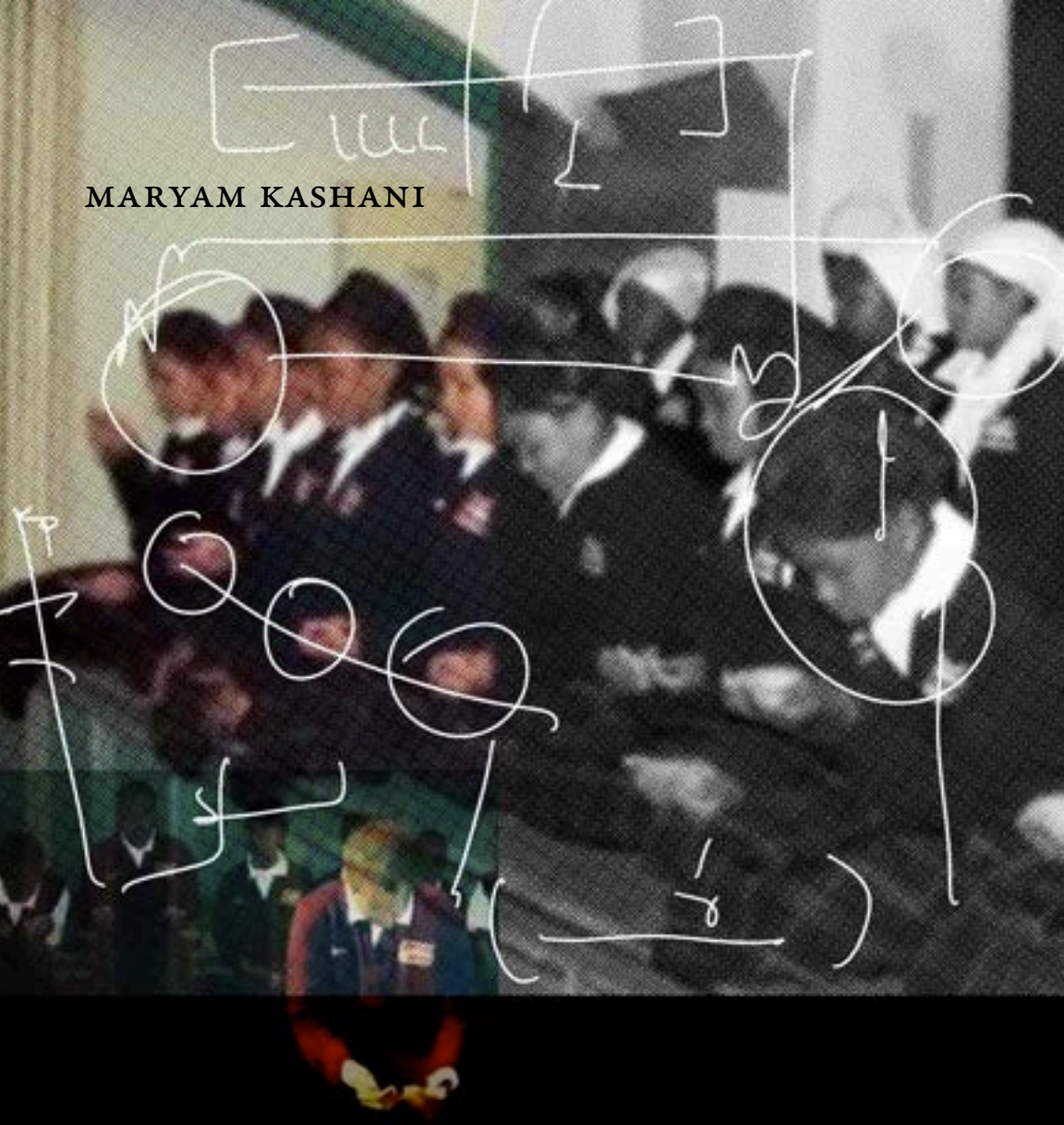

MARYAM KASHANI

MEDINA

BY THE BAY

Scenes *of* Muslim Study and Survival

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To all the seekers

and

Hajjah Dhameera Ahmad (1950–2017)

For the truths are obscure, the ends hidden, the doubts manifold, the minds turbid, the reasonings various; the premises are gleaned from the senses, and the senses (which are our tools) are not immune from error. The path of investigation is therefore obliterated and the inquirer, however diligent, is not infallible. Consequently, when inquiry concerns subtle matters, perplexity grows, views diverge, opinions vary, conclusions differ and certainty becomes difficult to obtain.

ABU ʿALI AL-HASAN IBN AL-HASAN IBN AL-HAYTHAM
(d. 1040), *The Optics of Ibn Al-Haytham*

In my writing and filmmaking, it has always been important for me to carry out critical work in such a way that there is room for people to reflect on their own struggle and to use the tools offered so as to further it on their own terms. Such a work is radically incapable of prescription. Hence, these tools are sometimes also appropriated and turned against the very filmmaker or writer, which is a risk I am willing to take. I have, indeed, put myself in a situation where I cannot criticize without taking away the secure ground on which I stand.

TRINH T. MINH-HA, "'Speaking Nearby': A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-ha" Nancy N. Chen and Trinh T. Minh-Ha

CONTENTS

A NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION, TRANSLATION, AND BLESSINGS

I use a modified version of the transcription system outlined in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* (IJMES) for transcribing words and phrases from the Arabic language into English. For ease of reading, I have omitted the use of diacritical marks, with the exception of the Arabic letters ʿayn (ʿ) and hamza (ʾ). Most translations from Arabic to English are mine with references made to Hans Wehr's *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, Edward William Lane and Stanley Lane-Poole's *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, and other cited texts. For Qurʾanic translations, I predominantly referred to Abdullah Yusuf Ali's *The Meaning of the Holy Qurʾan*, Sahih International (www.tanzil.net), Muhammad Asad's *Message of the Qurʾan*, and Marmaduke William Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Qurʾan*, relying upon a particular translation in each instance, but substituting another translation or phrasing as necessary.

In quoted text, I convey the spoken transliteration and the live translation from English to Arabic of my interlocutors as this translation is what is heard by their audiences or students. I italicize the first time (and sometimes the second if it has been awhile) that an Arabic word or phrase makes an appearance in the text. I discontinue italicization to convey how it operates with/as English as part of a global Muslim lexicon. Similarly, for proper names and Islamic concepts and phrases commonly used with/as English, I often use spellings that are common in the English language, rather than

following the IJMES system (e.g., "El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz" instead of "al-Hajj Malik al-Shabazz," "Kameelah" instead of "Kamila," "deen" instead of "din," or "Alhamdulillah" instead of "al-hamdu li-llah").

In Medina by the Bay as elsewhere, many Muslims follow the mention of the Prophet Muhammad with *salla Allahu ʿalayhi wa-sallam,* "blessings of God be upon him and grant him peace." I do not include the greeting in the text (unless it is spoken in a direct quote), but feel free to take a breath and extend this blessing with every reference to him, as some Muslims do. One may also extend these blessings to his family, *salla Allahu ʿalayhi wa-alihi wa-sallam. Radi Allahu ʿanhum,* "may Allah be pleased with them," as this blessing is similarly uttered after mention of the *Sahaba* (Companions of the Prophet) and other prophets, and appropriate conjugations are used for an individual man (*ʿanhu*), woman (*ʿanha*), two people (*ʿanhuma*), or a group of women (*ʿanhunna*). Similarly, one may say "may Allah have mercy on her/him/them" for ancestors. Such verbal expressions and gestures invoke an ethical and embodied crafting of Muslim consciousness, pace, and discipline toward cosmic recognition and spiritual genealogies. Respect.

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Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Poet and Zaytuna College graduate Rasheeda Plenty writes in her poem "Book" about the seeds of knowledge that are planted and cultivated within us, how we become "bewildered when a soft rain begins to fall inside of us . . . we stand gazing at our chests to see what will come from our bodies/this strange planting, here." As I write these acknowledgments in the midst of a decades-long inquiry into questions of knowledge, I find it impossible to account for all the "strange plantings" that contributed in one way or another to "the ink and bark with all the green pressed out" of this book. And yet. . . .

I first express eternal gratitude to and seek forgiveness and mercy from Allah, the all-knowing. I am also grateful to and seek grace and forgiveness from the ancestors and the students (and their families), scholars, and staff, past, present, and future of Zaytuna College and the Muslim communities of the San Francisco Bay Area. Your generosity and patience have been a great gift and lesson. Most of you are not named directly in this book, but you know who you are, jazakum Allah khayran. I thank the Zaytuna founders Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, Imam Zaid Shakir, and Dr. Hatem Bazian and its board of trustees, Advisory Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and the Executive team and staff who approved and enabled my initial research, especially Farid Senzai. Teachers, imams, shaykhs, and shaykhas Souhad Zendah, Dawood Yasin, Abdulkarim Yahya, Adnan (Adrian) Wood-Smith, Khalid Waajid, Muhammad Shareef, Saliha Shakir, Rasheed Shabazz, Rania Shah, Athar Siddiqee, Irfan Rydhan, Yahya Rhodus, Sundiata Rashid, Aïdah Aliyah Rasheed, Ebadur Rahman, Khadijah O'Connell, Rami Nsour, Randy Nasson, Abdul Rauf Nasir, Yusuf Mullick, Feraidoon Mojadedi, Aaminah Norris, Amir Abdel Malik, Mahan Mirza, Radia and Shakir Massoud, Shirin Maskatia, Ali Malik, Mariam Lovejoy, Rusha Latif, Ayesha

Khan, Colleen Keyes, Munir Jiwa, Amina Jandali, Sulaiman Hyatt, Ali Hassan, Liliana Hanson, Abdul Latif Finch, Zain Elmarouk, Rania Awad, Tahir Anwar, Bilal Ansari, Abdullah bin Hamid Ali, Sumaya Albgal, Hisham Al-Alusi, Sumaira Akhtar, Mohammad Abdurrazzaq, and Siddique Abdullah taught me much in the most explicit and subtle of ways. Ustadh Haroon Sellars (the force is strong with this one and his family) consistently served as a reminder and teacher in this seeking and wayfaring along the Prophetic path; the best parts of my writing and films are due to his and others' guidance. Jazakum Allah khayran. The failings are my nafs and other whispers.

May Allah have mercy on and be pleased with Hajjah Dhameera Ahmad to whom this book is dedicated; I flourished in the gardens she planted and continue to learn from her today. Thank you to Brothers and Sisters Saadat, Nisa, Azizah, Yusuf, Ismail, Timothy, and the rest of the Ahmad and Simon families for being her joy and light and for the innumerable sacrifices. I pray that this text honors her legacy.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(those who appear in more than one chapter, in order of appearance)

BROTHER MASOUD calls the blues adhan and is a convert to Islam who was raised in the Pacific Northwest and relocated to the Bay Area during his time working on ships. His family migrated north during the Great Migration from Mississippi and Louisiana.

SABA is a white Muslim woman originally from the Midwest who lives in Oakland who participates in hearings to prevent the expansion of surveillance in Oakland.

FATEMEH is a Zaytuna College student raised in Southern California by her North African and white parents.

NUR is my DSLR (digital single lens reflex) camera; *Nur* means light in Arabic.

THE UMMA is the community of believers.

ZAHRAH is a Zaytuna College student born to Black Caribbean parents and raised in Brooklyn.

IMAM ZAID SHAKIR is an African American Islamic scholar, co founder of Zaytuna College and founder of Al-Ansar Mosque (pseudonym) in Oakland.

THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (d. 632) Muhammad ibn Abdullah was born in the year 570 in Mecca and was orphaned at the age of six. Raised by his uncle to become a merchant-trader, he received revelation from Allah at the age of forty, becoming the Messenger of Allah, the final prophet in a monotheistic lineage that includes Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa), and Jesus (Isa). He would go on to spiritually and politically lead a diverse religious community that would eventually become the world's second-largest and fastest-growing religion.

SHAYKH HAMZA YUSUF HANSON is a white American Muslim scholar, co-founder of Zaytuna Institute and Zaytuna College.

DR. HATEM BAZIAN is a Palestinian activist and scholar, co founder of Zaytuna College and advanced lecturer in Asian American Studies, UC Berkeley.

MALCOLM X, EL-HAJJ MALIK EL-SHABAZZ (1925–1965) is a Black Muslim scholar, community organizer, and ancestor.

ABU HAMED AL-GHAZALI (d. 1111) is an Islamic scholar born in Tus, Khorasan, (now Iran) whose contemporarily read work, including *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (*Revival of the Islamic Sciences*), focuses on the spiritual or inward dimensions of Islamic thought and practice.

HAJAR is a Black Muslim woman raised in the Bay Area who was a part of the As-Sabiqun movement at Masjid Al-Islam in East Oakland. She is currently a university professor in Northern California.

IMAM ABDUL ALEEM MUSA AND AS-SABIQUN MOVEMENT Oakland-raised Imam Abdul Alim Musa converted to Islam while in prison and established Masjid Al-Islam in East Oakland in 1981. The As-Sabiqun movement was established as a national movement in 1995 by Imam Musa.

HAJJA RASHEEDA (ROSA) was born in San Francisco in 1950 to a Black Catholic family with roots in Louisiana and Oklahoma. She became a member of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1967 and participated in the Third World Strike at San Francisco State University. She converted to Islam in the 1970s and was an educator and principal in Oakland public schools, while also raising four children (and grandchildren) with her husband in Oakland.

OSCAR was born and raised in Oakland in the 1970s–1980s. Having been a student activist and a Black nationalist in high school, he converted to Islam in the 1990s.

SHAYKH MUHAMMAD SHAREEF is a Black US-born Muslim who returned to the United States in 1990 after studying Islam in East and West Africa as a representative of the Jama'at of Shehu Dan Fodio. He established the Sankora Institute (SIIASI) in 1986 to further learning and to preserve African Islamic manuscripts and texts. He lived and taught in Northern California for many years and currently lives in exile from the United States after experiencing FBI surveillance and infiltration in his communities.

HAROON is the audiovisual technician and coordinator at Zaytuna College. He moved to the Bay Area from the East Coast in the 1990s to be a part of spreading the message of Islam at Zaytuna Institute. He is an African American convert to Islam, husband, and father in his forties.

AMINAH is an Arab student at Zaytuna College from the Midwest.

STEVE is a Black student at Zaytuna College in his mid-twenties who had converted to Islam shortly before joining Zaytuna. He is originally from the South and graduated from a prestigious university on the East Coast. He commuted to Zaytuna from San Francisco where he lived and worked full time in addition to being a student.

IMAM BENJAMIN PEREZ (1933–2009) was a Latino and Indigenous (Seminole/Yaqui) man from Central California who moved to Oakland in 1955 where he joined the Nation of Islam. He was dedicated to connecting Latinx and Native peoples to Islam through *da'wa* and served as a prison chaplain from the 1960s onward.

MARIO was born to a white mother and an African American father in Berkeley. He converted to Islam and attended Masjid Al-Islam in East Oakland as a teenager. He moved to Syria in his early twenties and later migrated to Tarim, Yemen, to study and teach at Dar al-Mustafa Seminary.

HABIB 'UMAR BIN HAFIZ is a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad and highly influential Yemeni scholar of the Hadrami diaspora. He established Dar al-Mustafa Seminary in Yemen in 1996 and Dar al-Zahraa Seminary for women a year later. He is consistently ranked highly on a list of the "500 Most Influential Muslims" in the world.

MATTHEW is a white convert to Islam who served as one of the first student life coordinators at Zaytuna College.

MARY is a Latina Muslim from the East Bay who converted to Islam as a teenager. She is married to Michael, a Filipino convert.

RUQAYYA is a third-generation Black Muslim student at Zaytuna who was born and raised on the East Coast.

