

2024

Islamophobia and the construction of a modern Catholic identity

<https://hdl.handle.net/2144/49997>

"Downloaded from OpenBU. Boston University's institutional repository."

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Dissertation

**ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MODERN CATHOLIC
IDENTITY**

By

ALEXANDRA BAYER

B.A., University of Missouri, 2016
M.A., University of Missouri, 2018

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2024

©2024 by
Alexandra Bayer
All rights reserved

Approved by

First Reader

Margarita Guillory, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Religion

Second Reader

Kecia Ali, Ph.D.
Professor of Religion

Third Reader

Anthony Petro, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Religion

For my little loves, Thomas and Peter

Acknowledgements

I don't think I could ever truly put into words the gratitude I feel towards all the people that have mentored me, supported me, guided me, and loved me through this process. This project was not the one I set out to write when I first matriculated at Boston University. All my previously laid plans were thrown out the window at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and, happily, this project is the result of that chaos. I am grateful that it was made possible by support from the Social Science Research Councils Religion, Spirituality, and Democratic Renewal Fellowship, with funds provided by the Fetzer Institute.

A massive thank you goes out to my committee who deeply shaped my intellectual thought process. Margarita Guillory asked me to attend office hours two weeks into a theories and methods seminar in 2020 and told me that I had something to say and to just say it. I've been working on that ever since, but I think I've done it here. Kecia Ali has been there every step of the way, regardless of if I was her official advisee or not. She always has a game plan, and she always knows what to say. Anthony Petro asked critical questions during my comprehensive exams that pushed me in ways I wasn't anticipating. Thank you to Jonathan Klawans for agreeing to chair my committee—my first seminar at BU was with him, so it felt fitting that he be present for the end of my journey.

My family was instrumental throughout this process. My parents are my biggest cheerleaders. Within weeks of starting at BU, they came to visit, and my dad made sure to buy what seemed like every BU sweatshirt the bookstore offered. He's not here to see me finish, but I still have those sweatshirts and it's a memory I'll cherish forever. My mom

never doubted that I'd get this done. Never. My grandparents have been my biggest fans for as long as I can remember, and they make me feel like I'm doing them proud every time we talk. No one was more excited for me to go on this journey than my in-laws. Ray and Christie have cheered me on without fail since the day I met them, and I can't thank them enough.

Writing can be lonely, but I was never alone thanks to a few key people. Kira Ganga Kieffer decided one day in early 2020 that we were going to be friends and the rest is history. I can't thank her enough for her constant companionship, advice, support, and her incredible ability to find obscure *Atlantic* and *NYT* articles on topics with which I'm enthralled. To Dennis Kelley and America Wolff: I do not have the space or the ability to extend a thank you that would suffice. Dennis has read every word I've ever written since my senior year at the University of Missouri and has never once waived in his support. America Wolff has been my rock since we met in a Sufism seminar more than 7 years ago. Together, Dennis and America have been a constant source of love and dark humor through a group text aptly named the Equal Opportunity Emotional Dumping Ground. Meredith Schasch and Krysti Baker cheered me on from states away and provided unwavering support in my journey. We met through our husbands, but I'm so grateful that our friendships have blossomed into something more akin to family.

At its heart, this project is a labor of love. It is inherently shaped by my journey into and through motherhood. I wrote my first sentences the day my eldest, Thomas, started daycare. I finished the project days before we welcomed our second, Peter, into the world. Parenthood gave the project a sense of urgency. Not just in the temporal way that I suddenly

had less time than seemed humanly possible, but mainly in the way that what I was writing seemed more important somehow. That fighting for social change was more important than ever and that by saying what I had to say may, in some small way, make the world a better place. Becoming a mother made this project possible for me. It gave me a sense of direction and purpose and without my children I don't think it would be complete.

Finally, to my sweet husband, Ray. We've got a good thing going, you and me. It's for the life that we've built together that I am the most grateful.

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MODERN

CATHOLIC IDENTITY

ALEXANDRA BAYER

Boston University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2024

Major Professor: Margarita Guillory, Associate Professor of Religion

ABSTRACT

While Muslims have been in the United States for centuries, in the aftermath of September 11th, Muslims and Islam in the United States faced a renewed and intense form of public visibility. This visibility did not dissipate in the months that followed 9/11, but rather continued to permeate American news media outlets in the decades that followed. The coverage of Muslims and Islam in the United States was frequently polarizing and racially charged. Coverage occurred across media sites, and, interestingly, American Catholic sites also engaged in discourses surrounding Muslims and Islam in the United States from distinctly Catholic perspectives. Yet, these perspectives also covered a polarizing spectrum: the theologically conservative-liberal spectrum of American Catholicism.

The stark split between liberal and conservative American Catholic responses to and towards Muslims and Islam in the United States may be surprising considering that until the mid-twentieth century American Catholics were the subject of public and ubiquitous anti-Catholic hostilities. However, this split among liberal and conservative Catholics has a long-standing history, beginning in earnest in the mid-twentieth century after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. In the twenty-first century and in the

era of public Catholicism, American Catholics actively engage in discourses surrounding the presence of Muslims in the United States. By analyzing debates surrounding Muslims in the contemporary United States, this dissertation interrogates how white American Roman Catholic construct Muslims in the United States as Other and how conservative and liberal Catholics employ discourses about the Other to construct their identities as contemporary American Catholics. Particularly focused on white Catholic American narratives about Muslim and Islam in the United States, this project asks what insights can debates among conservative and liberal Catholics about Muslims and Islam in the United States between the years 2001-2022 provide into contemporary American Catholic identity formation, as well as conceptions of citizenship, gender, and race? Not only do these debates speak to differing ideas of citizenship, gender, and race among Catholics, but also to broader American cultural ideas about what it means to be American and who is eligible to be an American.

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
Fields of Study	6
Methods.....	13
Media Outlets.....	16
Chapter Overview	20
<i>Chapter One: White American Catholics: From the Pope in Exile to a Catholic Presidency</i>	24
Anti-Catholicism in the 19 th Century.....	28
Parochial Schools and the Battle over American Identity	35
The Whitening of American Catholicism in the 20 th Century	38
Intracommunal Tensions in the Late-19 th and Early 20 th Centuries	44
Vatican II and the Fragmented Transformation of American Catholicism	48
Catholic Liberals and Catholic Conservatives in the Twentieth Century.....	55
Concluding Thoughts.....	59
<i>Chapter Two: Racialized Muslims and White American Catholics</i>	61
Racialization of Muslims and Anti-Muslim Hostilities	64
Dog Whistle Politics and the Media	73
Constructing the Global Muslim.....	81
Religious Freedom and Christian Persecution.....	91
The Moderate Muslim and the Terrorist.....	100
Concluding Thoughts.....	116
<i>Chapter Three: Interreligious Dialogue and the Spirit of Vatican II</i>	118
The Legacy of <i>Nostra Aetate</i>	122
Interreligious Dialogue and Catholicism: Difficulties of Dialogue.....	130
“How a Christian Can Become muslim”: Interreligious Dialogue as a Tool to Fashion Catholic Identity.....	147
Academic Celebrations of <i>Nostra Aetate</i> and the Call to Dialogue.....	159
Concluding Thoughts.....	173

<i>Chapter Four: Conservative Catholics: Protecting Women, the Nation, and Their Americanness</i>	175
American Catholic and Muslim Masculinities	179
Protectors of Women and Love of Country	183
The Canaries in the Coal Mine	194
What the Silence of Catholic Men Says about Catholic Identity.....	206
Concluding Thoughts.....	218
<i>Conclusion</i>	220
<i>Bibliography</i>	228
<i>Curriculum Vitae</i>	254

List of Abbreviations

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
CARA	Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate
CRRM	Commission for the Religious Relations with Muslims
DIM-MID	Dialogue Interreligieu Monsatique-Monastic Interreligious Dialogue Board
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
ISNA	Islamic Society of North America
NCR	<i>National Catholic Reporter</i>
NCRregister	<i>National Catholic Register</i>
PCID	Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
VSCN	Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians

Introduction

On January 27, 2017, President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13769, “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States.”¹² The Order, which colloquially became known as the “Muslim ban,” fulfilled a campaign promise from the then-presidential hopeful who called for “a total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States until our country’s representatives can figure out what is going on.”³ Trump’s call came at a campaign rally in South Carolina in response to the 2015 San Bernardino, California shooting that took the lives of 14 people and injured 24. At the rally, Trump stated that “without looking at the various polling data, it is obvious to anybody the hatred is beyond comprehension. Where this hatred comes from and why we will have to determine. Until we are able to determine and understand this problem and the dangerous threat it poses, our country cannot be the victims of horrendous attacks by people that believe only in Jihad, and have no sense of reason or respect for human life.”⁴ The shooters, a married couple, were Muslim. Yet despite Trump’s implication that the couple immigrated to the country from elsewhere, the husband was a native-born American citizen, and his wife was Pakistani, legally in the United States on a visa. In his campaign

¹ Donald Trump, Executive Order 13769, “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States,” *Federal Register* 82, no. 8977 (January 27, 2017): 8977-8982.

² While writing this introduction, Donald Trump, again on the presidential campaign trail, called for the return of his “Muslim ban,” saying he’s “gotta bring it back” and that “when I return to office, the travel ban is coming back even bigger than before and much stronger than before.” See Aswain Suebsaeng and Adam Rawnsley, “Trump 2024: Bring Back the ‘Muslim Ban’— and Expand It,” *Rolling Stone*, May 5, 2023; Kathryn Watson and Zak Hudak, “Trump Says He’d Bring Back ‘Travel Ban’ That’s ‘Even Bigger than Before,’” *CBS*, July 7, 2023.

³ Donald Trump in Jessica Taylor, “Trump Calls for ‘Total and Complete Shutdown of Muslims Entering’ U.S.,” *NPR*, December 7, 2015.

⁴ Donald Trump in Jenna Johnson, “Trump Calls for ‘Total and Complete Shutdown of Muslims Entering the United States,’” *Washington Post*, December 7, 2015.

statements, Trump engaged in a discursive rhetoric that has been on the rise in the post-September 11th era: the assumption that Muslim equates to terrorist and unamerican. This assumption is at the heart of this project.

After Trump's inauguration, his "Muslim ban" was one of his first orders of business. The executive order barred travel into the United States from seven Muslim-majority countries— Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen— for 90 days. It also suspended Syrian refugee resettlement. The ban went into effect the next day, leaving inbound travelers, including refugees, stranded in airports.⁵ In the immediate aftermath of Trump's executive order, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed numerous lawsuits in order to block the deportation of individuals impacted by the ban who were stranded in airports. The national response was controversial and contentious.⁶ Pew Research Center reports that across all demographics, 59% of Americans disapproved of the executive order and 38% approved of it.⁷ However, data also shows that white Americans were almost evenly split on the matter, with 50% disapproving and 49% approving.⁸

⁵ Joanna Walters, Edward Helmore, and Saeed Kamali Dehghan, "US Airports on Frontline as Donald Trump's Travel Ban Causes Chaos and Protests," *The Guardian*, January 28, 2017.

⁶ For a range of media coverage of the executive order, please see: Dana Blanton, "Fox News Poll: Views on (Trump's) Proposed Ban on Non-U.S. Muslims," *Fox News*, July 10, 2017; Lyric Lewin, "In Support of a Travel Ban," *CNN*, accessed July 14, 2023; Joby Warrick, "Jihadist Groups Hail Trump's Travel Ban as a Victory," *Washington Post*, January 29, 2017; Harry Enten, "Will Trump's Refugee ban Have Public Support?" *FiveThirtyEight*, January 28, 2017; Eliot Nelson, "The KKK and Their Friends Are Overjoyed with President Trump's First 10 Days," *Huffpost*, January 31, 2017; Eric Hananoki, "White Nationalists Praise Trump's Muslim Ban: 'God Bless You,' 'Feel Like Crying' with Joy," *Media Matters for America*, January 30, 2017; Mark Critchley, "Donald Trump's 'Muslim Ban' Supported by Stoke City Defender Geoff Cameron," *Independent*, February 3, 2017; Namira Islam, "An Anti-Muslim Narrative Has Shaped Policy for Decades. The Travel Ban Will Make It Worse," *Vox*, June 27, 2017.

⁷ "In First Month, Views of Trump Are Already Strongly Felt, Deeply Polarized," *Pew Research Center*, February 16, 2017.

⁸ "In First Month."

While media coverage writ large was expansive, interestingly, Catholic media outlets were also abuzz and were equally polarizing. This dissertation analyzes conservative- and liberal-leaning Catholic media outlets' representations of Muslims and Islam and the United States, arguing that American Catholics deploy dog whistle tropes about Muslims and Islam in the United States in order to construct their identities as white American Catholics. For example, in article written for liberal-leaning Catholic publication *Commonweal*, Michael Peppard wrote “simply stated, this executive order is among the single worst actions that our new president could have done. It gains nothing, harms many, endangers all, abandons principles, helps our enemies recruit, and – in an ironic twist seemingly lost on this administration—it gives the worst terrorist to attack our country the precise thing he wanted.”⁹ On the other end of the Catholic theological conservative-liberal spectrum, *Church Militant*, a conservative-leaning publication, published an article in support of the executive order titled “72 Terrorists Come to U.S. from Seven Banned Muslim-Majority Countries.”¹⁰ *Church Militant* reported that “Since 2001... 17 of the 72 convicted terrorists entered as refugees from these terror-prone countries.”¹¹

The stark split between liberal and conservative American Catholic responses to the executive order, and towards Muslims more broadly, may be surprising considering that until the mid-twentieth century American Catholics were the subject of public and ubiquitous anti-Catholic hostilities.¹² However, this split among liberal and conservative

⁹ Michael Peppard, “Executive Disorder about Islam,” *Commonweal*, January 31, 2017.

¹⁰ “72 Terrorists Come to U.S. from Seven Banned Muslim-Majority Countries,” *Church Militant*, February 15, 2017.

¹¹ “72 Terrorists Come to U.S. from Seven Banned Muslim-Majority Countries.”

¹² From here on, I will use the terms liberal and conservative Catholic when referring to white American liberal and conservative Catholics.

Catholicism has a long-standing history, beginning in earnest in the mid-twentieth century after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. Post-Vatican II, American Catholicism underwent a shift from private-practice forms of Catholicism that saw the separation of civic and religious life towards public Catholicism, wherein American Catholics bring their Catholicism into their civic lives, namely their political lives.¹³ In the twenty-first century and in the era of public Catholicism, American Catholics actively engage in discourses surrounding the presence of Muslims in the United States. Despite calls from the Catholic hierarchy like the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for tolerance towards immigrants to the United States, specifically Muslim immigrants, white Catholics tend to hold negative views towards Muslims, immigrants, and immigration.¹⁴ By analyzing debates surrounding Muslims in the contemporary United States, this project interrogates how white American Roman Catholic construct Muslims in the United States as Other and how conservative and liberal Catholics employ discourse about the Other to construct their identities as contemporary American Catholics. This trajectory begins with an exploration of how Catholics of European descent transformed from ethnic Other to white American Christians during the 20th century. Beginning with an overview of anti-Catholic rhetoric and prejudice, this project draws parallels between the racialization of American Catholics during the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries and the contemporary racialization of Muslims in the United States. Once the Catholics attained cultural citizenship in the United States during the mid-20th century, concurrent to the Second

¹³ José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

¹⁴ Darren E. Sherkat and Derek Lehman, "Bad Samaritans: Religion and Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the United States," *Social Science Quarterly* 99, no. 5 (November 2018): 1791.

Vatican Council, this project shifts to focus on 21st century American Catholic media outlets and the narratives and discourses produced about Muslims in the United States on these sites. This includes an analysis of how American Catholics, broadly, discuss Muslims and the implications of these discourses. The project then moves into specific examinations of how liberal Catholics and conservative Catholics discuss Muslims and Islam in the United States.

How American Catholics conceive of American Muslims and Islam is important—Catholics are producers and reproducers of American cultural ideals. They engage with broader cultural narratives and contribute widely to political and cultural discourses, whether by voting or by social media usage. This has a large and lasting impact on American Muslims populations, especially in the post-9/11 era, as anti-Muslim hate crimes are on the rise.¹⁵ Particularly focused on white Catholic American narratives about Muslim and Islam in the United States, this project asks what insights can debates among conservative and liberal Catholics about Muslims and Islam in the United States between the years 2001-2022 provide into contemporary American Catholic identity formation, as well as conceptions of citizenship, gender, and race?¹⁶ Not only do these debates speak to

¹⁵ Scott C. Alexander “Anti-Catholicism, Islamophobia, and White Supremacy in the United States,” in *Overcoming Orientalism: Essays in Honor of John L. Esposito*, ed. Tamara Soehnle (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 255.

¹⁶ It is important to note that while this study focuses on the Othering of American Muslims, white American Catholics marginalize and Other non-white Catholics, specifically Black and LatinX Catholics. John T. McGreevy argues in *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* that during the twentieth-century, Polish, Irish, and German Catholics became coded as white within their parishes and within larger cultural discourses as Black Americans moved from the South into the urban North. In the presence of Black Americans, “ethnicity was flattened into race” (36). White American Catholics and their parishes disenfranchised Black Catholics and did not construct parishes within Black neighborhoods and used discriminatory practices to discourage Black Catholics from joining their churches (37). This was not only a problem of the mid-twentieth century. Even during the Civil Rights Movement, Amy Koehlinger notes in *The New Nuns* that women religious who viewed

differing ideas of citizenship, gender, and race among Catholics, but also to broader American cultural ideas about what it means to be American and who is eligible to be an American.

Fields of Study

Currently, there is a lack of scholarship on lay Americans as producers and reproducers of anti-Muslim rhetoric within the field of American Religious History and within scholarship on Islamophobia. Furthermore, there is a lack in scholarship attending to how Catholics engage in this discourse. This project seeks to rectify these gaps in knowledge. This project complicates the American religious history narrative that traces the ascendancy of Catholics of European descent from religious Other to fully-fledged Americans. This project argues that where Catholics were formerly Othered, they now deploy similar tactics— one’s previously used *against* Catholics— in order to Other Muslims in the United States and solidify their own identities as American Catholics. Furthermore,

promoting racial justice as part of their vocational calling were few and far between. She defines these women religious as the “new nuns,” and argues they were a group of nuns who abandoned traditional apostolic works in order to do unprecedented social justice work among Catholic and non-Catholic communities, often Black American communities. As Alyssa Maldonado-Estrada notes that feast days and parishes are sites of intra-Catholic boundary making, where “people judge, construct, and enact *Catholic propriety*. These evaluative judgements often rely on racist constructions and complicate notions of devotional events as unifying and collective spaces where love and reverence for a saint efface ethnic and racial tensions” (170). In these events, white Catholics construct notions of “proper” Catholicism that preclude Black Catholics from fitting within this constructed category. “Proper” Catholicism actively condemns and demonizes practices from Black Catholics and engages in centuries-long debasement of Africana practices. See also Michelle Y. Gordon, “Midnight Scenes and Orgies”: Public Narratives of Voodoo in New Orleans and Nineteenth-Century Discourses of White Supremacy,” *American Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (December 2021): 767-786; Kevin Winstead, “Authentically Black, and Truly Catholic”: A Survey of the Study on Black Catholics,” *Sociology Compass* 11, no. 10 (October 2017); Jennifer Reed-Bouley, “‘I Belong! And I’m Here to Stay!’ U.S. Black Catholics’ Faith and Faithfulness,” *Ecclesial Practices* 2 (2015): 177-197; Michael J. Pfeifer, *The Making of American Catholicism: Regional Culture and the Catholic Experience* (New York: NYU Press, 2020); Matthew Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2017); and R. Bentley Anderson, *Black, White, and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005).

this project intervenes in studies on Islamophobia by examining the ways in which everyday Americans, namely lay Catholics, produce a specifically-Catholic brand of anti-Muslim hostilities that inform their identities as Catholics and as Americans.

In his book *Terrified: How Anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations Became Mainstream*, Christopher Bail details how anti-Muslim fringe organizations moved into the American mainstream post-9/11. He argues that rather than capitalizing on widespread preexisting sentiments about Muslims, anti-Muslim organizations move into the mainstream due to complex cultural, structural, and socio-psychological factors and thereby reshape the cultural environment that reinforces their negative messages. As we will see throughout this project, the negative, anti-Muslim messages that formerly-fringe actors, like William Kilpatrick and Robert Spencer, produce become part of mainstream Catholic thought on Islam and Muslims in the United States.¹⁷ Once this occurs, negative stereotypes and imagery about Muslims in the United States are easily disseminated by other less public figures who publish on Catholic sites. This project interrogates both lay and ordained Catholic perspectives on Muslim Americans, as well as conversations between the laity and Roman Catholic institutions to explore how white American Catholics understand their own American Catholic-ness in relation to US Muslims.

Taking Bail's analysis as a starting point, this project examines how negative messages about Islam and Muslims in the United States proliferate through Catholic media spaces and examines how the ways in which white American Catholics talk about Islam reinforces and constructs their own identities as Catholic Americans. Relatedly, this project

¹⁷ Both of these authors are introduced in detail in chapter two.

shies away from using the term Islamophobia or Islamophobic unless a source directly uses that language. Following the lead of Juliane Hammer who notes that anti-Muslim hostilities are not “innate or natural” fears of Muslims, but “rather, it is an ideological construct produced and reproduced at the nexus of a number of political and intellectual currents that need to be taken into consideration and assessed critically in each instance or event of Islamophobic discourse or practice,” this project instead uses the terms anti-Muslim hostility, anti-Muslim discrimination, and anti-Muslim racism.¹⁸

White American Catholics, newly minted into white American cultural identity, actively participate in the racialization of Muslims in the United States as a discursive move by which they construct their own identities as white American Catholics. As we will see, Catholics of European descent transcended from racialized Other into part of the American Christian cultural majority during the mid-twentieth century. Anti-Catholicism during the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries was deeply intertwined with the Protestant roots of the United States, but also to a kind of Protestant nativism that constructed Catholic immigrants as racial and ethnic Others, who were portrayed as “heathens.”¹⁹ This functioned to ostracize Catholics from American civic involvement, as Catholics were thought to be antithetical to American identity *due to their Catholicism*. As this project will demonstrate, white Catholics now employ this discursive rhetoric of ostracization and othering against Muslims in the United States who are racialized as other and as inherently unamerican *due*

¹⁸ Juliane Hammer, “Center Stage: Gendered Islamophobia and Muslim Women,” in *Islamophobia in America: The Anatomy of Intolerance*, ed. Carl Ernst (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 108.

¹⁹ The discourse of heathen as a tool for racializing Catholics will be discussed in detail in chapter one. Kathryn Gin Lum, *Heathen: Religion and Race in American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022), 37.

to their practice of Islam. In the post-September 11th era, individuals who “look Muslim” are immediately coded as Muslim, as we will see in chapter two, and thereby have attached to them a religio-racial identity that is assumed to be inherently unamerican. This project builds upon previous works that discuss racialization by demonstrating how white Catholics use Catholic media in order to racialize Muslims in the United States as Other and as unamerican.

This project talks at length about American culture and American cultural citizenship. While the intricacies of what *American* culture means to the interlocutors within this project, culture herein is determined as a group of collective individuals, “...those who constitute themselves as members of the group (1) recognize as their own; (2) recognize themselves; (3) recognize in those people with whom— *as a result*— they feel bound by sentiments of affinity; and (4) recognize as lacking in those from whom— and once more, *as a result*— they feel themselves estranged and constitute as Other.”²⁰ In short, culture— its rituals, standards of behavior, and norms— is determined by a group of people who recognize that they are a group, of which they see themselves as a member and to which they feel bonded. Of crucial importance, however, is the fact that culture also allows the collective members of the group to identify those who they believe *do not belong in their group*. This identification is critical to the project at hand.

The cultural identity, namely white American Christianity, is innately tied to an understanding of the United States as a nativist Christian nation. The Christian roots of

²⁰ Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 51.

American culture, which “has been an integral part of and support for the dominant beliefs, values, and institutions,” become weaponized against Muslims in the United States through a process of othering.²¹ As we will see throughout the project, the othering of Muslims in the United States by white Catholics reinforces the identity of white Catholic Americans through a complex process of stigmatization and abjection. As Katherine Pratt Ewing argues, “these stigmatizations and social fantasies associated with them constrain the possibilities for full cultural citizenship for a stigmatized minority, but also that traces of these stigmatizations are manifest by individuals as an array of strategies for the maintenance of a positive subjectivity and identity in the face of abjection.”²² Where culture is invoked as a reason for the incompatibility of Islam and American belonging, it is not. Rather, discourse, or the *interpretation* of culture, to perpetuates the idea that cultural incompatibilities drive differences and hostilities among American Catholics and Muslims in the United States. As Joan Wallach Scott argues, “the idea of culture was the *effect* of a very particular, historically specific political discourse.”²³

The anti-Muslim hostilities and negative stereotypes perpetuated and disseminated by white American Catholics are, as we will see, distinctly Catholic because of the spaces in which these rhetorical devices for identity construction emerge. This is *not* to say they are inherently unique because Catholics are disseminating them, nor is this to say there are no commonalities between Catholic anti-Muslim hostilities and white Evangelical anti-

²¹ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, new ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), ix.

²² Katherine Pratt Ewing, *Stolen Honor: Stigmatizing Muslim Men in Berlin* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 6.

²³ Joan Wallach Scott, *Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 7.

Muslim hostilities. Where American Catholics write about tropes like the idea of the global Muslim, the threat of Muslims to Christians and their disdain for religious freedom, and the terrorist Muslim, the display of Muslims as violent terrorists is also prolific within right wing American Evangelical circles, particularly the American Christian Zionist movement.²⁴ One major difference among Catholic anti-Muslim rhetoric and Evangelical anti-Muslim rhetoric is the use of biblical justifications for discrimination by evangelicals.²⁵ Steven Fink argues that evangelical Christian Zionists claim that by not protecting Israel from Palestine (which is a direct synonym in anti-Muslim circles for Muslims), “the stakes are just as high for Americans, because their nation too may be destroyed if they do not support Israel against Palestinians. Based on their exposition of Genesis 12:3, these leaders exhort congregations and readers to support Israel and therefore receive God’s blessings instead of God’s curses.”²⁶ This type of rhetoric, the biblically-based variety, is not commonly seen within American Catholic narratives about Muslims and Islam. Rather, Catholics use Catholic social teachings and statements by members of the Catholic hierarchy to anchor their arguments to their Catholicism. While many of the tropes of violent, essentialist Muslim identity exist within both Evangelical and Catholic realms, this project argues that the arena in which Catholic anti-Muslim rhetoric emerges, and the modes of dissemination, are *distinctly* Catholic, though they may not be entirely *unique* to Catholic discourses. In other words, by rooting anti-Muslim rhetoric in

²⁴ Steven Fink, “Fear Under Construction: Islamophobia within American Christian Zionism,” *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 33.

