such as the “primitive idolatries of the Northmen, Slavs and Magyars”, and people in the northern Europe had not heard the name “Mahomet” (Mastnak 2010: 31-32). It was not until the end of the 11th century and First Crusade that the Muslim as the enemy begins to crystalize in the Latin West.

At the end of the 10th century and beginning of the 11th there were movements in the Latin West calling for peace amongst Christians. The Pax Dei (Peace of God) movement led to the establishment of the Treuga Dei (Truce of God) (Mastnak 2002:1). This movement was shared amongst the ecclesiastical, papal, and ruling political classes who were invested in a creating a movement of pax et unitas (peace and unity), creating a “social bond” in the unified corpus viewed Arab conquest as a punishment for their sins, and described the Arab Muslim conquerors in negative ways as the treacherous “sons of Ishmael” as well as in positive terms for the ways in which they allowed Christians norms and lifestyles to remain intact and relatively autonomous (Penn 2012). Up until the First Crusades and early 12th century, Latin Christians still did not view Muslims-as-Muslims yet; they were called a number of different names with no coherent way of seeing a relation between the groups of Muslim people they were dealing with, naming them anything from Saracens, Persians, Turks and Arabs to pagans, Jews, “enemies of God” and infidels (Birk 2012:103). Muslims were more likely to be viewed as pagans and connected to a cyclical war of “Christianity vs paganism” in which Muslims were associated as pagan with the old Roman empire that had persecuted Christians before adopting Christianity as a state religion. Muslims were not in any way viewed through the perennial lens of a battle between Christianity and Islam that we encounter so often now (Birk 2012:92).

43 Muhammad Asad notes in his biography how the Chanson de Roland (ca. 1095) (Song of Roland) which was a legend composed about the victory of Christians over Muslims in southern France in the late 8th century, was not composed until after the First Crusade, thereby becoming one of the first “national anthems” of Western Christendom (Asad 2004: 7). Quinn notes that the actual battle took place as a result of Franks invading Spain at the request of one Muslim ruler who sought an alliance with the Franks to defeat another Muslim ruler (Quinn 2008: 49-50). He also notes how the French Chanson – like the Bavarian Parzival, popular English sources including Pier’s Plowman and The Canterbury Tales, and Dante’s The Divine Comedy - became part of a wider anti-Islamic weltanschauung of epic poetry during the Crusades that aimed to create a market for a comprehensive and entertaining picture of the Muslim enemy and his ideology (49).

44 Edward Said (d. 2003) makes a similar point, although in slightly different terms, in his book Orientalism, “The European encounter with the Orient, and specifically Islam … turned Islam into the very epitome of an outsider against which the whole of European civilization from the Middle Ages on was founded” (1979: 70). The key point here being that Islam becomes Islam, and Muslim becomes Muslim as the ontological Other in the foundational moment of the Middle Ages. While Said focuses on this through the historical formation of the discourse of Orientalism, Mastnak focuses on this through the historical formation of the crusade-industrial complex of the medieval period in relation to the fundamental Muslim enemy.
christianorum (Christian body) free from division and dissension. This unitary body of all Christians would equal one body, and this one body equaled the corpus Christi (body of Christ) (2002: 36). This search for internal peace and the end to shedding blood\(^\text{45}\) of Christians internal to Latin Christendom developed into a war internally against those who did not fit its image and externally against all non-Christians. Conceptualizations concerning “holy war” and “just war” came together in this crucible to forge the Crusades and establish them on a number of military and legal grounds; all of this growing out of a desire for “holy peace” (2002: 66). With regards to those “enemies of peace,” this moment also saw the unification of Western Christendom against a common hegemonic force and enemy, the Muslim. Mastnak states that the atmosphere of the 11\(^\text{th}\) century Latin West demonstrated a widespread shift taking place from relative civilizational, ethnic and religious inclusivity (or ambiguity) to exclusivity (2002: 39).\(^\text{46}\)

The 11\(^\text{th}\) century was also the turn of a millennium. Mastnak argues that millenarian feelings and the logics of messianism, eschatology and apocalyptic concerns became key to the crusading movement for peace. The capture of Jerusalem and Israel became two images intimately linked with Pax Dei and Treuga Dei, with pilgrimages to Palestine (as the Promised Land) increasing and becoming continuous amongst the populace of the Latin West. The desire to undertake the

\(^{45}\) The concept of blood is central in the historical formation of Christianity. In Gil Anidjar’s Blood: A Critique of Christianity (2016), he argues that blood has been one of the main ways Christianity has defined its ontology, both materially and metaphysically, in terms of “us” and “them”:

…the blood fostered by the Eucharist gave rise to the community of blood, from which was extrapolated a universal anthropology. Accordingly, the perceived exceptionality of a community discriminating and excluding on the basis of blood (the limpieza de sangre of medieval Spain, the Nazi race laws) must be reconsidered in light of the rule, the constitution of the community of blood shared by all Christians in the Middle Ages and thereafter. Blood is accordingly at the center of the “papal revolution,” the disciplinary revolution that recasts and refigures first the body mystical as the visible body of the church’s members; second, the earthly authority of the pope (the Crusades); and third, the community of Christians as united in the pure blood of Christ. Blood is where the origin of both nation and race must be explored—at the very least. Incidentally, the striking absence of Jesus’ pure blood from scholarly theorizations of race testifies to the vanishing of Christianity from critical attention. (2016: 32).

For many Western Christians during the Crusades, the spilling of Christian blood and fratricide was intolerable. The founding of unity through a hematology of pure Christian blood thus constituted an important ontological aspect to medieval Western identity (133-134).

\(^{46}\) It was also a time of Christendom entering into offensive military expansion. Mastnak summarizes the dynamics of this transitional era here:

The pagan and infidel inroads into the western Christian world had ended, and with them Latin Christians’ defensive wars. The Latin Christians now launched military attacks. They set out to Christianize their pagan neighbors in the northern and eastern parts of the European peninsula and to reconquer the lands in Spain, southern Italy, and Sicily that they thought of as having been unjustly taken from them. Coinciding as it did with the rise of religious exclusivism, Christian military expansion meant the spread of exclusivism—the military march of an exclusivist religion by means of which exclusivism itself became a religion. But this is looking too far ahead, to the time of the Crusades (2002: 39).
long and dangerous journey to see the Sepulcher of Christ became a mass movement, which culminated in the “recapturing” of Jerusalem in the First Crusade (2002: 46). The fantasy of traveling to the Orient and visiting the Holy City as a “path to salvation” was utilized and made real in the holy struggle to bring internal peace to Christendom by regaining Jerusalem. It is reported that at the Council of Claremont in 1095, Pope Urban II preached to launch the First Crusade by proclaiming Deus volt! (God’s will) – which became the enduring war-cry of the crusading spirit. Pope Urban II’s remarks at the Council of Claremont were based on the logic of ending fratricidal wars by instead marching into a just battle against non-Christians (51). The Council of Claremont and the reformist Urban’s vision was epoch-making in that it connected the peace movement to this new crusading call. The crusades became a struggle for peace, and the last struggle for bringing about the peace of God in the coming centuries (48-49).

2.1.2. From Defensive to Offensive through Crusades

According to Mastnak, it is important to note that the Crusades were also launched unprovoked. In the transition to a militaristic and exclusivist civilizational paradigm, Western Christendom sought to go on the offensive as a way of bringing internal peace and unity to the deep divisions and conflicts within their corpus Christi. As opposed to the earlier reconquista - which took place in the mid-eleventh century and was led by the Frankish figure Charlemagne who waged a “never-ending war” against the “Sarrazins” on the frontiers of Western Christendom (2002: 67) – the Crusades took place against “enemies of Christianity” on territories that did not border Latin Christians, nor threaten Christian possessions, nor give pretext for war (2002: 118). Additionally, the language and framework used in the First and later Crusades was never based on an any idea of defensive war, as were holy wars in the past. The language of “defense of the Church” and defensio was substituted for libertas and liberatio, with liberatio being the most frequent word used by Urban II in his galvanizing for the First Crusade (2002: 96). Mastnak argues that the Crusades quickly become the main organizing principle in Christian wars against the infidels, saying even that the reconquista became connected to the Crusades only to the extent that the reconquista became subordinated and assimilated to the Crusades; the ultimate goal of the reconquista becoming a “second march to Jerusalem” by the early 1100s (2002: 96).

47 Deus Volt has reemerged as a popular cry amongst members of contemporary Far-Right movements across the world, a point I will return to later.

48 In regards to the dynamic of ending fratricide by making Christian identity more exclusivist, Anidjar notes that Urban II’s crusade campaign made it salutary – slightly amended from it being permissible, as it had been made under Pope Alexander II (d. 1073) – to use arms due to the spilling of Christian blood. This led to a newfound distinction “between bloods” that allowed for more militaristic action against the natural blood enemy (i.e., non-Christian infidel) who was the necessary Other in the ontological process of making the crusading Self’s blood clean (2016: 133).
Another main motivating logic of Urban II and the Crusades was to save Eastern Christians. A letter was received by Urban II from Byzantium Emperor Alexius I asking for help in fighting the Seljuk army in Asia, but the letter said nothing of desiring to reconquer the Holy Land. In the wider view of Western Christians, their Eastern counterparts were being oppressed by their barbaric Saracen neighbors and leaders. Yet, this understanding came with little knowledge of Eastern Christendom. Eastern and Oriental Christians had no “identity of interest” in relation to Latin Western Christians, and never appealed for help in reconquering the Holy Land from Western Christians (2002: 119). While Muslim-Christian relations under Islamic rule in the East were not perfect and contained exceptional periods of persecution of Christian minorities, Eastern Christians by and large enjoyed relative autonomy under Muslim rule and enjoyed positions of privilege and power in the “Holy Land” (ibid.).

49 There was in fact a reconciliatory letter from Byzantium Emperor Alexius I to Pope Urban II asking for mercenaries to help fight the onslaught of the Seljuks in Asia. The letter was not asking for help in retrieving a lost Holy Land nor for a grandeur unification between Western and Easter Christendom (France 2005: 69). Rather, as I will show through Mastnak, it was the work of Urban II who interpreted as such, and then came up with the idea of the Crusades as a way to foster unity amongst Latin Christians in the West while fighting with non-Christians outside Christendom’s imagined borders. While Western and Eastern Christian forces did work together at times during the Crusades, the Eastern Christians ultimately faced many of the same massacres and degradations as Muslims (Thomas 2010: 16), with Western Christians sacking Byzantium’s capital, Constantinople, during the Fourth Crusade. Western Christian attempts at taking the Holy Land through the Crusades also caused reactions from Muslim scholars that produced more exclusivist interpretations of Muslim-Christian relations which were directed at Eastern Christians whom they became more suspicious of (Mastnak 2002: 119; Thomas 2010: 19). Latin Christian actions were so militant and unconcerned with the Byzantine political sphere that the daughter of Emperor Alexius I, Anna Comnena, reflected on the First Crusade by noting how the “Latin barbarians” were so militant that they were “no less devoted to religion than war” (Mastnak 2002: 147).

50 Of importance here is the case of Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim (d. 1021) who ordered the destruction of the Holy Sepulcher in 1009, which led to Western Christians becoming more aggressive in their views of Saracens. Unsurprisingly, they took out their aggression from this incident on Jews back in the Latin West. This incident was an exceptional case of a Muslim ruler persecuting Christians, in addition to his many other Muslim subjects, with medieval historians generally considering Al-Hakim gone mad (Mastnak 2002: 38-39). What is also important to note is that with the rise of Muslim empires and conquest, Islamic Caliphates widely maintained majority Christian and non-Muslim populations for centuries with rare cases of brunt forced conversion, conversion being something that happened very slowly and gradually over time due to a number of political, socio-economic, legal and theological reasons coercively and non-coercively (Sayyid 2013). This by no means is a suggestion that Eastern Christians, and specifically Arab Christians, did not experience forms of marginalization. Thomas argues that the early years of Islamic civilization in the Arab Mashriq - such as during the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties - were more liberal in accommodation towards non-Muslims and specifically Christians, with Arab Christians contributing greatly towards society even while also feeling the pressure to accommodate towards the dominant Islamic culture (Thomas 2010: 11-18). It is during the later Middle Ages, with Crusaders on one end and Mongols on the other, that certain Islamic currents evolve in a more negative direction in relation to Eastern Christianity; most notably under the Mamluk dynasty (b. 1250), which saw the rise of such anti-Christian policies as removing Christians from positions of power within the state, the destruction of churches and monasteries and the forcing of Christians to wear heavy wooden crosses that distinguished them from Muslims (19). With the victory of the Ottomans over the Mamluks in 1516, Muslim-Christian relations eventually turned more positive under the Ottoman millet system which allowed for more political, legal and cultural autonomy for non-Muslim communities (20).
The specific “crime” of the Muslims whom the Crusades were directed against consisted of the “unlawful possession” of the holy places. Yet, Mastnak argues, the Crusades were an unprovoked military offensive far beyond Western Christendom’s borders. It was with the crusades that Palestine ceased to be the Promised Land (terra repromissionis) of the Old Testament and became the Holy Land (terra sancta) (2002: 119). From Christendom’s point of view, it was called “Holy” because Jesus Christ had sanctified it with “his physical presence, with his birth, with his life among men, and with his death and resurrection” (119). Thus, it was styled as patri Christi (Christian homeland) and haereditas Domini (hereditary) to Christendom. Logic follows that the Muslims in Palestine were not only guilty of heresy but were invaders and usurpers. On the other end, Crusaders were thus pious patriots coming “home” to their “fatherland” in order to “liberate” it as it was their lawful possession (119-120).

For Mastnak, the creation and centrality of the Holy Land was the condensation of what today we call the “crusading ideology.” The objective of this crusading ideology unfolded as a long march through the “ruins of the earthly Jerusalem” to the “heavenly City.” This terra sancta though – and by extension the Crusades – was a sublime object of this war; as such, it was unattainable. Liberating the entirety of the world was not something that could quench the holy desire that animated this crusade. This crusading ideal, once launched, was destined to become permanent as a “state of permanent war against the heathen” (2002: 120).

2.1.3. Consolidation of Muslim Ontological Otherness through Crusades
The construction of the Muslim as the normative enemy par excellence was key in this Crusading paradigm. This construction of the Muslim across religious, racial and ontological difference becomes paradigmatic through the Crusades. Prior to the Crusades, Muslims were seen as one amongst many other pagani, gentiles, infidels, and barbari, just as they were seen, for example, in the context of battles between Muslims and Frankish Carolingians, as one of the “foreign peoples” such as the “Lombards, Saxons, Avars, Normans, Danes, and Slavs” who participated in fratricide amongst warring populations internal to Christendom (2002: 106-107). It is with the

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51 This statement of permanent crusade continued to be upheld post-1492 CE by the likes of Pope Alejandro IV, when he says nearly the same thing in a Papal Bull in 1496 thereby extending it to the Indians, Black and all other non-Christians in the widening domain of “life, liberty and property” of the Spanish Empire, “Pues es peculiar de los reyes de España luchar por la fe, y fue siempre destino de los reyes españoles vencer a los infieles.” Translated as, “For it is peculiar of the kings of Spain to fight for the faith, and it was always the destiny of the Spanish kings to conquer the infidels” (Asociación 1994: 537).
The Muslim soon became the main enemy as well as the paradigm to view other enemies. Muslims had long been viewed by Latin Christians as the cursed descendants of Ishmael, who was born to the black slave Hagar and not Ibrahim’s “pure” wife Sarah (105-106). They were “malign, vicious, unclean” non-humans, “sons of fornication,” “members of the Devil,” “subjects of the Devil,” and “subject to diabolical law.” To make any type of pact with Muslims became an abomination against the soul as well as the destruction of Christendom. To “keep peace” with “the most evil” was a crime that disembodied the body of christianitas, and Muslims were a part of a gens (genus, race, people of one origin) that were “most evil” (110-112).

While such perceptions appeared prior to the First Crusade, they appeared more strongly and paradigmatically after. Mastnak argues that one way the Muslims become the enemy was the way in which the term Saracen gradually became the term applied for Latin Christendom’s enemies altogether. In terms of conflict and crusades internal to Christendom (which continued despite the attempt to unify against an external enemy) the term Saracen was used to define people outside the boundaries of humanity and Christendom’s civilization. In the 12th century, crusades were waged against the Eastern European Slavs and they were called Saracens by various West European powers; the English called the Danes, Irish, Scottish and Saxons Sarazins; and the Vandals, Vikings and other unbelievers were tarnished as Saracens as well (2002: 116-117). For Mastnak, it is at the level of collective identity and the notion of a unified respublica christiana that anti-Muslim logics are most pronounced. The Crusade is the historical

52 David Lewis argues that the event which begins Western Christendom’s definition of itself against Islam is when the Muslim forces are defeated at the Battle of Poitiers (present-day France) in 732 (Lewis 2009). Adib-Moghaddam furthers that the discourse of holy war against barbarian infidels emerges more forcefully with the rise of Charlemagne (742-814) to the throne of the Franks in 768 (2011: 43). Adib-Moghaddam also cites the beginning of the reconquista of Al-Andalus and the offensive by the Normans in Islamicate territories in Southern Italy and Sicily, both in the 11th century, as important for sparking the divide between Western Christendom and Islam prior to the Crusades (48). As mentioned earlier, Mastnak notes how these moments of anti-Muslim views existed prior to the Crusades, but it is through the Crusades that they become paradigmatic as a consolidated system. Adib-Moghaddam agrees with Mastnak when referring to the Crusade period as producing a different world-system from civilizational binaries in the past, “We see here a binary system which functions primarily in a politico-theological mode, both as an ideological instigator and as a religious marker of difference. A schematic binary differentiating the polis and the barbarian (or the Aryan and the inferior non-Aryan) already existed during antiquity. This was the first time in that area that the world was cut in two and that binaries were mixed with ideational reference points such as language and race. The Christian-Islamic dialectic adds a new dimension. It made it possible to write history in terms of a confrontation between institutions, administered armies, and formalised religious world-views and their interpretation by theological authorities. This is a binary that emerged out of the political and military reaction to the emergence of Islam, not out of some primordial hatred towards the Oriental other” (55). Like Mastnak, Adib-Moghaddam is making a post-essentialist historical argument that denies a Western perennial hate for the East, while also recognizing how the historical binary between the West and Islam started in the Middle Ages and has continued to produces systems of social difference.
moment that Christendom becomes conscious of its own identity. This notion of collective selfhood was created alongside an antagonistic relationship with the collective Muslim Other as the fundamental enemy through holy war. So much so that the Muslim world-system becomes the antithetical system to Christendom as “the social Antichrist” (117).

Muslims, like other racial paradigms in modernity or even the premodern world, were seen through the lens of ontological difference. Mastnak calls this “Platonic Orientalism” due to the ways in which Muslims were placed alongside non-human things such as animals, germs and dirt in the wider cosmology of the Hellenic Great Chain of Being which pervaded Christendom’s normative epistemic structure (2010: 43). As non-human beasts and objects, Muslims were to be cleansed from the sanctity and purity of the earth which was to be Christianized through Christendom’s Universalitatus, or universalizing mission. Cosmologically, Muslims were considered a “defect” in the Great Chain of Being. The 14th century Christian humanist Ramon Lull of the Franciscan order, while holding negative views of Jews and other infidels, made it clear that Saracens were the greatest obstacle to peaceful unity. Saracens imploded the universe (ipsi sunt qui impediunt universum), and their existence was a “defect in the universe” as they were an element of “disorder.” They were the embodiment of falsehood against truth. They were injustice materialized as they defied God’s justice and obedience to Him correctly. They were also an offense to the beauty of God for illegally occupying the Holy Land and Jerusalem (2002: 226).

On the topic of Orientalism and the Crusades, Mastnak also notes how a number of scholars mark the beginning of “Islamic” or “Oriental” studies to the 12th century when Peter the Venerable (d. 1156) commissioned a translation of a number of Arabic books, including the Qur’an in order to

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53 In Geraldine Heng’s The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages (2018), she makes an argument - in contrast to the tendency to make race/racism a phenomenon only of the modern – that systems of race and racism were alive and well in pre-modern world. In relation to the medieval West, Heng argues, “A reissuing of the medieval past in ways that admit the ongoing interplay of that past with the present can therefore only recalibrate the urgencies of the present with greater precision. An important consideration in investigating the invention of race in medieval Europe (an invention that is always a reinvention) is also to grasp the ways in which homo europaeus – the European subject – emerges in part through racial grids produced from the twelfth through fifteenth centuries, and the significance of that emergence for understanding the unstable entity we call ‘the West’ and its self-authorizing missions” (5). Heng makes the argument in her work that a whole gamut of peoples – such as Jews, Roma/Gypsies, Africans, Muslims, Mongols and others – were seen through a racial difference that posited them as ontologically inferior to White Western Christian Man. Heng also comes to the conclusion that it is the medieval period which cements the West’s view of itself as racially distinct and superior to all Others. At the same time, Heng’s inquiry, like my own, is only limited to discussions of race in the premodern Western world, but does not deny race/racism existing in other socio-historically specific geographies and time periods, such as the premodern Islamic, African or even amongst Mesoamerican peoples (12). These other time periods/geographies are simply not within the scope of our studies.
win over the Muslims through conversion (2002: 169). While Peter is looked at as “progressive” and “peaceful” figure by some who anachronistically idealize an “enlightened” man in times of massive crusades, his Islamophilic and phobic approach of using the word instead of the sword was in fact a form of “peaceful militancy” that can be likened to Las Casas desire to civilize the Indians through Christianity instead of Sepulveda’s brunt military aggression (2002: 176). Peter the Venerable ultimately helped organize the Second Crusade (Mastnak 2010: 43), as did Las Casas affirm the colonization of the Americas.

In the life and ideas of Franciscan monk, Ramon Lull (d. 1315), it is hard not to see the proto-formations of what later becomes modern/colonial forms of damnation on a global scale. Lull was a monk who lived and preached amongst the Saracens in North Africa. While taking a path similar to Peter the Venerable by attempting to win the Saracen over through learning their language in order “save” them and win back the Holy Land, he, nonetheless, was an ardent supporter of militant crusades for peace (Mastnak 2002: 216-220). In his twilight years when he penned his most prolific works, he developed the theory of “one language, one faith, one belief” – a supremacist claim that declared the destruction of all non-Latin languages, and non-Christian knowledges and faiths to be destroyed in order for “true order” to be established in the world (225).

Of course, Lull’s main interlocutor whose language he even learnt, was the Muslim, and this “defect in the universe” continued to serve as the underside of the undying crusading spirit. It is difficult to not make the connection between Lull’s militant exclusivist paradigm and the “paradigm of war” which comes through the encounter in the New World; the latter paradigm being the fertile soil that sprouted the globalized interstate system of “one nation, one identity, one peoples” (Grosfoguel 2011) that still haunts the world today by way of the universalizing modern, carceral, capitalist, nation-state. Furthermore, the Crusades, long before modernity, created a system of external genocide and internal ethnic cleansing according to Western logic. Non-Christians external to Christendom were subject to the ultimate victory in holy war, which was pax perpetua

54 Anidjar and Said interestingly note that the formal commencement of Orientalism as an intellectual discourse begins roughly around this time with the Church Council of Vienne (1312) which established number of chairs in Arabic, Hebrew, Greek and Syria in Paris, Bologna, Avignon and Salamanca” (Anidjar 2008: 48).
55 Lull bought a Moorish slave with the sole purpose of this slave teaching him Arabic. By the end of this nine-year master-slave dialectic (we will return to Hegel later), he accused this Moor of blaspheming the name of Christ and beat him. When the slave defended himself, Lull had him thrown in jail where the Muslim slave hung himself (Mastnak 2002: 216-220). On the level of the interpersonal as well as the systemic, Lull projected norms that defined both the Crusade and what was to come later.
(eternal peace). The Others within Christendom, such as the Muslims and Jews or the Christian schismatic, heretics, pagans, and witches, faced war and isolation from Christendom with the later intent of ethnically cleansing them in order to purify corpus Christi of its “dirt.” Mastnak notes how the crusader victory in Palestine put both of these systems in place at once. On one hand, when the First Crusaders arrived and conquered Jerusalem, several thousand Muslims and Jews were killed and expelled, leaving the streets in blood. In settling after victory, the Crusaders created two separate societies in one, in the contemporary sense of “apartheid,” in which a tiny local minority of Crusader colonizers ruled over the general population (Mastnak 2002: 127).

2.1.4. Before Europe and Beyond – The (Post)Modern is Medieval

As argued earlier, there was a pre-existing framework and matrix of power that was in full function and force when the conquest of Al-Andalus took place and when Columbus landed in the New World. While it had not been able to successfully launch itself to a global level, and was even defeated at certain times in the face of Muslim imperial power or due to conflict internal to Christendom, it had been developing over a several centuries-long process since the First Crusade. The encounter with the Indigenous peoples of the Americas, therefore, must be intersectionally viewed as part of Christendom extending this crusading paradigm beyond the Mediterranean and across the Atlantic. It is at this moment that the crusading spirit realizes new terrain westward, and begins to better fulfill its mission of achieving peace and unity through global war, terror and death. This crusading spirit did not stop after crusading attempts failed in the Holy Land, but continued simultaneously as what became European power expanded across Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans at the end of the 16th century, into the long 16th century and beyond. In a metaphorical sense, the rest of the non-Western world became an enslavable, colonizable and domitable Muslim Maria in Christendom/Europe’s route to conquer the Holy Land. As Mignolo notes, the 16th and 17th century were dominated by a Christian imaginary whose “missions” extended from Catholics and Protestants in the Americas to Jesuits in China (Mignolo 2012: 30).

56 In Antonio Feros’ work Speaking of Spain: the Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World (2017), he identifies the Muslim and the Jew as the “Others Within” Europe (Chapter 3) and the African and Indian as the “Others Without” (Chapter Four) to Europe at the dawn of modern Europe.

57 There were not “rivers of blood” that were “ankle-deep” as popular culture so often claims. Madden argues this amount of blood is a fantastic exaggeration, yet agrees the streets were bloody, and that the number killed in the initial Crusader conquest of Jerusalem were in the several thousand (Madden 2012).

58 Cardinal, Pierre-Alexandre suggests in his article “The Other ‘Other:’ Moors, International Law and the Origin of the Colonial Matrix” (2017 forthcoming) that the coloniality of power is already formed prior to the colonization of the Americas.
The Caribbean decolonial philosopher, Frantz Fanon, wrote, “Europe is literally the creation of the Third World” (Fanon 2011: 58). If Europe is the creation of the Third World, then what is Europe? As decolonial scholars have rightly asked, what is its underside? What are its contents and discontents? Yet, just as importantly, we should also be asking, when does Christendom become Europe? Mastnak argues that the rise of the idea of Europe as the new signifier for Western Christendom occurs after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453. While the classical term *Europa* did exist in the lexicon of the classical Mediterranean and the Middle Ages as a mythical figure and geography, it did not gain a sense of “usness” nor political character until much later. It was in the 14th and especially 15th century that Europe starts to be used by Latin Christians to rally for common action and stands in as the bearer for collective Western political consciousness (Mastnak 2005: 206-208). For Mastnak, the development of Europe as a distinct political ontology and centralizing community crystallized as a response to the imperial capture of Constantinople by the Ottomans in 1453. With the violation of Christian sovereignty on European soil by the Ottomans, anti-Muslim sentiments and systems revamped to play an immense role in the literal making of Europeans and Europe as a political community. The desire to “erase the Turk from Europe,” “exterminate the Turk in Europe” and “chase the Turk out of Europe” becomes the point of unity for this new Western unity and entity called Europe (ibid.). Mastnak notes that the Crusading spirit of the Middle Ages allowed for the creative potential to reimagine how the West would form itself going forward. As a result, Europe is defined with much greater exactitude than ever before, and becomes regarded as the cultural and religious whole of Latin Christians, as well as the agent and arena of political action. Europe started to be represented as Christians’ *patria*, its homeland, fatherland and native soil whose freedom, religion and way of life were threatened by the Turk. Undergirding this new collective political ontology and community was its *spiritus rector*, the Muslim (ibid.).

Christendom and Europe were used interchangeable for two centuries (16th and 17th centuries) after this initial moment of Europe becoming a collective identifier politically and socially for Latin Christians (Mastnak 2005: 208-209, Mignolo 2012: 30). As in the medieval past, this anti-Muslim attitude persisted in placing the Muslim outside the ontological realm of the human; the difference

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59 Interesting to note is that the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans seems to have also reconfigured the identity of Eastern Christendom. For centuries prior to 1453, Russian civilization had accepted the Byzantine Empire as the legitimate orthodox Christian heir to classical Roman Empire, with Constantinople operating as the “2nd Rome” (Thackeray 2012: 202). Within a century after Constantinople’s fall, Russia assumed authority for Eastern Christendom and Orthodoxy; Moscow became known as the “Third Rome” or “Northern Rome”; and Russian emperors began referring to themselves as “New Constantines” in reference to the Roman emperor who made Constantinople a co-capital along with Rome (ibid.)
in this modern anti-Muslim attitude was that it was successful in its attempts to conquer Muslim sovereignties on a global scale. Thus, hierarchies of Eurocentric power slowly grew and the ability to enforce anti-Muslim policies and systems became more effective. This anti-Muslim trend, in being guided explicitly and libidinally by the crusading spirit, stayed consistent from early to late modernity; including the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and up until the current post/modern moment. From Catholics to Protestants, and Christian humanists to secular humanists, the Muslim remained a fundamental enemy, threat and mark of ontologically inferiority to the rising European Self as Western Christian/Secular Man. The capital, resources and land of Muslim Asia and Africa – as well as Muslim diasporas outside the Old Ummah - were a site for continuous war, enslavement, extraction and settlement of European interests.

2.1.5. Early Modern Christian Humanism – A Crusading Commonplace

As a number of scholars note (Mastnak 2010: 35, Nancy Bisaha 2006: 5, Gilmore 1952 & Schwoebel 1965), the paradigm of early modern Christian humanism in the 15th and 16th century was very occupied with “chasing the Turk” out of Europe in order to keep the geography, religion, culture and way of life of Europeans “pure”. The Muslim became the “reconciler of brethren” and antagonist mark of “them-ness” to European “us-ness” (Mastnak 2010: 34). This anti-Muslim attitude proliferated amongst the masses of Europeans by way of listening to preachings of the crusade, joining in daily prayers against Muslims and paying crusading taxes. The new printing press was mobilized to support anti-Muslim propaganda in books, booklets, proto-newspapers and even in peoples’ calendars; the notion of time and space in everyday European life was composed with images of princes and Latin Christian peoples waging war against Turks, Moors and other Muslim peoples. For Mastnak this early modern “humanist commonplace” was simultaneously a “crusading commonplace” (35). The crusading spirit reached the depths of all in social strata, all the way to illiterate lay society (Mastnak 2002: 126), with Bisaha noting that Christian humanists regarded the crusades as a “golden opportunity for rhetorical exercises” (2006: 5).

In the 17th century, the Duke of Sully (d. 1641) devised the “Grand Design.” The Design was a plan for European peace and unity that was also premised on Europe “conquering parts of Asia as were most commodiously situated, and particularly the whole coast of Africa” and was to “convert the continual wars among [Europe’s] several princes, into a perpetual war against the Infidels” (2010: 35-36). The Design later inspired 20th century British imperialist, Winston Churchill
Such perpetual war—I would call it a perpetual crusade—was a standard ingredient in the politics and political imagination of early modern Europe. As a formative principle and imperative, it was not shattered by deals and compromises made in practical politics. To a degree we should not underestimate, this perpetual crusade has framed Western policies and politics. The ideas and attitudes that constitute the perpetual crusade, and are reproduced by it, have crosscut religious, ideological, cultural, and ethnic divides among Christians. They have been voiced in different political languages across different historical periods, creating shared ground even among opponents and foes. They are inseparable from cherished Western ideals of liberty, rights, justice, peace, and humanity. They belong to the same web of thought and imagery as those ideals. They are part of what makes Western thought complex and, as such, not an unqualified good (2010: 36).

For many of these early Christian humanists, like Juan Luis Vives (d. 1540) or Francis Bacon (d.1626), the only relation imaginable between Europe and the Muslim was war (Mastnak 2010: 37, 2005: 223). Muslims were antithetical to the concept of the centralizing Western state, as well as the ontological state of Europeanness and Western Man (2005: 221). This crusading paradigm is one that fully embellishes the colonization of the New World and transatlantic slave trade (2010: 37-38). From Columbus to the Valladolid Debates; to crusading drives that jumpstarted early colonization and the slave trade in West Africa; to policing which Black African bodies were more of a threat to Christian efforts in the New World (i.e., the African Muslim), the crusading spirit was always near and involved in war against the Muslim and other non-Europeans.

Even Protestants, including Martin Luther (d. 1546) himself, maintained a fundamentally anti-Muslim posture. Luther had initially argued against the Crusades due to who was conducting them; Luther was against papal power and clerical participation in warfare as well as proclamations that individuals could attain salvation through the “good works” of enjoining clerical and papal commands. Despite Luther’s anti-clerical rational behind Luther’s argument against the Crusades, he nonetheless held that Muslims were a diabolical, evil and non-human people whose belief in the rude devil Mahmet and Alcoran condemned them to damnation (2010: 38-39). He believed Turks were instruments of Satan, and viewed Islam as a devilish system which would destroy humanity (Francisco 2007: 148). Luther argued that Ottoman and Muslim conquest of European territory was a “correct” divine punishment for Europeans sins. He thus replaced the papal/clerically-led crusades with the Türkenkrieg (German, “war against Turks”) led by lay princes. Not only that, but Mastnak notes that even when war was led by “secular rulers” it

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60 Martin Luther wrote a book On War Against the Turk (German, Vom Kriege wider die Türken) in 1528 that analyzed the costs and benefits of warring against Turks for Europe.
maintained a godly character and was simultaneously called a *gotseligen Krieg* (godly war). For Mastnak this meant the Protestants helped to “secularize” if not “desacralize” war against Turks and Muslims (Mastnak 2010: 38-39).

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, notables of the Scientific Revolution and Age of Reason were also very immersed in the Crusading spirit and unending war against the Muslim. The German polymath Leibniz, a key link between the *ego conquiro* of Cartesian rationality and later Enlightenment figures, argued that war within Europe was scandalous and war against the Muslim and barbarian infidels was perpetually legitimate. He suggested to the French “Sun King” Louis XIV (d. 1715) that he conquer Egypt in order to strike the Ottomans at their weakest point (2010: 39-40). In the 18th century, French thinker Saint-Pierre, who influenced Rousseau and Kant, argued that the only way Muslims could become reasonable was by complete ontological destruction and Westernization. Saint-Pierre’s attempt to solve the Muslim question for European unity and peace was through “general crusade.” He proposed an international order of peace through “European union” based on a “universal crusade” in which Muslims must be run out of and plundered in Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia and Africa in order to colonize and proliferate “new Christian sovereignties” on the ruins of the Muslim world. Peace was defined as European rule and order in all parts of the world (2010: 40-41).

The very symbol of the Enlightenment, Voltaire, was stubbornly anti-Muslim until the day he died, viewing Islam and the Prophet as the pinnacle of fanaticism and antihumanism (Djait 1985: 21). During his life, he wrote letters to Prussian king Frederick II and queen Catherine II of Russia asking them to not only “humiliate” but completely “destroy” and “annihilate” the Turks from Europe. On his death bed, Voltaire wrote to czarina Catherine relaying his life’s regrets saying, “I wish I had at least been able to help you kill a few Turcs” (Mastnak 2010: 41). In 1788 the French secular philosopher, Volney (d. 1820), who penned theories on the universalization of civilization radiating from Europe in gradual formation of a “great humankind,” wrote that Muslims were a “disease” and “germs”, and imagined the czarina Catherine II becoming the Empress of Constantinople, thereby restoring Greek Empire (Mastnak 2010: 41, Djait 1985: 24-28). The French Revolution at the turn of the 19th century neither caused a stir amongst Europeans with regard to their approach to the Muslim question. The conquest of Egypt by Napoleon, whom

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61 Ian Almond notes how Leibniz wrote in his “Reflections on the War” (1687) that Islam was a plague to be delivered from Europe. He provided an early modern rejection of Muslims as enemies of reason and civilization and a theological repudiation of Islam (Almond 2011: 6).
postcolonial scholars such as Said cite as foundational in their understandings of Orientalism (Said 1979 and 1997), was an old idea and offspring of the Revolution (Mastnak 2010: 41). In more ways than one, the enlightened crusading spirit was already the underside of the Enlightenment and secular turn.62

2.1.6. Late Modern Crusading, Secular or Religious?
The crusading spirit remained an intangible creative resource for secular European imperialists and nationalists well into the 19th and 20th century. With French colonization of Algeria in 1830 CE, the French archbishop of Aix-en-Provence led a congregational prayer in rousing just war language sourced from Crusading ideology:

If there was ever a just war...it is that which is prepared today against the perfidious and cruel enemy of the Christian name in Africa. It is to avenge the repeated insults made on our flag; it is to efface the shame of the tribute paid until today to the tyrant of Algiers by Christian nations; it is to assure the freedom of the seas to our commerce; it is to deliver from Moslem slavery the unfortunate navigators who frequent these vicinities. [It is for all this] that our august monarch has seized the sword that God has confided him to defend and protect his people. (Brower 2012: 225-226)

In the context of British imperialism in late 19th and early 20th century Sudan, the crusading spirit pulsed as well. British evangelical missionaries and colonial administrators - or “knight-administrators” as some of them self-proclaimed - in Sudan used crusader discourses in their policies and attempts to “civilize” Sudanese society (Sharkey 2012: 271-2). When the supposedly secular (or atheist) French and British conquest of the Ottoman state in the early 20th century, the crusading imagination was alive and well too. Upon entering Jerusalem in December 1917, British General Edmund Allenby (d. 1936) remarked, “The wars of the crusaders are now complete.” After conquering Damascus in 1920, French General Henri Gouraud (d. 1946) stood at the grave of Saladin, kicked it and declared, “The Crusades have ended now. Awaken Saladin, we have returned. My presence here consecrates the victory of the Cross over the Crescent” (Al-Amin 2013: 16). In the aftermath of World War 1, the French historian Rene Grousset (d. 1952) wrote in 1939 a book for a popular audience, saying that the French and English machinations in the Middle East are a replay of the old Crusades. Grousset wrote that in 1914 the “Franks” set foot in

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62 Anidjar regards Napoleon’s desire to “fight for Islam” as Islamophilic in ways that mirror Europe’s long history of philo and anti-Semitism in trying to govern and control its Jews (2008: 48). He also regards Orientalism, as an enduring extension of Western Christian logic, as key in forming both the secular and religious (48). The ways in which this Orientalist conception of the secular/religious seems to treat racial Others in philic and phobic ways that demean their ontologies; whether they are too religious, not the right religion, or gross in their secular displays and affections towards material pleasure and sexuality – all accusations thrown at Jews and Muslims through the lens of the religious/secular by way of the crusading spirit (43-48).
Syria “again” in order to four years later “deliver Tripoli, Beirut and Tyre, the city of Raymond of Saint-Gilles, the city of John of Ibelin, the city of Philip of Montfort. As to Jerusalem, it was to be ‘reoccupied’ on December 9, 1917, by the descendants of King Richard under the command of Marshal Allenby” (Mastnak 2010: 42). Mastnak notes, and I concur, that historiographically a view such as Grousset’s is irreproachable. Yet, it shows how alive the crusading spirit remained even in the 20th century. Not only imaginatively - the last of the crusading bills issued by the papacy to the kings of Spain only expired in 1940 CE when there was no longer a Spanish king to receive another (Mastnak 2005: 230). The crusading spirit even lead the infamous “Lawrence of Arabia” (T.E. Lawrence) - who colluded with British authorities and Arab nationalists to launch the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman caliphate - to the Levant to conduct research on crusader castles; his undergraduate thesis being, “The Influence of Crusades on European Military Architecture to the End of the Twelfth Century.”

In the heyday of US American involvement in the Cold War, the turn towards a secular rhetoric of Crusade was also useful. President Eisenhower launched a program called the “Crusade for Freedom,” which was a propaganda campaign that gained prominence in the 1950s. The Crusade for Freedom was aimed at gaining domestic support for an organization called the “National Committee to Free Europe” which worked to curb Communist influence internationally in territorial Europe. On September 4th, 1950 (ironically, Labor Day), Eisenhower inaugurated the Crusade in a broadcast to millions of US citizens over all major radio stations into what was to become one of the defining public speeches of the Cold War:

To destroy human liberty and to control the world, the Communists use every conceivable weapon—subversion, bribery, corruption, military attack! Of all these, none is more insidious than propaganda. Spurred by this threat to our very existence, I speak tonight— as another private citizen, not as an officer of the Army—about the Crusade of freedom. This crusade is a campaign sponsored by private American citizens to fight the big lie with the big truth...In this Battle for Truth, you and I have a definite part to play. During the Crusade, each of us will have the opportunity to sign the Freedom Scroll. It bears a declaration of our faith in freedom, and of our belief in the dignity of the individual, who derives the right of freedom from God. Each of us, by signing the Scroll, pledges to resist aggression and tyranny wherever they appear on Earth. Its words express what is in all our hearts. Your signature on it will be a blow for liberty. (Cummings 2010: 212)

Scholar of rhetoric, Menhurst, argues that the rhetoric of the Crusade for Freedom, essentialized in Eisenhower’s inaugural address above, is the paradigm for understanding all Cold War

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63 Mastnak notes elsewhere that King Richard I (d. 1199) was “probably the best of all crusade commanders” (2002: 347).
64 There are a numerous publications of T.E. Lawrence’s Crusader Castles in print by various press houses.
rhetorical campaigns by US presidents in that 1) it was one of the most successful and longest running Cold War campaigns (15 years), 2) spanned four presidencies from Truman – Johnson, representing a truly national effort across party lines and administrations and 3) employed both private and public rhetorical schemes that are characteristic of the “dominant motives, means, and symbolic manipulations” of US American Cold War discourse in general (Medhurst 1997: 646). If the secular rhetoric of Crusade was so powerful during the Cold War, a time period long removed from the “religious” Middle Ages, how else can we understand the crusading spirit as none other than a capture on the imagination of a capitalist Western/Christian/Secular/Atheist-centric world in which the crusades carry currency in mobilizations for power against the internal and external “enemies” of Western Man? The supposedly secular and purely materialist Cold War was even subversively shaped by the lurking anti-Muslim crusading spirit.6566

2.1.7. Crusading Spirit in Film, Fiction and Fanfare
At the level of mainstream culture and globalizing consumerism the Crusades have remained a steady fixture. By way of science fiction, popular literature, movies, toys, online gaming, comics, and even in public education systems, the Crusades remains a principle that guides the capital, imagination, and unthought of Western Man. In the genres of science fiction and popular literature, the pseudohistorical conspiracy theories postulated in Holy Blood, Holy Grail (1982) inspired white American author Dan Brown to write the immensely popular novel The Da Vinci Code (2003), which later spawned a very successful film (2006) based on the novel. By way of conspiracy and mixing fact with fiction, these books keep alive romanticized narratives of chivalry groups such as the Knights Templar, who were a hugely successful medieval military order during the Crusades that existed across Christendom operating a type of proto-banking global financial system that kept fortress Christendom safe from the Other.67

65 It should be noted that several European powers rallied around a pan-Catholic-Christian European identity to combat communism in Europe and the Third World during the Cold War. See Adrian Hanni’s “A Global Crusade Against Communism: The Circle in the “Second Cold War”” in the edited volume Transnational Anti-Communism and the Cold War: Agents, Activities and Networks (2014).