INTRODUCTION

SCENE 1—HEAR THE CALL OF THE BLUES ADHAN

OVER BLACK

We hear shuffling steps, distant birds chirping, a rumbling hum of traffic from the freeway, murmurs, and whispers as PEOPLE enter a large room. Above the hushed sounds, a voice sails; it wails; it twangs; it rides.

BROTHER MASOUD

> Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar. Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah. Ashhadu an la ilaha illa Allah. Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasul Allah. Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasul Allah. . . .

FADE IN

INTERIOR. STOREFRONT MOSQUE, NORTH OAKLAND, MIDDAY.

We see the anthropologist's POV (point of view) from the women's section. Sunlight streams in through an open door. Bookshelves full of shoes line the far wall. A few elder MUSLIM MEN and WOMEN sit on metal folding chairs, MEN toward "the front" of the room, WOMEN arranged in loose rows behind them. CHILDREN bounce around receiving hugs and joyful exclamations. Some MEN and WOMEN stand in prayer or are seated in their respective sections. Pitched and pitchy, BROTHER MASOUD continues to call the *adhan* (the Muslim call to prayer), holding his hands to his ears as he rotates back and forth to his right and left sides.[1]

The camera PANS to a back wall with a Chinese calligraphic print of Arabic text hanging above three preteen and teenage BROTHERS sitting on the floor below it.

. . . Hayya ʿala as-salah, hayya ʿala as-salah. Hayya ʿala al-falah, hayya ʿala al-falah. Allahu akbar Allahu akbar. La ilaha illa Allah.[2]

FADE OUT

The adhan is always called in Arabic and though the words are always the same, this call is particular to this place. Brother Masoud was a sailor living in the Bay Area after growing up in the Pacific Northwest. His family migrated there from Mississippi and Louisiana after World War II during the Great Migration north and west by African Americans. Brother Masoud's adhan, in its modal tonality and timing, calls Muslims in harmony with the blues rhythms and inflections carried by African Americans, predominantly from Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, to the Bay Area in the Great Migration throughout the twentieth century (Murch 2010; Self 2003; Woods 2017). Those blues rhythms and modalities convey inheritances from West African Islam carried by captive Muslims shipped to the Americas throughout the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries (Diouf 1998; El Shibli 2007). Masoud's blues adhan also carries a refugee rhythm from Southeast Asia, as Masoud learned how to call the adhan from a Cham imam in Seattle.[3] This call traveled across Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and the Atlantic, and through the South and up to the North, down the West Coast, to a storefront mosque in Oakland. I heard Masoud and others call blues adhans in mosques and industrial park community centers in Oakland, Fremont, and San Francisco, California. As it emerges from western lands and histories, via eastern lands and refugee migrations, this Arabic, its tonality and cadence, is uncanny to Arabic speakers who come from where these words were revealed. Nevertheless, this blues adhan signifies and beckons: *What do you hear?*[4]

CUT TO:

INTERIOR. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING, DOWNTOWN OAKLAND, EVENING.

We see the young woman approach the podium, taking a deep breath before beginning her statement. A subtle tremor in her breath accompanies a firm stance as she folds her arms behind her back and begins to speak.

SABA

> You can pave over the blood of the martyrs, but you can't fossilize the spirit of resistance. Terrorist, gang member, provocateur—these are all codewords for a person that's in the way of profit and power, both in Oakland and internationally. (*Pause.*) As a Muslim I demand that you cancel plans for your monitoring center. We are not stupid. We know that the purpose is to monitor Muslims, Black and brown communities, and protestors. This will have a deep impact on our Muslim communities. These communities are all monitored in different ways, but all of these ways overlap in our Muslim community.

CUT TO BLACK

Saba was one of many Muslims who attended and spoke at hours-long city council meetings in Oakland's City Hall in the winter of 2013–2014.[5] Given a minute and a half, with an additional two minutes ceded by other speakers, Saba proceeded to explain why she was opposed to the council's potential approval of Phase II of the Domain Awareness Center, a city and portwide surveillance system that would integrate visual surveillance data into a centralized network connecting private and public systems, the Oakland Police and Fire Departments, and the Coast Guard. Saba connects how the figuring of "terrorist, gang member, provocateur" within languages of securitization, policing, and governance racialize and mark "Muslims, black and brown communities, and protestors" as problem populations that "get in the way" of capital. Her concern for monitoring and the threat of her obscurity inhered in the camera's inability to register her facial features (she wore a veil on her head and across her lower face) except for her light skin and eyes. The camera registers her nervousness, though—the tremble in her voice and the way she held the cuffs of her sweater sleeves, her preparation to speak—indexed by the notes she made

in her notebook and the names of others who ceded their time; and her historical ties to the Bay Area in recognition of all the times the port was used by demonstrators to protest war, capitalist extraction, colonial dispossession, and extrajudicial police violence. *What do you see?*

CUT TO:

SCENE 3—REFUSALS AND OFFERINGS

EXTERIOR. COURTYARD OF SMALL COLLEGE CAMPUS, BERKELEY, NIGHT.

We PAN ACROSS a large green hedge with red blooms lit by a single flood light. FATEMEH standing still, reads from OFF SCREEN and slowly comes into view.

FATEMEH

O well for him who lives at ease/ With garnered gold in wide domain/
Nor heeds the splashing of the rain / The crashing down of forest trees/
O well for him who ne'er hath known/ The travail of the hungry years/
A father gray with grief and tears/ A mother weeping all alone.

CLOSE UP of FATEMEH'S hands holding a book. Camera PANS UP to FATEMEH'S face.

FATEMEH (CONT'D)

But well for him whose foot hath trod/ The weary road of toil and strife/
Yet from the sorrows of his life/ Builds ladders to be nearer God.

FADE OUT

Fatemeh's disposition was quiet and thoughtful, both in the classroom and in social settings.[6] A first-year student at Zaytuna College, an emergent Muslim liberal arts college in Berkeley, California, she was cautious with her words and conscious of the spaces she occupied. She had declined to participate in one-on-one interviews for my ethnographic research, but when I approached her about doing a film portrait, she surprised me with her willingness and enthusiasm. I had previously associated her disinterest

in interviews as a shyness and reticence about her own self-representation.[7] Yet, she also had a playfulness that emerged in her everyday self-expression and performance, as in class projects. Fatemeh chose the terms of her self-representation, distinguishing between conducting an interview and performing a recitation of someone else's words. An expansive self-image emerges in her choice to perform "Tristitiae" by Oscar Wilde (1854–1900), a particularly witty and flamboyant nineteenth-century Irish writer and poet, in a garden in the middle of the night. There was aspiration and pleasure, a thrill and playfulness. *What is being refused, what is being offered?*

The above scenes introduce a worlding, an attunement and a tuning in, that I, as ethnographer, filmmaker, so-called expert, have coproduced and assembled to address the struggles and strategies of everyday (Muslim and non-Muslim) life in the San Francisco Bay Area in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Throughout *Medina by the Bay,* ethnographic, historical, and anecdotal scenes, written in the screenplay genre, perform multiple tasks. Within the scenes are audiovisual cues—landscapes, words, gestures, and characters—that inform the substance of this ethnography. The three scenes above reference the hailing of "Muslims," from being called to pray and hear the blues to being marked as populations, whether by the "terror industrial complex" (Rana 2017b), which includes the prison and military industrial complexes, or by the ethnographer/filmmaker. While the first scene is a documentary recording of something that happened in real "ethnographic time and place" at a mosque in North Oakland in 2011, the second is "found footage" culled together from public recordings on the internet. The third scene is an edit of a staged performance that I (and my camera Nur) produced in collaboration with Fatemeh and her classmates in the Zaytuna College courtyard on a winter night.[8]

To hear the blues adhan, to see connections and refuse to be seen, to make an offering of ethnographic truth through a staging, these *ethnocinematic* gestures have different aesthetic qualities and functions, yet all constitute something of the dynamics of the "Medina by the Bay" as a geography and project. They are brought together in montage to introduce the form and content of this text: the ethical, spiritual, and political stakes of knowledge practices—how we narrate, represent, transmit, dispute, and enact collective survival in this life and the next. The stakes, of course, are high—flourishing life and premature death; salvation and the next-life geography of souls; mobility and displacement; and accumulation, dispossession, and exploitation of social, cultural, and material resources. This is much-examined academic and movement-based terrain, but what this

study offers, humbly, is an analysis of such stakes from the perspective of the lives and deaths, refusals and offerings of a multiracial and multiethnic *umma* (community of believers), in order to make a more comprehensive argument about how knowledge, power, and ethics happen under specific sociocultural and material conditions and how an attention to such conditions may enable us to make different choices with and for one another.

By looking at one diverse religious community as a microcosm for the Bay Area, *Medina by the Bay* thinks through these issues on a microscale in ways that have relevance to a larger geography of relations of power and constellations of belief and accountability. It is a call to balance ethics and politics on more than a telos of individual—and at times communal—liberation, survival, and "happiness" (Sara Ahmed 2010); it is a reminder to ask, "in what way do I contribute to the subjugation of any part of those who I define as my people?" (Lorde 1984, 139). It is about how we are implicated in one another's lives and deaths (from other human beings to the natural world and the objects we create) and how we must call ourselves to account.

Medina by the Bay is an argument for taking Islam and Muslim ways of knowing and being seriously. While Muslims are often absorbed into sociopolitical struggles as victims (e.g., Muslim Ban, refugees, victims of war, colonial occupation, and heteropatriarchy), they are actively ignored or willfully neglected by scholars and activists as sources of knowledge and models of practice, largely due to overriding (Islamophobic) concerns about patriarchy, jihadism, homophobia, being spread by the sword aka colonization, and not being fun/free (lots of rules about food, drink, clothes, prayer, sex, etc.). Following the lead of Muslims themselves, I show another moral and ethical vision and embodied framework that offers one way out of a liberal humanist hegemony built upon centuries of racial capitalist and imperialist exploitation, destruction, and disavowal. Muslims are a billion strong; emerge fiercely from the carceral geographies of prisons, jails, and camps (Malcolm X 1965; Bukhari 2010; Daulatzai 2012; Slahi 2017; Felber 2020); endure under the most stringent and dehumanizing of sanctions and occupation (Iran, Iraq, Palestine, Black Muslims); and continue to produce thousands if not millions of people who have memorized and embodied the entire Qur'an across fourteen centuries (Ware 2014).[9]

Medina by the Bay runs with multiple projects of study and struggle toward getting at what is at stake, "no less than the truth about the world," while acknowledging "that something about the perspective, experience, and knowledge of the oppressed is not making its way into existing dis-

courses" (Alcoff 2011, 71; Kelley 2016). I invite my readers into "complex communication," which "thrives on recognition of opacity and on reading opacity, not through assimilating the text of others to our own" (Lugones 2006, 84) but rather, engaging in creative and transformative processes in which we decipher our respective "resistant codes" and logics (Lugones 2006, 79; see also Glissant 1997).[10] To readers who know little of Islam, you will pick up and get lost at times, and I ask you to be my accomplices toward taking seriously the possibility that Muslim ways of knowing and being have something to offer you. For those who know something of Islam, whether through study or practice, I likewise ask for you to be my companions (as in the *Sahaba*) as I bring other ways of knowing and being to bear on what it means for Islam and Muslims to survive on Turtle Island, in what we call North America.[11]

FROM MECCA TO MEDINA

"This is like, kind of, our Medina, you know?" Zahrah was sitting with her classmates in a wide circle on the green grass of their campus courtyard, a shared space that held a UC Berkeley extension program, the American Baptist Seminary of the West (now Berkeley College of Theology), and the nascent Zaytuna College (est. 2009). It was the last day of their first year, and their professor Imam Zaid Shakir was asking them to relate what they had studied over a yearlong Islamic history course to their contemporary context. For Zahrah, the daughter of Caribbean immigrants who had grown up in Brooklyn, coming to Zaytuna College was like the earliest Muslims migrating to Medina. Having grown up Muslim in a post-9/11 New York, Zahrah had been featured in a published collection of writings by Muslim youth, and by the time she graduated from Zaytuna, she would receive multiple invitations to the Obama White House and be interviewed for many articles and news stories. At Zaytuna, she and her classmates reenacted the migration toward freedom that the original seventh-century *hijra* (migration) to Medina entailed: they could (as her classmates said) "be free" as Muslims, to explore what that meant to them on their own terms. She recounted, "We can be more at home here and really make something of our own and really establish ourselves, and then go back out, you know, when we've decided who we are."

In the Islamic tradition, Medina as a place and idea is connected to the 622 CE/1 AH hijra of the Prophet Muhammad and the first community of

Muslims in the Hejaz (modern-day Saudi Arabia).[12] The Prophet Muhammad was forty years old and living in the city of his birth, Mecca, which was a center of religious pilgrimage and trade when he began to receive the revelations of the Qur'an in 610 CE. Many of the first to hear the message of Islam and convert to this new way were women, youth, the enslaved, and tribeless people. As more and more people converted to Islam, traditional relations of power, lineage, and hierarchy were disrupted; the agitated leaders of Mecca started targeting the new Muslims. In order to preserve their safety and survival, the community migrated physically and spiritually, leaving their beloved Mecca.

The Prophet Muhammad initially sent a small group of Muslims to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), where the Negus, a Christian king, offered them asylum. A few years later, the rest of the community left Mecca for Yathrib, a northern oasis populated by Jewish and pagan tribes, where many were converting to Islam and where the Prophet was invited to mediate between these conflicted tribes (the Prophet Muhammad's grandfather Abd al-Muttalib was also born in Yathrib to Salmá, who had been an influential woman in the matriarchal traditions there) (Lings 1983). As he left Mecca, the Prophet Muhammad turned back to it and stated, "You are the most beloved of the cities of Allah to me, if the *mushrikeen* (polytheists, those who acted against the Muslims and Islam) did not force me out, I would have never left you" (*Zaytuna College* 2020; Ibn Kathir 2003, 9:96).

The small, beleaguered community was welcomed by the *Ansar* (the Helpers) into Yathrib, which would be called Medina al-Nabi, "city of the Prophet," and they entered into protective covenants with the different tribes.[13] Free to practice Islam openly, the Prophet took on a new role as political leader and arbiter within this diverse community of new Muslims, Jews, and pagans, and a new society came into being. The documented sayings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad, or *hadith,* are understood as the "tradition" or *Sunna* (way or practice) of the Prophet. The root letters, h-d-th, refer to something happening, yet "hadith" is also translated as "modern" and "new," connoting the transformative impact and newness of the revolutionary social, economic, and political changes the Prophet implemented.[14]

The multiple meanings of "hadith" speak to how we understand the "generative rather than prefigurative" characters of traditions (Kelley 2021). With the emergence of new forms of relations and social structures came the frictions of letting former customs, beliefs, and hierarchies go. The conflicts that arose and were resolved in Medina—betrayal and expulsion, war and peace, hypocrisy and forgiveness, property relations and

mutual aid—continue to inform contemporary Muslims in terms of what it means to live in relation at multiple scales: as a servant of Allah (God) and as a member of a socioeconomic, spiritual, and political community.

In one of our first conversations, Zahrah spoke to me about why she came to the not-yet-accredited Zaytuna College when she was offered scholarships to prestigious universities: "I need to develop myself spiritually. And . . . it's my responsibility to gain Islamic knowledge because it's the most important knowledge that you can have. . . . I remember my sister said, 'It's poor *adab* (manners) to not walk through a door when Allah has opened it for you, especially if it's something that will only bring you benefit.'[15] And so, that's one reason why I wanted to come. You know, I felt like if I didn't come, then it was possibly a poor reflection on my character, as in why would I choose not to come here, and postpone my Islamic knowledge or potentially not do it at all?" Zahrah also had a secondary reason for choosing Zaytuna, and this was the influence of her father, who had converted to Islam as a teenager: "I kind of always felt like, 'Well, what am I going to do . . . that is as comparable to what he did?' And so, I thought this was the best way to carry on that transition in his life, you know, because becoming Muslim is the biggest blessing that Allah can give to your family, and so I felt like this was a continuation of that for me and for my family." At eighteen years old, Zahrah already carried a sense of spiritual, ethical, and political responsibility that she associated with being and becoming Muslim. Moving to Berkeley and attending Zaytuna was a commitment to personal development, which would benefit herself, her family, and her communities.

