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Deconstruction of religious thought in Islam: Iqbal and the Ahmadiyya

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Introduction

Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1875 to 1938 CE) stood at the cusp of modernity in British India. As the "poet visionary" and "spiritual father" of Pakistan, his role as an anti-colonial intellectual who "dreamed" of carving out an independent Muslim homeland from British India is thoroughly ingrained in the popular imagination, state institutions, and political rhetoric. Other than Jinnah, the political "founder" of Pakistan, no other figure enjoys such heroic, mythic status. Scholars of Islam and modernity have treated and cited him as a preeminent Muslim modernist globally. His role as a leading Pan-Islamist with Jamal-ud-din Afghani and Syed Qutub is unquestioned and his prominence as Indian Muslim political modernist is unrivalled. Indeed, "few people have ever disputed his power"[1] and Iqbal's name is invoked as a moral authority[2] to this day.

In addition to his 12,000 verses of Urdu and Persian poetry, Iqbal famously published six English language lectures under the title "Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam" in 1930 (a seventh was added in editions since 1934). These lectures have stood as a testament to his significance for those invoking "liberal" Islam.[3] The lectures have influenced Muslim intellectuals around the world, from Dr. Ali Shariati (ideologue of the Iranian revolution) to Dr. Fazlur Rahman in Pakistan to Dr. Tariq Ramadan (the noted European Islamic reformer) today. They remain a persistent reference point in the modern academic study of Islam[4] and, indeed, South Asian Islam.[5]

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[1] M. Dorraj, "The intellectual dilemmas of a Muslim modernist: Politics and poetics of Iqbal," *The Muslim World* 85 (1995), 266–79: 266.

[2] E. Durkheim, *Sociology and Philosophy. Translated by D.F. Pocock*, trans. D. F. Pocock, 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010 [1924]).

[3] R. Hassan, "Introduction," in *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought*, ed. H. C. Hillier and B. B. Koshul (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015). See also M. Q. Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan: A History* (Princeton University Press, 2018: Ch. 2).

[4] F. Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); H. C. Hillier and B. B. Koshul, eds., *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

[5] M. Q. Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan*.

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However, less discussed is the fact that four years after publishing *Reconstruction*, Iqbal wrote an essay in a newspaper entitled *Qadianis and Orthodox Muslims* denouncing the community of the Ahmadiyya as heretics, a charge he reiterated a year later in a written exchange with the Hindu, Indian nationalist, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Iqbal used the term "heretic" to describe the Ahmadiyya 30 times in these two English-language essays, leaving no doubt as to his views on the matter. Now, the Ahmadiyya were considered heterodox virtually since the community was established by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in 1880 in the town of Qadian in British Indian Punjab. A decade or so later, Ahmad's claim of receiving revelation as a "prophet" was roundly condemned by Muslims worldwide. Although Ahmad used this term in a particular sense of Islamic tradition, he and his followers were quickly declared "heretics".[6] Iqbal's essays consolidated this charge. Numerous studies have mapped the discrimination and violence experienced by Ahmadis since 1899 in Qadian, then in Pakistan where the community moved in 1947, and now worldwide.[7] In Pakistan, the community was officially declared heretical by constitutional amendment in 1974.[8] Iqbal is often cited as justification in both official persecution and popular violence.

This is no "mere" theological issue for adjudication by Doctors of Law, since Iqbal's arguments are not centered on theology nor, for that matter, does theological reasoning exist in a socio-political vacuum (as pointed out by critical religion research generally, and in the case of Ahmadiyyat specifically).[9] Given Iqbal's moral authority, it becomes crucial to ask what implications his hereticization of the Ahmadiyya has for understanding modern South Asian Islam. This article probes Iqbal's texts on Ahmadiyyat to ask how he justifies his argument to declare the Ahmadiyya heretics and "beyond the pale of Islam." The intention is to get at discursive themes undercutting his argument which, in turn, become points of entry to

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[6] Y. Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); A. Qadir, "Doors to the Imaginal: Implications of Sunni Islam's Persecution of the Ahmadi 'Heresy'," *Religions* 9, no. 4 (2018): 91–107.

[7] S. R. Valentine, "Prophecy after the Prophet, albeit lesser prophets? The Ahmadiyya Jama'at in Pakistan," *Contemporary Islam* 8 (2014), 99–113; S. Saeed, "Pakistani nationalism and the state marginalisation of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 7 (2007), 132–52; N. Khan, *Muslim Becoming: Aspiration and Skepticism in Pakistan* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Editorial, "Events of 1974: Anti-Ahmadi hostilities," *The Review of Religions*, March 2008; A. U. Qasmi, *The Ahmadis and the Politics of Religious Exclusion in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Anthem Press, 2015); A. Qadir, "Parliamentary hereticization of the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan: The modern world implicated in Islamic crises," In *Religion in Times of Crisis*, edited by G. Ganiel, C. Monnot and H. Winkel (Leiden: Brill, 2014): 135–154: A. Qadir, "How heresy makes orthodoxy: The sedimentation of Sunnism in the Ahmadi cases of South Africa," *Sociology of Islam* 4, no. 4 (2016): 345–367.

[8] A. Qadir, "When heterodoxy becomes heresy: Using Bourdieu's concept of doxa to describe state-sanctioned exclusion in Pakistan," *Sociology of Religion* 76 no. 2 (2015): 155–176: A. Qadir, "Parliamentary hereticization of the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan".

[9] T. Fitzgerald, "Religion and politics as modern fictions," *Critical Research on Religion* 3 (2015), 303–19; R. T. McCutcheon, *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). On defining theology when hereticizing Ahmadiyyat, see A. Qadir, "Doors to the imaginal".

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destabilize the modern "reconstruction" of Islam building on Iqbal. As Foucault famously showed in his cultural genealogies, it is by examining who is excluded and the manner of that exclusion that we can gain a better sense of the disciplining norm.

The political (colonial) context of Iqbal's declaration of heresy is also relevant, not least since he cites it himself. Now, it may be coincidence that Ahmadiyyat emerged during the peak of the British Raj in India and was condemned and excluded by Muslim authorities at the same time. However, the logic of coloniality cannot be isolated from the conditions of that exclusion. The colonial milieu informed the theological, legal, and political grounds on which the Ahmadiyya were excluded from Islam in British India and into Pakistan, and the logic of coloniality led to institutionalization of those conditions after colonialism had ended. In general, as a study points out, "It is remarkable that doctrinal orientations that dominate Islam took their shape only during colonial rule in the late nineteenth century,"[10] although there has been no attention to Ahmadiyyat in this context.

Colonialism — the politico-economic arrangement inhering in an extension of sovereignty over a foreign territory — led directly to institutionalization that informed the exclusion of Ahmadiyyat in British India. Institutions such as the modern nation-state, the federated legal system, state abstraction from local territory and centrally controlled education, all enabled Ahmadi exclusion. However, the continuation of those macro-institutions can be explained by coloniality, or the logic of that colonial relationship in structures of knowledge and existence.[11] On one hand, that logic constructed colonial territories in a dominated way by subjecting them to a certain form of knowing, as Edward Said famously showed.[12] That is, economic domination co-occurred with a coloniality of knowledge that produced an epistemological hierarchy across the colonial border. On the other hand, the logic of coloniality also formed the colonial sense of self in a manner that extended that logic far beyond its political footprint. This adds to discussions of complex selfhood in postcolonial South Asian studies.[13]

This paper analyzes the discourse of Iqbal's essays hereticizing the Ahmadiyya to describe the extensions of colonial logic into the most analytically elementary of postcolonial institutions, viz. the (post)colonial Muslim.[14] Drawing on recent post- and de-coloniality scholarship, the paper outlines three features of the modern, postcolonial, Muslim subject that are conditions of possibility for Iqbal's exclusion of Ahmadiyyat. Collectively, these features — whose genesis may be seen in coloniality — organize and enable a sustained, institutional momentum to keep Ahmadis in the shadow of Islam. These are the role of

[10] M. Q. Zaman, *Islam in Pakistan*, 14.