66 I would like to acknowledge that the word “crusade” has different meanings in different settings. Like many terms, it can and has been re-appropriated for liberative anti-oppressive purposes; yet, this does not deny the fact that the signifier crusade carries certain connotations that cannot be easily absolved from the histories in which it was hegemonically built upon. My argument in this work is not to make an absolutist semantic claim regarding the “authentic” or “true” meaning of the word “crusade.” Rather, I am putting it to use as a signifier tied to systems of Eurocentric necropolitical power that perpetuate a multivalent system of oppression; the crusades - and more specifically what I name as the “crusading spirit” - is not only tied to longstanding systems of Islamophobia, but is essential for understanding coloniality as a paradigm of war against those considered nonbeings.

67 Gaposchkin 2016, in the section “The Crusades in Popular Culture”.
With regard to the development and proliferation of the film industry in the 20th and 21st century headquartered in the US, Hollywood has continued to make films that either portray the Crusades positively, nostalgically, or even in critical cases from a nonetheless Eurocentric liberal point of view. The films Birth of a Nation\textsuperscript{68} (1915) The Crusades (1935), King Richard and the Crusaders (1954), Indian Jones and the Crusade (1989), Kingdom of Heaven (2005), and Assassin’s Creed (2016) – to name a few – demonstrate that in nearly every decade of Hollywood’s rise, a blockbuster hit resurrects the crusading spirit in secular, religious and pre/post secular fashions. While often not explicitly mentioning the name of the Other (i.e., the pagan, infidel or Muslim) in the crusade-inspired films mentioned above, and even at times critiquing the Crusades through a liberal humanist lens, the portrayal of such “nameless” figures as the “assassin” often carry with them Muslim undertones; the word assassin itself being derived from Arabic and based on mythologies regarding the medieval hashashin order.\textsuperscript{69} The popularity of the Knights Templar in these films greatly romanticizes military law and order, and pose story lines of Western Man either losing and/or recapturing “the world” from spiraling back into primitive barbarism. What these films, books and stories do is create both a thought and unthought, living and breathing aesthetic of normalized crusade, as Stock notes; “Crusading ideology thus became a translatable cultural lingua franca employed to justify or further a variety of political and cultural agendas, including the justification of subsequent wars, whether religiously motivated or not” (Stock 2009: 97).\textsuperscript{70}

At the level of toys, gaming and comics, the crusading spirit tinkers on as well. The popularity of the Knights Templar and Christian military orders have inspired Lego collections, as well as numerous computer and virtual gaming platforms such as the enormously popular and lucrative Dungeons and Dragons, Warhammer 40k, Dragon Age, Assassin’s Creed, Medieval II: Total War,

\textsuperscript{68} Originally called The Clansman and directed by D.W. Griffith, Birth of a Nation was America’s first blockbuster film and laid the foundation for many films after it in terms of film industry vocabulary and standard. It was an utterly racist anti-black film about the Civil War and Reconstruction in the post-Confederate South. The film also demonstrates the enduring strength of crusading motifs against non-Europeans – the film largely includes stories of the Ku Klux Klan whose militaristic orders call themselves “Knights,” dressed in white hoods with red crosses across their chest riding horses in order to slay Blacks and other unclean gentiles (Lehr 2014). The Klan also currently maintains a newspaper called The Crusader (Blake 2017).

\textsuperscript{69} Assassin is derived from the Arabic word hashashin (literally meaning “hashish smokers”). The Hashashin were a group of Nizari Ismailis who did, in fact, engage in asymmetric warfare, surgical strikes and psychological warfare during the period of the medieval Crusades against rival Muslim powers and Latin Christian crusaders in Greater Syria and Persia. Some theorize they were called hashashin by their opponents in order to denigrate their reputation as drug addicts, as this was not a name they used to call themselves. For more information on the hashashin see Hodgson’s The Secret Order of Assassins (2005).

\textsuperscript{70} Gaposchkin 2016, in section “The Crusades in Popular Culture” and “Hollywood and the Crusades.”
and Knights of Honor. These toys and virtual worlds persistently perpetuate medieval epistemologies that carry the weight of modern generations into battles against Saracens and Infidels – whether explicitly named or not – as the void to whom which “humanity” should liberate its fingertips and civilization from. Marvel comics such as the Cry of the Crusader! and Holy War (both published in 1983) produced a super villain called the Crusader who was defeated by the “pagan” god Thor; the conclusion being that war waged in the name of “religion” is unjust. While this type of narrative is atypical of wider crusader themes in pop culture in that it explicitly condemns a “religious enemy”, it remains consistent in that it doesn’t name the “darker” enemies of the crusading spirit, thereby leaving an unthought question mark next to the Crusade’s underside. The battle between the monotheistic Crusader and pagan Thor also points to battles internal to the West concerning the religious vs secular, and again leaves unthought how both the Eurocentric conceptions of “religious” and “secular” operate as exclusionary paradigms of war against the Muslim.

The crusading spirit also plays a role in imagining the US American spirit of the recent past. At the level of education and sports in the United States, the Crusader mascot has remained a call to socially rally behind in high schools, universities and professional teams. Most teams who use the Crusader as a mascot want to identify with the ferocity and chivalry in which these medieval Christian warriors embody. In the 21st century War on Terror era, this has not gone unchallenged and some teams are re-examining their choice to maintain such a figure. The debates center around how the Crusader remains a symbol of Christian intolerance and aggressive exclusion. The majority of the universities that have debated the Crusader mascot have either chosen to change the mascot or are feeling the pressure to change, while a minority have chosen not to. For example in 2017, the College of the Holy Cross, a Jesuit university in Massachusetts, has debated changing the name of its school newspaper called The Crusader; especially as the Klu Klux Klan maintains a paper by the same name (Blake 2017). It is important to note that the Crusader mascot debate, as far as it interrelates the Muslim question to those of other racialized peoples, is very much part of larger conversations concerning figures and symbols at universities that resemble the values of colonialism, slavery and oppression which have been the targets of student movements in recent past that have sought to “decolonize the university”; such as the removal of “Redskin” mascots, anti-black symbols of slave masters at Harvard Law school.

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71 Gaposchkin 2016, in section “The Crusades in Popular Culture.”
72 Gaposchkin 2016, in section “The Crusader Mascot.”
73 The school newspaper had previously been called the anti-Native American name, Tomahawk, and was changed to The Crusader in 1955 (Blake 2017).
(Reuters 2016), or colonial statues such as Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (Etheridge 2016) and Oxford University (Rawlinson 2016).

2.1.8. The Latest Crusades of Terror

In the latter half of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, the crusading spirit remains an integral aspect to globalizing Western war, culture and consumerism. Mastnak notes how during the Bosnian genocide (1992-1995 CE) the term crusade was used by the Serb and Croat Christian perpetrators of the genocide against Bosnian Muslims, both in their own self logic and justification of the genocide as well as in communication to their Euro-American accomplices. It was also used by the victims of the genocide, Bosnian Muslims, in their own attempts to understand the ethnic cleansing, genocide and war that befell them. The Serbian and Croatian war masters who committed the genocide did so in the name of Europe and for Europe. While European liberals sympathetic to Bosnian Muslims complained that the act of genocide was a “crime against humanity” and against “European values”, others corrected their epistemological and ontological mischaracterizing of the situation. Sloveniak thinker Ervin Hladnik Milharčič wrote that what happened in Bosnia was not a “crime against humanity” but rather a crime committed by humanity against the targeted Bosnians; human ontology thus properly being identified with Western Man, and sub/nonhuman ontology with its Muslim victims. Bosnian Muslims, such as writer Alija Isakovic (d. 1997), also identified this modern crusade with a complex historical web of injustices committed by Western Man against its ontological others both internal and external to Europe; Isakovic listed as fellow “victims of humanity” the Irish, Basque, and Eastern Europeans alongside the Muslims and Jews of Al-Andalus, and Mayans and “Red-Skins” of the Americas (Mastnak 2003: 231-232).

In the week after the events of 9/11 and the commencement of the War on Terror age, US American president George W. Bush had a slip of (into?) “Western conscience” when he stated on public broadcast, “this crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take a while” (Ford 2001). Bush’s statement on the White House lawn rechristened the war against the Muslim (and many Others) in the 21st century as Western Man’s “crusader-in-chief” (Gibbons 2017) strengthened the crusading spirit not only in Iraq and Afghanistan, but widely throughout Muslim societies in Africa (see ARFRICOM below), Asia (including the former Soviet bloc countries) and within the Global North (Europe, US, Austria), in addition to greatly deteriorating the civil liberties of societies across the planet. Mastnak reflects on his own experience as the director of the Secretariat commission of the United Nations’ Alliance of Civilizations initiative in the post-9/11 era. The aim of the initiative
was to combat extremism; extremism of course only meaning “Islamic extremism.” The initiative was composed of “equal parts” of members from the Islamic world and West. The Muslims chosen happened to only be “moderate,” secular and modernized “good Muslims” who came from the Westernized elite of the Muslim world. They, like their Western counterparts, put the blame on the “irrational violence” of “Islamist extremists.” At the highest level of Western Man’s global “peace and unity” governing order, Mastnak found there was an incapability to historicize modern conflict and to confront Islamophobia head-on; instead, as Mastnak states, they choose to keep the crusading spirit alive by “beating its shadow” (2010: 45-46).

In the post 9/11 War on Terror era, the crusading spirit has yet again regained currency. The rise of Far Right, Neo-Nazi and fascist movements in white settler countries across the world has seen a massive heuristic engagement and employment of crusader motifs. Kundnani writes in his chapter entitled “Twenty-First Century Crusaders” that political parties such as the English Defense League (UK), Tea Party (USA), Vlaams Belang (Belgium) and ultra-Zionist movements in Israel – to name a few - see Islam and Muslims as not only the number one threat to “Judeo-Christian Western civilization,” but the “entire free world” (Kundnani 2015: 245). Although many of these Far-Right groups come from fascist histories of anti-Semitism, they now underscore the necessity of keeping “Judeo-Christian” civilization pure from “radical Islam,” “shariah,” and “colonization” by Muslims in the metropoles of the West. Also interesting is that these groups, such as the English Defense League, are willing to work with “anti-extremist” Muslims who denounce “radical Islamism”; the effect of this being the promotion of a completely compliant Westoxicated “good Muslim”, or promotion of Islamophobic ex-Muslims such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Majid Namaz (2015: 237). The English Defense League crest bears the Red Cross of the Crusades74 as well as the Latin motto *in hoc signo vinces* (“in this sign you will conquer”), a phrase

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74 The Red Cross was a symbol that became popular on the uniforms of the Knights Templar and other knights during the Crusades, and was inspired by the Christian Marty St. George of the ancient Roman Empire (Kundnani 2015: 239). During the rise of secular modernity and the context of the Geneva Conventions in the 1860s, Europeans wanted to make the symbol of International Humanitarian Law that of the Red Cross. Muslim world leaders involved in the negotiations argued against it as a symbol of bad faith and war while Europeans argued it was a purely “secular” symbol (Hashmi 2012: 329). How can we understand the weight that the symbol of the Red Cross carries across time, place and political spectrum as fundamentally tied to war against the Muslim and others? Take for example how the contemporary humanitarian aid organization the International Red Cross is often publically described as a proxy for liberal cultural imperialism that is implicated in the global NGO and military industrial complexes. It seems that both religious and secular, and liberal and conservative deployments of the Western civilizing mission intersect with the crusading spirit through the flag of the Red Cross. This is not to say it cannot be used otherwise; interestingly, Palestinian Christians also look to St. George as a sign of resistance and faith, yet, like their Muslim counterparts, his red cross is a symbol deployed against the Zionist-Crusading alliance (Knell 2014). Exceptions notwithstanding, the Red Cross is difficult to disassociate from systems of Western dominance and crusading spirit given that they continue to hegemonically exist.
that was potentially even written on the banner of Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes’ cross-bearing flag when he conquered Mexico.\footnote{The phrase written on Cortes banner was translated from Latin as “Friends, let us follow the Cross and with faith \textit{in this symbol we shall conquer}”\footnote{In Todorov 1999: 107-108.} (emphasis mine). I was not able to locate the Latin text for Cortes’ banner, but the English translation above bears immediate resemblance to \textit{in hoc signo vinces}. Translation found in Todorov 1999: 107-108.} The Crusader rally call first deployed by Pope Urban II in his inaugural sermon, “Deus Volt!”, has reemerged amongst the “alt-right” in the United States and elsewhere as a common sign off and rally call against the “Green Peril” of the Muslim. These Far Right groups come to street protests in clad in chainmail with red crosses on their chest, and share popular “memes” in their online networks of medieval “Crusader-Knights” who fought against Muslims.\footnote{"The Far Right's New Fascination with the Middle Ages." (2017)} The global Far Right’s pre/post-liberal heuristic engagement with the crusading spirit comes with a promotion of a “Dark Enlightenment” – that is, an anti-democratic philosophy which promotes a return to monarchism, traditional gender roles, rejection of egalitarianism, and a libertarian economic model – as well the fictitious idea that there is a global “White Genocide” happening with the decline of Western values and culture.\footnote{See - Notopoulos & Broderick’s “A Normal Person's Guide To How Far-Right Trolls Talk To Each Other” (2017).}

Like the Crusades of old, the War on Terror era has seen an explicitly articulated reemergence of the Muslim as fundamental enemy and figure who can bring peace and unity to a dying Westernizing global law and order. As Kundnani argues, a decade of War on Terror rhetoric has “entrenched a militarized identity politics as the default way of understanding our place in the world” (2015: 262). This militarized exclusivistic civilizational geopolitics of war is entrenched on the global neoconservative Right as well as global neoliberal Left. The manifesto of Anders Breivik, the Norwegian Far Right terrorist whose attack on the Worker’s Youth League summer camp in 2011 left 77 people dead, follows broader Far Right arguments that believe political correctness and multiculturalism have weakened national identity and encouraged Islamic extremism, bringing European nations to a crisis point. Breivik himself correctly noted in the first week of his trial, that this view was held by “the three most powerful [neoliberal] politicians in Europe” – Nicolas Sarkozy, Angela Markel and David Cameron (2015: 262).

In a similar manner, while Barack Obama’s presidency (2008-2016) was built on a wave of progressive “hope” supposedly to counter to the right-wing War on Terror paradigm, his left-wing War on Terror was nearly the same if not worse. Obama’s 2009 speech in Cairo was supposed to be a rapprochement with the Muslim world, yet fell flat when he again affirmed the Neo-
Orientalist promotion of the good Muslim-bad Muslim narrative and civilizational logics that make Muslims a fundamental problem (Abraham 2014: 137). While Obama did once publicly criticize the Crusades and Inquisition as examples of historical Christian extremism and injustice to bolster the idea that Islam is not the “only” religion which can be misinterpreted by extremists, in praxis, he went to support ten times more drone strikes - in mainly Muslim majority countries - than Bush during his two-term presidency. In effect, Obama’s anti-crusades remarks appear to be Islamophilic at face value, while being Islamophobic in reality. Additionally, whereas in 2008 when no African country would host US military troops on their soil, after only 30 months in office, Obama’s commander-in-chief stewardship saw the establishment of military relations with over 50 African nations through the United States African Command (AFRICOM) program. The AFRICOM program is a fundamentally Islamophobic program that uses the War on Terror framework to facilitate neocolonial US American interests and proxy wars on the African continent in the name of spreading “peace.” While in theory Obama’s multicultural neoliberal rhetoric appears to negate the crusading spirit, the visceral effect of his neocolonial war games and drones affirms the perpetuation of the crusading spirit.

2.2. The Crusading Spirit – An Indigenous Muslim Unit of Analysis

While the West has maintained the survival of the crusading spirit across time and space, the crusading spirit has also been a unit of analysis by which Muslims have indigenously named and interpreted the rise of the modern/colonial world by way of their own agency. As decolonial scholars have done extensive work on the archive of the Atlantic world in relation to coloniality, their research has not fully unearthed the histories and experience of coloniality’s victims in other geographies. Within several years of 1492, Iberian Catholics found their way into South and Southeast Asia, establishing trade routes that laid the groundwork for later imperial expansion.

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79 See Pillay, Anton M. "The Expansion of AFRICOM in Africa under Obama: A Paradox?"
80 The famed Iberian Christian conquistador Ferdinand Magellan (d. 1521) – who followed the path of Columbus and Da Gama in search of “commerce and Crusades” - landed in Southeast Asia in what is now the Philippines in 1521 CE. The Spanish encountered Muslims there, calling them “Moros,” who resisted Spanish colonization through jihad. The centuries long battle against Spanish crusading efforts post-1521 by the Moros was directly proceeded by American imperial war in the Philippines from in the late 19th and early 20th century. See Michael Hawking’s Making Moros: Imperial Historicism and American Military Rule in the Philippine’s Muslim South (2012) for a more detailed analysis of this history. While I am unable to expand more on this topic here, I briefly mention it as part of my broader attempt to remap the rise of coloniality to highlight the ways it has affected Muslims globally and in areas outside of the Atlantic world that most decolonial thinkers have thus far explored. Building up this larger archive of coloniality’s reach sheds further light on how prevalent and present the figure of the Muslim was as a guiding force for the spread of coloniality and the crusading spirit.
into the region. Portuguese explorer Vasco Da Gama reached the shores of the Malabar Coast in 1498, meeting the ruler, or “Zamorin,” of Calicut in a tense exchange. Da Gama was commissioned by Portuguese King Emmanuel in 1497 CE for purposes of trade and commerce, but also to find the mythical Christian king of the East, Prester John (who Columbus and others were also looking for), in order to capture Muslim trading routes in the East as well as unite in crusade to reconquer the Holy Land. The adventurous Da Gama, whose father was a “Moor-slaying” knight during the *reconquista* and whom Da Gama followed in being initiated into Crusader-Knighthood, was an ideal candidate to attempt the unaccomplished proto-capitalist and global crusading dream of King Emmanuel and wider Christendom (Cliff 2013).

**2.2.1. Malabaris and Moriscos in the Early Modern/Colonial World-System**

Muslim chroniclers of the Portuguese arrival on the Malabar coast shed light on the interactions between the Portuguese and the indigenous inhabitants of the coast; especially in terms of how they viewed the arrival of these unfriendly foreigners. The famed Malabari Muslim scholar Zainuddin Makhdoom (d. 1521) bore witness to the arrival of the Portuguese and their expansion. In his poem *Tahrid Ahl al-Iman ‘ala Jihad ‘Abadah al-Sulban* (*Instigation of the Believers to Struggle Against the Cross-worshippers*), Zainuddin explicitly described the Portuguese as *Ahl al-Sulb* (People of the Cross) placing them within the taxonomy of militaristic crusaders (Kunju 1989: 131). Shaykh Zainuddin Makhdoom II, the grandson of Makhdoom I, also wrote an extensive account of the *Franj*81 arrival and Malabar history; which has even been praised by contemporary European scholars as “moderate” and “historical” due to Makhdoom II basing his observations on facts “untainted” by the polemics of enemies at war (Kunju 1989: 150-151). When Da Gama returned after his first voyage to Calicut, his Portuguese patron King Emmanuel became “Lord of Conquest, Navigation and Commerce” of the non-Christian Eastern world, placing the geographies of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India under his domain according to European public law. Emmanuel then sent Da Gama back to Calicut in order to take over all the trade routes, proselytize non-Christians and fight an “eastern crusade” against the Muslims in Kerala (1989: 143). While Makhdoom’s accounts were more immediate, his first being written in 1502 (1989: 144), Makhdoom II’s longer historical account of Portuguese war and aggression in the region demonstrated how Muslims were singled out as a special fundamental enemy amongst other

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81 In this case, meaning the Portuguese; yet, *Franj* was a term used to describe Western Latin Christians at large, and later Europeans. And has even stayed alive in colloquial Arabic dialects until today (Maalouf 2012: Introduction). *Franj* was differentiated from *Rumi* which was used to define Eastern Christians from the Byzantine Empire (Gabrieli 2010: Introduction).

Both Makhdoom I and II’s works describe the unprovoked atrocities committed by the Portuguese against the Muslims and other indigenous inhabitants of the Malabari coast. The Muslims had lived in relative coexistence as a respected minority under the Hindu Zamorin of the coast. When the Da Gama and the Portuguese returned, they participated in many campaigns of violence - destroying Muslim property; demolishing their cities and establishments; prohibiting the Islamic pilgrimage of hajj; massacring those who tried to resist; burning mosques and copies of the Qur’an; mocking the Prophet; violating women; capturing and enslaving hostages; and making Muslims “bow to the Cross” (1989: 136-137). The Portuguese also played “divide and conquer” against the Zamorin of Calicut by allying with his enemies and destroying the indigenous bonds of sovereignty that upheld the relatively pluralistic Indian Ocean coast for centuries (1989: 163-188), laying the foundations for later British exploitation in the region (1989: 141).

What is important to note in this moment is that there were key internal logics and units of analyses that Muslims used to differentiate the European Other from their indigenous neighbors that are characteristic of a wider trend I will expand upon in this section. During the crusades of the Middle Ages in the Mediterranean between Latin Christians and various Muslim powers, there was a noted difference between the Christianity of the Crusaders and that of indigenous Christians who lived alongside Muslims according to Muslim chroniclers. As Matar writes in *Europe Through Arab Eyes*, from the Middle Ages to at least the early modern period (18th c.), Muslim litterateurs distinguished between *Ahl al-Sulb* (People of the Cross) and *Ahl al-Kitab* (People of the Book). The former *salibiyyun* (lit. cross worshippers) were explicitly associated with their “military danger, crusading ideology and imperial ambitions” while the latter were *dhimmi*, or protected non-Muslim minorities in Islamicate lands with whom Muslim authorities maintained normative peace and relatively prosperous positive relations (Matar 2009: 29-32). This categorization was common

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82 The expansion of the Portuguese into South Asia by way of Da Gama landing in Malabar (1498) is one of the main three events – alongside Portuguese exploration of Western Africa (1430 – 1498), and Spanish encountering the New World (1498) (Hall 2007: 281) – which allowed for Europeans to begin building up colonial trade, commerce and racist military efforts at a global scale. One thing shared by all three of these events is their anti-Islamic impulse. In all three scenarios, Europeans believed they would 1) find the mythical Prestor John who would help them to defeat Islamic forces in route to recapturing the Holy Land and 2) regain access to global trade routes which had been controlled by Muslims for centuries. This dual impulse of what I call “crusades and commerce” are the material and metaphysical motivations which drove early modern European Christians to universalize the crusading spirit beyond the confines of the Mediterranean. Also of importance and mentioned earlier - and what may very well be considered a fourth key event - is Magellan’s arrival to Islamic lands in what is now the Philippines in 1521, where Muslims very quickly rebelled through jihad against their Iberian conquistadors (Hawkins 2012).

83 I have already mentioned that this history of relatively peaceful interfaith relations should not be romanticized. There
from the *Maghrib* (Western Islamicate lands) to the *Mashriq* (Eastern Islamicate lands) under various sultanates and caliphates (Matar 2009: 80). As interpretations of Western Christianity developed, Muslims even distinguished between different sects within Europe during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation such as the *Latarin* (Lutherans) and *Qalabin* (Calvinists) (2009: 30).

Behind this contextualized backdrop, the Malabari Muslims community’s ability to distinguish between the crusading Portuguese *Franj* and other non-Muslim groups they had lived alongside for centuries (including indigenous Catholic Christians on the Malabari coast) makes sense. As do the numerous praises they made to their Hindu Zamorin rulers who fought on their behalf and in solidarity through jihad for over a century in order to successfully hold off the Portuguese conquest of the South Indian coast (Matar 2009: 189). Similarly, in the context of the conquest of Al-Andalus - if we may revisit my earlier invitation to view the rise of the modern/colonial world-system through the lens of an enslaved Andalusian Muslim woman, Maria - the struggling Morisco community that faced ethnic cleansing, patriarchal enslavement and colonization post-1492 viewed the militaristic Catholics perpetrating acts of war as those who “adorer al-salib” and “worshippers of the cross.” At the same time, it was encouraged that “good tidings” would come for Muslims and Christians who befriended each other (Green-Mercado 2012: 292-293). Within a decade of 1492 CE, from Moriscos in the West to Malabaris in the East, the deployment of the language of *Ahl al-Sulb* and *Franj* becomes resituated as a unit of analysis and transnational discourse that described the rise of early Europe and the modern/colonial world system from an indigenous Muslim perspective.

The differentiation between what Muslims perceived as a foreign militaristic Christian invader and an indigenous Christian ally points to a sophisticated unit of analysis not based in an “irrational” religious logic – as the dictates of secularism would assume – but to a sophisticated political and civilizational distinction between those perpetuating war, genocide and slavery aggressively and unprovoked, and those who were not. This means that the use of theological language to identify the Other is not irrational or simply about religious “truth and falsehood”, as Maldonado-Torres

were moments of exclusionary violence against *dhimmis* (non-Muslim protected minorities), especially during times of when Muslim powers were being ambushed by both Crusaders and Mongols during the Middle Ages, or even in the 19th and 20th century when Western powers were destroying the Ottoman Empire and Ottoman Christian subjects began to be seen as a dangerous 5th column leading to such atrocities as the Armenian Genocide (Majid 2009: 96). To claim that the Islamicate world was more tolerant with regards to racial and religious diversity in comparison to the West does not absolve it of exclusions to that principle.

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might say. This Muslim unit of analysis situates the crusading spirit of Western Christendom and then Europe alongside coloniality - and not Christianity itself - as a defining factor of modernity. This indigenous Muslim logic of viewing European expansion over the Islamicate world as a crusade has remained in the memory of Muslims into late modernity and even during more secular times.

2.2.2. Late Modern Crusade-Naming, Secular & Religious

In the Arab Muslim world of the 20th century, the crusades served as a useful unit of analysis for both secular and religious fronts against Western hegemony. The rise of secular Arab Nationalism led to an increased interest in the crusades of the Middle Ages, as contemporary Arab revolutionaries realized the similarities at play as well the very present Europeans attitudes that invoked the crusades. Many Arab nationalists, not unlike Islamists, viewed the Middle Ages as the “Golden Age” of Arab Islamic civilization, which included the Arab Muslim world’s militant engagements with Western Christendom. In their contemporary context of Western imperialism, Zionist Israeli colonization of Palestine, and the wider movements of decolonization, Arab nationalists analyzed the medieval Crusades as the first stage of European colonialism, as a type of isti’mar mubakkar (i.e. “proto-colonialism,” or “premature imperialism”) (Hillenbrand 1999: 590). Arab nationalist independence movements adopted anti-Crusader rhetoric and lionized the likes of Salah al-Din Al-Ayyubi (d. 1193), or Saladin, as a historical symbol for contemporary resistance against Western aggression; Saladin being the famed Muslim warrior-king who drove the Crusaders from Palestine (ironically, Saladin was a non-Arab Kurd, as were the non-Arab Turkish armies who largely drove off the Crusaders in the Middle Ages). The Eagle of Saladin (Nasr Salah al-Din) has been used on flags and coats of arms across Arab nationalist movements (Egypt, U.A.E, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen) and is still used as the coat of arms in Egypt, Iraq and Palestine (Karsh 2013: 134).

At the peak of secular Pan-Arabism, Gamal Abdel Nasser, proclaimed, “In the days of our forefathers the name they adopted for deception and treachery was the Crusades. The deception was in the name of religion, but religion had no connection whatsoever with that aggression, for the Crusades represented nothing else than imperialism, domination and despotism in every sense of the world” (Karsh 2013: 134). Nasser fancied himself a modern Saladin fighting off Zionist and Western Crusaders. A film was even released under his tenure as Egypt’s president entitled Saladin (1963) which was essentially propaganda for Nasser and his Pan-Arabist agenda; especially when Saladin (a Kurd) anachronistically proclaims in the film, “My dream is to see an
Arab nation under one flag” (Chahine 1963). Even Arab leaders of Ba’thist parties in Iraq and Syria, notably Saddam Hussein, utilized the crusades as an analytical tool for the present. Saddam Hussein produced a children’s book called “The Hero Saladin”, which contained a picture of Hussein on the front cover and narcissistic references to himself as Saladin II inside the cover (Cline 2003).

2.2.3. Palestine, the Holy Land and Neo-Crusades
Prior to examining the persistence of the crusades within Islamist discourses, it is necessary to underline one other area which drives home the model of the crusades as a prominent analytical tool by Muslims; that is, the context of the Zionist Israeli occupation of Palestine. The figure of the “Zionist-Crusader” and the Zionist-Crusader alliance have become common terms by which various groups of Muslims and others in the Islamicate world address the ongoing presence of coloniality in their lives and ontologies. Ziad Asali summarizes the long-term material and theoretical connections between the Western “crusading spirit” and Zionism:

Zionism, in fact, is the heir - albeit an illegitimate one - of the Crusader movement. It was born out of the depth of the Crusader residue in Western societies as it combined the dreams of reconquest of the Holy Land with historical antipathy toward the Easterners along with the solution of the Jewish problem in the West. The Zionist movement has interjected a factor that has contributed decisively to the receptivity of modern Western societies to its ideology. By this, I mean the emphasis on Judaism as a national identity in addition to a religious identity. This nationalist definition of Judaism has found an echo in the era of the development of various nationalities in Europe. In addition, it has contributed, along with fundamentalist Christian evangelical ideology, to the provision of support for Zionism. Thus the Jews have been transformed from being the earliest victims of the First Crusade to being the executors of the last one (Asali 1992: 57).

British General Allenby’s proclamation in 1917 CE when he entered Jerusalem that the “crusades were complete” occurred during the same year the Balfour Declaration was signed, with the British promising the Zionist movement and world Jewry a homeland in Palestine. This proto Judeo-Christian alliance (the Holocaust had yet to occur) lays a foundation for the post-WWII acceptance of Jews (mainly Ashkenazi, or white European Jews to be exact) into the ontological fold of Europeanness, as well as the proliferation of the idea of a Judeo-Christian civilization as past, present and future home to Western civilizational dominance (Slabodsky 2015: 6-7). Sayyid has noted that just as the narrative of Zionism is something that comes as “commonsense” to proponents of Western hegemony, the narrative of anti-Zionism has become “one of the threads that connects the ummah” (Sayyid 2014: 186-187). Additionally, others have pointed to the way

84 Asali himself calls it the crusading spirit a number of times (Asali 1992: 55).
the question of Palestine filled the hole left by the dissolution of the last Caliphate (1924 CE) and the failure of earlier Pan-Islamist movements to maintain the Caliphate. Pan-Islamist energies were transferred to nationalist causes within the ummah, becoming epitomized in Palestine as a master symbol of Pan-Islamist politics and desire (Devji 2008, 130-131).

The narrative of anti-Zionism and Palestine are ones that have near total universal appeal across the Muslim world. Palestine holds currency as the epitome of the ontological state of the ummah under the conditions of global coloniality. Pro-Zionist forces across the world have long been prominent in the proliferation and profiting from Islamophobic logics, industries and wars before and throughout the rise of Judeo-Christian Western hegemony. While many Muslims in their various contexts across the world now call this the Zionist-Crusader alliance, I argue that the value of using this unit of analysis also digs deeper. Even if not explicitly articulated by many, the Zionist-Crusader analogy put forward by Muslims points towards a critique of Judeo-Christian civilization hegemony. It shows an acknowledgement of the hierarchies of Judeo/Christian/ secular epistemology and ontology within the coloniality of power and is fundamental to engaging the Muslim question. This understanding, which I will expand upon shortly, places the crusading spirit at the crossroads of the Cartesian inspired coloniality of knowledge as well as the Heideggerian influenced coloniality of being.

85 In Camil Aydin’s The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History (2017), he largely argues that the idea of the “Muslim World” is a modern colonial invention in response to the essentialization and racialization of Muslims as single category and civilization in the late modern period. Aydin argues that this process only begins to occur in the late 19th century at the high-tide European imperialism, and discredits analyses of Islamophobia that date the negative correlation between Islam and the West to the medieval Crusades as false ahistorical narratives (Aydin 2017: 232). Aydin’s work attempts to dispel said ahistoricism by brilliantly displaying the contradictions existent during both the period of the Crusades and European imperialism in the 19th/20th century in which Muslim-Christian alliances were nearly as abundant as antagonisms (235). Pan-Islamism and the Muslim World, for Aydin, are more so pragmatic and utilitarian devices that Muslims used to counter the essentialism of Europeans who racialized them (235). While I appreciate aspects of Aydin’s deconstruction of essentialisms in relation to the West and Islam, and the highlighting of contradictions within these essentialisms, I disagree with Aydin’s overemphasis on these contradictions. Aydin’s argument eclipses the possibility for Muslims to legitimately respond through a counter-hegemonic political project and ontology that takes Islam as its universal. What I mean by this is that Islam can serve as a postessentialist political project and ontology that takes Islam as its universal. What I mean by this is that Islam can serve as a postessentialist political project (a topic I will touch upon in greater detail in Chapter 4) by which coherency and contradiction can co-exist under the master signifier of Islam, or in other words, the Muslim world. Shahab Ahmed’s (d. 2017) What is Islam (2017) is one project that comes to mind which makes a similar argument about Islam in the premodern world which views Islam/the Islamic/Islamic civilization as a “coherently contradictory” human phenomenon (2017: 301 – 302). I also disagree with Aydin’s postcolonial reading of Islamophobia for the ways it delegitimizes and overlooks the systemic ways Islamophobia shaped the world prior to the 19th century. In contrast to Aydin, Anouar Majid argues that the clash of civilizations, whether between Islam and the West or the West and the Rest, becomes a global systemic reality in the post-Andalusian/1492 age which is marked by anti-Muslim racist logics (2009).

86 See Nathan Lean’s The Islamophobia Industry, or the widely read report “Fear Inc.: The Roots of the Islamophobia Network in America” by the Center for American Progress (https://islamophobianetwork.com/).
2.2.4. Islamist Crusade-Naming

To return to my previous point, Islamists have also used the crusade as a method of understanding the nature of coloniality’s power relations in the modern world. In this section I will highlight how revolutionary Islamist nationalist movements such as Hamas, to Muslim Brotherhood stalwarts such as Hassan al-Banna (d. 1949) and Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966), to the likes of anti-nationalist and exclusionary Islamists such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS, theorized the framework of the crusades to deploy in analysis and critiques of dominant power relations imposed on the Muslim world. Unsurprisingly, in the context of the battle over the Holy Land and Occupied Palestine, the Hamas Charter (Euben & Zaman 2009: 364-386) contains a number of references to the Crusades of - the Middle Ages; the modern “ crusading” missionaries in the Levant (i.e., see Sudan section above); the rhetoric of General Allenby; Zionism87; and even Nazism as an equivalent crusading manifestation of Zionism, except in this situation the Palestinians are the Jews and the Jews are the Nazis (Euben & Zaman 2009: 362). Following the religious and secular Arab Sunni Muslim trend, both Al-Banna (1906-1949) and Qutb (1906-1966), whom many regard as founding ideologues of the Ikhwan al-Muslimeen (Muslim Brotherhood), cite the Crusades (as well as Zionism) in their analyses as an enduring historical impulse underlying Western imperialism both from Euro-America and the Soviet Union in the Muslim world (Koch 2015: 173-174). In Qutb’s critique of both the Capitalist Euro-American and Communist Soviet hegemony during the rise of the Cold War he writes:

> All these opinions overlook one vital element in the question, which must be added to all other elements - the Crusader spirit that runs in the blood of all Westerners and lies deep in their minds, to which is added imperialism’s fear of the Islamic spirit and the effort to destroy the strength of Islam, whereby Westerners are linked by a single feeling and a single interest in destroying it. This unites communist Russia and capitalist America. (emphasis mine)88

While this quote, if taken verbatim, is problematic for essentializing the nature of all Westerners of having the crusading spirit in their blood, it’s more important value points to a sophisticated social critique of the rise of hegemonic Western power, whether Capitalist or Communist. The

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87 Admittedly, the references to “Jews” in the Hamas Charter are problematic, and may even come across as anti-Semitic. Yet, the context of a (white) Jewish supremacist state can never be decontextualized as the reason for Hamas’ strong language at times against the “Jews”, the very logic of Zionism uses Jewishness as an organizing principle against indigenous Palestinians to the extent that non-European descent Israeli Jews who face racism from Ashkenazi descent Israeli Jews nonetheless maintain forms of domination over Palestinians through their privileged Jewishness, serving in the military and colonization of Palestinian life and land.

88 This English translation is my edited version of the same Arabic words taken from two different English translations (Qutb 2010: 270-275) and (Qutb 1996: 287). I edited the translations so as to appear as smooth as possible, as both contained awkward wording and syntax on their own.
quote is also immediately followed by a critique of Judeo-Christian hegemony through the lens of a Zionist-Crusader alliance (Qutb 1996: 288).

Along similar lines, more exclusionary Islamist groups and individuals also utilize the crusades in their analyses. The likes of Osama Bin Laden might be credited as one of the most popular exclusionary and problematic figures who nonetheless skillfully critiqued Western power. While many – including myself - do not agree with many of his actions, thoughts or strategies, if one actually reads his speeches and writings (which many are won’t to do outside of sensationalist media headlines) it is quite clear he had an intelligent understanding of global power relations and history. His global reach and success were arguably built off weaving these longer social analyses into narratives of the Qur’an, Prophetic and apocalyptic discourses to galvanize masses to defend and fight for the ummah. The “Zionist-Crusader alliance”, Judeo-Christian hegemony and the notions of the West as a Crusading empire are abundant in his interviews and speeches (Bin Laden 2005: 73, 133 & 187).

Devji has interestingly argued that terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda and figures such as Bin Laden who use exclusionary violence are not engaged in building a geographically situated politics attached to traditional notions of land sovereignty and locally located social struggles. Rather, they are involved in building a supra-political projects concerned moreso with global humanitarian ethics and existential aspirations of “saving humanity” from the perils of the modern world, much in the same way the likes of Mohandas K. Gandhi (d. 1948) or other globalist humanitarian ecological rights advocates frame themselves (Devji 2008: Chapter 1). Given that there are scholars more closely analyzing the rational of these “orphans of modernity” (Abou El Fadl 2002) instead of ex post facto writing them off as simply irrational monsters, I assert that Bin Laden’s - or other extremists - problematic methodological engagement with the Crusades is nonetheless part of a wider legitimate indigenous Muslim historical understanding of the rise of the modern/colonial world as an extension of the crusading spirit.

Finally, we should consider a number of prominent Muslim intellectuals in the 20th and 21st century, who may very well cross the line or transcend binaries of secular vs. religious, who have been keen on using the Crusades as part of their analyses of global power structures. Majid mentions how the famed Jewish-born European Muslim Muhammed Asad (d. 1992) - who travelled, studied and held political positions in the states of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan yet has also been described as a liberal “mediator between East and West” - published a pamphlet
entitled *Islam at the Crossroads* (1934) which linked Western imperialism with the Crusades; this pamphlet went on to influence Qutb and generations of Islamists (Majid 2009: 118, Qutb 1996: 283). Hamid Algar (b. 1940), the famed Berkley-based British-American Muslim scholar whose erudite translations and commentaries on classical and contemporary Islamic sciences and politics have educated generations of critical scholars in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, has affirmed the “crusading spirit” as a unit of analysis that connects Western imperialism to Zionism as well as the Bosnian Genocide (Qutb 2010: 15). The Muslim Algerian social theorist and postcolonial thinker Malik Bennabi (d. 1973) ruminates on the global reach of the Crusades across continents and the longue duree of modernity:

The Crusades offered the European Civilization an opportunity to turn towards the exterior, and to reap a profitable harvest in the Muslim Civilization. The same tendencies pushed it to the discovery of America, and one could here discern the beginning of a profound rupture between a dominating Europe and the rest of humanity, that explains well the politics of the world for the last four centuries as well as its present disequilibrium (1979: 44).

This narrative of the Crusades and the crusading spirit as an integral and enduring aspect of modern Western civilization is one that is essential to any understanding of the coloniality of being. The very title of contemporary Moroccan-American scholar Anouar Majid’s book is *We are all Moors: Ending Centuries of Crusades against Muslims and other Minorities*. Latin American decolonial scholars such as Maldonado-Torres have not fully integrated the narrative and effect the Muslim question has had in relation to the coloniality of being. To fill in this gap of knowledge in decolonial scholarship means we must further elaborate upon the mind, body and spirit of Western Man.

### 2.3. The Crusading Spirit – *El Espíritu Cruzado*

Let us recall for a moment Maldonado-Torres’ theorizing of the coloniality of being. For Maldonado-Torres, Descartes famous precept “I think therefore I am” was a combination of Cartesian epistemology and Hedeiggerian ontology; the underside of “I think” is the coloniality of knowledge and the underside of “I am” is the coloniality of being. The combination of the two are central to Maldonado-Torres conceptions of modernity/coloniality as a paradigm of war. What is also crucial is that Maldonado-Torres rethinks the philosophical dimensions of modernity’s Cartesian separation of the “mind” (as the coloniality of knowledge) and “body” (as the coloniality of being). The mind of modernity being Western Man’s universalizing ego-politics whose God-eye

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89 Admittingly, Maldonado-Torres does engage Majid’s work on the Muslim, for example, in his book *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity*. 

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view condemns the purely carnal and irrational bodies of the non-Western Self to hellish existence and damnation (Maldonado-Torres 2007). There is one factor unmentioned in Maldonado-Torres important reformulation of the mind and body equation in modernity though, and that is the “spirit”

What endures as the spirit of modernity, especially when one takes into consideration modernity as a paradigm of war, conquest and coloniality? In the same manner that this work has thus far demonstrated the problematics of Maldonado-Torres’s secular approach to understanding the ontological exclusions between the Old and New World, it now considers an engagement with coloniality through a non-secular lens that considers the lasting theological – and even spiritual - effects of modernity’s conception of the anthro and the cosmos. There is an underside to modernity’s Christian and secular theology, which affects both the mind and body as well as anthro and cosmos. This aspect of modernity’s rise can only be understood and properly situated if one does not see such a sharp break between the Old and New Worlds, but a continuation and extension of pre-existing paradigms of power and being from medieval Western Christendom.