Zaytuna College, like the larger Bay Area, is a unique site of Islamic knowledge production and Muslim encounter, where racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, class, and sectarian differences come into contact. It seemed like the ideal site to consider what epistemological and ontological alternatives, ways of knowing and being, Muslims in the United States could offer in a highly contentious landscape of Muslim representation and politics post-9/11. Part of the college's uniqueness was that it was cofounded by three "American Muslims," Shaykh Hamza Yusuf (Mark Hanson), who is white; Imam Zaid Shakir (Ricky Mitchell), who is Black; and Hatem Bazian, who is Palestinian.[16] While their racial and ethnic differences were significant, within the context of Muslim institution-building, what was more striking was the diversity of their intellectual genealogies, spiritual dispositions, and political commitments. Yusuf studied with individual teachers for decades, most notably in Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, and later received his doctorate in Islamic Studies

from the Graduate Theological Union in California in 2020; Shakir studied Islam at Abu Nour University and privately in Damascus, Syria, and has a master's degree in political science from Rutgers University; and Bazian earned his doctorate in Near Eastern Studies at UC Berkeley in 2002. Bazian is also a senior lecturer in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley and runs an Islamophobia research center.[17]

While Zahrah and the other students at Zaytuna had grown up watching YouTube videos and listening to audio recordings of the college's Muslim scholars, I had first heard of Zaytuna in 2006 when it was still an institute based in Hayward, a small East Bay city south of Oakland where the San Mateo Bridge connects the West and East Bays. In a *New York Times* article, Zahrah's and Fatemeh's future teacher, Imam Zaid Shakir, was described by students as "the next Malcolm X," and Zaytuna Institute was described as a thriving center of Islamic learning (Goodstein 2006). The institute became Zaytuna College in 2009 and welcomed its inaugural class of students in fall 2010.[18] At the time they were supported by a fluctuating staff of about ten people, who were mostly Pakistani, although there were also Afghan, Latinx, African American, (east) Asian American, and white Americans (not everyone was Muslim). Zaytuna's inaugural cohorts consisted of recently converted Black, Asian, Latinx, and white Muslims; second- and third-generation Black Muslims; Muslim students from African, Arab, Asian, Caribbean, Latinx, and South Asian families; and Indigenous converts.[19] A few were from the Bay Area, but most of the students came from other regions of the country—Southern California, the Pacific Northwest, the South, the Midwest, and the East Coast—and grew up in other cities and suburbs. Like the historical Medina, Muslims migrated to the Bay Area to participate in the envisioning of a new or renewed society, another Medina, by the Bay. In this encounter with other tribes, beliefs, and peoples—both Muslim and non-Muslim—they would be called upon to respond and submit to a revelation that invited them to reevaluate the world and their place in it.

Zahrah's classmates and teachers believe that Islam and Muslims have something to offer the world, that Islam as a way of being and knowing can address the ills of society at local, national, and global scales. In their lineages, they cite Muslim figures ranging from scholar al-Ghazali (d. 1111) to the founder of the world's oldest university, al-Qarawiyyin (in contemporary Morocco), Fatima al-Fihri (d. 880); more locally, they reference figures like El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, also known as Malcolm X (d. 1965) and sports icon al-Hajj Muhammad Ali (d. 2016).[20] This text subsists with El-Shabazz as Muslim ancestor and *wali* (one with a standing with Allah);

his interpretive work with the Islamic tradition; his assessment of global racial systems, U.S. empire, and colonization; his commitment to Black people, the Third World, and our collective liberation; and his capacity to learn, admit mistakes, and *change his mind*.

Do Zaytuna College and Muslim communities carry forward the anti-imperialist, anti-racist, internationalist, and faith-centered social justice legacy of El-Shabazz? Or do they offer pathways to cultural citizenship that buttress a settler colonial United States, establishing themselves as authoritative voices and representatives amid a "crisis of authority" (Z. A. Grewal 2013)? These questions are complicated in these pages, but to jump scales from the school to the national and international does not account for Zaytuna's emergence within the specific local and regional political economy and cultural geography of the San Francisco Bay Area in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (1400s AH). Specifically, I needed to account for the Medina by the Bay's emergence on Indigenous land and through the Black radical tradition and how a multiracial umma is inducted into "grounded relationalities" (Byrd et al. 2018) and struggles for liberation and autonomy as a matter of faith, while also articulating what Islam has contributed and continues to contribute to such traditions of study and struggle, however unthought or unnamed.

While the establishment of the historical Medina was a significant endeavor toward living justly in intercommunal relation, it was not without contention, conflict, and betrayal as individual and communal trusts and covenants were sealed and broken. I consider and invoke these early histories and their attendant theologies in order to think about how contemporary Muslims of the Bay Area have practiced and can practice Medinan relations, forms of mutual refuge and responsibility with Indigenous and other populations of the Bay Area, without reinforcing a settler colonial structure and its attendant logics of race and religion. I expand my frame temporally and spatially, zooming out from Zaytuna College to consider the ebbs and flows of Muslim communities throughout the Bay Area from the 1950s to the present to demonstrate the contingencies of how forms of Islamic belief and practice emerge from a specific time and place and how socioeconomic forces and geopolitical agendas impact which Muslim ways of knowing and being flourish and which are subject to precarity.

How Muslims move through and mark time in these interlocking and overlapping spaces complicates the ways that Muslims and urban geographies are typically studied.[21] The ethnographic study of Muslims in the United States, informed by theories of race and racialization, has been at

the forefront of developing analyses of anti-Muslim and intra-Muslim racisms in relation to anti-Blackness and US empire.[22] I expand the stakes of this work toward questions of Muslim epistemic and material survival and the implications of being in grounded relationality. As Karl Marx wrote, "*religious* suffering is at the same time, an *expression* of real suffering and a *protest* against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions" (Marx, 54). It is also something more. With my discussion of material conditions, sociopolitical categories, and critical analyses, I do not want to suggest that Muslim faith is simply "the opium of the people" (54) or "a mystifying thing that we need to look past in order to understand what is 'really' going on"; rather, as Lara Deeb has argued, "faith *is* what is going on, it is a very real thing in and of itself, located in practices, discourses, inner and outer states, relationships, and effects in the world" (Deeb 2006, 40). Similarly, Sylvia Wynter suggests that religion provides an alternate structure of belief that "has served as a humanizing and revolutionary ideology for great movements of the people" (Wynter n.d., 57). While Marx focuses on the individual "oppressed creature," Muslim ways of knowing and being expand beyond the individual toward how Muslims are situated in relation to a "heartless world" and "soulless conditions," regardless of and in relation to their own individual suffering.

In consideration of such ethical-political and salvational requirements, I am interested in how Islam is mobilized as a force—and how Islamic forces themselves mobilize—to reorder selves, logics, spaces, and relations of power. While some anthropologists think that the anthropology of Islam is too concerned with Islam, given Muslims themselves can be rather ambivalent about it in their everyday lives, I conjecture that Muslims and others harbor noncommittal and contradictory feelings about the settler colonial state, racial capitalism, war, traffic, the internet, multicultural liberalism, and patriarchy, but that doesn't make them any less constitutive of everyday lives and relations.[23] I draw from what I observed, participated in, and missed in Muslim communities in the San Francisco Bay Area in my visits between 2010 and 2022 but also on a longer history of growing up in and being in relation to the Bay and its lapsed and devoted Muslims, lapsed and devoted Catholics, Jews, Christians, and Buddhists, atheists and agnostics, Maoists and Marxists, red-diaper babies, activists, artists, queers, straights, studs, dykes, preppies, hippies, trannies and trans people, transplants, criminals and the criminal-minded, the haves, the have-nots, Indians and Native Americans, Mexicans, hella Filipinos, Black folk, Chinese folk, mixed kids,

racists, living legends and legacies, hip-hop heads and punks, family, everyone Allah has willed and created.[24]

In the context of *Medina by the Bay*—the project, my "cast of characters" are both practicing and nonpracticing Muslims, those who go to mosques and those who are "unmosqued." They are Black; North, West, East, and South African; Arab; West, South, Southeast, and East Asian and Pacific Islanders; Latinx; Native American; European; and white American Muslims. They are Sunni, Shi'i, and other sectarian and nonsectarian formations. They are refugees of war, empire, and colonization (especially from Afghanistan, Yemen, and Palestine); they are Indigenous; they are descendants of enslaved Africans; they are recent immigrants and second-, third-, fourth-generation United States citizens; they are documented and undocumented; they arrived as students, as working-class laborers and farmworkers, as technicians, doctors, and university professors; they are unemployed and underemployed; they are cisgender men and women; they are transgender; they are straight; they queer gender; and they are the displaced, the displacing, and the stuck in place. Yet, because they are Muslim in that they are oriented or disoriented, identifying or disidentifying toward Islam and the umma in one way or another, this casting, this unruly aggregate, offers one lens through which to understand the particularity of Muslimness in the Bay Area for a collective body that is anything but particular.

While this text emerges from this unruly aggregate, it is neither an examination of Muslim identitarian politics nor a reductive transparency of who Bay Area Muslims are and what they believe. Neither is it an exposé nor hagiography of particular figures or institutions.[25] Rather, I propose that through the (micro) lens of one diverse "community," *Medina by the Bay* provides an alternate view of the (macro) socioeconomic and cultural dynamics of the Bay Area in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and poses a question more broadly about how we think and act ethically and politically about knowledge and survival.[26]

In my cutting from history to the present day, I chart the vectors of possible futures. I take responsibility for this particular place and time and work toward resonance "to explore and develop the ability to speak to very different groups of people without having to name them all" (Trinh 1999, 37). This means that while I invite the umma to approach matters of our collective survival anew, I likewise extend that invitation to all others who consider Muslim survival as part of theirs or sense the resonances in our respective struggles. Nominative processes have been a critical component of a power/knowledge nexus that orders the world and the people within it

toward the maintenance of material and discursive power and the political orders they work with and through. I approach this work as a form of extension, "reaching for you/whoever you are/and/are you ready?" (Jordan 1977, ix), as an invitation toward hearing the call *without* naming you in advance.

KNOWLEDGE AND SURVIVAL

From the seventh century onward, becoming Muslim meant subsuming (though not necessarily breaking) traditional ties of kin, tribe, and geography for the reordering of life in Islam and with the Prophet Muhammad. Knowledge practices were a critical part of conceptualizing the self as a Muslim within a myriad of affiliations—a homeland, an occupation, a school of law, or a bloodline. Conversion to Islam became a strategy for material and spiritual survival in which Muslim converts and reverts engage in a "life-long study of Islamic history and Muslim scholarship," incorporating knowledge into everyday life (McCloud 1995, 3).[27] This includes making the testimony of faith in the Arabic language, learning how to ritually cleanse one's body, memorizing the words and bodily motions of daily prayers, changing one's diet, and reorienting one's self to Allah and all that Allah created.

Students, teachers, and community members often referenced the following Qur'anic verse when discussing differences within the Muslim community as both a challenge and instruction: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of male and female, and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah is Knower, Aware" (Qur'an 49:13). This verse is understood to describe the ontological condition of difference as an epistemological and ethical challenge. To "know each other" is put in relation with righteousness, being God-conscious, imbuing the relations of difference with an ethical imperative for survival and salvation.

The fundamentals of Islamic tradition based in the Qur'an and Sunna (the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad documented in hadith and the *Sira*, the Prophet's biography) and the corpus of Islamic law and scholarship have "survived" fourteen hundred years via oral transmission, textual transcription, mimetic practice, knowledge-based genealogies, and state-based support and sponsorship.[28] While many scholars, laypeople, pundits, and politicians operate as if Islamic knowledge is not disavowed in Muslim-majority societies and that Islamic knowledge and practice continue to govern everyday life, others contend that the shifts that occurred in

Muslim societies from the eighteenth century onward, if not sooner, have subsumed and splintered Islamic epistemologies, apportioning which aspects of Islamic tradition belong in the modern nation-state and its governing apparatus and which have become privatized or relegated to religious authorities like the 'ulama' and mullahs (T. Asad 2003; Agrama 2012).[29]

At the same time, a full accounting of the theological and material consequences of coloniality and the colorline and how they have infused the historical Muslim world since the Portuguese kidnapping and enslavement of West Africans in 1441 has not taken place (Du Bois 1990; Wynter 2003).[30] While states, scholars, and laypeople may claim to be Islamic, they often make such claims while holding fast to a colonial (and secularizing) order of knowledge, difference, authority, and being (Devji and Kazmi 2017; Hallaq 2013; Mamdani 2001; Najmabadi 2005; S. A. Jackson n.d.; Wadud 1999).[31] The race-concept, liberal humanism, and the global transformation wrought by colonial racial capitalism all introduced modalities of thought, belief, and power that reorganized how social and spiritual life were governed and what role Islam and Muslim actors played in that governance (Robinson 2000; Melamed 2015; Koshy et al. 2022). *Medina by the Bay* brings forward some of this accounting and examines the material conditions that shape how Islamic politics and ethics are articulated and practiced in efforts to ensure the survival of Islam and Muslims.

While survival is neither "an academic skill" nor "a theory" (Lorde 1984, 112, 139), both formal and informal knowledge practices and consciousness-raising have been essential to what it means to survive—materially, spiritually, and as a people. Toward that end, religious, racial, and ethnic minority communities have long created their own schools and colleges as a "way to redeem the process of formal learning and as a way to pursue, indeed prefigure black [and Muslim] cultural and political sovereignty" (Rickford 2016, 4). Started in Oakland in 1966, the Black Panther Party's survival programs attended to the sustenance and survival of hearts and souls as they taught children and community members to celebrate their Blackness, their bodies, their histories, and their cultures. They also addressed survival through an ethics of care: feeding children breakfast, distributing clothing and shoes, driving and escorting elders, providing medical and dental care and ambulance services, and community defense and political advocacy.

I do not think of survival as "subsistence or 'mere' survival" (Gumbs and Wallace 2016, 383). Rather, "survival" conjures legacies of Muslim and "black feminist poetics and practice" that require us "to remember our existence always in the context of our guardian dead, those ancestors that survive

through us and our community, which has suffered differential unjust death" (2016, 383).[32] Within the tradition of Islam, ancestral work and the ties that bind believers to revelation and its transmitters take multiple forms—from the constant remembrance and reference to the Prophet Muhammad, his Companions (the Sahaba), and the early scholars and figures to remembrance of the Muslims who lived and died in these waters and on this soil, especially the millions of African Muslims who were kidnapped from their indigenous homelands and enslaved in the Americas from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries (Diouf 1998; GhaneaBassiri 2010; Gomez 2005).[33]

For Muslims, material survival is subservient to spiritual survival; we can have housing, clothing, food, health, education, and employment, but if our hearts have hardened toward Allah and one another, we are already dead. The Islamic tradition offers important lessons for how we understand the material and spiritual as part of a unity, *wahda* (oneness), and *tawhid* (oneness of Allah), in which our everyday acts and attitudes work within and reflect a metaphysics of oneness. Everything is thus related, and it is through this relationality that the ethics of knowledge and survival emerge. While ethics shape individual practice, such practices mean little without the context of community through which one develops their *deen/din* (faith, religion) and earns personal and collective salvation.