[11] N. Maldonado-Torres, "On the coloniality of being," *Cultural Studies* 21 (2007), 240–70.

[12] E. W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

[13] A. Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty: Individual and Community in South Asian Islam since 1850* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[14] M. Iqbal, *Islam and Ahmadism* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, 1935; repr., 1980).

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science and unity, what Anidjar termed the secular divisibility of human and divine,[15] and the production and maintenance of what Santos called the absyssal line.[16]

Background: Iqbal and Ahmadiyyat

The Ahmadiyya

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (1835 to 1908) declared in 1880 that he had received divine inspiration to reform the condition of Muslims in British India.[17] In November 1888 he invited Muslims to be initiated under his guidance and held a major ceremony for dozens of new initiates the following March. The ceremony marked the beginning of Ahmadiyyat as an Islamic reform movement centered in British-ruled Punjab and became an annual event (*ijma'*), analyzed first in this journal.[18]

Ghulam Ahmad made four spiritual claims based on revelations.[19] He referred to himself as *mujaddid* [reformer] of the century, drawing on a tradition that a reformer of the religion would appear every 100 years. Next, he referred to himself as *muhaddath* [a person spoken to by God], a title only agreed upon previously for the Caliph Umar, a companion of the Prophet Muhammad and his second successor. Third, Ahmad claimed the title of *mahdī* [guided one, typically used by Shia's for the eschatological 12th imam] and *masīh* [messiah]. With this claim (recorded in his 1893 *A'ina-yi kamalāt-i Islam*, p. 426), Ahmad claimed to be the second coming of Jesus. He interpreted Islamic tradition to suggest that Jesus had survived the crucifixion to continue his mission in the east (in Kashmir) and had died a natural death there.[20]

The controversy of this claim was quickly overshadowed by Ghulam Ahmad's fourth claim: to have received revelation that he was a "prophet." This claim violated a belief among Muslims then (and which has only increased since) that Muhammad was the last of the prophets sent by God. The Ahmadi response to this rests on interpretations of the Quranic reference (33:40) to Muhammad as *khātim al-anbiya'* [final prophet] and of a *hadith* [oral tradition] in which he said he was the "seal of the prophets" (Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Kitab al-manaqib 18, vol. 2, p. 390). The common interpretation considers *khātim* [final] as temporal finality,

[15] G. Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[16] B. de Sousa Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 30 (2007), 45–89.

[17] M. G. Ahmad, *Barahin-e-Ahmadiyya* (Qadian, India (English translation published by Islam International Ltd., Tilford, Surrey, 2012)1880).

[18] H. A. Walteb, "The Ahmadiya movement today," *The Muslim World* 6 (1916), 66–78.

[19] Y. Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*.

[20] This claim might seem audacious to many today. Yet, it drew on a Muslim tradition of Jesus' missing years and life past 33 having taken place in Kashmir H. Kersten, *Jesus Lived in India: His Unknown Life Before and After the Crucifixion*, trans. T. W.-Czisch (New York: Element, 1986). It is a minority tradition and contested by most Muslims and Christians, e.g. G. Grönbold, *Jesus in Indien: Das Ende einer Legende [Jesus in India: The end of a legend]* (Berlin: Kösel-Verlag, 1985)

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implying that Muhammad was the last in time of a succession of over 124,000 prophets sent by God; prophecy therefore was sealed (closed) after his death in AD 632.[21]

Ahmadis interpret *khātim* as logical finality ("ultimate") and believe that Muhammad is the ultimate "seal", or guarantee of authenticity, to perfect all minor prophecies. Once again, the claim drew on a long theological tradition.[22] In the early days of Islamic thought, there was never a consensus on the now-dominant, temporal definition of finality: "this now generally received understanding of the Qur'anic phrase ["final"] is not the only possible one and had not necessarily been the earliest".[23]

Popular and political Muslim opinion on Mirza Ghulam Ahmad quickly turned hostile and groups demanding state action against Ahmadis multiplied. After Pakistan was formed in 1947, the Ahmadiyya leader at the time, Ghulam Ahmad's son, led the community out of Indian Qadian to Lahore in Pakistan, and then to a new city nearby. Violence and discrimination against Ahmadis in the "Islamic" republic of Pakistan simmered and erupted often, involving looting, arson and murder of community members. Eventually, the National Assembly passed a unanimous constitutional amendment in 1974 declaring the Ahmadiyya heretics. The Second Constitutional Amendment of Pakistan declared they be treated as non-Muslim minorities under law, invalidating their claims to be Muslims and associating them as political Other in the state-building process of Pakistan.[24] In 1984, military President Zia-ul-Haq promulgated an Ordinance that declaring most Ahmadiyya activities criminal offences (Anti-Islamic Activities of the Qadiani Group, Lahori Group and Ahmadis (Prohibition and Punishment) Ordinance, 1984).

The Ahmadiyya are now barred from calling themselves Muslim, praying or preaching in the name of Islam, and exhibiting Islamic symbols publicly, distributing Islamic literature, pronouncing the statement of faith, or calling their places of worship "mosques".[25] Those accused of "posing" as Muslims may be charged with blasphemy, punishable by death under Pakistani law. The ordinance led to unprecedented structural discrimination: Ahmadis are barred from holding office of President or Prime Minister and are forced to vote in elections only on minority seats. The community boycotted this categorization, effectively leading to their dis-enfranchisement.

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[21] This view is amplified in Urdu, Ahmad's own language, in which the root word "*khtm*" is ambiguous but in common parlance often connotes "final" as "last." However, one of Urdu's parent languages is Arabic which, similar to Hebrew, is based on triconsonantal roots. As a result, most words may have many meanings depending on how the sequence of three consonants is interspersed with vowels. Meanings are often gleaned from contexts, and ambiguity is common in interpretations. Urdu vernacular thus also includes many places where *khatam* means "ultimate."

[22] A. Qadir, "Doors to the Imaginal".

[23] Y. Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*.

[24] N. Khan, *Muslim Becoming*.

[25] T. Mahmud, "Freedom of religion & religious minorities in Pakistan: A study of judicial practice," *Fordham International Law Journal* 19 (1995), 40-100; M. N. A. Siddiq, "Enforced apostasy: Zaheeruddin v. State and the official persecution of the Ahmadiyya community in Pakistan," *Law & Inequality* 14 (1995), 275–338; S. R. Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

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Waves of public violence against the approximately six million Ahmadis still in Pakistan is apparently condoned by religious authorities and state officials.[26] Many Ahmadis emigrated from Pakistan and at least six million now live elsewhere, headquartered globally in UK. However, they face challenges around the world, in Muslim majority countries like Bangladesh and Indonesia as well as minority contexts, such as Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, and South Africa.[27] Proponents for the second amendment and for violence against the Ahmadiyya — such as the founder of banned militant outfit, *Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan* — often cite Iqbal.

Iqbal and Ahmadiyyat

Iqbal wrote a brief essay in 1934 entitled *Qadianis and Orthodox Muslims*, using the derogatory idiom to refer to the Ahmadiyya. Iqbal's argument was that the Ahmadiyya should be declared non-Muslims as "consistent with the policy of Qadianis themselves." There is a contradiction inherent in calling non-Ahmadis as "orthodox" Muslims, as that implies Ahmadis are non-orthodox Muslims, but Muslims nonetheless (no other cases of non-orthodox Muslims are mentioned). An Ahmadi can hardly be declared both non-orthodox *Muslim* as well as *non*-Muslim, which is what Iqbal proceeds to do throughout the text.

This is not just a matter of loose writing but of the troubled nature of Iqbal's task. Islamic history is replete with instances of *takfīr*, or declarations of heresy,[28] but it had rarely meant what Iqbal was now going to take it to mean: not allowing Ahmadiyya to call themselves Muslims, as they had been claiming. Iqbal's preeminent preoccupation in 1934 was the political task of forging a modern Muslim state by reimagining the *ummah* as a political nation.[29] This task coincided with his definition of an orthodox Muslim as those who were not Ahmadi.[30]

Iqbal had earlier taken a number of positions on political matters related to Islam, such as about the non-viability of the Ottoman caliphate in modern times, Muslim political

[26] Al-Islam, "Religious Persecution of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community," 2014, no. March 23 (2013), http://www.thepersecution.org/; K. Idris, "Not in the name of faith," *Dawn*, 21 September 2008; R. Tanveer, "Ahmadi persecution: Police bow to clerics to tear down minarets," *The Express Tribune*, September 22 2013; H. Yusuf, "Minorities Report," *International Herald Tribune*, 6 December 2012.