While this has implications for the Muslim and may seem to be expressed poignantly through the experience of the Muslim under coloniality, I have also addressed in Chapter One how it has implications for others subjugated to the hellish boundaries of coloniality’s snares, such as the Indian and Black. By drawing attention to the long-term contribution of anti-Muslim logics and systems vis-a-vis the crusading spirit, we can unveil what I call the “coloniality of the spirit.” If the coloniality of knowledge correlates to the mind of Western Man, and the coloniality of being to the bodily existence of Western Man, then surely there is an undying force also present within the imperial matrix of Western Man’s mind and body; that is, *el espíritu cruzado*, or the crusading spirit. In order to philosophically understand the development of this crusading spirit alongside that of Western Man’s mind and body, let us turn to Hegel.

### 2.3.1. Hegel and the Coloniality of the Spirit

G.W.F. Hegel (1770 – 1831) was a secular Protestant German philosopher who believed that the “Spirit” of humanity and history had reached its peak in Western Man and modern Europe’s Enlightenment. Mignolo writes that Hegel’s monumental work *The Philosophy of History* consolidated the Western view and sense of the human that had begun to unfold in earlier (Christian) Renaissance Humanists (Mignolo 2012: xi). Hegel lived during an era of massive European imperial expansion (which he praised), and watched as the French Revolution (1789-1799) unfolded and Napoleon’s army conquered Egypt. In another famous work, *The
Phenomenology of the Spirit (1979), Hegel wrote how “Spirit” progressed from East to West; Spirit in his definition, being described as the highest form of reason, totalizing itself as “absolute knowledge” and the progressive force behind the “universal history” of the world. While this Spirit originated in the Orient, it has culminated in the West, and specifically for Hegel, in the Holy Roman Empire and German nation he descended from. In part three of Phenomenology, Hegel states that Spirit’s progress manifested first in China, then India, Persia, and Egypt until the decisive moment it reaches Greece; from Greece to Germany there being “only one step” (Mignolo 2012: xii). Greek and Rome, however, are the places where Spirit feels most at home, with Hegel saying, “Among the Greek we feel ourselves immediately at home, for we are in the region of the Spirit” (Hegel 1979: 223). Mignolo comments on this quote and points out that this “ourselves” doesn’t include “Chinese, Muslims, Indians (of India), Africans, Aymaras and so forth.” This “ourselves” is only referring to Christian Europeans in secular Europe (Mignolo 2012: xii).

Mignolo’s critique shows Hegel’s Spirit was one uniquely tailored for Western Man, and only made possibly through his God-eye view and imperial posture over centuries of conquest, war and enslavement of the heathen non-Western Christian world. For Hegel, this Spirit was the pinnacle of sacred and profane, as well as religious and secular accumulation of absolute knowing and being. It was the pinnacle of a God-like civilized Self that spiraled out of the West over the Rest to teach the uncivilized Rest how to be human and understand “universal history.” Even though Hegel acknowledged Spirit coming from the East to West (though not the South, including his anti-black views of Sub-Saharan Africa and ignorance of the Indigenous of the Americas90), he is not able to humble himself to acknowledge the dignity of those non-European peoples who are still living and breathing in the world with him, albeit choked by a Western imperial noose.

Given Hegel’s ignorance to his own locus of enunciation and whom he was speaking over, there is a need to revisit the fundamental aspect of his so called abstract universal Spirit, epitomized in his quote: “When Spirit sees itself and its world as being Reason it becomes ethical substance actualized” (Hegel 1979: 550). Considering that this bold statement was pronounced by Western Man, what might its underside sound like? What might the Morisca female slave, Maria, who was shipped across the Atlantic say if she had to describe the Western phallic Spirit that rose over the world she was stolen from? I assert that the Hegelian Spirit is implicitly understood by the victims

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90 See Babacar Camara’s “The Falsity of Hegel’s Theses on Africa” (Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 36, No. 1, Sep. 2005, pgs. 82 – 96) for more information on Hegel’s anti-black views.
of Western Man as, “When the Crusading Spirit sees itself and its world as being the Ego Conquiro it becomes the non-ethics of war actualized.”

The civilization of death that Europe visited upon the Third World – literally, by creating it, as Fanon reminds us – is fundamentally guided by a crusading spirit. What is missing from the mind and body of “I think therefore I am” is the location of the spirit in relation to the imperial self of Western Man. This Hegelian “coloniality of spirit” is one that encloses the triad of Western Man’s mind, body and spirit. The coloniality of Hegel’s *Geist* is what drives and maintains the connection between the mind and the body of Western Man’s crusading self as it connects them theologically and geopolitically “in spirit.” Following Maldonado-Torres, Mignolo and the long list of Muslim thinkers archived above, the non-ethics of war presented by this crusading spirit is one that wreaks havoc against the Muslim and other racialized non-beings by way of its long-term commitment to securing peace through war, and raining civilizational death upon those whose histories and ontologies are not deemed dignified by Western Man. Both literally and figuratively, the crusading spirit is the *qiblah* of Western Man; that is, the direction of his prayer and inner being. This crusading spirit does not lead Western Man to focus upon a sublime Other that is meant to reveal to him his human limitations in relation other humans and sentient beings, nor his humaneness amongst the vastness of the cosmos. Rather, the crusading spirit refocuses Western Man on his own idolatric and phallic *ego conquiro*, which acts as perpetrator in chief of global coloniality and places peoples in the zone of nonbeing.

For Mignolo, Hegel’s philosophy and phenomenology of Spirit is the Enlightenment’s version of the colonization of space and time (2012: xii). As Oludamini Ogunnaike argues, Hegel’s conception of the anthro and cosmos teleologically temporalizes the classical Great Chain of Being by replacing God at the top of the chain with Western Man, followed by all non-Westerners below (Ogunnaike 2016: 799-802). This temporalizing process, started earlier by the likes of

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91 Maldonado-Torres deems the “non-ethics of war” as part of the paradigm of war that visited the Americas post-1492, “What happens in the Americas is a transformation and naturalization of the non-ethics of war, which represented a sort of exception to the ethics that regulate normal conduct in Christian countries, to a more stable and long-standing reality of damnation” (2007: 247). This non-ethics of war is an unethical approach to nonbeings in modernity that attempts to condemn their ontologies to damnation.

92 German for “Spirit,” or even “Mind” – which shows the direct interrelation Hegelian Spirit and its corollary espiritucruzado have to the mind and body of Western Man.

93 *Qiblah* is an Arabic word which is used by Muslims to denote “the direction to which they pray” (i.e. the Ka’bah in Mecca). While I am of course using it metaphorically here, I find it interesting that the roots of *qiblah* in Arabic – “q-b-l-i” – have to do with notions of “acceptance, surety, consent and agreement.” Thus, quite literally, Western Man’s *qiblah*, as guided by the crusading spirit, is in the direction of only that which he can accept and be in agreement with; coloniality, non-ethics of war, civilizational death, etc.
Voltaire (d. 1778), David Hume (d. 1776) and Immanuel Kant (d. 1804) - is crystallized in Hegel’s theory of the progress of “World Spirit.” Hegel’s evolutionary theory and Spirit travel throughout History along a continuum of “evil, ignorance, darkness, the past, the ‘primitive’” and non-European races of humanity on one end, and “good, knowledge, light, the future, ‘civilization, progress” and the European race on the other (802). This teleology was combined with Hegel’s engagement with environmental determinism and Aristotelian arguments for the right and duty of conquest, subjugation and even elimination of the “dark side” of the continuum by light. Ogunnaike notes how these ideas have maintained currency until now in justifying Western imperialism, colonization and genocide and are implicitly invoked in everything from “developmental work to Marxist coups to white supremacist ideology” (ibid.). Through Hegelian Spirit, it becomes ontologically clear that Western Man is the top, present and future of this Great Chain of Being, while the Rest are non-beings who lay farther down the chain either in the past or outside of history altogether (799-802). Hegel’s Spirit girdles Western Man’s command of humanity, history, time and space. The crusading spirit performs an identical role.94

2.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued three points: 1) firstly, that the historiography of the crusading spirit must be viewed within a ten-century-long paradigm that accounts for ways in which the medieval crusades birthed an exclusionary anti-Muslim racist Western ontology that continues well into the modern world and up to the present moment in ways old and new, religious and secular; 2) secondly, that Muslims have long conceptualized the rise of modernity as connected to the crusades, and have used the term “crusading spirit” as an indigenous unit of analysis that captures the effect of coloniality on the ummah, and 3) lastly, that the crusading spirit reveals another aspect of the anthropo and cosmos of Western Man, the coloniality of the spirit.

The linking of this crusading spirit (both medieval and post/modern) to the rise of the West over the Rest has long been included across a variety of discourses by Muslims to analyze their ontology and that of the West. Before proceeding to an analysis of contemporary postcolonial

94 My critique of Hegel’s racism should not be taken as a wholesale denial or rejection of interesting or useful aspects of his thought. Hegel’s theory of the master-slave dialectic, for example, is one which has inspired generations of thinkers to counter modern Western hegemony and power (for example, see George Ciccariello-Maher’s Decolonizing Dialectics 2017). In line with the broader impulse of decoloniality. Nor should my critique of European thinkers be seen as some type of nativist essentialist rejection in total of their thought; rather, it is a meta-critique of Eurocentric fundamentalism and a deprovincializing of the PLATO to NATO narrative. My aim is to ultimately to re-enter the conversation with European thinkers on more just and humane grounds without overlooking historical atrocities or the “face to face” which is always inflected in systems of knowledge, power and being.
Muslim ontology in the next chapter, I will conclude with some summary remarks on my use of the term “crusading spirit”. In building off previous definitions of Mastnak and relating it to the contemporary Muslim question, Husain has argued that the crusades of the Middle Ages should be understood as defining a type of “geopolitical theology.” By geopolitical theology, he means that the combination of “faith and territory” encapsulated a unified notion of medieval Christendom that clarified its racial character through theological language as well as geopolitical and territorial boundaries; in other words, a geopolitical theology (or an ideology and bodypolitics which posits a territory as basis for its geopolitics). In Urban II’s initial sermon to commence the Crusades, he called for “blood and brotherhood,” which led to what Adnan calls the “roots of whiteness” (or, Europeanness/Westernness) as a type of ethnic and racial category.95

This geopolitical theology created a political ontology for Western Christendom that became alive through the crusades and antagonisms with the Muslim enemy. This political ontology, guided by the crusading spirit, fully inflicted the encounter in the New World; the Transatlantic slave trade and Africa; European conquests across the Mediterranean, Pacific and Indian Oceans; and Russian colonization of Islamicate lands in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. In short, the crusading spirit was ontological present throughout Islamicate Africa and Asia (including their diasporas in the Americas, Europe and elsewhere) in modernity. Contrary to decolonial scholarship, such as Maldonado-Torres, I do not believe there was a sharp break between the Old World and New World logics in terms of ontological hierarchies. Rather, the crusading spirit marks a continuation and further unfolding of Christendom’s and then Europe’s geopolitical theology, whether religious or secular. If the Muslim represented the death of the Old World through conquest, it simultaneously remained the underside of the New World through conquest. The Muslim remains a figure that revives the Old World, just as it haunts the New. It is the


96 Hamid Algar notes how the rise of the “Eastern Front” of Islamophobia occurred as Russia rose as a Slavic Orthodox Christian continental power that conquered Muslims – whom they weighed as “godless and uncleaned creatures destined for eternal perdition” - in the Caucus region, Eastern Europe and Central Asia since at least the 16th century (Algar 2008). Recent geopolitical convulsions attest to the persistence of this history as current President Vladimir Putin looks to neomedieval inspiration in order to revive a purer Slavic Orthodox civilizational model as the historical basis that propels a unified Russia as a great power into the future. In connecting the dots “across the pond,” American Right-wing forces also look to Putin as a figure of White Nationalism and an Eastern Christian ally in the revived battle between Christendom and Islamdom (see the article “To Russia with Love: Courting a New Crusade” (2017) in works cited). I will turn to the effect of Russian Islamophobia on Muslim ontology in greater detail in the next chapter.
persistent *spiritus rector* of Western Man’s *qiblah*, as the West continues to wage civilizational war against the Rest on a planetary scale.

In conclusion, the *espiritu cruzado* is the spirit of Western Man. It is the geopolitical theology of modernity/coloniality and must be seen as preceding and floating alongside the *ego conquiro*, guiding the body and mind of Western man as a ghost and real-life terror, reflecting how the Muslim is viewed by the Western gaze. The crusading spirit is a deep-seated libidinal drive of modernity that manifests materially, mentally and spiritually: the body of modernity is white and European; it’s mind is Christian, secular and atheist; and its spirit is a Crusade against the Muslim and wider non-European Other. In complementing Maldonado-Torres conceptualization of modernity as a paradigm of war (2008), the crusading spirit helps us understand the secular and non-secular ways in which the paradigm of war has crusaded across time and space. Latin American and Caribbean decolonial scholars, such as Maldonado-Torres, Wynter, and Mignolo, have focused more so on the formation of the Atlantic world system, while the crusading spirit allows us to go beyond these borders theoretically and analytically. Sharp breaks did not exist between the Old and New World as it would be wrong for us to assume secular approaches for understanding race, ontological exclusion and even the persistence of the Crusades themselves.

By understanding the rise of the modern/colonial world away from the Atlantic-centric model that Latin American decolonial scholars have developed, we can better understand how Mediterranean, African and even Indian Ocean societies experienced earlier and later forms of coloniality through the crusading spirit. Additionally, we are better able to integrate the crusading spirit into our understandings of the Americas and Atlantic-centric model. The crusading spirit expands the historical archive and analytical paradigm in discussions concerning the coloniality of being. The crusading spirit underscores the persistence of the Muslim Question in relation to coloniality, it reveals the coloniality of spirit, and it examines how Eurocentric notions of the religious/secular perform civilizational violence through the crusading spirit. The crusading spirit reveals the purchase of Eurocentric theologies and theories of war (both secular and religious) in relation to the mind and body of Western Man and Imperial Being. It is a drive both physical and metaphysical, and transacts at the level of being, economy and even ecology; that is, if we are to understand the natural world as a Muslim Maria turned Mother Earth that has been patriarchally dominated, enslaved and pillaged of dignity through perennial warfare on soil, sand and sea. The crusading spirit, as well as the Muslim Question, are part of a wider decolonial Muslim and post-essentialist historical analysis of the clash of civilizations and should not be confused as a desire
to essentialize this clash as an irreconcilable natural antagonism. Without a thorough and critical analysis of the *longue duree* civilizational rise of modernity/coloniality, there is no way forward to imagine civilizational just peace and dialogue otherwise. It is at this juncture, that I would like to transition to a contemporary discussion on postcolonial Muslim ontology, and one of its most widely debated divides – the good vs bad Muslim binary – in order to think of ways beyond civilizational warfare and the crusading spirit.
Chapter 3

Redefining the “Good Muslim, Bad Muslim” Framework: A Critique of Mahmood Mamdani’s Approach

The East with its population of one and a half billion enslaved by the West European bourgeoisie was forgotten by the Bolshevik leaders. The development of the international class struggle continued by-passing the East … Because of ignorance concerning the East and of the fear which it inspired, the idea of the participation of Eastern revolutionaries in the world revolution was systemically rejected” – Mirsaid Sultan-Galiev, in his ‘The Social Revolution and the East’, Zhizn’ Nastional’nostey (1919) (cited in Bennigsen 1983: 97).

3.0. Introduction

One of the main frameworks used to discipline contemporary Muslim ontology in the neo/postcolonial era97 is the “good Muslim-bad Muslim binary.” The discourse of the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary is one that takes place outside of Muslim communities amongst Islamophobes just as much as it is one that has been internalized within the *ummah* by Muslims who debate what form of Muslim political identity is permissible or most suitable for the existing power structure. While a number of scholars (Mamdani 2004, Safi 2011, Shryrock 2010) have dealt extensively with the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary as a component of global Islamophobia, Mahmood Mamdani’s seminal work *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, The Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (2004) popularized and gave historical prominence to the term. Mamdani is an African postcolonial theorist from Uganda whose work explore the intersection between culture and politics, comparative studies of modern colonialism, the history of genocide and civil war in Africa, the War on Terror and the Cold War, and the history and theory of human rights and citizenship. He has taught in a number of countries in Africa, such as Uganda and South Africa, and currently teaches in New York City at Columbia University (About).

In considering the various definitions and explications of the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, the following definition characterizes it well: the “good Muslim” is one who conforms to modernity, liberalism, Westernization and the structures of coloniality. The “bad Muslim” is the antithesis of the good Muslim in that s/he does not fit into dominant discourses and power structures of the

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97 South African thinker, Sabelo Ndlovu, argues in his work *Coloniality of Power in Postcolonial Africa: Myths of Decolonization* (2013) that the postcolonial is inextricably linked to the neocolonial; meaning, the underside of the postcolonial moment has always been neocoloniality. Hence, he uses the term neo/postcolonial to draw attention to the visible and invisible sides of power and discourse in the postcolonial period.
day. Mamdani locates the historical appearance of the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary in the vacuum created by the end of the Cold War and the need for Western hegemony to find a new enemy against which to define itself. The “Red Scare” of Communism, he argues, was proceeded by the “Green Peril” of the Muslim enemy in the form of so-called Muslim fundamentalists and extremists (2014: 21).

While there is much validity in aspects of Mamdani’s framework of good Muslim-bad Muslim thesis, there are a also number of limitations to his conceptual and historiographical claims. Mamdani relates the good Muslim-bad Muslim framework to American power, and to a rather limited period of time at the end of the Cold War. He has also not thoroughly interrogated issues of the political and politics in relation to Muslim political ontology under the conditions of coloniality, nor how Muslims faced issues related to racist Western political ontology due to Russian and Soviet power. In responding to these limitations in Mamdani’s framework, I present three arguments: 1) Mamdani’s conceptual and historiographical framework for the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary requires recalibrations that include other undersides of both coloniality and the Cold War in relation to the Muslim, 2) the issue of Russian/Soviet Islamophobia must be interrogated with regard to modern Muslim political ontology, thus revealing a reach of the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary beyond American power, and 3) the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary needs to be understood as a disciplinary paradigm at the level of Muslim political ontology, and reapplied to a new Cold War historiography that shows the gaps in Mamdani’s approach.

3.0.1. Good Muslim-Bad Muslim, Islamophobia, Islamophilia
Mamdani argues that the rise of the Green Peril in the post-Cold War era contributes to the notion that there is a “clash of civilizations.” He does not identify this as a cultural clash between the West and the Rest, as some who promote the theory would argue, but a political problem based on racist geopolitics, and economic disparities inherited from the legacies of modern European colonialism and slavery in the Third World (2014: 17). Mamdani cites the White American Orientalist Bernard Lewis (b. 1916) as one of the first proponents of the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary with the publication of his article, “Roots of Muslim Rage” (1990).98 Three years later,
another White American political scientist, Samuel Huntington, published his article “The Clash of Civilizations?” (1993) which argues that the future of the world would not be defined by clashes between nation-states, but clashes between cultures, and that “Islamic extremism” would be the greatest threat to “world peace.”

While both Huntington and Lewis’ approaches are interrelated, Mamdani distinguishes them as a type of “hard vs. soft” - respectively applied - war against the global Muslim enemy (Mamdani 2014: 23-24). Huntington’s “harder” approach argues for outright civilizational warfare in support of the West over the Rest, while Lewis’ “softer” stance proposes a type of alliance with “good Muslims” who will work with the West in order to destabilize the West’s enemies inside the Muslim world and cause or exacerbate divisions (ibid.). The 1990s put in place a framework that was then extended to new proportions when 9/11 happened and the post-9/11 War on Terror era commenced. Mamdani cites former White US president, George Bush and White British Prime Minister, Tony Blair as briefly flirting with a Huntington-style clash of civilization approach to the War on Terror. Both quickly maneuvered to a less harsh Lewis-style approach which posited working with good Muslims against the bad ones in order to defeat what they described as ‘Islamic extremism’. The atmosphere created by global neoliberal and neoconservative support for the War on Terror led mainstream media across the world to make the distinction between good Muslims who are “modern, secular and Westernized” and bad Muslims who are “doctrinal, antimodern, and virulent” (ibid.).

Andrew Shryrock summarizes a number of other important characteristic of the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary in relation to global formations of Islamophobia using the Schmittian political distinction between “friend and enemy” as follows:

One of these, now widely recognized, is the spread of “good-Muslim/bad-Muslim” binaries (Mamdani 2004), in which the good Muslim (the friend) is the real Muslim, and the bad Muslim (the enemy) is a creature who violates the good Muslim code; he can and should be vigorously opposed. The “good Muslim,” as a stereotype, has common features: he tends to be a Sufi (ideally, one who reads Rumi); he is peaceful (and assures us that jihad is an inner, spiritual contest, not a struggle to “enjoin the good and forbid the wrong” through force of arms); he treats women as equals, and is committed to choice in matters of hijab wearing (and never advocates the covering of a woman’s face); if he is a she, then she is highly educated, works outside the home, is her husband’s only wife, chose her husband freely, and wears hijab (if at all) only because she wants to. The good Muslim is also a pluralist (recalls fondly the ecumenical virtues of medieval Andalusia and is a champion of interfaith activism); he is politically moderate (an advocate of democracy, human rights,

civilizational clash between the West and Islam post-Cold War, this suggests a much longer genealogy of civilizational clash discourse between the West and Islam.
and religious freedom, an opponent of armed conflict against the U.S. and Israel); finally, he is likely to be an African, a South Asian, or, more likely still, an Indonesian or Malaysian; he is less likely to be an Arab, but, as friends of the “good Muslim” will point out, only a small proportion of Muslims are Arab anyway (Shryrock 2010: 9-10).

Shryrock links the good Muslim-bad Muslim narrative to the wider system of globalized anti-Muslim racism both inside and outside the ummah through both Islamophobia (building relations against the bad Muslim enemy) and Islamophilia (building relations with the good Muslim friend).\(^9^9\)

Connected to the wider systems of anti-Muslim public policy and logic, the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary is a sociopolitical problem in North America, Europe and Australia, with well-developed related strands in India and China, as well as several African states with sizable Muslim minorities. Shryrock points out that in Muslim-majority countries the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary plays out in the divide between Islamists and secularists (Shryrock 2010: 1-2), or what Sayyid calls Islamism and Kemalism (1997). This means in Muslim-majority states that good Muslims are secular nationalists who do not see Islam as the master signifier of their political discourse and social order, while bad Muslims are Islamists whose language is Islam when doing the political and building social order.

If we consider the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary to be a fundamental tool of globalized Islamophobia, then we should recognize its operation inside both the West and the Rest. Anxieties around good and bad Muslims are part of a global anti-Muslim disciplinary regime that persists in epistemic, ontological and political relations. This disciplinary regime is prevalent with regard to Muslims living in the West, who must be made into “good citizens,” just as it plays out in non-Western and Muslim-majority contexts where Muslims must become a member of a tolerant and inclusive Western-dominated family of nations. As Shryrock argues, “…lurking behind this formula, thwarting and distorting it, is the ‘deal breaker’: the Muslim radical, the extremist, the terrorist, or, just as problematic, the Muslim person or Muslim-majority state that does not want to be incorporated on these terms” (2010: 7). If anti-Muslim racism is the operating logic that works across all these contexts to discipline Muslims, then the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary in its totality must be seen as a fundamentally anti-Muslim tool that is only concerned with a disciplinary

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\(^9^9\) In Chapter 2 I mention how Gil Anidjar argues that Napoleon’s desire to “fight for Islam” in his conquest of Egypt was Islamophilic in ways that mirror Europe’s long history of philo and anti-Semitism in trying to govern and control its Jews (2008: 48). Others have argued that the concept of phobia/philia also applies to the racial figure of the Black in the American anti-Black political system: “The concept of negrophilia/negrophobia is essential to understanding...contemporary American racism in general. So often people are confused by a world where a black man can be president and, at the same time, black people are being gunned down in racially-motivated shootings. In the liberal model of race, this is a contradiction, but when viewing the world through the lens of negrophobia and negrophilia, these two events can logically co-exist and even support one another” (Grandpre & Love 2014: 78).
and necropolitical engagement with the Muslim – it allows no space for liberative praxis nor to imagine the world otherwise. Before expanding on this point, I will first return to Mamdani’s analysis of the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary.

3.1. Reframing Mamdani’s Good Muslim-bad Muslim binary and Cold War Narrative

Nothwithstanding my partial agreement with Mamdani’s discursive analysis of the post-Cold War good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, a number of his assertions about the development of this paradigm problematic and requires reframing as part of the framework of anti-Muslimness/anti-Islamism and coloniality. In this section, I will 1) restate the Cold War in relation to coloniality and the Muslim rather than the post-Cold War period; 2) critically analyze Mamdani’s Cold War historiography; 3) and argue that the Cold War is part of a longer history of intra-Western reforms.

Firstly, Mamdani represents the historiography of the good Muslim-bad Muslim as entirely connected solely to the post-Cold War moment. This historical framework is narrow and delinked from the wider paradigm of modernity’s civilizational power relations. A number of Cold War historiographers have written works critical of the mainstream narratives on the Cold War. Bozo categorizes the unnuanced mainstream scholarship of the Cold War as having either a 1) bipolar view of the Cold War, which focuses mainly on the imperial state narratives of the USA and USSR

100 My understanding of Islamophobia is, at times, better expressed through the more technical and less popular terms anti-Muslimness and anti-Islamism. While I accept that Islamophobia is a system that disciplines Muslimness and Islam in philic and phobic ways through a number of discourses that are biological, cultural and political, I do believe there is a need at times to use terms other than Islamophobia for sake of conceptual clarity. Doha mentions this tension and the need to differentiate between common conceptualizations of Islamophobia, and what he calls “anti-Islamism” - “As a conceptual frame, anti-Islamism moves beyond articulations that either conceptualize Islamophobia as a behavioral-psychological disposition created through misinformation, or as a structural form of racial bigotry. Instead, anti-Islamism describes a consistent effort to counter and negate Islam’s world-making aspirations... As a conceptual term, anti-Islamism breaks with prominent theorizations that reframe Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism. Anti-Islamism as a framework allows us to understand not only how Islamophobia operates at the level of communal racial attitudes, but also in relation to the historical, epistemic, and psycho-social effects of secularization and the War on Terror. Having said that, anti-Islamism both precedes and exceeds the War on Terror and earlier forms of war in the Islamicate world. It is both general and generative. Sociological case studies and ethnographic accounts provide us with empirical data, but frequently fail to narrate a theory of how and why the anxiety and fear towards Islam has a generalizing consequence in modern secularity” (Doha 2018: 29-30). The tension Doha is pointing to is that many definitions of Islamophobia do not point to the coloniality of knowledge, being or the political due to a veiled or uninterrogated secularity in their logic. In my understanding of Islamophobia in this work, I unveil secular logic by taking a Sayyidian approach to analyzing Muslim political ontology, that raises the issue of Islamism and anti-Islamism. While I appreciate Doha’s conceptual clarity in making this distinction, I do not think there needs to be a “break”, as he suggests, but rather an extension of the meaning in Islamophobia to include anti-Islamism, anti-Muslimness, or other terms. This inclusion must happen in order to more centrally locate underrepresented critiques – such as that of the secularity of knowledge, being and the political - in the wider canon of Islamophobia Studies. From this point forward, I will use anti-Muslimness/Islamism at times to distinguish when I am dealing with a secular logic in relation to Muslim political ontology.
or 2) a unipolar view of the Cold War, which is very American-centric (2008: 3-4). Bozo argues that both the unipolar and bipolar approaches provide a historically weak framework for dealing with Cold War-era contexts in regions outside the imperial territories of the USA and USSR; even doing injustice to the complexities and antagonisms which existed within Europe (ibid.).

Along similar lines, Tuong Vu critiques bipolar Cold War historiographies for their inability to understand the complexity of the societal divisions in Asia, whether pre-existing or concurrent to the Cold War. Vu argues that Asia was already engulfed in a number of social conflicts prior to the Cold War. These local conflicts lasted longer and intensified due to the Cold War; and vice-versa, these local and regional conflicts also affected the bipolar powers in the Cold War. Vu argues that mainstream Cold War historiographies mark the historical trajectory of the Cold War emanating from Europe to Asia in a very top-down approach. Vu instead argues that what occurred was not a linear nor top-down approach from the West to the Rest, but an “intercontinental synchronization of hostilities” at a global scale (Vu 2010: 7). Vu argues that mainstream approaches to the Cold War often portray Third World countries as mere pawns in the Cold War, which strips them of political agency (2010: 4). The standard narrative, according to Vu, is that the Cold War arose out of the ashes of Europe, and that Europe’s imperial demise created a political vacuum concerning who would be the next great superpower in the world. This political vacuum led to the structural and ideological contentions that shaped US and Soviet relations as the two battled it out for forty years (the length of the Cold War) to see who would take over world dominion. Vu notes that when the colonies of these great powers are described - for example, in the Middle East, Latin America, Africa, and Asia – they are often situated only in spatial terms (forum/vacuum) in relation to the two superpowers and Europe, making one wonder what exactly these colonial subjects were doing (5-6). These uni and bipolar narrative create a situation where history and sociology only exists in reference to Western contexts, whether North American, European or Russian, and lack of history and sociology exists in reference to the Rest, leading to a defacto form of epistemic and political racism.

Other than being limited to Western geographies and Eurocentric frameworks, Vu argues that mainstream Cold War narratives are focused on the nation-state as a unit of analysis rather than a multiplicity of cultural and political references. In the context of Asia, Vu argues that this severely limits the ability to analyze the complexity of historical actors in Asia during the Cold War (11). Vu argues that that imagination and materiality of Asia was much wider than traditional patriotism and modern nationalism. From communists who pledged allegiance to a World Revolution rather
than a nation-state; to socialists involved in building an independent Indochinese social federation; and to Pan-Islamists and Pan-Buddhist movements who organized their politics around religious worldviews, the various historical actors in Asia were not constrained by national boundaries (11-12). In the case of Chinese Communists, Vu argues that Mao and his comrades did not have a strong devotion to Chinese nationalism nor along other national boundaries of territory, language, ethnicity or common histories. Their solidarity was along social class boundaries of bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie or proletariat, with factions of Chinese society being seen as enemies and their destruction, even by the Japanese, was desired by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Rather, the CCP viewed the Mongols and Soviets as brothers due to their class consciousness and commitment to the World Revolution, and not to any form of nationalism (ibid.). Therefore, Vu posits that the historiography of the Cold War the must be drastically reformed:

I suggest that we reconceptualize the geographical spread of the Cold War not as a Eurocentric pattern but as the intercontinental synchronization of hostilities. Scholars should do a better job at analyzing how indigenous political processes in Asia may had had a reverse impact on relations between the superpowers. To assign greater agency to Asian actors also requires analysts to move beyond the nation-state to examine alternative frames of cultural reference or political loyalties. The underlying assumption is that the histories of countries outside of Europe and North America during the Cold War period followed their own autonomous logic and should not be subsumed under some Eurocentric trends. (12-13)

Without this reconceptualization, it becomes difficult to give appropriate attention to various components of the Cold War that existed at both local and global scales, and in extremely diverse areas, all with their own histories, political genealogies and societal developments. 101

3.1.1. Mamdani’s Cold War Historiography: A Critique

101 There are several examples of Vu’s more critical approach to Cold War historiography that she applies to Asian locations. For example, in the Indonesian context, one must contextualize how Indonesian Muslim President Sukarno (1901-1970) created an alternative framework to the bipolar Cold War blocs, by building a nation away from their needs, calling for the international Bandung conference and establishing the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (13). Additionally, in the context of Singapore, Vu notes the complexities of Singaporean Socialists, who tried to join the Socialist International, which was a Eurocentric organization that claimed to represent the ideas of democratic socialism. When the Singaporean socialists attempted to adapt “Asian values” and “Oriental lifestyles” to their vision of democratic socialism, it led them to be expelled from racist Orientalist Socialist International in 1976 (14). While not developing an analysis in relation to the Muslim beyond mere mention, Vue does note how Muslims posed a unique challenge to the nation-state framework at the late stage of the Cold War in Afghanistan (12). Both Vu and Bozo’s frameworks point out the problematics of normative Cold War historiographies in relation to global, European and Asian contexts; yet their frameworks are helpful in dealing with many other geographies as well. While neither deal in detail with issues such as secularism, how the Cold War fits into the larger framework of modernity, nor how the Cold War affected the Muslim question, their critiques reveal that there are many undersides to the Cold War which cannot be overlooked, and are helpful to reframing the Cold War in relation to the Muslim.
With regard to Mamdani’s Cold War historiography, there are a number of issues in relation to the Muslim. First, Mamdani has a very unipolar reading of the Cold War through an American-centric approach. Mamdani largely provides a genealogy of the late Cold War (mid-1970s until the fall of the Soviet Union) through the lens of American and Israeli involvement in supporting proxy wars in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Mamdani 2004: 12). In doing so, his aim is two-fold: a) to create a transnational comparative framework for understanding US involvement in responding to the overthrow of US backed right-wing dictatorships in the Third World and b) to analyze how political violence and terrorism was manipulated by America in Africa, Latin America and Asia to serve American interests (2004: 118). In doing so, he attempted to show how similar things were across these various contexts, while downplaying differences and not critically contextualizing the non-American historical actors in these contexts. By assuming that regions as diverse as Central America, Southern Africa and Central Asia could be explained through similarity and not difference, Mamdani makes leaps that leave much unexplained and questionable, especially in relation to the Muslim world.

Second, Mamdani offers little to no critical analysis of the Soviet and Eastern bloc’s role in mobilizing state and non-state actors in various Islamicate locations during the late Cold War. He focuses heavily on the American nation-state as a unit of analysis and framework for analyzing the various power dynamics that pervaded these diverse regions in the late Cold War. The result of his unipolar, American state-centered analysis, and non-engagement with the Eastern Bloc’s role in manipulating political violence in its satellites states leave the reader questioning, as Vu suggested above, what exactly where these colonial subjects doing? Mamdani’s failure to approach the late Cold War by analyzing it through something akin to Vu’s “intercontinental synchronization of hostilities” (Vu 2010: 7) leaves the reader with a feeling that these forces in the Third World, and more specifically Muslims in these regions, could only be motivated and manipulated either by American interest or their own pathologies.

I contend that the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary’s historical existence is tied to coloniality, the crusading spirit and the wider civilization war of the West against the Muslim. As I have previously shown, anti-Muslim/Islamist ontology is significant element that lurks behind coloniality as a driving force to modernity’s paradigm of war against racialized peoples in the zone of non-being. While I agree that there are historically unique particularities to the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, these are simultaneously a very modern occurrence that cannot be explained without contextualizing them within the longue durée of coloniality’s march. In this section, I provide
evidence of Mamdani’s problematic analysis of the Cold War in relation to the Muslim, as well as
demonstrate that the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary was far from something new.

3.1.2. The Cold War as Intra-Western Reform - Religious and Secular, Capitalist and
Communist
The Cold War should be viewed as a period of intra-Western social reform. In the larger picture
of Western history, the Cold War takes place after four and a half centuries of attempted Western
domination of the planet. While Mamdani briefly mentions the relationship between the modern
nation-state and racist political violence in his introduction (2004: 3-16), he does not build a
paradigmatic framework between these subjects and his later discussions on the good Muslim-
bad Muslim binary. The reader is thus left feeling a void between early and late modern forms of
racist statist political violence in relation to the Muslim, which would facilitate connecting the dots
between the fall of Granada in 1492 and rise of Guantanamo post-9/11. Mamdani does not deal
with the impact of the destruction of pre-Westphalian/colonial forms of governance on the
collective modern Muslim psyche but focuses on the dynamics between secular nationalist states
in the Muslim world and the role of the US in destabilizing them in the 20th century. In order to
reframe our understanding of the Cold War, we must understand what happened internal and
external to the Muslim world at the level of political ontology.

The Cold War takes place in a post-caliphatic Westernizing international world order where
Muslims no longer have a great power to rally around after Western powers eventually led the
Ottoman Caliphate to surrender and abolishment in 1924.102 For Sayyid, this made the Muslim
ontologically homeless and without a mechanism for exercising political agency in the rising
plutocratic Westernizing world order (Sayyid 2014: 113). The Cold War also takes place after two
“World Wars” – I put “world war” in parentheses as these were not wars that actually cared about
or involved all of the people in the world at symmetric levels of power. Both WWI (1914-1918 CE)
and WWII (1939 – 1945 CE) were wars fought for and by competing Western powers and their
less powerful allies and satellites in the Rest, for the ultimate sake of Western civilizational power
and planetary domination. Prior to, during and after these so-called “World Wars” (the “world”, just
like the “human,” largely being an extension of Western Man)103, the West persisted in its

102 A number of authors (Pankhurst 2013, Kennedy 2016, Hassan 2018, Sayyid 2014 and others), both explicitly
Islamist and non-Islamist, have argued that the final dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 by Turkish secular
nationalists is central to rupturing the ummah’s collective cultural, economic and political memory.
103 Jamaican decolonial thinker Sylvia Wynter’s reflections on the coloniality of being (2003), she posits that the long-
histories of religious and secular humanisms from the Middle Ages to Modern periods have rejected non-Westerners
domination over Rest in the same manner that it attempted to consolidate power within and for greater Western unity and civilizational dominance.

If we take bipolar historiographies of the Cold War as having a truth to them, but definitely not all the truths as Vu would argue, we can still understand the Cold War (1947-1991) arriving at a moment in which Europe’s imperial demise signaled a new internal Western battle concerning who would take dominion over international world order – American Capitalism or Soviet Communism, situated between the Western and Eastern blocs. While struggles for decolonization had been happening during all of these so-called world wars – and, indeed, since the moment modernity/coloniality began to form – the Bandung Conference (1955) was a watershed moment in the history of decolonial struggles (Mattison and Mignolo 2012). The Bandung Conference was a meeting of nearly thirty African and Asian countries, many of them Muslim-majority countries, who gathered on the basis of “neither capitalism nor communism, but decolonization” as Muslim Indonesian President Sukarno stated at the conference. It was the first time an international conference took place where the colored peoples of the world came together to charter a new vision away from competing forms of Western supremacy; indeed, more than half of the world population was represented by the delegates involved (Mattison and Mignolo 2012).

From the early stages of the Cold War, there was opposition to the dominance of both American and Soviet models of world-making. Many of those involved in Bandung came together the next year to form the Non-Alignment Movement (1956), or NAM, in an attempt for a “middle path” between the Western and Eastern blocs of the Cold War. The idea of the NAM, following Bandung, was to create an alternative inter-civilizational model for the planet in which sustainable development, peace and security would be normative values of international engagements between countries away from Western understandings of these concepts (Mattison and Mignolo 2012). The intention here in mentioning Bandung and the NAM is not to comment on its successes from the fold of the world and humanity. While her analysis of Western Man and modernity engages well with the figures of the Indian and Black, like Maldonado-Torres, the Muslim is notably absent from her work. In contrast, Mamdani’s theorization of Islam and Africa may point to a framework for analyzing the different ways Muslims and Blacks (not discluding Black Muslims) are treated as non or lesser-than human, “…Africa is seen as incapable of modernity, hard-core Islam is seen as not only incapable of but also resistant to modernity” (2004: 19). Mamdani’s insinuation that Blacks are seen as non-modern/non-beings and Muslims as anti-modern/anti-beings points to an interesting node of comparison between the two in relation to the political ontology of Western Man. While it is not within the scope of this work, Mamdani’s framework may lay down a foundation for further comparing the similarities and differences between anti-Black and anti-Muslim logics in relation to Western political ontology.

Bozo also mentions that the Bandung/NAM moment is an example of an important historical phenomenon that both uni and bipolar Cold War frameworks overlook in terms of impact and significance (2008: 3-4).
or failures, or even its complicities in the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, but to point to the fact that there was always sustained opposition and critique to Western powers – whether European, American or Soviet - dominating the international sphere before, during and after the Cold War by Muslims and others. Why was there a need for a Bandung in the first place? It was clear that the post-World Wars and Cold War eras did not suffice as paradigms to solve political differences amongst oppressed non-Western peoples.

In light of this reality, the Cold War should be viewed as part of a failed genealogy of Western reforms for the world. Neoconservative author, William Lind, wrote that the Cold War was the last in a long line of “Western civil wars” that started in seventeenth-century Europe (Mamdani 2004: 21). Lind, like Samuel Huntington, is definitely not an ally in the struggle against coloniality; yet, there is a truth to his statement, just as there is a truth to Huntington’s view on the clash of civilizations. Scholars such as Talal Asad (2003) have noted the role that “religious wars” played in the formation of Europe, modernity and the concept of the secular. These religious wars, which lead to the modern Eurocentric definitions of the religious and secular, were in many ways different or competing visions of the ideal which Europeans wanted to project as the future of Western culture, economy and civilization.

The rise of Marxism should be seen along this line as a type of secular cosmological critique of the prevailing sociopolitical, state and religious establishments of post-Enlightenment Europe. Although rejecting a cosmology centered around a godhead, Marxism nonetheless promotes a type of “religious” view of the world, as many have argued (Newell 1995). Additionally, through the lens of a Khaldunian sociological approach it could be said that Marx’s interpretation of European and world history was centered around forming an ‘asabiyyah (“group solidarity” in Arabic) on the basis of class consciousness across time and place. In this sense, Marxism becomes a movement of “religious reform” that critiques the social systems of European

105 Huntington is far from the first to articulate a discourse that recognizes social difference between the West and the Rest. Earlier I pointed to the fact that Bernard Lewis referred to civilizational clash theories since the 1950s and 60s. In addition to Western men, numerous Islamic thinkers, such as Sayyid Qutb and Malik Bennabi, have deployed a civilizational clash discourse in their works as discussed in Chapter 2, and many non-Westerners, notably Aime Cesaire in his Discourse on Colonialism (1950), have written about the civilization clash between the West and the Rest. The difference between Huntington and Lewis and the aforementioned thinkers from the Rest is that Huntington and Lewis write in support of coloniality while the others do not.

106 In Farid Alatas’ Applying Ibn Khaldun (2015) he lays out Ibn Khaldun’s framework for understanding religious and political reform. This framework includes the notion that conflicting classes or forces, whether urban or rural, would align around a new psycho-social solidarity, or ‘asabiyyah, based on a reformed ideology or religion in order to replace a societal order that they deemed decadent or unjust (2015: 90-91).
Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic, that played a role in the historical developments of slavery, feudalism and capitalism. When viewed in tandem with Vu’s description of Chinese Communist social solidarity through class consciousness and commitment to the World Revolution rather than nationalism, Marxist ‘asabiyah’ clearer and historically situated, rather than assumed as the only universal tool of analysis which should be applied equally across all world historical contexts, as many Marxist historians erroneously assume it to be.

Furthermore, the racial understanding, or lack thereof, of classical Marxism and many early Marxist inspired Socialist/Communist movements should be taken into account, as Marx – like Hegel – was a racist whose view of the world inferiorized non-Western peoples and their world-systems (Grosfoguel 2010). A number of scholars, notably Cedric Robinson who wrote *Black Marxism* (1983), have critiqued the way in which many Marxists fail to understand the role of racism in the trajectory of modern capitalist development and class exploitation. It is clear that religion, secularism, atheism and other ideologies played important roles on both sides of the Cold War and are directly linked to the West’s post-Enlightenment understandings of the role of the secular and religious in relation to Europe’s own political ontology. Robinson speaks of a type of “racial capitalism” in *Black Marxism* (2000: 2). In this chapter, I will be moving in the direction of defining a type of *racial communism*. While Robinson’s concept of racial capitalism explores the ways in which Eurocentric racism organizes capitalist in modernity, I will be exploring the ways in which Eurocentric racism – and specifically anti-Muslim racism – operate through socialism/communism.