²⁵ Fink, 34.

²⁶ Fink, 34.

specifically Catholic ways and by publishing on Catholic news media sites, anti-Muslim hostilities are used to construct a distinctly Catholic identity against the Other of Muslims in the United States. This happens because of the mode of engagement, *even though* some rhetoric may be similar to wider anti-Muslim hostilities.

Within the field of American religious history, discussions of liberal and conservative Catholics largely revolve around the discourses of Catholic intellectual elites who belong to these two categories. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States is a diverse community wherein divisions among the community often revolve around social teachings. Frequently, the divisions are between the (more) liberal American Catholic laity and the more conservative bureaucratic institutions of the Vatican. More specifically, however, this division occurs between American Catholic women and men in leadership positions within the church.²⁷ Christel Manning argues that opinions surrounding women's ordination and reproductive rights are a type of litmus test that delineates between liberal and conservative Catholics. However, in the 21st century, I argue that opinions about immigration, and more specifically Islam in the United States, now serve as an additional litmus test to distinguish between liberal and conservative Catholics. The camps of "conservative" and "liberal" Catholics became readily apparent in the aftermath of Vatican II, wherein the Church underwent a liberalization. In response, there was, and remains, a growing movement of conservative Catholics.²⁸ Where some Catholics felt the church's

²⁷ C. J. Manning, "Women in a Divided Church: Liberal and Conservative Catholic Women Negotiate Changing Gender Roles," *Sociology of Religion* 58, no. 4 (1997): 376.

²⁸ Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby argue that right-wing conservative Catholics position themselves as a group that have not changed and have held fast in their Catholicism, while the world around them, and liberal Catholics, have changed. Specifically in the aftermath of Vatican II, they note that conservative Catholics hold on to a religious identity that distinguishes them from white Protestants, rather than

reforms were a betrayal, many felt that the reforms, while well-intentioned, were “misconstrued by liberal extremists to allow for a total disregard of church doctrine in favor of individual choice.”²⁹ In chapter one, we will see how the theological categories of conservative and liberal emerged in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, and how these divisions remain important and inform how American Catholics talk about Muslims in the United States.³⁰

Methods

This project is historically based and aims to track and analyze the intracommunal debates among liberal and conservative American Catholics about Muslims in the twenty-

assimilates them. See Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

²⁹ Manning, 376.

³⁰Manning, 377. The distinction between liberal and conservative Catholics is not one that I employ superficially. In a 1998 article in the *National Catholic Reporter* titled “Of Common Ground and Long Memories” Frank McGuire, self-declared conservative Catholic, argues that reconciliation among liberal and conservative Catholics is unlikely due to the “long memories” of conservative Catholics. He writes, “Or try this chestnut from Fr. Andrew Greeley on for size: ‘I wonder how I would be able to explain that I am still a Catholic to ... those Catholic conservatives for whom a list of doctrinal assents is the proper measure of Catholicism. One of which assents is NOT to the notion that God is love, a notion which they find dangerous. Too bad for St. John. They are the heretics, the falsifiers of the tradition, the scribes and Pharisees of our time, the false prophets. Pay them no heed.’ These examples are not exceptional, and all are from the core of liberal Catholicism. It's painful to drop money into the collection or write tuition checks to pay the salaries of people who think you foolish, fascist and heretical and don't mind saying so.” Furthermore, as José Casanova notes, the spread between liberal and conservative Catholicism is more nuanced than aligning these theological identity markers with political parties. He writes that “First, there no longer exists a Catholic vote, since Catholics tend to be distributed in a proportionate manner across the entire American political-ideological spectrum. Therefore, the bishops can hardly be said to represent any particular political constituency or be its spokespersons. Second, Catholic religious leaders, like American protestant and Jewish religious leaders can be ‘dichotomized into *theologically* liberal and conservative camps.’ Finally, Catholic religious leaders are more uniformly ‘conservative’ on issues of sexual and family morality and more uniformly ‘progressive’ on economic, political, and international issues than the American population, than the Catholic laity, and than other religious leaders” (203-204). Prior to the 1960s, the Catholic laity represented a monolithic community to the rest of the country, due in large part to the tradition of laity deference to the clerical hierarchy. For a discussion of this transition from deference to the disbandment of the “Catholic vote” post-Vatican II, see Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics, 1950-1985* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

first century. In order to do so, I utilize a variety of primary and archival sources to shape a historical narrative by discussing and analyzing key social, political, and cultural moments. This project treats digital archives from Catholic news and information sites, as well as books published by Catholic authors and publishers, as physical archives and therefore uses traditional historical approaches to evaluate source materials. This project utilizes close and critical readings of primary sources to identify significant patterns and themes within the sources. These strategies of interpreting primary texts will consider questions like what is the agenda of the author (is the goal of this work to introduce Islam to Catholics in a negative or positive manner?), who is the audience (specifically is this source targeted towards liberal or conservative Catholics?), are the facts listed in this source truthful or bending the truth. Close and critical readings of sources help in identifying nuance and context of the sources at hand, something which can be lost in large-scale readings.³¹

Close readings of primary sources will enable me to not only read against the grain of the source and uncover “unsaid” meanings within the texts, but also to read along the grain in order to grasp larger trends and the “common sense” meanings that authors intended and the larger narratives they are engaging. Reading against the grain utilizes techniques from the field of digital anthropology, which blends traditional ethnographic and anthropological methods with digital computer technology. In this way, digital ethnography is a field with ample opportunities to explore multimedia sources using

³¹ Zachary M. Schrag, *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

traditional methods in new innovative ways.³² This project seeks to answer this call for innovation by utilizing online digital archives in order to engage with interlocuters *through* digital archival material. This approach accounts for the fact that blogs, comments, and articles produced for the digital world are often embedded with offline world experiences and interactions.³³

For each website, I used the search terms “Islam” and “Muslim/s” in order to pull all articles from the site that were either tagged as being related to these terms or that mentioned either term within the article itself. As mentioned above, the timeframe of this project meant that I only pulled articles from 2001 onward. From there, each article was imported into Evernote, sorted by publication, then coded thematically. Due to the volume of data, the project focused on 207 articles in total published between 2001 and 2022 that *explicitly* mentioned Islam or Muslims. The codes used to quickly sort through the articles were: September 11th, Christian Nations, Christian Persecution, Culture Wars, Interreligious Dialogue, Immigration, Moderate Islam, Multiculturalism, National Security, Popes, Radical Islam, Religious Freedom, Terrorism, and Women and Girls. The “quick” codes indicate the general topic of the article used for distant reading of the data. Once the initial coding of all articles was completed, each article received a close reading that further coded it based on themes presented and it was placed into a chronological

³² Mike Fortun, Kim Fortun, and George E. Marcus, “Computers in//and Anthropology: The Poetics and Politics of Digitizations,” in *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*, ed. Larissa Hjorth, Heather Horst, Anne Galloway, and Genevieve Bell (London: Routledge, 2019), 13.

³³ Christine Hine, “From Virtual Ethnography to the Embedded, Embodied Everyday Internet,” in *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*, ed. Larissa Hjorth, Heather horst, Anne Galloway, and Genevieve Bell (London: Routledge, 2019), 22.

timeline. It is from the combination of close and distant readings that the themes that analyzed within this project emerged.

Media Outlets

In sourcing my material, I focused on eight major Catholic media outlets across the liberal/conservative theological spectrum, as well as a small collection of manuscripts written by Catholic authors, published by Roman Catholic publishers, or publishers with an affiliation with the Church.³⁴ The surveyed media sites are *America*, *Busted Halo*, *Church Militant*, *Commonweal*, *Crisis*, *First Things*, *National Catholic Register*, and *National Catholic Reporter*. *America* is a Jesuit-founded publication founded in 1909. Their mission states that “the Ignatian traditions of ‘finding God in all things’ and the promotion of justice shape or commentary.”³⁵ A liberal-leaning publication, *America* “aggressively promoted racial and social justice from the 1930s through the 1960s” and frequently criticized Senator Joseph McCarthy during the 1950s. *America*’s editors note that following the Second Vatican Council, they “consistently promoted conciliar reform, but they struck a balance between the extremes of opinion in the reforming church, acting as a bridge for church dialogue.” Their 2021 impact report notes that in 2021 they had: 70,000 print magazine readers, 12,000 digital subscribers, 1,100,000 unique monthly users, 175,000 newsletter subscribers, 1,125,000 social media followers, 250,000 podcast

³⁴ The choice to focus on these eight outlets is due to data from the Bridge Initiative’s *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam* report. They make up the most widely read Catholic outlets, and cover the theological liberal/conservative spectrum.

³⁵ “History,” *America*, accessed July 31, 2023.

downloads per month, and 54,000 YouTube subscribers. Furthermore, they had more than 87,000 “mentions” in the secular and religious press, both editorial and on social media.³⁶

Busted Halo is an outlet that seeks “a more joyful and meaningful experience of Catholicism that positively impacts peoples’ lives.” Founded by the Paulist Fathers, *Busted Halo* is distinctly American in that it is circulated within the United States, but also the product of the first religious order of Roman Catholic priests to be founded by an American citizen.³⁷ Based in Michigan, *Church Militant* is a conservative Catholic publication with more than 300,000 subscribers. The publication is described in the following terms: “The Church Militant (*Ecclesia Militans*) is the Christian militia. The Church Militant does battle against sin, the devil and the demonic "rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).” The “Mission” page for the publication quotes Pope Leo XIII who once wrote that “Christians are born for combat.”³⁸

Commonweal is a liberal-leaning publication founded in 1924 “for all readers who want to engage with the Catholic tradition in a context of justice, charity, and critical intelligence.” *Commonweal* was notably active during the Cold War, as one of the only Catholic publications to actively oppose of Senator Joseph McCarthy. In the 1990s, the publication contended “with the critics of liberal Catholicism, and imagines a still greater role for the laity.” The 21st century saw the publication criticize “the anti-Islamic rhetoric” fueled by the war on terror.” Founded in 1982, *Crisis* bills itself as “America’s most trusted

³⁶ *America*, “2021: A Year of Transformation and Hope,” accessed July 21, 2023.

³⁷ “About Busted Halo,” *Busted Halo*, accessed July 31, 2023.

³⁸ See “Mission,” *Church Militant*, accessed June 29, 2023.

source for authentic Catholic perspective on Church and State, arts and culture, science and faith.” *Crisis* is specifically situated as a Western Catholic news source, as their mission statement asks “The West has arrived at a crisis point. We must decide: Do we serve the City of God or the City of Man?” *Crisis* was a strictly print magazine until 2007. They note that “the highpoint of the print run was... when *Crisis* had over 33,000 subscribers— quite a feat for a relatively niche Catholic publication.” Writing for “orthodox” Catholics, *Crisis* claims to now be one of the top Catholic sites on the Internet. Since its creation, it has published over 14,000 articles and featured more than 2,000 writers.³⁹

Founded in 1990 by Richard John Neuhaus, a former Lutheran pastor who converted to Catholicism and was ordained as a priest, *First Things* is a conservative-leaning magazine and publication with a mission to “advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.” It also claims to be America’s “most influential journal of religion and public life.” Not a specifically Catholic publication, it caters to both evangelicals and Catholics, yet Catholicism is a strong pulse within the publication. The *First Things 2022 Annual Report* indicated that in 2022 alone, the web platform for the magazine had 3,215,958 unique visitors.⁴⁰

The *National Catholic Register* (NCRegister) was founded in 1927. A conservative-learning publication, it is read “by tens of thousands of active lay Catholics along with over 800 priests, 160 bishops, 40 archbishops and 30 Vatican officials.”

³⁹ “Crisis Magazine Turn 40,” *Crisis*, November 1, 2022”.

⁴⁰ See “About,” *First Things*, accessed May 5, 2023; “2022 Annual Report,” *First Things*, accessed May 5, 2023.

Publishing bi-weekly, NCRRegister is “America’s most complete and faithful Catholic news source.” In 2011, EWTN Global Catholic Network, the largest religious media network in the world, purchased NCRRegister. EWTN is a conservative Catholic media organization that consists of 11 international TV channels which are “broadcast in multiple languages 24 hours a day, seven days a week to over 350 million television households.”⁴¹ *National Catholic Reporter* (NCR) is a publication that states that it is “the only significant alternative Catholic voice that provides avenues for expression of diverse perspectives, promoting tolerance and respect for differing ideas.” Their values focus on social justice, human dignity, inclusiveness, and excellence.⁴²

If the media outlets analyzed were placed on a spectrum that ranged from most theologically conservative to most theologically liberal, that would look something like: *Church Militant*, *Crisis*, *First Things*, *National Catholic Register*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *Busted Halo*, *America*, and then *Commonweal*, with *Church Militant* representing the most conservative outlet and *Commonweal* the most liberal, and the middle point existing somewhere between NCRRegister and NCR. *Church Militant*, *Crisis*, and *First Things* have overlapping authors, yet *Crisis* and *Church Militant* are more likely to share contributors with one another than with *First Things*. Similarly, *America* and *Commonweal* overlap in terms of contributing authors. Of note, while NCR and NCRRegister appear to occupy complete opposite sides of the liberal/conservative spectrum,

⁴¹ “About Us,” *National Catholic Register*, accessed May 4, 2023, <https://www.ncregister.com/info/about-us>; “About EWTN,” *EWTN*, accessed May 4, 2023.

⁴² “Mission and Values,” *National Catholic Reporter*, accessed July 31, 2023.

respectively, the Bridge Report found that the publications scored almost identical negativity scores for their reporting on Islam and Muslims in the United States.⁴³

One notable comment on the media sources used and, consequently, my digital interlocutors: the vast majority of the authors discussed herein are men. This is not because I am choosing to highlight male voices over female voices, but rather because men are the ones who, by and large, are featured on the sites discussed writing about the topic of Islam and Muslims in the United States. The majority of authors on the sites in general are men. This is unsurprising given the gendered, hierarchal structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Despite the liberalizations that took place during the Second Vatican Council, which included getting rid of the obligation for women religious to don the habit and for lay women to veil during Mass, women are not ordained to the priesthood and many women are not active in scholarly circles. This is not to say there are none, nor to say that this could not change. What this is to say is that at the time of publication, men make up a majority of the authors: out of the 207 articles, 22 were written by women.

Chapter Overview

This project is comprised of four chapters. Chapter one, “White American Catholics: From the Pope in Exile to a Catholic Presidency,” traces the emergence of Catholics of Anglo-Saxon descent from a racialized, ethnic Other in the United States to white American Christians. Simultaneously, this chapter teases out the history of how during the integration of white Catholics into American civic participation, intracommunal

⁴³ Jordan Denari Duffner and The Bridge Initiative, *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam*, 62.

debates over authority fractured American Catholics into two distinct groups: liberals and conservatives. It is these intracommunal debates that speak to larger cultural concerns about citizenship, race, and belonging. Chapter two, “Racialized Muslims and White American Catholics,” explores how in the 20th century, both liberal and conservative Catholic media outlets produce, reproduce, and disseminate racialized tropes about Muslims and Islam in the United States. This chapter demonstrates that through Othering Muslims in the United States and establishing them as Other through a series of racialized tropes, white American Catholics reinforce their identities as true *American Catholics*.

The final two chapters explore how liberal and conservative media outlets, respectively, talk about Muslims in the United States. Chapter three, “Interreligious Dialogue and the Spirit of Vatican II,” explores liberal American Catholic discourses on Muslims in the United States. It argues that liberal Catholics utilize a framework of interreligious dialogue as a key component to their own religiosity. I argue that liberal Catholics use interreligious dialogue with Muslims as a means by which to strengthen their own Catholicism *and* use “the spirit of Vatican II” to establish dialogue as a cornerstone of American Catholicism. Finally, chapter four, “Conservative Catholics: Protecting Women, the Nation, and Their Americanness,” examines the gendered aspects of conservative Catholic media representations of Muslims and Islam in the United States. This chapter argues that conservative Catholic commentators construct their identities as conservative Catholics against a monolithic, racialized Muslim masculinity. Specifically, this chapter argues that white conservative American catholic men establish and maintain their identities as such through an intense othering of Muslims using highly gendered

discourses. Simultaneously, they distinguish themselves from liberal American Catholics by castigating interreligious dialogue as a dangerous, anti-American practice.

In late August 2023, two newsletters came across my inbox: one from *America* and one from *First Things*. The newsletter from *America* came with the subject line “This battle over sex education isn’t being led by white conservatives– but by Muslim parents.” The *First Things* newsletter came on a Sunday afternoon and was titled “Sunday Spotlight: Understanding Islam.” The spotlight featured two archived articles, one from 2015 titled “Holy Warriors” and the other from 2004 titled “Islamic Counter-Reformation.” The article from *America* discussed “the political hegemony” the Democratic party in the United States has over Muslim voters who, in actuality, align with white conservative voters more than with liberal voters on many social issues. It questions how socially conservative Muslims fit within the fabric of the Democratic party and if the party can, in fact, accommodate their deeply held religious beliefs.⁴⁴ The 2004 *First Things* article, “Islamic Counter-Reformation,” takes issue with “contemporary” Islamic practice. The author writes, “my own view is that many of the problems of contemporary Islam are more like Protestant problems than like Catholic problems, and therefore that something more akin to a dilution of Protestantism is required.”⁴⁵ Casting Islam as problematic and decidedly unlike Catholicism, this introductory sentence sets the tone for the rest of the

⁴⁴ Paul James Macrae, “This Battle over Sex Education Isn’t Being Led by White Conservatives but by Muslim Parents,” *America*, August 22, 2023.

⁴⁵ Paul Marshall, “Islamic Counter Reformation,” *First Things*, August 2004.

article. As discussed above, both media outlets occupy seemingly opposite ends of the theologically conservative/liberal spectrum, yet both outlets sent newsletters about Islam within five days of one another. At their cores, each article is about religious identity and civic belonging in the United States. This project analyzes exactly how this identity construction, and the resulting othering of Muslims in the United States, functions. As the following pages will show, the manners in which American Catholics discuss Islam in the United States function are not benign. The racialization of Muslims in the United States by American Catholics casts American Catholics as entirely American and, as a result, Muslims in the United States as inherently *unamerican*.

Chapter One: White American Catholics: From the Pope in Exile to a Catholic Presidency

On October 31, 1845, *The Liberator*, a famed abolitionist newspaper edited by William Lloyd Garrison, ran an article titled “The Haitian Emigrant.” Lamenting the state of Haiti both politically and religiously, the unnamed author bemoans that “then those who have any religion at all, are Catholics; and all these Saints’ days, and processions don’t seem to us like religion.”⁴⁶ What seems like a racially loaded, yet off-hand, comment is indicative of the general mood surrounding Catholicism in the mid-nineteenth century. For many American Protestants, Catholicism was simply irreligious. Anti-Catholicism functioned in the United States in a way that framed Catholicism as entirely incompatible with the ethos of the United States. Roman Catholics were considered non-white ethnic Others, incapable of being fully American due to their “heathenish” allegiance to the Pope and refusal to practice a refined, dignified Protestant Christianity⁴⁷. Nearly 175 years later, however, Joseph Biden became the second Roman Catholic president of the United States. He joined a federal government consisting of six Catholic Supreme Court justices and a Catholic Speaker of the House. Given the degree of anti-Catholic hostility and violence that percolated through the mid-19th and early 20th centuries, what changed between “The

⁴⁶ “The Haitian Emigrant,” *The Liberator*, October 31, 1845, https://www.digitalcommonwealth.org/book_viewer/commonwealth:gb19h4041.

⁴⁷ As will be discussed throughout this chapter, the Othering of Roman Catholics is deeply embedded in Christian nationalism. Throughout this project, I employ Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry’s framework of Christian nationalism to think of it not as a specific theological interpretation of Protestant Christianity, but rather as “a cultural framework—a collection of myths, traditions, symbols, narratives, and value systems— that idealizes and advocates a fusion of Christianity with American civic life” (10). For 18th, 19th, and many 20th century nativist Protestants, Catholicism not only failed to be compatible with these myths, traditions, and symbols, but were seen as an active *threat* to American civic life and, consequently, to American Christendom.

Haitian Emigrant” and the election of Joseph Biden to the presidency? How did white American Catholics move from ostracization as “ethnic Other” to part and parcel of the larger American cultural milieu?

This chapter provides a historiography of Roman Catholicism in the United States from the late nineteenth century through the end of the twentieth century. Unlike previous historiographies on the same topic, however, this chapter specifically teases out the emergence of white American Roman Catholics, detailing the shift in the larger American national imaginary from viewing Catholics as a racial, ethnic Other to viewing white Roman Catholics as white Christians in the United States.⁴⁸ While Catholics have been in the United States for hundreds of years, the population of Catholics skyrocketed during the nineteenth century. Between 1840 and 1924, more than 1.8 million Irish immigrants settled in the United States. The quick and rapid influx of Catholics into the United States set off a renewed, jingoistic, and racialized anti-Catholicism throughout the country, making the 19th century a prudent place to begin this historiography.

⁴⁸ For historiographies of Catholics in the United States see: Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*, 1st ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985); John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: Norton, 2003). R. Scott Appleby and Kathleen Sprows Cummings, eds., *Catholics in the American Century: Recasting Narratives of U.S. History*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012); Michael J. Pfeifer, *The Making of American Catholicism: Regional Culture and the Catholic Experience* (New York: New York University Press, 2020); James T. Fisher, *Communion of Immigrants: A History of Catholicism in America* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000); James M. O’Toole, *The Faithful: A History of Catholics in America* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008). John McGreevy’s *Parish Boundaries* presents a history of the Catholic encounter with race, but it is largely limited to the 20th century and in the North, largely discussing white Catholics’ encounters with Black Americans in the midst of the Great Migration. On the other hand, Matthew J. Cressler’s *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic* traces the emergence of Black Catholicism during the 20th century in Chicago.

The national imagination of Americanness was, and remains, fueled by Protestant roots.⁴⁹ Roman Catholics, as a demographic, are not all white—this is certainly just as true in the United States as it is globally. However, white American Catholics are, I argue, the only Catholics who have gained full access to American cultural citizenship. This chapter will demonstrate that while Catholics merged with Protestants into a larger group of American Christians, intracommunal struggles and debates over authority fractured white American Catholics into two main groups: liberal and conservative Catholics. Becoming fully discrete by the end of the Second Vatican Council, liberal and conservative Catholics disagree on issues of authority within the Church and about how best to exist in a pluralistic society. Liberal Catholics, historically, pushed for progressive reforms within the Church, like those solidified during the Second Vatican Council, and urged the Church to become more accommodating of other religious traditions. Conservative Catholics, on the other hand, were disillusioned by the liberal agendas that sought to upend hundreds of years of tradition within the Church, disagreed with public dissent with the Church and its decisions, and were unsettled with theological shifts towards relativism. These intracommunal debates are important because they do not exist in a vacuum. In fact, intracommunal debates among American Catholics speak to larger cultural concerns about rights,

⁴⁹ David Sehat demonstrates that the United States has a long -standing history of linking proper, moral citizenship with Protestant Christianity’s moral code. He writes that “because the morality enforced in law often came from Protestant Christian ideals and was presented as such, behind the claim of exceptional liberty stood the reality of religious control, which worked through much of U.S. history to coerce rather than to persuade citizens to behave according to [Protestant] religious norms” (7). See David Sehat, *The Myth of American Religious Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). Also see Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972); R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Tisa Joy Wenger, *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

citizenship, modernity, and race. During the 20th century, contention among liberal and conservative Catholics flourished regarding race, especially during the Civil Rights movement. While Catholics as a whole were largely inactive during the Civil Rights Movement, white liberal inter-racialist Catholics sought to integrate churches and white nuns frequently took missions in inner-city communities of color.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, conservative Catholics were reckoning with the presence of Black Catholics in their neighborhoods. As John McGreevy notes, before the 1940s, Catholics primarily thought of race in relation to other Euro-American groups, but with the Great Migration and the influx of Black Americans into northern Catholic neighborhoods, white American Catholics tapped into the very American racial hierarchy that strictly distinguished Black and white peoples. By discriminating against Black Americans, both Catholic and non-Catholic, white Catholics distinguished themselves from another Other and began to align themselves more closely with white American Protestants.⁵¹ While white Catholics as a

⁵⁰ See Matthew J. Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2017); Amy L. Koehlinger, *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

⁵¹ John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 34. In addition to the 1960 presidential election, the 60s were revolutionary for the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement had seen little Catholic involvement, but the Catholics who were active in the movement were white inter-racialist Catholics who “fought hard, in para-parish organizations like the Catholic Interracial Council, against so-called ‘racial’ parishes that separated Black and Irish and Italian and Mexican Catholics from one another.”⁵¹ Women religious were among the most active Catholic population in the Civil Rights Movement. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, women religious transformed their missions from traditional assignments, like teaching in parochial schools, and moved towards unprecedented works outside of their assigned parishes. Women religious in the United States were not only emboldened to move beyond the cloistered walls of their parishes due to the changes that happened within Vatican II, but they also were uniquely situated because of the cultural movements that were taking place simultaneously. The cultural revolution and the Civil Rights Movement added to the ability that American women religious had to take on these new missions. These women religious were often white women working in Black communities. Despite the social justice orientation of their callings to serve non-Catholic communities of color, the Catholic liberals within these communities referred to them as “foreign” or “heathen” missions, which carried a clearly racialized connotation that conveyed more than “non-Catholic” in meaning. The interaction between white women

whole were accepted by white Protestants, internal divisions caused discord. Demarcating the emergence of white Catholic liberals and conservatives is important because the history of these two groups informs the ways in which they respond to American Muslims in the twenty-first century. Catholic debates about Muslims, and other non-Christian groups, in the United States cannot be separated from the history of American Catholicism and the responses that American Catholics have to other religious traditions are intrinsically tied to these foundational debates.

Anti-Catholicism in the 19th Century

While anti-Catholicism had been a mainstay in American culture for centuries, the degree of its severity ebbed and flowed. In the mid-19th century, anti-Catholicism resurged, in response to an increase in immigration from Catholic-majority countries and the economic slump of the 1870s. By 1854, more than 2.75 million Catholics had immigrated to the United States, with the total number of Catholics reaching more than 3.1 million. This made Catholicism the largest single denomination in the country.⁵² Anti-Catholic sentiments in the mid-19th century were linked to three main issues. First was Catholic opposition to abolition. National abolitionist publications, like *The Liberator*, used a Protestant-informed call to morality as the basis for most articles printed in the weekly periodicals. Catholics, those who owned slaves and those who did not, were not looked upon favorably by liberal abolitionists due to continued suspicion of the institutional

religious and communities of color highlights the emergence of white Catholics as a discrete group, distinct from Black Catholics and Latino/a Catholics. See Cassandra L. Yaccovazzi, *Escaped Nuns: True Womanhood and the Campaign against Convents in Antebellum America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

⁵² Cassandra L. Yaccovazzi, *Escaped Nuns: True Womanhood and the Campaign against Convents in Antebellum America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018) xix.