Survival is thus not only a matter of preserving one's own safety and subsistence; it is also a matter of accountability in which one bears "responsibility for the violence of the nation of which you are a subject" (Edwards 2016, xxv). Regardless of how we may identify or disidentify with the United States as a nation-state formation, we bear responsibility for its violence both "here" and abroad. If we fail to recognize this responsibility, "there is no future that any of us will share" (Lorde 1988, 440). This is quite literal as we come to terms with our responsibilities to the earth as our material extinction now has a timeline. Allah expects us to do wrong: "By the One in Whose Hand my soul is, were you not to commit sins, Allah would replace you with a people who would commit sins and then seek forgiveness from Allah; and Allah would forgive them" (an-Nawawi 199 #, no. 422).[34] And these culpabilities repeat throughout millennia—countless times the Qur'an gives accounts of entire peoples who go astray and are then destroyed. Inevitably, we will get lost, sin, cause harm, suffer, repent, and be guided back to the path by Allah's grace or be tried in the afterlife. The tradition of Islamic renewal and resurgence speaks to the circular and eternal nature of study and struggle (*jihad*) and an abolitionist possibility for transformative justice at the scales of ethical relations with self, other, and God.

In her lecture for the "Malcolm X Weekend" at Harvard University in February 1982, Audre Lorde discusses how she "didn't really hear Malcolm's voice until it was amplified by death"; in the last year of his life, she understood him to be moving toward an "inevitable confrontation with the question of difference as a creative and necessary force for change" (Lorde 1984, 134–35). As he established both the Muslim Mosque, Incorporated, and the Organization of Afro-American Unity, El-Shabazz signaled the need to strive for justice in coalition with other groups, while also continuing the moral and spiritual development that being in Muslim community yielded. Like El-Shabazz, Lorde argues "we must move against not only those forces which dehumanize us from the outside, but also against those oppressive values which we have been forced to take into ourselves" (Lorde 1984, 135). She asks us to recognize "some piece of humanness that knows we are not being served by the machine which orchestrates crisis after crisis and is grinding all our futures into dust"; we are then called to recognize "that any attack against Blacks, any attack against women, is an attack against all of us who recognize that our interests are not being served by the systems we support" (Lorde 1984, 139). Lorde speaks here to survival as a matter of souls—sustaining one's heart (humanness) when the world and its prevailing ideologies and structures harden hearts and encourage human beings to forget their metaphysical and relational contexts.

In the Qur'anic telling of the story of Adam's sons, Cain (Qabil) and Abel (Habil), a decree is made to the children of Israel, "if any one slew a person—unless it be for murder or for spreading corruption in the land—it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people" (Qur'an 5:32). This verse seems to contradict itself by giving instances in which killing another is just at the same time that it states that killing one person is like killing all of humanity. Read in the context of the entire Qur'an and Sunna, it is the tension between these conditional statements and how this may or may not happen in practice that shapes the struggles of Muslim ethical and political life. This terrain opened for El-Shabazz and others a possibility for self-defense and protection that distinguished itself from the Christian doctrine of "turning the other cheek," while at the same time compelling the conversation of what it means to use force and the heavy toll that it potentially brings upon the soul and humanity at large.

Similarly, in the narrative of conquest and deliverance exemplified by the Old Testament story of the Israelites and Canaanites, God commands the Israelites to "drive out all the inhabitants of the land before

you" (Numbers 33:52). Understanding the role that this story has played in liberation theologies, Osage scholar Robert Warrior suggests centering the Canaanite experience and paying attention to how such "conquest narratives have made their way into Americans' consciousness and ideology" (2005, 7). Shadaab Rahemtulla considers how the Qur'anic version does not include a promise of land, but rather, Allah "makes a preferential option for the oppressed simply by virtue of being oppressed, irrespective of their faith" (2020, 215). This reorientation of how we understand land, the oppressed, and the interpretation and mobilization of sacred texts demonstrates how the materiality of where, how, and with whom we live is intimately tied to what we believe and know at a spiritual and metaphysical level.[35] As I consider Islamic and Muslim survival in the Bay Area, I hold in view how theories and theologies of race and religion have been wielded throughout a settler colonial continuum from Spanish conquistadors and missionaries to contemporary statecraft and (liberation) theologies that have mobilized Exodus and the "promised land" for its tropes of freedom, deliverance, and redemption at the expense of the Indigenous peoples and lifeways of the "promised land."

GEOGRAPHY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

"Medina by the Bay" as a conceptual frame, social geography, and "infrastructure of feeling" (Gilmore 2017, 237) draws from where we are grounded, the land of the Bay Area itself, its waters, its earthquakes, the blood and bones in its soil, its flora and fauna, and the cultures that have emerged through time in relation to this place.[36] These cultures manifest as mosques, Islamic schools, bookstores, restaurants, and grocery stores, which constitute private infrastructures that are connected to and enabled by private and public infrastructures like the internet, media, freeways, trains and buses, shipping lines, banks, and school systems, as well as Islamic infrastructures or pillars like *zakat* (alms tax), *salaat* (prayer), *hajj* (pilgrimage), *sawm* (fasting), *shahada* (witnessing and the testimony of faith), and Islamic laws and customs regarding food, education, morality, place-making, and congregational prayer. By bringing forward the interrelatedness of these natural, material, and affective infrastructures, I demonstrate the contingencies of Islamic belief and practice, how geography, cultural and socioeconomic forces, and geopolitical agendas impact which Muslim ways of knowing and being become normative and dominant or marginalized and diminished.

The Qur'an states that all of creation (from thunder and winds to bees, spiders, stars, light, darkness, and figs) are signs "for those who use their minds" (2:164), guides toward understanding ourselves as part of that creation, in relation to Allah, one another, and the natural world. These Qur'anic injunctions resonate with (Muslim and non-Muslim) Indigenous theories and cosmologies that understand "land as pedagogy" (Coulthard and Simpson 2016; L. B. Simpson 2017) and "water as relative" (Yazzie and Baldy 2018), that teach "us to think about knowledge in continuous movement, transition, and change" (Barker 2017) and "knowledge as always already a place" connected to other spaces and times (Goeman 2013, 163).

Knowledge as place and in continuous movement is enacted at multiple scales as Muslims travel throughout the Bay Area to attend lectures or communal prayers, crossing the Bay over and under its seven bridges, listening to Qur'anic recitations or Islamic lectures initially on audiocassettes, then CDs, MP3s, and other digital files. Knowledge as place also exists in the space between shoulders and feet as Muslims line themselves up for prayer, whether in mosques, living rooms, prison yards, parks, or plazas, and in the shadows students' bodies cast as they calculate midday and afternoon prayer times (Kashani 2014).[37] The Medina by the Bay is also a contested geography in which forms of epistemic and material violence have shaped the distributions and dispossessions of people and resources across its lands and waters, at the same time that the Bay Area has been an epicenter of social and political reimagining and struggle with significant local and global reverberations. Beat and Black Power, free speech and free love, gentrification and gay pride, hip hop and hyphy, Silicon Valley and slow food, multiple movements and modes narrate the Bay Area as vanguard and anomaly in relation to the rest of the United States.

Descendants of the region's original human inhabitants, the Indigenous peoples collectively (and anthropologically) referred to as the Ohlone (Ramaytush, Chochenyo, Tamien, Awaswas, Karkin), Patwin, Yokuts, and the Coast and Bay Miwok, continue to seek visibility, recognition, land, and sovereignty in struggles with the nation, state, counties, and private entities (Field, Leventhal, and Cambra 2013; Nelson 2021; Sogorea Te' Land Trust 2021). The destruction of their ancestral "native economies, polities, and cosmologies" for the sake of productivity "in the European sense" was also a "wholesale transformation of the coastal ecology of California" committed in the names of Christianity and empire, and then for the state of California (Field and Leventhal 2003, 99).[38] The Bay Area also continues

to be home to a large urban Native population, composed of members of many Indigenous nations who were forcibly encouraged to leave reservations from the 1950s onward in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Urban Relocation program. This federal effort to assimilate Indigenous peoples toward their nonexistence failed to disappear Native peoples, who continue to maintain connections to their tribal lands, reservations, traditions, and to one another (Ramirez 2007). Muslims in the Medina by the Bay articulate multiple strategies for Islamic and Muslim survival, some that are articulated "*inside* First Peoples' sovereignty" and others through "settler rights" (S. Jackson 2019, 346). As places like Zaytuna College reorient Muslims to their reciprocal relations with the land, "to restore balance and order on earth in a manner consistent with a Qur'anic worldview and in conformity with our divinely mandated function as stewards of God on earth, *khalifatul Allah fil 'ard* (viceregents/stewards of God on earth)" (Zaytuna College 2018), they may likewise orient themselves beyond the "benevolent use of the land" (S. Jackson 2019, 346) toward grounded relations and solidarities (Coulthard and Simpson 2016; Coulthard 2014).[39]

Hajar is a Black Muslim woman whose parents migrated to the Bay Area from the East Coast and Texas in the 1960s.[40] Currently a university professor, she started teaching at a Muslim elementary school in East Oakland in the 1990s. The school was part of As-Sabiqun movement, established by Imam Abdul Aleem Musa in 1995 with a five-point plan aimed at creating "a community within a community, a city within a city, a nation within a nation—an Umma determining and directing its own affairs" (Al Rashid 2014, 44). Part of the vision for the movement was to create "New Medina," a Muslim community governed through the concept of "geographical integrity" in which Muslim communal life was centered around the mosque, schools, businesses, *da'wa* (calling/inviting to and within Islam), and social welfare institutions. Ultimately, this vision for New Medina faced numerous setbacks; despite attempts to be independent of the state, "we definitely had influences of the state all around us because they sanctioned violence on our communities, on ourselves; the police are running rampant around our community." For Hajar and others, the ideal of a local community was consistently challenged by a larger socioeconomic and geographic context where "you want to be in it, but not of it, but then you can't really—unless you have enough power in terms of money and resources to actually do something." So, while the community had their own forms of security, they could not contend with "the guns and the violence and all those things; we could not impact those things on the terms that we had."

At the same time, Hajar's community developed relationships with an Indigenous community who invited them to visit and stay on their reservation south of the Bay Area, and it was there and during other retreat gatherings that Hajar gained a sense of what freedom and sovereignty could look like, "to actually have just your own land and your own everything, right? . . . I distinctly remember them saying, 'You have left the United States.' And that was such a profound moment for us and for our children to see that and stuff like that. It was beautiful. It was absolutely beautiful. And that to me is what it should be or could be."[41]

While Hajar refers to "your own land and your own everything," she is not emphasizing possession as property to be exploited for capital; rather, she invokes the idea of land as a communal means of reproduction and site of possibility removed from the violent effects of racial capitalism, organized abandonment, and colonial relations. In her account, a Black-led multiracial Muslim community sought the sovereignty of and sovereignty with Indigenous peoples through Islam and their own relationships to the lands and water of the Bay Area. These experiences emerged from a "grounded relationality" in proximity, that recognized the sociopolitical, material, and geographic tethering of our collective struggles in particular places (Byrd et al. 2018; Coulthard 2014; Nichols 2018). The groundedness of this relationality is "situated in relation to and from the land . . . and other elementary or material currents of water and air" without "precluding movement" (Byrd et al. 2018, 11). Rather than comparative frameworks of commensurability and disconnection, a relational analysis attends to "dynamics of co-constitution, interaction, and friction" (Byrd et al. 2018, 5). In grounding this work in the specificity of the San Francisco Bay Area, the land and water relatives of the Ohlone, Patwin, Yokuts, and Miwok and the home of so many other relocated peoples, I attend to our proximate relations at a regional scale, focusing on the inhabitants of Medina by the Bay in ways that are not limited to our Muslim kin. Imagining, recovering, and enacting survival and ways of living that are not "tethered to the death of the Other" are essential ethical and political commitments for Muslims who seek to follow a Prophetic path (King 2019, xi; Shange 2019b).

The Bay Area exemplifies how a particular region presents challenges to more nation-based hegemonic ideologies of race, sex, and politics while not being immune to them as people and ideas come and go (Ramirez 2007; Shange 2019b). "The accumulated history" of the region informs how people make sense of social relations, how they know one another across and through difference, and how they practice living in proximity

(Massey 1994, 156; Cheng 2013); yet these same accumulated histories also bear the weight of new histories, peoples, and ideas that simultaneously are made possible by the histories that they obscure and negate. The recent affluence in the region and in the Muslim community has dramatically transformed the progressive, creative, and working-class cultural landscape and with that affluence comes the high rates of turnover, exile, and exodus that take critical memories with them (Solnit 2000, 22; Banks et al. 2012; Maharawal and McElroy 2018; Menendian and Gambhir 2019).

The Bay Area, like much of the country, is resegregating. The unfinished work of the civil rights, Black freedom, and Third World movements reached a zenith in public schools, for example, in 1989, when they were at their most desegregated nationally (Chang 2016, 70). State governments have been at the forefront of dismantling those hard-fought achievements in schooling, housing, employment, and antiracism toward carceral geographies, geographies that are not limited to prisons and law enforcement, but that enable the inequality that "capitalism requires" and "racism enshrines" (Gilmore 2017, 240; see also Gilmore 2007; Shange 2019b, Sojoyner 2013). One cannot separate local and regional infrastructures and infrastructures of feeling from one another as the particular "implies entire historical geographies in constant churn . . . any category or system has many dimensions, necessitating analytical stretch in order to perceive the material world in a variety of overlapping and interlocking totalities" (Gilmore 2017, 229).

One of the earliest Muslim schools in the Bay Area was the Nation of Islam's University of Islam, which became the Clara Muhammad School in Oakland in the 1970s. Hajja Rasheeda, one of the first teachers at the school, had been a Black Panther and member of the Black Student Union at San Francisco State during the establishment of Black and Ethnic Studies in the Third World Strike of 1968. Other teachers and community members at Clara Muhammad and Masjid Al-Waritheen (of the Warith Deen community) embodied Black Power infrastructures of feeling as well. In the 1980s these Bay Area Black Muslims—many of whom were professionals and middle-class homeowners, with the leadership of Wallace (Warith Deen) Muhammad, the son of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad—were able to purchase and then maintain three buildings, including a former Catholic church that held the school and a mosque, in Oakland's Fruitvale District. In the 1990s, Oscar, a recent convert to Islam, began attending the mosque, where every spring, Imam Faheem Shuaibe named all the young people going to college the next year and asked them to stand up.[42]

Oscar grew up in West Oakland's Lower Bottoms, deeply informed by its Black Panther histories; three generations in Oakland, his people migrated from Arkansas on his mother's side and Louisiana on his father's.

> It was at Masjid Al-Waritheen where I first met young adults, young people in my peer group who were going to places like Yale, MIT, Georgetown, Howard University. This is the first time I met people in my peer group who were actually going to college, Black folks. They were producing young adults, Muslims like that. And I was blown away. I remember one sister, Tawhidah . . . she went to Yale. . . . I remember after *jumu'a* (Friday congregational prayer) going up to her like, "Tawhidah, you're going to Yale!?" She was like, "Yeah. But it's not that big of a deal, you know." I was like, "What!?" And she was like . . . she was downplaying it. I was like, "Man, you're going to Yale." She was like, "Yeah. And they paying my way too. I got a free ride." "Wow," I was super impressed.

Over the next decade, the Warith Deen community faced multiple demographic and socioeconomic challenges in what Oscar referred to as a "bustling" and intergenerational community: "They had elder women, elderly folks, young adults, teenagers" who began to age, move away from Oakland, or migrate to other Muslim communities or away from Islam. During the subprime mortgage crisis of 2007–2010, the Warith Deen community lost the Clara Muhammad School and mosque building. The costs of maintaining the large, old building, combined with the diminished financial resources and geographic proximity of the community, bad and impossible choices, and predatory banking structures, contributed to the loss of this significant fixture in Bay Area Islam. Meanwhile, the Muslim Community Association in Santa Clara County and the South Bay Islamic Association in San Jose, both founded in the 1980s in Silicon Valley and which are predominantly upper- and middle-class Arab and South Asian, have built schools, acquired additional real estate, and expanded multiple times both before and after the subprime mortgage crisis. Similarly, Zaytuna College has purchased twenty million dollars of church, school, and residential properties in North Berkeley within its first decade of existence (2009–2019).