While widely understudied, the role of religion was central in mobilizing forces on both sides of the Cold War. For those on the Western bloc, in the United States, for example, they imagined the Cold War as a struggle of good vs. evil in which righteous Christianity/capitalism was fighting devilish atheism/communism. The Christian capitalists were God-fearing believers against those of the godless totalitarian Communists (Kirby 2017). As indicated in Chapter 2, this was also evident in Europe with the proliferation of transnational forces which mobilized against the Eastern Bloc through a Pan-Catholic European identity (Hanni 2014), in addition to how the language of “crusades” came to be used in American propaganda against the rise of the godless Soviet Union (Cummings 2010).

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107 My critique should not be read as anti-Marxist nor pro-Marxist, but a critique of economic reductionism of many Marxists in their conceptualizations of power. I owe this understanding of Marxism to Dr. Roberto Hernandez of California State University, San Diego.
On the other hand, the Soviet Union also had an ideological position; that of Marxist-Leninism, which, in effect, became the state theology and was deeply organized in the metaphysics and sociology of the highly centralized imperial Soviet state. The Soviet policy with regards to non-secular/atheist theologies was largely a harsh privatization or even abolishment of religion, with massive promotion of an atheist ideology through propaganda campaigns that were anti-religion both within Russia and its colonies. Within the Soviet Union itself, Christian establishments were severely repressed in many places at first, while at later times Soviet leadership and Russian Christian forces realized the mutual benefit of maintaining positive relations, though the state still remained ardently secular and atheist (Thomas). Russian Orthodox Christianity remained privileged in relation to other religions though, even if the Soviet state remained ardently atheist/communist.  

Soviet Russia also had relations with its Muslim societies. Although the USSR supported many Third World secular national liberation struggles – a number of them in Muslim societies in Asia and Africa - against European colonialism and in the name of communism, this did not mean it’s relationship to the Muslim either inside or outside of territorial USSR wasn’t problematic. The experience of long-term Russian colonialism in Muslim societies in Central Asia points to a very negative relationship with the Muslim, that sheds light on how the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary is not something new as Mamdani argues, but a constituent of the coloniality of being before, during and after the Cold War. Mamdani’s uncritical approach to understanding the dynamics of Russia’s role in the Muslim world up to and through the Soviet period forces us to reconsider Russia’s relationship to the Muslim.

3.2. Russia and the Muslim Problem

The modern Russian experience with the Muslim has been paradigmatically negative. A number of scholars have written about the longue durée expression of Russian Islamophobia (Bennigson

\[108\] In Madina Tlostanova’s “A Short Genealogy of Russian Islamophobia” she writes: “The Bolsheviks first used the Muslim progressive forces to win power and later destroyed these very people to make sure that any possibility of Islamic revival was strangled. In spite of its outward tendency towards atheism, the regime tended to smuggle in the collective unconscious the idea of the superiority of the Russian Orthodox church over all other religions, even if in the masked form of Russian national traditions, and rejected any Islamic thought and Muslim organizations – again, masking this tactic as a battle with ‘bourgeois nationalism’. Note that no ethnic Russian was ever sentenced for this crime in the Soviet Union. Early Soviet anthropological and racial studies never dealt with Russian peasants but rather made expeditions to the non-European parts of the empire to investigate the biological, social, and intellectual patterns of Tadjiks and Chukchas using an argument that always betrays its racist biases. The Bolsheviks were against the Western style of racism, but they were for a Soviet style of racism” (2010: 178).
In this section, I will focus on charting a genealogy of Russian Islamophobia from medieval Tsardom to modern Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia. Like Western Christendom, coincidentally, of importance in this historical relationship between the Russian and Muslim worlds are the epochs of the 10th and 16th centuries. The 10th century marked the moment that geopolitical and civilizational boundaries were established between Russian and Islamic peoples that still carry weight and influence until today. As Bennigson argues, in the early 10th century the borderline between “civilization” and “barbary” was reversed from today, with the Slavic ancestors of the modern Russian people being viewed by highly developed Muslim polities of the Central Asian regions (i.e. Middle and Lower Vulga, North Caucasian mountains, Derbent, Syr Daria, etc.) as the uncivilized, wild and primitive natives (Bennigson 1983: 5). This protohistory of Russian-Islamic relations, as Bennigson argues, from the 9th to the 12th centuries, was characterized by many complex exchanges between various sedentary and nomadic populations, whether Christian, Muslim, Jewish (such as the Khazar kingdom) or other in the Eurasian and Central Asian regions that did not characterize a hardened paradigmatic “negative” relationship just yet (1983: 5-7). From the 13th to the 15th centuries things began to change. The Mongol invasion of Russian territories in the Middle Ages left deep scars on the collective consciousness of Russia (Law 2012: 4-5). For three centuries, Bennigson states that Russia did not participate in political economies brought along by the century-long rule of “Pax Mongolica”109 to all the regions between “the Black Sea and the Pacific Ocean bordering the commercial highways linking Europe to China (Silk Road) and to India (Spices Road)” (1983: 7-8). Southern Russia was thoroughly devastated and depopulated by the Mongol forces, while Northern Russia was bypassed in the economic exchanges between East and West (ibid.).

The Mongol “Golden Horde”110 rulers in these Central Asian regions became Muslims while still maintaining the complex “religious tolerance” of the Chingiz Khan, argues Bennigson (1983: 11). The rise of the so-called Mongol-Tatar yoke on Russian civilizational advancement has been described by Russian historians as a period that put Russia in a type of “Dark Ages.” Furthermore, modern Russian and Soviet historians projected backwards to periods where they were in conflict with Muslim powers as “crusades” even when these were not framed that way at the time (ibid.).

109 Lit. Latin for “Mongol Peace”, yet refers to the periods of the 13th and 14th centuries when Mongol civilization conquered and sustained sovereignty over vast swaths of Eurasia and the Silk Road, from Eastern Europe to Southeast Asia (Prawdin 1961).
110 The “Golden Horde” is the Russian designation for the “Ulus Juchi,” or the Western part of the Mongol Empire, which flourished from the mid-13th to the end of the 14th century and consisted of a mix of mainly Turkic and Mongol peoples. The area eventually Turkified and Islamized, notably under the rule of Uzbek Khan (d. 1341) who converted to Islam and made it the state religion (Golden Horde & Oz Beg).
Modern Russian historians present the period of Muslim Tatar dominance in the region as an era of "absolute monarchy, serfdom, and arrogant messianism" as a direct result of the Muslim Golden Heard rulers (8). Whether this is true to historical fact or not is another discussion; yet, Bennigson interestingly notes that this type of narrative of civilizational decadence, militant crusades and dark ages is not part of the historical memories of other countries in the region who were conquered by the Mongols, such as China, Iran, Turkestan, Georgia or Armenia (ibid.). At the same time, this period imbibed in Russians a long-lasting inferiority complex towards their former Muslim masters which survives until this day and gives Russian-Muslim relations their unique character. As Bennigsen notes:

These relations are not those of the classical ‘colonial’ type, where the European master, hated as he may be, was, at the same time, respected for his better organization, greater technical skill and superior military power. The native Muslims in the USSR, even when obliged to recognize and to yield to the supremacy of their Russian ‘Elder Brother,’ do not feel inferior in the cultural or political matter. Ayaz Iskhaki, a Tatar revolutionary historian, summed it up in question: ‘How did it happen that we became slaves of our former slaves?’ (1983: 8).

The strange relationship of an “Elder Brother” (Russia) having an inferiority complex towards his “Lesser Brother” (Muslim) is deeply rooted in the historical hatred of Russians towards Muslims in general, and towards the Turco-Tatar Muslim in particular. It has survived for centuries and made a cultural/biological racial symbiosis between different Soviet nationalities a hopeless dream (Bennigsen 1983: 9, Law 2012: 4-5). I would add that there are interesting similarities between the modern Russian self-conceptualization of this time period as a type of “dark ages” in relation to Christendom and later Europe’s conceptualization of this time period as a “dark ages” too. It seems darks ages only exist in the modern Western imagination when Muslims are in civilizational power.111 Yet, this makes more sense when put into the context of Russia being viewed (and viewing itself) as the “Third Rome” and “Second Jerusalem”, and heir to Christian Orthodox Byzantium, as well as a type of Eastern Spain that protected Europe against Asiatic and specifically Muslim savages (Bennigsen1983: 5, Thackeray 2012: 202, Rossman 2013: 199).

111 In God’s Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science (2010), James Hannan’s argues that there is a need to deconstruct the idea of a medieval “Dark Ages” as the Middle Ages were not simply a period of stagnation and degeneration, but a period of complex growth and developments in science, technology and all aspects of human life in Western Christendom that actually laid the foundation for such events as the Reformation and Enlightenment. The idea of a Dark Ages is largely a late modern construction by Europeans made in order to justify their idea of the secular as a break from the past (Asad 1997). The idea of a Dark Ages, I argue, is an act of secular “history-making” (Asad 1997: 2) which is teleological marked and guided by the logic and desires of Euromodern secular historiography. In light of Europe and Russia’s long-term anti-Muslim projects, it seems apparent that one of modernity/coloniality’s spatiotemporal functions is to form the very notion of history itself – like that of ontology - against that of the Muslim.
Along similar lines, the long-sixteenth century was another moment when Russian conquest of Islamicate lands (1552-1900) becomes a bedrock for long-term Russian relations with the Muslim. In 1552, Ivan the Terrible (d. 1584) and the Tsardom of Moscow conquered Kazan and began processes of state and empire building that attempted to discipline or destroy Muslim presence in the regions they conquered. For Bennigson, the loss of former Tatar Muslim controlled Central Asian lands (Middle Volga, Lower Volga and Western Siberia) marked, shortly after the loss of Al-Andalus, the second greatest set-back for Islamicate civilization and the beginning advance of Western civilizational dominance across the Islamicate world (1983: 9-12). It could be said that the rise of Russian Tsardom over the next three-hundred and a half years up until the Soviet Union emerged mirrored several of the developments of the Westphalian state. One of them was the exclusionary marriage of state and religion, Russian Orthodox Christianity and Tsardom, which created a civilizational complex that viewed the Muslim as enemy, barbarian and problem. While certain rulers were harsher, such as Tsar Mikhail (1596 – 1623), and others more liberal, such as Catherine II (1729-1796), the fact remained that Muslims posed a “nationality problem”112 for the Russian empire as they did not fit the logic of one nation, one language, one religion and one state (1983: 12-16).

While the Russian Empire was not as successful as the Spanish in Al-Andalus in completely liquidating or expelling Muslims from the territories they conquered, Muslims were similarly racistly viewed as hostile, alien and foreign bodies that needed to be disciplined and destroyed. Through such imperial policies as destroying Muslims’ political economies; forced conversations and proselytization to Russian Orthodox Christianity; the shutting down of mosques; forced resettlement of Russian Christians in former Muslim lands; the confiscation of waqf (communal trust) properties; mass expulsions and ethnic cleansing; and epistemicide through the replacement of Islamic knowledge structures with Tsarist education systems, Muslims were systemically killed, converted and forced to Russianize or face the consequences (1983: 12-16). Simultaneous to these wide-spread anti-Muslim policies were exceptional moments of cooperation between Russians and Muslims. In the 18th and 19th century, during the reign of Catherine II and shortly after, a more liberal approach to the Muslim Question in Russia allowed

112 The “nationality problem” of Russia old and new is fundamentally a problem of political ontology and the coloniality of being. The racialized Jews, Muslims and other “indigenous groups” under Tsardom, the Soviet Empire and Post-Soviet Regime have posed a nationality problem to Russia’s political ontology because they are considered nations outside the body politic of Russia, whether religious or secular (Korey 1973 & 1995, Rossman 2013, Tlastanova 2010).
for relative political and economic partnership. Bennigsen writes that the flourishing of a type of “Tatar Renaissance” expressed through the Muslim modernist reformist Jadid Movement\textsuperscript{113} was a result of this time period (1983: 19, 25). Without a doubt, the Russian imperial engagement with the Muslim was complex. There were many Muslim figures, states and movements who both cooperated and resisted it. Yet, when viewed through a long-term and systemic point of view, it becomes paradigmatically clear that Muslims were an undying problem for Russians, especially when Muslims expressed any desire for political autonomy.

The rise of the Russian Empire and later USSR must also be interrogated in relation to modernity/coloniality. Tlastanova, unlike Bennigson, provides a genealogy of Russian Islamophobia that examines how Russia’s relationship with the Muslim was both an internal pre-existing historical relationship, as well as one externally influenced by modern Eurocentrism.\textsuperscript{114} Tlastanova, counter to Bennigsen, argues that the initial type of Islamophobia had developed early on due to Russian opposition to the nomads of the Eurasian Steppe in the Middle Ages and later the Mongols who colonized Russia (1237-1480). Russian identifications with being the heir to Byzantium and Orthodox Christian Empire lead to a religious basis for Islamophobia similar to Western Christendom’s early forms of Islamophobia. For this early Islamophobia, Muslims were \textit{pogany} (from Latin \textit{paganis}) and \textit{busurman} (a Slavic distortion of \textit{Musulman}, and slur for Muslims) (Tlostanova 2010: 172). In relation to Europe though, Tlostanova argues that Russia was viewed as an Asiatic and racialized empire. Europe looked upon Russia with the same inferiority that

\textsuperscript{113} The Jadid Movement, or Jadidism, was an Islamic modernist reform movement in Central Asia, mainly among Uzbeks and Tajiks, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that attempted to reconcile classical Islamic teachings with those of the modern social sciences and Western thought. They self-labeled themselves as modern reformist \textit{jadids}, or “new” in Arabic and Farsi, in comparison to the traditional \textit{qadims}, or “old”, who, according to Jadid logic, blindly followed tradition and stagnated Islamic knowledge production as a result (Hitchins 2008).

\textsuperscript{114} One might find similarities in Chinese Islamophobia. Yi argues that “Chinese culturalism” has been a classical force that views non-Chinese as more or less civilized based on their adherence to Chinese Han values, such as the Confucian religio-social system or learning the Chinese language (2010: 186-187). Both Yi and Polk note that although these insider-outsider civilizational logics had existed in relation to Muslims since China’s first contact with Islam, it is through the Manchurian Qing regime of the Last Empire (1644-1911) where the view of the Muslim Other becomes more centralized (2010: 190 & Polk 2018: 418-434). The Muslim as “rebel” becomes more solidified during this period, leading to a normative discursive process in which Chinese writing about Muslims over the past 300 years has shared the theme of “violence” and has been articulated by “Chinese Confucian, nationalist and communist alike” (Yi 2010: 190). A number of different thinkers have published in recent years highlighting Islamophobia under Chinese Communism since the mid-20th century and especially during the War on Terror. The centralization of modern/colonial state sponsored Marxist-Leninist-Maoist propaganda and policy during Chinese Communist rule, in addition to recent Chinese renditions of War on Terror Islamophobia and anti-Islamism share more in common with Soviet and post-Soviet Russian Islamophobia (Yi 2000, Byler 2017 & 2017). For Yi, it is both age-old Chinese culturalism as well as importation of Eurocentric ideas of the secular and War on Terror that collide to define Chinese Islamophobia.
Western Europe looked upon Spain; therefore, the difference that came to the fore was imperial difference, and not the colonial difference that the rest of the non-West faced (2010: 171).

Russia thus tried to play “catch-up” to the rise of European modernity. Starting from the end of the 17th century onwards, Russia began a process of active self-colonization through the lens of Eurocentric modernity. This process mixed Russia’s pre-existing Islamophobic and racist discourses tied to its own Orthodox “Christendom” model with that of modern Europe’s rising secular model (2010: 172). This relationship between Europe and its Eastern Spain even lasted through the Cold War, as the meaning of the Western Blocs’ “democracies” was described in contrast to the Asiatic despotism of the Eastern Blocs’ “totalitarian communism” (Sayyid 2014: 74). The eventual convergence of adopting both religious and secular forms of racial colonial difference - if we remember my revised understanding of Maldonado-Torres’ religious/secular approach to racism in Chapter 1 - led to Russia’s increasingly hostile relationship to Muslims guided by an indigenized Russian coloniality (Tlostanova 2010).

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115 In remarking on the absence of religion in secular approaches to understanding the Cold War, Ahmad argues that the name and idea of the Cold War was often in reference to the binary of the West vs. Islam. The name “Cold War” (guerra fria) itself was first used by Spanish writer Don Juan Manuel (d. 1348), a prince and nephew of Ferdinand II, to describe the relationship between Islam and Western Christendom as “neither war nor peace” (2017: 9). Already in 1953 Bernard Lewis likened the Cold War with Islam, later identifying the Soviets as participating in a “communist jihad”. This rhetoric followed earlier claims of such thinkers as British philosopher Bertrand Russell (d. 1970) who likened the Bolsheviks to being “successors of Mahomet” (ibid.).

116 There is noted existence of long-term Russian anti-Semitism as well. Both Rossman (2013: 196-197) and Beller (28) note that anti-Judaism existed in medieval Russia. Christianity had been brought to Russia by way of Byzantine missionaries in the 9th century, and old Christian - albeit Orthodox rather than Catholic - Jewish polemics persisted as a result (Rossman 2013: 197). Yet, the Jewish Question was more systemically or overtly raised in the 18th century when vast tracks of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth – where Jews had lived for centuries, constituting the bulk of Ashkenazi Jewry - were annexed to the Tsardom (Beller 2015: 28). Persecution, oppression and racial discrimination proceeded the annexation through such policies as the Pale of Settlement (1791 – 1917) (ibid.) Jews were viewed as outside the body politic of Russian imperial national identity, alongside the likes of Muslims and Tatars at times, and could only become “truly Russian” by converting to Russian Orthodox Christianity (31). A number of works (Korey 1973 & 1995, Rossman 2013) have also noted that although traditional religion-based anti-Semitism was officially banned following the Bolshevik Revolution (1917), new secular forms of anti-Semitism emerged after and throughout the history of the Soviet Empire, especially under the reign of Stalin (d. 1953), and even into the post-Soviet era (Rossman 2013). While it is not within the scope of this work to provide a more detailed genealogy of anti-Semitism in Russia, there are interested similarities and differences to note between Russian Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. In terms of similarity, both started as religious forms of racism and then transformed into secular racisms in the Soviet era, and were fueled by centuries of Russian civilizational racism. One difference is that Muslims were much larger in size than the Jewish populations who suffered under long-term Russian racism. While much scholarship has been written on anti-Semitism in Russia, there is a lack when it comes to Russian Islamophobia. This is similar to what had long been the situation on studies of medieval and modern Iberia where studies of anti-Semitism were abundant while studies of Islamophobia had been scarce. I believe this points to the coloniality of knowledge, and specifically the hegemony of the Judeo/Christian/Secular privilege, in which Jews entrance into Westernness from the mid 20th century forward allowed for the normalization of their narratives of former subjugation in such areas as Spain, Russia or Europe. Under the hospices of modern/colonial knowledge structures, Western Christian/Secular guilt towards Jews has allowed for them to be welcomed into the family of nations, while others continue to remain external to the canon of the “human”.

3.2.1. Soviet Islamophobia, Coloniality and the Good Muslim-bad Muslim Divide

The birth of the Soviet Union did not mark the end of Russia’s Islamophobic relationship to the Muslim. The Soviet state created the idea of Homo Sovieticus, or the ideal Soviet Man. Who was able to travel towards the ontology of this Soviet Man and be fully accepted as one? It became clear the Muslim was not. During a short period after the Bolshevik Revolution (1918-1923), there was a formation of Muslim National Communist parties amongst the various Muslim nationalities who had supported the Bolsheviks and joined the Communist Party. Prior to and after the Revolution, these Muslim National Communists desired to see themselves as part of the Soviet Republic; yet, they also wanted cultural and political autonomy for Muslims and the ability to indigenize communism on their own Pan-Islamist terms (Bennigsen 1983: 37-38 & Bennigsen 1980).

As much as the Muslim National Communists were tied to the unification of the Muslims masses enslaved to capitalist exploitation, they also viewed their fate as tied up with that of the Western European and Russian proletariat in opposition to global capitalism and colonialism. The Pan-Islamist Soviet Muslim communists wanted to be the vanguard that took communism to the Muslim masses of Asia and Africa. For a short period, Moscow became the Mecca of Muslim revolutionaries from across Africa and Asia who believed that the October Revolution was an important step in the liberation of the Muslim World from the colonialist West. The Muslim revolutionaries – Indian Caliphate Nationalists, Iranian Democrats, Arab Radicals, Indonesian freedom fighters and more - all convened in the city during this time period to discuss supporting the World Revolution (Bennigsen 1983: 93-98). The Soviets, nevertheless, viewed these Muslims with suspicion and disdain for still regarding themselves as part of the Muslim world and ummah, unwilling or unable to fully Sovietize and drop their religio-cultural and political Pan-Islamist baggage. The Muslim National Communists had extended the olive branch to the Bolsheviks by proposing a plan to work together by unifying Soviet Muslims under one nation, or under one Millet. They were opposed to being divided into different “deMuslimized” nationalities and

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117 For many Marxists, the communist Soviet Man was their counter to capitalist Western Man. In effect, this was a Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism. The Soviet Man was the ideal ontology and teleological end to the Hegelian Spirit which flooded Marxist historical materialist understandings of history, class divisions and the cosmos.

118 In Arabic and Turkish, millet literally means religion, religious community or nation. The Ottoman millet system was a form of personal law that allowed for various confessional communities – that is, mainly Muslims, Jews and different Christian denominations – living under the Ottoman Caliphate to rule themselves under their own laws (i.e., Muslim Shari’ah, Christians Canon Law, and Jewish Halakha). The millet system was non-systematic up until the 19th century with the introduction of the Tanzimat Reforms (1839-1876), which ensured that religious minorities were
wanted to create an autonomous Muslim communist state while still supporting the Soviet Republic (ibid.). The Muslim Communists’ aspirations were continuously shot down, leading Sultan Galiev (d. 1940), one of the prominent Muslim Communists leaders of the time to say:

The East with its population of one and half billion enslaved by the West European bourgeoisie was forgotten by the Bolshevik leaders. The development of the international class struggle continued by-passing the East [...] Because of ignorance concerning the East and of the fear which it inspired, the idea of the participation of Eastern revolutionaries in the world revolution was systemically rejected (‘The Social Revolution and the East’, Zhizn’ Nastional’nostey, 39 (47) 1919)” (Bennigsen 1983: 97).

Sultan Galiev and other Muslim National Communism leaders had warned others coming from the Third World that Russian Communism was not intrinsically different than Russian Tsarism and that eventually it would become a tool of Russian imperialism (1983: 99, Mabruk 2006: 146). In relation to the broader Muslim world, Soviet policy in supporting Communist parties was complex and had liberatory potential, yet ultimately ended up self-serving, caring less about local concerns than it did about its imperial designs. They did not understand the complexity of local traditions, needs and desires, and were not willing to comprise their vision of the Soviet Man. The lack of success and ultimate decline of communist support in Muslim societies during and after this period, Bennigson argues, was largely due to Soviet arrogance, ignorance and Eurocentrism in their approach to spreading the so-called World Revolution (Bennigsen 1983: 101-102, Law 2012: 21). While this is not an issue I can expand upon in great detail here, I will provide a framework later for understanding the contradictions of Soviet support for secular nationalist movements in Muslim societies. From the beginning of the Soviet project, it was clear the Muslim could not become the Soviet Man on her terms. After this initial period, the Soviet Man only became more aggressive, and the plight of those who disagreed worsened.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Matthew Renault writes that Sultan Galiev provided a decolonial critique of the colonial Soviet approach to communism and the Colonial International in his article “The Idea of Muslim Communism: About Mirsaid Sultan Galiev (1892-1940)” (2014, article translated from French). From early after the Bolshevik Revolution, Sultan Galiev was excluded from the Soviet Communist International-organized People’s Congress of the East in Baku (1920), which brought together revolutionaries from the East and West to support national liberation movements in the East and labor struggles in the West (Renault 2014). The Congress did not follow through with approving the goal of Muslim National Communist Autonomy. Galiev was expelled from the Communist Party in 1923, and imprisoned due to his relations with Muslim rebel nationalist leaders and Soviet fear of the spread of “Sultangalievism”. Sultan Galiev was not allowed to rejoin party, and starts writing between 1923-27 about revolution from the East, critiquing Eurocentric and Soviet chauvinist visions of World Revolution (ibid.). One of Galiev’s arguments was that the Ummah should still unite towards a World Revolution except for the bourgeois and feudal classes. He called for communists from the East to have privilege and priority over communists in West, and was against the idea of a “Colonial
Bennigsen describes the period immediately after the initial post-Bolshevik decade as a “Period of the Iron Curtain” (1928-68). Stalin’s purges, brutal Sovietisation/Russification and the breakdown of local societies and “micro-nationalities” became the norm. In relation to the Muslim, this led to cutting Soviet Muslims off from the rest of the Muslim world and a number of state policies that would lead to epistemic and ontological death for many Islamic systems, institutions and communities. In learning from there Tsarist ancestors’ “religious Islamophobia”, Bennigsen notes how the Soviet state implemented a number of “secular Islamophobic” policies including: banning annual pilgrimage to Sunni and Shia sites (Mecca for both and Qom for the Shi’as); the wide-scale shutting down of mosques and distribution of anti-religious and anti-Islamic propaganda, the reclamation of Muslim waqf properties; the extensive successful and unsuccessful genocide attempts targeting specific Muslim populations (as well as other non-Muslim “threats”); banning Arabic in certain regions and the attempted linguistic colonization of Muslim ethnicities; and the promotion of Soviet tolerance towards Islam through creating and co-opting Soviet Muslim religious leaders and sending them abroad to the Muslim world on propaganda trips (1983: 25-54, 100-103 & Law 2012: 21).  

Islam, even in its everyday and symbolic forms, remained one of the major anxieties of the Soviet empire which systemically eliminated all of its signs as a part of, a wider campaign of erasing indigenous cosmologies, religions, languages, histories, and replacing them all with the self-degrading slave mentality which is very hard to get rid of today. A good example was the forceful ‘Cyrillisation’ of all Turkish language, which deprived them of the continuity of their traditions and of the possibility of a dialogue with others of similar religious or linguistic heritage. Other examples include the elimination of mosques in predominantly Muslim localities of the empire and profanation of the sacred elements of Islamic architecture in Soviet public buildings (Tlostanova 2010: 178-179).  

Further, Tlostanova argues that the architectural Other for Soviet self-engineering was found in the Oriental Muslim woman. How might this Oriental Muslim woman relate to the Maria of Al-International. Galiev was later sentenced to death and imprisoned several times after 1928, until he was executed in 1940 (ibid.).  

Secular is used in the sense that the logic of Soviet secular racism built on the palimpsest of Russian religious racism in ways new and old, even if they were still targeting the same Muslim enemy. For more on how religion is a racialized category in post-Enlightenment conceptualizations of the human, see Theodore Vial’s Modern Religion, Modern Race (2016).  

The Russian Cyrillic alphabet of today was based on Greek letters modified by the Byzantine missionaries and brothers St. Cyril (d. 869) and Methodius (d. 885) who created the Slavic Glagolitic script. Such histories are used to support the idea of Moscow as a “Third Rome” and “Second Jerusalem”, Russia as an Eastern Spain, and Russian civilization as a continuance of Eastern Christendom (Thackeray 2012: 202). Soviet forced cyrilization of its Muslim colonial subjects must be viewed in light of this Christian/Secular-centered historical dynamic, as linguistic colonization is part of coloniality’s larger project of epistemicide (Grosfoguel 2013).
Andalus from Chapter 2, in terms of the world that rose over her? Tlostanova argues that the Soviet’s Oriental Muslim woman was supposed to be modernized by the “Great Russians” with the grand idea of making her (and everyone in the Soviet empire) fit the future standard of the Soviet citizen which was to be “a racially mixed atheist, brought up on the ideas of Russian cultural superiority and manifesting theatrical multicultural traits in cuisine, singing, dancing, fiction, theatre, national costume, etc.” (2010: 179). Soviet citizens of nominal Muslim heritage – including the Oriental inorodtsy, or “born others”, who - like the Moriscos of early modern Spain - were racially marked even though they had converted to Russian Orthodox Christianity from Islam in previous generations – remained trapped in colonial difference. Tlostanova argues that Maldonado-Torres’ misanthropic skepticism was applied to this colonial ontological difference. For these “enemy-nations” of the Soviet empire, Soviet treatment towards the Muslim rested on the notion that “ontology predetermined politics” (2010: 178-180).

In the post-Soviet and post-Cold War era, Russian Islamophobia has slightly transformed but remained just as racist. While the desire to convert Others into the Sovietized communist faith is gone, the desire to discipline and dominate through the social engineering of a Post-Soviet Man/citizen is prevalent. The Muslim woman of the post-Soviet era is an internal threat (akin to Europe’s gypsy, Jew, and Morisco of old) that must be tamed at all costs. For example, Tlostanova notes that in 2003 the openly Islamophobic Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs launched operation Fatima which prescribed searching all hijab-wearing women as possible terrorists. While there are many others discriminated against by the Russian state based on religion and/or ethnicity, Tlostanova argues that anti-Muslim/Islamist racism remains the strongest as an organizing principle (2010: 180-181). From labeling Muslims the derogatory busurmanin in the heyday of the Tsarist empire, to that of the Tartar and other ethnic/nationalist names in the 19–20th century, to now racistly calling Muslims “Black” in the 21st century, the Muslim Other endlessly agitates the Russian Self (2010: 177).

From the Russian Orthodox Man to Soviet and Post-Soviet Man, the religious and secular Tsarist and Soviet models viewed the Muslim as a perennial menace, enemy and threat. In this regard, Soviet Man must be seen as but a Red extension122 of Western Man and the coloniality of power,

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122 Ian Law, in his Red Racisms: Racism in Communist and Post-Communist Contexts (2012), argues that there was “no paradox” between racism and communism, and that racism was a part of communist logic in Maoist China, Soviet Russia and Castro’s Cuba (143-144). With regards to Soviet Russia, Law notes that, “The socialist nation was built on the basis of territorialisation of ethnicity, state-invented differences and mutually exclusive ethnic loyalties, and ‘on the principle of blood’ (Tishkov 1997, p. 250). This was the regime’s high period of ethnophilia with the wiping
being and knowledge. If Western Man’s degodded self is a White Man in a blue sky, then his other half has always been his angry Red brother, still in the Western sky. These brothers might fight each other like any siblings would in a normal family, but they would never completely dispose of each other, unlike the Muslim, Black or Indigenous non-beings who are outside the family, laying wasted in the hell of coloniality.

3.3. Reframing Cold War Historiography in Relation to the Muslim

Now that the Islamophobia of Russian civilization has been resituated as part of the web of global coloniality, we can reexamine Mamdani’s claim on the Cold War. In this section I will focus on several critiques of Mamdani’s approach to Cold War historiography, with specific reference to the following: 1) a reformulation of Mamdani’s abstract notion of Political Talk to a more conceptually clear understanding of political ontology, 2) integrating the dynamic of Kemalism and Islamism at the level of the political within the Muslim world throughout the Cold War, and 3) provide an alternative to Mamdani’s approach to the late Cold War that transcends Kemalist understandings of the Afghan war. Ultimately, my aim is to reframe Cold War historiography in a way that sheds light on how the Green Peril was not only a force that comes into being in the post-Cold War era, but was active prior to and throughout the period of the Cold War and post-Cold War eras.

3.3.1. The Political and Politics, Ontology and the Ontic

Mamdani argues that the post-Cold War era’s obsession with the clash of civilizations theory is not an issue of “Cultural Talk”, or the incompatibilities of Western and non-Western cultures, but is an issue of “Political Talk”, where conflicts between the West and the Rest should be understood by placing these conflicts in political contexts of unaddressed grievances (Mamdani 2004: 17-62, 219). He does not offer a well argued theoretical basis for what he means by the political in relation to the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary. Mamdani’s lack of conceptual specificity of what he means by the political, politics or power is a major inadequacy in his work.
He fails to distinguish between the political and politics, as well as ontology and the ontic. First, ontology deals with the problem of being, while the ontic deals with the problem of being “thrown out into the world”, in the Heideggerian sense (Heidegger 2002: 7-12). Ontology therefore predetermines, or rather, in a non-teleological sense, encircles the ontic. In post-foundational political theory, the ontological/ontic divide is what undergirds the political/politics divide. In relation to the political aspect of being, or political ontology, ontology/political predetermines the ontic/politics; politics being the ontic expression of the political, meaning, what has already been normalized as the politics of society (Sayyid 2014: 12 & Marchart 2007: 1-8). Mamdani devotes most his in Good Muslim, Bad Muslim analyzing politics and is therefore ontic in his approach. Mamdani does not describe nor put forward a critique of political ontology in his good Muslim-bad Muslim analysis. Mamdani’s approaches treats the Muslim problem as one of politics, not of the political, and of the ontic and not the ontological. I find no sustained attempt in Mamdani’s work on the good Muslim-bad Muslim divide to define what he means by politics, the political and power outside of generalized and unfixed notions of these terms. Further down I discuss his approach to the Cold War and Afghanistan and demonstrate how political ontology remains unthought in his work.

the lack of thinking through secularity in relation to the Muslim in Daulatzai’s work (2). This is the same problem in Mamdani’s work.

124 As opposed to anti-foundationalism, which abandons the search for grounds in political ontology, post-foundationalism argues that there are grounds (in the hegemonic and counter-hegemonic senses of social beings), but that there is no final ground (Marchart 2007: 7-8). Marchart summarizes well the distinctions and correlations in post-foundational understandings of the political, ontology and politics: “It is in the light of our post-foundational condition that an explanation can be given to the peculiar fact that what is called in philosophy the ontological difference is mirrored conceptually in the field of today’s political theory in the form of the difference between the concept of politics and the concept of the political...This is how the differential character of the political difference is to be understood: the political (located, as it were, on the ‘ontological’ side of Being-as-ground) will never be able fully to live up to its function as Ground – and yet it has to be actualized in the form of an always concrete politics that necessarily fails to deliver what it has promised. But politics and the political, the moment of ground and the moment of the actualization of this ground, will never meet because of the unbridgeable chasm of the difference between these terms, which in itself is but the signature of our post-foundational condition” (ibid.).
In contrast to Mamdani’s unclear Political Talk, I argue that conflicts between the West and the Rest should be viewed through the lens of political ontology.\textsuperscript{125}\textsuperscript{126}\textsuperscript{127} The political ontological civilizational divide between the West and Rest, and, more specifically, the Muslim and anti-Muslim, is mitigated by the Schmittian friend/enemy ontical divide. Therefore, wherever there is an engagement between the Muslim and anti-Muslim, the anti-Muslim will treat the Muslim through the lens of friend/enemy. When treated as a “friend”, this is an Islamophilic approach that otherizes the Muslim by making him or her “good.” When treated as an “enemy,” this Islamophobe otherizes the Muslim by deeming her or him “bad.” Thus, the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary is constitutive of and constituted by the political means of the anti-Muslim, in whichever Islamophobic or Islamophilic mask they wear. My understanding of the Muslim question reframes the understanding of the good/bad binary as an operating principle of coloniality, the Islamophobe and the Islamophile, given their political ontology is always already anti-Muslim. The Islamophobe and Islamophile both do politics in the ontic sense, while the anti-Muslim is the political ontology which organizes or encircles them. This means the Red Scare was not a problem of political ontology for the West, it was a problem of politics and the ontic based on imperial difference. The Green Peril has always been about a political ontological divide the West and the Muslim based on colonial difference. By understanding the Muslim question as an issue of political ontology predicated on the friend/enemy distinction - and not solely an issue of political economy, capitalism, secular national liberation, human rights, or Mamdani’s Political Talk - we can better understand contradictions that arose during the Cold War in relation to the Muslim.

\textsuperscript{125} As James argues, race theories are dominated by two camps – eliminativists who rely on biological ontology and conservationists who rely on social ontology. For eliminativists, the concept of race must be biologically grounded. For conservationists, race is based on social practices. There is a third approach that James acknowledges, which is beyond the normative theorizing of both eliminativists and conservationists, and that is the political ontology of race. The political ontology of race is based on political representation and agency. Political ontology has to do with the agency of said race group in determining the political salience of that group’s racial identity (James 2012).

\textsuperscript{126} Following Burman, I view ontology as a term that is used to discuss “the nature(s) of reality in the sense of the world(s) in which the self exists and unfolds.” Further, to deal with political ontology means to attend to ontological difference “without losing sight of sociopolitical struggles and global asymmetric relations of political and economic power.” (Burman 2016: 75-76).

\textsuperscript{127} There are three definitions of political ontology which I have laid out above: 1) the first deals with the philosophical implications of political ontology, politics and the ontic in post-foundationalism, 2) the second deals with the way political ontology informs race/racism, and 3) the third deals with political ontology in the broad sense of being involved in the praxis of struggles. All three of these definitions of political ontology guide my understanding of ontology in this work in relation to the Muslim and anti-Muslimness, Islamism and anti-Islamism. They relate to the racial and political effects of Islamophobia on Muslim being, as well as the philosophical and political effects that Muslims exert against coloniality and the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary through the language of Islam/ism in social struggle.
While the Soviet Union did in fact support a number of secular nationalist liberation struggles, including those in the Muslim world – whether financially, through arms, diplomatically or even from just a friendly distance – that does not absolve the Soviet state from its fundamentally anti-Muslim political ontology. In situations of multiple Western great powers involved in a complex web of far-reaching geopolitics across the Global North and South, the persistence of the political friend/enemy, and good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, is a distinction that stroked both ends of the Cold War. Late in the Cold War and with the rise of counter-hegemonic Islamist movements in the 1970s and 80s, Western bloc powers became friendly with Islamists. “The enemy of my enemy is my friend”, goes the logic. Immediately after the Cold War, these same Islamists quickly became the West’s enemies. What was at stake in the Cold War for the Eastern and Western blocs was not Muslim political agency or self-autonomy, but the battle between Westernized capitalists and communists who had a Eurocentric plan for dominating the world regardless of the political ontological autonomy of their Muslim friends and enemies.

3.3.2. Kemalism and Islamism

At the level of the political, the Cold War was always guided by the Green Peril, whether friend or foe, because Muslims were not able to do the political or politics on their own terms. Not only that, but the Cold War was instrumental in agitating the colonially imposed religious/secular divide upon the Muslim world; with a privileging of the secular. As Sayyid argues, the main political frontier that divides Muslimistan is that between Kemalism and Islamism (2014: 64). The Kemalist/Islamist divide is organized by the divide between the master signifier of secular nationalism – whom

128 There are numerous examples of Western and Eastern blocs being both Islamophobic and philic within and outside of their borders. With regard to the Eastern Bloc, it was largely Islamophobic within its own territories towards its Muslim populations and colonies while being Islamophilic abroad to secular nationalist Kemalist movements in the Muslim world, such as Nasserite Egypt, the PLO and Baathist Syria (Primakov 2009). At other times, such as the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Soviets were friendlier with Muslim National Communist movements before becoming more phobic (Bennigsen 1980). With regard to the Western Bloc and America, it was Islamophobic within its own territories and colonies – such as the Filipinos and Blackamerican Muslims (Hawkings 2012 & Curtis 2013) or European colonies in the Muslim world - while being Islamophilic towards Muslim countries outside their control that were Kemalist (i.e. Kemalist Turkey or Kemalist Iran) (Yilmaz 2015 & Malik 2014) or even Islamist (i.e., American support of Mujahideen in Afghanistan, or even Israel’s at times less antagonistic earlier relationship with the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood) (Petrilli 2018). Internal and external to the Eastern and Western blocs they formed good and bad Muslims. What is clear is that Muslim political autonomy and Islamist agency was not in the concern of the superpowers during the Cold War, unless it fit their imperial designs and political teleological ends.

129 Asad points out how both the Eastern and Western blocs of the Cold War utilized the Hegelian belief in capital-H “History” that sought to promote universal social models based on the precepts of secularity (Asad 2003: 14-15). The defeat of Communist Hegelianism did not stop neo-Hegelian apologists, such as the Francis Fukuyama New World Order-types, from continuing the crusading drive of anti-Muslim/Islamist secularism post-Cold War either (15).
Sayyid calls Kemalists[^130] - and those centered around the name of Islam, or Islamism[^131] Sayyid argues that Kemalism made Islam an obscurant of the past and an enemy to civilization, science and progress. Islam could only be a private code of ethics, and not central to forming political order nor the public domain. In place of Islam, Kemalism proposed secular nationalism and the Westphalian nation-state as the vehicle of political progress, emancipatory politics and modernization in the Muslim world. The solidification of new territorial, linguistic, ethnic and geographical boundaries laid down by Kemalists therefore created divides in Muslim societies that did not exist in the same way before. They fundamentally restructured pre-colonial modes of ontology in the Islamicate world, and led to a period of increased reliance and internalization of Eurocentric modes of production, social engineering, statecraft and virtually all other hierarchies of global coloniality (2007: 52-83).

Islamists, on the other hand, have desired to rally around the language of Islam as the unifying master signifier which did not seek a break from the past, but a reconnection through an anti-Western political ontology of Islam. Kemalism had become the dominant ideology of the Muslim world following the retreat of European powers in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Since the mid-1970s, Sayyid argues that Islamism and Islamist tendencies in various movements have become the only counter-hegemonic force that have arisen to challenge coloniality and Kemalist

[^130]: While Kemalism as a name is usually located within the socio-historical phenomenon that started with the founding of the Turkish Republic by Kemal Ataturk (d. 1938) in 1923 (Azak 2010), Sayyid extrapolates the term from this fixed historical discursive trajectory to become the name and metaphor of a much wider movement within Muslimistan that displayed the same ontological features of Kemalism.