Church and its lack of condemnation of slavery. Second was Catholic opposition to women's suffrage, which proved to compound anti-Catholicism, specifically for liberal abolitionists. The perceived Catholic opposition to women's suffrage was linked to the anti-convent sentiments that percolated through 19th century America, specifically among abolitionist circles. Cassandra Yacovazzi demonstrates that abolitionists viewed Catholic nuns as victims of enslavement by the Catholic church. She argues that

Abolitionists presented slavery as a threat to female purity, the marriage institution, and happy homes, citing the rape of female slaves and the harrowing experience of family separation through sale. While abolitionists relied on factual testimonies, crusaders against convents, relying on unsubstantiated evidence, also presented the nun's life as the antithesis to female virtue, marriage, and domesticity, striking a nerve with middle-class sensibilities.⁵³

Liberal Protestant abolitionists used sensationalized tales about nuns as a way to depict the moral failings of Catholics. Social identity is intimately tied with gender relations and representations of women.⁵⁴ How women are depicted, particularly by men, in this case male abolitionists, reveals the deeply rooted societal concerns of the male authors. In this case, by sensationalizing the role of women religious in Catholicism, male abolitionists make the case that Catholics are in every way antithetical to American identity and morals.

The third issue for Catholics in the United States was a post-Civil War sense of American identity that was “a conviction that the crucible of battle had forged a nation where once had stood a rickety union.”⁵⁵ This national vision of a discernable American

⁵³ Cassandra Yacovazzi, *Escaped Nuns: True Womanhood and the Campaign against Convents in Antebellum America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), xv.

⁵⁴ Nadia Maria El Cheikh, *Women Islam, and Abbasid Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 117.

⁵⁵ John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co.), 96.

identity did not include Catholics, whose presence threatened a cohesive a functional United States. In short, white Anglo-Saxon Protestants who had been born in the United States were part and parcel of a true American identity, while Black Americans, American indigenous communities, Chinese and Japanese immigrants, and Catholics were excluded from American cultural citizenship. While the role of the Pope in Catholic life was a concern, one of the most prevalent critiques circulating mid-nineteenth century America was the Church's staunch opposition to modernism.⁵⁶ The anti-modernist stance of the papacy fueled anti-Catholic rhetoric that Catholicism's presence in a country stunted intellectual and economic growth. Proponents of this theory often cited Catholic-majority countries, like Italy, as an example of what could befall the United States should Catholicism continue to flourish.⁵⁷ The roots of English Protestantism heavily informed the ways in which the largely Protestant American cultural majority viewed Catholics of European descent.⁵⁸ Catholicism functioned as a foil to American identity, a discursive move that I will argue throughout this project that is now weaponized against Muslims in the United States by white Catholics.

The anti-Catholicism that percolated through American society during the 18th, 19, and 20th centuries was not only tied to the Protestant Reformation and a decrrial of "popish"

⁵⁶ McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 102.

⁵⁷ McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 102. Following chapters will discuss the ways in which this rhetoric is repackaged and weaponized against Muslims in the United States by white Catholics. Proponents of these anti-Muslim sentiments often cite Muslim majority countries as examples for the dangers that Islam poses to American ideals of modern liberalism.

⁵⁸ Protestant Americans actively racialized Catholics of European descent and coded them as non-white and Other. This discrimination also applies to Catholics of color, like Black Catholics, however, for Catholics of color, they are already racialized in a phenotypical sense and were placed at the bottom of the American racial hierarchy. It is this phenotypical racialization that takes precedence for white Protestants (and white Catholics). In short, the focus was on the fact that Black Americans were Black rather than the fact that they were Catholic.

ways. Rather, anti-Catholicism was anchored to an American Protestant nativism that constructed non-Anglo Saxon Protestant immigrants as racial and ethnic Others. Irish immigrants— as well as those from Poland, Italy, and Eastern Europe— were met with “bitter hostility” due to the prevailing idea that Catholic immigrants were “inherently depraved.”⁵⁹ The thought that European Catholics were depraved was more than a poor opinion. Rather, as Kathryn Gin Lum demonstrates, the portrayal of Catholics as heathens functioned to racialize them as non-white, non-Christian, and doomed to eternal damnation. For those of English descent who lived in the United States, the idea that the Irish were barbarians seeped into larger American cultural ideas. The Irish were thought to be, “the quintessential wanders in the heath, the wild men who needed to be taught how to live in civil society.”⁶⁰ But leaving Ireland and immigrating to the United States was not enough to rid Irish Catholics of the pejorative label of heathen. Rather, their Catholicism tainted them. Protestants took issue with almost every facet of Catholicism: the cult of saints, veneration of images and saints, the propitiation of the Virgin Mary, the use of incense, the transubstantiation of the Eucharist, and their allegiance to the Pope. Each of these aspects of Catholicism were seen as remnants of paganism. For Protestants, “the Irish had access to the truth, but the failure of the Protestant Reformation to take firm root in Ireland was prof of their essential heathenism, obstinacy, and guilt.”⁶¹ Because the Irish Catholics knew of Protestantism, yet still chose to enthusiastically practice their

⁵⁹ James T. Fisher, *Communion of Immigrants: A History of Catholics in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 147.

⁶⁰ Kathryn Gin Lum, *Heathens: Religion and Race in American History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022), 37.

⁶¹ Lum, 37.

Catholicism, a pagan form of “Christianity,” it was clear to anti-Catholic American Protestants that they were a lesser class— a lesser race— of people. This sentiment was reinforced by the common depiction of Catholics practicing “primitive” religion in popular newspaper caricatures.⁶²

The anti-Catholicism of the 19th century was ubiquitous. Jose Casanova estimates that anti-Catholicism was one of the “few dispositions shared by practically all Protestant groups in colonial America.”⁶³ The anti-Catholicism of the colonial period waned until the mid-19th century when it was renewed with a sudden, intense vitriol that had dire consequences. Reverend Lyman Beecher, President of Yale, a New England Calvinist, and father to Harriet Beecher Stowe, began an anti-Catholic sermon circuit in 1834 and declared that “the Catholic Church holds now in darkness and bondage nearly half of the civilized world... It is the skillful, powerful, dreadful system of corruption to those who wield it, and of slavery and debasement to those who live under it.”⁶⁴ At the same time that speakers like Reverend Beecher were proclaiming their Catholic hostilities, other anti-Catholic American Protestants were taking physical action against the Catholics in the United States. In 1834, the Ursuline Convent on Mount Benedict in Charlestown,

⁶² José Casanova, “The Politics of Nativism: Islam in Europe, Catholicism in the United States,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 38, no. 4-5 (May/June 2012).

⁶³ Casanova, “The Politics of Nativism.”

⁶⁴ Lyman Beecher, in José Casanova, “The Politics of Nativism.” Beyond inherent depravity that threatened the livelihood of those who lived where Catholicism existed, ethnic Others were also portrayed as risks to life itself. Alan M. Kraut demonstrates that in the 1840s, at the beginning of mass immigration from Ireland, Irish immigrants were blamed for outbreaks of cholera and Italian immigrants for polio. See Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the Immigrant Menace* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 2.

Massachusetts was burnt to the ground.⁶⁵ In the days following the arson of the Ursuline convent, *The Liberator* published a report of the arson, and stated that

The excitement is said to have arisen against the nunnery in consequence of a report that a female was confined there against her will and that she had once made her escape, but was enticed back under the promise of being dismissed in three or four weeks with honor, which was not done. Mr. E. Cullen of Charlestown and the Selectmen of the same town investigated the affair, and certify that the female remained there on the 11th inst. voluntarily.⁶⁶

The anti-Catholicism stoked by publications like *The Liberator* resulted in catastrophic consequences. Anti-Catholicism had moved beyond the lecture circuit and into the physical destruction of property that threatened the lives of all of those that lived in the Ursuline Convent. After the arson attack, *The Liberator* refers to the event as “excitement” and the briefly notes that the rumors that instigated the event were false. The burning of convents is, as we will see in later chapters, parallel to 21st century attacks on mosques in the United States, which are stoked by anti-Muslim hostilities, including those that circulate on Catholic news media sites.

The anti-Catholic fervor resulted in the publication of dozens of “escaped nun” novels which detailed false accounts of women escaping convents where they had allegedly been held hostage. The Ursuline convent had been the subject of one of these novels, with rumors of hostage women fueling anti-Catholic paranoia. The novels depicted nuns as “white slaves,” who were portrayed as victims of sex, sadism, wicked priests, witness to infanticide, and innumerable other atrocities.⁶⁷ This anti-Catholicism functioned as a

⁶⁵ Casanova, “The Politics of Nativism;” Yacovazzi, *Escaped Nuns*, xv.

⁶⁶ “‘The Despotism of Freedom!’ More Mobs!,” *The Liberator*, 4, no. 33, August 16, 1834.

⁶⁷ Yacovazzi.

means of racializing Catholics as distinctly Other and non-American. This nativist and Protestant discursive move is one where anti-Catholicism “reflects a general understanding of American civic belonging—namely that *real* Americans are native-born white Protestants” and, therefore, *real* Americans are not sexual sadists who “enslave” women under the guise of religion nor murder infants. The association of Catholicism with slavery is directly connected to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church tolerated and sometimes even supported the brutal chattel slavery that existed in the United States. As Maura Jane Farrelly notes, “Catholic republicanism... was a racialized republicanism, built on a foundation of ordered relationships that were defined and defended by the institution of race-based slavery.”⁶⁸ Furthermore, evidence shows that while Catholics who owned slaves held a disproportionate share of slaves in the Upper South and that they converted enslaved peoples to Catholicism, they manumitted enslaved peoples at a rate far lower than other slave owners.⁶⁹ This confluence of factors became one of the bases for Protestant abolitionists to produce anti-Catholic hostilities throughout the United States. The presence of anti-Catholicism in numerous facets of American culture—from politics, to literature, to religious sermons— meant that anti-Catholicism was part-and-parcel of 19th century American identity. The anti-Catholic hostilities that permeated the American cultural scene during the 19th-century was not benign. As seen above, it held real, and sometimes dire, consequences for Catholics living in the United States. The highly discriminatory views of

⁶⁸ Maura Jane Farrelly, “American Slavery, American Freedom, American Catholicism,” *Early American Studies* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 85.

⁶⁹ Farrelly, “American Slavery, American Freedom, American Catholicism.”

Catholics held by American Protestants appeared in almost every aspect of American culture during the 19th century.

Parochial Schools and the Battle over American Identity

One element of American Catholic culture that flourished during the late 19th century and early 20th century was the parochial school. Parochial schools provide a good window into how American Catholicism functioned in the United States during the late-19th and early-20th centuries: separate from the public (Protestant-influenced) school system, yet divided largely along ethnic lines and neighborhoods, the parochial school was the crown jewel of a parish. The role of the parish in twentieth century American life cannot be overstated. In 1884, during the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, the presiding American bishops decreed that all Catholic children in the United States had the right to a Catholic education, and thus required that every parish have a school within two years. This began a massive school construction push that placed school at the center of the American Catholic neighborhood.⁷⁰ Between 1880 and 1900, parochial school enrollment grew from 405,000 to almost 1.25 million.⁷¹ The parochial school ignited renewed fears about Catholic integration into the American cultural sphere writ large.

During the mid-19th century, public schools emerged as the beacon of American identity. In public schools, Protestant theology, hymns, 10 Commandments, and prayers were part of the curricula. Proponents of public schools “champion[ed] the public schools as the nation’s sacred temple, and any attempt to remove the Bible from the school was

⁷⁰ Fisher, 78.

⁷¹ Fisher, 78.

seen as a ‘blow at the very foundation of republicanism.’”⁷² American Catholics were seen as doing just that. Not only did Catholic parents want their children to receive Catholic instruction in Protestant institutions, but many non-Catholic Americans also saw these schools as fundamentally detrimental to American society. As John T. McGreevy notes,

from the mid-1930s to the early 1950s, intellectuals concerned about Catholic power labored to demonstrate the non-hierarchical sources of American culture, a project in which Catholicism played a strategic, antithetical role. According to editors at the *New Republic* and the *Nation*, a broad group of faculty members in the humanities and social sciences, and many influential figures in Reform Judaism and mainline Protestantism, Catholic authoritarianism might quash the scientific spirit, produce adults incapable of psychological autonomy, and have disastrous effect on national unity because of the growing number of children enrolled in Catholic school.⁷³

The parochial school functioned simultaneously as a beacon of American Catholicism *and* as a physical representation of the incompatibility of Catholicism with the American ethos. Their existence furthered the paranoia that Catholics were not true Americans and that they were unable to integrate into American society. The parochial school, in the minds of anti-Catholics, functioned as a training ground for anti-American ideals and would lead to an increasingly divided United States due to the increasing number of children who attended them. This concern was so great that the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) protested parochial schools. The KKK felt that removing the Protestant Bible from public schools *and* sending children to Catholic parochial schools threatened the literal American nation. The KKK “feared Catholics because of the allegiance to an opposing religious movement, their ties to immigration, and the hierarchy of the Church, which appeared secretive and possibly

⁷² Dolan, 269.

⁷³ McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 175.

dangerous.”⁷⁴ The KKK’s focus on Catholicism had much to do with what Mark Paul Richard calls “an attempt to reassert control over their communities” in the face of rising Catholic demographics.⁷⁵ While not all white Protestants were members of the Klan during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many were, in fact, highly sympathetic to its causes, which is why the Klan’s platform of anti-Catholicism provides a useful barometer for thinking about the anti-Catholicism during this time period more widely.

Catholics, however, did not see parochial schools as the antithesis of American identity. Rather, they saw no conflict in educating their children in a religious setting, typically influenced by their ethnic backgrounds. Not only were Catholics keen on sending their children to parochial schools, but Catholic universities were also a popular choice for those looking to continue into higher education, which sat uneasy with the KKK and its sympathizers. In an event that evokes memories of the arson attack on Mount Benedict convent, on December 19, 1923, Klansmen detonated a dozen bombs on the campus of the University of Dayton, a Catholic institution. 50 cars filled with Klansmen drove through the campus threatening students, as they were confronted with a large burning cross that had been lit at the time of the first bomb.⁷⁶ Like the incident in Charlestown, MA, the KKK’s attack on the University of Dayton demonstrates that the racialized anti-Catholicism that pervaded American culture was not benign nor limited to op-eds and books. Rather, it had real life consequences for Catholic communities around the country.

⁷⁴ Kelley J. Baker, *The Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK’s Appeal to Protestant Americans, 1915-1930* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 91; 200.

⁷⁵ Mark Paul Richard, *Not a Catholic Nation: the Ku Klux Klan Confronts New England in the 1920s* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 2.

⁷⁶ William Vance Trollinger Jr., “Hearing the Silence: The University of Dayton, the Ku Klux Klan, and Catholic Universities and Colleges in the 1920s,” *American Catholic Studies* 124, no. 1 (Spring 2013).

The Whitening of American Catholicism in the 20th Century

School systems, particularly the parochial schools, served more than just children born into Catholic families. Black migrants from the South emigrated in large numbers. Largely non-Catholic Black populations settled in Catholic neighborhoods and sent their children to Catholic parochial schools. The arrival of Black migrants to Northern cities, coupled with the ubiquity of the parochial school and the Catholic theological mission to convert non-Catholics, gave rise to Black Catholicism, as Matthew Cressler has shown.⁷⁷ John T. McGreevy has argued that “the primary ‘race’ problem for American Catholics before the 1940s was the physical and cultural integration of the various Euro-American groups into the parishes and neighborhoods of the urban North, not conflict between ‘blacks’ and ‘whites.’”⁷⁸ Interactions between the Euro-American Catholic communities saw American Catholics utilize the racialized ethnic language described above. However, when it came to discussing interactions with Black Americans, they suddenly coded themselves and their co-religionists as “white.”

While American Catholics were coding themselves as white, non-Catholic white Americans did not consider Catholics of European descent to be white. This barred them from the privileges afforded to those who were coded as white, such as citizenship, better paying jobs, and suitable housing.⁷⁹ Between 1840 and 1924, the category of “white” was

⁷⁷ Matthew J. Cressler, *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

⁷⁸ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 9.

⁷⁹ Numerous works exist delineating the complex relationship between whiteness and citizenship. By excluding groups of peoples from citizenship, they were coded as non-white and vice versa. See Jacobson; Ian Haney Lopez, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press 2006); Cheryl L. Harris, “Whiteness as Property,” *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (June 1993): 1707-1791).

still used as a term for white supremacy in the United States, but it expanded, now accommodating for varying degrees of whiteness:

The key here is in his [sic] implicit ranking of human difference by some degree—peoples who are entirely “different” and those who are “some-what” different. But even if painted in “shades” rather than in stark black-and-white polarities, the importation of “different” peoples posed a terrible threat to the well-being of the republic.⁸⁰

This “variegated” understanding of whiteness demonstrates how even within a black-and-white racial system, non-Anglo-Saxon white immigrants were coded as not entirely white and as dangerous. Poles, Irish, Italians, Croats, and other groups, who immigrated to the United States in large numbers during the mid-19th and early-20th centuries were not understood to be white in the sense that white Anglo-Saxon Protestants were. Race functions as a constructed category rather than a factual quality; it operates as “designations coined for the sake of grouping and separating peoples along lines of presumed difference,” which allows the categories to shift depending on time and place.⁸¹ It is precisely the sticky, vague, and moldable nature of race that allows for non-Anglo-Saxon European immigrants to be both white and non-white. Whiteness, as a category, is neither monolithic nor stagnant. This is certainly true for the late-19th and early 20th centuries before non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants attain the status of white that affords them a privilege not extended to non-white peoples in the United States. Matthew Frye Jacobson argues that “racial categories themselves—their vicissitudes and the contests over them—reflect the competing notions of history, peoplehood, and collective destiny by which power has been

⁸⁰ Jacobson, 47.

⁸¹ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 4.

organized and contested on the American scene.”⁸² Racial designations lay bare societal ideas about who is and who is not eligible for citizenship and, in many cases, personhood. Who was coded as white and when is deeply tied to a desire that Barbara Fields has named “a determination to keep the US a white man’s country,” which “has been the central theme of American, not just Southern, history. Racism has been America’s fatal flaw.”⁸³ Catholics remained non-white Americans through the mid-20th century. As Catholics communities were quite insular during this period, their segregation from the rest of American society led to further attacks on their ability to be American.

During the mid-20th century, the Catholic intracommunal language to discuss race shifted as “white” Catholics began interacting with Black Catholics, and Black Americans more generally. During this time period, many white American Catholics began to distinguish themselves from Black Americans through discrimination. While the immigrant ethnic groups faced prejudice from non-Catholic Americans (and certainly one another), they did not treat Black Americans the way they treated one another. John T. McGreevy argues that “for Catholics to bracket African-Americans as simply another ‘immigrant’ group, in other words, ignored the way in which Euro-Americans claimed a shared identity. The same priest proposing that African-Americans could be viewed as ‘foreigners’ could also assume the existence of ‘our Caucasian society’ and lump Irish, Italian, and Poles into one ‘white’ race.”⁸⁴ The variegated classification of ‘white’

⁸² Jacobson, 9.

⁸³ Barbra J. Fields, “Ideology and Race in American History,” in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 143.

⁸⁴ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 34.

mentioned above now functioned as a means through which Catholics of European descent tapped into the white status previously afforded only to white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. When interacting with one another or with white Protestants, they were understood to be racialized ethnic groups. Through interactions with Black Americans, particularly through the Great Migration, they became comparatively white. In these instances, “ethnicity was flattened into race.”⁸⁵ This was a common tactic used by racialized minority groups in order to join the larger cultural imaginary. This national, cultural imaginary connects race and religion, and that the “classificatory terms mutually defined one another in American culture,”⁸⁶ thus beginning the linkage of white Catholicism to white Christianity, which allowed white Catholics to merge into larger American culture. The white-but-not-white status of Catholic immigrants during this period is what, as we will see, later gives white American Catholics the foothold to become part and parcel of the American national imaginary, unlike non-white Catholics or other peoples of color. In the 1950s, two trends emerged that propelled American Catholics from ethnic Other to white Christians. First was the Cold War. Many anti-Catholic tropes highlighted the influence of the Vatican as a reason to distrust Catholic loyalty to the United States. However, during the 1950s, communism emerged as a “true” threat to Americanism. Catholics had been, and continued to be, vociferously anti-Communist, marking them as more American than previously thought. Sidney Hook, a prominent anti-communist philosopher, commented to a reporter in 1955 that “all I’m saying is that today the most urgent threat comes from the Kremlin,

⁸⁵ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 36.

⁸⁶ Tisa Joy Wenger, *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 20.

not the Vatican. After all, the Pope hasn't got any atomic bombs."⁸⁷ More than not having any bombs, most Catholics during the 1950s saw the threat of communism as more than a threat to democracy. Rather, they saw communism as a threat to western Christendom, with the United States being the final stalwart of Christendom.⁸⁸ That Catholics were demographically the strongest supporters of McCarthyism and passionately anti-communist signaled their ability to be American.⁸⁹ The second major development that occurred simultaneously with anti-communism was the move of white Catholics from lower socioeconomic status to the middle class. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Catholic immigrants, who largely had little education, worked low-wage and low-status jobs.⁹⁰ But with the establishment of Catholic parochial schools and Catholic universities, the American Catholic population saw larger numbers of Catholics on prestigious university faculty rosters and the rise of Catholic intellectuals who were well known outside of Catholic communities.⁹¹ These trends "fostered a new perception of Catholics as literate and cultured people."⁹²

The 1960s, for the United States in particular, was a decade of radical social upheaval. In 1960, John F. Kennedy became the first Roman Catholic president in the history of the United States. For Catholics, this was a massive achievement in moving into the American mainstream. Just over 30 years previous, in 1928, Herbert Hoover beat Al Smith in the presidential election. Smith, a Roman Catholic, suffered from anti-Catholic

⁸⁷ Sidney Hook, in McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 212.

⁸⁸ Allitt, 60

⁸⁹ Allitt, 20-23.

⁹⁰ D'Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Meyer, 3.

⁹¹ D'Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Meyer, 5.

⁹² D'Antonio, Davidson, Hoge, and Meyer, 5.

prejudice, and won only 7 states' votes. Much of the anti-Catholic rhetoric during the 1928 election focused on the devotion of Catholics to the whims of Rome, painting Catholics as entirely incapable of being patriotic Americans. This rhetoric was pushed heavily by the KKK, who were active in the American political sphere at local, state, and national levels.⁹³ Kennedy's election did not mean that Americans were unconcerned about a Roman Catholic in the highest public office—John F. Kennedy, like many Catholic scholars and public figures, was forced to demonstrate the benign nature of his Catholicism. In the fall of 1960, Kennedy gave a speech to the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston, a Protestant organization, and stated that “I do not accept the right of any ecclesiastical official to tell me what to do in the sphere of my public responsibility as an elected official.”⁹⁴ That Kennedy, a white Roman Catholic, won a presidential election, demonstrates the gradual acceptance of Catholics into the American cultural mainstream. However, in the 1960s, this acceptance was still conditional, as is evident by Kennedy's speech to the Ministerial Association of Greater Houston.

While Catholics of European descent began to shift from a racialized, ethnic Other, seen as completely discrete from, and antithetical to, American identity, American Catholics were undergoing intense internal changes as well. During the same period, from the mid-nineteenth century through the twentieth, two polarizing groups were forming within the Catholic community: conservatives and liberals. The formation of these two groups is closely intertwined with the contemporary sociocultural changes happening in

⁹³ McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 147-48; Baker, 229.

⁹⁴ Allitt, 19.

the United States. As we will see, the emergence of conservative and liberal groups has a lasting impact on the American Catholic community.

Intracommunal Tensions in the Late-19th and Early 20th Centuries

While Catholics in the United States dealt with hostility and discrimination from non-Catholic Americans, the Church itself was dealing with intracommunal discord that threatened to fragment the Church. It is through these intracommunal tensions that conservative and liberal Catholics emerge as distinct theological and political camps within the American Church. These fragmented intracommunal positions would fully emerge in the 1960s and continue to exist through the 21st century. Aligning with either the conservative or liberal position informs not only theological stances, but also how one interacts with non-Catholics, like American Muslims, contemporarily.

In response to the Enlightenment, Pope Pius IX called the First Vatican Council (1868). The relationship between the papacy and the Enlightenment-formed principles of modernity and liberalism was tenuous at best. Liberalism is the “long tradition of political philosophy—stemming in part from the social contract theories of thinkers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau—that places the autonomous individual at the center of political and social concerns.”⁹⁵ The Enlightenment was linked to the tradition of Protestantism, thereby linking the democratic ideals of the recently reunified United States to Protestantism and *not* Catholicism.⁹⁶ In the wake of the Civil War, the relationship between Protestantism and American identity were tightly wound and rooted in

⁹⁵ Fenton, 5.

⁹⁶ McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 176.

Enlightenment principles.⁹⁷ In the lead up to the First Vatican Council Pope Pius IX published an encyclical by the name of *Quanta Cura* (1864), wherein he systematically lashes out against

the nefarious enterprises of wicked men, who, like raging waves of the sea foaming out of their own confusion, and promising liberty whereas they are slaves of corruption, have striven by their deception opinions and most pernicious writings to raze the foundations of the Catholic religion and of civil society, to remove from among men all virtue and justice, to deprave persons, and especially inexperienced youth, to lead into the snares of error, and at length to tear it from the bosom of the Catholic Church.⁹⁸

The *Quanta Cura* makes the Church's stance on modernism and liberalism clear. Not only did it pose a threat to the institution of the Holy See itself, but it threatened to lure practicing Catholics away from the fold and warned that the youth of the Church were especially vulnerable to such temptations. The encyclical continues to warn that "since where religion has been removed from civil society, and the doctrine and authority of divine revelation repudiated, the genuine notion itself of justice and human right is darked and lost."⁹⁹ Once the First Vatican Council had convened in 1868, the pope published *Pastor Aeternus*, which established the concept of papal infallibility. This new doctrine moved the Church in a more conservative direction amidst a wave of liberalization and proved to be a crucial catalyst in the history of American Catholicism.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ John W. O'Malley links the Enlightenment to the anti-clerical sentiments that stoked the nineteenth century: "Even more devastating was the ideology that carried these events forward. Behind the Revolution lay the Enlightenment, which on the Continent was rabidly anticlerical, anti-Christian, and especially anti-Catholic," John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), 54.