[27] A. Qadir, "Parliamentary hereticization of the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan"; A. Qadir, "How heresy makes orthodoxy".

[28] Y. Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous*: 2; C. Adang et al., eds., *Accusations of Unbelief in Islam: A Diachronic Perspective on Takfīr* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).

[29] Although Iqbal was famously and explicitly against "nationalism" as a sentiment, there is no doubt that he considered the nation-state to be the most apt political form for the Muslim "ummah" in South Asia: I. S. Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[30] In fact, when questioned specifically by reporters about the Ahmadiyya, the political founder of Pakistan, Jinnah, stated on May 23, 1944 in Srinagar, Kashmir that all those calling themselves Muslims would be treated as such in the envisioned country of Pakistan.

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representation in a colonial Indian council, or the place of nationalism in a Muslim's life. In many cases, he went against coordinated and considered opinions of Islamic scholars like Maudoodi or Hussain Madani, notably in arguing that some Islamic law is open to rational interpretation and change.[31] However, Iqbal never suggested any definition of an "orthodox Muslim," nor did he declare any other types of Muslims as "non-orthodox." His only reference to this category is in this essay and so it must mean, for Iqbal, that an orthodox Muslim is only what an Ahmadi is not.[32] Iqbal's theme is unity amongst Muslims for national identity. Formally, at the time, there had not been an organized demand for a separate Muslim homeland, so Iqbal's views of the ummah as a political nation did not require sovereignty. His first concern was for Islamic unity extending across South Asia and beyond in a "League of Muslim states".[33]

In 1935, Indian nationalist Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru commented on the piece by suggesting that Iqbal's idea of "Islamic solidarity" seemed to have "fallen away," as Iran, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and other Muslim nations were becoming "nationalist" and looking to pre-Islamic sources for legitimacy.[34] Nehru's question to Iqbal was not whether the Ahmadiyya should be considered Muslims, but rather whether Iqbal's underlying idea of Islamic solidarity was feasible and why, after all, he would pick on the Ahmadiyya and not apparently equally unorthodox Muslims like Ismailis.

Iqbal's response in 1935 was the lengthier essay *Islam and Ahmadism*, in which he dropped the idea of "orthodox" and classified all Ahmadi heretics on the same, political basis. His claims that the Ahmadiyya disrupt Muslim solidarity center on statements in which

[31] I. S. Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*: 2.

[32] Analyses of Iqbal's political philosophy, such as the estimable volume by Sevea, tend to offer the dominant narrative that Ahmadiyyat violates the Islamic statement of "finality" for Iqbal's views (I. S. Sevea, *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal*: 122–23). Purohit contends that Iqbal also considered Ismailis (Shias following the Aga Khan) to be "non-orthodox," although Iqbal himself never wrote this; he only stated that Ismailis believe in a perpetual *Imamat*, which is not the same as prophethood, and that "theological interpretation of the Ismailis may err": T. Purohit, "Muhammad Iqbal on Muslim Orthodoxy and Transgression: A Response to Nehru," *ReOrient* 1 (2015), 78–92; M. Iqbal, *Islam and Ahmadism*: 56. These points are quite consistent with hermeneutic debates that have always been a part of Islamic tradition and are a far cry from declaring a group heterodox or even heretical in an enforceable, outright rejection of self-affirmation of Islam.

[33] There is some evidence that Iqbal adopted Ahmadism in 1897, six years after the first *Jalsā* (Gathering) by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad: K. K. Shahid, "The Ahmadiyya Betrayal," *The Nation* 2015; K. Chaudhry, "What if Allama Iqbal had remained an Ahmadi?," *The Express Tribune* 2015. He referred at one point to the community as "a true model of Islamic life" and the founder as "probably the profoundest theologian among modern Indian Muslims" in 1900, even helping the second caliph (Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mahmood) get elected as president of the All-India Kashmir Committee: K. K. Shahid, "The Ahmadiyya Betrayal". According to witnesses, Iqbal left the community in 1908 but remained on cordial terms and never condemned Ahmadism until the vitriolic essay in 1934. Iqbal's intellectual journey included other milestones that he later renounced, such as Marxis-Leninism. However, he never retracted the essays on Ahmadiyyat.

[34] J. Nehru, "The Solidarity of Islam," *The Modern Review of Calcutta*, 1935, 504–06.

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Ahmed suggested that those who do not follow him are not Muslims.[35] Iqbal's theological ground is that being a Muslim requires only two beliefs: unity of God and finality of Prophet Muhammad. According to him, all other beliefs may be accommodated within Islam but these two are inviolate. The first is generally considered one of the five "pillars" of Islam, but the second was never an article of faith in the way Iqbal makes it out to be. (Iqbal does not refer to the other four pillars as essential in these essays.)

Iqbal and the ummah

In light of his political ideals, Iqbal was seeking a nation that he would ultimately argue required a separate state. That nation was the ummah, which had to be contorted to mean something that it had not classically meant: a body of individuals, in principle delineable, who conformed to a belief distinguished as Islam. The project of making a nation out of an ummah so conceived is one that runs through Iqbal's poetry (in the collections entitled *Bāng-e-Dara – The Call of the Marching Bell* – and *Bāl-e-Jibril – Gabriel's Wing*). However, what is less commented on is that the (re)definition of the ummah as a nation in search of a state, took place on the same grounds of constitutive Otherness that most nation-building projects do. The hint to that lies in Iqbal's own words in the 1935 essay, when he refers to the "issue involved in Ahmadism … as one of the greatest problems of the East and perhaps of the whole world".[36] In fact, Iqbal's most cited feature has been his call for Muslim unity. The ex-parte rejection of Ahmadis as Muslims runs as a counter-current to his idea that God does not seek to "restrict the social horizon of [Islam's] members".[37]

There are two reasons for unpacking Iqbal's construction of the ummah via exclusion of the Ahmadiyya. The first and more prosaic is that Iqbal's prominence has made his position an authoritative statement, cited without need for further elaboration or proof by, for instance, Maudoodi or the in the proceedings of the debate on the second constitutional amendment. As Naveeda Khan points out, the amendment and subsequent case law in Pakistan may be seen as answering Iqbal's call to declare the Ahmadiyya out of the fold of Islam.[38] Indeed, Iqbal is referred to often as an authority in the proceedings of the National Assembly in 1974 that resulted in the second constitutional amendment declaring the Ahmadiyya heretics.[39] Clerics, as well as the Attorney General officiating at the parliamentary debate, cite Iqbal's unwavering denouncement of the Ahmadiyya as justifications. Maulana Abul 'ala Maudoodi, a fiercely

[35] In 1974 the fourth Ahmadi Caliph, Mirza Nasir Ahmed, pointed out that such statements were taken out of context and were responses to earlier *takfīr* against the Ahmadiyya by other Sunni clerics, following an established tradition of the results of false hereticization. M. N. Ahmad, *Mahzarnama: The Memorandum - Submission by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at to the National Assembly of Pakistan Regarding Its Basic Tenets* (Lahore: Islam International Publications, 2003).

[36] M. Iqbal, *Islam and Ahmadism*: 8.

[37] A. M. Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Second ed. (Lahore: Publishers Emporium, 2003 (1930)), 129.

[38] N. Khan, *Muslim Becoming*: 118.

[39] A. Qadir, "When heterodoxy becomes heresy".