These brief references to accumulation and abundance and dissolution and dispossession are both particular to and emblematic of larger dynamics in the Bay Area. When Oscar says, "the Black Muslim community goes the way of the Black community," he means that the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the larger Black population imply the conditions of Black Muslim communities. African Americans suffered massive losses

in the subprime mortgage crisis and have been heavily impacted by urban redevelopment and gentrification in the metropolitan Bay Area. African American Muslim communities have seen their mosque attendees and members dispersed to the outer reaches of the Bay Area from their earlier communal foundations in San Francisco and Oakland. While they are in relation to a larger community of Muslims, they also live in proximate relations with their non-Muslim families and neighbors. What is happening to Muslims in the Bay Area, who are estimated to be about 250,000 people (one of the largest concentrations in the country), says a great deal about what is happening to the entire Bay Area (Bazian and Senzai 2013).

Despite such communal losses, a proliferation of US-based Islamic schools, institutes, programs, seminars, conferences, and distance-learning programs in the last three decades speaks to the structural conditions of *some* Muslims having more resources and (leisure/devotional) time (Deeb and Harb 2013); a (neoliberal) faith in the charismatic power of education, expertise, and certification (Starrett 1998; Z. A. Grewal 2013); a desire to produce institutions toward establishing generational continuity, security, and cohesion (Haddad, Senzai, and Smith 2009; Memon 2019); and the need to be conversant with a media and social landscape in which Muslims are (still) compelled to explain and defend themselves and their faith (Alsultany 2013; 2012; Jamal and Naber 2008).

Muslims are distributed across the socioeconomic spectrum, and a growing resegregation in the Bay Area puts specific demands on educational institutions like Zaytuna. How the Zaytuna administration recognizes its role in ameliorating or reinscribing historical and social injustices, especially regarding education, gender, race, and class, is a significant marker for the potential to reorder society in line with its historical legacies. An analysis of the logics at play at Zaytuna College and other Muslim spaces throughout the Medina by the Bay are important for bringing forward the contradictions, conflicts, and transformations that emerge when market-driven, neoliberal logics meet social-justice and faith-based logics, such as in "Islamic finance," "social justice capitalisms," "black neoliberalism," and "progressive conservatisms" (Dawson and Francis 2016; Riguer 2017).

Zaytuna College's proximity to and the fiscal patronage of Silicon Valley is present in the dot-com vocabulary often uttered at the school. Zaytuna was called a "start-up," currently in "Zaytuna 2.0," and many of its administrative and managerial leadership have been recruited from the tech industry. Such proximity and influence have impacted how the college is organized and managed. Following trends in education nationally, Zaytuna College

initially hired (Muslim) business professionals, rather than those with educational experience, to manage the institution. This intentional form of management and bureaucracy surreptitiously impacts the dynamics of the social and intellectual atmosphere and student and administrative staff morale.

Zaytuna has made a significant commitment to let students graduate debt free (as part of a larger Islamic critique of debt and interest), and they have graduated many local students who would have not otherwise been able to access higher education. But the question remains both there and throughout the Medina by the Bay: Who is asked to sacrifice or work harder, and how are piety discourses mobilized to support austerity measures and achievement gaps? While maintaining the need to center Muslim agency and accountability (like when students break codes of conduct or do not keep up their grades), I wonder to what extent a Muslim school can intervene with transformative, rather than punitive, responses. Which Prophetic modalities are foregrounded at which moments and how? How does resegregation *within* the Muslim community occur in relation to a dynamic discourse of Muslim heterogeneity? I likewise bring these questions to the fields of education and the academy more broadly. How do we reorient our knowledge production and transmission toward the needs and knowledge of the most vulnerable in ways that foreground, rather than suspend, the grounded relationality of schools and their local communities (Shange 2019b)?

Toward addressing some of these questions, chapter 1, "Medina by the Bay," presents scenes of study and survival in Medina by the Bay (with a focus on Oakland and the East Bay) that evoke the contexts and processes through which formal and informal knowledge practices (*daʿwa, taʿlim,* and *ta'dib*) evolved from the 1950s to the present. These scenes are not an exhaustive rendering of Medina by the Bay's past and present; rather, they are demographic, geographic, and affective portals and structures for the following scenes and chapters to move through and against. Chapter 2, "Roots, Routes, and Rhythms of Devotional Time," expands space and time to consider the global effects and ethical and political implications of Medina by the Bay, how affinities are formed through an Islamic kinship of faith, spiritual and knowledge-based genealogies, and liberatory lineages that reorder how differences (racial, gender, class, sectarian) shape relations and responsibilities. In chapter 3, "Codewords and Counterinsurgent Continuities," I trace historical continuities that demonstrate how government surveillance and infiltration policies (the state's desire to know, control, and destroy), as well as Muslim alliances and solidarities, impact which forms of Muslim life and knowing survive and which do not.

The deep context of the global war on terror, the terror-industrial complex, and a related structure of white supremacy, settler colonialism, and racial capitalism "make writing [and filmmaking] and analysis a careful, complex instantiation of jurisdiction and authority" (A. Simpson 2014, 105). Through my ethnographic research, I asked Muslims to speak and be seen, surveyed/surveilled even. Not speaking when one is compelled to "answer for" Islam, not demonstrating that one is not an "oppressed" Muslim woman—Muslims are often denied these rights to "silence" and opacity. While much of my research came to have use-value for the college (my video footage was used in Zaytuna promotional videos and students and community members consistently spoke of their appreciation for opportunities to reflect), I was also acutely aware that I was contributing to an "incitement to discourse" about Muslims (Foucault 1978).

Trinh T. Minh-ha addresses the ethical and political relations of knowledge production by maintaining "a self-reflexively critical relationship toward the material, a relationship that defines both the subject written and the writing subject, undoing the I while asking 'what do I want wanting to *know* you or me?'" (1989, 76). Trinh's question about "wanting to know" orients my own production and transmission of knowledge. It remains important to produce counterknowledges that are useful for the communities to whom we are indebted and that reorder our epistemological assumptions, while also remaining attentive to how "our work is sometimes, even often, willfully misread, misinterpreted, and misused" (Fernando 2014, 27). To protect and anticipate future "concerns of the community" and to attend to the "asymmetrical power relations that inform the research and writing," I do not discuss "everything" that I saw and heard (A. Simpson 2014, 105).

I navigated a space in-between where I had a multiplicity of statuses at Zaytuna College and elsewhere: student, Muslim woman, audiovisual technician, community member, and researcher.[43] Despite the open doors, I was viewed with a weary acquiescence by those who are always being defined by others, as when one student introduced herself strategically and playfully as one of my "experiments" to a friend. Haroon, the audiovisual technician at Zaytuna, framed my being there another way: "Your being named Maryam is not an accident at all, so your involvement in this project is the writing of your personal story and your journey with and to knowing Allah, and you are in a very unique position that is unprecedented in this organization . . . it's like miraculous."[44] While acknowledging this great privilege and what he called "the scary aspect," Haroon urged me to remain "conscious of that sense of accountability, and to take it on in

the best way possible." Haroon made clear to me, as did others throughout my time at Zaytuna, that I should not see my work and relationships as "simply research." I should "seek benefit" and examine my own relationship to Allah. This was not a unanimous position, however.

Others at Zaytuna believed that I should maintain a "critical distance" so that I could maintain "objectivity" toward what was happening at the college. If I became too close to people and the lines between "on the record" and "off the record" became blurred, I would become too biased to see clearly, or worse, I would exploit and manipulate such relationships and invade and betray privacies (Stacey 1988; Wolf 1996). Such fears were not unwarranted as many individuals had already experienced the media misrepresenting them, and they were sensitive to how Muslims were portrayed. There was also a heightened sense of ethics in terms of what was private, what wasn't, and when it came to talking about events at the college, at what point it was unethical to speak about other people who were not present in the room.[45] It is for this reason that I found moments of refusal or resistance useful "diagnostics of power" (L. Abu-Lughod 1990). My interlocutors' refusals informed my own refusals in the "ethnographic calculus of what you need to know and what I refuse to write," film, or edit for presentation (A. Simpson 2014, 105).

Toward that end, in chapter 4, "Out of Bounds," I consider the ethical-political bounds and responsibilities of ethnographic relation and representation and how embodied forms of knowing from tears and gendered geographies to forms of intimate distance and filmmaking offered ways to navigate tensions between opacity and making visible toward an elaboration of how power, knowledge, and ethics intersect. In chapter 5, "Epistemologies of the Oppressor and the Oppressed," I return to the Zaytuna classroom where students and teachers discuss Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*. I bring theories and theologies together to consider how we reorder our ways of knowing and being from the position of the wretched and oppressed.

REFUSALS AND OFFERINGS—THE ETHNOCINEMATIC AS KNOWLEDGE AND ETHICS

In the opening three scenes and throughout, I emphasize the *cinematic* and ethical implications of ethnographic participant-observation, analysis, and representation by presenting my research (observations, interviews, archives, etc.) as ethnocinematic scenes, to get at the critical function of

the (audio)visual in shaping our epistemological and experiential conditions and to demonstrate the intertextual limits and possibilities of engaging the ethical, (audio)visual, and textual together.[46] Film and digital technologies alter our perceptive and cognitive capacities; our knowledges of the world—how we sense, think, and make meaning—are mediated by images, and our sensory apparatuses are accustomed to receiving and forming images according to the parameters and expectations put in place by cinema (Keeling 2007, 5). So, when Muslims watch videos of Islamic scholars online or listen to Qur'anic recitation or lectures in their cars or on their mobile devices, they are being shaped by the cinematic effects and common-sense logics of media (Hirschkind 2006; Hirschkind and Larkin 2008; Moll 2010; Vries and Weber 2001). They are also impacted by how the figure of the Muslim is mobilized in state discourse and popular culture.[47] Additionally, visual and multimodal anthropologists consider how the camera itself and the process of making ethnographic films enable embodied forms of knowing and seeing that transmit knowledge and affect in ways that are distinct from text (Collins, Durington, and Gill 2017; J. Jackson 2004; D. MacDougall 2006).

By staging ethnographic performances (as in Scene 3 above) and offering ethnocinematic scenes throughout this text, I explore the possibilities of breaking from a "totalizing quest of meaning" (Trinh 1991, 29) and reformist "politics of visibility," toward getting free "from the world of the cinematic and the common senses that animate it" (Keeling 2007, 10).[48] My writing and filmmaking foreground the ethics, politics, and shape of ethnographic relationality through experimental form while also attending to a need for counterknowledge. This tension is present throughout as I struggle with what "speaking nearby" rather than about can look like, while also giving the reader (historical, theoretical, spiritual) tools to deploy (Trinh 1991).

Traditional ethnographic vignettes produce images for the reader that convey a sense of "being there," reinscribing the anthropologist's authority to describe and analyze what was witnessed. By writing ethnocinematically, I draw attention to the pressure that visual and discursive regimes put "on the ways images commonly present themselves as an index of what they appear to record" (Keeling 2011, 58). My ethnocinematic scenes combine multiple ethnographic and historical "events" in juxtaposition and also narrate scenes I did not observe but was told about. I arrived at this form because I struggled, and eventually refused, to tell the history of Islam in the Bay Area in a linear timeline and from a single point of view. There are infinite points of view, Muslim and non-Muslim, human and nonhuman;

my camera Nur had its own point of view that exceeded the possibilities of what I could see or do, while prayers and supplications made centuries before demanded presence. By exposing some of the cinematic apparatus in this way, I draw attention to the incompleteness—whether by choice or chance—of what is not included. In some cases, there are ample images; in others, there are no images nor sufficient ways to image. For example, in chapter 2, I describe a scene as it would appear in a film, and indeed this is how my camera captured this event. In chapter 4, I return to that scene to describe what the camera could not capture—years of history, centuries-old prayers, and distant prophecies; I discuss the difference between describing a scene with text versus showing the scene as a set of moving images in a particular political, ethical, and affective context.

I am also interested in what this ethnocinematic approach offers in its ability to traverse, collapse, and expand space and time. Historical figures and alternate geographies are made present in devotional gatherings, classrooms, and conversations. Thinking cinematically through montage enables me to narrate a different metaphysics and radical relationality of ethnographic space and time in much the same way that Muslim scholars and their students localize and historicize Islam in their rhetorical leaps and devotional bounds. "The camera introduces us to unconscious optics" in which time and space can expand, contract, and otherwise defy our phenomenological expectations (Benjamin 1968, 239).

I also draw upon the cinematic and Fanon's feelings of lived experience as Black: "I cannot go to a film without seeing myself. I wait for me. In the interval, just before the film starts, I wait for me" (2008 [1967], 107). This moment of anticipation, endurance, and potential exposure refers to "the relationships of time made visible by cinema" and "the possibility of *exploding* the lingering logics of colonial reality" that construct Blackness and Muslimness as distinct, however overlapping and co-constitutive, problems (Keeling 2003, 107–8; Bayoumi 2008). The conceptual notions of and affective feelings toward Islam and Muslimness, both Black and non-Black, are entangled with colonial and secular logics and cartographies that in the United States situate both Islam and Muslims as foreign, invasive, irrational, illiberal, ungrievable, and terrifying. Muslims themselves, (dis)identifying their own lived experiences with the cinematic images and logics that shape them, enact these same logics despite themselves. I conjure the cinematic form and the intervals that mark time between past and future as a space of possibility that breaks from commonsense logics that animate our ways of knowing and being. My "editing" of past and

contemporary moments offers just one set of connections and ruptures with the hope that other possibilities and questions can emerge and "be perceived in the interval, gap, or break between them" (Keeling 2011, 73).

Twelfth-century Islamic scholar Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazali (d. 1111) situates seeing and knowing as ethical practices that one must cultivate: "Were it not that He has placed an image (*mithal*) of the whole world within your very being you would have no knowledge of that which is apart from yourself" (al-Ghazali 2010, 59). For al-Ghazali, being able to "see" is contingent on the will of Allah and one's ethical becoming; one must protect one's (seeing) heart, so that access to images is not cut off, and at the same time nurture the heart's ability to see. Seeing and knowing are ethical relations that are characterized by a tension between the limits of an autonomous subject who experiences the world through her senses and that which is enabled by external forces. So, when a Muslim student surrounds herself with photographs of Muslim scholars, she also invites the images to "work" on her, enjoining her to be more like these spiritual models. At the same time, negative and racist images similarly work on us, corrupting and hardening our hearts, impacting our capacities to see and know ourselves and others. The epistemological and phenomenological implications, then, are that images "become forms of thought constituting a new kind of knowledge—one that is grounded in visual communication, and thereby dependent on perception, demanding the development of the optical mind" (Emmelhainz 2015, 2; see also Connolly 2002). The "development of the optical mind," the "seeing heart," and the cinematic go hand in hand in describing how our logics, beliefs, and behaviors are shaped by images of the world that we may or may not apprehend, understand, or know.

EPISTEMOLOGY FOR THE NEXT

Around 1998, more than a decade before I heard the blues adhan in the storefront mosque in North Oakland, that same space was called Masjid Al-Ihsan (Mosque of Excellence), and it was a Naqshbandi *zawiya* (lodge of the Naqshbandi Sufi order). In this small two-room storefront, Shaykh Muhammad Shareef, a Black US-born Muslim who had returned from decades of study in East and West Africa, drew "a cross section of the Muslim community in the Bay Area" to receive "something that many of us had never gotten, which was one-to-one transmission of a religious text from a shaykh to the students in a traditional manner where you read the text and

the shaykh comments. You read, he comments. You read, he comments. And everybody has to participate."