⁹⁸ Pope Pius IX, "Quanta Cura: Condemning Current Errors," Papal Encyclicals Online, accessed December 8, 2022, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9quanta.htm>.

⁹⁹ Pope Pius IX, "Quanta Cura: Condemning Current Errors."

¹⁰⁰ From 1861-1922, the *Risorgimento*, or the Kingdom of Liberal Italy, had control of the Italian state. In September of 1870, the liberal rebels in Italy conquered Rome and wiped Vatican City off the European map. Pope Pius IX went into exile within the Vatican, depleted of temporal, state power. The "prisoner

Meanwhile, the winds of change were taking root in the United States despite the Church's official stance against modernism. During the late 19th century, one noted reformer named Isaac Hecker caused a stir. Hecker authored many essays and articles that attempted to reconcile the teaching of the Church and the newly minted modern age in an attempt to revamp the Church and attract Protestant converts within the United States.¹⁰¹ A proponent of Americanism, Hecker's works were popular—he authored two books, and an anthology of essays, and founded a monthly journal titled *Catholic World*. After his death in 1888, his legacy continued when he was the subject of a papal encyclical titled *Testem Benevolentiae* (1899). With the doctrine of papal infallibility adding even more credence to his encyclical, Pope Leo XIII took aim at Hecker's theology, specifically accommodation of other traditions in the name of attracting converts, writing

Let it be far from anyone's mind to suppress for any reason any doctrine that has been handed down. Such a policy would tend rather to separate Catholics from the Church than to bring in those who differ. There is nothing closer to our heart than to have those who are separated from the fold of Christ return to it, but in no other way than the way pointed out by Christ.¹⁰²

The condemnation of Hecker's vision of an Americanist Church saw a turning point for Catholics in the United States. In previous decades, Catholics in the United States were quite visible and active in the wider American cultural scene in spite of continued anti-

popes," which included Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X, were in a precarious state. "The Roman Question," which refers to "the abnormal status of the pope as a prisoner of Liberal Italy without a territorial sovereignty to guarantee his spiritual autonomy" would be a guiding force of the trajectory of Catholicism in the United States for decades to come. See Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

¹⁰¹ Patrick W. Carey, "Hecker, Isaac Thomas (18 December 1819-22 December 1888)," *American National Biography*, February 2000, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.bu.edu/10.1093/anb/9780198606697.article.0800656>.

¹⁰² Pope Leo XIII, "Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae: Concerning New Opinions, Virtue, Nature and Grace, with Regard to Americanism," Papal Encyclicals Online, accessed December 13, 2022, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/113teste.htm>.

Catholic hostilities. Yet after the *Testem Benevolentiae*, “as if repentant for the theological deviations denounced in the encyclical, the American church retreated in the years following its release into a cultural ghetto, effectively shutting itself off from the ideological enticements of the broader society.”¹⁰³

The general isolation of Catholics continued through the 1950s. United in a patriotism during World War II and following, liberal and conservative Catholics had very different goals for their respective communities: liberal Catholics pushed for accommodation with Protestant culture while conservative Catholics advocated a continued separateness and isolation. It was these two prevailing stances that came to a head during the Second Vatican Council. In the lead up to Vatican II, white liberal Catholics became known as “interracialists” who sought to “erase race altogether” as a means to end discrimination within their parishes and within the United States.¹⁰⁴ The concern for racial change within the United States was the hallmark characteristic of the mid-20th century liberal Catholic, who was often a layperson “embarrassed by the reluctance of Church officials to initiate programs on racial matters” during the mid-20th century.¹⁰⁵ More so, liberal Catholics displayed a toleration of, even defense of, the liberalist tradition stemming out of the Enlightenment. While disavowing “secular liberalism,” much like conservative Catholics, American liberal Catholics thought that democracy, in the sense that people choose their own representatives so that they may

¹⁰³ Michael W. Cuneo, *The Smoke of Satan: Conservative and Traditionalist Dissent in Contemporary American Catholicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8.

¹⁰⁴ Cressler, 11.

¹⁰⁵ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 85.

represent the citizens, was a positive development.¹⁰⁶ This was quite controversial considering that less than 50 years earlier, Pope Leo XIII had condemned liberalism. Conservative Catholics were appalled by this toleration. Patrick Allitt demonstrates that “American liberals in the twentieth century, Catholic conservatives believed, had made a fetish of pragmatism and relativism, so that they lacked the firm intellectual foundations on which to stand in the coming war for civilization.”¹⁰⁷ This civilizational struggle was doomed to come to pass because American liberals refused to see that liberalism and communism were inextricably linked and offered the perfect gateway to “the defeat of Western civilization.”¹⁰⁸ The discontent between Catholic liberals and conservatives compounded almost immeasurably during the 1960s, largely due to the Second Vatican Council.

Vatican II and the Fragmented Transformation of American Catholicism

The tension between these two groups within the American Catholic community was palpable. Then, in 1959, Pope John XXIII was elected to the papacy. Viewed as an “interim” pope who satisfied both liberal and conservative camps within the Church, Pope John XXIII placated liberals who heavily critiqued Pope Pius XII for his refusal to condemn the Holocaust yet was felt to be a safe choice for conservatives. The election of

¹⁰⁶ Allitt, 32.

¹⁰⁷ Allitt, 32.

¹⁰⁸ Allitt, 32. As we will see in later chapters, twenty-first century American Catholic conservatives use similar language and imagery to talk about the dangers of liberal ‘toleration’ of Muslims in the United States. Much as communism is portrayed as a threat to Western Christendom in the mid-twentieth century, in the twenty-first, Islam and Muslim Americans are cast as the prevailing dangers to Western civilization and to Christendom.

Pope John XXIII displayed a ‘win-win’ attitude amongst the cardinals. However, when he announced a Second Vatican Council, it took the Church, and the world, by surprise.

Following the announcement of the Second Vatican Council, most participants assumed that the council would be a “rubber-stamp” of the conservative Church’s agenda,¹⁰⁹ yet Pope John XXIII repeatedly used the Italian word *aggiornamento* to describe his intentions with the council. *Aggiornamento*, a verb meaning “bringing up to date,” carried with it a liberal connotation that the Church had been eschewing for centuries, most notably with Pope Leo XIII’s condemnation of Americanism. This usage of *aggiornamento* infused the council with tension from the start.¹¹⁰ The expectation had been set that for most bishops only their attendance was required. The actual proceedings would be handled by Rome rather than by bishops and cardinals from around the world because Rome was the center of the Church and “it was Rome, the Pope, who had decided to call the bishops to a council!”¹¹¹ On the opening day of the Council, however, Pope John XXIII gave a speech that urged the attendant fathers to think of the necessity of the council from the point of view of “renewed, serene, and tranquil adherence to all the teachings of the Church... the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a leap forward toward a doctrinal penetration and formation of consciences.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Melissa J. Wilde, *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 3.

¹¹⁰ O’Malley, 9.

¹¹¹ Andrea Riccardi, “The Tumultuous Opening Days of the Council,” in *History of Vatican II*, vol. 2, *The Formation of the Councils Identity: First Period and Intersession October 1962-September 1963*, ed. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997), 5.

¹¹² Pope John XXIII, quoted in Andrea Riccardi, 17.

Despite Pope John XXIII's encouragement to "leap forward" through the council, the conservative leadership of the Vatican immediately set the task of electing members of conciliar councils. This election required all 2,500 attendees to vote for 160 fathers to comprise the councils. The issue with this was that it was impossible for all attendees to know enough of one another to make a list. The drama compounded when word that a "shadow list" of nominees, produced by the conservative preparatory council, had been circulating.¹¹³ While the general understanding was that attendees would mainly just be attendees, the immediacy of the election, coupled with the pre-selected list, took many by surprise. Achille Cardinal Liénart, a progressive French leader and member of the Council of Presidents, quietly told the chair of the Council of Presidents that the proposed manner of voting would be impossible and requested to speak.¹¹⁴ The chair, Eugène Cardinal Tisserant, denied Liénart's request, citing the daily schedule. Rather than deferring to the ranking cardinal, Liénart stood and spoke to the entire audience, requesting a motion to delay voting for a few days in order that the fathers get to know one another. The hall erupted with applause and fellow Council members supported his motion. Consequently, Tisserant approved the motion. This dramatic opening to the Second Vatican Council would set the tone for a confrontation between liberal progressives and conservative traditionalists throughout the duration of the council.¹¹⁵ The intervention of Liénart was seen as a rejection of rubber-stamping the agendas set forth by the preparatory councils

¹¹³ Riccardi, 29.

¹¹⁴ Wilde, 18.

¹¹⁵ Riccardi, 29; Wilde 18.

and as an indication to the attendees of the Council that they had more power than previously thought.

The products of the Second Vatican Councils Sixteen were 16 documents: four constitutions, nine decrees, and six declarations. Each document dealt with a different topic, but one of them, the *Nostra Aetate* (the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions), held a lasting impact on the ways in which liberal and conservatives conceive of their relationships with other religious traditions. The *Nostra Aetate* “bumped along” the roughest road to publication¹¹⁶ and was an important and politically charged document: less than two decades before the first session of the Second Vatican Council, the world saw the atrocities of the Holocaust, which the Church had yet to address. As mentioned above, Pope Pius XII drew ire and criticism for his refusal to condemn anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. The severity of the Pope’s refusal was heightened by the popularity of Father Charles Coughlin’s radio broadcasts. Based in Detroit, Coughlin hosted a radio program that boasted tens of millions of listeners. It started in the 1920s and was the first Catholic service available on the radio. The radio program reached millions of ears and originally consisted of Catholic theology and endorsements of President Franklin Roosevelt. When his show made national airwaves, he received upwards of 80,000 letters a week from listeners.¹¹⁷ To say he was popular among American Catholics is an understatement. In the 1930s, Coughlin used his program to disseminate increasingly anti-Semitic views, including support of and defense of Kristallnacht, which

¹¹⁶ O’Malley, 7.

¹¹⁷ “Reverend Charles E. Coughlin,” *PBS, The American Experience*, accessed December 29, 2022, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/holocaust-coughlin/>.

he argued was the result of Christian retaliation against Jewish aggression.¹¹⁸ This program was *distinctly* Catholic. Originally started to teach catechism to children, Father Coughlin's anti-Semitic views were blatant and stoked the fans of anti-Semitism, even after the United States entered into World War II. Coughlin was not the only Catholic leader who spewed vitriolic anti-Semitism. Numerous other priests throughout the world refused to condemn anti-Semitism since they charged Jews with deicide of Christ.¹¹⁹ These stances were problematic for the Church, especially in light of the horrors of the Holocaust. In short: the *Nostra Aetate* was a necessary document for the Church.

During the early days of the decree, media reports circulated that the Church was constructing a document on the Church's relationship with Judaism. In response, several Arab leaders saw this decree as a political statement in support of the state of Israel and, therefore, as a statement *against* Palestine and Muslims.¹²⁰ Bishops from Muslim-majority countries urged the withdrawal of the document, arguing that the misreading of the goals of the *Nostra Aetate*, as it was originally conceptualized, could bring violence against

¹¹⁸ David Goodman, "Before Hate Speech: Charles Coughlin, Free Speech and Listeners' Rights," *Patterns of Prejudice* 49, n0. 3 (2015): 209-211. Eric L. Goldstein argues that many white American Catholics held antisemitic views, blaming them in particular for the plight of the American people during the Depression era. Goldstein argues that since Catholics lagged behind Jews in attaining economic mobility, they were attractive targets. As Catholics were also targets for the KKK along with Jews and Black Americans, Goldstein implies that targeting Jews with discrimination and vitriol took attention away from American Catholics and placed it on American Jews. See Eric L. Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 123. This is a similar argument to one later made by Tisa Wenger, that American Catholics routinely placed themselves on the "white" side of the American racial spectrum and sought to "reconfigure those [racial] hierarchies to rank (white) Catholics and (white) Protestants as equals" while leaving behind Black Americans quite consciously. See Wenger, *Religious Freedom*, 39.

¹¹⁹ O'Malley, 221.

¹²⁰ Arthur Kennedy, "The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*," in *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition*, ed. Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), 398.

Catholics in their respective countries.¹²¹ After numerous iterations, meetings, and drafts, it became evident that the *Nostra Aetate* was not viable as a decree unless it also discussed the Church's relationship with other non-Christian traditions. The document, which originated at the behest of Pope John XXIII, had become a keen interest of Pope Paul VI.¹²² The document drew criticism from Catholic conservatives who charged the Church with relativism. Beyond discussing the Church's relationship with Judaism, it also mentions Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. This document was monumental because it marked the *first* time that the Roman Catholic Church took a stance on non-Christian traditions. Regarding Muslims, the *Nostra Aetate* states

The Church regards with esteem also the Moslems. They adore the one God, living and subsisting in Himself; merciful and all- powerful, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men; they take pains to submit wholeheartedly to even His inscrutable decrees, just as Abraham, with whom the faith of Islam takes pleasure in linking itself, submitted to God. Though they do not acknowledge Jesus as God, they revere Him as a prophet. They also honor Mary, His virgin Mother; at times they even call on her with devotion. In addition, they await the day of judgment when God will render their deserts to all those who have been raised up from the dead. Finally, they value the moral life and worship God especially through prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

Since in the course of centuries not a few quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Moslems, this sacred synod urges all to forget the past and to work sincerely for mutual understanding and to preserve as well as to promote

¹²¹ Kennedy, 398.

¹²² Pope John XXIII died months before the opening of the second session of Vatican II. Pope Paul VI was elected, and in many ways was seen as more conservative than his predecessor. This put him in opposition to the Council, who, as Melissa J. Wilde argues, wanted to make more progressive changes than the pope (5). The tension that bubbled between the more liberal Council and conservative leadership was a microcosmic representation of the tension that bubbled among the laity.

together for the benefit of all mankind social justice and moral welfare, as well as peace and freedom.¹²³

The language of the decree was designed to placate Muslim leaders and prevent backlash coming upon Christian populations in Muslim-majority states. Yet the backlash about the document, which originally began as controversy from bishops in Middle Eastern states, came from Catholic conservatives. The *Nostra Aetate*, along with the *Dignitatis Humanae* (the Declaration on Religious Freedom), is cited frequently by traditionalist Catholics who consider the Second Vatican Council a betrayal. Recalling the previous councils, like the Council of Trent which responded to the Protestant Reformation and the first Vatican Council which responded to liberalism, that the Church would put out a document that could be seen as affirming non-Catholic, specifically non-Christian, traditions was jarring to many Catholic conservatives. The *Quanta Cura* of Pope Leo XIII maintained that the Church, and the Church alone, held the key for salvation.¹²⁴ Before the *Quanta Cura*, at the Council of Trent, the Church affirmed the deep separations between Protestants and Catholics and instituted many of the ritual actions that pre-Vatican II Catholics were long accustomed, like the priests being separate from the congregation—both figuratively and literally. For Catholic liberals, the *Nostra Aetate* represented a positive change in the Church with which many American liberals were happy. This was a win for American Catholic liberals, who, along with other Catholic liberals from non-Catholic majority countries, who prioritized ecumenicism with other traditions.¹²⁵

¹²³ Pope Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate*, October 28, 1965, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

¹²⁴ McDannell, 12.

¹²⁵ Wilde, 6.

Catholic Liberals and Catholic Conservatives in the Twentieth Century

Beyond the *Nostra Aetate*, which will return to our discussion in chapter three, the dissent among the Council members was clear. Following the first session of the Council in 1962, the conservative leadership of the Vatican and its conservative allies were already being delegitimized as an authority source in such a way that progressive leaders referred to them as “the minority.”¹²⁶ The progressive tone of the Council reverberated out of Vatican walls and into the Catholic community globally. The changes made during the Second Vatican Council, and their impact upon the laity, cannot be overstated. The “spirit” of Vatican II had become synonymous with reform, which meant that reading reform into the official documents and decrees became a go-to strategy for Catholic liberals. This strategy was met with hostility from Catholic conservatives immediately following the Council.¹²⁷ Joseph A. Komonochak summarizes the issues Catholic conservatives (lay and elite) had with the council nicely:

Once the genie of reform was let loose on the council, it proved impossible to keep it confined within officially approved limits. The literature of conservative Catholics laments the decline in the traditional popular devotions, the abandonment of distinctive clerical and religious dress, the political activities of clergy and religious, women’s abandonment of hats in church, the massive departures from the priesthood and religious life, the decline in membership and even the dissolution of Catholic professional associations, the abandonment of Gregorian chant and its replacement with Protestant hymns or by music that imitates popular musical styles, the collapse of the unitary neoscholastic method and language of theology, the spread of dissent (particularly after the publication of *Humanae Vitae*), and the movement for the ordination of women. Growing up Catholic in the postconciliar period is now so different that a teacher has to explain many of the symbols and

¹²⁶ Wilde, 23.

¹²⁷ The discontent of Catholic conservative about progressive agendas beyond the immediate aftermath of the Council will return to the discussion below.

rubrics, gestures and rules that once characterized a quite distinctive Catholic subculture.¹²⁸

Devotions to Mary were downplayed by Vatican II at the urging of Catholic liberals who sought to display Catholicism in a more legible manner to Protestant observers. Women religious were no longer compelled to wear habits and lay women were no longer required to veil their hair during Mass. The clergy now had license to partake in political activities and theological language had become pastoral—the Church was no longer a strictly authoritative figure. Rather, it had been rebranded as a “people of God.” Masses took on a distinctly Protestant tone. No longer did priests face away from their congregations, now they faced their constituents and gave Mass in the language of the congregation rather than in Latin. Gregorian chants were no longer the music that filled a Mass, but rather an acoustic guitar and Protestant-esque hymns filled the churches and cathedrals. In short: the church underwent an upheaval. This sparked concern for Catholic conservatives who felt the church’s reforms were a betrayal. Even if “betrayal” went too far in classifying the conservative mood surrounding the reforms made at the Second Vatican Council, many felt that the reforms, while well-intentioned, were “misconstrued by liberal extremists to allow for a total disregard of church doctrine in favor of individual choice.”¹²⁹ Yet the “liberal extremists” saw Vatican II as a positive move for the Roman Catholic Church.

¹²⁸ Joseph A. Komonochak, “Interpreting the Council: Catholic Attitudes toward Vatican II,” in *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America*, ed. Mary Jo. Weaver and R. Scott Appleby (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 18.

¹²⁹ C. J. Manning, “Women in a Divided Church: Liberal and Conservative Catholic Women Negotiate Changing Gender Roles,” *Sociology of Religion* 58, no. 4 (1997): 376.

Catholic liberals are, as Joseph Varacalli describes them, the “wing of the Church that constantly attempts not only to meet modernity ‘head on’ but to make it Catholic.”¹³⁰ Thus, Vatican II represented, for liberal American Catholics in particular, a move towards a modern, global Church. This was reinforced by the bishops’ description of the church as ‘a people of God’ in lieu of the traditional hierarchy.¹³¹ The tension among liberal and conservative Catholics came to a head in the years immediately following the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council. In 1968, Pope Paul VI released a highly controversial papal encyclical: *Humanae Vitae*. As noted above, the Second Vatican Council declined to discuss the use of artificial birth control. As the Council had taken on a shockingly liberal agenda and tone, many suspected that when the Church did decide to tackle the issue, that their stance would follow suit. This was not the case. The *Humanae Vitae* officially forbade the use of artificial birth control by Roman Catholics.¹³² To say this was a controversial document would be an understatement. Catholic liberals were outraged. Catholic conservatives were outraged that Catholic liberals were outraged. Liberal opposition was characterized by public dissent, a stance that one Catholic conservative theologian blamed on the Vatican council, “nothing has contributed more to the postconciliar polarization of ‘conservatives’ and ‘liberals’ more than the opening of the Second Vatican Council gave to ‘pluralism’ in theology. The notion that there are many valid perspectives on religious truth implies that these perspectives cannot be reduced to a single, objectively true theology

¹³⁰ Varacalli, 19.

¹³¹ McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 160.

¹³² Pope Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, July 25, 1968, https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.

and seems to contradict the biblical ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism’ (Eph 4:5).”¹³³ Not only were American Catholic conservatives upset at the *Nostra Aetate*’s implication of relativism and the possibility of pluralism with other traditions, American Catholic conservatives were disturbed by the implication that lay Catholics, and even clergy, could publicly disagree with Rome and have their opposition sanctioned as an acceptable alternative to papal stances. American liberal Catholics were particularly vocal and earned much media coverage. This highly public dissent outraged Catholic conservatives who felt that the Church itself was being disrespected, even though close to 90 percent of Catholic laity in the United States disagreed with the Vatican’s position.¹³⁴¹³⁵ Catholic liberals considered the use of birth control both an issue of religious freedom *and* of human rights, arguing that proscriptions on artificial birth control did not take into account the children who would be born into the world without food or education.¹³⁶ After the publication of the *Humanae Vitae*, a theologian named Charles Curran publicly denounced the encyclical, and garnered 600 signatures from liberal Catholic thinkers from across the United States.¹³⁷ The tension could be, in highly simplistic terms, understood as a ramification of the Second Vatican Council. Catholic liberals felt that the Council allowed for a plurality of opinion and conversation, while many conservatives, like Joseph Ratzinger (who would later

¹³³ Benedict M. Ashley, “The Loss of Theological Unity: Pluralism, Thomism, and Catholic Morality,” in *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America*, ed. Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 63.

¹³⁴ Patrick Allitt notes that the public dismay among American Catholic conservatives at American Catholic liberal dismay was mostly in theory. In practice, many American Catholics, conservatives included, flouted the ban on birth control. See Allitt, 97.

¹³⁵ Dolan, 435.

¹³⁶ Allitt, 175.

¹³⁷ Cuneo, 21.

become Pope Benedict XVI) felt that liberal theologians hijacked the Council and purposefully misrepresented its accomplishments.¹³⁸

Concluding Thoughts

In order to understand the discourses that Catholic liberals and conservatives engage in regarding Muslims in the United States, it is paramount to understand the historical tensions that exist between the two groups. The liberal and conservative agendas set during the Second Vatican Council and in the post-conciliar period set the tone for how American Catholics talk about Muslims in the United States. More than a commentary on Muslims, American Catholics often engage in debates, discourses, and sometimes disparaging attacks against their co-religionists. As we will see throughout the project, liberal Catholics are highly concerned with interreligious dialogue and ecumenicism. This, they believe, is in keeping with the “spirit” of Vatican II, and a proper form of Catholicism in the twenty-first century. The authors that discuss the importance of interreligious dialogue frequently compare their approach with their conservative counterparts who are wary of relativism and pluralism. This stems, as we have seen, directly from the propagation of liberal Catholics in the post-Vatican II period. On the other hand, Catholic conservatives are frequently concerned with defending their faith *and* with defending the country. As we’ve seen, one of the characteristics of Catholic conservatism is a support of the Church, traditions, and now, the United States. Much like Catholic conservatives fought against modernism and communism as threats to Catholicism, many Catholic conservatives see the presence of Islam in the United States in a similar light. In their

¹³⁸ Komonochak.

dialogues, Catholic conservatives often charge Catholic liberals with misunderstanding the dangers that relativism and pluralism pose for the Church and the faith. These two viewpoints will be dealt with more thoroughly in chapters three and four, respectively, but the idea that contemporary debates about Islam are deeply rooted in the intracommunal debates of the twentieth century is of the utmost importance.

It is in the wake of the Second Vatican Council and amidst the social and cultural upheaval of the mid- to late-twentieth century that American Catholicism saw two very distinct groups of white American Catholics appear: conservative and liberal. Before the 1950s, Catholics were neither coded as white, nor as a group with disparate factions within the community. However, the twentieth century both of those things change. Catholics of European descent became part of the larger American cultural scene and were afforded full cultural citizenship, something they had previously been denied. Simultaneously, American Catholics began to fraction into liberal and conservative theological camps. It was also in this post-conciliar period that American Catholics began placing more weight on their political party affiliations than they did on their denominational affiliations.¹³⁹ This shift becomes readily apparent in the twenty-first century where theological stances and political party affiliations are held in taut tension. The next chapter will explore how white American Catholics are now racializing Muslims in the United States as a means of identity creation.

¹³⁹ Mark M. Gray and Mary E. Bendyna, "Between Church, Party, and Conscience: Protecting Life and Promoting Social Justice among U.S. Catholics," in *Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension between Faith and Power*, ed. Kristin E. Heyer, Mark J. Rozell, and Michael A. Genovese (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008), 88.

Chapter Two: Racialized Muslims and White American Catholics

By the turn of the 21st century, white American Catholics were no longer a discrete group of racialized, ethnic Others. They had attained full cultural citizenship within the United States and were coded as white Christian Americans, making them part and parcel of the American national imaginary. As we saw in chapter one, before the 1950s, Catholics of European descent were not viewed as American by fellow Americans. This was in large part due to the racialization of Catholics as non-American, ethnic Others. The 20th century was a momentous time for Catholics in the United States. First, white Catholics transitioned from being ostracized from American cultural citizenship to becoming recognized as American Christians, thereby gaining full access to American cultural citizenship. Then, during the 1960s, two distinct groups emerged within the American Catholic community in the wake of the Second Vatican Council: conservative and liberal Catholics. Conservative Catholics focused on defending their religious practice from liberalist innovations, as well as defending their country from un-American and un-Christian threats, like communism. Liberal Catholics, on the other hand, sought to propagate interreligious dialogue, ecumenicism, and social justice within the Catholic community.

Given the developments for American Catholics during the 20th century, we see a kind of litmus test for what happens when these newly “white” and culturally “American” Catholics are confronted with the possibility to engage, as American cultural insiders, with an outside group, namely Muslims in the United States. What transpires traces lines back to the crucial divisions that emerged post-Vatican II. The racialized depictions of Muslims in American Catholic media sources sheds light on why Catholics who read Catholic media

and news sites are more likely than not to hold negative opinions about Muslims and Islam in the United States.¹⁴⁰ Both liberal sites, like *Commonweal*, and conservative sites, like *Crisis* and *Church Militant*, produce and deploy a racialized rhetoric of Muslims that paints Muslims in the United States as not only anti-American, but as inherently unable to be American.

This chapter analyzes how Catholic media outlets, both liberal and conservative, produce, reproduce, and disseminate racialized anti-Muslim tropes. The tropes presented—the “global” Muslim, Muslim hatred of religious freedom, the moderate Muslim, and the terrorist—appear in both conservative and liberal Catholic media representations of Muslims. However, while the deployment of these tropes occurs across the liberal/conservative spectrum, as we will see, liberal media sources employ more subtle, dog whistle-esque tropes, while conservative sites tend to use more obviously racist tropes and language. By castigating Muslims in the United States and casting them as unamerican, Catholics reinforce their identities as true Americans and highlight the importance of being *Catholic* in the United States. How Catholics address Muslims in the United States serves as an ideological litmus test which demarcates the boundaries between liberal and conservative Catholics.