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anti-Ahmadi activist, also quotes Iqbal — whom he disagreed with in most political matters — when it comes to "proving" that the Ahmadiyya left the fold of Islam of their own accord.[40]

The second reason is Iqbal's central concept of *khudī*, which for him meant "self-reliance, self-respect, self-confidence, self-preservation, even self-assertion when such a thing is necessary, in the interests of life and the power to stick to the cause of truth, justice, duty …"[41]; in short, Selfhood. With this term, Iqbal was concerned with imparting to Indian Muslims a sense of "I am," an individuality that he felt lacking.[42] Hence, he wrote, "man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique Individual" (Introduction to *Asrār-e-khudī*). He felt that a sense of *khudī* would enable agentic resistance to colonialism as well as a differentiation from the Hindu majority of India. *Khudī* was the central underpinning of Iqbal's philosophy, continually refined since he introduced the concept in his philosophical poem, *Asrār-e-khudī* (Secrets of the Self). The concept has invariably been taken on its own. Yet, it is untenable to maintain that this central concept is somehow dissociated from his essays on the Ahmadiyya, even though the two have never been connected. A fuller picture, then, must require an understanding of how *khudī* connects to exclusion of the Ahmadiyya from the fold of Islam. Moreover, this is the missing link in many South Asian studies, where the intellectual history of Iqbal is rarely connected to conceptions of selfhood in postcolonial Pakistan.

To probe this point, it is important to note that Foucault insisted that the category of "individual" is a construct of the power/knowledge couplet, arguing that the formation of this category has varied over time.[43] That is, the "individual" is not a participant in power so much as a product of it, and so must be analyzed rather than being assumed as pre-given in other analyses. Indeed, for Foucault, the individual is a historically recent concept whose appearance must be explained in relations of power:

> Before the end of the eighteenth century, Man did not exist … He is a quite recent creature, which the demiurge of knowledge fabricated with its own hands, less than two hundred years ago: but he has grown old so quickly that it has been only too easy to imagine that he had been waiting for thousands of years in the darkness for that moment of illumination in which he would finally be known.[44]

It is hence important that the construction of Iqbal's conception of Muslim Selfhood — in itself a central component of the postcolonial Muslim subject in South Asia — relies on

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40 A. A. Maudoodi, *Qadiani Problem* (Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., 1994).

41 S. A. Vahid, ed. *Thoughts and Reflections of Iqbal* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1964), 244.

42 A. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing: A Study Into the Religious Ideas of Sir Muhammad Iqbal* (Leiden: Brill, 1963); A. Hasan, "Reconstructing the Muslim Self: Muhammad Iqbal, Khudi, and the Modern Self," *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 2 (2014), 14–28; E. Moosa, "The Human Person in Iqbal's Thought," in *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought*, ed. H. C. Hillier and B. B. Koshul (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015).

43 M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

44 M. Foucault, *The Order of Things*, 370.

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hereticization of the Ahmadiyya. In analyzing the essays, three aspects are identified below as conditions of possibility for this hereticization and so of the postcolonial Muslim Self.[45]

The modern science of exclusion

The priority Iqbal awarded to rationality in religious thought is well known, and captured in his statement in the famous book *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*: "in view of its function, religion stands in greater need of a rational foundation of its ultimate principles than even the dogmas of science".[46] Iqbal subscribed to the separate magisteriums theory of science and religion, each form of knowledge having mutually exclusive domains. In religious thought, his primary concern was to promote rationalism to equate with the sciences, a project very much at the heart of Islamic early modernity. Iqbal saw rationalism as the key to the West's superiority over the East and sought to inscribe rationalism in religious thought in Islam. Moreover, rationalism was a theological concept for him: God is a "rationally directed creative will" described as the "Ultimate Ego," and must be apprehended rationally by human beings.[47] His idea of rationalism is evolutionary and admixed with progressivism:

> With the birth of reason and critical faculty, however, life, in its own interest, inhibits the formation and growth of non-rational modes of consciousness through which psychic energy flowed at an earlier stage of human evolution. Man is primarily governed by passion and instinct. Inductive reason, which alone makes man master of his environment, is an achievement; and when once born it must be reinforced by inhibiting the growth of other modes of knowledge.[48]

Iqbal domesticated rationalism in Islamic religious thought as *ijtihād*, a term from classical Islam which he defined as a principle: "to exert with a view to form an independent judgment on a legal question".[49] His review of Islamic legal history argued for the dire need of rationalism as analogical reasoning in the absence of precedent.

As an exemplar, Iqbal frequently cited Ibn Taymiyyah (d. CE 1328), an iconoclast who disapproved of Sufi practices and shrine cultures and who had a defining influence on the later school of Salafism as well as on Ibn Abdul Wahhab (d. CE 1792), to whom is attributed the school of Wahhabism. Iqbal describes Ibn Taymiyyah admiringly in his essay as "the founder of the so-called Wahhabi movement which may fitly be described as the first throb of life in modern Islam" (37). He also admires reformers of modern Islam

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[45] Quotations are from the 1980 reprint edition, which includes both essays in one volume. Citations with only page numbers and no other information refer to this volume.

[46] A. M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*: 2.

[47] A. M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*: 31, 87.

[48] A. M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*: 61.

[49] A. M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*: 72.

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like Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Rashid Rida, and Jamal-ud-din Afghani to contrast with Ghulam Ahmad. The three are well known by Muslims today as pan-Islamic reformers who struggled with what they saw as the defining problem of the 19th century: combining Islam and modernity scientifically.

Iqbal on Ahmadiyyat's "irrationality"

Despite his idea that science and religion occupied separate magisteriums of knowledge, Iqbal often draws upon modern "scientific" literature and fields to study religion, such as "modern sociology" to understand the "intensity of feeling which the Indian Muslims have manifested in opposition to the Qadiani movement" (60). Thrice he calls for a study of the founder of Ahmadiyyat by "modern psychology" (8, 26, 58) and suggests that the views of Ibn Arabi — referred to by millions of Muslims as the Sufi Master of Masters and quoted by Ahmad — are "psychologically unsound" (24). In both essays his writing is motivated by causality, and he often analyzes complex historical causes of phenomena such as the apparent "decline" of the Muslim world (36). He also frequently refers to "logic" and considers the path to reforming Islamic "theological schools" in India (madrassahs) as "re-initiating them into the function of logical contradiction as a principle of movement in theological dialectic" (19). He uses "logic" to demonstrate that finality of prophethood must be considered factually and literally; not, as Mirza Ghulam Ahmad did, in the sense of *burūz* (likeness).

It is clear that Iqbal's idea of rationalism is expressed in what he saw as modern science, which could be used to analyze religion. Of course, Ahmad also represented innovation in Islam, but his reference points were not Western, nor could he speak or read in European languages. Rather for Iqbal, Ahmad's innovations become "theological inventions" (34), evoking the Quranic term *biḍa* (heterodox and unjustified innovation).

The modern self should aspire to be rational, for Iqbal, but only in a certain way that draws upon Western science. Now, Iqbal's principal objection to Ahmadiyyat is, as above, that it ruptures what he sees to be essential "Muslim political and religious solidarity particular in India" (9). Why does he think of Ahmadiyyat as a "force of disintegration" (10)? It is because, for Iqbal, the Ahmadi founder is a "medieval theologian" and Ahmadiyyat builds on the three most "primitive" elements that he analyzes as being historical causes for Muslims' decline in India. The first is "*mullaism*," or reliance on clerical authority that has become "extremely conservative" (39). Iqbal points out that "to the inventions of the myth-making Mulla [cleric] is largely due the stupidity of the average Muslim" (45). Such a reliance apparently restricts freedom of thought, and Iqbal admires Ibn Abdul Wahhab precisely for preaching freedom from clerical authority in Arabia. The second is "mysticism" that "swayed" Muslims and "kept them steeped in all kinds of superstition" as it had "fallen down to a mere means of exploiting the ignorance and credulity of the people" (40). The third is that Muslims kings have their "gaze solely fixed on their own dynastic interests," presumably referring in particular to the Mughals who ceded their reign to the British. To conquer these beliefs "which had ruled for centuries" requires instilling "logic" (29).