[^131]: Contrary to the common theme with scholarship on political Islam that examines Islamism through a legal or statist lens (i.e., that the main desire of Islamists is to establish Shari’ah through a modern Islamic state), Sayyid defines Islamism through the lens of poststructuralism, postmodernism and semiotic theory. Ian Almond comments on Sayyid’s postmodernist approach here: “Sayyid’s definition of Islamists as ‘those who use Islamic metaphors to narrate their political projects’ could not be more Rortyian; his Zizekan understanding of Islam as a ‘nodal point’, a ‘master signifier’ around which various elements constitute themselves and draw meaning goes much farther than any of his peers in establishing a semantic framework for a better understanding of Islam. His description of Muhammad as a figure who ‘has inaugurated…a discursive horizon’, or that of the Caliphate a nodal point around which one could construct a global Muslim identity, all draw upon a very definite vocabulary of poststructuralist/semiotic theory in their postmodern Islamic apologetics” (Almond 2010: 3-4). While one could critique Sayyid for his lack of focus on the jurisprudential, statist or even theological aspects of Islamism – given that these do in fact play a central role in normative Islamist discourse in the past two centuries (Euben & Zaman 2009) – what Sayyid’s work does is rethink Muslim political agency at a philosophical level using the language of Neo-Orientalists such as Foucault and Baudrillard (Almond 2010) as well as that of Islamists in a post-Orientalist fashion. The tensions and distinctions between legal-centered and philosophy-centered hermeneutics within Islam is one that predates modernity, as Shahab Ahmed (d. 2017) brilliantly displays in his book *What is Islam?* (2017), and continues throughout the modern. I view Sayyid’s work as falling more so within the philosophical hermeneutic of Islam – he does explicitly critique legalism (2014: 163 & 179) – as he focuses more on a post-essentialist rationalist philosophy of defining what the political means for Muslims. This is in contradistinction to, say, a transcendental theological discourse of Muslim salvation or spiritualism (i.e. *tasawwuf*); or even, an Islamic liberation ethics that answers how Muslims should respond to questions of the Self and Other (Esack 2006).
supremacy (1997: 84). For Kemalists, Sayyid argues, westernization and modernization were the same thing. For Islamists, westernization and modernization are not the same. Islamists have been largely anti-Westernization, but not anti-modernity. For this same reason, Islamists came to see both liberalism and socialism as negative because, for Islamists, Islamism is seen as a totalizing counter-hegemonic discourse that is against all forms of Westernization. As Sayyid notes, “The ultimate antagonist for the Islamists, however, is not Kemalism, but the West, an 'overarching imperial formation'. The Islamist critique of Kemalism is not restricted to the particular inability of Kemalism to provide better services, to cope with the world economic system, and so on, but a critique of the way in which Kemalism articulated its reforms and practices with western discourse” (119). The metaphor of the West is the centerpiece of Islamist discourses, and their critiques of Kemalism are due to the ways in which Kemalist policies have imitated the West (119).

The Soviet empire largely partnered with Kemalist regimes in Muslim societies during the post-Caliphatic and Cold War era because this fit their goals both internal and external. The Soviet empire wanted to keep Soviet Muslims alienated from the wider ummah through the divide and conquer mechanism of creating secular nation-states in Islamicate societies which were not organized around Islam. The Western bloc ended up supporting Islamists during the late stage of the Cold War as a means to weaken Soviet power and hegemony in Kemalist states. More broadly speaking, by supporting whichever Kemalist or Islamist who served as a friend or enemy to each side on the Cold War, Islamicate societies continued to be governed principally by the Geppetto of the West over the Rest even as they had their own internal struggles. At the end of the Cold War, with the Red Scare no longer being a major schism in the Western civilizing mission between the Western and Eastern blocs, the post-Cold War era repositions itself in order to retarget the Green Peril as the main enemy of a reconsolidated Western global hegemony. The Islamists went from having tea at the White House\textsuperscript{132} in one decade to hiding in the mountains and deserts of Muslimstan as America attempted to bomb these good-Muslims-turned-bad to oblivion. The Muslim, and especially articulations of Muslim political agency against Westernization (i.e., Islamism), come to the fore again as the main war which the world must win.

3.3.3. Beyond Kemalist Understandings of Afghanistan and the late Cold War

Mamdani’s approach to understanding Afghanistan in the Cold War is a template that can be used to summarize all of the various critiques I have made of his Cold War and good Muslim-bad

\textsuperscript{132} In 1983, White American President Ronald Reagan invited members of the Islamist Mujahidin to the White House as part of his efforts to support their resistance against the Soviets in Afghanistan (Ingersoll 2013).
Muslim historiography. Firstly, Mamdani’s unipolar American-centric analysis remains silent on the issue of Soviet colonialism and historical Russian anti-Muslim racism in Central Asia and Afghanistan. He confines his ontic analysis only to late Cold War politics delinked from the Afghan region’s long-term history, and detached from Muslim political ontology in relation to forces such as the Soviet empire and Kemalist Central Asian nation-state formation. Mamdani’s main argument is that American imperial support for the internationalization of the Mujahideen movement against the Soviet-backed communist Afghani government created an “Islamist Right” akin to that of the Right-wing dictatorships in Latin America which were pro-American (Mamdani 2004: 129).133

My main contention is that Mamdani does not treat the Mujahideen as complex historical actors through the lens of political ontology. Mamdani does do a sufficient job of describing the Mujahideen forces’ different strategies of politics through an ontic analysis, based on the various Islamist movements ethnic, sectarian or ideological differences amongst themselves (2004: 153-163). But, this does not give us a paradigmatic picture of which forms of the political were at stake in Afghanistan in relation to colonial ontological difference, whether in the short or long term. Mamdani focuses on these different strategies of politics between various Islamist factions as simply short-term matters (i.e. confined to late Cold War history and not, for example, coloniality) while not doing the same for others involved in the Afghan war such as the Soviet empire or Soviet-backed Afghan Kemalist communists. In effect, Mamdani’s defacto Soviet friendly position makes Islamist Mujahideen forces appear only as “bad Muslims” in the short and long-term, and as weak historical and social actors. The condition of possibility for Muslim political agency beyond Kemalism is rejected by Mamdani’s insistence to pre-emptively subject Mujahideen

133 This is a common feature in global Leftist (which is normatively epistemically secular) discourse when it comes to movements in Muslimistan that are inflicted and/or led by Islamist currents. The Left treated Afghanistan in the 1980s the same way it is now treating Syria in the 2010’s. In her article, “The ‘Anti-Imperialism’ of Idiots” (2018), British-Syrian anti-Assad regime activist and thinker Leila al-Shami takes the global Left to task for being apologists of the fascist authoritarian Assad regime, which has wreaked havoc on Islamist and anti-authoritarian Leftist circles within Syria for decades. The global Left has not had the epistemic humility nor wherewithal to listen to Syrian activists who have been involved in anti-Assad regime movements for decades before and concurrent to the Syrian uprising (2011). Instead the Left uses Islamophobic War on Terror inspired language such as “Islamist Right” and “Islamofascists”, and make repeated generalizations about the Syrian opposition being a monolith of American and Gulf-money backed Islamist extremists (@BenjaminNorton 2017). Counter to this Leftist Islamophobic discourse, which has in effect made Syria a New Afghanistan, Syrian anti-Assadists themselves such as al-Shami and Robbin Yassin-Kassab have written books – see, for examples, Burning Country: Syrians in Revolution and War (2016) - that detail the social struggles and contradictions anti-regime activists face between the Assadist state (and its Iranian and Russian state funders), transnational Sunni takfiri movements such as ISIS, and the many factions within the rebel Free Syrian Army opposition camp. Counter to the analytical rigor displayed by the likes of al-Shami or Yassin-Kassab, for these Leftist Islamophobes, Syrians and Muslims in Syria cannot be analyzed with sociological and historical complexity without relying on an anti-Muslim/Islamist reservoir of language.
brands of Islamism to questioning, condemnation or at best suspicion. Mamdani fails also to
describe something akin to Vue’s “intercontinental synchronization of hostilities” (Vu 2010: 7)
which would at least include a critical analysis of how multiple state and non-state actors merged
from various global and local sides to form the crucible of Mamdani’s so-called “American jihad”
in Afghanistan (2004: 130).134

If the Afghans and international Mujahideen forces who rose up against the Soviets and
communist Kemalist Afghani government were treated with more complexity as historical actors
and social agents in Mamdani’s work, I would make the argument that Mamdani is presenting a
logical fallacy by correlating the cause of the Mujahideen’s uprising to that of the Contras in
Nicaragua135, or even other Cold War-era African and Asian contexts. I would demonstrate that
the Soviet relationship to communists in Nicaragua and Central America had a different historical
connotation than that of the Soviet relationship to communists in Central Asia (i.e. one not marked
so sharply by anti-Muslim racism and the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary). I would also prove
that the correlation of Soviet support of communist movements in Latin America and Central Asia
does not demonstrate that the cause of Soviet support of communists in each location was the
same. Mamdani’s framework does not provide me the ability to argue for such conclusions,
because, unfortunately, he does not give political agency nor ontological legitimacy to the
Mujahideen as a conversant partner in history, and mainly portrays them as pawns of America.
Even though Mamdani wrote his book two decades after the beginning of the Afghan War (1979
– 1989), he does not note that America had an Islamophilic relationship with Islamists in
Afghanistan during the Cold War. Nor does he note that this Islamophilic relationship with those
same Islamists very quickly turned into an Islamophobic one within a few years of the end of the
Cold War. His otherwise brilliant framework of good Muslim-bad Muslim does not realize that the
good Muslim-bad Muslim binary existed during the Cold War, and that both the Western and

134 Much later in his analysis of Afghanistan, in a more nuanced way, Mamdani briefly cites the thoughts of an actual
Afghan and another scholar of Afghanistan who mark complex reasons for rise of Taliban, and shows how both Soviet
and US state projects played a role in contributing to the historical conditions that forces such as the Mujahideen and
Taliban were attempting to resolve (2004: 162-163). Aside from this brief moment, Mamdani largely frames the
causes, actors and angles to approaching the Afghan War as a decidedly American concoction, stating that Reagan’s
America wanted to “turn the Afghan War into the Soviet Union’s Vietnam” (2004: 124).
135 The Contras were various U.S. funded right-wing rebel groups that were active in Nicaragua from 1979 to the early
1990s in opposition to the socialist Sandinista government. The term contra means “against” in Spanish, and became
popularized due to the characterization of the Contras as forming la contrarrevolución, or the “counter-revolution”
(Brown 2001).
Eastern blocs each had their own good and bad Muslims whom they used for their own anti-Muslim means.

Furthermore, Mamdani simplifies the internal dynamics of the Muslim world and Afghanistan, particularly in relation to the dynamics between Kemalism and Islamism. He argues that the US supported Islamists movements in various locations across the Muslim world as a local buffer to Soviet influence in these countries, including, “…the Sarekat-i-Islām against Sukarno in Indonesia, the Jamaat-i-Islami against Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in Pakistan, and the Society of Muslim brothers against Nasser in Egypt” and even Israel supporting the formation of Hamas in Palestine (2004: 120-121). Mamdani’s grouping of all these different contexts and movements is quite strange as he makes no distinction between their political orientations. All of the secular nationalist Muslim leaders mentioned above were in fact members of the NAM (including Afghanistan before the Soviet invasion). Even at the level of internal Kemalist differences, these secular Muslim countries cannot simply be described as pro-Soviet, especially when the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan caused a sharp fissure in the NAM’s already tedious relationship with the Eastern bloc, with pro-Soviet states siding with the invasion and most of the Muslim states (even though Kemalist) condemning it (Wiznitzer).

Mamdani seems to assume that somehow American support put Islamists in a position of power in relation to pro-Soviet or even NAM-centered Kemalists. Was this the case though? Even with soft power support during the Cold War, no Islamist movement outside of Iran, Sudan, Afghanistan, or ISIS (all coming from very different positions on the Islamist spectrum), has been able to capture state power or form an autonomous state project either during or since the Cold War due to their continued disciplining by Kemalist forces and their Western allies. Mamdani’s framework does not recognize the divide between Kemalists and Islamists as a division of the political, nor as a relationship that takes place in a hierarchy of power where Kemalists have epistemic, ontological and political privilege and Islamists do not.”

Even though Islamists have been historically subjected to positions of powerlessness in relation to Kemalist nation-states and to coloniality more broadly, Mamdani assumes he can simply call the Mujahideen an “Islamist Right.” Mamdani’s decontextualizing of anti-Western opposition to

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136 Mamdani also labels countries such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as “Islamist” (2004: 129). Sayyid argues that they are in fact Kemalist, by stating that in their conceptualizations of the political, Islam can play a role of lesser or greater value, but it does the position of the master signifier of the political order, thereby unifying the field of discursivity away from Kemalism (Sayyid 2003: 70-72).
Soviet communism - whether in the soft form of Afghan Kemalists who were part of the NAM or that of various Islamists, the former being a lesser problem than the later due to its secular nature - boils Muslim opposition to Soviet colonialism down to simple reactionary politics and temporary American support. With that narrow point of view and non-reading of the hierarchies of power at play, Mamdani is unable to come to a critical understanding of long-term Russian coloniality and Soviet anti-Muslim/Islamist racism in Central Asia. Mamdani does not go to the dark side of the Soviet invasion and Communist Saur Revolution, which were largely colonialist and Kemalist.\textsuperscript{137}

What is at play here in Mamdani’s approach is a problematic secular Leftist logic. Like secularism in general, secular Leftist logic does not examine itself for its Eurocentricity nor its biased pro-Soviet historiographical understandings of the Cold War. This unexamined secular Leftist logic therefore lacks the tools to approach the complexity of Muslim political ontology whether in Afghanistan or elsewhere in the Cold War or Post-Cold War eras. One example of this inconsistency is when the secular Left/Kemalists view the Islamist Mujahideen as sell-outs due to their acceptance of American support during the late Cold War. Yet, when presented with contradictions within their own pro-Soviet understanding of history, they see complexity. For example, it is rare to find Leftist critiques of the Soviets working with Western Bloc capitalists (USA and UK) as part of the big three Allied powers to defeat Nazi Germany during World War II (Miller 2006). Secular Leftist logic is able to comprehend complexity in a situation of multiple great powers who happen to be fierce political enemies forming an alliance due to a shared enemy. Yet, when it comes to Muslims (and other non-Westerners) who act independently of secular Left universalist assumptions and logic, sociology and history go out the window, and Leftist Islamophobia remains uninterrogated.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{137} For a more comprehensive history of the effect of modern/colonial Soviet imperial involvement in post/colonial Afghan state in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century and particularly the late phase of the Cold War, please see Mohammed Kakar’s \textit{Afghanistan: The Soviet Invasion and the Afghan Response, 1979-1982} (1995) and Amin Saikal’s \textit{Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival} (2012).

\textsuperscript{138} Coming from the Left, Islamophobic terms such as “Islamist Right” or “Islamofascism” (Mamdani 2004: 164) cast a secular westernized Leftist logic onto “bad Muslims” who assert a political ontology against or outside the normativity of secularism and Kemalism. Since at least the Cold War, these types of terms have become commonplace across the global secular westernized Left. Dabashi (2013: 100-107) has revealed this Islamophobia in relation to a liberal Left and left-of center liberals. In a sense, the work of Sayyid (2003) begins a conversation for describing anti-Muslim systems and logics in relation to Kemalist forces in the Muslim world as well as radical secular Leftist movements more broadly. Yet, Sayyid’s work does not build a broader historical and theoretical framework for understanding Leftist Islamophobia. In brief, while one can cite the epistemic Islamophobia of Marxism’s founders, such as Marx or Engels (Grosfoguel 2010), the Islamophobia of the Left as a hegemonic project of modern states has operated in various ways since the beginning of the Soviet project (1914). From being against the Muslim National Communists who attempted to join the Left albeit in Pan-Islamist form, to being against anti-communist Islamists of the type in Afghanistan or those prevalent in the world today, Muslims have not been allowed to assert political agency through the language of Islam without a racist secular westernized Left (and Right) disciplining or rejecting them. While the focus my work is not to expand on this point, I do briefly mention it, as any attempt to form a Muslim
In short, Mamdani’s historiography of the Muslim Question and Cold War must be reformed, as it is clear that the Green Peril long preceded the Red Scare. The Red Scare was marked by temporal imperial difference, and not the unending modern/colonial difference of the Green Peril. The Red Scare was more like Western Man’s split, alter-ego. The Green Peril, on the other hand, was always lurking behind and below the Red Scare in the libidinal economy of the West, whether capitalist or communist. Therefore, I argue that the Green Peril precedes, runs concurrent to and proceeds the Red Scare. The Muslim problem, and even the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, is not a result of the post-Cold War era as Mamdani argues, but a result of coloniality and systemic anti-Muslimness.

3.4. Conclusion
My understanding of Mamdani’s problematic approach to understanding Cold War historiography in relation to the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary can be summarized in five points: 1) Mamdani maintains a unipolar reading of the Cold War through an American-centric lens 2) Mamdani does not engage in a critical analysis of the Soviet role in the Cold War in relation to the Muslim and long-term Russian Islamophobia 3) Mamdani focuses on an ontic analysis of politics in his framework of Political Talk rather than political ontology 4) Mamdani does not unsew the internal political dynamics of state and non-state actors in the Muslim world, particularly in relation to Kemalism and Islamism and 5) Mamdani’s approach to the Afghan War during the late Cold War entangles all of the points above and points to the crystallization of a postcolonial secular Leftist imagination which also has its own forms of good and bad Muslims.

In contrast to Mamdani, I argue that the problem of good Muslim-bad Muslim binary is one of coloniality and not the post-Cold War era. In my view, in order to understand the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary in broader relation to coloniality we must return to the moment of 1492. While I am able to show how the Islamophobic and philic approaches of certain medieval Western Christians I mentioned earlier, such as Ramon Lull or even Peter the Venerable, are examples of anti-Muslim political ontology due to their desire to crusade against Muslims in hard and soft ways, I think, for comparative purposes, a better example would be that of Sepulveda and Las Casas. Post-1492 is when Islamophobia goes global, and when it becomes an important organizing principle in the coloniality of power. Arguably, as I hope my various cartographies of Islamophobia political ontology against or beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary must also deal with the anti-Muslim/Islamist racism that exists on both the Left and Right.
show, Islamophobia might just be the first globalized form of modern racism if we understand how far it reached from the Americas, to across Asia and Africa by the end of the long 16th century as a systemic form of Westernizing power.

If we remember from Chapter 2, both Sepulveda and Las Casas wanted to wage war against the Muslim. Yet, if we take the Sepulveda-Las Casas Valladolid debate in relation to the Indian, we see the same relation that both Ramon Lull and Peter the Venerable in had towards the Muslim. While Sepulveda argued for outright war and genocide of the Indian in phobic terms, Las Casas argued for the Christianized humanity of the Indian on philic terms. In both cases, Indigenous agency and being was not their main concern; rather, they only cared for the various Western approaches to solving the Indian Problem by making the Indian a friend or enemy. In this regard, we can see the dialectical nature of coloniality at the level of political ontology which always ontically makes friends and enemies through politics, while the fundamental racist nature of political ontology goes unquestioned. From Sepulveda and Las Casas of the 16th century, to Huntington and Lewis of the 20th century, to Trump and Obama of the 21st century, the racialized non-beings of modernity are not meant to articulate a political ontology beyond friend or enemy.

To deal with the Muslim problem at the level of political ontology is to first acknowledge the divides that arise as a result of the political, before discussing what forms of politics we take on. The need to go beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary has long been a task of Muslims attempting to live and be beyond the confines of the coloniality of being. While there are multiple starting points, movements figures and moments that can serve as examples for going beyond the divide of good/bad in order to decolonize being, I will only be focusing on two in this work in the next chapter, as my explicit aim is to deal with Muslim ontology in the postcolonial context. Dabashi’s concept of the Muslim Revolutionary and Daulatzai’s proposal of the Muslim International are two attempts by self-described post and decolonial thinkers who have proposed conceptions of Muslim ontology in the neo/post-colonial world which aid in thinking about Muslim ontology away from and beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary.
Chapter 4
Decolonizing Postcolonial Muslim Ontology:
Beyond Good and Bad Muslims

Over the last two hundred years, we have been metamorphosed into metaphors of other people’s narratives, narratives of fixed disposition and evidently irreversible grammatology. We need to conjugate ourselves out of that grammar. – Hamid Dabashi (2013: 107).

…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-sates, capitalism and imperial power, a zone of struggle and solidarity in which new kinds of politics emerge. The Muslim International…shapes and is shaped by the convergent histories and narratives that are central to the shared struggles of these overlapping diasporas. For those diverse histories and narrative are what influence the various modes of resistance and forms of mobilization that have continued to challenge power in enduring ways. - Sohail Daulatzai (2012: xxiii-xxiv)

Islam is the greatest unifying force in the Dark World today. – Malcolm X (Cited in Daulatzai 2012: 103).

4.0. Introduction
Earlier in the work, I engaged the framework of Maldonado-Torres in his understanding of the coloniality of being. I dealt mainly with Maldonado-Torres’ approach to ontology which understands ontology as an existential place where the racialized victims of modernity exist in the zone of non-being. For Maldonado-Torres, the zone of non-being is a place where racialized subjects dwell in hell, stripped of the opportunity to gift-give and participate in the interpersonal and intersubjective act of receptive generosity, “The coloniality of Being is thus fundamentally an ontological dynamic that aims to obliterate in its literal sense of doing away completely so as to leave no trace gift-giving and generous reception as a fundamental character of being-in-the-world” (2007: 258). Maldonado-Torres’ approach to ontology mainly deals with ethics (Maldonado-Torres 2007 & 2008) and in his conceptualization of what it means to decolonize being he focuses on the ethical imperative of restoring the ability to gift-give and participate in receptive generosity between those in the zone of being (Europeans, whites) and non-being (non-Europeans, non-whites) (2007: 257-263).
Maldonado-Torres’ ethical imperative attempts to decolonize being by going beyond colonial ontological difference (i.e., the coloniality of being) and to ultimately restore what he calls “transontological difference”. If colonial ontological difference is defined by the non-ethics of war, then transontological difference is defined by the rehabilitation of ethics for former non-beings who were victims of the non-ethics of war (2007: 253-254). Maldonado-Torres argues that Fanon’s famous quote at the conclusion of *Black Skin, White Masks* sums up the ideal of transontological difference, “Superiority? Inferiority? Why not the quite simple attempt to touch the other, to feel the other, to explain the other to myself? Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the You?” (cited in Maldonado-Torres 2007: 260). Fanon’s reflections on ethics greatly inform how wars waged by the enslaved and colonized can be orientated by “love”, understood here as the desire to restore ethics and give it a proper place in the Self-Other relationship that was destroyed by the coloniality of being (2007: 256). For Maldonado-Torres, this war of love opens the way for a decolonial justice and peace to be restored to the intersubjective relations of previous non-humans who regained their ontology through decolonial struggle (2007: 260-261). His “ethics first” approach goes beyond the racist divides that coloniality has forced upon the ontologies of those in the zone of non-being.

Maldonado-Torres’ “ethics first” approach differs from Sayyid’s political approach. There are numerous ways of dealing with the Muslim Question in the modern/colonial world-system. A number of Muslim thinkers, such as Islamic liberation theologians and Islamic feminists, have focused heavily on the Muslim Question through an ethical lens. Another approach to thinking through the Muslim Question is to center the issue of epistemological colonial difference, or what decolonial scholars call the coloniality of knowledge. I briefly mention the ethical and

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139 A number of Muslim thinkers have approached the Muslim Question through a largely ethical lens, whether implicitly or explicitly in their works. This is evident in the works of Muslim liberation theologians, such as Farid Esack (*The Qur’an, Liberation and Pluralism* 2007 & *On Being a Muslim* 2009), as well as Muslim feminists, such as Sa’diyyah Shaikh (*Sufi Narratives of Intimacy: Ibn ‘Arabi, Gender and Sexuality* 2014) and Kecia Ali (*Sexual Ethics and Islam: Feminist Reflections on Qur’an, Hadith, and Jurisprudence* 2006). Their works are largely concerned with Muslims challenging both Eurocentric and indigenous Islamicate hegemonic power systems through critical ethical pedagogies of “double critique” in the ontic field of politics. These works lack a systemic analysis and theorization of political ontology and world-systems analysis. On the other hand, Sayyid’s works largely side lines the issues of ethics (aside from a chapter in his book *Recalling*), relegating ethics to a less important role in relation to the political.

140 A number of works that move in this direction. Joseph Lumbard has written an article “Decolonialising Qur’anic Studies” (2016) which focuses on indigenous Muslim knowledge traditions of Qur’anic interpretation, such as the exegetical *tafsir* tradition, and argues they are sidelined or not taken seriously as valid forms of knowledge production by the globalized Westernized academy. Another example would be Rudolph Ware’s *The Walking Qur’an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (2014) which argues that classical forms of Qur’anic and Islamic education in Islamicate West Africa were not based on a Cartesian divide between the mind and body, but on the practice of passing down and gaining knowledge through embodied practices and scholarship. Finally, Ebrahim
epistemological approaches to the Muslim Question in my own understanding as descriptive points of comparison, and to state that in this work I am not specifically dealing with those approaches. In this section and in my wider work, I have set up my argument to deal primarily with political ontology; not because other approaches to understanding Muslim ontology are unworthy, but because this is simply the scope and limits of my argument. The good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, as I have previously mentioned, is mitigated primarily by a political divide (not an ethical or epistemological divide) organized by the anti-Muslim logics and social realities of coloniality. This political divide asks questions about how Muslims are allowed to exist in the world as political actors and agents, or not. Sayyid’s work focuses on going beyond the racist divides of coloniality by approaching the Muslim question mainly through the lens of Muslim political identity (Sayyid 1997 & 2014). In this section I will focus on how conceptualizations of Muslim political identity that lend themselves to the discourse on decolonizing Muslim ontology.

Another point which requires clarification is the meaning of going beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary. In relation to the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, what does going beyond mean? How does it relate to colonial ontological difference and Muslim political ontology in the postcolonial context? Going beyond has to do with redefining how we understand 1) historiography and 2) the language of Islam in relation to Muslim subjectivity. In the world of coloniality, there exists a deep disciplining of Muslim subjectivity by way of denying Muslims a history and a language to engage the political. Investigations into Muslim political ontology could deal with a number of other topics, such as ecology or gender, which also all play a role in going beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary that coloniality puts forward. Yet, due to the limits of this work, this chapter focuses on historiography and language. Sayyid presents these two concepts as central to his project of providing a decolonial political identity for the Muslim to

Moosa in his *Ghazali and the Poetics of Imagination* (2005) employs the concept of dihliz (Persian, “threshold”) as a type of “border-thinking” that Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) embodied and used as way for contemporary Muslims to engage in multiple intellectual traditions while still staying authentically Islamic. The common theme that runs through these works is that epistemology lays at the philosophical forefront in their critiques of Eurocentric approaches to engaging the Muslim Question.

141 Historiography is different from history. While history is defined largely as a study of the past based on stringing together observables such as artifacts, written works, oral sources, and memory archives, historiography differs slightly in meaning as it deals with how history itself gets narrated, interpreted and passed down as a package. Historiography is thus “the history of history” (Vann). Historiography examines the way history gets written, and is the how, while history is the what. Historiographies are in a sense prepackaged understandings of history (Historiography). In this work, I am concerned with both history and historiography, but am more concerned with examining the how certain postcolonial readings of history get prepackaged into given historiographies which, in effect, perpetuate coloniality and hidden Eurocentricisms. To critique and deconstruct neo/postcolonial historiography is a process of reconstructing the good and bad Muslims of those histories contained therein, towards a decolonial historiography and post-Western future.
challenge and overcome the limits of coloniality’s trapping of the Muslim subject.\textsuperscript{142} This \textit{going beyond} means moving in a direction which does not seek to play enemy or friend to the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, but seeks to reopen the possibility of a critical Muslim political identity that delinks from the demands and classifications of the good/bad binary, and ultimately creates its own friends and enemies.

In this section, I compare and contrast two forms of Muslim political identity which aid in forming a decolonial Muslim political ontology that transgresses the boundaries of coloniality and the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary. These conceptualizations of Muslim political identity have been theorized by two postcolonial Muslim thinkers - Hamid Dabashi’s concept of the Muslim Revolutionary (Dabashi 2008) and Sohail Daulatzai’s concept of the Muslim Internationalist (Daulatzai 2012). Both Dabashi and Daulatzai’s conceptualizations deal with aspects of historiography and language which produce a fruitful and critical engagement with Sayyid’s take on Muslim ontology. In this section, I interrogate the decolonial value of Dabashi and Daulatzai’s thoughts on Muslim ontology in the postcolonial context, as well as reveal how they repeat neo/postcolonial understandings of Muslim political ontology. This process of critique and appraisal does not necessarily mean that there is a single answer to going beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim divide. Rather, my engagements with their interpretations of Muslim political ontology and identity offers a \textit{process} for thinking beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim divide. While the particular argument in this section is that Dabashi and Daulatzai put forward both colonial and decolonial reflections on Muslim ontology, it is also a case for a decolonial Muslim process of “clearing and dreaming”\textsuperscript{143}, which puts forward that there are multiple possibilities and

\textsuperscript{142} For more on Sayyid’s understanding of historiography and language, see Chapters 1 and 2 of \textit{Recalling} (2014). For Sayyid, Islam is the name that gives Muslims a name (2014: 1). Islam is a language for Muslims to conceptualize the political and to engage in politics. He defines this language of Islam as Islamism. Conceptualizations of history and historiography are important in relation to Islamism because, for Sayyid, Islamism challenges the master narrative of the Plato-to-NATO story that defines Western universalism and coloniality. “It is at the level of contesting genealogies, at the point where foundational discourses are articulated, that Islamism – by insisting on its ability to renarrate and recast Westernese discourses in such a way that threatens to dissolve the Western identity of these discursive elements – challenges Westernese with universalization” (2014: 24). Contesting the historiography and language of Westernese through the historiography and language of a decolonial Muslim political identity is thus one way to decolonize being according to Sayyid’s logic.

\textsuperscript{143} Sayyid underscores how the process of “clearing and dreaming”, or “clearing and imagining”, is integral to decolonizing investigations of the Muslim: “This current volume is organized around two broad sets of conversations: those that deal with the various attempts to block Muslims from becoming the authors of their own history, and those that try to imagine what kind of history Muslims could write. The ability to articulate Muslim autonomy with consistency and hope, which demands that Muslims engage in the difficult but necessary task of writing their own history as Muslims, requires as the first step a clearing of the ground, a clearing of the objections that are constantly made and endlessly recycled” (Sayyid 2014: 10-11). Elsewhere Sayyid writes, “The division between clearing and dreaming cannot be absolute nor is it in the case of this volume, rather it ranges along a spectrum on which one end is
horizons beyond the good/and Muslim binary. Of course, by the very nature of this inquiry my own clearings and dreamings are included in addition to the implicit argument for a process of pluriversal clearing and dreaming in and of itself. Each section is divided according to thinker and deals with a) clearing and b) dreaming through their historiography and language in relation to their respective formulations of Muslim political ontology/identity.

4.1. Dabashi and the Muslim Revolutionary

Hamid Dabashi is a contemporary Iranian-American Muslim postcolonial thinker based at Columbia University in New York City, USA. Born in Iran in June 1951 to a working-class family in the south-western city of Ahvaz, Dabashi has since become a prolific scholar of Islam and a renown cultural critic. His interests span a wide array of subjects, from Iranian studies, medieval and modern Islam, comparative literature, world cinema and the philosophy of art (Biography). His works on contemporary Islam demonstrate a critical engagement with both colonial modernity as well as pre-modern and modern Islamicate intellectual history. Dabashi has reflected specifically on what it means to be a Muslim in the modern world (2013), as well as forwarded a radical Muslim political identity that he calls “the Muslim Revolutionary” (Dabashi 2008). Nonetheless, his works demonstrate a number of postcolonial tendencies that differ from that of the approach of decoloniality. Grosfoguel notes that the difference between postcolonial and decolonial studies lie within the issue of their differing historiographies of modernity, which I noted earlier, as well as language. By language, I mean the explicit and implicit forms of discourse and related epistemic universalisms that postcolonial thinkers such as Dabashi interlocate in their works, which largely still draw from Eurocentric framings of history and society (Grosfoguel 2011, Sayyid 2014). Both Dabashi’s shortcomings and breakthroughs are valuable in relation to decolonizing Muslim political ontology, and his historiographical and language conceptualizations of the Muslim Revolutionary are carefully engaged in this section.

Dabashi’s conceptualizes the political identity of the Muslim Revolutionary through the lens of Malcolm X (Al-Hajj Malik Al-Shabazz, d. 1965), in his book Islamic Liberation Theology: Resisting the Empire (2008). For Dabashi, Malcolm X was a figure who transgressed political and colonial boundaries that kept oppressed peoples from the core and periphery of the capitalist world-system away from each other in their interconnected global struggles against a common oppressor (2008: 23). Dabashi writes that Malcolm was the embodiment of the ideal Islamic

dominated by critique and alternative language games are put forward at the other” (2014: 15). Alternative historiographies are also put forward in the process of clearing and dreaming, as Sayyid argues (2014: 174).
liberation theology, “In his revolutionary character and iconoclastic legacy, Malcolm X links any
global conception of an Islamic liberation movement to the heart of the most progressive uprising
of the wretched of the earth” (2008: 245). He cites Malcolm’s legacy and ability to connect the
plight of African-Americans in the US Empire to the wider struggles of anti-colonial movements in
Africa, Asia and Latin-America as a key feature of the Muslim Revolutionary. In Malcolm’s life,
Dabashi encounters a figure whose conversion to Islam, and complex journey through various
expressions of Islam is the ideal model for any Muslim liberative project in the postcolonial
present:

With every move, he expanded what it meant to be a Muslim revolutionary, in terms tolerant
of diversity and dissent, intolerant of dogmatism and essentialism. In his identitarian
inauthenticities (for he ran away from many stereotypes) he was far more of an authentic
revolutionary, his religious monotheism always seasoned by a political polytheism. For
Islam in its widest and most global reach to become a relevant force in the age of rapid
globalization, this expansive, tolerant, self-transformative, and auto-critical legacy of
Malcolm X will have to become exemplary. Malcolm X had a reckoning with Islam. It is time
Islam had a reckoning with Malcolm X. (2008: 246-247)

The Muslim Revolutionary is thus a critical Muslim political identity tolerant of both “diversity and
dissent” and intolerant of “dogmatism and essentialism” even as it attempts to put forward a
presumably anti-essentialist political ontology. Through Malcolm’s hybridity of “religious
monotheism” and “political polytheism”, Islam is able to become a resistive force in a world were
globalization has rendered the “West vs Islam” binary, for Dabashi, no longer operative (Dabashi
2008).

There are a number of issues with Dabashi’s Muslim Revolutionary though. While Dabashi has
an entire chapter entitled “Malcolm X as Muslim Revolutionary,” there is nowhere in Islamic
Liberation Theology where he provides an explicitly centralized or systematized definition of the
Muslim Revolutionary. In reading the whole of Islamic Liberation Theology, especially in tandem
with a number of his other works such as Brown Skin, White Masks (2011), On Being a Muslim
in the World (2013) and Post-Orientalism (2017), one is able to better draw a panoramic and
systematic view of what the Muslim Revolutionary means as a political identity in relation to
Dabashi’s wider arguments on Muslim ontology.

In the historiographies and languages that undergird Dabashi’s thoughts on Muslim ontology,
including that of the Muslim Revolutionary, Dabashi exhibits a decidedly postcolonial approach
that has both decolonial and colonial aspects when thinking through the process of decolonizing
Muslim being beyond coloniality and the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary. From his rejection of
the West vs Rest historiography, to his anti-Islamist linguistic turns, Dabashi gets caught in neo/postcolonial tropes that fail to understand the deep political ontological divides that continue to mark the Muslim subject in modernity. On the other hand, Dabashi’s insight into the diverse historical forces which shaped Muslim identities in the modern/colonial encounter – such as socialism, anti-colonial nationalism and Islamism – and his expression of a post-Western language for doing Muslim politics point to a decolonial horizon for Muslim ontology. In the following sections, I will be clearing and dreaming through the historiographical and language features mentioned above which underlie Dabashi’s conceptualization of the Muslim Revolutionary in order to argue for a Muslim political identity which transcends the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary.

4.1.2. Dabashi’s Historiography - Clearing

Dabashi’s postcolonial historiography of the Muslim subject in modernity is problematic on a number of fronts. First, he does not deal with the role of race in the formation of the coloniality of being that disciplines Muslim political ontology. Second, and, connected to the first point, Dabashi’s argument that the West over Rest binary no longer exists overemphasizes the role of political economy and class difference while ignoring the cultural and colonial difference that mark the material realities between those in the West and Rest. In relation to the former, he engages in a form of economic reductionism that places capitalism as the primary organizing principle of modernity, while decolonial scholars center race as the primary organizing principle in the modern/colonial world-system (Grosfoguel 2011). For example, in his analysis of the colonization of South Asia by the British he argues that the capitalist mode of production was the central organizing principle in driving colonialism (2008: 45). Dabashi’s economic reductionism is visible again in the following quote:

What difference does it make if the British colonized India or Ireland, the Italians Mezzogiorno or Libya, or the French bourgeoisie the French or Algerian laborers? Colonization is colonization is colonization. Colonialism is integral to the operation of capital. Colonialism is the abuse of labor by capital, times racism, multiplied by predatory warmongering. The capital colonizes labor, not cultures” (2008: 141).

Dabashi erases the colonial racialized ontological difference that exists between working class Europeans and the entirety (whether working class or not) of non-Europeans by insisting in his class-first analysis that capital colonizes labor and not cultures/races.
Dabashi uses economic reductionism to explain away that racial difference remains the primary operating principle of the coloniality of power by choosing a class-based analysis of neoliberal globalization that privileges the supposed collapse of cultural (read racialized) difference between the core and periphery of capitalist world-order. He writes, “The rapid circularity of capital and labor code-named ‘globalization’ in its most recent spin has finally exposed the fabricated ideology of domination constitutional to the binary opposition between ‘Islam and the West,’ from which both illusions were made possible” (2008: 157). For Dabashi, Islam and the West as well as the West and the Rest binaries are forms of “false consciousness” that the globalized neoliberal bourgeois impose on the minds of proletariat masses.144 Such a position fails to understand that the Islam vs the Rest and West vs the Rest binaries are material productions of cultural difference that mark the political ontological divide between those in the zone of being and non-being. This is a consistent theme in Dabashi’s works. In On Being a Muslim in the World, Dabashi argues that capital produces racial divides in order to produce the colonial divide and not the other way around (2013: 144).145 Following Grosfoguel’s understanding of the difference between postcolonial and decolonial modes of inquiry (2011), this sharp divide between political economy and cultural studies is perpetuated by the disciplinary decadence146 of many postcolonial scholars, including Dabashi. The decolonial approach sutures the gap between political economy and

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144 For Dabashi, the Du Boisian color-line no longer exists, “With Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powel in positions of warmongering power, shoulder-to-shoulder with George Bush and Dick Cheney, the color line is no longer the defining moment of the twenty-first century, even if it were in the twentieth. Capitalism is color blind and gender neutral.” (2008: 21) This lack of systemic race analysis is characteristic throughout Dabashi’s work. Preceding the aforementioned quote, Dabashi equates the power of the “Arab Shaykhs” in the Gulf with that of the ruling classes in the US empire by saying they operate from the same positinalities of power in the world. In doing so, Dabashi misses the point that the Arab Shaykhs of the Gulf are actually controlled by the ruling oligarchs in the US and wider Global North, thereby assuming incorrectly that the power, and ability to exercise power, of Gulf monarchies is at par with those in the North; this is simple sociological falsehood from a systemic point of view. While the ruling classes of the Gulf indeed have soiled hands and engage in forms of neo-apartheid in their societies and proxy wars across the Muslim world through hard and soft power, their ability to do so and impact is nowhere near the level of Western supremacist modes of power and exercising power in the modern/colonial world-system, even if many of these Gulf ruling classes align their interests with those in the North. Colonial racial difference still remains even at the highest levels of capitalist bourgeois globalized neoliberal alliances across Wester and non-Western cultures.

145 Dabashi writes, “Colonial to me is the vertical abuse of labor by capital run horizontally amuck all over the globe. Capital called itself ‘secular’ (or, alternatively, ‘modern’) at the European center of its manufactured globeality and then denied, denigrated, dismissed, and sought to subjugate all its colonial sites to religion (or, alternatively, ‘tradition’) in order to belittle, intimidate, dismiss, and dominate them. Capital had the same disdain for the colonial site, which it called ‘religion,’ as for its own feudal European past, which it held (as it invented and catapulted it onto its medieval and ancient shores) even in darker contempt” (2013: 144). While pointing to valid and necessary critiques of the way the secular/religious were imposed Eurocentrically across the world, Dabashi again erases the role of racism and Western Man’s ontological project by imply reducing his mode of inquiry to a class-based analysis of colonialism.

146 Lewis Gordon, in his Disciplinary Decadence: Living Thought in Trying Times (2006), argues against the ossification of academic disciplines. Instead he proposes the teleological suspension of disciplinarity and tightly enclosed disciplinary boundaries so as to encourage scholars to recognize the openness of ideas and the purposes on which their disciplines were founded upon.
cultural studies by formulating an analysis of the modern/colonial world-system that recognizes the place of political economy and culture in forming modernity but places it under a wider array of hierarchies (class, knowledge, agriculture, languages, etc.) that is organized along the racial line of the Human (i.e., Western Man, zone of being) and non-Human (the Rest, zone of non-being) (ibid.). To deal with class as an organizing principle is thus an ontic mode of inquiry, rather than an ontological one, given that race is a type of primal ontological reality that already determines or encircles the ontic reality of class in the modern/colonial world-system.

Dabashi’s understanding of the West vs Rest binary is another example of his ontically inclined approach to understanding Muslim historiography rather than an ontological one. He widely argues for a “post-everything”\textsuperscript{147} approach in his works on the Muslim Question which posits that the West over the Rest binary is over, and that we live in a “post-civilizational” empire (2008: 34-35). There are two ways that Dabashi tries to explain the West vs Rest binary as a form of false consciousness. First, as I have demonstrated above, is through his economic reductionist class-analysis. The West over the Rest binary does not exist for Dabashi because racialized cultural difference is not a primal factor in his analysis, “Structurally the abused laborers in London, Paris and New York are identical in their relation of power to capital with colonized persons the world over” (2008: 35). This is an exaggerated comparison. If this were the case, the Blackamerican bourgeoisie would not be regularly arrested simply for being black in a putatively post-racial Obama-led American Empire\textsuperscript{148}, nor would wealthy Republican Muslim-American philanthropists accused of being bad Muslim terrorists for supporting Palestinian charities be held in detention and eventually stripped of their US citizenship and exiled.\textsuperscript{149} The idea that the working class across the world share a common basis for solidarity has long been critiqued; whether by the likes of Muslims, such as Sultan Galiev during and after the Bolshevik Revolution (Renault 2014), or by more recent Black thinkers, such as Cedric Robinson (2000) and Robin D.G. Kelley (2017). Working classes Whites and Westerners, of both leftist and rightist determination, have proven time and again that their race-based solidarities – whether in the form of economic racism or

\textsuperscript{147} In her article “Post-Everything”, Kersten details the various “posts” that Dabashi works with or puts forward: poststructuralism, postcolonialism, post-Islamism, post-Western, and more. While Kersten’s article is not critical of Dabashi, it highlights Dabashi’s “post” approaches throughout his works in the past decade.

\textsuperscript{148} World renown Harvard University, Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr., was famously arrested in his own house in Cambridge, Massachusetts after trying to force open his locked door. Police followed him into his house and eventually charged him with disorderly conduct and racial harassment after he accused white police officers of being racist for not believing the house was his (Thompson?).