Furthermore, this chapter argues that a major driving force of this dialectical process is entertainment and news media in the United States. As we will see below, Catholic anti-Muslim activists like Robert Spencer, the founder of Jihad Watch and Stop

¹⁴⁰ Jordan Denari Duffner and The Bridge Initiative, *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam*.

the Islamization of America, and William Kilpatrick, an academic turned prolific anti-Muslim writer, are routinely featured on Catholic sites, writing articles about Islam from the Catholic perspective that intentionally, and frequently quite subtly, stoke anti-Muslim hate.¹⁴¹ There are identifiable liberal and conservative “white” and “American” Catholic responses in the post-9/11 era, which can be traced back to the post-Second Vatican Council developments, as discussed in the previous chapter. Both sets of Catholics use Islamophobic, or anti-Muslim, tropes, but with crucial distinctions in tone and emphasis, as will be discussed below and in the following chapters. These tropes emerge particularly in the Catholic media, meaning that the conversations about Muslims among Catholics in the United States, and therefore the racialization of Muslims in the United States on these sites, is a *distinctly* Catholic form of anti-Muslim hostility.

In order to explore the discursive frameworks that both liberal and conservative American Catholics engage with to racialize Muslims in the United States, we will first turn our attention to the history of anti-Muslim hostilities in the United States. The

¹⁴¹ William Kilpatrick is a former Boston College professor who now writes prolific anti-Islam and anti-Muslim books, articles, and blog posts. He is routinely featured on *Crisis* and has written for the *National Catholic Register* and *First Things*. He has authored numerous anti-Islam books written for Catholics, including *What Catholics Need to Know about Islam and Christianity*, *Islam, and Atheism: The Struggle for the Soul of the West*. Beyond Catholic media, he has also appeared in FOX Business segments, providing commentary on current events regarding Islam and Muslims in the United States. He also has a blog that curates all of his articles and publications across platforms, the *Turning Point Project*. *Turning Point Project*'s mission is “dedicated to educating Catholics and other Americans about the threat from Islam by arming them with the information and analysis necessary to meet the challenge.” “About,” *Turning Point Project*, accessed May 5, 2023. Robert Spencer is “one of the most prolific anti-Muslim figures in the United States.” A conservative Catholic figure and the author of dozens of anti-Islam books, including *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*, *The Truth about Muhammad*, and *Did Muhammad Exist?*, Spencer lacks formal, academic training on Islam. He founded the anti-Muslim platform Jihad Watch and Stop Islamization of America. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, even though he is self-taught regarding Islam and Muslim practices, he “has given seminars on Islam and terrorism to the U.S. Central Command, Army Command and General Staff College, the Army’s Asymmetric Warfare Group, the FBI, the Joint Terrorism Task Force and the U.S. intelligence community.” See “Robert Spencer,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, accessed May 5, 2023.

racialization of Muslims did not begin in the wake of September 11th. Rather, as we will see below, anti-Muslim hostilities have a long history within the United States, particularly in the second half of the 20th century. The racialization of Muslims by white American Catholics in the 21st century is deeply entangled with the phenomenon of dog whistle racism, a form of discrimination wherein the whistle blower uses coded, yet meaningful, language to convey negative sentiments about a minority group.¹⁴² This coded language uses racialized tropes and stereotypes and crucially carries with it a kind of deniability. In other words, by using coded language, the user can claim something along the lines of “no, no, I didn’t mean that, you’re reading too much into what I’ve said,” if someone takes issue with their words. For white American Catholics writing about Muslims in the United States, these tropes include the construction of the “global” Muslim, the claim that Muslims disagree with the American ideal of religious freedom, and the binary of moderate Muslims and terrorists.

Racialization of Muslims and Anti-Muslim Hostilities

Six days after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, President George W. Bush spoke at the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C. and stated that “the face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That’s not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don’t represent peace. They represent evil and war... America counts millions of Muslims amongst our citizens, and Muslims make an

¹⁴² The usage of “whistle blower” here is distinct from the primary sense in that a whistle blower is an insider who reveals something damaging about their company, organization, or institution.

incredibly valuable contribution to our country.”¹⁴³ While this public presidential support for Muslims in the United States and around the world had a statistically significant impact on positive public perceptions of American Muslims in the first months following September 11, it did not preclude vigilante attacks against Muslim Americans and those *assumed* to be Muslim. On September 15, 2001, Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh gas station owner, was murdered by a man who yelled “I stand for America all the way!”¹⁴⁴ While Sodhi was the first victim of anti-Muslim hatred in the post-9/11 period, he would not be the last. If Sodhi was not a Muslim, how is he counted among the victims of American anti-Muslim violence?

As discussed in the previous chapter, racialization is a discursive process where “the extension of racial meaning [is applied] to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice, or group.”¹⁴⁵ During the 19th and 20th centuries in the United States, white Catholics were racialized as Other by the white Protestant majority. However, in the 21st century, Muslims in the United States— and, consequently, those assumed to be Muslim— become the newest racialized group. As Catholics became unracialized during the 20th century, they merged with the white Protestant majority to form a white Christian majority, which is, as previously argued, synonymous with American identity. In the United States, the category of “Christian” functions beyond doctrinal orthodoxy and

¹⁴³ George W. Bush “Remarks by the President at Islamic Center of Washington, D.C.,” *Office of the Press Secretary* (September 17, 2001), <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010917-11.html>.

¹⁴⁴ Khaled A. Beydoun, *American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 35.

¹⁴⁵ Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2015), 111.

personal piety. Instead, “the explicit ideological content of *Christian* nationalism comprises beliefs about historical identity, cultural preeminence, and political influence... This includes symbolic boundaries that conceptually blur and conflate religious identity (Christian, preferably Protestant) with race (white), nativity (born in the United States), citizenship (American), and political ideology (social and fiscal conservative).”¹⁴⁶ Christian nationalism in this sense is an ideological discourse through which white Christian Americans can position themselves and their perspectives on both cultural and legal citizenship, as well as social hierarchies, including racial hierarchies. While nativist white Protestantism is the preferred branch of Christianity for Christian nationalism in the United States, white Catholics actively work to maintain Catholicism as not only acceptable, but *crucial* to American identity. This Christian nationalist framework is not synonymous with jingoistic white supremacist movements, though they certainly fall under the purview of this category.¹⁴⁷ Rather, Christian nationalism in this sense is an ideological fusion of proper American civic engagement and, typically, politically conservative Christianity.¹⁴⁸ Balbir Singh Sodhi was *racialized* as a Muslim by his murderer. When the man who murdered Sodhi shouted “I stand for America all the way!” he denoted a particular understanding of who does and who does not fit into a racialized understanding of American identity.

¹⁴⁶ Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry, *Taking Back American for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), xx.

¹⁴⁷ Whitehead and Perry, xx-xi.

¹⁴⁸ I will demonstrate below and in the following chapter that even liberal Catholics engage in Christian nationalism, though not as overtly.

Negative images of Islam were prevalent in the decades before September 11, 2001.¹⁴⁹ Prior to the 1960s, Islam was a “threat abroad.” However, in the mid-20th century, two major events occurred that catapulted Islam into the American public eye. First, On October 3, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which opened immigration into the United States to peoples from countries other than those in Northern and Western Europe. Before 1965, most Muslims in the United States were Black Americans, but the Immigration and Nationality Act began a shift in these demographics.¹⁵⁰ In 1960, the number of migrants from Muslim-majority countries was 130,000 and expanded to 800,000 by the end of the century.¹⁵¹ By 2012, the number of mosques in the United States had risen to 2,100. Not only was the number of Muslims in the United States increasing, so was their visibility to non-Muslim Americans. Not only were more and more Muslims arriving in the United States following the 1965 Immigration

¹⁴⁹ Edward E. Curtis IV notes that the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the bombing of United States marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 saw the proliferation of the idea in the United States that the “Muslim” was “transgressive and potentially dangerous.” Curtis further contends that following the fall of the Soviet Union, foreign Muslims became the number one focus of U.S. foreign policy. This, consequently, led to the spread of the idea that “Muslims faced challenges between assimilating into mainstream American culture and preserving their traditional Islamic values.” This idea became the most prevalent theme in works on Islam and the United States. That Muslims posed a threat comparable to communism to the United States was evident in works by anti-Muslim authors like Daniel Pipes, who characterized Islam as a “Trojan horse” that was infiltrating the borders of the United States. Similarly, Zain Abdullah notes that events of the 20th century, like the oil embargoes during the 1970s led to major news media outlets in the United States depicting “caricatures of Arabs as rich oil ‘sheiks’ bent on world domination.” The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, followed by the first Gulf War, only strengthened the public opinion that Muslims were “militant, warmongering, and violent.” See Edward E. Curtis, IV, “The Study of American Muslims: A History,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*, ed. Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 20-22; Zain Abdullah, “American Muslims: 1965 to the Present,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*, ed. Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 66-67.

¹⁵⁰ Edward E. Curtis IV, “The Study of American Muslims: A History,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*, ed. Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 15-27.

¹⁵¹ Zain Abdullah, “American Muslims in the Contemporary World: 1965 to the Present,” in *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*, ed. Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 67.

and Nationality act, but in the following years, “the treatment of Muslims in the United States was shaped largely by a series of geopolitical encounters between the United States and various Muslim nations.”¹⁵² The second major demographic shift came as “thousands of African Americans accepted interpretations of Islam that gave them a social identity separate from American society and its legacy of racism. The rise of the Nation of Islam, the Moorish Science Temple, and other African American Muslim movements with separatist agendas raised concerns among some segments of American society that Islam was becoming a dangerous presence within the United States.”¹⁵³

The anti-Muslim hostilities and questions of cultural citizenship that American Muslims are subject to in the twenty-first century are not new, but rather September 11th served as a catalyst for the renewal of the idea that Muslims are inherently precluded from being true Americans. These hostilities, which many white American Catholics produce and engage in, mirror anti-Catholic hostilities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the United States, and average American citizens, saw the Soviet Union as the main supporters and exporters of terrorism in the mid-20th century, by the 1980s the threat of communism was replaced with the threat of the Islamic world.¹⁵⁴ As discussed in the previous chapter, American Catholics were among the most robust anti-communists in the United States during the Cold War. As we will see in this chapter, Catholics replaced the fear of communism with the racialization of Muslims.

¹⁵² Abdullah, 66.

¹⁵³ Jeffrey L. Thomas, *Scapegoating Islam: Intolerance, Security, and the American Muslim* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015), viii.

¹⁵⁴ Saher Selod, *Forever Suspect: Racialized Surveillance of Muslim Americans in the War on Terror* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 5.

In the 21st century, white Catholics actively racialize Muslims in the United States. “Looking Muslim” is a product of the racial hierarchy that exists in the United States. As Erik Love notes,

The racial lens through which Americans see the world distorts and conceals the obvious truth that it is basically impossible to determine someone’s religion based solely on their physical appearance. That racial lens is why it’s possible to ‘look Muslim’ in America. In other words, there are a set of physical traits and characteristics that can mark someone as ‘Muslim,’ regardless of their actual religion, ethnicity, or nationality. Race is the only reason to explain why this is so.¹⁵⁵

This process of “looking” Muslim is one reason that Arab and South Asian Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, Hindus, and others are immediately racially coded as Muslim in the United States. Balbir Singh Sodhi *looked* Muslim and therefore became a victim of anti-Muslim violence, despite not actually being a Muslim man. As Saher Selod notes, racialization weaponizes concepts including biological traits as well as cultural differences like gender roles, clothing, and food practices.¹⁵⁶ In the United States, the category of Muslim is, to borrow Su’ad Abdul Khabeer’s language, is “triangulated” against whiteness and Blackness.¹⁵⁷ This triangulation against whiteness and Blackness leads to “typing of the Muslim into the immutably foreign and unassimilable ‘Bad Muslim’ on the one hand, and the moderate and mainstream Muslim on the other.”¹⁵⁸ The fact that many Muslims in the United States are Black is inconsequential in this typology. “Muslim” becomes coded as individuals who have ancestry or immigrated from the Middle East, South Asia, and

¹⁵⁵ Erik Love, *Islamophobia and Racism in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), 2.

¹⁵⁶ Selod, 23.

¹⁵⁷ Su’ad Abdul Khabeer, *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 24.

¹⁵⁸ Khabeer, 25.

North Africa, as well as practice specific behaviors like prayer and the wearing of beards and headscarves.”¹⁵⁹ The process of racialization is a civilization assemblage, or “the complex interplay of ideological and institutional process that work together to define who and what counts as civilized and thus fully human– and by contrast who and does not.”¹⁶⁰ The result of the racialization of Muslims in the United States is that “Muslim” becomes a religio-racial identity.¹⁶¹ Religio-racial identities are understandings of “individual and collective identity as constituted in the conjunction of religion and race.”¹⁶² Religio-racial identities, like those of Muslims in the United States, are characterized and created via the “deeply powerful, if sometimes veiled, ways the American system of racial hierarchy as structured religious beliefs, practices, and institutions for all people in its frame.”¹⁶³ The intersection of American Christian nationalism with the discursive process of racialization of Muslims manifests in public and ubiquitous anti-Muslim hostilities.

Much like racialization more broadly, the concept of anti-Muslim hostility is a multifactorial cultural discourse that capitalizes on the American racial hierarchy. Anti-

¹⁵⁹ Khabeer, 24. Khabeer notes that the racial coding of Muslims as “brown and foreign” is a new development stemming from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Previously, Black Muslims were the predominant face of American Islam. She notes that “the Black Muslim designation was shorthand for the Nation of Islam and for a practice of Islam that was considered heterodox and seen as a dangerous form of Black protest. Like the ‘Muslim’ of today, the Black Muslim was known by specific bodies and behaviors: black skin, bow ties, and preaching ‘hate.’ Likewise, the Black Muslim was also under intense state surveillance under the COINTELPRO program (an FBI Counter Intelligence Program), which included the use of agent provocateurs to destabilize Black Muslim Communities. Therefore, although the racial type associated with Muslimness has changed from Black to Brown, there is also continuity: *the Muslim continues to be seen as a threat to the state that is managed not only through state surveillance but also through notions of multiculturalism*” (25). Emphasis added.

¹⁶⁰ Wenger, 23.

¹⁶¹ Judith Weisenfeld, *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 5.

¹⁶² Weisenfeld, 5.

¹⁶³ Weisenfeld, 5.

Muslim hostilities, or Islamophobia, are “the presumption that Islam is inherently violent, alien, and unassimilable, a presumption driven by the belief that expression of Muslim identity correlate with a propensity for terrorism.”¹⁶⁴ In this framework, Islamophobia is a tripart dialectical process that finds its roots in Orientalism, and thereby racializes, demonizes, and socially excludes Muslims by casting them as Other and un-American.¹⁶⁵ This tripart process involves both private citizens, including those who produce news media and those who consume it, and institutions, like the executive branch of the United States government. This Islamophobic framework is the product of public acts of hatred.¹⁶⁶

Public hate encourages the fear of the *idea* of a group of people because of what they represent. For many Americans, anti-Muslim discourses perpetuate the idea that those who are racialized as Muslim represent the antithesis of American identity. As we saw in chapter one, the racialization of Catholics functioned as a discursive move whereby American identity was constructed upon a nativist and Protestant understanding of who could be considered fully American. This framework racialized Catholics as Other and non-American. In the twenty-first century, white Catholics now deploy a similar rhetoric that racializes Muslims as distinctly Other and non-American. Through this process, white Catholicism and Catholics are reified as American in juxtaposition with un-American Islam and Muslims. This “fear” of the un-American Muslim impacts the connections between American citizenship and American public space. More specifically, Muslims in the United

¹⁶⁴ Beydoun, 28.

¹⁶⁵ Beydoun conceptualizes the three arenas of Islamophobia as: (1) Private Islamophobia; (2) Structural Islamophobia; and (3) Dialectical Islamophobia. All three of these modes intersect in order to form and then reproduce views about Muslims in the United States.

¹⁶⁶ Caleb Iyer Elfenbein, *Fear in Our Hearts: What Islamophobia Tells Us about America* (New York: New York University Press, 2021), 3.

States are assumed to *not* have full access to American public spaces because they are perceived to be un-American.¹⁶⁷ While useful for thinking about the ways in which public discourses about a group of individuals has negative effects throughout the country, an argument this chapter will build upon, the framework of fear of Muslims by non-Muslims occludes the true nature of anti-Muslim hostilities. Juliane Hammer's work on anti-Muslim usefully unpacks the ways in which fear does not capture anti-Muslim hostilities. She argues that

Islamophobia is not an innate or natural fear of Islam or Muslims. Rather it is an ideological construct produced and reproduced at the nexus of a number of political and intellectual currents that need to be taken into consideration and assessed critically in each instance or event of Islamophobia discourse and practice.¹⁶⁸

Hammer eschews the notion that *Islamophobia* is based on fear of Muslims and instead urges attention to the multifactorial and dialectical discourses that create this complex discriminatory process. Hammer further directs attention to the fact that these anti-Muslim discourses are highly gendered. She argues that Muslim women experience Islamophobia in two distinct ways. First, they are the objects of hate and hate crimes and therefore “have Islamophobia mapped onto them directly” and are visible representations of Islam in the United States. Second, they are cast as victims to their culture and to Muslim men specifically. This analysis of Muslim women bearing the brunt of Islamophobia discourses is reminiscent of the anti-nun discourses of the 19th century, discussed in the previous chapter. Women of Othered groups become, and remain, targets for the Othering majority,

¹⁶⁷ Elfenbein, 26-27.

¹⁶⁸ Juliane Hammer, *Peaceful Families: American Muslim Efforts against Domestic Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 37.

who use gender-based stereotypes to prove the “unfitness” of the minority group in the United States. As we will see in chapter four, conservative Catholics are very preoccupied with Muslim women as symbols of an “Islamic takeover” and with Muslim men being violent oppressors.

To more fully capture the complex interplay of political, social, and intellectual discourses that ostracize and racialize Muslims in the United States, this project utilizes the terms anti-Muslim hostilities or anti-Muslim discrimination. By naming anti-Muslim hostilities as a societal phobia, the root of the problem— in this the intersection of white American Christian nationalism and the American racial hierarchy— is obscured.¹⁶⁹ It is the racialization of Muslims in the United States and non-Muslim Arabs and South Asians that drives anti-Muslim hostilities in the United States. Below this chapter demonstrates how white American Catholics racialize Muslims in the United States.

Dog Whistle Politics and the Media

While some instances of anti-Muslim attitudes are blatantly negative and discriminatory, others are more subtly hostile. Ian Haney López calls this phenomenon of coded racial language dog whistle politics. López argues that this “new racism rips through society, inaudible and also easily defended insofar as it fails to whoop in the tones of the old racism, yet booming in its racial meaning and provoking predictable responses among those who immediately hear the racial undertones of references to the underserving poor, illegal aliens, and sharia law.”¹⁷⁰ Dog whistle politics refers namely to a coded way to talk

¹⁶⁹ Love, 17.

¹⁷⁰ Ian Haney López, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 4.

about race in a way that transmits a strong meaning without violating social norms regarding explicitly talking about race.¹⁷¹ In short, dog whistle politics is a subtle form of racism which “is a new way of talking about race that constantly emphasizes racial division, heatedly denies that it does any such thing, and then presents itself as a target of self-serving charges of racism.”¹⁷² Much of this dog whistling takes places in the news and entertainment media. Anti-Muslim dog whistle terms in Catholic media outlets and publications include “moderate Islam/Muslims,” “religious freedom,” and “terror.”

While both liberal and conservative authors and publications engage in anti-Muslim rhetoric and discourses that are coded in dog whistle politics, as we will see below, highly conservative Catholic authors and publications in less coded, more obviously racist, negative ways. Take, for example, an August 22, 2019, article written for the conservative publication *Church Militant* titled “Indoctrination for Teachers, Funded by Taxpayers.”¹⁷³ In the article, a Muslim woman leading a diversity training for teachers in a Michigan school district is accused of subjecting those in attendance to “two days of Islamic propaganda, where Islam was glorified, Christianity disparaged, and America bashed,” simply because she was Muslim. The content of the lecture, per the school district, was to teach “diversity and respect for all.” Even still, *Church Militant* took issue with the claim that “white, Christian males were more of a threat than Jihadis,” and accused Muslims of

¹⁷¹ López, 4.

¹⁷² López, 4-5.

¹⁷³ Based in Michigan, *Church Militant* is a conservative Catholic publication with more than 300,000 subscribers. The publication is described in the following terms: “The Church Militant (*Ecclesia Militans*) is the Christian militia. The Church Militant does battle against sin, the devil and the demonic "rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).” The “Mission” page for the publication quotes Pope Leo XIII who once wrote that “Christians are born for combat.” See “Mission,” *Church Militant*, accessed June 29, 2023.

genocidal atrocities throughout human history. The language used by *Church Militant* clearly situates Muslims as non-American others in comparison to the fully American “white Christian male.”¹⁷⁴ In a more blatant example, *Church Militant* editors accuse “liberals and evil-minded anti-Catholic culturalists” of aiding and abetting “Islamic extremists” to the detriment of society. Muslims are depicted as practitioners of “a religion whose members maraud all over the Islamic world executing homosexuals” and “Islamic butchers.”¹⁷⁵¹⁷⁶

As we will see below, this trend of using more blatant language occurs more frequently on conservative sites, while more liberal-leaning publications utilize dog whistle tropes. This is not to say that conservative sites *only* use obvious discriminatory language in place of dog whistle tropes, but rather that liberal publications tend to deploy dog whistles almost exclusively, while conservative sites engage in both. The more coded, less blatantly discriminatory rhetoric is related to the phenomenon of what Namira Islam terms soft Islamophobia. The coded language employed by *Commonweal*¹⁷⁷ is an example of soft Islamophobia. Soft Islamophobia, or a discreet anti-Muslim discourse, occurs when

¹⁷⁴ Anita Carey, “MI School District Offers Muslim Indoctrination for Teachers, Funded by Taxpayers,” *Church Militant*, August 22, 2019.

¹⁷⁵ “Islam, Catholicism, Modernism,” *Church Militant*, August 23, 2015.

¹⁷⁶ Other examples can be found in the following curated selection: Robert Spencer, “Is Multiculturalism Evil?” *Crisis*, November 8, 2011; William Kilpatrick, “Why the Odds Favor Islam,” *Crisis*, June 12, 2017; Zoe Romanowsky, “Breast That Kill... and Not in the Way You’re Thinking,” *Crisis*, March 26, 2010; William Kilpatrick, “99% Nonsense: ‘Muslim’ Does not Equal ‘Islam,’” *Crisis*, March 3, 2015; Pat Archbold, “Islam and Dialogue: What’s the Point?” *Crisis*, March 27, 2013.

¹⁷⁷ *Commonweal* is a liberal-leaning publication founded in 1924 “for all readers who want to engage with the Catholic tradition in a context of justice, charity, and critical intelligence.” *Commonweal* was notably active during the Cold War, as one of the only Catholic publications to actively oppose of Senator Joseph McCarthy. In the 1990s, the publication contended “with the critics of liberal Catholicism, and imagines a still greater role for the laity.” The 21st century saw the publication criticize “the anti-Islamic rhetoric” fueled by the war on terror.”

individuals and groups “transform ‘Muslim’ into a cultural category, centers the preferences of white ‘persuadables’ on how they want to understand Islam” and generally ignores or obscures the structural forces (like the media) that perpetuate negative stereotypes of Muslims.¹⁷⁸ Soft Islamophobia does not necessarily seek to offend or discriminate, but rather displays a lack of attention to, or a lack of care towards, structural forces within the United States that enable discrimination to continue. Soft Islamophobia is related to dog whistle racism in that the coded language is inaudible on one register, but the intent behind the coded language is entirely intelligible on another. In the case of soft Islamophobia, which is frequently seen in more liberal spaces, the anti-Muslim hostilities are even more obscured within a language of interreligious dialogue and cooperation.¹⁷⁹

While the spoken-but-muted terms of dog whistle politics are used broadly by non-Muslim Americans discussing Muslims, news and entertainment media platforms are complicit in forming and perpetuating the discourses of dog whistle racism, as we will see below. American news and entertainment media framing of Muslims informs the opinions that non-Muslim American have about Muslims in the United States.¹⁸⁰ For Catholic media sites specifically, the Bridge Initiative has shown that the majority of Catholic media outlets across the liberal/conservative spectrum— including *Crisis*, *National Catholic Reporter*, *National Catholic Register*, and *America*— have “negative sentiment in their

¹⁷⁸ Namira Islam, “Soft Islamophobia,” *Religions* 9, no. 9 (2018).

¹⁷⁹ How liberal Catholics perpetuate soft Islamophobia through an infatuation with interreligious dialogue and cooperation will be explored in the following chapter.

¹⁸⁰ I borrow Kimberly A. Powell’s definition of framing as “the organization of information into news stories written for an audience that enables them to comprehend events, peoples, religions, etc. through a particular focus, lens, or frame.” Kimberly A. Powell, “Framing Islam/Creating Fear: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism from 2011-2016,” *Religions* 9, no. 9 (2018): 257.

headlines about Islam. The majority of the outlets also have anger as the primary emotion in their headlines.”¹⁸¹ This aligns with the findings of the international media research institute Media Tenor’s report that between the years 2007 and 2013 more than 75 percent of the of the 430,000 stories ran about Muslims and Islam in the United States during primetime television news slots were negative.¹⁸² This indicates that before a reader even opens the article or watches the news segment, the headline presents negative information about Islam and Muslims in the United States, even on Catholic-specific sites.

The framing of Islam and Muslims in the United States is highly dependent on who media organizations decide to have write or speak on the topic of Islam. In the case of Islam in the post-9/11 period, many media organizations shifted to having non-Muslim, anti-Muslim “experts” write about Islam and Muslims in the United States. Christopher Bail has demonstrated that mainstream media organizations moved fringe, anti-Muslim organizations like Jihad Watch, and anti-Muslim activists like William Kilpatrick and Robert Spencer, into the mainstream by repeatedly choosing to feature them on their platforms. The anti-Muslim sentiments that are published on American Catholic sites enable “civil societal organizations [to] perform cultural messages before the public in press conferences, television interviews, and newspaper editorial pages. There, these organizations compete to satisfy the public’s appetite for drama.”¹⁸³ While the Catholic media outlets may not themselves be “fringe” organizations, they feature the fringe actors,

¹⁸¹ Jordan Denari Duffner and The Bridge Initiative, *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam*.

¹⁸² Thomas, 97-102.