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Tradition and modernity

These elements, then, might be defined as what "tradition" is for Iqbal, and it is precisely these elements that he believes Sir Sayyid, Rida, and Afghani "concentrated their whole energy on creating a revolt" against (39). In the 1934 essay, Iqbal refers to these three principles as belonging to the "pre-Islamic Magian culture in Western and Middle Asia," in which he includes Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity (59). Magianism, for him, is equivalent to messianism, and he contends that, "It is probable that the Magian man psychologically enjoyed this state of expectation" (59). He considers Ahmadiyyat as a throwback to pre-Islamic Magianism — Ahmad "turns out to be only a Magian in disguise" (23) — and so finds it understandable that the traditional "masses of Islam" are attracted to it.

By contrast, says Iqbal, "The modern man is spiritually far more emancipated than the Magian man" (59). He argues that not only is Magianism pre-Islamic (evoking the term *Jahilliya*, the pre-Islamic age of ignorance in Arabia), but also that "awake" Muslims have no place for it. Modern Islam, for Iqbal, will not "tolerate any revival of medieval mysticism" (34) and has no place any further for a "primitive and saint-ridden" culture as existed in "the North-West of India" where Sir Sayyid was active (37). Such mysticism is "superstition" in contrast to the "broad daylight" of rationality and modern science (40). The same is true of succumbing to mystical or clerical authority for, "In primitive countries it is not logic but authority that appeals" (30). Clerics and mystics, say Iqbal, invariably deliberately mystify to exploit people (44), which is why rational thought and logic are needed to defy them. Iqbal extols Mustafa Kemal Ataturk for "excluding [the *mulla*, or cleric] from the religious life of the people," a move that "would have delighted the heart of an Ibn Taiymiyyah" (45).

Ahmadiyyat's institution of Caliphate also bothers Iqbal, who says that this institution "has ceased to be operative and cannot work as a living factor in the organization of modern Islam" (47). Similarly, Iqbal decries Ahmad's identification as a "Persian" prophet, since he sees Islam as a force for "de-racialisation," with its unity being not in racial or ethnic inclusion but in the ideology of belief in God and the finality of the Prophet (50). It is in this ethnically neutral way, argues Iqbal, that Islam aligns with the "spirit of modern times" (51).

At issue here is not Iqbal's political philosophy or theological reform. Tradition, as Talal Asad reminds us, is obviously invented; that has never been in question. The point is that in modernity, tradition is invoked in a certain way that creates a dismissive orientation to the past.[50] Modernity tends to be constructed not as part of a tradition but over against it. So too, Iqbal's essays — as well as writings of the reformers he cites admiringly — are a turning point in reorienting to the past as a period concluded, over against which the present and future may be imagined. Such a "modern" orientation to the future is, of course, as much a

[50] T. Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 223.

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part of tradition as any other orientation to the future (such as continuity) may be; it is just that the former refuses to acknowledge the latter.

In sum, Ahmadiyyat is simply not modern enough for Iqbal. It hearkens back to a communal, authority-driven, institutionally defunct, mystically irrational, and "unsound" form of Indian Islam that Iqbal would classify as traditional. That view stands entirely against his idea of an individually driven, rationally founded, institutionally independent, and scientifically congruent modern Islam. Quite obviously, modernity, for Iqbal, stands over against tradition, for all his much-commented influence from Bergson, who had a quite different notion of the subjective experience of time.[51]

Unity and the scientific self

For Iqbal, the modern Muslim is a reasoning self, wary of mystical obfuscations or calls to submit to religious authority. The modern Indian Muslim, in particular, must be an agent in history, not a subject of history upon whom foreigners, self-interested kings, and religious charlatans act. This is, almost precisely in a nutshell, how Iqbal intends for *khudī* to be interpreted throughout his works. It connects naturally with his ideal of *ijtihad* as individual efforts at legal-theological reasoning in Islam. The contrast to the reasoning, scientific, ideological, individualized self is an unthinking, racially-minded, "stupid" Muslim who submits to religious authority and reports of mystical experience. Iqbal's views of tradition are explicit. He also wants to replace traditional forms of communalism in the form of spiritual submission (*bay't*) with a new form of legalistic communalism expressed through democratic assemblies (the Islamic concept of *ijma'*, or consensus). Iqbal's modern Muslim as an individual agent thus circumvents local community, earthly spiritual authority and continuity in tradition, to align with national, democratic interests and supra-national religious allegiances. By necessity, any view that falls into the former container is rejected and excluded.

It is notable that Iqbal never defines science here or anywhere else, but his examples are exclusively drawn from Western Europe, primarily from French, German and English writers, some of whom he had met while in Heidelberg and London. He considers Islamic science only to be that which is intimately related to Western European definitions of science. There is not in Iqbal, nor in any of his contemporaries, an indication that the epistemologies of Western Europe (or, the North) have already hegemonically defined what constitutes valid "scientific knowledge" in representing the world.[52] Nor does he ever draw a connection between the driving scientific quest for unity in knowledge (like the Grand Unified Theory of physics) with his own driving search for socio-political unity among

[51] S. B. Diagne, "Achieving humanity: Convergence between Henri Bergson and Muhammad Iqbal," in *Muhammad Iqbal: Essays on the Reconstruction of Modern Muslim Thought*, ed. H. C. Hillier and B. B. Koshul (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 33–55.

[52] B. d. S. Santos, *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 5.

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Muslims.[53] Indeed, Ahmadiyyat seems to be the instance of exclusion that seems to lie at the heart of every "unity." As has been recently summarized:

> Because the collective essence or common identity that is frequently the basis of unity is created, not discovered, its generalization may require violent exclusion, the marginalization of dissent, and the assimilation of difference. Furthermore, what constitutes the unity of a collectivity may turn out to be a negation, a constitutive exclusion of an other against which the community is defined. Hence the ideal of unity … can readily be used to repress or exclude those … who lack supposedly essential characteristics used to define the nation.[54]

For all his resistance to colonial intrusion, Iqbal is remarkably read to adopt, virtually wholesale, the political contours of Western democracy no less than its scientific knowledge, whose original design, it has been argued, was "to convert this side of the line into the subject of knowledge and the other side into an object of knowledge".[55] The exclusive nature of "modern" scientific knowledge related to its search for unity will be discussed below, but for now it is important to note that scientific knowledge is not just modern but also colonial. In prioritizing Enlightenment epistemology, such scientific knowledge is well known for erasing non-Western continuities between subject-knower and object-known, as in classical Islamic epistemology.[56] That classical epistemology is how the mystical goal of union with the divine is described by Ahmad and by Sufis throughout Islamic history.

Such a mystical union of dissolving the ego is quite the opposite of Iqbal's goal of fortifying *khudī*, as evident when Iqbal accuses Ahmad for "destroy[ing] the will" of people through spiritual discipline. For Iqbal, "as human selves approach God, rather than losing their individuality (which is what is imagined to happened under the concept of fanā), they become even more individuated".[57] Mystical union is not his purpose, political emancipation through reason is. Hence, he can say, "Islam has had too much of renunciation; it is time for the Muslims to look to realities. Materialism is a bad weapon against religion; but it is quite an effective one against Mulla-craft and Sufi-craft which deliberately mystify the people with a view to exploiting their ignorance and credulity" (43). In this way, Iqbal's reliance on science helped ground his political efforts in an entirely this-worldly plane.

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[53] As Santos points out, "The epistemological imagination at the beginning of the twentieth century was dominated by the idea of unity": B. de Sousa Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges", 67, fn 43. Unity suffused through political ideals, natural scientific quests, historical accounts of early human religious sharing, and the very idea of "a" humanity, determining intellectual directions as well as what would be considered "legitimate."

[54] R. Karapin and L. Feldman, "Unity," *Polity* 52 (2019), 1–2: 1.

[55] B. d. S. Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 30 (2007), 45–89: 69.

[56] M. Ha'iri Yazdi, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992).

[57] J. Majeed, *Muhammad Iqbal: Islam, Aesthetics and Postcolonialism* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009).