\textsuperscript{149} This refers to the case of Muslim Palestinian-American Dr. Sami Al-Arian who was accused of terrorism in 2003 for raising funds for charities in Gaza, Palestine. After years of house-bound detention without any trial, he eventually stripped of his citizenship and deported to Turkey in 2015 (Tillman).
epistemic racism – supersede that of their class solidarities with non-Whites/Westerners. This does not mean that the gap is sutured between Westerners and “Resterners” to share political futures, but it does mean that Dabashi’s claim that abused laborers in the North share the same condition in relation to capital as “colonized people the world over” is unsubstantiated.

Second, and flowing from the first point, Dabashi’s analysis of the West over the Rest binary is rooted in an ability to lay out social hierarchies of power that are defined by a political ontology based on colonial difference. He states that due to the nature of the diffusion of neoliberal capitalism through globalization that there is no such thing as the West anywhere (because it was always a smokescreen anyways), and that we have entered a post-national and post-civilizational world. “We have now completely entered a post-national dominance of cultures and the post-civilizational collapse of capital and colonial divides. The fabrication of ‘Islam and the West’ as a particularly poignant variation on the theme of the ‘The West and the Rest’ no longer holds valid” (Dabashi 2008: 158). To substantiate this, Dabashi cites the collapse of economies controlled by nation-states as leading to the rise of cities that express the transnational nature of labor and capital (ibid.).

What is at stake in the example above is both Dabashi’s empirical observations, as well as his postcolonial ontological assumptions and framework. Dabashi’s lack of race analysis empirically disturbs his class-centric lens, pointing to a number of unobserved empirical mischaracterizations of how power works along colonial ontological difference. He tries to reason through the question of neoliberal globalization and planetary imperialism and his answer to this question is that capitalism and class-analysis are the starting points of analysis. He empirically collapses the difference between the West and the Rest and the North and the South by arguing instead that class can explain the neoliberal ontical reordering of the world into a post-national and post-civilizational world-system. This leads Dabashi to say something like, “The Saudi and Kuwaiti billionaires, just like Jordanian or Moroccan monarchists, or Latin American drug cartels, Asian entrepreneurs, Russian businessmen, Iranian clerical cliques, Chinese party apparatchiks, Indian Hindu fundamentalists, Israeli Zionists, European corporations, etc. – they are all, as Susan Willis would put it, flying the American flag” (2008: 151). It is at this uncritical point of comparison where Dabashi’s lack of understanding the social and political is most obvious. I will return to this subject soon.
4.1.2.1. Why Difference Matters: Towards a Decolonial Muslim Historiography of Coloniality

Dabashi’s attempts to exit the historiography and material reality of the West over the Rest binary without analyzing the social colonial differences emanating from the political ontology of anti-Muslimness. For Sayyid, difference is the condition of the possibility of a decolonial Muslim political identity, let alone any identity. Sayyid argues that:

Thus, to resort to dialogue as a means of transcending differences would imply the erosion of the identities constituted by the articulation of those differences. The erosion of identity cannot escape being a violating act; the more deeply etched and fundamentally drawn the identity, the more likely its loss would be felt as violation. The existence of differences, however, also points to the possibility of conflict. Conflict guarantees the construction of a world that can always be unraveled to demonstrate its ignoble beginnings. In other words, the presence of conflicts and the inability to reconcile differences prevents structural closure; it keeps a space open in which the struggle for a new construction of the world can take place. This struggle carries with it the possibility of articulating those social relations in a different way. Conflict provides an opportunity to escape one’s socialisation and to remove oneself from the current order by refusing the subjugations and subjectifications that are an offer. (2014: 28)

In effect, by denying the racial colonial ontological difference in his analysis of the modern/colonial world-system, and by instead inserting an ontic and ethically orientated “hermeneutics of alterity” that rejects the “metaphysic of identity” (2013: 159), Dabashi is complicit in mere dialogue as a means of transcending differences. Sayyid argues that the hegemony of liberal philosophy inculcates the desire to see the primacy of the rational individual, and to see conflicts as being the result of failed paradigmatic solutions. This failure, according to Sayyid’s reading of liberalism, is temporary and can only be defeated by the exercise of reason and goodwill. Thus, Sayyid argues that this view, which is Dabashi’s view, posits that differences exist in the world due to empirical rather than ontological limits (Sayyid 2014: 20).

Dabashi’s historiographical dismissal of the West over Rest binary erodes the possibility of a decolonial Muslim political identity that is based in opposition to the West over the Rest binary because Dabashi has a priori made the claim that the West over the Rest does not exist. Therefore, Muslims must firstly (and only?) exist as radically ethical beings, and not radically political beings. He does not acknowledge the racial socio-political ontological divides based on the West over the Rest binary that still vibrantly exist in relation to the Muslim. This, combined with his ethics-first hermeneutics of alterity approach\(^\text{150}\) to going beyond colonial difference, result

\(^{150}\) Dabashi’s Levinasian influenced hermeneutics of alterity, like Maldonado-Torres’ similar Levinasian-Fanonian conception (2008), is in and of itself not an unworthy formulation. However, unlike Maldonado-Torres who recognizes colonial ontological difference, Dabashi limits Muslim subjectivity to the ethical realm by overlooking racial
in Dabashi trying to liberally and empirically explain away the political divide of “us vs them” (friend/enemy, good/bad Muslim, etc.) without developing sharp enough political teeth to confront the anti-Muslim social divisions of the world that lay the conditions of possibility for asserting a decolonial Muslim identity which can disturb the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, colonial difference and go beyond it.

Lastly, Dabashi’s historiography of colonialism and slavery in the Islamicate world, as well as resistance to it, is limited to the common postcolonial tendency to begin analyses colonialism in the 17th and 18th centuries rather than earlier (Dabashi 2008 & Grosfoguel 2011). A decolonial approach centers the longue durée of coloniality/modernity by starting an analysis of Western forms of domination as rooted in the 15th and 16th century conquests of Al-Andalus, the Americas, Africa and other parts of the Islamicate and wider non-Western world (Grosfoguel 2011). This postcolonial genealogical error on Dabashi’s part causes him to make the claim in a number of his works that “the Muslim is the New Jew” (2011 & 2013). By bracketing the problem of anti-Muslim racism to its manifestations in a post-World War II West where Jews are no longer threats to a redefined Judeo-Christian/Secular world-order, Dabashi fails to see that the Muslim has always been the Muslim in the mind of a fundamentally anti-Muslim modern world-system. While Judeophobia is, of course, interrelated to Islamophobia and shares genealogical similarities in terms of how Jews and Muslims were marked as racially inferior by Western Man, Dabashi’s postcolonial misstep erases how impactful anti-Muslim modernity throughout the long march of coloniality. While anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim racisms share similarities, the difference in their impact lays within the systemically different ways they have organized the world in the medieval and modern periods.  

\[\text{difference and political ontology, rather than seeing the political and ethical as intertwined and necessary dimensions for confronting coloniality.}\]

\[\text{151 Anti-Jewish sentiments have their roots in the 1st century CE in classical Greco-Roman society (Slabodsky 2015: 47), while anti-Muslim sentiments existed since after its birth in the 7th century in both Eastern and Western Christendom as I described in Chapters 1 and 2. Where these anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim logics meet is in the medieval period in Western Christendom as more solidified systems of pre-modern theoanthropological racisms. Jews were a racialized minority in medieval Christendom and modern Europe, yet their racialization ceased to exist as a systemic reality in the post-WWII era. Anti-Muslim racism, on the other hand, existed inside medieval Christendom and continues to exist under modernity/coloniality. Muslims were a larger demographic threat to both medieval Christendom and modern Europe (if we remember my earlier comparison between racism against Indians and Black Africans in Apartheid South Africa, with Black Africans clearly being the larger demography and threat). And anti-Muslim racism exists within the Islamicate world at the level of the political through the anti-Islamist nature of Kemalism. Judaism as a political ontology is privileged in the post-WWII as part of the Zionist-Crusading secular/Judeo/Christian world-system, and Jews no longer experience racist governmentality based on their Jewishness anywhere in the world. Thus anti-Jewish racism/Judeophobia and anti-Muslim racism/Islamophobia can be analytically compared but they can’t be equated as the same, especially if we look at the praxis of how they have organized the world through their impacts, with Judeophobia no longer existing as a systemic reality post-WWII.}\]

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Decolonial historiography must better incorporate the way that coloniality was historically formed in relation to the Muslim: 1) the inclusion of Vasco Da Gama (as a type of “Eastern Columbus”) going East to South Asian Islamicate lands; 2) the Spanish landing in the Polynesian areas in the early 16th century (ex. the Moros in the Philippines); 3) the rise of Russian civilization to the north of the Islamicate world, and the Soviet and Chinese anti-Muslim Communist states; 4) and the policing of Muslim diasporas (whether Black African, Morisco, or other) in the Americas and elsewhere (post-1492 Catholic Iberian peninsula, for example). The four points above are all historical phenomena which the Latin American, Atlantic-centered decolonial historiography must better incorporate into its own archives of the rise of the modern/colonial world-system in order to further unveil the presence and extent of anti-Muslim/Islamist racism latent within coloniality.

Sayyid argues that challenging the historiography of the Plato-to-NATO narrative and good Muslim-bad Muslim binary is integral to the formation of a decolonial Muslim political identity (2014: 37). I would add that specifically in relation to the Muslim, as I pointed to in my conceptualization of the crusading spirit in Chapter 2, that we might be dealing with “ten Centuries of crusades” which was inaugurated by Pope Urban’s call of Deus Vult! in the 11th century (Garaudy 1999: 3). I agree with the decolonial historiographical notion that this crusading spirit only got to reach global ambitions in a post-1492 world, but, as a point of building a larger decolonial Muslim historiography that reveals the underside of the Plato-to-NATO narrative, I argue that the crusading spirit’s ten centuries of permanent warfare is integral for our own narrative in clearing the political ontology of Western supremacist historiography and dreaming against and beyond it. With regard to Dabashi’s historiography of the Muslim Revolutionary, there is a need to expand and critique the postcolonial limits of his conceptualization, as much as we need to dream alongside other parts of it.

4.1.3. Dabashi’s Historiography - Dreaming

In terms of the ways in which Dabashi’s historiography lends itself to dreaming of a Muslim political identity that goes beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim narrative, let us revisit the relationship between the political and politics. In the post-foundationalist school of political theory, the political is to the ontological, as politics is to the ontic (Marchart 2007: 1-8). For Sayyid, a counter-hegemonic Islamist project and Muslim political identity must navigate the movement “from Islam to the Islamicate” (2014: 148). Sayyid argues that Islam is the ontological element in this decolonial Muslim political project, while the Islamicate is the ontic. In the same manner, while
Islam correlates to the political, the Islamicate correlates to politics (2014: 148). By this, he implies that:

Islam for Muslims functions as a quilting point: a name that unifies a discursive formation. For Islam to play this role does not mean that it is a signifier without signified, for that would be mere noise...rather it is a signifier that condenses networks of signifieds thus giving belonging (to a specific discursive universe) and their meaning in that totality. It is precisely because Islam functions like this for Muslims that it is impossible for it to be tied down to its signifieds through an elaborate enumeration [in the Islamicate]. (2014: 149)

Furthermore, Sayyid argues that the political is a condition for the possibility of the relationship between the friend and enemy; meaning, in the Schmittian\(^{152}\) sense, the political erupts and becomes a signifier when a distinction between friends and enemies takes hold (2014: 170). Sayyid underscores that the political also necessitates politics:

By politics is meant not only the wheeling and dealing of its practitioners, but rather the set of complex arrangements (formal, informal, institutional and personal) by which the political is tamed. Politics is the way in which any social order can be policed, marshalled and given the appearance of suture. Politics then is a constant effort to tame the antagonisms inherent to the political: it is the domestification of the political. (2014: 171)

In light of the Sayyidian distinction between Islam and the Islamicate in relation to the political politics, much of Dabashi’s historiographical claims are not as helpful for forming a political ontology of Islam, as they are for the ontical terrain of politics in the Islamicate. In my understanding of the relationship between the political and politics, I do not think that because Dabashi errs in a failure to exhibit a coherent understanding of what Islam means as a political ontology or world-system that his insights into the ontic dimension of the Islamicate are invaluable. On the contrary, his diverse reading of Islamicate histories (though not necessarily historiography)\(^{153}\) in relation to the Muslim subject in colonial modernity aid in forming a creative politics that can domesticate an decolonial Muslim political ontology into the world. On this point, which I will return to again, I argue that it is in politics that the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary can

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152 Carl Schmitt (d. 1985) was a conservative German political theorist and jurist. He wrote extensively on the domain and exercise of political power, and his ideas have remained a major influence on subsequent generations of political theory, political theology, continental philosophy and legal theory (Hooker 2009)). Sayyid’s works largely draw from Schmitt’s understanding of the political, whereby Sayyid repurposes Schmitt’s framework to make sense of Islamist social movements and their political philosophies in the past century (1997 & 2014). Dabashi seems to refer to a critique of Schmitt’s idea of the political as necessitating an enemy Other (2013: 103 & 114) but does not elaborate nor provide a well theorized alternative.

153 I define historiography in my work as an ontological matter, and history as more ontic. This is based on the definitions I provided above in which historiography is correlated to a pre-conceived reading of history/ies which governs a person’s readings of history/ies. To suspend and critically examine one’s historiography is an ontological act. Critiquing history as facts and observations in the ontic sphere is necessary, but to move in a counter meta-historical direction one must suspend canons of history/ies, or in other words, historiographical ontologies.
be countered by way of the precursor of forming a counter-hegemonic decolonial Muslim political identity.

Dabashi’s analysis of various social movements in the Islamicate world is one aspect of his historiography of the Muslim Revolutionary that lends itself to a process of decolonial dreaming in terms of the politics that the Muslim must deal with. He notes how three forces - Islamism, anti-colonial nationalism and revolutionary socialism - shaped Muslim subjectivities in social movements against colonial modernity:

In combative conversation with ‘the West’ (the code-name for European colonialism that culminated in American imperialism), ‘Islam’ was systematically mutated (more than by anyone else by Muslims themselves) into a singular site of ideological resistance to foreign domination in Muslim lands. The militant Islamism that ensued was obviously not the only mode of ideological resistance to attempts at global domination. Anti-colonial nationalism and revolutionary socialism (of pre-Soviet, Soviet, and post-Soviet sorts) were equally instrumental in mobilizing people against the barefaced robbery of their homeland and dignity. (2008: 196)

It is in this combative encounter with the West that Dabashi locates Malcolm X and the Muslim Revolutionary as a critical Muslim political identity that is religiously monotheistic and politically polytheistic (246-247). What is of importance in this reading of Islamicate historiography is that it greatly aids in teasing out how the political and politics work themselves out as part of the wider tapestries of the Islamicate social. If we compare Dabashi’s more ontic reading of these three forces alongside that of Sayyid’s more ontological reading of how Kemalism and Islamism shape the Muslim subject, what kind of politics and historiography emerges?

Dabashi’s empirical reading is ontic because it does not recognize the colonial difference that arose out of the encounter of the three ideologies mentioned, nor does it place them in hierarchies of power in the Islamicate social. Dabashi’s trio of Islamism/Anti-Colonial Nationalism/Revolutionary Socialism does not deal with the ontological demands that the epistemic political division between the religious and secular imposed on the Islamicate world. This is why Sayyid’s unveiling of Kemalism as a privileged secular epistemic and political positioning in the Islamicate over that of Islamism is helpful to tease out the benefits and limits of Dabashi’s trio because Dabashi’s ontic analysis of these three historical forces, fails to place them in a hierarchy of socio-epistemic difference. When put in conversation with Sayyid’s conceptualization of Islamism/Kemalism, it is evident that a Muslim identity based on Islamism can never simultaneously be secular nationalist and/or socialist at the level of the political due to
the ways in which the hegemonic Kemalist nature of secular nationalism and socialism have disciplined or contained Islamism for challenging their ontological groundings.  

4.1.3.1. Being a Bad Muslim, Becoming a Decolonial Muslim

For a Muslim political identity to thus emerge out of the ontological and ontic crossfire of Dabashi and Sayyid’s historiographical reading of Islamicate societies, we must learn how to better order them at the social level of political ontology. If the dominant Kemalist forms of Islamicate socialism and nationalism view the Islamist as the “bad Muslim”, and the Kemalist as a “good Muslim”, what is the process for exiting the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary with social power relations in mind? It is my contention that the so-called bad Muslim is the starting place for such an exit strategy. The bad Muslim, unlike the good Muslim, has an anti-Eurocentric politics of opposition to the modern/colonial world-system, even if deeply problematic at times (i.e., takfiri groups like ISIS)\(^{155}\).

The good Muslim, whether as secular nationalist or revolutionary socialist, can only provide an intra-Western critique due to their dominant reliance on the universalizing Western language (Kemalism) whether in capitalist or communist form (Marxism, Nationalism, etc.). Of course, not all bad Muslims are the same. Al-Qaeda in Libya is different from ISIS in the Sham is different from Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan is different from the Islamic Charter Front in Sudan and so forth. There are exclusivist takfiri Islamists – a minority within the wider gamut of Islamism - who are far from providing decolonial responses to global coloniality.\(^{156}\) Nevertheless, bad Muslims experience the underside of the West over the Rest historiography that has been internalized in the Islamicate world; that is, the Kemalism over Islamism binary.

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154 Whether it is the Islamist Muslim National Communist movements of the early Soviet empire (Renault 2014; Bennigson 1980), or the formation of Islamism against that of Kemalism in the secular Republics of Muslimistan (Primakov 2009), Islamist currents have rarely been able to form counter-hegemonic statist or post-statist Caliphate-type structures without facing constant opposition from more privileged anti-Islamist political structures - whether those of the West, Russia, China, African Union, or Kemalist forces within Muslimistan.

155 Omar Ashour writes that, “Takfir (excommunication) is the act of accusing a Muslim of abandoning Islam and becoming an infidel or an apostate (murtadd). Based on that concept, Takfirism is an ideology whose basic assumption labels a whole Muslim community (a village, a city, a country or the global Muslim community) as infidels/apostates, unless proven otherwise” (9: 2009). A decolonial Muslim understanding of takfirisim views it as a form of sectarian exclucivism that is a detriment to the post-mazhabi horizon, I point I turn to later.

156 Not all Islamist movements and thinkers are decolonial, but Islamism in its totality and counter-hegemonic historical manifestation provides a decolonial response to coloniality and Kemalism. While it is not the focus of this study, there is an urgent need to develop a grammar beyond so-called “moderate” and “radical” Islamism - which is itself based on the good Muslim (moderate) - bad Muslim (radical) binary – in order to further internal decolonial critique within Islamism. Terms such as takfirisim and exclusivism, which I have used in brief above, are examples of a move away from the anti-Muslim/Islamist language of radical/moderate and good/bad.
It is only by going to the margins of this narrative through the politics of the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary itself that one can begin to articulate a counter-political ontology that is affirmatively Muslim against an anti-Muslim world. By having this preferential option for the *mustad’afun*\(^{157}\), one can then develop a politics that domesticates a decolonial Muslim identity beyond its previous racist classifications of good/bad.

This does not mean that a decolonial Muslim identity cannot learn from the histories and tools that such movements as socialism or nationalism provide. Muslim identity must not be dogmatic, but it must be counter-hegemonic at the level of the political, with space for creativity and diversity in politics after claiming a counter non-Westernized universality for itself through the language of Islam. It does mean though that the Eurocentric historiography that universalized both nationalism and socialism during the Cold War, Post-Cold War and War on Terror periods - while simultaneously attempting to kick Islamism to the dustbin of history - must be challenged. It also means that anti-colonial nationalism and socialism must be provincialized and Islamism deprovincialized away from the current Kemalism over Islamism binary in the Islamicate world. It is by going to the space of the bad Muslim first, and then beyond, that one can begin critiquing the inconsistencies, contradictions and problematics found within Islamist movements.\(^{158}\) One must take a stand on the oppressed side of social difference as a bad Muslim, and then from there can begin to redefine who one’s friends and enemies are as a decolonial Muslim that organizes the political and social in a post-Western manner. If one does the critique from the positionality of the good Muslim, they are de facto perpetuating the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary through a new lens that posits Muslims who do the political (let alone politics) through the language of Islam as perpetually damned bad Muslims. By choosing the ontic side of the bad Muslim, and from there becoming a decolonial Muslim ontologically, one is able to shatter the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary and begin to name and order the world more autonomously.

\(^{157}\) In effect, I argue that Islamism occupies the position of the *mustad’afun* (i.e., the oppressed) in relation to Western and Kemalist hegemonies of Muslim power, knowledge and being. By interlocating the idea of a preferential option for the *mustad’afun*, I draw upon the work of Muslim liberation theologian Farid Esack who argues that both the Qur’an and Sunnah overwhelmingly support the notion that believers must commit themselves to struggling alongside and for the *mustad’afun* (Esack 2006: 99-100, 110).

\(^{158}\) Such as neoliberalism, gender injustice and authoritarianism – all of which have existed normatively in various anti-colonial secular nationalist and socialist movements that became state projects. Maybe this is to say that Islamism, like its partners Dabashi puts it in conversation with, is just as complex a human phenomenon; yet, it seems to be a priori rejected due to the anti-Islamist politico-epistemic relationship that Kemalism demands from anti-colonial nationalism and socialism in the Islamicate world, including its diasporas.
In summation, Dabashi’s postulations on the historiography that underlies the Muslim Revolutionary is both limiting and liberating if put in conversation with a more systematic political ontological analysis. While the scope of this work does not allow me to comment in length on the other aspects of Dabashi’s historiographical approach which may be useful for thinking through a decolonial Muslim identity or politics – such as his comparative analysis of Islamic and Christian liberation theologies, inclusion of a wider canon of Shi’ah history, or his problematic lack of inclusion of African Muslim histories – I, nonetheless, have laid some groundwork for a decolonial clearing and dreaming beyond normative postcolonial approaches to Islamicate historiography and the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary. I now turn towards Dabashi’s engagement with language in relation to the Muslim Revolutionary.

4.1.4. Dabashi’s Language - Clearing

There are one main issue and one minor issue in relation to Dabashi’s approach to the language of Islam and the Muslim Revolutionary. The major issue is his anti-Islamism, and the minor issue is his understanding of Malcolm X and Malcolm’s connection to the language of Islam. In regard to the major issue, Dabashi puts forward a normative anti-Islamist position, and does not systematically define what he means by Islamism anywhere in his works. On one hand, he praises the Islamism of the “200-year” struggle against colonial modernity as a type of liberation theology that was an ideological necessity to resist European colonialism alongside and in conversation with anti-colonial nationalism and revolutionary socialism (2008: 98). Dabashi argues that Islamism has ultimately been a failure though for being a type of “religious nativism”; and especially the brands of Islamism that have come to dominate the postcolonial moment, such as those of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Revolution and Republic in Iran (ibid.). Due to Dabashi’s lack of systemic social and ontological analysis, he consistently makes questionable comparisons between Islamists (who are always those already in the zone of non-being) and others who are either in the zone of being or more privileged within the zone of non-being, such as Zionists, Christian and Hindu fundamentalists, and Islamicate Kemalists. In this section, I will address Dabashi’s anti-Islamist approach to language in relation to the following two points: 1) his inability to understand Islamism as a language for Muslims at the level of political ontology and 2) his questionable comparisons between different political languages which always seem to posit Islamism as the breeding ground of the bad Muslim.

4.1.4.1. Visiting Dabashi’s Islam and anti-Islamism
First, Dabashi does not consider Islam to be a language, nor a name for Muslims to do the political. For Dabashi, Islam is a “religion” at best which can inform his polyvocal hermeneutics of alterity, or Islam is reduced at worst (and against Dabashi’s own wishes) to a type of “legalism” (2013: 154 & 158). Dabashi sums up here that Islam cannot enter the domain of the social as a name, “The moment [sic], the moment of an Islamic naming, an Islamic revolution, and Islamic republic, that it (die dinge selbst) was violently forced to become definitive, it stopped even being integral and people (Muslims—nominal, denominational, believing or other-wise) either openly revolted against their own faith, or else embraced it in ostentatious militancy, thus protesting too much” (2013: 154). For Dabashi, the “Islamic ideology” (i.e., Islamism) of the 200-year battle against colonial modernity was an inherent form of religious nativism that saw its end in the Islamic Revolution of Iran of 1979, whose proceeding state Islamist project of the last three decades has become too unethical for him to consider it, amongst other Islamist projects whether society or state-centered, as politically interesting in substance or form (2008: 110). Islam, for Dabashi, primarily plays an ethical role as a religion for the Muslim Revolutionary to do politics but not the political. Dabashi premises his anti-political stance towards the language of Islam by mainly reading Islamism as a form of religious nativism and essentialism.

Islamism has been commonly critiqued as a form of essentialism by a number of postcolonial writers, especially on the secular colonial Left, including by Kemalist Leftists in the Islamicate world. For these writers, like the Kemalist Syrian Leftist Aziz al-Azmeh, Islamism can only be a form of nativist totalitarianism akin to communism or Nazism which promotes fascist tendencies. For these critiques, Islamism can only be a discourse that fantasizes an authentic essence because Islamists’ discovery of a “real” or “true” Islam can be nothing more than distortion of an Islamic tradition that has actually been much more diverse (Sayyid 2014: 49-50). Sayyid argues that what is hidden in such arguments against Islamist essentialism is the dominance of an unacknowledged Western universalism and Western language (what Sayyid calls “Westernese”159). This Western universal language, or Westernese, in effect, operates as the

159 Westernese is the language of the West which promotes the hegemonies of the Plato-to-NATO narrative and Western universalism: “This renarration reveals the contingent nature of the ‘Plato to NATO’ sequence; it demonstrates the trap of universalism for Westernese. Advocates of Westernese insist on the universal status of their discourse; in other words, the values of that discourse are the one that have applicability outside any particular frame or context. At the same time, they advocate the Western nature of the universal, that Western values are synonymous with the universal. If we can understand that a truly universal value would be unmarked by any association with any particular cultural formation, what Westernese offers is not universal values, but a suggestion that only Western values are universal (a position that many members of the critical Left end up endorsing by conflating the desire for the universal with ignorance of the ‘non-Western’)” (Sayyid 2014: 22-23).
standard bearer to whom non-Western universalisms and languages must submit to as inferior particulars (60). Sayyid suggests that such anti-essentialist critiques of Islamist essentialisms believe the language of Islam cannot become a universal language to describe the world because the Islamic tradition is supposedly (in its essence?) much more diverse. Without questioning why it is that Westernese can resolve its diverse signifieds through the master signifier of the West, while others cannot, one renders non-Westernese languages as defacto inferior to that of the hidden essentialist dominating West. Sayyid argues that to do a critique of essentialism without a critique of universalism often results in reaffirming a superior Western universal in relation to inferior non-Western particular. This goes against the principles of multiculturalism (ibid.), or what decolonial scholars would call pluriversality (Mignolo 2012: xxii).

Unveiling this covert Westernese facilitates the creation of a pluriversal world rather than one defined by Western Man’s putative universalism. Sayyid himself argues for a post-positivist (2013: 12) and post-foundationalist conceptualization of Islamism by critiquing the universalism of Westernese (2013: 60), as well as Muslims who approach the Islamic tradition through an atomistic and positivist fashion (2013: 163). Sayyid’s post-positivist and post-foundationalist understanding of Islamism is not in search of an essence and foundation for Islam, or another tradition for that matter. What he seems to be saying is that Muslims can believe or argue about what the foundation of Islam is (i.e., its ground), but they should not be worried about claiming they know exactly (in the divine sense of the Ultimate, or final ground) the essence/foundation of Islam. In my reading, what is at stake here for Sayyid is making the social a space open for contestations of power and decolonial pluriversality, and not colonial (Western) universality. That is why language is important for Sayyid, because it mitigates how we understand the social divisions which arise out of the political. That is also why Islam is a name as well as a language for Sayyid. Islamism is a decolonial language for him because Islamism reminds Muslims of a radical counter-universal political possibility: “that Islam is Islam, and for Muslims that is all that it needs to be” (2013: 191). In effect, we must abandon the West’s universalizing mission while doing two things: 1) firstly, we must not blame Islamist essentialism - or what Spivak (1987: 205-7) has called “strategic essentialism” - for being the problem, but being problematic, and 2) secondarily, also putting forward a post-essentialist reading of Islam.

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160 The problem being a cause, and the problematic being a symptom of the cause. The distinction here is important as blaming Islamism for its essentialism in effect treats it as the problem and cause, when in fact, Islamist essentialism is a problematic response to a much larger veiled problem and a symptom of the cause that rendered its condition of possibility; that is, Western essentialism and its dominating universal under coloniality. Treating Islamist essentialism
Dabashi, on the other hand, seems to be engaged in a debate against Islamism similar to al-Azmeh. Dabashi engages in a number of critiques of Islamism as a form of religious nativism and essentialism (2008: 98, 156 & 2013: 158). Yet, he critiques of Islamist essentialism do not go in tandem with critiques of Western universalism. At best, he normatively disregards Islamism for its essentialism while only lightly critiquing what he reads as exemplary forms of other essentialisms (and never names these other forms Western): “These tendencies towards absolutist certainties were not, of course, limited to Islam. As Islam was thus reduced to yet another form of nativism, so was nationalism degenerated into jingoism, as did socialism into Stalinism” (2008: 98). In a more objective fashion Dabashi later states, “Whereas anti-colonial nationalism borrowed the very modular imagination of the ‘nation’ from the centers of capitalist modernity and used it against colonialism, religious nativism recast the ancestral faith of the natives at large and sought similar ends” (2008: 156). Here Dabashi seems to be only making an observable statement about how anti-colonial nationalism and Islamism interacted in their epistemic dealings with the colonial encounter. Yet immediately afterwards, he takes a stronger position, “It was the substance, not the form, of nationalism that provided the colonial world with a site of resistance to colonialism” (157).

In effect, Dabashi argues that it was not a problem for anti-colonial nationalists to take the substance of Western universalism while changing its form. Throughout his works, Dabashi’s soft critiques of socialist and nationalist essentialisms are less in quantity and quality than his harsher critiques of Islamist essentialism. Additionally, by not critiquing the Western universalism that underlies both nationalism (colonial or anticolonial) or socialism (revolutionary or Stalinist), Dabashi, defacto, holds Western universalism as the mirror through which to judge Islamism.161 Aside from a 200-year period (19th and 20th centuries) up until the Iranian Revolution (1979) where Dabashi deems Islamism a “necessary” form of resistance and religious nativism, it seems that Islamists in the post-1979 and wider postcolonial moment can only become bad Muslims for as a cause will perpetuate the creation of bad Muslims, because the anti-Muslim Western universal is not being unveiled and critiqued.

161 This is not to deny that Islamism, anti-colonial nationalism and revolutionary socialism did not influence and converse with each other, as Dabashi argues. But it is to argue that this “hybridity” – a point I will return to later – did not happen at levels of equal power in relation to the language of Western universalism. Islamism is a non-Western universal, whereas socialism and anti-colonial nationalism, while being critical of the dominant forms of Western universalism still nonetheless used the language of Westernese as their intra-Western critique of Western universalism. That is one structural reason why Pan-Islamist renditions of nationalism and communism are not able to survive or rise to the level of hegemony. Pan-Islamism has been historically disciplined or rejected by both the West and Kemalists inside the Islamicate world whether capitalist, communist or nationalist.
Dabashi; all the while Kemalist socialists and nationalists who use an overt Western universalism as their standard can at best be problematic at times, but never as bad as those essentially essentialist Islamists. A problem arises for Dabashi when Muslims take the substance and language of Islam – an ontological move – as their base, rather than Dabashi’s preferred base of a hybrid language of ontic forms (Islamism/Socialism/Nationalism) which never acknowledges the Western universalism hiding between the ontological cracks.

In regard to the second issue with Dabashi’s anti-Islamism, Dabashi seems to assume that all forms of religious nativism operate within a world devoid of power relations. Because of this assumption, Dabashi normalizes comparing Islamism to any other form of so-called religious nativism; “a Jewish state here, and Islamic republic there, all in the neighborhood of a Hindu fundamentalism and all in need of a superior Christian empire to make them behave” (2008: 36). Elsewhere Dabashi writes,

The four modes of religious tribalism now rampant in the world – Christian imperialism, accentuated by a Jewish state, an Islamic Republic, and a pervasive Hindu fundamentalism – will have to be resisted and overcome by varied modes of liberation theologies that partake in the moral authority of all world religions but are irreducible to any tribal reading of any one of them. (2008: 265-266)

Dabashi’s haphazard analogizing of Islamism to the trio of Zionism-Christian imperialism-Hindutva points to a systemic deficiency in his understanding of political ontological hierarchies in the world. First, Islamists belong to the zone of non-being according to the modern/colonial/secular/Judeo-Christian and increasingly Hindutva friendly world-system, and Islamists are in fact opposition to these forces. Zionists, Christian fundamentalists (of the Northern and white variety) and Hindutva supporters, on the other hand, are all privileged according to the theoanthropological racial matrix of the modern/colonial world and are in political alliance with the Western civilizing mission.162

162 Hindutva (lit. meaning “Hinduness”), is a form of Hindu cultural nationalism which views India as an ancient Hindu homeland. It views the religions of Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism as authentically Indian religions, while it views those of Islam, Christianity, Judaism and Zoroastrianism as essentially foreign invaders who colonized India throughout the ages (Sharma 2002). Hindutva sees a number of social groups, notably Dalits and Muslims, as their enemies in the struggle to return India to its pure origins (Sharma 2015). Critiques of Hindutva view it as a form of internal colonialism that has been creating a type of Jim-Crow-like apartheid system in relation to India’s Muslim subjects (Khaliq). In building off the Orientalist remains of British colonialism’s statecraft and sectarianism which viewed Muslims as external to the “true” Indian nation, Hindutva forces have sought to legitimize rule through alliance with Western powers such as Israel and the United States against that of Islamist resistance in India (Muralidharan). Hindutva remains at the top of the political hierarchy in organizing Indian society through systems of anti-Muslim and anti-Dalit governmentality (Sharma 2015). To thus equate Hindutva essentialism (i.e., the cause, the problem) with Islamist essentialism (i.e., at times the symptom of the cause, and/or problematic) is a step that obscures power relations and the hegemony of Hindutva’s material position of dominance and power in Indian society and as part of
In relation to the dialectic of being the problem or problematic, Islamists are problematic, but the Zionist-Christian-Hindu fundamentalists are the problem. Even at the level of political violence, Islamist violence pales in comparison to Zionist-Christian-Hindu fundamentalist violence. Despite this, due to the increasingly anti-Muslim world we inhabit, the spectre of the Muslim terrorist (read ‘bad Muslim’) seems to haunt even Dabashi to the point that he horizontally equates Islamist violence to non-Islamist forms of religious violence. This is a false equivalency and questionable analogy that Islamophobically posits Islamism across the board, whether in the “moderate” (itself a colonial label) or the extremist takfiri form, as the standard bearer of religious nativist violence. It is, in fact, the trio of Zionism-Christian-Hindu fundamentalisms which produces the most widespread forms of the supposedly religious nativist violence on a planetary scale.

Finally, Dabashi’s anti-Islamist stance comes out in his reading of Islam as type of liberation theology, the Muslim Revolutionary being the ideal embodiment of this liberation theology. The political does not feature as a counter-hegemonic option for Dabashi’s Muslim Revolutionary to restructure the modern/colonial world-system. Rather, the Muslim Revolutionary and its companion, Islamic liberation theodicy, is primarily guided by an ethical impulse for Dabashi. He configures the Muslim Revolutionary in this anti-political way so as to be in a moro-ethical permanent state of opposition to power. In his reading of Shi‘i and wider Islamicate history, as well as his notion the “end to Islamic ideology” (i.e., Islamism), Islam “can only morally succeed when it is politically weak and combative, and conversely, it morally weakens and loses legitimacy when it is in political power” (2008: 13). While Dabashi’s hermeneutic of alterity is admirable for its commitment to the margins, his abandonment of the political leaves Muslims with no ontological home in the world to build power or make the world anew. Sayyid argues that “groups that are unable to accept the impossibility of a world without power are condemned to permanent

Islamophobic transnational networks of alliance with Zionists and Right-Wing Christians (Center for American Progress). Islamist essentialism speaks from a fundamentally lower position of power in relation to Zionist, Christian and Hindu fundamentalisms and cannot be equated as the same in the way Dabashi – and others secular Left scholars of Islamophobia such as Deepa Kumar (2012: 93) – seem to argue.

Over the past half-century, Zionist, Christian and Hindu fundamentalist forms of violence have risen to positions of power that allow them to have a structural impact that is far more sustaining and far-reaching than Islamist exclusionary violence (Sharma 2015, Muralidharan, Sayyid 1997, Center for American Progress). Islamist exclusionary violence has been made a spectacle by the mainstream media as the main form of violence which plagues the world through “hauntology” (Sayyid 1997: 1), all the while masking the reality of other forms of violence – such as Zionist/Christian/Hindu fundamentalist types – as far greater. These hidden forms of structural violence and overt omission of the violence of the powerful exacerbates the view that Islamist violence is the main enemy of “the world”. Sayyid remarks that the Muslim remains a “ghost-like” figure under coloniality which “haunts” the world by way of its at times explosive demands against international world-order (1997: 1).
Dabashi’s Muslim Revolutionary, which does not view Islam as a language and is explicitly anti-Islamist, is thus stuck in a politics of permanent opposition which lacks a strategy building a counter-hegemonic political project and an ontological home for Muslims.  

4.1.4.2. Reading Against Dabashi’s Malcolm

The other minor issue I take with Dabashi’s language is his engagement with Malcolm X. While Malcolm X is the foundation of Dabashi’s concept of the Muslim Revolutionary, his engagement with Malcolm X does not demonstrate that he has a foundational grasp of who Malcolm was and has been for Malcomite scholars and activists, and wider Muslim politic aspirations. Rarely does one find Dabashi actually citing the specific words and actions of Malcolm X. Aside from engaging with commonly known themes in Malcolm’s life such as his conversion to Sunni Orthodoxy from the Nation of Islam (NOI) or his Hajj pilgrimage, Dabashi mainly uses Malcolm as a faux metaphor for his own ideological construction of the Muslim Revolutionary rather than citing what Malcolm actually said or did, or citing other Malcomite scholars who have been carrying his legacy for decades. Thus, Dabashi does not take notice that Malcolm’s conceptualizations of historiography and language were in direct opposition to his own. At times, it seems Dabashi is also implicitly racist towards Malcolm and the NOI community that he came from. I briefly mention some examples of these issues below, and will deal more in depth with Malcolm X later when we come to an analysis of Daulatzai’s Muslim International, which is an objectively more thorough and nuanced engagement with Malcolm and his legacy.

Dabashi’s occasional racist approach to analyzing Malcolm is evident in his description of the NOI, which was the cradle that birthed Malcolm into the world of Black Muslim radicalism, “Malcolm X spent the next five years (1952-1957) transforming the Nation of Islam from its limited, ghettoized, and parochial vision into a vastly popular and increasingly revolutionary movement

165 At other times, Dabashi is sympathetic to counter-hegemonic Islamist political projects, such as Hamas or Hezbollah, but only when they participate in the politics of civil society and are one factor, amongst many, in the hybridized liberal democratic pluralism of a larger non-Islamist (and defacto Kemalist) Islamicate state project (2008: 226). Dabashi assumption in regard to Islamism in this case is to say that Islamists are only “good” when they deal in politics and not the political. This potentially points to a new good Muslim-bad Muslim binary in relation to Islamism, which I pointed to earlier about the need to go the positionality of the bad Muslim in politics first, before being able to exit the good Muslim-bad Muslim ontologically as a decolonial non-Kemalist Muslim. If the critique against decolonial Muslim ontology has been made outside the positionality of affirming that bad Muslims have a right to exist in the first place through the counter-universal language of Islam, one will continue to create tangential good/bad Muslims out of Islamists who remain good until they form a hegemonic political project (whether through a statist or post-statist project) and become bad.
among African Americans” (2008: 247). Calling the NOI “limited, ghettoized, and parochial” is far from a respectful treatment of a much more complex religious and social revolutionary movement of Black Muslims than Dabashi presents. He internalizes a common incorrect trope about Malcolm’s legacy (popularized, in part, by uncritical readings of Alex Haley’s historiographic-hagiographical *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*) that assumes it is only after Malcolm’s *hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca), leaving the NOI, and embracement of “true” Sunni Orthodoxy that he becomes the “truer” internationalist and revolutionary that he could never have been with the NOI.166 This paints the “limited, ghettoized, and parochial” NOI as some type of backward, narrow-thinking and irrational hate spewing “white hate” organization, when in fact, the NOI is the internationalist revolutionary base from which Malcolm first learned about the universal brotherhood of the Afro-Asiatic man and Islamic *ummah*.167

Dabashi goes on to call Malcolm a “reverse-racist” and makes a racist (both in anti-Muslim and anti-Black terms) analogy between the Muslim *ummah* of today and the Black Muslim NOI community during Malcolm’s time, saying that both are in need of a Hajj that “cleanses their own soul of much malady that has afflicted them” (2008: 242). Dabashi seems to be suggest that Black, Muslim and Black Muslim pathologies are *the* cause of the conflicts they face and *the* cause of the problematic projects they may or may not be putting forward. This is akin to saying it is the fault of the worker and his/her own self-imposed stupidity that keeps him/her confined to the margins, and not the fault of the dominant power structure of the ruling bourgeoisie elite who put the worker there in the first instance. Dabashi would surely understand the latter example given his assumed class consciousness, though it seems the former has flown by Dabashi’s colorblind and racist reading of Malcolm’s actual life and praxis.

The basic assumptions concerning historiography and language that the actual Malcolm put forward are in direct contradiction to that of Dabashi’s Muslim Revolutionary. Both his readings of the West over the Rest binary as well as his stance on Pan-Islamism oppose Malcolm’s positions

166 At a conference on Malcolm X at Duke University (USA) entitled, “Scholars and Publics Forum: Malcolm X Now” (2015), Michael Muhammed Knight refers to this approach as type of “Sunni Triumphalism” which posits Malcolm’s post-hajj views as his truer arrival, with Knight exclaiming, “Malcolm’s pre-NOI life gets erased and his post-NOI life gets really oversimplified. And we just look at the hajj and that is the entirety of his post-NOI story” (alhassen 2018: 147).

167 Dabashi could have avoided such errors either through a simple google search, or a cursory reading of basic Malcolmite or NOI focused literature that were all available long before he published *Islamic Liberation Theology* in 2008. Such misreadings of basic facts about Malcolm’s life appear awkward, especially given Dabashi cites the late Manning Marable as his colleague at Columbia. Dabashi was aware of Marable’s Malcolm X project at Columbia University and cites it in *Islamic Liberation Theology* (2008: 292).
during his own time, and that of generations of Malcolmite scholars and activists. In regard to Malcolm’s position on the West over the Rest, in the days before he died, Malcolm made it clear to his followers what power structure they were up against, “What is it revolting against? A power structure. The American power structure? No. The French power structure? No. The English power structure? No. Then what power structure? An international Western power structure.”