¹⁸³ Bail, 9. As we will see below, the anti-Muslim sentiments that appear on Catholic media sites range from racially coded depictions of Islam and Muslims as against religious freedom to overtly racist and hostile pieces that claim that Muslims will destroy Western Christendom.

like William Kilpatrick and Robert Spencer, as experts on Islam that perpetuate negative stereotypes about Muslims. While their commentary on Muslims in the United States would have been considered “fringe” in the immediate aftermath of September 11th, their regular appearance on mainstream Catholic media sites normalizes their views and opinions and thus moves them from the fringe to the mainstream. Featuring “fringe” authors, like Kilpatrick and Spencer, has a two-fold impact

Yet when mainstream organizations angrily denounce the fringe they only further increase the profile of these peripheral actors within the public sphere. This unintended consequence creates tension and splintering within the mainstream—but also gives the fringe organizations the visibility necessary to routinize their shared emotions into networks with more powerful organizations that help them raise funds and consolidate their capacity to create cultural change.¹⁸⁴

In short, once anti-Muslim pundits are featured on a public platform, their visibility in the mainstream becomes commonplace. Their views become “common sense” and routinized. The routinization of these negative stereotypes and the consequential racialization of Muslims in the United States works to construct the foreign, unamerican, Muslim Other. The formerly-fringe actors are given a mainstream platform to produce and reproduce highly racialized stereotypes and framing of Muslims in the United States that establishes Muslim as Other, while simultaneously affirming themselves as Americans who are conversing with, or warning, non-Muslim Americans about the threats that Muslims pose to the United States. These negative depictions are produced and disseminated by anti-Muslim actors so frequently that the negative depiction moves from the fringe into the mainstream.

¹⁸⁴ Chris Bail, *Terrified: How Anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations Became Mainstream* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 10.

Bail's analysis is focused on news media broadly, yet Catholic sites are manufacturing distinctly Catholic forms of anti-Muslim discourses which utilize dog whistle terms like "religious freedom," "terrorism," and "moderate Islam." A report by the Bridge Initiative at the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University found that Catholics who regularly consume Catholic media are more likely than those who do not to hold negative views of Muslims.¹⁸⁵ Catholic media sites, then, clearly promote negative views of Muslims in the United States, whether in a blatantly racist fashion (like we will see with the conservative site *Crisis*) or in more coded ways (like we will see with *Commonweal*, for example). If not reading Catholic media sites makes a Catholic less likely to hold negative views of Muslims, then it is evident that the consumption of content from these sites is a driving force of anti-Muslim hostilities amongst their demographics. The study also found that Catholics are less likely than other American demographics to personally know a Muslim, suggesting that for many American Catholics, Catholic media sites are primary forms of knowledge about Muslims for Catholics in the United States.¹⁸⁶ This same report found that 63% of polled Catholics reported that they gathered information on Islam and Muslims via 'news outlets which reference the topic generally.'¹⁸⁷ This is an important point, as it highlights

¹⁸⁵ Jordan Denari Duffner and The Bridge Initiative, *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam* (Washington, D.C.: Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, 2016).

¹⁸⁶ According to the Bridge Initiative, only 30% of Catholics know a Muslim personally, compared to 40% of Americans broadly who report knowing a Muslim personally. Those who do not know a muslim personally are twice as likely to hold "very unfavorable" views of Muslims, while the 30% of Catholics who do know a Muslim are twice as likely to report holding "somewhat favorable" views of the group.

¹⁸⁷ Jordan Denari Duffner and The Bridge Initiative, *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam*.

the importance of language and framing in articles. If Catholics are not seeking out information about Islam specifically, but rather reading articles that *mention* Islam or Muslims, then understanding how dog whistle racism and anti-Muslim hostilities percolate through these media outlets is crucial. The ways in which Catholic sites frame the topic of Islam and Muslims in the United States thereby frames Catholic perceptions of Muslims in the United States and Islam. Furthermore, consumers of Catholic media, both liberal- and conservative-leaning, are more likely to hold negative opinions about Islam and Muslims in the United States.¹⁸⁸ Catholics who read Catholic sites are consuming content that frames Muslims in the United States in a negative light.¹⁸⁹ Catholics consuming Catholic media sites, then, are consuming content that is produced in a way to stoke anti-Muslim hostilities. The content produced and disseminated from these sites, then, shapes the image that many American Catholics have of Islam and Muslims in the United States.

Understanding how white American Catholics— both liberal and conservative— engage with, produce, and read anti-Muslim articles gives important insight into how American Muslims are racialized more broadly in the United States as well as insight into how American Catholics position themselves as American vis-à-vis the Othering of Muslims in the United States. Across the liberal/conservative Catholic spectrum, three common tropes about Muslims appear: the idea of the global Muslim, the threat of Muslims

¹⁸⁸ Jordan Denari Duffner and The Bridge Initiative, *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam*

¹⁸⁹ This correlates with data that shows that, broadly, Americans who consume American news media are more fearful of Muslims in the United States than those who do not (43% vs. 31%). See Nacos and Torres-Reyna, 57.

to Christians and religious freedom, and the Moderate Muslim/Terrorist dichotomy.¹⁹⁰ We turn first to the global Muslim.

Constructing the Global Muslim

On September 23, 2001, the *National Catholic Register* (NCRegister) ran a piece titled “Faith Hits Ground Zero: Eyewitness Accounts.” The author, Joseph Cullen, describes being in lower Manhattan, a mere two blocks from the World Trade Center, when the first plane hit the North Tower. Cullen’s article is characteristic of those published in the immediate aftermath of September 11: filled with grief, relief, and a sort of shocked-induced awe. In his autobiographical account, Cullen, like many others who would publish similar pieces, recalls waking “early the next morning after a fitful night and opened the paper to see photos of scenes that were already frozen in my mind– the shock and fear of onlookers, the blood and dust descending on people I work alongside every day. I was again overcome with grief.”¹⁹¹ What is noticeably missing from Cullen’s firsthand account is a mention of Islam, Muslims, or even al-Qaeda. Yet, as we have seen with the data above, this type of article was characteristic of the days and weeks following September 11. In the days and weeks before al-Qaeda was confirmed to be responsible for the attacks, many news sites were posting content that emphasized the coming together of Americans and a sense of sheer goodwill. In another NCRegister piece published in October 2001, Father Chris Hynes tells a story similar to Joseph Cullen’s. Yet Father Hynes notes that “this was

¹⁹⁰ Of crucial note, the discussion of Muslims in the United States among white American Catholics is heavily gendered. While I do not attend to this here, chapter four is dedicated to the gendered nature of conservative discourses on Islam in the United States.

¹⁹¹ Joseph Cullen, “Faith Hits Ground Zero: Eyewitness Accounts,” *National Catholic Reporter*, September 21, 2001, <https://www.ncregister.com/news/faith-hits-ground-zero-eyewitness-accounts>.

an evil attack on our nation. It was a violation of our way of life. Yet, in all of that, there is a goodness coming out of it that has been remarkable.”¹⁹² By drawing on the notion of “our nation” and “our way of life,” Hynes creates a stark dichotomy that contrasts the United States with the perpetrators of September 11th. As we have seen, “our nation” is one that implicitly draws upon white Christian nativism. Originally a Protestant nativism, in the mid-20th century white Catholics gained access to full American citizenship and thus became part and parcel of the nation. The “our nation” and “our way of life” that Hynes describes taps into a white, Western Christian understanding of Americanness, which is contrasted with the unamerican nature of those who perpetrated the attacks. While the number of articles published about Islam, Muslims, and Arabs in the United States rose sharply in the six months after September 11, during this period news media sites also shifted towards more neutral, balanced language about Islam and Muslims in the United States.¹⁹³ Catholic news media sites followed this trend regardless of the theological leanings of the paper.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Chris Hynes, “Ground Zero Became His Parish,” *National Catholic Register*, October 21, 2001, <https://www.ncregister.com/interview/ground-zero-became-his-parish>.

¹⁹³ Thomas, 98. Brigitte L. Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna found that in the six months before September 11th, major American broadcast organizations and news networks— ABC News, CBS, NBC News, CNN, and Fox News— ran just 188 stories that mentioned Islam. This number rose to more than 1,400 in the six months following September 11th. Not only did the number of stories about Muslims and Islam increase more than seven-fold, the tone also changed. Of the 1,400 stories, positive depictions of Muslims and Islam in said stories increased to more than 40%, while negative and stereotypical depictions decreased to less than 25%. See Brigitte L. Nacos and Oscar Torres-Reyna, *Fueling Our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007).

¹⁹⁴ One outlier to this general trend is *First Things*. In a November 2001 article that was written the day after 9/11, Richard John Neuhaus immediately launched into a diatribe where he not only began discussing “the West and the rest,” but also into explicitly racist language. He writes “We can only try to do best by those Muslims who have truly chosen our side in ‘the clash of civilizations... On the Luke 14 passage, the *International Bible Commentary* (also published by Liturgical Press) offers additional comfort: ‘Jesus is not literally demanding the ‘hatred’ of family and self. *The Semitic mind, and the African as well, can only entertain two extremes: truth and falsehood, love and hate, light and darkness.*” That’s a relief, then. We who are not Semites or Africans *understand about nuance.*” Emphasis added. As we will see later, this

After the initial six months post-September 11th, the tone towards Muslims in the United States changed in both broad media sources and Catholic media sources. While media analyses have demonstrated that more than 66% of broad media sources depicted Muslims in negative, stereotypical, and racist way.¹⁹⁵ One of the negative dog whistle tropes is the trope of the global Muslim. Authors and publishers cast Islam as a single, unchanging tradition with firm rules and regulations, and thereby are able to construct what Saher Selod terms the “global Muslim.” The global Muslim is

stripped of individuality based on nationality and culture. In the media, a Saudi Muslim is barely distinguishable from a Pakistani Muslim, as both simply invoke a fear of terrorism due to their religious identity... their racialized religious identity as a terrorist transforms their bodies into enemies of the state who must be policed and surveilled because they may commit acts of terror against the American people.¹⁹⁶

A constructed global Islam and global Muslim allow non-Muslim Americans who talk about Muslims to make sweeping generalizations about all Muslims and non-Muslims who are racialized as Muslims– including those in the United States. The global Muslim is problematic since not only does it create a monolithic stereotype about a religious tradition with more than one billion practitioners, but the stereotypes are negative and laced with connotations of fear and suspicion. The global Muslim construction enables non-Muslims writing about Muslims to then construct Islam “as relatively static and constant, which in turns renders Islam authoritative.”¹⁹⁷ As we will see below, anti-Muslim actors can then

First Things actively engages with both dog whistle racism and explicit racism. See Richard John Neuhaus, “September 11– Before and After,” *First Things*, November 2001, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2001/11/september-11-before-and-after>.

¹⁹⁵ Nacos and Torres-Reyna.

¹⁹⁶ Selod, 8.

¹⁹⁷ Hammer, *Peaceful Families*, 12.

weaponize statements like “the Qur’an says” and “according to Islam” in order to give credence to their anti-Muslim hostilities. Since Muslims are racialized based on their religious tradition, all other aspects of a Muslim’s individual identity become null and void. Through this essentialization, a Sunni in Somalia is synonymous to, and indistinguishable from, a Shi’a Muslim in Iran, all of whom are indistinguishable from a Muslim living in the United States. The construction of the global Muslim produces a monolithic “Muslim” identity in the United States that is highly racialized and carries a very specific imaginary of who is Muslim. The category of “Muslim” is one, as discussed above, that is “triangulated” against Blackness and whiteness in the United States, which results in Black Muslims not being coded as Muslims and therefore are not seen as Muslims nor thought of as Muslims in the way that people of South Asian, North African, and Middle Eastern descent are. This is, again, why Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh man of South Asian descent, was targeted by his white murderer—he *looked* Muslim and was racialized as such.

The construction of the global Muslim has a long history in American culture, and it is pervasive.¹⁹⁸ In January 2002, months after the United States began bombing Afghanistan *Crisis* published a review for a book on the history of Christian-Muslim “tensions.” Robert Royal, the article’s author, writes that “today, we tend to downplay the

¹⁹⁸ In 1990, Orientalist Bernard Lewis published an article in *Atlantic* titled “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” with the subheading “why so many Muslims deeply resent the West, and why their bitterness will not easily be mollified.” In 1996, Samuel Huntington published a book titled *Clash of Civilizations* that argued that future wars would not be among countries, but rather differing cultures, pitting “the West” against “Islam.” These two American publications were among the most popular and pervasive of a genre that warned of the incompatibility of Islam and the West. Yet while the 1990s saw a resurgence of anti-Muslim discourses due to al-Qaeda’s bombing of the World Trade Center and the Gulf War, in 1978 Edward Said = published a monumental, field-defining book: *Orientalism*. Orientalism is the history of Western scholarship’s depiction of and construction of knowledge about the East. Said argued that Orientalism fueled Western imperialism and gave reason for Western occupation of “uncivilized” and “savage” lands.

long historical tensions between the Christian West and the Islamic world. In some ways we are right to do so.”¹⁹⁹ By dividing the world into the Christian West and the Islamic world, Royal engages in a common discursive move wherein “Islam” and “Muslim” become stagnant, unchanging, and monolithic categories.²⁰⁰ The strict dichotomy of “Islam” and “the West” is reminiscent of the 19th and 20th century dichotomy of “Christian America” and “Catholics” explored in chapter one. In 2004, the editorial team at *Commonweal*, a historically liberal Catholic publication, published an article that critiques the USCCB’s pastoral letter published in the wake of September 11th.²⁰¹ In it, the editorial staff uses three dog whistle tropes to construct the racialized, global Muslim. They first argue that

It might have been helpful if the bishops had discussed Islam and the Arab world in more detail. Although the lack of ‘participation in political life’ is alluded to, the role of democratization can play in fighting poverty and curbing violent conflict, including religious conflict, is not sufficiently acknowledged in their statement. It is not easy to imagine the prospects for democracy in an Arab world characterized

¹⁹⁹ Robert Royal, “Seeing Things: Epic Struggles,” *Crisis*, January 2002, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/2002/seeing-things-epic-struggles>.

²⁰⁰ Hammer, *Peaceful Families*, 12.

²⁰¹ On November 14, 2001, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) issued a pastoral message urging the United States government, and lay American Catholics, to seriously consider going to war with Afghanistan in response to the September 11th attacks. They write that “the events of September 11 were unique in their scale, but they were not isolated. Sadly, our world is losing respect for human life. Those who committed these atrocities do not distinguish between ordinary civilians and military combatants, and there is the threat of possible terrorist use of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons in the future... in our response to attacks on innocent civilians, we must be sure that we do not violate the norms of civilian immunity and proportionality. We believe every life is precious whether a person works at the World Trade Center or lives in Afghanistan.” The USCCB’s pastoral letter sought to mitigate reactionary and hawkish calls for war in response to the attacks, mirroring Pope John Paul II’s call to find non-war alternatives for conflict resolution. The complicating factor for many Americans, and in particular Catholics, was that al-Qaeda was not a formal, recognized state. Rather, it was a group of combatants who, while funded and harbored by state actors, were not a state. They were technically a group of civilians living among innocent civilians. The USCCB’s message urged Catholics to respect *all* human life, including those of innocent Afghans who would be at risk if the United States were to pursue a war with Afghanistan. See United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “A Pastoral Message: Living with Faith and Hope after September 11,” *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, November 14, 2001, <https://www.usccb.org/resources/pastoral-message-living-faith-and-hope-after-september-11>.

by great disparities in wealth and where corrupt monarchies or dictators spawn antidemocratic religious zealots. But democracy is clearly a necessary antidote to political violence.²⁰²

In this selection, the entire Arab world, where Islam is the majority religion, is a place without democratization, rife with poverty and violence, and filled with both wealthy dictators who create terrorists and the poor. All Arab Muslims are cast in a negative light due to this. Recall the previous chapter wherein Catholics were racialized as heathens. A similar process happens here. While *Commonweal* does not use the language of heathen, heathenism is replaced with “antidemocratic” wherein “antidemocratic” and “lack of democracy” become synonymous with the lack of civilization. Catholics were considered non-white, ethnic Others due to their “heathenish” allegiance to the Pope compared to the dignified, refined, and modern Protestantism that flourished in the United States. Here we see the antidemocratic heathen, the Muslims in the Arab world, who refuse a modern, Western democratic government and instead have a heathenish alignment to antidemocratic religious zealots and monarchies. Much like the understanding of Catholics of European descent as non-American Others needing to be educated on how to live a proper, civil (Protestant) society, in this selection, Muslims occupy a similar position, wherein they must be taught about democracy in order to fight poverty and curb violent conflict. The “guilt” of Muslims is, much like Catholics who were aware of Protestantism and still chose to practice Catholicism, is that they are aware of democracy and democratic ideals like religious freedom yet choose to not embrace them nor practice them. The editors

²⁰² “War & the Common Good,” *Commonweal*, June 14, 2004, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/war-common-good>.

reinforce that Islam, the monolith, is violent, stating that “It took Christianity centuries to wean itself of the sword, and it only did so reluctantly. The modern separation of church and state, after all, was the result of the inability of Christians to resolve their differences peacefully.”²⁰³

Not only is Islam violent, but the implied message of the *Commonweal* editors is that Islam, and therefore all practicing Muslims, are stuck centuries in the past. Meanwhile, Christianity is centuries ahead of Islam in terms of development and progress. Progress here is defined as a separation between church and state. As we will see below, the American relationship between religion and government, typically framed as an idyllic separation between church and state and the existence of religious freedom, becomes a frequent comparison point for Western Christendom and the Islamic world. As the editors write, “Islam knows little of the separation of mosque and state.”²⁰⁴ The imagery of Christianity “weaning” itself from violence taps into a shared Catholic memory of the Crusades and the eventual reconciliation of Catholicism with American identity. That Islam does not separate the mosque and the state in the formal way that the Vatican is removed from American politics is an apparent moral failing on the part of all Muslim majority countries and is due to the unchanging nature of the constructed global Islam. That religion and politics interact in way that is not governmentally sanctioned in the United States is an issue for the editors at *Commonweal*. However, there is no mention made of the fact that they, a Catholic publication, frequently cover and give opinions on

²⁰³ “War & the Common Good.”

²⁰⁴ “War & the Common Good.”

American politics and geopolitical policies, implying that the American Catholic way of interacting with the government is the ideal relationship, while the global Muslim relationship between “mosque and state” ought to change.

In April 2002, *Crisis* published an article by Robert Royal titled “Seeing Things: Breaking with Etiquette.” In the wake of September 11th, Royal feels that “Muslim apologies for the attack have mostly been perfunctory, when they have been offered at all. Muslim and non-Muslim opinion seems to converge on only one point: that the United States needs to examine its role in provoking Islamic rage.”²⁰⁵ Not only does Royal indicate that *all* Muslims must atone for the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, but the implication is that Muslims in the United States were not impacted by the events of September 11th, nor did they lose loved ones or their own lives.²⁰⁶ The dichotomy of Muslim and non-Muslim in this passage is not a loose categorical classification of religious belief, rather all Muslims are responsible for September 11th and must share the same ideologies as the al-Qaeda perpetrators. The United States is contrast with Islamic rage, indicating that Muslims and the United States are mutually exclusive. He continues, indicating that at one point “Islam was the greatest world civilization,” tapping into the construction of Islam as an immutable, static culture, rather than a diverse and changing religious tradition. He notes that “something internal to the Islamic system seems to have allowed the political, military, and cultural backwardness to occur” in Muslim-majority

²⁰⁵ Robert Royal, “Seeing Things: Breaking with Etiquette,” *Crisis*, April 2, 2002.

²⁰⁶ Of note, Christopher Bail demonstrates that between 2001 and 2003, only two press releases among hundreds from mainstream Muslim organizations that condemned terrorism achieved any media influence in the United States. Conservative media outlets covered none of them. See Bail, 55.

societies compared with traditionally Christian societies.²⁰⁷ The global Muslim and construction of monolithic Islam are entirely negative in Royal's calculation, compared with the positive Christian societies which lack "shadowy religious hierarchies." Royal presents Muslims and Islam as unchanging, stagnant, and inherently flawed. He concludes that "the West can try to help, but its own presuppositions are too different from Islamic categories to be of much use." This conclusion indicates that "Islam" and the West are entirely incompatible, to the point of being unintelligible to one another. This indicates that for Royal, Muslims in the United States are incapable of being fully American as they have yet to apologize on behalf of all Muslims in a meaningful way, and this is due to their "backwardness" that stems from "something internal" within Islam. Over a decade later, Peter Jesserer Smith, writing for *NCRRegister*, produced an article titled "Muslims vs. 'Outlaws of Islam.'" Citing numerous Muslim intellectuals, leaders, and scholars of Islam, Smith advances the idea that, contrary to popular belief, many Muslims are, in fact, working to combat terrorism in the name of Islam. However, Smith promotes the idea that there are two Islams: the false Islam claimed by terrorists, and the "real" and "classical" Islam that activists are trying to save.²⁰⁸

Institutionally, the Catholic Church engages in the construction of the global Muslim. Echoing the call for a condemnation of terrorism from Muslims around the world, during an in-flight press conference from Istanbul to Rome, Pope Francis says that in response to terrorism, "there needs to be international condemnation from Muslims across

²⁰⁷ Royal, "Seeing Things: Breaking with Etiquette."

²⁰⁸ Peter Jesserer Smith, "Muslims vs. 'Outlaws of Islam,'" *National catholic Register*, January 4, 2016.

the world. It must be said, ‘no, this is not what the Quran is about!’”²⁰⁹ While calling for international and widespread condemnation from Muslims, Pope Francis also displays an understanding of what “true” Islam is and what it is not. Similarly, a year later in 2015, the Archbishop of New York, Cardinal Timothy Dolan told *CNN* that Islamic terrorists “do not represent genuine Islamic thought” and are “a particularly perverted form of Islam... These are not pure, these are not real Muslims.”²¹⁰ Cardinal Dolan, like Pope Francis, displays an understanding of a singular “true” Islam that “pure” and “real” Muslims must practice. This true, pure, and real Islam is one that is intelligible to and deemed appropriate by Catholics.

The responses of the Pope and American bishops, like the high-profile Cardinal Dolan, often stoke ire from conservative Catholic circles who see their responses, despite engaging in the global Muslim trope, as a masquerade covering up the “true” nature of Islam. Kilpatrick argues that “ever since the Second Vatican Council, Church leaders have presented a smiley-faced version of Islam which emphasizes the commonalities with Catholicism and leaves out the alarming element.”²¹¹ Kilpatrick also claims that “it’s time for Catholic bishops and Catholic religious liberty organizations to go beyond the current simplistic model of religious liberty, and recognize that Islam does not fit in with many of the assumptions on which it is based.”²¹² Despite both conservative commentators like Kilpatrick and the liberal-leaning papacy and American cardinals being Roman Catholic,

²⁰⁹ Pope Francis, *In-Flight Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis from Istanbul to Rome* (Papal Flight: the Vatican, 2014).

²¹⁰ Timothy Dolan, interview by Chris Cuomo, *CNN*, March 3, 2015.

²¹¹ William Kilpatrick, “Pope Francis, Indifferentism, and Islamization,” *Crisis*, December 31, 2018.

²¹² Kilpatrick, “The Burqa, the Baker, and the Bishops,” *Crisis*, June 12, 2018.

the disconnect and disagreement amongst the parties indicates an intracommunal struggle over what it means to be Catholic and American, and who is capable of attaining access to American cultural citizenship.

Religious Freedom and Christian Persecution

In February 2004, NCRRegister ran a story titled “Religious Freedom Meets Islam.” Responding to the controversial move by the Bush administration to invade Iraq, author Jim Cosgrove argues that “lurking behind a lot of the problems in Iraq is one fundamental disagreement Americans have with many Iraqis: the importance of religious freedom.”²¹³ Cosgrove’s juxtaposition of “Americans” with “Iraqis” draws on a very specific understanding of who an “American” is. As discussed previously, the American cultural imaginary is white and Christian, and in this specific instance, Catholic. Americans, as Cosgrove implies, all hold the same understanding of religious freedom—that is, you are free to practice in ways intelligible to Americans and if you are not a Christian, then you should fully and freely support Christians practicing their religion in any way they choose. Recall that during the 18th and 19th centuries, the presence of Catholicism was not supported by non-Catholic white Americans, who argued that Catholicism was an inherent threat to American freedom. During the 20th century, white Catholic transitioned from ethnic Other to white Americans who can other. This shift melded white Catholic identity with American identity, drawn upon here. Cosgrove continues to note that the invasion of Iraq and the subsequent nation building efforts of the US government “will mean nothing

²¹³ Jim Cosgrove, “Religious Freedom Meets Islam,” *National Catholic Register*, February 8, 2004, <https://www.ncregister.com/commentaries/religious-freedom-meets-islam>.

unless all Iraqis are allowed the freedom to worship as they wish. It will be a battle every bit as difficult as the military ones. As the U.S. state department pointed out in its recent report on religious freedom, Muslim countries such as Iraq are often the least likely to recognize others' rights to worship."²¹⁴

The role of religious freedom in the construction of American identity is intimately tied to the foundation of the nation itself. The American ideal of religious freedom is tied to "racial whiteness, Protestant Christianity and American national identity" in a way that defines not only American cultural identity, but also defines American whiteness and justifies American colonial and imperial rule.²¹⁵ In the case of the Iraq War, the charge of lacking religious freedom becomes a way to Other Muslim-majority countries, their occupants, and indeed Muslims in general. By claiming that Islam does not value religious freedom, the implicit message is that Islam/Muslims do not share a fundamental American value, thereby placing them at odds with Americanism writ large. The ubiquitous claim that the founding fathers separated church and state is clouded in misunderstanding. While the United States lacks a formal, institutionalized church, a Protestant-based "moral establishment" links the state and religion.²¹⁶ In short, the United States' cultural ideals are

²¹⁴ Cosgrove, "Religious Freedom Meets Islam."

²¹⁵ Wenger, 1.

²¹⁶ Sydney Ahlstrom famously posited in his foundational *A Religious History of the American People* that, while at the time of publication (1972), Christianity did not seem to hold an overt sway over the United States, Protestantism, specifically Puritanism, was and remained influential throughout the formation of the American colonies and eventual United States. Puritan Protestant values integrated themselves into the legislature, and as we saw into chapter one, into the education of American youth via the public school system. Sehat extends Max Weber's argument in *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* to argue that the economic fabric of the United States was built by business owners who capitalized upon the idea that "only the Protestant Christian religion could provide a bond that would unite rich, and poor" (189). Beyond economic influences, both the United States Constitution and the First Amendment are products of Protestant morality. As Sehat argues, "principles of federalism gave the states an enormous reservoir of power to regulate the health, welfare, and morals of its residents, and religious partisans drew from this

inseparable from the moral ethics of Protestant Christianity. In the 21st century, white American Catholics across the liberal/conservative spectrum now see Catholic morals as implicitly linked to American identity.