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The "theologico-political" cut: Divisibility of human and divine

In a discussion on the "theologico-political," drawing on Denis Guénon's *Hypothéses sur l'Europe*, Gil Anidjar points out that in the way the history of Europe is carved out "the political in its internal difference is constituted out of religious division".[58] The French Revolution enacted a massive cut between religion and politics by first discursively constructing a "unity" that had never been a reality. The term and its echoes in Europe, argues Anidjar, have institutionalized a division of what never really was a unity. As critical religion scholarship points out, both "religion" and "politics" were discursively constructed in their moderns sense to be precisely defined by the cut between them, yet it becomes hard to actually trace a unity between the terms as we understand them today.[59] Anidjar's concern is that in this way a decisive division was enacted between sacred and profane —divine and human, holy and secular, etc. — not only as a statement of "fact" (something that *is*, notably with Durkheim) but also as a norm (something that *should be*). Since the division is discursive, it offers a ready way to classify humanity between the enlightened/ disenchanted/ liberated/ secular and mystified/ superstitious/ dogmatically trapped/ religious.

Anidjar goes further than Guénon or Jean-Luc Nancy (with a similar point) to argue that this division encompasses the figure of the "enemy" in Europe, archetypally filled by the Jew (inner) and Arab (outer). Indeed, his point is that the figure of the enemy institutionalizes the strange "theologico-political." For Guénon, Islam as enemy is "the primordial identitarian rapport, constitutive of Europeanness".[60] For Anidjar, Islam is the constitutive Other by way of being "exteriorized" as a container for the theologico-political combinant. Islam is, in a curious way, interior to Europe's history in being consistently, historically constituted as an exteriority: "the exteriority of Islam marks its proximity." Islam is discursively produced, in this way, as a projection of the exteriority that constitutes Europe, only tangentially related to Islam as the signified in other, say Muslim-majority, contexts. European "secularism" co-occurred and intensified at the same time as the Orientalist "discovery" and colonization of the religious East or the Americas. The term "religious" came to be synonymous with intolerance, fanatical observance of dogmas, and so on. All of this came with the massive, discursive difference between human and divine, which itself was very much part of secular, Enlightened, scientific knowledge.

The 19th century was crucial to this dynamic, when fascination with the mystical Orient to learn from (exemplified by Warren Hastings in India) turned into denigration of the "backward" East, dominated by political despotism, hedonistic debauchery, impractical theorism, caste division, and so on (exemplified by Macaulay in India).[61] The West's "secularism" became further and further contrasted with the East's "religiosity," and discursive exteriorization went hand in hand with the scientific theme of "Unity". One of the greatest charges the

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[58] G. Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab*: xxi

[59] T. Fitzgerald, "Religion and politics as modern fictions".

[60] G. Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab*: xxi

[61] A. Qadir, "The ideal of utility in British Indian policy: Tropes of the colonial chrestomathic university, 1835–1904," *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 197–211.

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secular West could lay on the religious East was that it had not performed the "theologico-political" cut, and hence has no place in the West today.

This was the basis of the argument about the politically "despotic" East. As Anidjar notes, drawing on earlier histories, "'despotism' as a *political* category" was a "Western invention".[62] The translation of the term from the household into politics was made possible by a complementary invention of the despot's apathetic subjects, "faithfully resigned" to being ruled. The subjects were *absolutely* subjected, and their lack of agency was essential to the characterization of despotism. The blind fatalism of despotic subjects became the discursive condition for the introduction of laws in Europe, laws that embodied "reason" for Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* ("Law in general in human reason"). The condition of a fatalistic, religious populace absolutely subjected to "despotic" rulers, in this narrative, can only be amended by reason and law that enact the secular divide between human political ethic and divine religious aesthetic. Enacting the theologico-political cut hence means exteriorizing an other who has not yet made the cut, so to speak. This Other has been, for Europe, the blindly fatalistic subject of despotic rulers with no law or reason.

A secular Iqbal

Iqbal can be seen to enact this 19th century sensibility in his calls to reason and law as cut away from mystification and "mullaism," for all that his reason is also religious and his law is also prophetic (Muhammad's Sharia). His argument is that Islam is not necessarily politically vindictive or inquisitive in the sense that Christianity has been (15). Condemning Nehru's note, Iqbal writes revealingly about Hindu India:

> I can very well realise that a man like the Pandit, who is born and brought up in a society which has no well-defined boundaries and consequently no internal cohesion, finds it difficult to conceive that a religious society can live and prosper without State-appointed commissions of inquiry into the beliefs of the people.

Iqbal is after the "well-defined boundaries" that characterize the theologico-political cut. (It is notable, however, that Pakistan in 1954 and 1974 saw precisely the "State-appointed commissions of inquiry into the beliefs of the people" that he deemed unnecessary in Islam.) Iqbal accepts religious intuition but not such that it can be "prophetic consciousness," which is how he interprets Ibn Arabi. Even if that were to be admitted, he argues, that "experience will have no socio-political significance making him [the religious adept] the centre of a new organisation" (24). This speaks to Iqbal's conviction that the way forward for Islam in India was to introduce rational law and democratic political organization in enacting the principal cut needed for a "modern" nation. He can thus use terms like "*traitor* to Islam" (21) for Ahmad. The emphasis added underscores the use of a political category in a religious context. The same use is evident when Iqbal points out that "the question of whether a person or a community has ceased to a member of Islam is, for the Muslim point of view, a purely legal question" (43).

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[62] G. Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab*: 125.

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In fact, Iqbal claims the theologico-political cut for Islam long before it emerged in Europe: "Nor is the idea of separation of Church and State alien to Islam … [which] effected this separation long ago in Shi'ah Persia" (47). He does point to a difference between the "Islamic idea of the division of the religious and political functions of the State" and the "European idea of the separation of Church and State." The former is apparently a split of administrative functions only, the latter a "metaphysical dualism of spirit and matter" (48). Iqbal clarifies that this means that "Muslim legislative activity" must not be freed from the "conscience of the people" which is spiritually Islamic. This is a notable domestication of the cut, aligning Islamic popular rhetoric with law and with some form of natural (popular) law. In terms of rational laws, Iqbal likewise discursively constructs political grounds for where he sees religion as acceptable: "Muhammad … emancipated his followers by giving them a law which is realizable as arising from the very core of human conscience" (21).

Iqbal's call for a separation of the political and theological entails the construction of an imagined, homogenous whole where such a cut had not been enacted. He is prone to paint India as a whole and the Hindu polity in particular as such. However, his main target here is Ahmadiyyat and the institution of the Caliphate, which he is convinced is outdated as in the case of the Ottomans: "In the abolition of the Caliphate which … had practically become a kind of Empire, it is only the spirit of Islam that has worked out through the Ataturk" (46).

A contradiction arises for Iqbal when considering the Muslim Indian "masses." On one hand, he is apt to endow them with a pre-analytical "conscience" that "has for centuries been trained and developed by the spirituality of Islam" (49). That is, if Muslim legislators would just follow the people, all would be well. On the other hand, the very same "conscience" has apparently been ruled by irrational "beliefs" (29), and the Indian Muslim is "stupid" and prone to fall for the "inventions of the myth-making Mulla" (45). The masses are "intensely religious" (29) and have a gullible and fatalistic, "Magian," expectation for a messianic savior (38). The masses have been "swayed by the kind of mysticism which blinked [sic] actualities … and kept them steeped in all kinds of superstition" (40).

The gullible Indian who succumbs to Ahmadiyyat is, for Iqbal, merely enacting a centuries-old fatalism of the masses who subject themselves to despotic rulers that "use" religious language of a particular (mystical and messianic) kind. It is in this way that Iqbal's modern self discursively constructs the theologico-political cut that maintains some semblance of the unity of what was divided, even if only to condemn it in an Other, be that Other the past Indian Muslim self or the present, gullible, fatalistic Indian who subjects himself to Ahmadiyyat. In constructing the culture of the future Muslim self by way of difference, Iqbal has permanently inscribed Ahmad within *khudī*, just as he inscribes the literal meaning of finality of prophethood as a sixth pillar of Islam. It is a striking parallel to Guénon's statement that "Europe figures itself facing Islam," the two being "intimately involved in a specular formation of mirror images".[63]

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[63] G. Anidjar, *The Jew, the Arab*: xxi.