Malcolm, the street hustler turned prison mate turned revolutionary intellectual, had an understanding that the West over the Rest is a political system of racism. Contrary to Malcolm, Dabashi’s economic reductionist position would argue that the global bourgeois supposedly “hood-winked” - to use Malcolm’s words - Malcolm into the false consciousness of the West over Rest binary.

At the level of language, Malcolm X was influenced mainly by three strands of political theory; Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism. Malcolm also understood the tensions that existed between Kemalist Egyptian President Gamal Abdel-Nasser (d. 1970) and that of Islamist Egyptian thinker and activist Said Ramadan (d. 1995), the son-in-law of Hasan al-Banna, and was banned from Egypt by Nasser himself for his involvement and leadership in the Muslim Brotherhood (alhassen 2017: 135). Malcolm remained politically neutral between these two personal friends and comrades of his (whom he met several times during his travels among the ummah and elsewhere) as he secured funds from both Nasser and Ramadan’s Islamic organizations to fund Islamic education for Black Muslims in the USA (142). While space does not allow elaboration on this point in greater detail at the moment, I argue that Dabashi’s anti-Islamist position would not fare well in the face of Malcolm’s Pan-Islamist visions then, in addition to the way Malcolm’s pan-Islamist vision inspired generations since his death. Furthermore,

168 This was first heard on a YouTube compilation of Malcolm’s speeches (Malcolm X – Revolution). Another website claimed that the speech was on Feb 15th, 1965, the day Malcolm’s house was firebombed, and a week before his assassination (Feb 21st, 1965) (There’s a Worldwide Revolution). The speech begins with Malcolm recounting the firebombing, and the quote above occurs midway through his speech.

169 Malcolm noted the “knot of tension” that existed between Nasser and Ramadan and attempted to stay friends with both without taking a hard stance against either, stating in 1964, “I think I can be more helpful and of more value to these progressive relations forces at Cairo by solidifying myself also with the more moderate or conservative forces that are headquartered in Mecca” (alhassen 2017: 142). Malcolm’s reference to Cairo refers to Nasser, and his reference to Mecca refers to the likes of Azzam Pasha (d. 1976), Ramadan and other Muslim Brotherhood connected figures based there. Curtis writes that these tensions between Egypt and Saudi were a part of the Arab Cold War, and, contrary to alhassen, argues that Malcolm actually sided with Egypt and Nasser (2015: 786). Curtis seems to be unaware of Malcolm’s delicate balance between the two - which alhassen’s work demonstrates - that points to a mutual appreciation of both, given that Malcolm’s struggle back home in the USA was not tainted by the same social divisions as the Arab Cold War. While Malcolm did not take a hard stance against Kemalism or Islamism and seemed to float between both for strategic purposes, it is clear he was not anti-Islamist.

170 In alhassen’s chapter “Malcolm X in the Mashreq (and Africa)” (2017), she details the influence of Pan-Islamism on Malcolm through his engagement with such figures as Said Ramadan and Azzam Pasha (2017: 212).
Dabashi fails to recognize contributions of Islam in Africa, and Black Muslim histories (whether in Sudanic Africa or its Islamicate diasporas) in any of his conceptualizations of historiography or language in relation to the Muslim Revolutionary outside of his problematic engagement with Malcolm X.\(^{171}\) I will return to an engagement with Malcolm X through the lens of Daulatzai, whose work does some intellectual justice to the thought and action of Malcolm X; for now, I would like to dream with Dabashi’s language for a moment.

### 4.1.5. Dabashi’s Language - Dreaming

In terms of Dabashi’s language games with Islam, there are several aspects which aid in dreaming beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim and building a decolonial Muslim identity. There are a number of ways in which Dabashi’s postcolonial and Sayyid’s decolonial approach to the language of Islam align in their end points, but not necessarily in their beginnings, or processes of clearing/dreaming. The two ways that Dabashi and Sayyid align in a decolonial way in relation to the language of Islam are through their post-legalistic and post-Western (or Sayyid’s post-Westernese\(^{172}\) approaches to forming a language of Islam at the level of the political and politics. In this section, I focus mainly on Dabashi’s post-legalistic and post-Western conceptualizations of language which move in a decolonial direction.

Dabashi defines his post-Western approach to the language of Islam as a project that helps to create an ummatic grammar alternative to coloniality’s grammar, “Over the last two hundred years, we have been metamorphosed into metaphors of other people’s narratives, narratives of fixed disposition and evidently irreversible grammatology. We need to conjugate ourselves out of that grammar” (2013: 107). Dabashi’s methodology for this process of creating a new language

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\(^{171}\) Dabashi does not refer to Islam or Islamism in Africa and Black Muslim communities as part of the *ummah* which was under attack by colonial modernity and resisting it as well (2008: 156, 198). The likes of revolutionary African Muslim figures - such as Shehu Usman Dan Fodo (d. 1817), the Sultan of the Sokoto caliphate in what is today Senegal during the 18th and 19th centuries, or more contemporary figures such as Sudanese Islamist, Hassan al-Turabi (d. 2016), who both provide important links to wider Black contributions to Islam and Islamism - are not mentioned in Dabashi’s work. The only legitimate “true” Islamic languages for Dabashi are “Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu” which he underscores were the standard bearers of pre-modern Islamicate literary humanism (*adab*) (2008: 139, 180, 243). What of the multitude of Islamicate languages in Sudanic Africa which contributed volumes to Islamic knowledge production in *ajami* languages, such as Hausa and Swahili (Hassane 2008)? Dabashi does not mention that even Malcolm X sought to teach Black Muslims Hausa and Swahili (and Arabic) through his Organization of Afro-American Unity and the Muslim Mosque Inc. (X 1965).

\(^{172}\) The slight difference between Dabashi’s post-Western and Sayyid’s post-Westernese approaches is that Sayyid has dealt with a critique of hidden Western universalism’s policing of the Muslim subjects claim to autonomy and agency, while Dabashi has not.
against colonial formations of the Muslim subject\textsuperscript{173} is to reach back to the Muslim pre-modern past. More explicitly, following a number of contemporary Muslim thinkers (Sayyid 2013, Ahmed 2017) Dabashi argues that the overemphasis on the legalistic or jurisprudential tradition (\textit{usul al-fiqh}) in forming modern Muslim subjectivity is an internalization of modern/colonial statecraft that makes Islam an absolutist “religion of law” concerned more with essentializing the otherworldly and worldly imaginations of Muslims. This overemphasis on the law, for Dabashi, has produced a massive decentralization or erasure of the polyvocal nature of classical Islamic epistemological paradigms, which had as its foundation in such disciplines as philosophy (\textit{falsafah}), scholastic theology (\textit{kalam}), Sufism (\textit{tasawwuf}), literary humanism (\textit{adab}), aestheticism/arts (\textit{fann}) and other extra-legal sciences, which all existed alongside legalism (2008: 244 & 2013: 42-79).

Dabashi, citing 10\textsuperscript{th} century Muslim thinker Ahmad Ibn Yusuf Katib al-Khwarazmi’s \textit{Mafatih al-\textquoteleft Uloom} (\textit{Keys to the Sciences}), notes that pre-modern Islamicate knowledge paradigms placed the various disciplines above into three categories: 1) the literary arts (\textit{Adab} subjects such as poetry and history) 2) the religious sciences (jurisprudence and theology) and 3) the foreign sciences (philosophy, medicine, logic and so forth) (2013: 47). Dabashi, citing Makdisi, further classifies these three categories into two forms of orthodoxy, scholasticism and humanism. For humanism, orthodoxy was construed through language, and for scholasticism, orthodoxy was construed through religion. Dabashi interprets Makdisi’s scholasticism vs humanism binary to mean that “orthodoxy in language” produced the primacy of the literary imagination in humanism, which stood in contrast to doctrinal debates (i.e., “orthodoxy in religion”) operative in scholasticism (ibid.). Dabashi is careful to not project any type of religious vs secular binary onto that of humanists or scholastics of the past (who indeed, could be one in the same) (50), arguing like Makdisi that both humanism and scholasticism always had their “roots in religion” (47).

\textsuperscript{173} Decolonial Islamic thinker Hatem Bazian has interpreted modern Muslim subjectivity through the lens of a DouBoisan double-consciousness framework. In the \textit{Souls of Black Folk} (1999), Du Bois’ concept of double consciousness analyzes the psychology of African Americans who are forced to look at themselves through the eyes of others which denies them the possibility to attain self-consciousness, always being trapped by a double self as opposed to a more whole truer self. Bazian’s article “Souls of Muslim Folk” (2013) replaces the African-American in Du Bois’s double consciousness theory with the Muslim in order to demonstrate how, “In acting Muslim, a person is preoccupied with answering and resolving the racialisation and otherisation central to Eurocentric discourses of coloniality” (2013). While Bazian’s Muslim discourse on double consciousness is promising in that it deals with a deeper psychological unveiling of coloniality’s effect on the Muslim subject, it can also come across as a pessimistic view if the long histories of Muslim resistance and dreaming against coloniality are not highlighted. The Muslim subject is greatly affected by double consciousness. However, this does not mean it that double consciousness has ever fully colonized or defined Muslim subjectivity as a totality.
This polyvocality, as Dabashi and others such as Sayyid (2013) or Ahmed (2017) argue, allowed the various sciences to, in effect, balance each other out within the pre-modern knowledge paradigm as all authentically Islamic, even while conflicts and contradictions did indeed exist amongst the various disciplines. Dabashi valorizes this pre-modern polyvocality as a type of Muslim cosmopolitanism that must be reconceptualized for the present in order to write the grammar of a post-Western Muslim future:

Being a Muslim in a post-Western world necessitates a critical thinking that will gloss over the colonial and post-colonial experiences, whereby Muslims were turned into the ideological instruments of political resistance in European imperialism. A critical rethinking of Islamic cosmopolitanism does not require a ‘reformation’ modeled on that of European Christianity, but a restoration of that spirit of worldliness in which being a Muslim meant embracing, rather than rejecting, the world. Muslims lived that worldliness over many centuries and produced a massive global civilization as its enduring trace. The possibilities of inhabiting the renewed worldliness of Muslims’ lived experiences is contingent on a full-bodied recognition of the multiple varieties of creative and critical imaginations that collectively inform the medieval Muslim mind and the world Muslims had envisioned around themselves. We need to remember the past well in order to be able to live in a full-bodied future. (2013: 79)

Dabashi rejects the impulse for an Islamic Reformation based on Eurocentric premises, which would be based on a rejection of the past and tradition in favor of the new and modern. He instead argues for revisiting the past on non-Eurocentric terms which means to operate alternative to a traditional/modern or religious/secular divide that is characteristic of colonial modernity. In order to elaborate beyond these binaries, Dabashi deconstructs the religious and secular in the Western imagination, “The West’ thus became secular by way of the ‘Rest’ becoming religious” (2013: 147). What Dabashi means is that the concept of “religion” was a category attributed solely to non-Europeans by Western Man in order to conceptualize them as stuck in the past, decadent, otherworldly and unconcerned with world ambition. The “secular” was thus reserved only for European men, whose conceptualizations of Reason, History, Science and so forth became the standard bearers of paradigmatic knowledge traditions both for themselves and for those whom they colonized or enslaved in modernity. While mentioning Gil Anidjar, who argues that secularism was a creation of Christendom (Anidjar 2006), Dabashi adds that religion was a creation of colonial modernity. This religious invention of colonial modernity then “depleted the world not just of its natural resources but also its worldly disposition, replenishing it with a divisive alienation from itself – tradition versus modernity, Islam versus the West, the West versus the Rest, the Sacred versus the Profane” (sic) (2013: 147).

4.1.5.1. Dunya of Death, Dunya of Life
In order to restore this wordliness for a post-Western future away from the religious-secular divide Dabashi calls for a reconceptualization of the language that Muslims use. For Dabashi, the modern translation of *din* as religion, *dawlat* as state and *dunya* as world must be reconceptualized for a Muslim liberative project. Dabashi critiques the separation of Church and State as a conceptual framework which stems from Europe’s particular relationship between the religious, secular and state, saying that such Eurocentric model cannot serve as a universal for the rest of the world (2013: 120). Europe’s relationship between its own *din* and *dawlat* has resulted in a *dunya* of death, as Dabashi writes,

> At the time of the transmutation of the nation-state into camp, *bios* into *zoë*, civil rights into human rights, human into Musselman, Muslim into Taliban, the United States Constitution into the Patriot Act and Homeland Security Act, and ipso facto of *citizen* into *naked life*, it is not just *din* but equally so *dawlat* that are the modus operandi of the biopower and governmentality. (2013: 120-121)

The bastardization of *din* and *dawlat* to functions of biopower and governmentality at a planetary scale for the purpose of metasized “subjecting, subjection, and subjugations” of those in the zone of non-being has radically altered the spirit, mind, body and soul of those who ontologically dwell in the colonial *dunya* of death (121).

While Dabashi lacks a systemic and ontological understanding of the ways the secular has operated in the Islamicate world at the level of the political – something akin to Sayyid’s Kemalism over Islamism divide - he does make an interesting claim about how he thinks *din* and *dawlat* within Islamicate societies are used to disallow the ability to be worldly (and therein change the world) on non-Eurocentric terms. Dabashi argues that Islamist essentialism has made *din* and *dowlat* too metaphysical in their dead certainties. Therefore, for Dabashi, only “the vulnerability fragility of an impermanent world can guarantee the permanence of our civil liberties” (2013: 126). Dabashi argues that the *dunya* is the impermanent world where the metaphysical certainties of *din* and *dawlat* can dissolve into an order to end the binary conflict between religion and state which Muslims in their essentialisms have internalized through colonial modernity. Rather than a post-Islamist and post-secular society, Dabashi argues for a pre-Islamist and pre-secular society as both Islamism and secularism have “done their damage and exhausted themselves” (126). The *dunya* becomes, in a sense, a worldly terrain for Muslims to reworld themselves on post-Western terms.

There are a number of issues with Dabashi’s otherwise brilliant conceptualization of *dunya* that I will briefly summarize here in order to redefine the *dunya* in a decolonial direction. In summary,
Dabashi’s methodology argues that the Muslim Revolutionary must engage in a “pre-Islamist” act of retrieval of pre-modern polyvocality and cosmopolitanism. This retrieval must be accompanied by a rejection of nativist modern Islamism of the last 200-years and especially of the post-1979 variety, alongside a pedagogy of post-legalism in regard to Islamic knowledge production. Only then, can the Muslim project herself into a post-Western future through a post-Western language of the *dunya* - and not the language of Islam, which for Dabashi has devolved into a colonial legal-centric religious nativism - to resolve the binaries created by the religious/secular governmentality of the modern nation-state. This is all predicated on his anti-metaphysical and ethical hermeneutics of alterity as the Muslim Revolutionary’s main weapon in overcoming colonial modernity.

In order to reorder Dabashi’s non-Eurocentric grammar of *dunya* in a decolonial direction, I argue that we must abandon his “ethical” anti-Islamist stance and politics of liberal cosmopolitanism in relation to the *dunya*. Instead, I argue we must reinsert the language of Islam into the equation and repurpose the *dunya* as a post-essentialist modality for doing politics in the Islamicate. By calling for a politics of the *dunya*, I am calling for a horizontal plane for the Muslim to do politics through a post-Westernese language, *dunya* being part of the signifieds of the wider language and master signifier of Islam that can domesticate Muslim agency into the Islamicate through the Muslim Revolutionary.

If Dabashi’s language of the *dunya* remains anti-Islamist, Dabashi will only be recreating a *dunya* with more good/bad Muslims through his ontic lens. By allowing Islamism to engage in the politics of the *dunya* away from Dabashi’s reading, we create a political ontology that goes beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary through Muslim decolonial struggles in the politics of the Islamicate *dunya*. Part of Dabashi’s anti-Islamism stems from his narrow reading that it is the fault of Islamists that legal-centrism colonizes the polyvocality of the Islamic tradition, thereby

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174 Dabashi’s expression of a pre-Islamist polyvocal cosmopolitanism (2013: 127) is in my opinion a liberal reading of Muslim cosmopolitanism. The definition of cosmopolitanism is to be a “citizen of the world” and is based on the idea that all human beings belong to one community sharing a common morality (Brock). While I do not deny a radical rereading of what Muslim cosmopolitanism can mean, Dabashi argues for an anti-Islamist, anti-political and non-systemic reading of the structural location of the Muslim in the modern/colonial world-system. His hermeneutics of alterity and permanent opposition to power do not seem to provide solution for Muslims to build a post-Western future, aside from liberal dialogue and critique. His polyvocal cosmopolitanism, when contextualized, are thus complicit in an anti-Muslim political underworld where Muslims’ non-citizenship status can be coloured slightly better by his ethical liberal individualism. As Sayyid argues, a decolonial Muslim identity cannot be persuaded by such utopian fantasies without the political, and must rather be guided by a non-utopian poetics whose ethical horizon allows Muslims to ethically correct themselves as they build a political home for the *ummah* (2013: 179 & 189).
devolving modern Muslim worldviews into a world-less Islam that is primarily concerned with juridical absolutist materialism and a “metanarrative of absolutist salvation” (2008: 98). Dabashi inadvertently shows how Islamist revolutionaries such as Ali Shariati (d. 1977) brought the language of Islam to the Muslim ummah though a post-legalistic politics of the dunya, “The late Ali Shari’ati spent a lifetime trying to pull Islam (Shi’ism in particular) into the public domain and away from its self-appointed juridical custodians” (2013: 133-134). At other times, Dabashi chastises Shariati for his supposedly essentialist Pan-Islamist call to “Return to Self” and to fight Westoxification (2013: 117), contrasting him with his (mis)reading of Malcolm who supposedly did not promote Shariati’s bad Muslim essentialism. Dabashi does this again with Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) making him a bad Muslim and unlike the fabricated good Muslim Malcolm of Dabashi’s imagination (2008: 242-243). I argue that the very fabric that stitched figures such as Malcolm, Shariati and Qutb together across the global was the universal language of Islam (whether NOI, Sunni, Shi’i, or other), and their opposition to coloniality through their politics of the dunya.

Dabashi also partakes in a reading of Hegel’s Geist/Spirit as being a worldly rather than otherworldly force in history. For me, as laid out in Chapter One, the underside of the Hegelian Spirit is the crusading spirit. If this crusading spirit is read through the language of Islam it could be said that its worldly production is a dunya of death, which Western Man implanted in the ummah. The underside effect of Hegel’s Spirit in the world - as the crusading spirit and geopolitical theology that guides Western Man’s qiblah - is the permanent production of a dunya of death. Counter to this dunya of death, a decolonial Muslim political identity must reclaim the dunya not as a hell or heaven but as the world in which the language of Islam inspires the ummah to create another world. Muslims already have jannah (heaven) and jahannam (hell) as part of their

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175 This narrow reading by Dabashi again blames the colonized for a problem created by the colonizer. Many Islamist movements’ overemphasis on the promotion of piety or mechanically following the Shari’ah is an issue of viewing Islam through a positivist lens that can rightly be critiqued. That critique, however, does not need to go hand in hand with denying Islamism’s political imperative which seeks to reorder society through the language of Islam. Blaming Islamists for being pathologically positivist without a critique of the Eurocentric period that inserted that positivism into Muslim minds in the first place is an anti-Muslim move. Furthermore, narrowly reading examples of Islamist positivism into defining Islamism as a whole, and into supporting one’s own project of disallowing Muslims a non-Westernese universal to reorganize the social order is another way to mark which Muslims are good and which are bad along the lines of the political.

176 This points to the post-mazhabi potential of Islamism (Sayyid 2014: 190). In another work, “Khomeini and the Decolonization of the Political”, Sayyid theorizes the idea of post-mazhabism as a framework which allows “Umamic solidarity” to trump “sectarian differences” (2014: 287). He cites Ayatullah Ruhullah Khomeini’s (d. 1986) theory of Islamic governance which closed the sectarian gap between Sunni and Shi’i positions on legitimate government by arguing that without the presence of a Mahdi all Muslims must strive to live under an Islamic government, thereby overturning the orthodox Twelver Shi’i position on legitimate Islamic authority which stated that none could exist after the death of the 12th Imam (286-287).
cosmology and, in taking a post-positivist position, should not be overly obsessed with proving their metaphysical certainty. Jannah and jahannam are divine ontological certainties one accepts by definition to be a believing Muslim. What must be done in an anti-Muslim world as Muslims is to overturn the dunya of death created by Western Man and his accomplices, and replace it with a dunya of life.

There are a number of hadith (narration of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) that Muslims can turn to in putting forward a dunyawi politics of life within the ummah. The first is, “Al-dunya mazra’ah al-akhirah (this world is a crop field for the Afterlife)”\textsuperscript{178}. In my opinion, it can be argued that the Prophet is calling upon Muslims to build a world of life and not death; unless that is, Muslims think a dunya of death and non-being is the correct field for preparing for the afterlife. The other hadith is, “al-dunya sijn al-mu’min (the world is a prison-house for the believer)”\textsuperscript{179}. At one level, it is possible to read absolutist metaphysical implications into this hadith, ascertaining that the world is forever a prison until death. That is a legitimate interpretation, and quite common among Muslims. However, I believe this argument is usually premised on the belief that this hadith solely refers to issues of self-purification of the nafs (ego, self), and individualized detachment from the dunya so that the material realities of the dunya don’t trick the Believer into thinking this life is the Ultimate Answer for all his problems. Rather, Muslims should consider the social implications of this hadith in addition to the personal. For Muslims who believe in Islam as a language of political liberation in the context of an anti-Muslim world, might we ask how the social prisons of the dunya (i.e. coloniality, prison-industrial complex, economic exploitation, gender apartheid, etc.) must be challenged alongside that of the personal prisons which exists as deterrents to living a healthy life as a Believer? If Muslims can break free from both the personal as well as the social prisons of the dunya, they will be able to live a Prophetic life is concerned with individual spiritual transformation as well as collective political transformation.

\textsuperscript{177} One of the six Pillars of Faith (Arkan al-Iman) in Sunnism and one of the five Principles of Religion (Usul al-Din) in Twelver Shi’ism is belief in the Day of Judgement (Yawm al-Qiyama). For the vast majority of believing Muslims, the Day of Judgement is when believers will be judged by Allah, the righteous being relegated to heaven (jannah) and the wicked to hell (jahannam) (Eschatology).

\textsuperscript{178} This hadith has not been found except in Al-Ghazali’s (d. 1111) voluminous work, Ihya ‘Ulum al-Din (Revival of the Religious Sciences). This hadith has been critiqued by Islamic scholars as a fabricated or weak (da’if) hadith; yet, it’s meaning is still regarded as valid and true (sahih), as it relates to the meaning of other ahadith and to verses from the Qur’an (Ahlahadeeth).

\textsuperscript{179} The full hadith is “Al-dunya sijn al-mu’min wa jannah al-kafir”, meaning, “The world is a prison-house for the believer and Paradise for the non-believer.” Found in Sahih Muslim, Book 42, Number 7058. Also recorded as sound (sahih) in al-Tirmidhi, Sunan ibn Majah and other hadith compilations (Sunnah.com).
The common Sufi saying that the *nafs* (ego, or self) must “die before dying”\(^{180}\) also comes to mind in this conversation. Which ego or egos is it that Muslims have been so deeply implanted with? In the context of coloniality and an anti-Muslim world social order, it is the hidden Western imperial ego deep inside ourselves that must die just as much as it is the more abstract universal ego which has haunted Believers since time eternal. We must let the Western ego die both personally and socially so as to be able to confront a *dunya* of death, and fight for a *dunya* of life. There is no death without life; meaning, the paradoxical precondition for death is actually life. This would mean that one cannot die before dying if one already lives in a *dunya* absent of life. So, might we ask, which self are we willing to let die in order that the death of that self-promises a life worth living (even if just to die a more noble death later)? Muslims must fight for a more noble death and cannot do so without destroying the *dunya* of death which imprisons them from life first.

In summary, Dabashi’s postcolonial interpretations of both historiography and language must be cleared and dreamed through in order to present a new decolonial Muslim political identity. Dabashi’s anti-political and anti-Islamist ontic readings of the historiography and language of Islam must be critiqued and reordered in order to make use of them towards a decolonial political ontological project. We now turn to Sohail Daulatzai, another postcolonial Muslim thinker, whose reflections on the historiography and language of postcolonial Muslim identity aid in thinking through a decolonial turn in Muslim political ontology.

### 4.2. Daulatzai and the Muslim International

Sohail Daulatzai is an Afghani-American scholar activist from Los Angeles. His scholarly works range from the fields of Black studies, Hip-Hop studies, Critical Race Studies and Muslim Studies. He has written two works (2012, 2016) and edited a forthcoming (2018) that deal with Muslim identity in relation to the Blackamerican freedom struggle, anti-colonial struggles in the Islamicate and wider Global South, anti-Muslim racism, and various Muslim aesthetic, artistic and cultural movements associated with those struggles.\(^{181}\) In his book *Black Star Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (2012), he conceptualizes a Muslim political identity that aids in thinking beyond the confines, snares and traps of an anti-Muslim postcolonial

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\(^{180}\) *Mutu qabla ‘an tamutu* is a common Sufi saying that means to “die before dying.” The significance of this idea in Sufi teachings is that one must let the lower qualities of her *nafs* (ego) die and experience a spiritual resurrection before one’s actual death in order to rid one’s *nafs* of the qualities which separate the lover from the Beloved. This Neoplatonic Sufi idea underscores the idea that the soul must undergo ritual purification, akin to dying, which brings it closer to its divine origin (Rosen 2008: 77-78).

\(^{181}\) See Sohail Daulatzai’s faculty page at the University of Irvine, California here - https://www.faculty.uci.edu/Scripts/UCIFacultyProfiles/humanities/afam/index.cfm?faculty_id=5300.
world. His approach to Islam is postcolonial in many of the same ways I have argued with regards to Dabashi; yet, his formulation of the Muslim International also portrays decolonial tendencies. While Daulatzai is not as well-versed or published in matters of pre-modern and modern Islamicate intellectual history as Dabashi, or Islamicate political philosophy like Sayyid, his interventions into the debate on Muslim ontology are guided by a solid grasp of the effect of racial systems in modernity, a deep reading of Malcolm X’s Black Muslim radicalism and a multifaceted engagement with popular arts forms and literature which Muslim thinkers and activists have been inspired in the late 20th century. His reflections on historiography and language in relation to the Muslim Internationalist produce fruitful dialogue with Dabashi and Sayyid for the process of clearing and dreaming towards a decolonial Muslim political ontology.

In a similar move to that of Dabashi, Daulatzai formulates the Muslim International through the figure of Malcolm X. The Muslim International is a Muslim political identity that grapples with and attempts to overcome the complexities of the neo/postcolonial world-system. Daulatzai largely deals with the encounters Malcolm X had with radical Black/Pan-Africanist Internationalism and what he calls “Muslim Internationalism” in the “Muslim Third World” during the Cold War eras of hypernationalism and Third World decolonization (2012: xvi). He mainly conceptualizes the Muslim International in relation to the Black Freedom Struggle inside the US Empire during the mid-20th century, secular anticolonial nationalist movements inside the Muslim Third World and the Bandung conference. The Muslim International is a grounding for Muslim agency to form in a border zone that is in opposition to the powers that be, “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” (2012: xxiv). Daulatzai explicitly shies away from strongly defining the Muslim International in relation to the political, politics or ontology (2012: xxiv & xxvi).

In this section, I analyze the ways the Muslim International can be mobilized in decolonial directions. Daulatzai portrays both postcolonial tendencies as well as decolonial ones that can be mobilized for further defining the decolonization of Muslim being and going beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary. In regard to his historiography, he mainly puts forward a secular Leftist reading of the Cold War and Third World decolonization era that implicitly erases Islamist resistance. At the same time, he brilliantly connects the histories of the US Black Freedom Struggle to mobilizations against imperialism, slavery and colonization in the Global South and Muslim world. In regard to language, Daulatzai turns to secular Leftist language and Westernese
to define the Muslim International without thinking through the ways Westernese can perpetuate hidden Western universalisms. His engagement with Malcolm X is much deeper and nuanced than Dabashi’s, but lacks more critical reflection on the role of the secular and Islamism in order to utilize Malcolm and the Muslim International (MI)\textsuperscript{182} in more decolonial directions. These, and several other issues, will be presented in this section in order to both clear and dream through the MI towards a decolonial horizon.

4.2.1. Daulatzai’s Historiography – Clearing
Daulatzai falls into two problematic streams when dealing with the historiography of the MI. The first is that, like Mamdani, Daulatzai’s Cold War historiography does not mention the various ways in which the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary was prevalent on both sides of the Cold War. He promotes a secular nationalist Kemalist reading of Third World decolonization in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century Islamicate world and assumes that framework was the pinnacle of decolonial resistance during those times up until now. Secondly, while Daulatzai attempts to create the idea of a Muslim Third World by relating it to history of Black Radicalism and Internationalism, he does not mention the long histories of Pan-Islamism that resisted the same global imperial forces, and also influenced Black radicals in the US and internationally.

In regard to the first issue, Daulatzai’s secular reading is silent on important histories of Islamophobia that affected the Muslim world, and histories of Islamist resistance and revival against coloniality which were in mass circulation in the \textit{ummah}. One point of contention here is that Daulatzai bases his reading of history and the MI mainly on Blackness and Black political identity, “In fact, when the Cold War was in full swing and the repression of the Black Left and anticolonialists was on the rise, it was through the Nation of Islam that Malcolm X carried the torch and illuminated a path of Black liberation that traveled the road alongside the national liberation movements of Africa, Asia, and Latin America” (2012: 16). Shortly after this reflection on Malcolm’s historiography in relation to broader liberation movements, Daulatzai opines the centrality of Black identity in his formulation of the MI, and the connections between Black Americans and the Muslim Third World (2012: 17). Throughout Daulatzai’s work it becomes clear that Black agency is his main conceptual reservoir in formulating the MI.

What is problematic is not Daulatzai’s promising exploration of historical ties between Black agency and Muslim agency (themselves not totally sealed off categories, including Black Muslim

\textsuperscript{182} From this point forward the “Muslim International” will be abbreviated as MI for sake of brevity.
agency), but that the basis for this exploration is not grounded in the name of Islam. How can one be in the process of formulating a specifically Muslim political identity without basing it on - or at least thoroughly engaging - the master signifier of Islam? Daulatzai’s basis for the MI lacks a cursory reflection of normative radical Muslim identity expression across the ummah outside the small minority of Black American Muslims, such as Malcolm X, whose positionality he interlocutes to formulate the MI’s historiography. This leads Daulatzai, in my opinion, to the historiographical blind spot of not recognizing huge swaths of Muslims contributing to decolonial struggle against global Eurocentric Judeo-Christian-Secular capitalist world-system.

One example of this is that he displays no insight into the anti-Muslim Red Scare of the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War, nor the rise of anti-Islamist Kemalist regimes inside the Muslim World. Citing Malcolm X’s interpretation of his Bandung experience in his famous “The Message to the Grassroots” speech where Malcolm stated that “our African [and] Asian brothers put their religious and political differences to the background” (2012: 34), Daulatzai – nearly five decades later – does not question the successes or limits of Bandung or the post-Bandung moment in relation religion, secularism and Islam. This nostalgic secular Leftist Kemalist historiography turns a blind eye not only to the inner mechanisms of what was happening during the Bandung moment in the Muslim World, but more so after, thereby leaving a massive hole in the historiographical framing of the MI whose revolutionary Islamist ancestors seem to not have history during or after that time. While Daulatzai is very adept in highlighting the role of Islam, or Muslim Internationalism as he calls it, and Pan-Africanism in Malcolm X’s rhetoric and travels as a Black Muslim (2012: 35), he does not once use the word Pan-Islamism or Islamism to describe the revolutionary movements and forces that Malcolm encountered as “Islam” and “Muslim Internationalism” in his journeys.\(^\text{183}\)

Recognizing that Daulatzai, unlike Dabashi, is not a scholar of Islamic Studies might explain or even excuse his limitations in these basic historiographical inadequacies or misreadings. Yet, the implications of a secular Leftist and Kemalist reading of the Cold War, in addition to the complete exclusion of basic normative trends of Islamist internationalisms within the historiography of the MI are major issues that must be corrected if the MI is to be useful in a decolonial, and not just a

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\(^{183}\) The suggestion is not that this is intentional. However, the lack of recognizing a name - Islamism - which is prevalent in scholarship on Malcolm’s relationship to Islam, is awkward, especially when other scholars who have studied Malcolm X and Black Muslim movements inside the US often use that term to describe the movements that interacted with Black radicals from the US (Lubin 2014, Grewall 2014, alhassen 2017).
postcolonial, forming of Muslim political ontology. There are several aspects of Daulatzai’s MI historiography though which are more in line with a decolonial reading of Muslim political agency.

4.2.2. Daulatzai’s Historiography – Dreaming

There are several decolonial aspects to the MI’s historiography in Daulatzai’s conception. First, unlike Dabashi, Daulatzai is keenly aware of the role of race in organizing the modern/colonial world-system, pointing back to the moment of 1492 and the Moor as a basis for constructing Muslim and other racial paradigms throughout modernity (2012: xvi). This is a key point in differentiating between decolonial and postcolonial approaches to the Muslim Question, as Eurocentric racism is the primary organizing principle which organizes all other modern hierarchies of power, knowledge and being.184

Second, Daulatzai is brilliant in connecting the historiography of the Black Freedom struggle inside the US Empire to broader movements in the Muslim Third World. By showing how the histories of the Muslim world and globality of Islam touched Black struggles inside the US (and vice-versa), and produced fusions of arts and counter-cultural movements, Daulatzai demonstrates how revolutionaries were looking away from Western civilization and back to African and Islamic civilizations (themselves not separate entities) in forming their identities and counter-cultural movements. Daulatzai specifically highlights “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” (2012: xvi). While Daulatzai’s methodology is more ontic than ontological in this regard, his linking of these histories nevertheless creates a historiographical palimpsest for the MI to travel beyond the confines of Eurocentric historiography of the Muslim World at the level of politics. He shows that just as Western modernity created a globality to oppress the Rest, those in the Rest were also creating their own liberative counter-globalities in critical conversation between each other and the West that challenged Western supremacist readings of history. Like Dabashi, who also shared the global and counter-global implications of nationalism, socialism and liberation theologies Christian and Muslim in a more ontic fashion (2008), Daulatzai’s closing of the gap between Pan-African

184 This is not an essentialist claim of making race an essential foundation of the modern/colonial world system. Rather, it is a post-essentialist historical claim that reveals the ontological reality of the way race operates through the snare of coloniality. This approach still assumes race is not a transhistorical category and must always be contextualized. In modernity, race has historically been the overarching guide to define the persistent Plato-to-NATO narrative and West over the Rest divide. This acknowledgement is made with the intent of defeating racism through a post-Western approach to understanding decolonial Muslim identity formations and political ontology.
and Muslim Internationalist movements aids the pluriversal project of decentering Eurocentricity in politics and the creation of a post-Western world(s).

In terms of Muslim agency and combating the narrative of Westernese, let us visit an elaboration by Daulatzai on the MI;

…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-sates, capitalism and imperial power, a zone of struggle and solidarity in which new kinds of politics emerge. The Muslim International…shapes and is shaped by the convergent histories and narratives that are central to the shared struggles of these overlapping diasporas. For those diverse histories and narrative are what influence the various modes of resistance and forms of mobilization that have continued to challenge power in enduring ways. (2012: xxiii-xxiv)

Sayyid comments on Daulatzai’s formulation above and how the MI is a political agent that brings the facts of the ummah into the world. He argues that Daulatzai’s MI points to the “innovation of a post-national Muslim politics, in which the Westphalian state does not constrain the expression of an Islamicate identity, and this expression is articulated with various decolonial discourse, in such a way that the [MI] becomes the surface of inscription for decolonial demands” (2014: 181). Sayyid argues that the MI provides a modality for post-national politics that challenges Western historiography and the Plato-to-NATO narrative. The MI goes beyond the limits of personal Islamic piety as politics,185 and promotes various intellectual and cultural expressions that push the Muslim subject into the world. The proliferation of these counter-narratives provincializes Western historiography and deprovincializes Islamicate historiography (181-182).

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185 Sayyid does not deal with how the politics of pietistic expressions can also be a form of counter-cultural resistance and world-making as Saba Mahmood does in her work, Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and Feminist Subject (2005), on Islamist women in Egypt. While he is not anti-pietistic, he does critique how piety cannot be the only component of Islamist political projects (Sayyid 2014: 181). What he is more so considered with in regards to theology is that it not be made the foundation of an Islamicate social order. If theology becomes the foundation of a polity then the ontology of the state becomes equated with divine ontology, and therefore denies humans the agency to transform the political, because the political is no longer up for debate; meaning, theology as the political becomes sedimented and fatalistically unchangeable (165). Theology, for Sayyid, like the Qur’an, can inform the political language of Islam but Muslims cannot be made into foundationalist gods – theology and the political must be up for debate so that societies and states can be transformed towards the ethical horizons and ideals of Islamic theology or sacred texts like the Qur’an (ibid.). Sayyid himself is explicit about his project being non-theological in the sense that he is not making arguments about salvation (2015: XX) and argues that he is “not for a future which is authentically grounded in the theology of Islam, but rather a decolonial future where Muslims become the authors of their own history” (ibid.). Critics may rightfully view such a position as a weakness in Sayyid’s approach given that most Islamists largely deal with theology in their thoughts and actions about what it means to be an authentic Muslim in the world (Euben 2009); yet, Sayyid’s post-foundationalist attempt does at least make clear the philosophical implications of where theology should locate and relate itself with regards to the political so as not to make Muslims gods, and Islamicate societies fatalistic.
The deprovincialization of Islamicate historiography from the margins to center provides a surface of inscription for Muslims to write themselves into a post-Western future. For Sayyid, “The counter-narrative that is decolonial and global would allow Muslims to fit their biographies with consistency and hope into a history” (182). The creation of this historiographical canon for the MI cannot simply be the crystallization of Muslim agency as permanent opposition to coloniality. Both Dabashi and Daulatzai put forward historiographical conceptions of Muslim agency which are radical in the ontic sphere of politics, but fall short in that they do not provide strong political ontological frameworks beyond permanent opposition against power. To go beyond permanent opposition, Sayyid argues that the MI must always be moving in the direction of the caliphate; the caliphate for Sayyid being a type of great power that navigates Muslims from their “diasporic” ontology to a “home” ontology, and makes the ummah no longer a scandal in exile but a force to be reckoned with in the post-Western future (182). Daulatzai is not solid in his perception of political ontology, and his conceptualization of the MI can be further radicalized by the inclusion of Islamist historiography in addition to the constructive meat of the MI striving towards the caliphate. Nevertheless, he provides a necessary decolonial post-Western modality for doing post-national politics.

4.2.3. Daulatzai’s Language - Clearing

Similar to Daulatzai’s limitations in historiography, there are two major concerns with his language scheme in relation to the MI; that of his proclivity towards Westernese, and the other is his lack of engagement with Islam as a language and universal to do the political. The first is evident in a number of Daulatzai’s major concepts – from the “Muslim Third World” (Daulatzai 2012: xiii), to the “Muslim Left,” (2012: 195 & 2018) and arguably even the “Muslim International” itself – all appeal to a secular Leftist and Kemalist language of Westernese when looked at in the larger picture of his language schema. This is not to say that such concepts are irredeemable, but that

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186 Sayyid’s argument in favor of a “home” ontology (2014: 182) might appear to be in contradiction to Dabashi’s argument for a type of “exilic” ontology (Dabashi 2017: 1-16). The tension I find between both visions is that Sayyid puts the political first in terms of philosophical importance, while Dabashi places ethics first in his dedication to a hermeneutics of alterity (2013: 159). Without downplaying their differences, and rather than picking one side as the answer, I believe that both positions must be reinterpreted to best serve a decolonial Muslim subjectivity that is more holistic in relation to the political and ethical. In short, I argue that there must be a dialectic between the “home” and “exile”. One must be able to build a strong ontological home for the Muslim self and ummah, just as he keeps an ethical commitment to living for and with the mustad’afun, of all margins (in a post-mazhabi/sectarian fashion). The political cannot completely subsume the hermeneutics of alterity in the quest for liberation, just as the hermeneutic of alterity must not lose sight of building power through counter-hegemony. This mizan (balance) between the two is integral to building a counter-hegemonic Muslim political ontology which also never loses its taqwa (God-conscious) derived commitment to the margins.
they would need further theoretical justification and conceptual clarity which Daulatzai does not provide. His assumption is that this language is already worth decolonial value. I differ with him in to my critique of the assumed decolonial nature of such language.

First, with regards to the Muslim Third World, why should it be described as such and appeal to imaginative geographies that are tied to Leftist secular anti-colonial nationalism during the 60s-70s? Is not the “Muslim World” itself already enough to distinguish the Islamicate as ontologically different from and subalternized by “the world”? Why the appeal to the “Third”? Second, in relation to the Muslim Left, why must Muslims become part of the descriptive arsenal of the radical secular Left, when it is clear the radical secular Left has consistently taken issue when Islam becomes the master signifier in social struggles? Muslims who engage the political through the language of Islam are a threat to the radical secular Left’s Eurocentric vision of the world, and I have shown earlier that both during the Cold War and after, the global Left has continued to make good and bad Muslims through its Islamophilic and phobic engagements with Muslim political agency which assumes Islam as its universal. Lastly, in terms of the Muslim International, the concept is more immediately tied to secular Leftist imaginations of the “International” which I have shown earlier continuously exclude Muslims for being too Oriental in their articulation of internationalism. My questioning of Daulatzai’s terms is not to say they are unworthy, nor that

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187 In Chapter Two, I critiqued Camil Aydin’s critique of the term “Muslim World” in his book, The Idea of the Muslim World: A Global Intellectual History (2017), in which he argues the term is a Muslim essentialist counter to Eurocentric Islamophobic essentializing of Muslims which erases the diversity, multiplicity and diversity amongst the many Muslim worlds that exist. What Aydin overlooks is the myriad ways in which Muslim legitimately thought through and used the term in struggle in order to formulate autonomous agency away from Westernese. What is at stake in this debate is Muslims’ ability to produce a counter-hegemonic universal. Both Aydin’s dismissal of the term as utilitarian and purely pragmatic (2017: 235), and Daulatzai’s lack of critically conceptualizing what he means by Muslim Third World as opposed to say, Muslim world, share a tendency to overlook or delegitimize the language Muslims have largely used to define themselves through the universal of Islam and in resistance to Westernese.