While Catholics across the liberal-conservative spectrum employ the language of religious freedom, highly conservative Catholics often weaponize this language of freedom and persecution in less coded, more blatant ways. Anti-Muslim activist William Kilpatrick, a former Boston College professor and frequent Catholic media commentator argues that when it comes to Muslims, American idealization of religious freedom puts American Catholics at risk. Responding to a Becket Fund for Religious Liberty statement, a foundation whose board members are mostly Roman Catholic, which affirms the need to fight for the religious freedom of all religions within the United States, Kilpatrick writes, “that sounds very noble and also very American, but, as I have argued elsewhere, one could just as easily say, ‘When a certain quasi-religion gets a foothold in society, the rights of all other faiths are threatened.’”²¹⁷ Kilpatrick continues to argue that by allowing Muslims to freely practice their religion, which includes women wearing burqas, the very existence of Catholicism in the United States is at risk:

It’s time for Catholic bishops and Catholic religious liberty organizations to go beyond the current simplistic model of religious liberty, and recognize that Islam does not fit in with many of the assumptions on which it is based. Catholic leaders need to recognize that Islam is as a great a threat to religious freedom as any local, state, or federal government agency. If they don’t start thinking about these issues, they may soon find themselves defending the right of Muslims to wear the burqa—

source to imprint their moral ideals onto state constitutions and judicial opinions. Prosecution for blasphemy was just one of the many religious and moral regulations that formed a *moral establishment* that connected religion and the states” (5).

²¹⁷ William Kilpatrick, “The Burqa, the Baker, and the Bishops,” *Crisis*, June 12, 2018, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/2018/burqa-baker-bishops>. Notably, the image used for this article is a still from Kilpatrick’s appearance on FOX Business, a nationwide station.

a custom that not only obliterates a women's identity, but also serves to pave the way for Islamization.²¹⁸

The issue for Kilpatrick is multifaceted. First, he presents Islam as a “quasi-religion,” establishing that Muslims should not receive the same protections of religious freedom that are so valued by Americans. Acknowledging that American Catholic bishops and lay Catholics are deeply invested in the cause of religious freedom, Kilpatrick urges these groups to realize that religious freedom and Islam are incompatible. More than incompatibility, Islam and Muslims are dangerous to individual citizens and to the country itself, from the local municipal level to the federal level. He then taps into the racialization of Islam by drawing attention to women's veiling practices, a practice Kilpatrick sees not only as indefensible by religious freedom standards, but also claims is a civil right violation, and, importantly, a symbol of the threat that Muslims pose to the United States and American Catholicism.²¹⁹ To be attended to in chapter four, the emphasis on women's clothing practices is reminiscent of the 19th century anti-Catholic fervor that saw Catholic nuns depicted as victims of Catholic men's violence. This depiction of Muslim women as victims— akin to the depictions of 19th century Catholic women religious— serves to racialize Muslims as un-American and Other.

More than 13 years after Cosgrove's “Religious Freedom Meets Islam,” *America's* Michael O'Loughlin wrote an article covered the 2016 International Religious Freedom Report, released by the state department under the Trump administration.²²⁰ O'Loughlin

²¹⁸ Kilpatrick, “The Burqa, the Baker, and the Bishops.”

²¹⁹ Kilpatrick's treatment of women's veiling is attended to in the fourth chapter.

²²⁰ *America* is a Jesuit-founded publication that emerged in 1909. Their mission states that “the Ignatian traditions of ‘finding God in all things’ and the promotion of justice shape or commentary.” A liberal-leaning publication, *America* “aggressively promoted racial and social justice from the 1930s through the

notes that the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) “was committing genocide against Christians and other religious minorities.”²²¹ While most of the article focuses on the threat of “Islamic extremists” to Christians and other religious minorities around the globe, O’Loughlin also observes that “when it comes to predominately Catholic countries, the report focuses on how welcoming those countries are to outsiders, especially migrants of different faiths.”²²² Furthermore O’Loughlin notes that “the White House announced that it had chosen Gov. Sam Brownback of Kansas, a social conservative and Roman Catholic, to serve as ambassador at large for international religious freedom.”²²³ O’Loughlin’s article makes two distinct discursive moves. First, by spending a majority of the article talking about the lack of religious freedom in Muslim majority areas and the persecution of Christians by Muslim states around the world, he employs the global Muslim trope to frame Muslims and Islam as dangerous and discriminatory. Second, O’Loughlin spends the second portion of the article highlighting the dedication that Catholics around the world have to religious freedom. Not only are Catholic countries exceedingly welcoming, but a Roman Catholic was chosen to head a task force on religious freedom. This frames Catholics as not only compatible with, but as champions of, the American ideal of religious

1960s” and frequently criticized Senator Joseph McCarthy during the 1950s. *America’s* editors note that following the Second Vatican Council, they “consistently promoted conciliar reform, but they struck a balance between the extremes of opinion in the reforming church, acting as a bridge for church dialogue.” Their 2021 impact report notes that in 2021 they had: 70,000 print magazine readers, 12,000 digital subscribers, 1,100,000 unique monthly users, 175,000 newsletter subscribers, 1,125,000 social media followers, 250,000 podcast downloads per month, and 54,000 YouTube subscribers. Furthermore, they had more than 87,000 “mentions” in the secular and religious press, both editorial and on social media.

²²¹ Michael O’Loughlin, “State Department Religious Freedom Report Focuses on Threats by ISIS,” *America*, August 15, 2017, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/08/15/state-department-religious-freedom-report-focuses-threats-isis>.

²²² O’Loughlin, “State Department Religious Freedom Report.”

²²³ O’Loughlin, “State Department Religious Freedom Report.”

freedom. As discussed in chapter one, in the 19th and early- to mid- 20th centuries, Catholics were thought of as being not only incompatible with American democratic ideals like religious freedom, but detrimental to them. During this period, a ubiquitous understanding of American civic belonging was that Americanness was predicated on a nativist and Protestant lineage. In the mid-20th century, however, white Catholics emerged as champions of American ideals in the face of the Cold War and gained access to American civic belonging. Here we see a non-Christian religion, like Islam, cast as incompatible with Americanism as their practices are not completely in line with contemporary American expressions of Christianity. In a similar way that Catholics asserted their whiteness and Americanness through comparison with Black Americans during the 20th century, O’Loughlin’s article uses the same discursive rhetoric to reify the Americanness of white Catholics in comparison to threatening Islamic extremists.

The concept of religious freedom is a malleable, contextual category in the United States, produced and employed by social institutions. The categories of religion and religious freedom “are forms of governance, ways that Americans regulate themselves. Arguments about religion are arguments about what rules should govern social life and about what kinds of social institutions produce free persons.”²²⁴ In short, religious freedom is not about the freedom to practice the religion of one’s choice, nor the freedom from mandated religion or religion in the civic arena. When American Catholics invoke the

²²⁴ Finbarr Curtis, *The Production of American Religious Freedom* (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 198.

language of religious freedom regarding Muslims, they are setting boundaries that delegate who is capable of holding American values and who is not.

The classification of Muslims as Other in relation to religious freedom typically appears in narratives about “the plight of global Christians.” A phenomenon of both liberal and conservative Catholic publications, the call for religious freedom in Muslim majority countries is frequently fused with depictions of tragedies befalling Christians in Muslim majority countries at the hands of the violent, global Muslim who does not believe in religious freedom for Christians and other non-Muslims. For many authors, without the protection of the American ideal of religious freedom, Christians are open to persecution at the hands of Muslims. In 2014, Gabriel Said Reynolds wrote that “one cannot easily sidestep the problem of Islamic anti-Christian persecution.”²²⁵ He continued, arguing that “it is nevertheless true that Christians living in the Islamic countries regularly face threats. In many of these countries, Muslims who convert to Christianity live in fear for their lives. Christians can be imprisoned for proselytizing and executed for an accusation of blasphemy against Islam.”²²⁶ Implicitly, Muslims are a threat to Christians, as countries governed by Muslims are unsafe places for Christians to practice, unlike the United States where any one can worship. In 2015, *Crisis* published an article by William Kilpatrick where Kilpatrick warns that Christian Europeans are being persecuted by Muslim migrants in the form of “violent crimes: rape, assault, and robbery.”²²⁷ These crimes are “very

²²⁵ Gabriel Said Reynolds is the Jerome J. Crowley and Rosaleen G. Crowley Professor of Theology at Notre Dame University, a private Catholic University located in Notre Dame Indiana. Gabriel Said Reynolds, “When Martyrdom Isn’t a Metaphor,” *Commonweal*, January 27, 2014.

²²⁶ Reynolds.

²²⁷ William Kilpatrick, “Migration and the Islamization of Europe,” *Crisis*, October 9, 2015.

common” in Muslim cultures, per Kilpatrick, and he warns that soon, Christianity will be obsolete in Europe due to Muslim immigration. Associate editor of *Crux* at the *Boston Globe* and the senior Vatican analyst for CNN, John Allen dedicated an entire book to this topic. *The Global War on Christians: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Anti-Christian Persecution* argues that militant and fundamentalist Islam is “the world’s leading manufacturer of anti-Christian hatred.”²²⁸ While Allen notes that Muslim countries are not the *only* threat to Christians, they are the leading. He furthers this argument to say that “all that said, it remains the case that too often the suffering of Christians is enveloped in silence, in part because it defies the Western narrative of Christianity as the architect of oppression rather than its victim.”²²⁹ Allen and others rework the anti-Muslim discourses within the United States to demonstrate that Christians are persecuted peoples. More than persecuted, however, they are the victims of Muslims. The framework of martyrdom is one that allows modern Christians the ability to “interpret their experiences in the world and interactions with others as part of this history of persecution and the struggle between good and evil.”²³⁰ Dozens of articles published by Catholic sites between the years 2002 and 2020 highlight this tension between good (Catholicism) and evil (Islam).²³¹ On June 7,

²²⁸ Josh Allen, *The Global War on Christians: Dispatches from the Front lines of Anti-Christian Persecution* (New York: Image, 2016): x.

²²⁹ Allen, xi.

²³⁰ Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 8-9.

²³¹ Not all articles will be featured or discussed within this section. For further reading, please see the following curated selection: Kathryn Jean Lopez, “‘Francis in Iraq’: A New Documentary Explores What a Historic Papal Trip Meant for Persecuted Christians,” *America* March 21, 2022; Christina Gebel, “Paying the Ultimate Price: What Martyrs Can Teach Us about Sacrifices for Faith,” *Busted Halo*, April 30, 2015; William Kilpatrick, “Migration and the Islamization of Europe,” *Crisis*, October 9, 2015; Tom Kean, “Head of 9/11 Commission on Five Ways to Prevent the Spread of Terrorism,” *America*, December 7, 2018; Kevin Clarke, “The Future for Iraqi Christians has Rarely Looked Grimmer,” *America*, December 20, 2016; “Churches in Sri Lanka Closed for Second Week in Fear of New Attacks,” *America*, May 7,

20117, the CEO of the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal service order, spoke in Washington, D.C. about a United States House of Representatives bill that “will provide humanitarian aid to Christians and other religious groups suffering at the hands of the Islamic State militants.”²³² The aid within the bill would “be directed to groups such as the Chaldean Catholic Archdiocese of Irbil, Iraq, which provides direct care for victims, and those groups in turn get the assistance to those in need.”²³³ Again in this framing we see the implication that Catholics, who are aiding victims of Muslims, are generous, freedom-loving groups, while Muslims are the perpetrators of atrocities so great that the federal government must be involved. In a similar effort in 2018, the Knights of Columbus created an effort titled “Rebuilding the Cradle of Christianity” in order to support Iraqi and Syrian Christians who were victim to persecution at the hands of ISIS.²³⁴ In an interview with Bishop Barnaba Yousif Habash, an Iraqi priest and bishop who moved to New Jersey in 2010, Mike May quotes Bishop Habash as saying that

Islam has succeeded in “nearly eliminating Christianity in some places in the Middle East that had been Christian homelands– Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the Holy Land, Jordan, Egypt, and Iraq. From the seventh century until today, the religious identity of the region has been completely changed... Christianity has virtually disappeared, owing to the various means of persecution– sometimes overt, at other times by legislation influenced by the Quran, and still other times by political decrees. There have only been a few periods when Christians enjoyed a peaceful of secure existence.”²³⁵

2019; “Sri Lankan Church Schools to Reopen after Easter Bombings,” *America* May 17, 2019; Gabriel Said Reynolds, “When Martyrdom Isn’t a Metaphor,” *Commonweal*, January 27, 2014.

²³² Josephine von Dohlen, “Bill to Aid Genocide Victims in Middle East Goes before Senate,” *America*, June 8, 2017, <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/06/08/bill-aid-genocide-victims-middle-east-goes-senate>.

²³³ von Dohlen, “Bill to Aid Genocide Victims.”

²³⁴ Mike May, “Nebraska Knights of Columbus Join Effort to Help Persecuted Christians in Iraq, Syria,” *America*, March 9, 2018, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/03/09/nebraska-knights-columbus-join-effort-help-persecuted-christians-iraq-syria>.

²³⁵ Barnaba Yousif Habash, in Mike May, “Nebraska Knights of Columbus Join Effort to Help Persecuted Christians in Iraq, Syria,” *America*, March 9, 2018,

By quoting an Iraqi bishop, May draws on Habash's Iraqi identity as a source of authority for claiming the Islam has almost entirely eliminated Christianity in "the Cradle of Christianity." Both Habash and May make sweeping generalizations about the status of Christians for over a thousand years in countries across the Middle East. Habash's claims that Christianity has disappeared from the region rely on the argument that Christians are gone because of Muslim persecution of Christians, rather than immigration patterns or simple conversions to Islam. The changing demographics of the Middle East are due to the violent persecution at the hands of Muslims and through the anti-Christian dicta of the Qur'an. These examples display an understanding of Muslims and Islam to be threatening to Christians and they engage in the construction of the global Muslim and monolithic Islam, which allows the authors to talk about the danger of Islam writ large. The persecution of Christians is often linked to "extremist" Islam, while moderate Muslims remain complicit in their silence on the matter. Elias Mallon, writing for *America*, says that "faced with the savage persecution of Christians and other religious minorities in Syria and Iraq, that [why don't Muslims speak out] is a question one often hears as the atrocities of the so-called Islamic State continue in the name of Islam. Why aren't moderate Muslim leaders speaking out against the Islamic State?"²³⁶ The construction the moderate Muslim/terrorist Muslim dichotomy is where we turn next.

The Moderate Muslim and the Terrorist

<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2018/03/09/nebraska-knights-columbus-join-effort-help-persecuted-christians-iraq-syria>.

²³⁶ Elias D. Mallon, "Who Speaks for Islam?: Muslim Authorities Call for an End to Militant Violence," *America*, March 15, 2015.

On November 1, 2001, less than two months following the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Robert P. George published an article for *Crisis* titled “Responding Justly to Terrorism.” Like most articles that came out in the weeks following September 11th, George does not link terrorism with Islam. In fact, nowhere in the article are the words “Muslim” or “Islam” mentioned.²³⁷ Rather, like many other articles of its time, he grapples with the theological quandary that responding to a violent terrorist attack presents. That same day, *Crisis* also published an article by Michael M. Uhlmann wherein he writes

Democracies are slow to anger, but ferocious when roused. The jackals who brought death and destruction to our shores fancy themselves clever but fail to grasp the artifacts of technology and deploy them to perverse purpose. But they do not understand what freedom is, and because they do not, they cannot grasp the ardor that free men will bring to the defense of their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.²³⁸

Though published on the same conservative site, the articles strike very different tones. First, Uhlman refers to the perpetrators of September 11th as “jackals,” invoking the image that those responsible are not only not human, but they verge on feral. The untamed, wild, uncivilized nature of the jackal is contrasted with the “slow to anger” yet “ferocious” United States. Where the jackal lacks comprehension and forethought, the United States does not react impulsively or without cause. The United States’ ferocity is acceptable and warranted.²³⁹ Uhlmann’s article taps into previously discussed tropes of Muslims as antidemocratic and unable to understand the concept of freedom. Engaging in dog whistle

²³⁷ Robert P. George, “Responding Justly to Terrorism,” *Crisis*, November 1, 2001.

²³⁸ Michael M. Uhlmann, “Late Edition: Sings of Weakness, Sings of Strength,” *Crisis*, November 1, 2001.

²³⁹ The imagery of the wild jackal is akin to 19th century depictions of Catholics in the United States as wild, untamed heathens.

politics, Uhlman argues that the “jackals” do not understand the American concept of freedom, which renders them unable to comprehend the backlash they will receive for their actions. Furthermore, Uhlman juxtaposes members of al-Qaeda with free men. In one sense, the use of “free men” harkens back to his argument that those involved in September 11th do not understand the concept of American freedom. It also implies a slavish relationship between the September 11th hijackers and their own ideological system. Yet Uhlmann’s article also engages with another common racializing trope: Muslims as violent terrorists.

In June 2006, John L. Allen, Jr. interviewed Australian Cardinal George Pell for NCR on the topic of Islam. When asked why he thought “disaffected Muslims drift towards political jihadism, while disaffected Christians drift towards ‘sects’ that promise prosperity and individual fulfillment,” Cardinal Pell responded that he believed that Islam was, at its core, a warlike religion stating “I’d also say Islam is a much more war-like culture than Christianity... I’ve had it asserted to me is that in the relationship between the Islamic and non-Islamic world, the normal thing is a situation of tension if not war, of outright hostility. You have to declare peace... that’s what’s been alleged. A state of tension or hostility between Islam and the *dar al-Harb*, the non-Islamic world, is constant.”²⁴⁰ In Allen’s question, the implication is that Muslims are drawn to violence in the form of jihad, while Christians seek self-betterment and positivity. The question itself sets up Islam and Muslims as inherently violent in opposition to the peaceful, loving Christianity. In his

²⁴⁰ John L. Allen, Jr., “Cardinal Pell on Islam and on Translations,” *National Catholic Reporter*, June 10, 2006.

response, Cardinal Pell goes a step further and asserts that, comparatively, Muslims are more “war-like” and prone to violence. Not only that, but the natural state of Muslims is one of hostility and even war. This characterizes Muslims as dangerous and violent, particularly when it comes to Western Christians. Cardinal Pell then indicates that this war-like nature is inherent to Islam and practicing Muslims, asking, “can a good moderate Muslim be faithful to the Koran? I think it depends on who’s going to win where, if there is going to be a struggle between the moderates and the extremists.”²⁴¹ First, Muslims globally are categorized monolithically by the Qur’an, a discursive move that establishes the global Muslim. Taking it a step further, Pell demarcates two—and only two—types of Muslims within this umbrella category: moderates and terrorists. Tellingly, however, is the fact that Pell questions if moderate Muslims are true, *faithful* Muslims. This is not a question he poses about “extremists.” Extremists, terrorist Muslims are faithful to the Qur’an, which is presented as the “internal logic” of Islam. The juxtaposition of “moderate” Muslims against “extremist” Muslims establishes that, for Pell, extremist Muslims are the *real* Muslims. Being labeled as either a “moderate” Muslim or an “extremist” Muslim is related to being labeled as a “good” Muslim or a “bad” Muslim, which is an applied political identity by which Muslims are labeled “bad” until proven to be “good.” Good Muslims are modern, secular, and Westernized, while bad Muslims are doctrinal, antimodern, and virulent.²⁴² The good Muslim/Bad Muslim dichotomy is connected to Mahmood Mamdani’s framework of culture talk, which “assumes that every culture has a

²⁴¹ Allen, Jr. “Cardinal Pel on Islam and on Translations.”

²⁴² Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: American, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Three Leaves Press, 2005).

tangible essence that defines it, and then explains politics as a consequence of that essence.”²⁴³ Pell’s demarcation between moderate and terrorist Muslim is part of the culture talk framework which assumes that the West has an immutable culture that is hated by the inflexible culture of the global Muslim.

In a January 2002 article for *First Things*, James Nuechterlein writes about the preliminary progress of America’s War on Terror.²⁴⁴ Nuechterlein’s framing follows the familiar pattern of the West vs. Islam, where he writes

Radical Islam will produce new generations of martyrs regardless of the nature of the American response to September 11. Those who hate the West in general and America in particular need no fresh incentives to keep their hatred alive. It is implacable and ineradicable nothing we do or do not do can “capture their hearts and minds,” to revive a phrase from the Vietnam War era. Those hearts and minds are forever closed to us, despite the exhortations to the contrary of those who speak blithely of eliminating the “root causes” of terrorism. (One enters here the obligatory disclaimer: we are speaking of radical Islam, or Islamism, not of the Muslim world in general.)... Much of radical Islam’s contempt for the West stems from our presumed softness and decadence. Incontrovertible military evidence to the contrary may induce a greater respect, if not affection, for the Great Satan.²⁴⁵

Islamic hatred for Western civilization, namely the United States, is depicted as an eternal, irrational hatred that lacks any solution. Nuechterlein’s assertion that radical Muslims will always hate the West is a prime example of the culture talk framework. Similar to the hatred and inherent war-like conflict that Cardinal Pell discussed above, Nuechterlein

²⁴³ Mamdani, 17.

²⁴⁴ Founded in 1990 by Richard John Neuhaus, a former Lutheran pastor who converted to Catholicism and was ordained as a priest, *First Things* is a conservative-leaning magazine and publication with a mission to “advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.” It also claims to be America’s “most influential journal of religion and public life.” Not a specifically Catholic publication, it caters to both evangelicals and Catholics, yet Catholicism is a strong pulse within the publication. The *First Things 2022 Annual Report* indicated that in 2022 alone, the web platform for the magazine had 3,215,958 unique visitors. See “About,” *First Things*, accessed May 5, 2023; “2022 Annual Report,” *First Things*, accessed May 5, 2023.

²⁴⁵ James Nuechterlein, “Hard Thoughts in Wartime,” *First Things*, January 2002.

argues, “nothing that Americans do will change this eternal hate.”²⁴⁶ Muslims are lost forever to their hatred for the United States and American ideals. Nuechterlein draws a firm distinction between the Islam that he is talking about (radical, terroristic Islam) and “not of the Muslim world in general.” For the radical Muslim, the only language they speak is violence: it is through violence that Muslims will gain “greater respect, if not affection,” for the United States. Neuchterlein’s distinction between Muslims in general and radical Muslims is a common dichotomy.

Father Peter-Hans Kolvenbach frames the distinction between Muslims as “there are fanatical Muslims and there are Muslims convinced that once they arrive in Europe they no longer need to follow the Koran because they’re outside the land of Islam.”²⁴⁷ There are Muslims who are radical terrorists like those described by Nuechterlein and then there are those who do not practice Islam once they are away from Muslim majority countries. This dichotomy between Muslims who are “westernized” and those who are radical is a manifestation of what the Good Muslim, Bad Muslim dichotomy. Sahar Aziz moves beyond the Good Muslim/Bad Muslim dichotomy into a typological hierarchy of racial Muslims: the religious dissident, the religious Muslim, the secular dissident, the secular Muslim, and the former Muslim. The former Muslim is a Muslim who converts from Islam to Christianity and “serves as native informants” for anti-Muslim activists and secular liberals. The former Muslim validates the dog whistles of non-Muslims by

²⁴⁶ The role that hatred plays, according to Catholics, in Islamic terrorism is also seen in a statement from Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin who noted in 2017 that the Vatican was concerned about terrorist threats “especially for the senseless hatred” from which they stem. See “Top Vatican Official Discusses ISIS Terrorist Threat, Immigration Debate,” *America*, August 2017.

²⁴⁷ John L. Allen, Jr., “Theological Dialogue with Islam ‘Impossible,’ Top Jesuit Says,” *National Catholic Reporter*, December 5, 2007.

providing “proof” that Muslims and Islam are anti-democratic, misogynistic, and violent, since the Former Racial Muslims’ role as validators of Islamophobia evinces the permanence of their racialized Muslim identities... although their tokenized status allows them to escape the worst consequences of anti-Muslim racism, Former Racial Muslims are still racial outsiders.”²⁴⁸ Ayaan Hirsi Ali is an example of the former racial Muslim.²⁴⁹ A frequent collaborator with William Kilpatrick, Ali provides confirmation of the worst suspicions non-Muslims have about Muslims. Kilpatrick writes,

What might Catholics learn from Ayaan Hirsi Ali? Two important question comes to mind. The first is that Islamic values are quite different from Catholic values... There is a second lesson to be learned from the work of Hirsi Ali. Catholic leaders, along with many secular leaders, seem to think that the only threat from Islam comes from militant extremists. Moreover, they contend that these violent jihadists have nothing to do with Islam. According to Ali, however, the threat is much larger and it most assuredly does have something to do with Islam.²⁵⁰

First, Ali confirms that Catholicism and Islam are different in every aspect, namely their values and morals. Second, as a former Muslim familiar with Islamic theology, Ali provides an authoritative voice for Kilpatrick’s claims that violent jihad is part and parcel of Islam. By having his claims of violence supported by the authoritative voice of a former Muslim, Kilpatrick advances his arguments that Islam “justifies, promotes, celebrates, and

²⁴⁸ Sahar Aziz, *The Racial Muslim: When Racism Quashes Religious Freedom* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), 9-10.

²⁴⁹ According to the Bridge Initiative, Ayaan Hirsi Ali “is a public figure who frequently appears in the media to discuss Islam. She calls for Islamic “reformation” and believes that violence against women is inherently Islamic. Hirsi Ali has worked with politicians and anti-Muslim activists, both in the U.S. and abroad.” A Somali-born American former Muslim, Hirsi Ali argues, publicly, that Islam is a “death cult” and must be destroyed with military force. As she has held appointments at universities like Harvard and Stanford, according to the Bridge Initiative, critics see “these appointments as providing “an academic veneer” that validates her controversial positions.” See Bridge Initiative Team, “Fact Sheet: Ayaan Hirsi Ali,” *Bridge Initiative*, June 16, 2017.

²⁵⁰ William Kilpatrick, “What Catholics Can Learn about Islam from a Former Muslim,” *Crisis Magazine*, April 24, 2017.

encourages,” acts of violence. This violence for Kilpatrick is twofold. First, it is violence in standard meaning. Additionally, however, he argues that Islam is committing “cultural” violence by spreading Islamic values and taking “advantage both of Constitutional protections and of the Western abhorrence for discrimination.”²⁵¹ Again we see that Islam is incompatible with Western culture because it manipulates Western values of inclusion. Yet, Ali’s status as a former Muslim does not earn her full access to Western inclusion, as Kilpatrick writes, “It’s time that Church leaders paid some attention to Muslims who are not part of the institutional Islamic apparatus— even if they are ex-Muslims such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali.”²⁵²

The hierarchy of racial Muslims is useful for conceptualizing the ways in which Muslims are policed in the United States because of their perceived levels of religiosity. However, in much of Catholic news media, Muslims fall mainly into two broad categories under the global Muslim umbrella: the terrorist and the moderate. Muslims who do not conform to Catholic understandings of proper religiosity or American civic behavior are accused of terrorism and their behavior and religiosity is policed by the United States government as well as non-Muslim (and even sometimes Muslim) citizens. Moderate, secularized Muslims do not “practice their religion of birth, believe American culture is colorblind, and support American foreign policy.”²⁵³ Both liberal and conservative Catholic media sites racialize Muslims as Other through the construction of the moderate and terrorist Muslim. Liberal sites, more often than not, use the trope of the moderate

²⁵¹ Kilpatrick, “What Catholics Can Learn.”