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The abyssal line

Iqbal points to only two "heresies" in Islam that have challenged what he considers to be the only "two basic principles of Islam, i.e. the Unity of God and Finality of the Holy Prophet" (43, cf. 17). These are the "Bahais in Persia and the Qadianis in India" (53). However, he notes that "Bahaism appears to me to be far more honest than Qadianism" as Bahais no longer call themselves Muslims and hence are apostates (60). Dismissing other juridical heterodoxies as "heresy below heresy," i.e. a minor category that "does not involve excommunication" (19), this leaves effectively only Ahmadiyyat as heretical. So, on one side are the "true Muslim" and others who tolerate all faiths and beliefs, even with "minor" differences (13). On the other are the Ahmadiyya, who declare kufr on all other Muslims.

The force and form of expunging are at issue here. As Iqbal himself notes, Islamic history never witnessed an Inquisition (15), nor are there any sacraments that may be withheld from those "outside the fold" of Islam. Hence, excommunication is not a legal or institutional category. Yet, by suggesting these parallels and reserving this category only for the Ahmadiyya, Iqbal invokes precisely such an expulsion. He cites the example of Spinoza being excommunicated (although he says Ahmad's distance from the Jewish philosopher "in point of intellect and in characters is simply tremendous," 10). It is telling because that excommunication also involved essentially a number of curses and a decree by the governing body of Portuguese rabbis in Amsterdam that

> no one should communicate with him neither in writing nor accord him any favor nor stay with him under the same roof nor within four cubits in his vicinity; nor shall he read any treatise composed or written by him.[64]

It is a similar social distancing model to what Iqbal proposed for the Ahmadiyya, and what was eventually enacted by the constitutional amendment in 1974 (the ordinance in 1980 went further in criminalizing Ahmadiyyat) and by Muslim communities elsewhere, as in South Africa.[65] It is not that Islam is the "same" as Christianity or Judaism; after all, Iqbal spends considerable time explaining that the "institution of Inquisition has been absolutely unknown in Islam" (15), or that Islam is entirely distinct from the "Magian culture … [which includes] Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Jewish Christianity [sic], Chaldean and Sabean religions" (59). Hinduism is deemed even further. Rather, it is that the differences amongst Muslims ("heresy below heresy") and differences with other religions (Magian) can be understood, even "tolerated." However, the difference from Ahmadiyyat is of a qualitatively distinct nature. The Ahmadiyya live beyond what Santos calls the "abyssal line."

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[64] S. Nadler, "Why Spinoza was Excommunicated," *Humanities: The Magazine for the National Endowment of the Humanities*, 2013.

[65] A. Qadir, "How heresy makes orthodoxy".

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Beyond the abyss

The main idea for Santos is that colonial epistemology involved knowledge over a category that lay beyond a vast, unthinkable gulf. Distinctions and nuances that are evident on "this" side of the gulf simply do not obtain on the "other" side of the abyssal line. The latter is dehumanized to the extent that "human" distinctions apply only to "this" side of the line. As he puts it, "this side of the line only prevails by exhausting the field of relevant reality. Beyond it, there is only nonexistence, invisibility, nondialectical absence".[66] When Santos suggests that the Other is "produced as nonexistent," this does not mean only an absence but, in fact, a production as non-existence. It means that a distinction does exist as an absence and, moreover, that different standards self-evidently apply to that absent side. There is a reality on the other side of the line but it is not a "relevant reality," while the reality on this side of the line can be debated along agreed upon terms. However radical the divide might be between different sides on "this" side of the abyssal line (such as between philosophy, science and theology), it is in any case recognizable; the same sides simply do not hold on the "other" side (such as between popular or indigenous knowledges).[67] Of course, scientific knowledge (such as anthropology) certainly recognizes the existence of these "alternative" knowledges and studies them, while "alternative" lifestyle communities may even adopt some of these. But, in any case, they are not knowledges on a par with science itself and cannot enter the methodological debate between science, philosophy and theology: a different standard of utility applies to them and to their adherents.

Santos argues that this distinction, so evident in epistemology, is also present in the law; indeed, it constitutes modern law. Here too, "hegemonic contact converts simultaneity to noncontemporaneity",[68] so that the principle of "universality" is not compromised even as the law is applied in one place and not in another. Santos notes that the colony was produced as a "lawless" zone where civilized distinctions (or rights) simply did not hold (50). The colonies were not absent but in some way a permanently *produced* absence where the lawless state of nature could always be encountered as a canvas for the civilized European. It was an exported "state of exception" not to do with emergency conditions but with a permanent exceptionality, as Agamben posited.[69] Santos points out that in this way there was no universally conceived "passage to civil society," but rather a coexistence both civil society (in the metropolis) and wild state of nature (in the colony).

Knowledge and law relate to a more subtle aspect of the abyssal line: the very definition of what constitutes a human. As Santos notes (51), a question was genuinely raised in the early sixteenth century as to whether Native Americans had souls, a question that "Pope Paul III answered affirmatively in his bull *Sublimis Deus* of 1537 … by conceiving of the indigenous people's soul as an empty receptacle" (51). A subhuman category of humanity is applied, wherein human distinctions simply do not apply and entirely different standards are in force,

[66] B. d. S. Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking", 45.
[67] B. d. S. Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking", 48.
[68] B. d. S. Santos, "Beyond Abyssal Thinking", 51.
[69] G. Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. K. Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

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such as degrees of violence and appropriation. Colonial geography is then a "savage zone" where the rules of civilized zones just don't apply. Maldonado-Torres, likewise, sees Columbus' writings as showing that he "perceived the indigenous people as a *tabula rasa* … because they were empty, or lacked substance, reflected in the idea that they did not even 'have religion'".[70] He notes that Columbus would have known in 1492 CE of the 1433 CE Spanish translation of a seminal work by Maimonides (*Guide for the Perplexed*), who mentions that some people are "irrational beings … without religion," thereby constructing religion as a racial category. This is similar to how the savage-civilized distinction in Africa determined the nature of "religion" in the European academy.[71]

Now, colonialism and the imperial projects in Africa and in the Americas were markedly different from those in South Asia. Africa and Americas were *tabula rasa* geographies, empty slates waiting for European modernity to write themselves in via reflection, and the abyssal line marked a differentiation between savage/ subhuman and civilized/ human. This is famously true of Africa, which "stands out as the supreme receptacle of the West's obsessions with … the facts of 'absence,' 'lack' and 'non-being'".[72] However, South Asia after the 18th century was an *errant* geography, a civilization gone wrong. It was deemed abortively premodern, non-technical, impractical, lost in past glory, as for instance with regard to its state of education.[73] Such rhetoric was instrumental also in describing the "lost" "golden age" of Islam, to the extent that this is the defining vocabulary of Islamic reform to this day. British colonials after the 18th century did not encounter an empty, subhuman India which they could populate with their own humanity (as with Africa and the Americas), but rather an India gone awry, where humanity needed correction, through which the colonists could meditate on their lawfulness.

Still, the epistemological and legal dynamic was the same in India or the Near East as it was in the Americas or in Africa. Hierarchy and hegemony were paramount and the rhetoric of "universal," as Said demonstrated "was based both on an analytic bifurcation of the world and an elision of that bifurcation".[74] Whether people on the other side were subhumans in one way or another, their geography was produced as absent. The standards of punishment, for instance, were equally asymmetrical in the colonial zone, whether the native was blank or errant. The abyssal line marked a binary in both cases. Indeed, the model of Western Christianity defined by the clergy in the eleventh century, with savage barbarians at the border of civilization, underlay both approaches.[75] It boiled down to a logic of expansion by way of first producing a hierarchical dichotomy and then an absence of the binary Other. Quijano

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[70] N. Maldonado-Torres, "AAR Centennial Roundtable: Religion, Conquest, and Race in the Foundations of the Modern/Colonial World," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 82 (2014), 636–65: 639.