188 This is not to suggest that there has never been the idea of a Muslim Left; the works of many scholars and activists, such as Hassan Hanafi (Hanafi 2015: 98), Ali Shariati (Rahnema 2014) or Farid Esack (2006) point towards moments where the Left and Islamism, or what some have called Progressive Islamism (Duderija 2017), have meet in critical and creative ways. Rather it is to underscore the normative incapacity of something akin to a Muslim Left rising to counter-hegemonic power due to the Islamophobia of the secular Left. Uncritical Muslim traditionalists have played a role in suppressing the ideas and movements of Leftists Islamist movements as well, yet they speak from a locus of enunciation which is epistemically less privileged than that of the secular Left. While uncritical Muslim traditionalists have been problematic in their responses to the West and progressive Islamism, the secular Left speaks from a positionality which is more a part of the problem, due to their privileged rank within Eurocentric hierarchies of knowledge and power. If Daulatzai wants to put forward a Muslim Left, there needs to be more conceptual clarity about how the language of secular Leftist Westernese has played a role in suppressing Muslim agency, and how such a Muslim Left would depart from this colonial baggage in a way that does not make bad Muslims out of less critical traditionalist Muslims and good Muslims out of an enlightened secular Leftist Islam.

189 The idea of the a Muslim International must be more thoroughly reconceptualized given the violent history of a Colonial Leftist International in relation to Islam and Muslims. In Chapter 3, I detailed Muslim Nationalist Communist leader Sultan Galiev’s critique of the “Colonial International” that emerged from the Bolshevik Revolution (Renault
they don’t carry any decolonial potential; rather, it is to further probe and move beyond the unthought secular Leftist Westernese that permeates postcolonial language schemes. It is not within the scope of this section to offer detailed counters to Daulatzai’s concepts, but I do argue that these language issues must be more critically conceptualized before being claimed as emancipatory or decolonial at face value for Muslim agency.

Daulatzai’s language game is also limited in relation to connecting the MI to Islamic thinkers, movements and discourses which take Islam as their universal and language to do the political. Contrary to Dabashi, Daulatzai does an excellent job citing the various ways in which Malcolm used the language of Islam in his political struggles. Yet, not once does Daulatzai connect Malcolm or the MI to the centuries of Islamist struggle against coloniality. Other Malcolmite scholars have at least noted the ways in which Pan-Islamism influenced Malcolm and noted how Malcolm was in direct conversation with various Pan-Islamist discourses during his life, such as the Muslim Brotherhood or Black Muslim movements that had long been influenced by Pan-Islamism¹⁹⁰ (alhassen 2017: 135 & Grewal 2014: 114). Even Daulatzai quotes Malcolm saying, “Islam is the greatest unifying force in the Dark World today” (2012: 103). Overall, Daulatzai’s MI, while acknowledging that Malcolm had a relation to the language of Islam in his political rhetoric and spiritual journeys, is divorced from the broader connection to Islamism. In place, Daulatzai argues for a type of hybrid modality for the MI to do politics, which must be problematized.

¹⁹⁰ Dusé Mohamed Ali (d. 1945) was a Sudanese-Egyptian political activist who was spread the message of Pan-Arabism, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Africanism in his encounters with Pan-Africanists in the West (Lubin 2014: 48). Marcus Garvey (d. 1940), the famed Pan-Africanist who founded the United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1914, had worked for two years prior (since 1912) in the London offices of Dusé Mohamed Ali’s journal African Times and Orient Review (Lubin 2014: 71). Ali’s blend of Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism had influenced Garvey, including Garveyite movements in the USA, where Ali eventually moved in 1921. After working for three years in various capacities of the UNIA in the USA, Ali turned his attention towards building Muslim internationalist networks. He supported Pan-Islamist publications and the building of Muslim organizations in the USA, and worked with Ahmadi and Black Muslim movements in ways that complemented the black nationalism of Garveyite movements (73). Both of Malcolm X’s parents were active members in the Garveyite UNIA organization during their lives (Vincent 1989), and the influence of Islamism on Black movements at the time is what led to the condition of possibility for such organizations as the Nation of Islam to blossom (Lubin 2014: 73). To name that Islamism had an effect on Malcolm’s life, let alone that of wider Muslim and non-Muslim Black social movements in the USA, is an integral step in highlighting the language of Islam in forming the MI and connecting it to other Islamist movements within the ummah.
For Daulatzai, the MI is a type of border-crossing figure who bears no grounding in a formal notion of the political, ontological or universal. Daulatzai writes,

…the Muslim International is not monolithic; it even resists homogeneity and encourages radical difference…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 International 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, created, and re-created by political activists, non-state actors, artists, writers, the working poor, women, exiles, refugees, and others, the Muslim International is a dissident and exilic space that encourages transgression, applauds border crossing, and foments forms of sabotage and resistance not possible within European and U.S. discourses about individualism, the nation-state, "democracy," and the broader philosophical and juridical frameworks of the Enlightenment, modernity, and Western liberalism (2012: xxiv).

Daulatzai also states that the MI disturbs the very idea of the “political” (xxvi). Instead, he opts for a looser and more pragmatic conception of the political, politics and power, which recognizes that power is everywhere, and that all activity is in a sense political. Further, the MI is a space in which formal political activities (political parties, labor unions, student and worker strikes, women’s right movements, peasant revolts, armed struggle, etc.) and informal political activities (unorganized everyday politics and agency, infrapolitics, “quiet encroachment” and resistance through informal economies, art and counter-cultural production, etc.) are both recognized as legitimate forms of politics for resisting neoliberalism (xxiv – xxv). Daulatzai underscores the point that activism and agency cannot only be seen in the grandiose claims of social movements, labor unions and formal political structures, but must also be expressed in song, cinema and writing (xxvi).

There are a number of promising aspects to Daulatzai proposal about the hybrid, border crossing political nature of the MI. Yet, his aversion to building stronger conceptual notions of the political, ontological and universal, and his uncritical adoption of Westernese in forming the language of the MI leads him along similar postcolonial routes as Dabashi. Like Daulatzai’s overemphasis on a hermeneutics of alterity and permanent opposition to power, Daulatzai’s overreliance on promoting radical difference and opposition to power in the everyday must be complemented by a counter-hegemonic political home for Muslims – something such as the caliphate, which aids in solving their diasporic homeless ontological condition. Hybridity has a role to play in relation to Muslim political ontology, but it must be decolonized away from dominant postcolonial renditions that we find in the works of Dabashi and Daulatzai.
4.2.3.1. From Postcolonial to Decolonial Hybridity

Bhabha’s (1994) and subsequent normative postcolonial conceptualizations of hybridity (Ashcroft 2007: 108-111) argue that the colonized, enslaved and oppressed did not simply lose agency once encountering the oppressor’s hegemonic language, but rather creolized it and resisted from within that liminal space in subversive ways. In effect, they resisted by doing such things as reshaping the language of the colonizer by inserting their own, or using the master’s language tools against the himself. While postcolonial hybridity seemed to have solved the problem of moving beyond nativism and cultural essentialism, a number of critiques have been raised against the concept of hybridity in postmodern postcolonial theory.191 Philosophically, one of the main critiques has been how postmodernism’s attempt to valorize an anti-essentialist cultural hybridity leaves masked a hidden Western universal. Sayyid argues that one should not reject postmodernism’s emphasis on anti-essentialism but complement it by unmasking the Western universalism that dominates Eurocentric understandings of hybridity (2005: 257).

In relation to power, the postcolonial concept of hybridity has also been critiqued for masking material power relations through the fancy language of an anti-essentialist liminal Third Space which is theoretically weak in acknowledging continued power difference between the oppressor and oppressed within that very liminality. Coming from a decolonial Jewish perspective, Santiago Slabodsky proposes a model of border thinking which overcomes three aspects of this limitation of postcolonial hybridity:

In the first place, it acknowledges the asymmetry of power between parties in the struggle. Second, it does not seek to playfully deconstruct the polarities. The border thinker constructs an alternative by prioritizing the colonized epistemologies thereby breaking with the two central features of the narrative: her/his racialization and the presumption of the inexistence of alternatives to Western thought. Lastly, it enables the integration of the modern Jewish experience as a decolonial programmatic project. This includes Jewish voices from the sixteenth to the twentieth century (2014: 151).

By taking into consideration the coloniality of knowledge, being and power, and siding with marginalized knowledges within the violent space of the West over the Rest, Slabodsky’s border-thinking counter to hybridity helps to solve the problems of taking postcolonial hybridity “as is”; meaning, as a form of Eurocentric multicultural assimilation, or as a hidden form of neo/postcolonial epistemic racism.

By combining both Sayyid’s approach and that of Slabodsky, I argue that decolonial hybridity is different from postcolonial hybridity in several ways: 1) it unmasks the Western universal that is often left uncritiqued in postcolonial anti-essentialist conceptualizations of hybridity, 2) it sides with the oppressed in the colonial encounter; meaning that non-Western universals and epistemologies become the subject-position from which to articulate a counter to colonial language games, and 3) in the case of an Islamicate decolonial hybridity, it allows for hybridity in the ontic sphere of politics while the language of Islam repositions itself as the counter-hegemonic political ontology that predetermines or encircles Islamicate hybridity.

In the case of both Daulatzai and Dabashi, we see how their interpretations of hybridity are postcolonial due to the ways in which they disavow or do not actively engage Islamism. As I shared earlier, Dabashi’s conceptualization of Islamism, secular nationalism and socialism as the hybrid which informed the Muslim Revolutionary was limited due to the ways it perpetuates the Kemalism – Islamism divide, and because Dabashi is anti-Islamist. With regard to Daulatzai, 1) his non-engagement with Islamism, 2) sole engagement with Blackness in forming a specifically Muslim identity, and 3) his anti-universalist position on the MI’s border crossing agency is limiting. Both of their engagements with hybrid forms of Muslim political agency/identity are useful and necessary, but they can only be repurposed in the ontic Islamicate after Islam is able to exist as a historical universal which can govern Muslim ontology. The danger of not partaking in the process of critiquing the hidden Western universal and siding with the subalternized universal (i.e., the Islamic universal in this case) lays in the outcome of perpetuating the good Muslim-bad Muslim divide. If Daulatzai’s MI hybridity is not decolonized by reinserting the language of Islam and wider Islamist internationalism as a source of agency, then Malcolm X becomes the good MI, and Islamists become the bad MI simply for the fact that their language is based on a different universal than Black Internationalism or Muslim Third World Kemalism. In the case of Dabashi, he does the same by making Malcolm X a good Muslim, and the likes of Shariati or Qutb bad Muslims for not being hybrid enough.

4.2.4. Daulatzai’s Language - Dreaming

Daulatzai’s basis for forming the MI is Malcolm X. In this section, I will be dreaming through alternative ways of reading Malcolm and the MI’s relationship to Islam as a kind of case study for how to move beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary and neo/postcoloniality’s snares. This will be done by arguing that Malcolm should be viewed as a type of Black Islamist, rather than simply a Black Muslim. With regards to Malcolm’s relationship to Islam, Malcolmite scholars often
recognize Malcolm’s approach to Islam as spiritual, theological or ethical (Daulatzai 2012, Curtis 2015, alhassen 2017), but few have analyzed how it is framed through the lens of political ontology. At best, they might mention the hybrid nature of Malcolm’s political philosophy as being a mix of Pan-Africanism, Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism (alhassen 2017: 36). Malcolm was undoubtedly a strong Black Nationalist throughout most of his life\(^{192}\), and his main concern was the plight of Black people in the USA even while he explored, stood in solidarity with or was influenced by concerns and political philosophies distinct from the Blackamerican context. Yet, his time in the NOI and his engagement with Islam post-NOI also point to interesting expressions of Islamist agency that deserve recognition. Malcolm was a multifaceted figure, and it appears that there is a lack of exploration of his interpretation of Islam as a language to do the political. 

Islam was a language for Malcolm and generations of Black Muslims that spoke to all oppressed peoples, and they faced discrimination for choosing Islam as part of their language scheme. Many historical Black Muslim peoples and movements in the United States had been targeted by the Islamophobic/philic US state for centuries for being Black and Muslim. I mention in Chapter Two how African Muslims were banned and treated Islamophobically by the Spanish and Portuguese empires who saw them as an active political threat and enemy to their projects of forced Christianization (Diouf 2013: 34-37). Edward Curtis notes how literate African Muslim slaves in North America were exotified and viewed as more civilized Orientals in comparison to their non-Muslim African fellow slaves by the US state. These early African American Muslims, such as the West African Fulbe Prince Abdul Rahman Ibrahima Sori (d. 1829)\(^{193}\) in the 1820s, were treated better by white Christian slave masters as a result of an American Islamophilic gaze which sought to make friends with African Muslims (Curtis 2013: 80-81). Ultimately, I would argue this was a form of Islamophilia that systemically disciplined African Muslims to not revolt in jihad but to conform to America’s Western/white power structure. By the early 20\(^{th}\) century, the rising Black

\(^{192}\) During an interview in 1962 at the Shabazz Frosti Kreem in St. Louis, Malcolm highlights the primacy of Blackness and role of Islam in his political philosophy, “The average Negro doesn’t even let another Negro know what he thinks, he’s so mistrusting. He’s an acrobat. He had to be to survive in this civilization. But by me being a Muslim, I’m black first—my sympathies are black, my allegiance is black, my whole objectives are black. By me being a Muslim, I’m not interested in being American, because America has never been interested in me” (Goldman 1974: 6). While Black peoples’ struggles were Malcolm’s main concern, Islam was a language that would aid in combating and going beyond the political ontology of American whiteness. 

\(^{193}\) Abdul Rahman Ibrahima Sori was a West African Fulbe amir (prince, commander or governor) who was captured in the Fouta Jallon region of what is now Guinea, West Africa. He was sold to slave traders in the United States in 1788, and after 40 years of slavery was freed in 1828 by U.S. President John Quincy Adams and Secretary of State Henry Clay at the behest of the Sultan of Morocco. During his enslavement, his white American slave master, Thomas Foster, began to refer to him as “Prince” once he was made aware of Sori’s lineage (Diouf 2013: 27-28, 137 & Austin 1997: 71).
Muslim movements of different theological orientations - such as Ahmadi, Sunni, Shi’a, NOI, or the Moorish Science Temple - were viewed as anti-American for their counter-universal epistemologies that challenged white secular/Christian America, and increasingly faced surveillance and statist violence as a result of siding with Islam (2013: 85-87).

4.2.4.1. Malcolm’s Islam beyond Orientalism and Zionism

By the time Malcolm arrived as a vocal public leader in the 1950s and 60s, his critique of Zionism – which came about due to his travels, connections and friendships he made through the Muslim world and the spirit of Islam – pitted him more strongly against the rising Western secular Judeo-Christian power structure. Malcolm visited Gaza on September 5th, 1964 for two days and was welcomed by an Egyptian colonel and Palestinian Muslim religious leaders in a refugee camp. He noted in his diary that “the spirit of Allah was strong” and he was particularly moved by a Palestinian poet 194 whose poem he recalled in his diary, mentioning such motifs as returning to the homeland and fighting jihad (alhassen 2017: 201-203).

Malcolm became one of the earliest Blackamericans to break with the Black Orientalism/Zionism of the civil rights movement and realize an “ummatic connection” to Palestine as an oppressed people (199 - 202). Prior to Malcolm, mainstream Garveyite Black nationalism viewed Zionism and Israel as a model for Blacks to emulate in returning to their own homeland (202). Malcolm’s harsh criticism of Israel in articles such as his infamous “Zionist Logic” (1964) played a significant role in shifting Black nationalism’s focus away from constructing Israel as a model to emulate.

194 Harun Hashim Rashid (b. 1927) was a famous Gazan poet who lived through both British and Zionist colonial violence in Gaza. Malcolm met with him during his trip to Gaza, and wrote down verses from one of Rashid’s poems in his diary. The poem is likely from Rashid’s Hatta Ya’ud Sh’abuna (Until our People Return) (1960) (alhassen 2017: 202-203):

We are Returning
Returning, returning, we are returning.
The borders shall be no more,
Nor fortresses nor fortifications.
So cry out, o displaced persons,
We are returning.
Returning to the homes, to the planes and the mountains,
Under the banners of glory,
jihad and struggle.
With our blood and self-sacrifice, brotherhood and loyalty,
We are returning.
Returning, o hills, returning, o planes,
Returning to our childhood and youth.
To wage jihad with a drawn sword and to reap in our land.
We are returning
Instead, Zionism and Israel became models to dismantle shortly after Malcolm’s time, and Palestine became a model to emulate for Malcolm and other Blackamericans in terms of thinking through their own projects of returning to the homeland of Africa and resisting neocolonialism and neoslavery (205).

Malcolm not only connected Zionism to Palestine but to the ways that Zionism was a major force of neocolonialism. He argued that Zionists were causing divides between Africans, Arabs and Asians in ways that did not exist before (208-209). He was educated by Muslim peers about the ways Black Orientalism and Black Zionism were internalized by non-Western peoples due to the ways in which Western knowledge systems, like Zionist logic, favored fermenting conflict amongst oppressed peoples in Africa and Asia around such issues as the Arab slave trade. Malcolm’s critique of Zionism came during the heyday of the civil rights movement in the US. His anti-Zionism was so impactful that he was tagged an anti-Semite by Zionist press in the US, and was criticized by Martin Luther King Jr. for causing the deterioration of Negro-Jewish relations (210).

alhassen argues that one of Malcolm’s main mentors after his break with the NOI was Islamist thinker Abdurrahman Azzam. Malcolm was gifted Azzam’s book *The Eternal Message* by Dr. Mahmoud Shawarbi shortly after his break with the NOI and ended up spending time with Azzam after completing his *hajj*. Malcolm’s interpretation of Islam and his wider political program was deeply shaped by the lessons he learned from Azzam. alhassen details how such themes as “centering spiritual nationality over material ideologies, elevation of the practice of ummah (or ummic paxis), and diagnosing racism as arising from the failure of ‘spirit of brotherhood’” all deeply influenced Malcolm’s Islamic humanism and liberation ethics going forward (168).

It was through Malcolm’s friendships and travels in the Muslim world, and deeper engagement with the language of Islam, that he developed a wider social analysis that would not have been

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195 Black Orientalism refers to the way in which Afrocentric and Black nationalist thought has internalized the norms of Orientalism in their historical engagements with Islam and the Muslim (Jackson 2005: 99-102, alhassen 2017: 161, Lubin 2014: 42, Mazrui 2000). In short, Jackson describes, “Black Orientalism seeks to cast the Arab/Muslim world as a precursor and then imitator of the West in the latter’s history of anti-blackness” (2005: 99-100). This step is made by Black Orientalists in a way that mischaracterizes the socio-historical specificities of anti-blackness in the Islamicate world, which have their own logics and genealogies separate from the Orientalist framework.

196 Shawarbi was an Egyptian soil chemist and member of the Federation of Islamic Associations of the U.S. and Canada, who actively embraced the NOI and other Black Muslim movements, rather than condemn them like many other Muslim migrant organizations were doing at the time (alhassen 2017: 70-71).
possible without Islam. The diary entry which came directly after his reflections on his time in Gaza outlined a historiography of indigenous struggles against coloniality which demonstrated how his social analysis was deepening. He connected Moroccans to Spain, the Indigenous to the Americas, “Negroes” to Africa, Arabs to Palestine and Israelis to Europe all as examples of indigenous people who have suffered under a Western international power (205-206). On the night before his assassination, February 20th, 1965, Malcolm did his last interview with an Islamist newspaper headed by Said Ramadan called Al-Muslimoon. In this interview, Malcolm underscores how the coloniality of power, knowledge and being use the tactic of divide and conquer to keep people divided in the ummah and the wider neo/postcolonial world:

The colonial vultures have no intention of giving it up with a fight. Their chief weapon is still “divide and conquer.” In East Africa there is a strong anti-Asian feeling being nourished among Africans. In West Africa there is a strong anti-Arab feeling. Where there are Arabs or Asians there is a strong anti-Muslim feeling. These hostilities are not initiated by the above-mentioned people who are involved. They have nothing to benefit from fighting among themselves at this point. Those who benefit most are the former colonial masters who have now supplanted the hated colonialism and imperialism with Zionism... Zionism is even more dangerous than communism because it is made more acceptable and is thus more destructively effective (211).

Of important in this excerpt from the interview are two things - firstly, Malcolm’s recognition of anti-Muslim sentiment that exists within Arab and Asian contexts, and secondly, his negative appraisal of communism. As I have demonstrated earlier, Islamophobia has been systemically internalized in the Islamicate world through the Kemalist-Islamist divide. Whether Malcolm is recognizing this reality is for debate (it definitely existed at his time), but it is interesting for him to note that anti-Muslim sentiment exists in contexts that are Islamicate. The second is that his critique of communism, alhassen argues (211), likely comes from being influenced by the readings of Azzam. At the time of Malcolm’s life, I would argue it would have been nearly impossible for a secular or Christian Black nationalist from the USA to have as sophisticated critical reading of Zionism, Islamophobia and Communism as Malcolm without having been exposed to pan-Islamism. Malcolm’s recognition of these forces in his social analysis are a clear sign that Islam operated as one of his main languages and defined his political ontology.

4.2.4.2. Malcolm’s Language of Islam & Black Islamism

Malcolm, the NOI and other Black Muslim peoples were disciplined due to both anti-blackness and anti-Muslimness, and Malcolm was prolific in his engagement with the language of Islam at the level of the political and politics. Malcolm did not only believe in the language of Pan-Africanism as an ontological modality to galvanize Black peoples in the diaspora. The cause of
Blackamericans was to be aided by the ontology of Islam; and just as Malcolm said, the black struggle “must also be the concern and the moral responsibility of the entire Muslim world – if [Muslims] hope to make the principles of the Quran a living reality” (Daulatzai 2012: 6). Islam was a versatile grammar and fluid vocabulary for Malcolm X and wider Black political culture in the US during the Cold War that connected Black struggle to Blacks, Muslims and all oppressed peoples outside the nationalist boundaries of the US (2012: 6-7). When Malcolm spoke of the expansiveness of the language of Islam in New York at a gathering of United Nations representatives, he not only deemed it the greatest unifying force in the Dark World but stated:

The unity of 600 million Moslems from the China Sea to the shores of West. Africa, is a force and a factor that has long been recognized by the major powers of the world...The 90 million Moslems in Indonesia are only a small part of the 600 million more in other parts of the Dark World, Asia and Africa. 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 (23-25).

The narrative of a “loss of self” and “return to origins” in the NOI and Malcolm’s discourse – like many other Islamists before and during his time such as Ali Shariati who produced a work entitled “Return to Self”\(^{197}\) – led to an embrace of a Muslim name and rejection of a name imposed by whiteness, allowing for a regained sense of being that had been destroyed by slavery and US state governmentality (19). Islam was not only a tool of apolitical ritual and personal spiritual confinement for Malcolm and Black Muslims. Islam gave Blacks a place in the world as Muslims who could establish a counter political ontology to that of the secular Judeo-Christian of the US American Left and Right, including accommodationist Black Christianity\(^{198}\). Dubois commented that the White Christian God of US empire caused Blacks to see Islam as a more radical ontology, “God, going north, and rising on the wings of power, had become white, and Allah, out of power, and on the dark side of Heaven, had become—for all practical purposes anyway—black” (Baldwin 1963: 4).

The NOI and Malcolm’s claim to an Afro-Asiatic political identity is another way in which Islam inspired Malcolm to connect to geographies and anti-racist ways of being counter to Orientalist nationalist boundaries imposed on Africa and Asia. As Daulatzai notes, “Terms such as Asiatic,\(^{197}\) For a discussion on Shariati’s work “Return to Self” see Arash Davari’s “Return to Which Self? Ali Shariati and Frantz Fanon on the Political Ethics of Insurrectionary Violence” (2014).

\(^{198}\) Malcolm’s condemning of Christianity as “the white man’s religion” lead Black Christian James Cone (d. 2018) to radically reinterpret Christianity against the white church and for black power. Cone founded the school of Black Liberation Theology which teaches that God is on the side of the oppressed, and specifically that of Black peoples in the USA in their struggle against the white supremacist power structure (Borrow 1994: 13-16).
Asian Black nation, Afro-Asiatic Black man, and Asiatic Black man were constantly and consistently deployed to provide an alternative genealogy for Black peoples in America, one that re-spatialized Black identity without exclusively looking at Africa as the site for the recuperation, recovery, and reconstitution of, Black history” (22). For many Black Muslims, the Afro-Asiatic identity was a way to affirm multiple aspects of their being - their Blackness, Muslimness and connection to an Islamic ontological plane that provided an anti-racist future. Alhassen argues that Malcolm’s attraction to the emphasis on tawhid (oneness of God) and the spirit of brotherhood in Islam underlined his belief that Islam was an antidote to the “cancer of racism” in America (2017: 143). For Malcolm, Islam could free not only blacks but whites from their mental slavery to a system that went against the justice of God, and God-given right for all people to be free, just and equal (2017: 144). In making such a declaration, I propose, Malcolm presents a type of anti-racist Pan-Islamist language which allows for building a post-Western Muslim future.

In conclusion, Malcolm engaged the language of Islam in the following manner: 1) as a name to do the political and define his ontology, 2) to counter and defeat an international Western power structure expressed through the language of Westernese, 3) to envision post-nationalist geographies beyond ethnicity that lead to an antiracist post-Western/white futures and a connectedness to all Blacks, Muslims and oppressed peoples. Thus, Malcolm was not only a Black Nationalist or a Black Muslim, but a Black Islamist.199 It may be useful to define other Black Muslim formations, such as the NOI or Dar ul-Islam movement200, as Black Islamist formations – not because they do or do not want to impose Shari’ah through a modern nation-state201 – but because Islam has provided them a language, like countless other Muslims and Islamicate

199 If Islam is a universal and language to do the political, then it also produces particulars. The particularity of Black Islamism in the USA does not contradict the universal nature of Islamism across contexts. Each context, whether Arab Islamism in Palestine in Egypt, Afro-Arab Islamism in Sudan, Iranian Islamism, Turkish Islamism, or any other form of Islamism can be situated by a particular while also remaining a part of a universal Islamist tradition. The universal language of Islam is what connects these various particular expressions of Islamism across the ummah. It might even be necessary to specify Malcolm as a Blackamerican Islamist within the wider canon of Black Islamism, as other expressions of Islamism in Black Muslim communities outside of the US might also lay claim to another particular form of Black or African Islamism. This is evident in other contexts where, for example, Arab Palestinian Islamism differs from Arab Egyptian Islamism, and so forth.


201 As detailed in Chapter 3, dominant understandings of Islamism approach it through a legal or state-centered framework, while Sayyid offers an understanding of Islamism through poststructuralism, postmodernism and semiotic theory that sheds light on its political philosophic hermeneutic and language dimensions (Almond 2010: 3-4).
peoples around the world, to formulate political agency and autonomy against and beyond Western ontology. Redefining Malcolm as a Black Islamist facilitates moving in a decolonial direction due to the ways it uplifts Islam as a universal and not just a postcolonial secular nominal Muslim identity. The conversation about redefining Malcolm as a Black Islamist also lends itself to theoretically redefining the MI or any decolonial Muslim ontology. As both Sayyid (2014: 181) and Daulatzai (2012: 22) argue, Malcolm’s connection to the ummah envisioned a community that was not tied to any particular nation-state. From “Harlem to Mecca, Cairo to Bandung, Algiers to Palestine” (23), the MI’s investment in a counter-citizenship in the ummah allows for a post-national, postsecular language for the MI to build a post-Western future towards the caliphate.

4.3. Conclusion: What is Decolonial Muslim Ontology?
In summary, Dabashi’s Muslim Revolutionary and Daulatzai’s Muslim Internationalist point to the neo/postcolonial limits as well as decolonial horizon of clearing and dreaming through Muslim ontology in the contemporary period. Their conceptions of historiography and language schemes, in conversation with Salman Sayyid and the wider canon of Decolonial Studies canon, provide necessary ground for decolonizing Muslim ontology. In regard to historiography, Dabashi’s postcolonial lack of race analysis and economic reductionism are contrasted by Sayyid and Daulatzai’s decolonial emphasis on the race in forming coloniality and the modern/colonial world-system. The exclusion of Islamist historiography in Daulatzai’s work and Dabashi’s anti-Islamism must be reconceptualized in order to widen the gamut of historical Muslim resistance against coloniality and Kemalism. Western colonialism and slavery from the 15th century onwards in diverse areas of the Islamicate – from the Americas, to the coasts of Africa and the Mediterranean, to the Central Asian steppes, to South and Southeast Asia by way of land and sea – all must be accounted for; including the influence of the West’s natal moment during the medieval Crusades which laid the ontological conditions of possibility for Europe to expand later. There must also be a move from the ontic to the ontological in analyzing the Muslim question. Kemalist and secular Left ontic historiographies in the works of Dabashi and Daulatzai erase the colonial ontological difference that arises due to the anti-Muslimness/Islamism hidden within the Western universalism of both Kemalism and secular Leftism.

In terms of language, Dabashi provides a more thorough engagement with the language of Islam and Muslim thinkers, but his anti-Islamist position nevertheless perpetuates the paradigm of good and bad Muslims by disallowing the agency of Muslims to make Islam a name and language to define their political ontologies and social orders. Daulatzai’s anti-political and non-Islamist
engagement with the language of Islam also supports the erasure of Muslims’ ability to think and be beyond Westernese through a counter-hegemonic political ontology of Islam. Sayyid’s post-essentialist approach which both critiques Islamism and Western essentialisms, and his distinction between Islam/ontology/political and Islamicate/ontic/politics are useful frameworks for turning the postcolonial problems inherent in Daulatzai and Dabashi’s anti-universal and anti-Islamist language schemes in a decolonial direction. Dabashi’s formulation of a post-Western grammar of the *dunya*, for example, becomes promising once better placed in relation to Islam and the Islamicate. By undoing the secular relegation of Islam to the private sphere, and by taking a post-legalist approach, Dabashi’s post-Western language scheme for the Muslim Revolutionary can be useful for creating a *dunya* of life in the Islamicate against that of the *dunya* of death perpetuated by coloniality. Similarly, Daulatzai’s Muslim International proposes a border-crossing hybrid agency in the politics of the Islamicate once postcolonial conceptions of hybridity are decolonized away from their Western universalist underpinnings.

In order to initiate the process of going beyond the good/bad binary, one must first take the side of the bad Muslim. By ontically siding with those *mustad’afun* who have been relegated to the zone of non-being through Western/Kemalist ontology, one chooses the side of the oppressed epistemically, ontologically and politically. From that point, one becomes a decolonial Muslim ontologically by autonomously defining the political and social order through the language of Islam, thereby defining who one’s friends and enemies are in struggle rather than being defined by an Islamophobic/philic universal that traps Muslim ontology into the binary of good/bad. The historiography and language of decolonial Muslim ontology must be post-Western, post-legalistic, post-national, post-essentialist and post-*mazhabi* in order to create a *dunya* of life against and beyond a *dunya* of death. The political nature of decolonial Muslim identity must be anchored in forming an ontological home vis-à-vis the building of power through the likes of a caliphate, just as it needs to be committed to an ethics that centers the homeless, margins and other *mustad’afun* (whether Muslim or not) who exist in the zone of non-being. The dialogical process between the political and ethics in the making of decolonial Muslim ontology understands that both 1) a hermeneutics of alterity and 2) a counter-hegemonic commitment to building historiographies and language autonomous from Westernese do not make either the political or ethics pre-determined theological idols; the political and ethics must be placed along a spectrum guided by *mizan* which the Muslim confront and interprets according to contextualized needs, desires, dreams, time and space. In conclusion, the process by which one goes beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary and the snares of the neo/postcolonial era must be guided by a
thorough process of clearing and dreaming. In taking seriously the ability of Muslims to write their own histories and speak the language of Islam as a universal, the decolonial Muslim emerges, and turns the tide of the Green Peril against the ontology of Western Man, thereby creating platforms for post-Western Islamicate futures.
Conclusion

The Muslim Question – A Decolonial Response

Islam is neither a religion of peace nor a religion of war – rather Islam is a language that Muslims use to tell stories about themselves. Recalling the caliphate, then, is a decolonial declaration, it is a reminder that Islam is Islam, and for Muslims that is all it needs to be. – Salman Sayyid (2014: 190 – 191)

The Muslim Question is one that has long perplexed the West. From its religious Christian childhood in the Middle Ages to its secular Judeo-Christian adulthood in Modernity, the Muslim has remained an out layer to the ontology of the West. Whether through the processes of Islamophobia or Islamophilia, the Muslim is at best treated as a temporary friend, or at worst, a perennial enemy. So long as Western Man maintains a theoanthropological view of the world rooted in his understandings of race, religion and the secular, the Muslim Question will continue to be unresolved. The aim of this work has been to put in question the political ontology of Western Man from a decolonial Muslim perspective. I have argued that two aspects of this relation between Western Man, decoloniality, and Islam must be redefined – 1) a redefinition of coloniality/decoloniality in relation to the Muslim and 2) that of postcolonial Muslim thinking with regards to decolonial Muslim thinking. This two-dimensional project was explored through reconceptualizing the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary, as well as thinking through what it means to decolonize Muslim being.

Islamic Decoloniality: Beyond the Atlantic-centric Narrative

Scholars within the field of Decolonial Studies have largely analyzed the rise of coloniality through their geopolitically positioning in Latin America, the Caribbean and North America. This work has asked – if we remember the character of Maryam/Maria from Chapter 2 – what it would mean to analyze coloniality from the perspective of a Muslim woman. To do so sheds light on gaps in the language and historiography of normative Decolonial Studies with regards to the Muslim Question. In order for decolonial scholarship to better understand and approach the Muslim and Islam in modernity, a number of substantive and methodological moves must be made. First, there must be a greater inclusion of the role of the crusading spirit and the coloniality of the spirit in inflicting and thereafter affecting the formation and rise of coloniality in the 16th century. This is not possible without showing that as much as there was a change in ontological hierarchies post-
1492, there was also a *continuation* and expansion from a well-developed pre-existing Western Christian palimpsest that largely viewed the Muslim as its fundamental enemy.

Second, the histories of coloniality’s rise in numerous locations outside of the Atlantic Ocean must be entered in the decolonial archive. While Columbus went West in search of Prestor John, crusades and commerce, Da Gama went East with the same colonial mission. Western powers from early to late modernity were encountering Muslims in nearly all locations they went - from Al-Andalus to the Americas; Africa West, North, Central, East and South; South and Southeast Asia on land and by sea; in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans; inside Europe itself in the South and East; and on the lands bordering Russia and China. Coloniality’s encounter with the Muslim in all of these locations points to a much wider cartography of power prior, during and long after the long 16th century in ways that are unique to the West’s relationship to Islam, as much as it shares similarities with others from the Rest.

Lastly, both religious and secular forms of Islamophobia – at the level of knowledge, power and being – have disciplined Muslim subjectivity in ways that must be continued to explored in relation to other racial figures in modernity, such as the Indian and Black. While scholars such as Maldonado-Torres have provided brilliant insights into the ways the coloniality of being has operated as an organizing principle in modernity, their language and framing must be complemented by other perspectives. Muslim have named the modern/colonial system as a type of Zionist-Crusading order, providing valuable insights into the ways that the religious/secular and Christian/Jewish hegemonies have given rise to a crusading spirit that further defines the anthropological and cosmological nature of Western Man and Imperial Being. The role of the secular and Kemalism must also be highlighted as forms of ontological disciplining which seek to limit the role the language of Islam can play in forming Muslim political agency against and beyond Western man, even well within the Islamicate world.

**Decolonizing Postcolonial Muslim Ontology**

Muslims have not been innocent bystanders to the mechanisms of coloniality. Through internalizations as well as rejections of the processes of Westernization, the postcolonial Muslim has sought to use or disabuse the language of Islam in her struggles. The hegemonic rise of Kemalism in the Islamicate has pointed to the fact the Muslim Question exists internal to the *umma*. Good Muslims become those who conform to coloniality and Kemalism, and bad Muslims those who reject the idols of modernity in various ways. Postcolonial Muslim thinkers - like
Mamdani, Dabashi, and Daulatzai – have sought to analyze the Muslim Question in relation to the West and the *ummah*. In their renderings of what it means to challenge systems of oppression both external and internal to Muslim subjectivities, they have provided both colonial and decolonial responses. The most salient critique provided by the above mentioned postcolonial Muslim thinkers is their empirical ontic understandings of Islamicate politics in relation to Muslim subjectivity. Their shortcomings appear when dealing with the ways in which Westernese has infiltrated Muslim subjectivity at the level of political ontology. Thus, the most urgent needs in answering the Muslim Question during the postcolonial period must deal with *both* the ontic and ontology when responding in decolonial fashion.

One way to challenge the ontic approach latent within the postcolonial Muslim canon is to reinterpret its historiography through the ontological. In Mamdani’s conceptualization of Cold War and good Muslim-bad Muslim historiography, we see how ontic readings (or even non-readings) of the secular and Kemalism do not fully capture the depth of anti-Muslimness/Islamism. Mamdani’s unipolar reading of the Cold War through a statist American-centric lens; uncritical analysis of the Soviet role in the Cold War in relation to the Muslim and long-term Russian Islamophobia; and secular Left readings of the Afghan War and Islamist movements crystallize forms of good and bad Muslims, old and new. The Green Peril cannot be ontically sanctioned to the post-Cold War period, and must rather be seen as an ontology at odds with Westernness due to the social difference produced by the crusading spirit and coloniality. The Green Peril has remained exterior to both the Red Scare and Western Man, and thus, history must be rewritten away from anti-Muslim/Islamist secular Left/Right understandings of the Muslim Question. If not, good and bad Muslims will be made by both Left and Right consciously and unconsciously.

Sayyid’s post-foundationalist, post-structuralist engagement with the language and historiography of Islam are a necessary decolonial intervention at the level of political ontology. While one of his limitations is located in not providing much theological content in answering the Muslim Question, he does attempt to philosophically *place* where theological relates to the political and social order. By putting Sayyid’s reflections on Muslim ontology in conversation with those of Dabashi and Daulatzai on Muslim political identity, a decolonial process emerges for clearing and dreaming beyond the anti-Muslim/Islamist parameters of the Muslim Question and good Muslim-bad Muslim binary. The decolonial Muslim must maintain a language and historiography that is post-Western, post-legalistic, post-national, post-essentialist and post-*mazhabi*. The potentially absurd insistence on so many “posts” is not mere intellectual exercise detached from reality. Dabashi’s
suggestion that Muslims must recreate a decolonial grammar exterior to Westernese is a complex and lengthy process because the Muslim must deal with a multitude of traditions at differing levels of power; in order to create a *dunya* of life against and beyond a *dunya* of death, the decolonial Muslim must be able to reflexively critique and appreciate the complexity of 1) the West, 2) the West inside himself (i.e. internal mental colonization/enslavement), and 3) the Islamic tradition from which he comes from and reconstructs.

At a practical level, exiting the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary beings with first taking the side of the bad Muslim. This ontic solidarity with the *mustad‘afun* of coloniality then leads to declaring oneself ontological Muslim through a decolonial process that clears and dreams its way through the webs of postcolonial Muslim subjectivity. For the decolonial Muslim, Islam must be allowed to operate as a counter-hegemonic universal in a post-Western pluriversal world. The hidden Western universalisms that so often creep into the ontological plane in ways apparent and less so must be undone; though, a critical and creative engagement with the Western tradition can be done through a decolonial hybridity in the ontic sphere as long as Islam retains the ability to be an autonomous universal. An essentialist denial of the right of Muslim subjectivity to take Islam as its universal will continue to produce bad Muslims who hold the language of Islam as their philosophical foundation, and good Muslims of those who either reject the master symbol of Islam or are only willing to allow its existence in an ontic sphere (“guided by which universal”? we might ask).

In conclusion, the decolonial Muslim must not reproduce a dogmatic or oppressive counter-hegemony in its pursuit of defining a new political order through Islam. This issue can be fine-tuned by better mitigating the relationship between ethics and the political. There must be a dialogical process between 1) an ethics-centered hermeneutics of alterity and 2) a counter-hegemonic political conception of an Islamic social that makes neither of these discourses idols. The political and ethical need to be guided by a heuristic *mizan* which the decolonial Muslim uses in order maintain a commitment to the margins, even as she forms a new center. Meaning, the

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202 Matthew Palombo reads Muslim liberation theologian Farid Esack’s Islamic conceptualization of pluralism in *Qur'an, Liberation and Pluralism: An Islamic Perspective of Interreligious Solidarity Against Oppression* (2006) as a form of interfaith praxis based in the margins rather than engaging in mere abstract universals untied to historical systems of power and coloniality (2014: 208-209). Esack argues for a praxis-based approach for engaging pluralism – interestingly, from a non-secular Islamic universal – which sheds light on how pluriversality must not be an atavistic affirmation of all non-Western universals, but a process of centering the margins both inside Western and the ‘Restern’ universals, so as not to devolve in irreconcilable essentialisms in the pursuit of pluriversal solidarity against oppression.
political ideal that “Islam is Islam, and for Muslims that is all that it needs to be” must be mitigated by an ethical imperative which affirms a return to Islam, but also asks a) to which Islam do we return, and b) how to reconstruct Islam in a liberatory, decolonial direction. Ultimately, a decolonial Muslim approach to the Muslim Question must redefine decoloniality as well as postcolonial Muslim ontology through a process of clearing and dreaming beyond the good Muslim-bad Muslim binary.

While making the call to return to Islam, Ali Shariati, in potentially post-foundationalist fashion, also clarifies that a return to Islam must also specify which Islam; “It is not sufficient to say that we must return to Islam. We must specify which Islam: That of Abu Zarr or that of Marwan, the ruler [...] One is the Islam of Caliphate, of the palace, and of rulers. The other is the Islam of the people, of the exploited, and of the poor” (cited in Abrahamian 1982: 14-15). Shariati’s understanding of return is not one that denies Muslims the possibility of doing evil, wrong or injustice. By specifying that a return also requires the questioning to which Islam we return, he provides a critical and creative reading of Islamic revivalism and reform that is attune to self-critique and self-transformation – especially in relation to the mustad’fun, whether Muslim or not – that is simultaneously committed to building a counter-hegemonic Islamic political project.

Reconstruction of Islam, in the Iqbalian sense, implies moving beyond a nativist Islamist approach whose return to Islam devolves into an exclusivist sanctification and ossification of the Islamic tradition. In Muhammad Iqbal’s Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam he argues for a philosophical engagement between Islam, the West and others in the Rest that both affirms Islam as a language and universal, while also being in critical and creative conversation with others. His idea of reconstruction is captured well by Javeed Majeed, “The key word ‘Reconstruction’ in the titles has connotations of rebuilding and renewing, using a mixture of preexisting and new materials. For Iqbal this project consists of balancing the tasks of reform and revision with the forces of conservatism so as not to reject the past entirely. The word ‘reconstruction’ therefore calls attention to the complexity of the project undertaken in the text, and in any project to rethink the foundations of religious thought in relation to modernity and its consequences... While Iqbal’s major preoccupation was with Islam, at times he sought to outline how other religions shared its predicament in the modern world. Islam becomes an acute manifestation of the problems religious as a whole face in relation to modernity’s processes of secularization and disenchantment and its ‘scientism’, that is, ‘science’s belief in itself [and] the conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science.’” (Iqbal 2013: xii).
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