Shareef was raised in the Nation of Islam in Connecticut and followed the son of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad, Imam Warith Deen Muhammad, in the "Transition" of many in the Nation toward Sunni Islam in 1975. Shareef then traveled to Africa to recover, as Oscar puts it, "that chain of transmission, that scholarship, that Islamic, that sacred tradition" that was disrupted when African Muslims were enslaved in the Americas. "So, he was about trying to connect us to . . . connecting us to Prophet Muhammad *salla Allahu ʿalayhi wa-sallam* (may God honor him and grant him peace) through our African ancestors, through that spiritual lineage."

Oscar described this class to me as "the highlight of many of our week," where young and old students would gather for two hours every Sunday evening to study *Tariq al-Janna,* the *Path to Paradise,* written by Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio (d. 1817), a Fulani scholar of Maliki *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and founder of the Sokoto Caliphate (established in 1804 in present-day Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Nigeria). Oscar described *Tariq al-Janna* as "a manual that outlines the fifteen traits of uprightness that Imam al-Ghazali talked about in his *Ihyaʾ ʿUlum al-Din* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*); Sheikh Uthman Dan Fodio condensed it into a small treatise that a person could read and begin to implement immediately." Shareef taught this class before any other, inverting the traditional order of Islamic study. Rather than beginning with the fiqh of *ibadat* (worship), like the requirements of ablution and prayer, Shareef told students like Oscar, Rasheeda, and others you will meet in these pages that "'We want to *begin* with *tasawwuf* (Sufism) because it's important that we not become arrogant with knowledge.' And he mentioned that the last, the most difficult blameworthy characteristic for a student to rid themselves of, after having learned a little bit, is arrogance. 'And so, we want to enter the study of knowledge, of sacred knowledge, religious knowledge, with some humility. So, we're going to study this book first.'"

Similarly, over a decade later at Zaytuna College, one of the first lessons that Imam Zaid Shakir imparts upon his students at Zaytuna College is the lesson conveyed by Imam Ibn Rajab (d. 1393): "Jubayr ibn Nufayr said: 'I met ʿUbada ibn al-Samit and said to him, "Will you not listen to what Abu Darda' is saying?" I then informed him of what he said concerning the loss of knowledge. He said, "Abu Darda' has spoken truthfully. If you wish I will inform you of the first knowledge to be removed from people. It is humility (*khushuʾ*). You will enter the central masjid and hardly find a

single humble person! "'" (al-Hanbali 2001, 10). Shakir repeatedly reminds his students that "knowledge arrogates." Knowledge makes one make claims (often in proprietary ways), such that cultivating humility becomes a foundational ethic of Islamic knowledge seeking. This humility does not prevent or limit critique, but instead enables one to reflect on one's practice of critique or intellectual inquiry with the ethics of knowledge, power, and mutual survival and salvation at the forefront.[49]

In Linda Alcoff's call for an "Epistemology for the Next Revolution," she urges scholars to move beyond description and critique toward a reconstruction of "how to make truth claims both responsible to political realities as well as reliable and adequate to the complexity of reality" (Alcoff 2011, 70). As Alcoff argues, it has become necessary not only to decolonize, but also to reconstruct epistemology, especially in the face of a political conservatism that uses "postmodern" critiques of scientific positivism to disprove theories of climate change, public health, and socioeconomic theories of the widening gaps between rich and poor. Indeed, (Bay Area) Muslim critiques of and apprehensions about critical theory, including those I witnessed, stem from its deconstructive quality, which seems to run counter to a theologically informed metaphysics of space and time. This common aversion to deconstruction and Allahless visions of (individual) liberation form the grounds upon which Muslims, like those at Zaytuna College, sometimes ally themselves with conservative Catholics, Christians, Jews, and nonmonotheistic conservatives. An epistemology for the next "requires us to uncover and reassess disavowed knowledges and to clarify the grounds of our own claims of adequacy or epistemic progress" while also disinvesting a reconstructed epistemology "of a mastery that would ignore the identity and situatedness of knowers while maintaining its normative capacity" (Alcoff 2011, 70).

Alcoff and liberation theologist Enrique Dussel's *political epistemology* is founded on a specific truth claim, "that currently existing social theories do not meaningfully engage with some of the most critical difficulties faced by the global poor" (Alcoff 2011, 71). Anthropological works that situate the global poor, disenfranchised, and dispossessed at the center of analysis and likewise as sources of social description and theory are moves toward a political epistemology when they also question and consider the categories and relations of power that inhere in the anthropological project (Harrison 1997; Smith 2012; Jesús and Pierre 2020; Visweswaran 1998; Jobson 2020). This means taking seriously "the work of thinking through the ontological implications of our truth claims" and the claims to truth our interlocutors

articulate (Alcoff 2011, 71). While Alcoff directs her call to contemporary scholars, I recognize how political epistemologies, which are grounded in the knowledge and experiences of the most vulnerable, have been reconstructed time and time again by those same communities as matters of survival. The blues adhan functions in this text as a way to remember and be called by these political epistemologies of our liberatory lineages.

In his analysis of the blues and plantation power in the Mississippi Delta, Clyde Woods attempts to "bridge the gap between the blues as a widely recognized aesthetic tradition and the blues as a theory of social and economic development and change" (Woods 2017, 20). For Woods, a "blues epistemology rests on two foundations. The first involves the constant reestablishment of collective sensibility in the face of constant attacks by the plantation bloc and its allies, and in the face also of a daily community life that is often chaotic and deadly" (Woods 2017, 29–30). The second attends to "social relations in the plantation South as one of the foundational pillars of African American culture" (Woods 2017, 30). Woods understands the South, and the Mississippi Delta more specifically, "as a Mecca," which suggests that the movement from the South to the North marks the establishment of multiple Medinas like the one by the Bay (Woods 2017, 290). The blues as a form of communication, analysis, and mode of being emerged from the South post-Reconstruction. As a foundational infrastructure of feeling, it shapes the contours of places like the Bay Area where African Americans migrated and continued the "constant reestablishment of collective sensibility," faced with a plantation epistemology that extended to white supremacist and racial capitalist structures in Northern cities. In a world largely ordered by such plantation epistemologies, a blues orientation cohered in African American theories and praxes directed toward collective survival and "nothing less than a new life" (Rosemont 1975, 8).[50]

Throughout the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries, West African Islamic epistemologies and ontologies contributed a Muslim poetics to the blues challenge to plantation ethics and logics (Diouf 2019; El Shibli 2007).[51] Sylviane Diouf (1998) demonstrates how Islamic notions of the self and community continued to persevere under the conditions of slavery as Muslims sustained practices such as fasting, charity, remembrance of Allah with prayer beads, and prayer. Muslims actively led and participated in slave revolts and maroon communities, contributing to the eventual emergence of the blues as a "theory of social and economic development and change" and the Black Radical tradition (Woods 2017, 20; Gomez 2005; Austin 2012; Robinson 2000; Lovejoy 1994; Reis and Brakel 1993).[52]

When Brother Masoud calls the adhan in Scene 1, we (ideally) hear the whole world—the spread of Islam, forced and willful migrations across the Atlantic and Pacific, and migrations from the South to the North—and a circular history of 1,400 years.[53] The adhan called by Brother Masoud was first called by Bilal ibn Rabah (al-Habashi, the Abyssinian, 580–640 CE), the most well-known among many African-descended Companions of the Prophet Muhammad. While in Medina, Bilal became the first *muezzin,* caller of the adhan, after the Prophet designated him to do so because of his "penetrating voice" (Ibn Hisham, Ibn Ishaq, and Guillaume 2001, 236). From that moment, he would climb onto the roof of the tallest house in Medina (and later in Mecca) and call out the adhan until the day the Prophet passed away.[54]

In 1975, Imam Warith Deen Muhammad referred to himself and the community of Muslims whom he led in the Transition as Bilalians, "because of the great dissatisfaction and confusion among our people concerning a proper and dignified name for themselves" (Muhammad and Aleem 2014). A year later, Imam Muhammad further elaborated: "We are here with a new consciousness that is not a black consciousness or a white consciousness but a divine consciousness" (Muhammad and Aleem 2014). As Precious Rasheedah Muhammad and Mahasin Abuwi Aleem state, Imam Muhammad's use of "Bilalian" "was designed to free the minds of a people; to move beyond the trappings and limitations of colorism and racism; to enable them to see themselves as slave servants of Allah alone; to follow the moral arc of Bilal ibn Rabah; to be truly free" (2014). This *spiritual* political epistemology marked the particular experience and history of Bilalians as a "new" ethnic group "of this land" (W. D. Muhammad as quoted in Abdul Khabeer 2017a, 36), which drew upon African descent but specifically emerged in the "context and process" (L. B. Simpson 2017; Barker 2018) of struggle and freedom-seeking in the United States and the Americas. The worlding, collective sense-making, and freedom-seeking of the "Bilalians" is part of what it means to both call and respond to the blues adhan.

The combination of the blues with the adhan speaks to the specific call of Islam in these lands and what it requires of Muslims in their ethical relations to this place, themselves, one another, and Allah.[55] The blues adhan demands a listening to history and its lessons, to what Black experience and epistemologies offer Black people, those who were here before, and those who have arrived more recently. To listen to the blues is to hear the lessons of enslavement, Emancipation, Reconstruction, Jim Crow,

the Great Migration, redlining and racism, COINTELPRO, and mass incarceration. It is to hear the broken promises and the harmonies and "cacophonies" of histories of dispossession, struggle, and survival (Byrd 2011). The blues adhan also requires us to attend to visions for economic, social, and cultural justice that arrived with other migrations to the San Francisco Bay Area. Land-based, anticolonial struggles and exile from Palestine to India to Fiji to Afghanistan offer their own blues epistemologies as well; while their rhythms and tonalities may differ, they also cry "a new society being born" (Woods 2017, 39). The blues adhan connects all Muslims to a Qur'anic injunction to assist orphans, those in bondage, the indigent/wretched/damned, travelers, and the poor. Through its ethical and political focus on the most vulnerable in our society, Islam provides the resources for a counter humanism and epistemology for the next, should Muslims see, listen, and reflect.

A significant element of Islamic and Muslim survival, "one of the most astounding features of our own tradition," is a commitment to *ikhtilaf* (difference) and its coexistence with *ijmaa'* (consensus), meaning that for centuries, Muslims have coexisted with one another with an understanding that different Muslims followed different schools of law and practiced certain elements of their faith differently, while also agreeing on certain fundamentals (S. A. Jackson 2011). Throughout the text I discuss how difference *between* Muslims and as Muslims was articulated and experienced in classes, *khutbas* (sermons), geographies, conversations, and everyday life. This challenge of difference and multiplicity is an essential quality that Muslims must remember, as we consider "how can one re-create without re-circulating domination" (Trinh 1991, 15)?

From the ethnocinematic to an epistemology for the next, *Medina by the Bay* is a practice of research/filmmaking/writing as creative event—"A creative event does not grasp, it does not take possession, it is an excursion. More often than not, it requires that one leaves the realms of the known, and takes oneself there where one does not expect, is not expected to be" (Trinh 1991, 26).[56] I write as a form of invitation for you to engage without the expectation that you are receiving a translation of "a reality outside itself," but rather "the emergence of a new reality" (Trinh 1989, 22). It is an invitation to wander and travel within Medina by the Bay.

For those who inhabit Medina by the Bay, it is an invitation to reflect upon it attuned to other frequencies and rhythms. It is an around the way approach from "an around the way girl" to interrogate the produced and

fixed meanings around race and religion that provide some explanation for how the United States continues to be at war with, dictates to, sanctions, incarcerates, kills, and starves Muslims around the world, while Muslims are simultaneously signifiers for, actors in, and resistors of the multicultural and multidenominational possibility of the colonial racial capitalist state.[57] As I bring theories and theologies together, I expect you to feel some discomfort, but that for me makes space for a new reality, for an essential, however difficult, conversation toward our mutual survival, the unveiling of hearts, and all that entails.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 Masoud is named for my paternal uncle Masoud Kashani (1951–1975), who passed away from injuries sustained in a car accident in San Francisco. He was the youngest son in a family of four brothers and two sisters and was the first in my family to be buried in the soil of the Americas. My father told me about the scramble to find a knowledgeable (Iranian/Shia) Muslim who could administer the rites of *janaza* (funeral absolutions and prayers). In a small section of Muslims buried in a cemetery in Colma, California, he lays next to a young Palestinian man who had passed away the year before.

Most of my Bay Area interlocutors are given pseudonyms, with the exception of public figures like prominent Islamic scholars, leaders, and institutions. The names I give my beloved interlocutors include practices of remembrance, a making present ("co-presence"), a selection of ancestors and lineages that shape the contours of Medina by the Bay (Jesús 2015). In most cases I do not give schools and other Muslim institutions pseudonyms because they are public-facing institutions that are quite distinct and merit a historical account of their significance; in some cases, they have had extensive media coverage, and as many Muslims would tell you, the FBI already knows about them and are probably in attendance.

2 (Allah is Great/er [4 times]/I bear witness that there is no Allah but Allah [2 times], I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah [2 times]/Come to salah (ritual prayer) [2 times]/ Come to success [2 times]/ Allah is Great/er [2 times]/ There is no Allah but Allah [1 time or 2 times]). This is a translation of the traditional Sunni adhan that was recorded and precedes the Friday afternoon congregational prayer, jumuʿa.

3 The Cham are an ethnic group and religious minority of Southeast Asia, predominantly in Vietnam and Cambodia. A large Cham refugee population arrived in the Seattle area in the late 1970s where they established a refugee center, mosque, and neighborhood.

4 The accompanying videos of the first three scenes can be found on www.maryamkashani.com under the "Medina by the Bay" project. They invite a "multimodal" engagement with Medina by the Bay (Collins, Durington, and Gill 2017).

5 Saba is named for Saba Mahmood (1961–2018), the brilliant and generous anthropologist and human being whose queries into and concerns for how we live with one another deeply inform these pages.

6 Fatemeh is named for my Iranian grandmother whose death during my father's youth precipitated the movement of my father's family from Iran to the United States prior to the Islamic Revolution in 1979. United States influence and interference in Iran throughout the twentieth century also impacted when and how my family arrived and stayed in the Bay Area.

7 Fatemeh actively participated in group interviews, however.

8 I discuss my camera—which, following a Prophetic practice of naming things, I named "Nur"—in more detail in chapter 4.

9 Iranians, Iraqis, and Palestinians include Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, atheists, Marxists, and so forth, but the sociocultural influences of Islam in combination with Indigenous and adopted traditions are important to consider.

10 I bring Indigenous and Black feminisms, as well as critical theories and theologies from Islamic studies, Black Radical tradition, anthropology, decolonial and ethnic studies, and visual studies together in ways that may make people of faith and people of critical theory (not mutually exclusive) uncomfortable, but that for me makes for an essential conversation toward our mutual survival, sustenance, and reproduction.

11 I do not offer a comprehensive account of "everything"; I share and juxtapose scenes of Medina by the Bay as possible portals, while also lamenting what remains unspoken, but not unthought. I primarily focus on Sunni communities because my research snowballed from Zaytuna College as a starting point, though Shiʿi and other Muslim spaces and individuals are made present intermittently.

12 The AH stands for "After Hijra." The Islamic calendar actually begins with the Prophet Muhammad's hijra to Medina, marking the place and time of an Islamic society being born.