[71] D. Chidester, *Empire and Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

[72] A. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 4.

[73] A. Qadir, "The ideal of utility".

[74] G. K. Bhambra, "Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues," *Postcolonial Studies* 17 (2014), 115–21: 116.

[75] N. Maldonado-Torres, "AAR Centennial Roundtable: Religion, Conquest, and Race in the Foundations of the Modern/Colonial World", 642.

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points out in his seminal work, that this is the logic of modernity.[76] Coloniality is the necessary underside of modernity, producing and maintaining a cultural absence.

Talal Asad notes that this modern/ colonial form of making a difference by way of dehumanizing and excluding, is discursively central to Europe as a civilization.[77] Europe gained its civilizational identity by constructing a narrative of "civilization" that excluded Islam by de-essentializing it. Asad's point is not only that Muslims are dehumanized as Other, but that Islam is considered inimical to "civilization," so that Muslims can "integrate" into European civilization only by shedding Islam and entering European space as "secular" humans. The same, it appears, is true in parallel of religion and "heresy," the latter being inimical to the former and to civilization: as with Columbus in the Americas, the question of veracity of religious beliefs goes only one way.

Iqbal's abyss

Iqbal's essays on Ahmadiyyat demonstrate all of these points related to establishing an abyssal line and placing the community beyond it. As before, his preeminent concern is with labelling Ahmadiyyat as a force of "disintegration" (10). Underlying this is a dehumanized sense of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and his followers, who are not even worthy of the "true toleration" that only "the true Muslim alone is capable" (13). For, quoting famous Persian poet Khusrau, "Only a true lover God can appreciate the value of devotion even though it is directed to gods in which he himself does not believe" (14). Yet, an Ahmadi is not worthy of even this toleration; in some strange way, the Indian Muslim's hatred of the Ahmadi is considered a "defensive attitude" that is, in fact, morally superior (14).

Iqbal argues throughout the essay that Islam's boundaries are not racial (unlike those of Hindiusm, the religion of Nehru, to whom Iqbal is rhetorically responding in the 1935 essay). The boundaries are also very broad, constituted only by "two propositions — that God is One, and that Muhammad is the last of the line of those holy men who have appeared from time to time in all countries and in all ages to guide mankind to the right ways of living" (17).[78] As such, only Bahais and the Ahmadiyya have crossed the line into heresy (18). The dual standards on either side of the absyssal line are apparent when Iqbal takes up the Islamic juridical principle of degrees of heresy (17-20). On "this" side of the line is "heresy below heresy" regarding "minor points of law and theology," which do not involve "ex-communication" (19). On the other side are the Ahmadiyya and Bahais who challenge Iqbal's definition of finality of Prophethood and make a major heresy.

A lot of Iqbal's attention is devoted to describing Mirza Ahmad as "medieval:" pre-Islamic Magian, clerical, irrational, an "Indian amateur in Sufism," and so on. The abyssal line for him is the divide between modernity and tradition. On the "other" side is Ahmadiyyat's

[76] A. Quijano, "Coloniality and Modernity/ Rationality," *Cultural Studies* 21 (2007), 168–78.

[77] T. Asad, *Formations of the Secular*: 168-70.

[78] This is the place where Iqbal defines Prophethood, which, apparently, does not necessitate revelation. Moreover, later in the paragraph, Iqbal suggests that a heresy arises "only when the heretic rejects both *or either* of these propositions" (17, emphasis added). Iqbal seems to be implying that oneness of God is optional to being a Muslim, a surprising position.

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inauthentic tradition of "obscure thinking." On this side is Iqbal's modern orientation over against that tradition. As a part of traditionalism, unscientific irrationality is considered on the other side of the abyssal line: the same principles simply do not apply as they do "here." Also on the other side of the abyssal line lie the confounding of "Church and state" (47), which is how Iqbal understands the Ahmadi Caliphate.

Crucial to establishing the binary of an abyssal line is the hierarchy of control: this side of the line determines what is on the other, if anything. It cannot work the other way around. Hence, it was never relevant or even possible to think how the indigenous people of the Americas considered Columbus, or how their ontology or cosmology conceived of these new visitors. It was only relevant or even possible to think how Columbus conceived of the indigenes.[79] Could the natives have expunged Spaniards from the moral order of humanity? The question would not have made sense to Columbus.

In the same way, it only makes sense for non-Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan to label the Ahmadiyya "*wājib-ul-qatl*," meaning either "deserving of being killed" or "required to be killed." This label has been frequently applied to the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan and elsewhere, for instance by a former Pakistani Minister of Religious Affairs in his capacity as a TV anchor in 2008, leading directly to the murder of two prominent the Ahmadiyya in the country.[80] It would make no sense at all — nor has such an incident ever been recorded — for an Ahmadi to declare a non-Ahmadi Muslim *wājib-ul-qatl*. Of course, liability to murder without consequence is an extreme: it is far more common to discriminate against the Ahmadiyya in Pakistan without consequence or even the need to justify. Yet, again, it would be unthinkable for the discrimination to go the other way.

Conclusion

It is not so much a question of tracing a process or identifying a mechanism leading from colonialism to coloniality and all its concomitants. It is, rather, a question of mapping contiguities between ways of being. Iqbal's essays on Ahmadiyyat are statements by the leading Indian Muslim intellectual of his time, and of someone considered to be one of the greatest modern Muslim thinkers worldwide. His concept of *khudī*, has stood the test of time as the defining aspiration of South Asian Muslim selfhood. So has his condemnation of the Ahmadiyya as heretics. This article has identified three features of *khudī* that tend to be overlooked when focusing on Iqbal's political philosophy, for the good reason that such focuses tend to overlook Iqbal's essays on Ahmadism.

The first of these is Iqbal's conception of science and rationalism and its attributes of unity coupled with exclusion. The second is enacting the problematic theologico-political cut that, in turn, requires the discursive construction of a historical unity between the two in premodern times. The third is the establishment of an abyssal line with knowledge over, and

[79] N. Maldonado-Torres, "AAR Centennial Roundtable: Religion, Conquest, and Race in the Foundations of the Modern/Colonial World".
[80] K. Idris, "Not in the name of faith".

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de-humanization of, what lies beyond. Again, colonialism did not *cause* any of these features of the Muslim Self, which were later institutionalized in Pakistan. Rather, there is a contiguity in forms of knowing-being as "*ego conquiro*"[81] in modern coloniality as seen in British attitudes toward Indians and Muslim attitudes towards the Ahmadiyya.

Both Indians (for British) and the Ahmadiyya (for Muslims) lay beyond the abyssal line, which is more than saying they were both refuse(d). Rather, they were grounds for the production of absence, denizens of a strange land where things just don't go the same way as they do "here." It is a geography marked by lack or one marked by error. In either case, it is a geography that helps the land on "this" side constitute itself, in the same way that the colonists projected the "feminine" onto India and thereby masculinized the West[82] or projected the "mystic" onto the East and thereby pragmatized[83] its own geography. All of these are projections of shadows onto the margins of civilized society and Ahmadiyyat might well be the pre-eminent margin of Islam. Throughout his essays, Iqbal produces Ahmad and his community as containers for all that Islam must expunge — mullaism, mysticism, messianism, despotism, and all manner of pre-modern qualities.

Iqbal's project of reconstructing religious thought is so significant in the world of Islam, that the suppressions which are conditions of its possibility acquire great import. The absences he produced speak to the construction of Muslim Selfhood by way of exclusion of Ahmadiyyat from the world of Islam. However, his project of reconstruction of religious thought in Islam alone cannot be responsible for the Ahmadiyya being in the shadow of the Quran. If, as with all projects in deconstruction, the movement of supplementarity is part of the process, then the Ahmadiyya were not just placed at the margins of Islam by Iqbal: they are kept there.

[81] N. Maldonado-Torres, "On the coloniality of being".

[82] A. Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), Ch. 1; D. S. Ahmed, ed. *Gendering the Spirit: Women, Religion & the Post-Colonial Response* (London: Zed Books, 2002).

[83] R. King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'* (London: Routledge, 1999).

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