13 "Din" (pronounced and spelled throughout this text as "deen") is often translated as religion, so "medina" is a place where din happens. In classical and formal Arabic (Fusha), most words build out from a three- or four-letter base. There are ten grammatical forms that this base builds off to convey different meanings and relationships. I refer to these constructions throughout the text because they demonstrate the paucity of translation as Arabic words are imbedded in oceanic webs of grammatical meaning. The Arabic root D-A(Y)-N refers to a myriad of words related to obedience, submission, possession, debt, credit, and requital. Medina thus means

city, a place that is "so called because [it] had, or [is] held, in possession, or under authority" (Lane and Lane-Poole 1968, vol. 3, 942–45).

14 In the eighth and ninth centuries, hadith are collected and evaluated, contributing to the "Islamic tradition" as part of a transmitted corpus and field of knowledge, but initially the Prophet's speech and actions marked a shift from or commentary on established practices (Hodgson 1974; J. A. C. Brown 2009a).

15 I discuss adab in more detail below. In modern usage it refers to good manners, etiquette, comportment, belles-lettres, literature, or culture. For Zahrah and others in the Zaytuna milieu, adab connotes an embodied, cultivated, and cognitive sense of manners and comportment that recognizes and acknowledges forms of authority, hierarchy, capacity, potential, and rank, as well as ethical decency, justice, mutual respect, piety, and God-consciousness. Because of the multifaceted nature of the word both in Arabic and in translation, it is in the discursive utterances and iterations of "adab" in the everyday around which a type of collective meaning is understood and contested.

16 I use "American Muslim" as a term that denotes location, citizenship-status, (English) language, and cultural positioning in the particular geography and cultural milieu of the United States vis-à-vis a global community of Muslims. I qualify the term because it assumes a tacit acceptance of the modifier "American," and makes little space for the ambivalence Muslims may feel toward the sociopolitical construction and contestation of the United States and dominant American cultural myths and values (see also Chan-Malik et al. 2014).

17 Shakir participated in activism against South African apartheid and continues to speak on many social justice issues, and Bazian was well known as a student organizer, especially on issues related to Palestine and American empire. While Shakir and Bazian's political participation has been more grassroots and community-based, Yusuf's recent political interventions have been oriented toward nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, advising presidents and state leaders, and, of course, Zaytuna College and its evolving programs of publications and public events.

18 I spent eighteen months in and around Zaytuna College and Bay Area Muslim communities from 2010 to 2012. I attended classes; faculty, staff, and student meetings; extracurricular and devotional activities; and congregational prayers, classes, and events at mosques and other spaces. I also visited some students and their families at their homes in the Midwest and on the East Coast. I returned to the Bay at least once a year from 2013 to 2021 and was in communication with Zaytuna graduates, faculty, staff, and community members as they moved or traveled in and out of the Bay Area. My dissertation, "Seekers of Sacred Knowledge: Zaytuna College and the Education of American Muslims," is more focused on Zaytuna College (Kashani 2014).

19 Throughout *Medina by the Bay* and following my interlocutors, I use "Muslim," "(Black) Muslim," "Black Muslim," or "African American Muslim" depending on context and meaning to signify a set of individuals interpellated and self-identified as Muslim and Black and/or African diasporic or descended. Racial/ethnic and nation-state descriptors like "Black" or "American" often delimit and oversimplify complex processes of self and communal identification that refuse processes of racialization and the allegiances of citizenship these terms connote. These same terms are also used by Muslims sincerely and strategically to connote expansive affiliations and attachments that comingle with "Muslim" in ways that can be impossible and undesirable to disentangle. My unwieldy uses of Black Muslim or (Black) Muslim draw attention to this complexity and occur in places where Blackness and Muslimness are deeply interconnected as embodied experiences, epistemologies, and ontologies that shape Medina by the Bay. These may be spaces constituted wholly or predominantly by Black Muslims or that are Black-led spaces with multiracial participation. "(Black) Muslim" attends to the ways that non-Black Muslims, scholars of religion, media, and representatives of the US nation-state attempt to discredit and deauthorize Muslim communities that are predominantly Black by labeling them as "Black Muslim" (Lincoln 1961) or by not including Black people and experiences in representations of Islam and Muslims. This continues to be especially relevant in court cases regarding the religious rights of the incarcerated and historically to cases of conscientious objection and citizenship (Felber 2020). A recent reclaiming of the term "Black Muslim" makes visible the particular genealogies of how Blackness and Islam are co-constitutive and productive (Abdul Khabeer 2016). Black Muslims in the United States also include those who have descended, like El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, from enslaved Africans in the Caribbean whose descendants immigrated to the United States.

20 El- or Al-Hajj is an honorific title given to Muslims who have performed the obligatory pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. I use El-Hajj for Shabazz because that is what is on his grave, while I use al-Hajj for Muhammad Ali in accordance with the system of transliteration I am using.

21 The anthropology of Islam has been dominated by the study of majority-Muslim settings where relations with the discursive tradition as a textual corpus shape articulations of piety, modernity, ambivalence, failure, genealogy, and the state (Mahmood 2005; Hirschkind 2012; Deeb 2006; Göle 1996; N. A. Khan 2012; Schielke 2015; Ho 2006; Messick 1993; Varzi 2006; Mittermaier 2011; Moll 2010; Agrama 2012; Larkin 2008a; Deeb and Winegar 2012). The study of Islam in Muslim-minority settings, or sectarian settings as in the work of Deeb and Harb (2013), discusses how Muslim subjectivities are likewise shaped by secularisms, Western feminisms, and racialization (Fernando 2014; Fadil 2009; Jouili 2015;

Bowen 2011; 2016; Mir 2016; A. Khan 2004; Rouse 2004; Chan-Malik et al. 2014). Research on the urban and suburban geographies of California have weighed more heavily on Southern California, where work on regional racialization and multiracial spaces, solidarities, and movements has built upon and complicated earlier research on ethnic enclaves, racialized geographies, urban/suburban divides, and assimilation and aspirational whiteness (Pulido 2006; Pulido, Barraclough, and Cheng 2012; Banks et al. 2012; Davis 2006). Wendy Cheng draws attention to the specificity of place in racial formation processes, "in which locally accepted racial orders and hierarchies complicate and sometimes challenge hegemonic ideologies and facile notions of race" (Cheng 2013, 10).

22 Anthropologists and scholars of education have moved this framework forward over the last two decades, building upon fieldwork that began before 9/11, but that was often informed by the intensification of Muslim and non-Muslim racialization in its aftermath (Mamdani 2004; J. A. Karim 2009; Maira 2009; Abdullah 2010; Rana 2011; N. C. Naber 2012; Z. A. Grewal 2013; Abdul Khabeer 2016; Corbett 2016; Maira 2016; A. I. Ali 2016; Rana 2017b; Auston 2017; Daulatzai and Rana 2018; Kashani 2018a; Li 2020; Perkins 2021). The scaffolding of such arguments also draws upon the interventions of Sherene Razack and Khaled Baydoun in legal studies; Yvonne Haddad, Julianne Hammer, Omid Safi, Faisal Devji, Edward Curtis IV, and Sherman Jackson in religious and Islamic studies; Karen Leonard, Louise Cainker, Sylvia Chan-Malik, Sohail Daulatzai, Hisham Aidi, Jasbir Puar, Evelyn Alsultany, Arun Kundnani, Mustafa Bayoumi, Keith Feldman, Alex Lubin, Ronak Kapadia, and Deepa Kumar; and the scholar-activisms of Rabab Abdulhadi and Hatem Bazian, and the "Islamophobia Is Racism" Syllabus collective.

23 Emblematic of this debate were a set of essays by Nadia Fadil, Mayanthi Fernando, Lara Deeb, and Samuli Schielke in *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5, no. 2 (2015) responding to prepositions of "too much Islam" set forward in Schielke 2010; Schielke and Debevec 2012.

24 I am the daughter of an Iranian father and Japanese mother who was born and raised in the City (San Francisco), who came of age in the East Bay, Berkeley, and the Town (Oakland), and whose kin are dispersed throughout the City, the South, East, and North Bays. Iyko Day describes how the stereotypes of "yellow peril" and the "model minority" complement each other in an ongoing settler colonial capitalism and racialization of Asians "in which economic efficiency is the basis for exclusion or assimilation" (Day 2016, 7), while Dean Saranillio explains from the Hawaiian context that "while migration in and of itself does not equate to colonialism, migration to a settler colonial space, where Native lands and resources are under political, ecological, and spiritual contestation, means the political agency of immigrant communities can bolster a colonial system initiated by White settlers" (Saranillio 2013, 286). When

Savannah Shange writes about the Sucka Free City as a "progressive dystopia," I feel it . . . home is hard, but folks keep striving (Shange 2019b).

25 The founders of Zaytuna College are well-known Muslim figures who arouse both ardent admiration and trenchant critique. For more detailed examination of Shaykh Hamza Yusuf, see Kugle 2006; Knight, 2009; Z. A. Grewal 2013; Quisay and Parker 2019; al-Azami 2019, 2021; forthcoming work from Quisay; and Yusuf's own writings, audiovisual recordings, and interviews. On Hatem Bazian see Naber 2012 and his own writings and videos; Bazian has also been the subject of multiple Islamophobic and Zionist attacks because of his activism and writing on issues related to Palestinian liberation and Islamophobia. Imam Zaid Shakir has published numerous books and articles, and many of his audiovisual recordings are also in circulation.

26 I use the pronoun "we" throughout the text to enact a relationality oriented toward collective survival. It connects the Muslims of the Bay Area to my readers and to myself. The "we" is a point of struggle and contention that implicates us in one another's lives and deaths (and afterlives!).

27 Some who enter Islam call themselves reverts instead of converts in recognition of the Islamic belief that we are all born Muslim. For some Black Muslims, there is also a sense of reverting back to Islam, which was a faith that many Africans practiced prior to their kidnapping to the Americas.

28 The Islamic "discursive tradition" also includes biographies, memoirs, poetry, commentaries, architecture and artworks, and the breadth and diversity of Muslim life from the seventh century onward (T. Asad 1986; Shahab Ahmed 2017).

29 Some state that this disavowal began as early as immediately after the death of the Prophet Muhammad; others would suggest that the murders of the Prophet's family, including of his grandsons Hasan and Husayn at Karbala, mark a critical disruption of the revolutionary impulse of Islam (Madelung 1997). The Qur'an anticipates and warns about the wrongs believers, or those who say they believe, will commit and what they will do in the name of religion. It also offers them redemptive paths forward should they reflect and turn toward Allah seeking forgiveness and mercy.

30 Sherman Jackson's theological writings on Islam and Black suffering speak to how Muslims must respond to racism (S. A. Jackson 2005; 2009; see also Chan-Malik 2011; Karim 2009; Abdullah 2010), while others discuss the effects of colonialism on Islamic education and law (Ware 2014; Agrama 2012; Mitchell 1988). Malcolm X's autobiography situates Islam as an anti-racist faith in the 1960s, but even then El-Shabazz noticed that racial logics of white supremacy had become global (Malcolm X and Haley 1965; Curtis 2015).

31 Muslim leaders in the United States who call for a "return" or "revival" of the Islamic tradition feel that because they are unencumbered by Arab or Desi "culture," for example, they can best articulate and transmit "true"

Islam. They do this while still referring to their "traditional" scholars, "untouched by modernity" in the historical Muslim world (Z. A. Grewal 2013).

32 For Gumbs and Wallace, "unjust death," similar to Gilmore's "vulnerability to premature death," is due to "capitalism, racism, homophobia, and transphobia" (383). I hold the particularity of their invocation of survival in place, while also attending to how critiques of homophobia and transphobia contribute to both the survival and unjust death of Muslims through the mobilization of human rights and liberal discourses that accuse Muslims (and thus authorize violence against them) of being simultaneously illiberal, fundamentalist, sexually deviant, and sexually frustrated (Puar and Rai 2002; Massad 2007; Puar 2007; El-Rouayheb 2005; Gurel 2017).

33 A smaller number of Muslims arrived as sailors, conquistadors (often having been forced to convert to Christianity prior to their departure), and navigators. Researchers also claim that based on old maps of Muslim geographers and traces of Arabic and Muslim practices in some Indigenous languages and cultures, Muslim explorers may have arrived before Columbus's "discovery" in 1492 (Nyang 1999).

34 Thank you to Abdul Salaam Thomas for reminding me of this hadith.

35 Imam Zaid Shakir and other Muslims enacted this grounded relationality by traveling to Standing Rock in 2016 to stand with the Water Protectors against the Energy Transfer Partners' Dakota Access pipeline (Hindtrospectives 2016; Estes 2019; Estes and Dhillon 2019), while Hatem Bazian's popular "Muslims in America" course in Asian American Studies at uc Berkeley begins with the history of Native genocide and European colonialism in the Americas toward a recognition of how racialization, white supremacy, and Orientalism function in relation and how colonialism would impact the historical "Muslim world" (Aydin 2017) and global migrations.

36 Ruth Wilson Gilmore describes "infrastructure of feeling" as "consciousness-foundation, sturdy but not static, that viscerally underlies our capacity . . . to recognize possibility as we select and reselect liberatory lineages" (2017, 237). Gilmore's use of "infrastructure" to describe what underlies a "constantly evolving accumulation of structures of feeling" describes well the Muslim impulse to maintain, evolve, and keep in motion an Islamic discursive tradition across place and time in a narrative arc tending toward salvation, justice, continuity, and individual and communal responsibility; like a material infrastructure, "it speeds some processes and slows down others, setting agendas, producing isolation, enabling cooperation" (Gilmore 2017, 237).

37 Ferguson urges interdisciplinary scholars to turn their attention "to that small and insignificant thing called the body" toward an examination of how "those little acts of production—reading, writing, teaching, and advising . . . such are the little things that we can deploy in order to imagine critical forms of community" that rather than reproduce or become

absorbed by state hegemonies, undermine them (Ferguson 2012, 232). I draw attention to the "body as geographic" and a site of knowledge as Muslims produce and transmit knowledge, exercise power, and make space, ethically and politically (McKittrick 2006).

38 The Confederated Villages of Lisjan belong to the land of the East Bay, and they are one of many Indigenous communities who came together as Ohlone in the 1960s and 1970s, inspired by Black Power and American Indian movement activism. Urban Indigenous women lead the work of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust toward restoring "people to their rightful place in sacred relationship with their ancestral land" in a process of rematriation, cultural revitalization, and land restoration, and they suggest that non-Indigenous people living on these lands pay a volunteer Shuumi (gift) land tax toward supporting this work and transforming the legacies of colonization (Sogorea Te' Land Trust 2021). The Sogorea Te' Land Trust, the protection of shell mounds, the development of Black and Indigenous farming (Black Earth Farms), and other resurgent practices build upon the ongoing intertribal work of Indigenous peoples in the Bay Area; in the East Bay, this effort has centered around the Intertribal Friendship House, which was established in 1955, and institutions like the Native American Health Center, established in 1972. Similar institutions, as well as political meetings and alliances, Native student associations on high school and college campuses, pow wows, ceremonies, barbecues, fishing trips, dancefloors, and softball games, work as "hubs" and home spaces for Indigenous peoples throughout the Bay Area (Ramirez 2007).

39 Zaytuna's Center for Ethical Living and Learning was established in 2019. They are developing an orchard and permaculture garden on ten acres of their Berkeley Hills campus, the former Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. See also Tlili's *Animals in the Qur'an* (2012) for a (re)definition of *khilafa*. Emily Riddle, a Nehiyaw (Plains Cree) and member of Alexander First Nation in Treaty 6 distinguishes between European political traditions, which define and practice sovereignty as "asserting exclusive control over a territory" and "Prairie NDN political traditions," which "teach us that it is through our relationship with others that we are sovereign, that sharing is not a sign of weakness but of ultimate strength and diplomacy" (Riddle 2020).

40 Hajar is named for Muslim ancestor Hagar/Hajar, wife of Abraham/Ibrahim and mother of Ishmael/Ismail, whom Ibrahim leaves in the desert with her nursing baby that "they might devote themselves to prayer" (Qur'an 14:37). Searching for water, she runs back and forth between the two hills, Safa and Marwa. The well of Zamzam miraculously springs forth, nourishing them both. Ibrahim and Ismail later build the Kaaba here, and during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Muslims must run back and forth between the same hills seven times, reliving Hajar's harrowing and heroic ordeal (al-Hibri 1997; Kahf 2016).

41 Many African American Muslims refer to themselves as "indigenous" to distinguish their emergence as a people with shared experiences and knowledge of the United States who have mobilized Islam from this specificity. Wynter articulates how Black people resisted dehumanization and created "another structure of values, an alternative and opposed consciousness . . . through the transplantation [of] their old cultures onto a strange soil, its reinvention in new and alien conditions. It was in this transplantation, this metamorphosis of an old culture into a new, that the blacks made themselves indigenous to their new land" (Wynter n.d., 46–47). They adapted themselves to this new world land and transformed it through dual relationships to the land that produced capital but also opposed the plantation "land-labor-capital-relationship" (49). As Katherine McKittrick elaborates, this form of indigenization "is not bound up in spatial claims"; rather, "Indigenization is rebellion. Indigenizations are ongoing rebellions that demand we think outside our normalized order of consciousness" (McKittrick 2021, 160).

Within Muslim communities there is internal critique of using "indigenous" in ways that do not distinguish between indigenization as spatial claim versus rebellion and how it contributes to the structure of settler colonialism, as in "Native Americans" or "American Indians" and their struggles for sovereignty and relationships to land, water, and one another. Shona Jackson (2014) describes how in the Caribbean context, "anti-blackness cannot be understood apart from the subordination of Indigenous peoples in early Empire, under colonialism, and ultimately in postcolonial nationalism." In the United States, references to enslaved African and post-Emancipation labor "affirm anti-blackness by valorizing blackness as that which performs labor for European humanity and, thus, for the humanity of the black self" (2014). This matter of terminology matters to the extent that it subsumes histories of Black Muslim and Indigenous relationality and the ways that becoming Muslim was part of a strategy of survival and rebellion against European humanism, white supremacy, white religion, and their respective valuations of morality, property, freedom, and labor. The term "immigrant" likewise obscures forced and willful migrations to North America and the "racialized vulnerability and disposability" Muslims face in terms of potential deportation, incarceration, family separation, disappearance, or assassination domestically and abroad (Day 2015, 107).

42 "Oscar" is named for twenty-two-year old Oscar Grant, who was assassinated by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) police Officer Johannes Mehserle on January 1, 2009, at the Fruitvale Station in Oakland. Grant was living in Hayward and working in both Hayward and Oakland at the time of his death but had celebrated the new year in San Francisco and was on his way home when he was pulled out of the train car for getting into (but actually attempting to stop) a fight on the train. Two days before, he and his girlfriend Sophina Mesa had discussed moving

out to Dublin or Livermore to raise their daughter Tatiana. Mehserle had grown up in Napa (in the North Bay), lived in the predominantly white suburb of Lafayette, and had been a BART officer since March 2007. The effects of post–World War II redlining are evident in these social geographies and convey the cultural, racial, and socioeconomic dynamics and demographics of the Bay Area (Self 2003). The Frank Ogawa Plaza in Oakland was named for Grant during the Occupy Oakland movement in 2010–2011. In June 2019, the City of Oakland and BART named the short byway where people get picked up and dropped off at Fruitvale Station Oscar Grant III Way. They also unveiled a mural painted by Oakland artist Senay Dennis, aka Refa One, featuring Grant on the side of the station.

43 While many "native" and "activist" anthropologists are able to make claims about their political projects being in line with or improving the life chances of the people with whom they conduct research, because Muslims in the Bay Area encompass multiple political and spiritual aspirations, identities, and worldviews, my alignment and the contours of my research were not always situated comfortably with individual, institutional, and communal goals (Berry et al. 2017; Narayan 1993). Jackson refers to a "commonsensical acceptance of my nativity" based on his embodying a particular racial politic, by way of his Blackness in Harlem, New York, that nevertheless is complicated by class difference and his way of "seeing," an aspired-to double consciousness, and a complicating double vision (Jackson 2004, 34, 38). My "nativity" was more ambiguous in that I did not carry the common "racial" markers of Muslimness. On a number of occasions, I would say something that would "reveal" my identification as Muslim, and the person to whom I had been speaking to for months (and sometimes even prayed with) would respond in surprise, "I didn't know you were Muslim!" In one case, a female student said, "I did think that you seemed like a Muslim though." Other times, people assumed I converted because I did not appear Middle Eastern, South Asian, Southeast Asian, or African American.

44 Maryam, mother of Isa, is a significant figure in the Qurʾan (some Muslims consider her the lone female Prophet of the Abrahamic faiths). She is known as Mary, mother of Jesus in Christianity.

45 There existed real fears about how I would represent students in particular, the most vulnerable to my participant-observation, as many of us developed intimate friendships, and I was privy to many personal and often "controversial" conversations and events. Zaytuna staff, students, and teachers used such ethical frameworks to limit my ethnographic inquiries and challenge and shape the parameters of my research (Kondo 1986; Visweswaran 1994; Wolf 1996).

46 By cinematic, I refer to what Kara Keeling calls a "condition of existence, or a reality, produced and reproduced by and within the regimes of the image Deleuze identifies and describes" (Keeling 2007, 3; Deleuze 1986).

47 How the figure of the Muslim is situated historically as the categorical Other has been discussed in terms of literature, photography, and painting (Alloula 1986; Mitchell 1988; Said 1979; 1997); television and film (Alsultany 2012; Morey and Yaqin 2011; Shaheen 2001; Shohat and Stam 1994; Weber 2013; T. Asad et al. 2009); and increasingly as part of an Islamophobia industry that creates lucrative alliances between conservative Christian groups and Zionists (Lean 2012, 11; Kumar 2021; Kundnani 2015; Shryock 2010; Sheehi 2011). Deleuze asserts that these logics and affects, transmitted through film, television, and media, "not only express, but also organize the movement of globalization" (Deleuze in Keeling 2007, 11), presenting the United States as "benevolent" and "post-racial" (Alsultany 2013, 162). In referring to these mediated discourses, Butler suggests that "such visual and conceptual frames are ways of building and destroying populations as objects of knowledge and targets of war, and that such frames are the means through which social norms are relayed and made effective" (Butler 2010, xix).

48 Ethnocinema has been used in reference to the filmic work of Jean Rouch, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and others (Harris 2010). My use of *ethnocinematic* draws attention to image-making as knowledge production produced by ethnographic writing and attempts to disrupt its logics and stability by drawing attention to its narrative production.

49 Since the early twentieth century, "secular" modes of critique have been considered the primary space where learning and "pure knowledge" can truly happen. As Asad notes, "It is not the secular claim to truth that worries me, but what critique may do to relationships with friends and fellow citizens with whom one deeply disagrees. Critique is no less violent than the law—and no more free. In short, I am puzzled as to why one should want to isolate and privilege 'critique' as a way of apprehending truth. What does this do to the way one is asked to—and actually—lives?" (Asad 2009, 140). "Normative secularity" and its attendant modes of critique often posit moral superiority to "secular visions" (or even feminist and other liberatory visions) of the world (Mahmood 2006, 343, 347). Mahmood offers critique of a "particular normative regime" like political secularism, "not to reject or condemn it," but to "[deprive] it of its innocence and neutrality so as to craft, perhaps, a different future" (Mahmood 2016, 21). Critique can also be a form of care, as in the ethnographic, pedagogic, or ethical relation that always hopes for and anticipates, "perhaps, a different future" (Mahmood 2016, 21; Fernando 2019).

50 Gilmore discusses how Woods originally presented his research under the rubric of a "blues ontology," which may have better encapsulated how entire worlds and forms of consciousness (which included Islam) came with captive Africans that enabled them to survive and struggle (Gilmore in Woods 2017, xii).

51 It is estimated that 10–30 percent of Africans who were enslaved in the Americas were Muslims (Diouf 1998; Singleton 2002; Austin 2012).

Qurʾanic recitation and the adhan have distinctive aural and sonic qualities of tone, timbre, and time that are not typically examined as music, yet their affective qualities often move and compel people in ways similar to Western definitions of music. "Distinct vocal characteristics such as solo, unaccompanied singing, the use of melismas [extending a single syllable across multiple notes], slurring and gliding into pitches, and a nasal sound" are all attributes of West African music that were audible in recordings of early African Americans settled in the Deep South and that moved gradually further west and north (El Shibli 2007, 163). El Shibli argues that Islamic influences on the blues have been "ignored because of the difference between Western and Islamic perceptions of what constitutes 'music'" (163). Islamic orality and rhythms, like other Islamic modalities and practices, were dynamically brought into relation with pre-existing forms of music, speech, and custom in West Africa as elsewhere.

52 In addition to Islam's contribution to the blues, the "particular epistemological impact of Islam and Muslim practice on hip hop music and culture," "the development of hip hop ethics and activism," and the Black Radical tradition more broadly have been undertheorized and underacknowledged (Abdul Khabeer 2016, 10; Daulatzai 2012; Aidi 2014). Recent scholarship also expands our understandings of the breadth of the Black Radical tradition and the role that Islam, especially the Nation of Islam and El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz (Malcolm X) played within it (Rickford 2016; Felber 2020; Murch 2010; Taylor 2017).

53 We also hear the blues adhan at the beginning of Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust* (1991), called by the character Bilal Muhammad (played by Umar Abdurrahman). This character was likely a reference to Bilali Muhammad (d. 1857) (or one of his descendants), who was part of a community of enslaved Muslims who lived on the Georgia Sea Islands. He penned a short treatise on ablution and prayer based on his memories of the Maliki text al-Risala by Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani (922–996) (Hilal 2017; R. B. Turner 2003). When I asked the fim's cinematographer and producer Arthur Jafa how that scene came to be, he said that it was "because he was there" (whether Umar Abdurrahman or Bilal Muhammad) in the Gullah community.

54 Within the Sunni tradition, Bilal ibn Rabah is said to have left the Hejaz for Syria after the death of the Prophet Muhammad to join the jihad and spread Islam there. Within the Shiʿi tradition, Bilal refused to recognize Abu Bakr as leader of the community and was exiled from the Hejaz or left to avoid being brought into the succession conflict. His refusal is especially significant because Abu Bakr had paid for Bilal's freedom in the early days of the community. To this Bilal responded, "If you have emancipated me for yourself, then make me a captive again; but if you had emancipated me for Allah, then let me go in the way of Allah" (Rizvi 1987, 28).

55 Islamic scholar Sherman Jackson defines Black religion as an "abiding commitment to protest, resistance, and liberation . . . committed to a refusal to be the object of another's will" (S. A. Jackson 2005, 32). Jackson's vision for the "Third Resurrection" takes the "orthodox Sunni tradition" as a starting point and sees the United States as a "political arrangement" within which "Blackamerican Muslims" may move "from a position in which they can only be defined and controlled by the state and the dominant culture to one where they are self-defined and exercise enough influence over social and political institutions to be able to protect their interests and self-determination" (S. A. Jackson 2005, 168). This Third Resurrection is both resonant and dissonant with Woods's "Third Reconstruction." Both articulate Black structures of refusal and articulation in the blues and Black religion that offer anti-racist analyses and freedom visions and struggle for a participatory democracy (what W. E. B. Du Bois and Angela Davis call "abolition democracy") and the role that (Black) "indigenous knowledge, of blues epistemology," plays in denying "power to another elite-led regime of stagnation" (Woods 2017, 289). Martin Luther King Jr.'s own blues transformation from leader of the civil rights–based Second Reconstruction to the Third Reconstruction was exemplified by his participation in the Poor People's campaign, which called for the "reconstruction of the entire society, a revolution of values" (Woods 2017, 187). Woods warns, "The 'civilizing' activity of providing 'nondeviant' role models for the creation of new men and women must come to an end" (Woods 2017, 290). Rather, we must "celebrate and valorize the millions upon millions, living and dead, who met the regimes of daily destruction with unshakeable dignity. In the same vein, the lands, rivers, streams, air, plants, and animals of the region must be restored to their sacred status" (Woods 2017, 290).

56 Travel and knowledge are intimately connected in the Islamic tradition. In a well-documented hadith, the Prophet Muhammad states, "Seek knowledge all the way to China." China as a site of knowledge, prior to the establishment of Islam there, suggests both an imperative to travel for knowledge and a catholic approach to seeking knowledge (at that time China was known for its developments in medicine, paper, printing, trade, seafaring, etc.). Traveling is also an ethical condition in which one encounters the unknown, is unsettled and estranged, is vulnerable to the generosity of one's hosts, and carries the responsibility of being a good guest. In another hadith, Muslims are encouraged to "be in the world as if you were a stranger or a traveler along the path."

57 In "Around the Way Girl" (1990), LL Cool J celebrates the street-smart girl from the neighborhood who "ain't scared to do her thing, standing at the bus stop, sucking on a lollipop." There is resonance between boroughs and bays as I felt hailed by LL as a Japanese-Iranian girl from the city who

was "real independent so your parents be bugging" and who aspired to be that girl who "always know what to say and do." The Around the Way Girl builds communities of care and relative security by loving her girls, code-switching, and learning how to handle the boys and the businessmen who sweat. The song was a rare ode that recognized the bus stop point of view and identified the critical infrastructural role young Black and brown women played and continue to play in the neighborhood, on the dance floor, and in the culture.

1. MEDINA BY THE BAY

1 Steve is named for Stephen Gaines (1971–2021), known around the Bay and beyond as Baba Zumbi of hip-hop crew Zion I. Steve was a seeker and striver; he showed up for people and the movement, and his music and spirit brought joy, hype, and knowledge to the people. For more on his music and contributions see E. K. Arnold (2021) and go listen to his music.

2 Rasmea is named for Rasmea Youssef Odeh (b. 1974), a Palestinian-Jordanian activist who was stripped of her United States citizenship and deported from the United States in 2017. She was targeted for her activism on behalf of Arab Americans and Palestinian liberation and charged with immigration fraud because she had not mentioned a previous conviction (gained through extensive torture) in Israel on her immigration application. She was not allowed to present evidence of her torture by Israeli prison guards nor her post-traumatic stress from this time period (N. Naber 2014; Khader 2017; Ghanayem 2019; Odeh 2019).

3 For those familiar with the US Muslim landscape, to think of Zaytuna College as an assembly of outlaws may seem strange as it represents itself as firmly oriented toward an authoritative and majoritarian Sunni tradition of Islamic theology, law, and other sciences. Yet, as Muslims who prioritize their ethical becomings, their orientations to themselves, Allah, and others through Islamic tradition, they sometimes feel affectively estranged and maligned from what they view as an increasingly atheistic, morally corrupt, aspiritual, and ethically unmoored modern society (even among fellow Muslims).

4 Daʿwa has tended to refer to what people do with media or as part of Muslim movements and "revivals" (Mahmood 2005; Rouse 2004; Abd-Allah 2006; Hirschkind 2006; Jouili 2015; Moll 2010; Larkin 2008a; 2008b; L. Abu-Lughod 2005; Kuiper 2021), while taʿlim has been discussed as a form of Muslim schooling that happens at home, in mosques, and in madrasas (schools) (Cook and Malkawi 2011; Hefner and Zaman 2007; Memon 2019; al-Zarnuji, Grunebaum, and Abel 2003). I draw from al-Attas's notion of taʾdib as education (or Islamization of knowledge) because it informs how scholars like Shaykh Hamza Yusuf under-