²⁵² Kilpatrick, “What Catholics Can Learn.”

²⁵³ Aziz, 9.

Muslim while conservative sites deploy the terrorist Muslim.²⁵⁴ Among the conservative sites, Catholic anti-Muslim activists exclusively utilize the Muslim-as-Terrorist trop. Catholic anti-Muslim activists like Robert Spencer and William Kilpatrick began as fringe actors yet moved into the mainstream by stoking fear and stereotypes.²⁵⁵ Featured on programming from FOX to *NCRRegister*, Spencer and Kilpatrick argue that violence, terrorism, and a hatred of American ideals are at the heart of the monolithic Islam.²⁵⁶ In numerous articles posted on conservative Catholic sites like *Crisis* and *Church Militant*, Spencer argues that Islam not only fails to condemn, but encourages, sexual assault and assaults on non-Muslim women.²⁵⁷ In these articles, Spencer is credited as a “distinguished

²⁵⁴ For liberal engagement with moderate Islam, see Carmel Delshad, “Meet the Face of Modern Islam: Speaking Out for the Moderate Muslim Majority in America,” *Busted Halo*, September 22, 2010; Scott Korb, “Looking for Its Luther,” *Commonweal*, September 2005; “Who Speaks for Islam?: Muslim Authorities Call for an End to Militant Violence,” *America* March 4, 2015; Mary Margaret Funk, *Islam Is...: AN Experience of Dialogue and Devotion* (New York: Lantern Books, 2003); George Dardess, *Meeting Islam: A Guide for Christians* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2005); Jordan Denari Duffner, *Finding Jesus among Muslims: How Loving Islam Makes Me a Better Catholic* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017). Of note is the fact that Sr Mary Margaret Funk’s book has sold more than 100,000 copies since 2005. See Jordan Denari Duffner and The Bridge Initiative, *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam*.

²⁵⁵ Bail; Elfenbein, 35.

²⁵⁶ For a curated selection of works that engage in these arguments, see: William Kilpatrick, *Christianity, Islam, and Atheism: The Struggle for the Soul of the West* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012); William Kilpatrick, *What Catholics Need to Know about Islam* (Manchester, NH: Crisis Publications, 2020); William Kilpatrick, “None Dare Call It Treason,” *Crisis*, September 18, 2018; William Kilpatrick, “Fool’s Paradise: The Appeal of Jihad,” *Crisis*, October 3, 2014; William Kilpatrick, “Triple Threat to Christians and the Church,” *Catholic World Report*, January 5, 2020; William Kilpatrick, “Why You Should Worry about Virgins in Paradise,” *Front Page*, December 6, 2016; Robert Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2005); Robert Spencer, *Did Muhammad Exist? An Inquiry into Islam’s Obscure Origins* (New York: Post Hill Press, 2021); Robert Spencer, “What Makes the West the Best,” *Crisis*, February 2, 2012; Robert Spencer, *Religion of Peace? Why Christianity Is and Islam Isn’t* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2007); Daniel Ali and Robert Spence, *Inside Islam: A Guide for Catholics* (West Chester, PA: Ascension Press, 2003).

²⁵⁷ See Martina Moyski, “Miss Michigan Stripped of Crown for Refusing to Wear Muslim Hijab,” *Church Militant*, July 22, 2019; Robert Spencer, “What Makes the West the Best,” *Crisis*, February 2, 2012; William Kilpatrick, “Is Sex Slavery Sanctioned in Islam?” *National Catholic Register*, September 8, 2015; Rodney Pelletier, “UK Ignores Muslim Rapists, Claims Child Protective Services ‘Transformed,’” *Church Militant*, January 31, 2018; Alexander Slavsky, “Leader of DC Women’s March Accused of Covering Up Sex Abuse,” *Church Militant*, December 18, 2017; Ryan Fitzgerald, “Muslims’ Alleged Right to Rape Non-Muslim Women,” *Church Militant*, March 6, 2016.

Islamic scholar” and an “expert on Islam,” despite his lack of any formal education on Islam and his classification as an “extremist” per the Southern Poverty Law Center.²⁵⁸ Kilpatrick similarly paints Muslims and Islam as inherently violent and dangerous. In an article discussing controversies surrounding events to draw the prophet Muhammad, Kilpatrick writes that, “in short, violent retribution for insulting Islam or the prophet is not just an eccentricity of ‘radical Muslims,’ it's standard operating procedure for the mainstream.”²⁵⁹ Kilpatrick deploys the construct of monolithic Islam to argue that all Muslims are prone to violence in the face of offense. However, Kilpatrick argues that the violence of Muslims is more sinister than the threat of bodily harm, he warns of the dangers of “stealth jihad.” Jihad, or struggle, is an Arabic term weaponized by anti-Muslim activists to characterize all acts by Muslims as threatening and part of a larger, global agenda. For Kilpatrick, stealth jihad is “the jihad that never sleeps.”²⁶⁰ “Stealth jihad” is “the slow-motion co-option of our cultural and political institutions. The battle against cultural jihad won’t be decided by rural militia and National Guard. It will be decided in the courts, in schools, in churches, in newspapers and on TV, and in state and federal legislature.”²⁶¹ While Kilpatrick’s original publications in the early 2010s focused on the physical violence of Muslims, his later postings (from the late 2010s through 2023) focus on the cultural violence that Muslims seek to wage on Western Christendom. Catholics in particular are at risk, and Kilpatrick implores Catholics to reject interreligious dialogue and blames

²⁵⁸ “Robert Spencer,” *Southern Poverty Law Center*, accessed March 28, 2023, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/individual/robert-spencer>.

²⁵⁹ William Kilpatrick, “Nothing to Do with Islam?” *National*

²⁶⁰ Andrew Harrod, “William Kilpatrick Makes the Catholic Case for Counter-Jihad,” *Jihad Watch*, October 12, 2020.

²⁶¹ William Kilpatrick, “Hijab Jihad,” *Crisis*, May 6, 2019.

dialogue between the USCCB and Muslim organizations for “facilitating” stealth, cultural jihad.²⁶² This language is unique to Catholic forms of Islamophobia, as it dialogues specifically with lay Catholics and formal Catholic institutions like the USCCB. Kilpatrick’s concept of stealth/cultural jihad employs all of the previously discussed tropes about Muslims: they are monolithic, violent, anti-democratic, anti-American, and anti-Christian: “Cultural jihad... is very effective because it’s hard to detect and harder still to resist. Cultural jihad is difficult to counter because it takes advantage of both Constitutional protections and of the Western abhorrence of discrimination. Thus, the special rights that Muslim leaders demand are always presented as the civil rights of a victimized minority.”²⁶³ For Kilpatrick, when Catholics engage in interreligious dialogue or fight for the rights of religious minorities, Muslims in particular, they “facilitate an Islamist agenda” that is inherently antithetical to Catholic identity.²⁶⁴

The category of “moderate” is an applied label that conveys the message that the Muslim-in-question is Westernized and palatable to white Christian and white secular Americans. The category of “moderate,” which is often used by Muslims in the United States, is the product of American liberal ideals where inclusion is predicated on a minority group “echoing and adapting dominant white Protestant narratives of American meritocracy and exceptionalism...”²⁶⁵ In the context of American Catholic news media, moderate Islam is a form of Islam that is intelligible and digestible to white American

²⁶² Kilpatrick, “What Catholics Can Learn about Islam from a Former Muslim.”

²⁶³ Kilpatrick, “What Catholics Can Learn about Islam from a Former Muslim.”

²⁶⁴ Kilpatrick, “What Catholics Can Learn about Islam from a Former Muslim.”

²⁶⁵ Corbett, 7.

Catholic audiences, while remaining Other. It is a “Christianized” form of Islam that performs its Americanness in public ways. The moderate Muslim remains Othered despite their conditional approval from Christian Americans. In a 2005 interview with *Commonweal* author Scott Korb, Reza Aslan, a then-doctoral candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara, argued that “good Muslims have always been strivers” who seek closeness with God.²⁶⁶ Korb notes that “The West is wrong to see Muslims as murderers and not strivers, Aslan contends. Those who murder are misguided sinners. The prophet Muhammad never would have approved. In Aslan’s history, Islam takes the shape of a single embattled soul engaged in the internal religious struggle that characterizes ‘the greater jihad.’” *Commonweal*, a liberal Catholic publication that exists on the opposite end of the Catholic media spectrum from *Crisis*, engages in a very similar “native informant” strategy that William Kilpatrick does. Yet rather than emphasizing the violence of Islam, which is mentioned numerous times within the article, Korb and Aslan seek to display Islam as different, moderate, and intelligible to Christians, writing that Islam and democracy are entirely compatible, “If there is ever a conflict between the two, it must be the interpretation of Islam that yields [in the secular sphere] to the reality of democracy, not the other way around.”²⁶⁷

The construction of the moderate Muslim is akin to the politics of respectability. While the politics of respectability originally referred to the women’s movement in the Black Baptist church during the late 19th and early 20th century, the politics of respectability

²⁶⁶ Scott Korb, “Looking for Its Luther,” *Commonweal*, September 2005.

²⁶⁷ Korb, “Looking for Its Luther.”

“functioned as a ‘bridge discourse’ that mediated relations between black and white reformers.”²⁶⁸ The politics of respectability emerged out of “progressives’ assimilationist agenda for immigrant groups in the early twentieth century” and manifested in “black Baptist women’s moralistic language and their social reform goals” mirroring closely those of white Progressive reformers.²⁶⁹ Much like the Black Baptist women’s assimilationist tactics of the early 20th century, the construction of moderate Islam– which is simultaneously a project of American imperialism *and* some Muslims in the United States who seek to reconcile Islam with American history– is an example of the politics of respectability, wherein a minority group conforms to the performances and desires of the majority.²⁷⁰ Not only do the politics of respectability, and the practice/construction of moderate Islam, gesture towards a dialogue between the actor and others, it also serves as a means to distinguish oneself from those who do not engage in the politics of respectability. The intersection of the politics of respectability and moderate Islam can be seen quite clearly in an analysis of the Cordoba House/Ground Zero Mosque controversy of 2010.

²⁶⁸ Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: The Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 197.

²⁶⁹ Higginbotham, 198-199.

²⁷⁰ Higginbotham makes clear that the politics of respectability are highly gendered. She notes that “left unheard are women’s voices within the public discourse of racial and gender self-determination” and that the politics of respectability *clearly* fall into the domain of women. A similar discursive process is at work with anti-Muslim hostilities and the construction of the moderate Muslim. As noted by Juliane Hammer, anti-Muslim discourses frequently focus on Muslim women, simultaneously, as both the victims of and the physical embodiment of Islam. In this way, Muslim women– how they behave, how they dress, how they move through the world, how they speak– are under the watchful, surveilling eye, of the wider American public who are judging whether or not they are behaving in a respectable “American” manner. This phenomenon will be explored further in chapter four’s discussion of abject Muslim womanhood and white American Catholic masculinity.

Proposed in December of 2009 by Feisal Abdul Rauf, the Cordoba House was to be a 13-story Islamic community center in New York City, two blocks from the location of the World Trade Center. Intended to serve as a physical site for interreligious dialogue to “heal” the divide between “Islam and the West,”²⁷¹ religious leaders from around the world applauded the Cordoba House and its mission, and between December 2009 and the summer of 2010, it seemed as if the project would move forward without a hitch.²⁷² However, in May 2010 the project went under review by the Manhattan Community Board and attracted the attention of Robert Spencer and Pamela Geller’s Stop Islamization of America Group. Spencer stirred enough controversy that former House Speaker, and practicing Catholic, Newt Gingrich criticized the naming of the mosque as a statement of Islamic superiority. A statement released by more than 40 interreligious figures, including Catholic figures, wrote that Gingrich’s comments “cast this debate in a way that demonizes all Muslims and exploits fear to divide Americans.”²⁷³ Yet other Catholics fully supported the backlash. *Crisis* published multiple articles condemning Cordoba House, each article

²⁷¹ Rosemary R. Corbett, *Making Moderate Islam: Sufism, Service, and “The Ground Zero Mosque” Controversy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017), 1.

²⁷² In support of the mosque and community center, Joe Ferrulo drew astute comparisons between Catholics during the 19th century and Muslims in the 21st century in the United States. “Their loyalty to America was constantly in question. They were distrusted for their secret societies; despised for religious rituals conducted in an ancient tongue. They were not Muslims they were Catholics of our nation’s not-so-distant past.” Ferrulo notes that “city [New York] officials back in the 19th century were appalled by initial plans for St. Peter’s which placed it in what was the heart of the city, on Broad street... Officials were also fearful of nefarious foreign backers not Saudi sheikhs, of course, but a \$1000 donation from an incorrigible papist, King Charles III of Spain.” See Joe Ferrulo, “When Catholics were Muslims in America,” *America*, October 12, 2010.

²⁷³ “Faith Leaders Support ‘Ground Zero Mosque,’” *National Catholic Reporter*, August 16, 2010, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/faith-leaders-support-ground-zero-mosque>.

taking a concrete, negative angle towards the mosque, save one article that instead condemned Newt Gingrich.²⁷⁴ John Zmirak writes that

Let me beg everyone who is able to make the pilgrimage to Ground Zero on the ninth anniversary of the Islamist mass-murder attack on our country. It is there that thousands of citizens will gather at 3 p.m. at Park Place (between Church and West Broadway) to register their outrage at the attempt by a foreign-funded, terrorist-friendly Muslims to build a triumphalist mosque at the site of an Islamist slaughter, replacing a building that was damaged by one of the planes hijacked by 19 orthodox Muslims.²⁷⁶

Highlighting the racialized tropes of Muslims as murderous terrorists who hate Western Christendom, Zmirak paints Muslims as foreign and unamerican. That Cordoba House was intended to represent a “moderate” Islam that Imam Rauf had spent years cultivating in New York City and around the country was inconsequential to Zmirak, as he characterized the plans as a representative trophy for Muslim terrorists.

²⁷⁴ Articles published about the Cordoba House, pejoratively known as the Ground Zero Mosque” included: Ronald J. Rychlak, “The Imam at Ground Zero,” *Crisis*, September 1, 2010; John Zmirak, “Say No to the Ground Zero Victory Mosque,” *Crisis*, September 8, 2010, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/opinion/say-no-to-the-ground-zero-victory-mosque>; Joseph Susanka, “The Problem of the ‘Ground Zero Mosque,’” *Crisis*, August 3, 2010, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/opinion/the-problem-of-the-ground-zero-mosque>; Ground Zero,” *Crisis*, September 1, 2010; William Kilpatrick, “Double Trouble: The Leftist Threat and the Islamist Threat,” *Crisis*, March 20, 2014; William Kilpatrick, “A Muslim President?” *Crisis*, September 22, 2015; William Kilpatrick, “The Burqa, the Baker, and the Bishops,” *Crisis*, June 12, 2018; John Zmirak, “What’s Your Theological Deal-Killer,” *Crisis*, August 25, 2010. The singular article that did not immediately condemn the Cordoba House project was a piece that derided Gingrich’s response to the mosque: Jacob Sullum, “If You’re Looking for a Profligate Authoritarian, Gingrich Is Your Man,” *Crisis*, December 14, 2011, https://www.crisismagazine.com/opinion/if-youre-looking-for-a-profligate-authoritarian-gingrich-is-your-man?_rt=NHwxfCZxdW90O2dyb3VuZCB6ZXJvIG1vc3F1ZSZxdW90O3wxNjgzMTIwMTUz&_rt_nonce=80006f8a44;

²⁷⁵ Founded in 1982, *Crisis* bills itself as “America’s most trusted source for authentic Catholic perspective on Church and State, arts and culture, science and faith.” *Crisis* is specifically situated as a Western Catholic news source, as their mission statement asks “The West has arrived at a crisis point. We must decide: Do we serve the City of God or the City of Man?” *Crisis* was a strictly print magazine until. They note that “the highpoint of the print run was... when *Crisis* had over 33,000 subscribers— quite a feat for a relatively niche Catholic publication.” Writing for “orthodox” Catholics, *Crisis* claims to now be one of the top Catholic sites on the Internet.” Since its creation, it has published over 14,000 articles and featured more than 2,000 writers. “Crisis Magazine Turn 40,” *Crisis*, November 1, 2022”.

²⁷⁶ Zmirak, “Say No to the Ground Zero Victory Mosque.”

In response to the Cordoba House controversy, *New York Times* contributor and practicing Catholic Ross Douthat published numerous articles on the topic of the Cordoba House. While Douthat wrote that critics of Islam who wanted so-called moderate Muslims to “prove” themselves as Americans— or, at very least, as American allies— by “making a frontal assault on Islamic culture,” to be unproductive, he argued that bridges between Western and Islamic cultures are difficult to build because the construction is often done by “figures who sometimes seem ambiguous and even two-faced.”²⁷⁷ Douthat, and Steven D. Greydanus who reported on Douthat’s articles for *NCRRegister*, indicate that moderate figures are liminal, almost untrustworthy because they play both sides: the Western side and the extremist Muslim side. Douthat continued to argue that Imam Rauf, the head of Cordoba House, appeared to be “the kind of person who makes *excuses* for sinister figures, and curries favor with them, and bobs and weaves where their crimes are concerned.”²⁷⁸ The moderate Muslim, then, is one who cannot be trusted *even if* they practice and speak in a way that is amenable to American civic ideals.

Taking issues with the trope of the moderate Muslim, William Kilpatrick published an article on *Crisis* in May 2018 that eschewed the notion that most Muslims are moderate. Comparing Islamic extremists to American Southerners in the Jim Crow era, he writes that,

They [Southerners] were, in varying degrees, products of their culture. But so, in varying degrees, are we products of our own culture. And one of the things our culture insists we believe is that the vast majority of Muslims are moderate. This is said to assure us that the importation of large numbers of Muslims into our culture won’t change a thing. But is it so? The point is this: if we can admit that at least a majority of southerners of only 70 years ago in the United States cooperated in an

²⁷⁷ Ross Douthat, “Imam Rauf and Moderate Islam,” *New York Times*, August 25, 2010; Steven D. Greydanus, “Douthat on Moderate Islam and Imam Rauf,” *National Catholic Register*, August 30, 2010.

²⁷⁸ Ross Douthat, “More of Rauf and Moderate Islam,” *New York Times*, August 27, 2010.

immoral system, why must we maintain the factor that the vast majority of Muslims are moderate? Indeed, in many key respects, Muslim societies closely resemble the South of the Jim Crow era... Why then should we believe that the vast majority of Muslims— the product of these cultures— are moderate?²⁷⁹

Kilpatrick notes the ubiquity of the trope of the moderate Muslim, but takes issue with it by claiming that not only is it a dangerous falsehood. Kilpatrick's implication is that as a product of their culture— used in the singular, indicating a monolithic Islamic culture— the majority of Muslims are dangerous terrorists. The comparison between Jim Crow Southerners and Muslims indicates that Kilpatrick sees Muslims as a threat to non-Muslim Americans, like racists white Southerners were to Black Americans. Not only are they dangerous, they are *immoral*. Even when “moderate,” Muslims pose a risk. He continues with another example

Take the case of the Pakistani rape gangs in England. Obviously, the perpetrators— many of them middle-aged men by the time of their arrest— could hardly be considered either “moderate” or “peaceful.” Yet, many more, supposedly peaceful and moderate Pakistanis must have known about the crimes, covered them up, or even participated in them.²⁸⁰

Here Kilpatrick presses that even moderate Muslims are a threat because of their inaction in respects to non-moderate Muslims. This example also serves as a warning to American readers as “Europe's utopian experiment in immigration isn't working out,” and an influx of moderate and terrorist Muslims poses a threat to American civic engagement and an American, Christian way of life.

Concluding Thoughts

²⁷⁹ William Kilpatrick, “Are the Vast Majority of People Moderate?” *Crisis* May 7, 2018.

²⁸⁰ Kilpatrick, “Are the Vast Majority of People Moderate?” The gendered implications of this passage will be analyzed in chapter four.

As we have seen, the construction of a global and monolithic Islam is characterized by depictions of Muslims as anti-democratic, anti-American, violent, and anti-Christian. When American Catholic media sites publish pieces hostile towards Muslims, they produce and disseminate racialized rhetoric that casts Muslims as Other, while firmly placing Catholics within the mainstream of American society. Where this chapter has dealt with how Catholics as a whole racialize Muslims, the following two chapters will explore the specifics of how liberal Catholics and conservative Catholics, respectively, racialize Muslims. Chapter three will attend to the liberal fascination with interreligious dialogue and interreligious cooperation while chapter four explores the conservative preoccupation with Islamic gender roles.

Chapter Three: Interreligious Dialogue and the Spirit of Vatican II

The previous chapter established the ways in which white American Catholics across the liberal-conservative spectrum engage in dog whistle racism to perpetuate anti-Muslim hostilities throughout the United States. Deeply entrenched in a long-standing history of anti-Muslim prejudice in the United States, the racialization of Muslims in the United States by white American Catholics works to ostracize Muslims from American cultural citizenship while firmly establishing white Catholics as ideal Americans. This discursive process proliferates through Catholic circles via Catholic media outlets, which publish articles and feature authors who engage in discussions of tropes like the global Muslim and monolithic Islam, the persecution of Christians and Muslim hatred of religious freedom, and the construction of all Muslims as dangerous terrorists. While it may seem that conservative American Catholics deploy dog whistle tropes against Muslims in the United States more blatantly than liberal American Catholics, as we will see in this chapter liberal American Catholics also frequently engage in the dog whistle tropes outlined in chapter two, specifically the trope of monolithic Islam.

This chapter explores how liberal Catholic authors use the language of interreligious dialogue to establish their identities as white, American, liberal Catholics. This is a discursive process wherein liberal Catholics use dialogue with Muslims in the United States as a conduit to establish their own identities. In this sense, Islam and Muslims in the United States do not function as equal conversation partners, but rather as mediums through which liberal American Catholics can strengthen or affirm their Catholicism and their American identities. The role of interreligious dialogue in the American Roman

Catholic Church largely begins with the publication of *Nostra Aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, during the Second Vatican Council. Through this document the Church offered, for the first time, a way to approach dialogue with non-Christians. As we will see, however, *Nostra Aetate* does not champion interreligious dialogue on equal grounds. That is to say, the Church's official stance is one of Christo-supremacy. Liberal American Catholics take *Nostra Aetate* as a call to engage in interreligious dialogue, particularly with Muslims in the United States and then deploy a theology of interreligious dialogue— and the legitimization of dialogue— as a means of proper American Catholicism. The discourse of interreligious dialogue enhances one's own Catholicism through contact with the religious other, which works to reinforce liberal Catholic identities.

By affirming the necessity of interreligious dialogue with Muslims through institutional authorities within the Roman Catholic Church, liberal American Catholics establish dialogue as a crucial part of proper Catholic practice. In the following chapter, we will see how conservative American Catholics focus heavily on gender roles and use gendered anti-Muslim tropes to construct their own identities as proper Americans and proper Catholics. Of note, where previous chapters— and the first half of this chapter— analyze Catholic media outlets almost exclusively, this chapter focuses more on textual forms of publications: books. The conversations surrounding interreligious dialogue frequently takes place in the pages of books written by Catholic authors and sold in Catholic bookstores. Additionally, academic volumes published by Catholic university presses comprised of essays contributed by Catholic scholars on the topic of dialogue are

also key mediums through which the importance of dialogue to liberal Catholic identity is explored.

First, we explore the legacy of *Nostra Aetate*, which was the shortest document published during the Second Vatican Council and now functions as the foundation of contemporary Catholic discourses on interreligious dialogue. Situating *Nostra Aetate* and the theological implications of such a document is crucial to understanding liberal Catholic engagement in interreligious dialogue. Then, this chapter builds upon the previous chapter to demonstrate that even when dialoging with Muslims, American liberal Catholics engage in dog whistle racism. Utilizing a framework that highlights the difficulties of dialogue, many Catholic proponents of interreligious dialogue place blame for any difficulties or disagreements on Muslims and their assumed, inherent “flaws.”

Liberal Catholics use the terminology of interreligious dialogue to imply a two-way, equal conversation among themselves, Catholics, and another religious group, in this case, Muslims in the United States. The face-value presentation of interreligious dialogue by liberal American Catholic proponents of this interchange is one wherein all parties come to the conversational table in an equitable manner. Dialogue, in this sense two or more people and two or more actions. It is an interchange, or, quite simply, “a basic concrete unit of social activity.”²⁸¹ It involves an *exchange* between the parties, like “excuse me” followed by “certainly.”²⁸² Beyond a reciprocal interaction, a social exchange like dialogue implies “that the sum of values is greater afterward than it was before, and this

²⁸¹ Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 20.

²⁸² Goffman, 20.

implies that each party gives the other more than he had himself possessed.”²⁸³ In other words, each conversational partner gains something from the dialogue. Yet, as I will demonstrate, an analysis of the language of the books and articles written by liberal American Catholics displays something quite different. Rather, liberal American Catholics approach “dialogue” in such a way that their conversational partners are not equal, nor, in some cases, are they even “partners.” Liberal American Catholic proponents of interreligious “dialogue” often produce contingent conversations wherein Muslims and Islam function to further one’s own Catholicism rather than advancing a truly back and forth conversation. It is this imbalance in conversational power that displays a soft Islamophobia on the part of liberal American Catholics who champion interreligious dialogue as a key component of American Catholicism. This phenomenon has roots, as we will see below, in *Nostra Aetate* and its position of Christo-supremacy.

Liberal American Catholics claim interreligious dialogue as a key component to their religious commitments in two main ways. The first rhetorical move creates a theology of dialogue. The theology of dialogue is one wherein proponents argue that by engaging in interreligious dialogue with Muslims in the United States, one can strengthen their own Catholicism. Second, proponents of dialogue turn to institutional sources of authority to establish that dialogue is more than a product of living in a pluralistic society. This chapter argues that highlighting interreligious dialogue as a feature of the post-Second Vatican Council Church rationalizes its role as a cornerstone of American liberal Catholicism.

²⁸³ Georg Simmel, *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 44.

Calling on institutional authorities like the USCCB and the Second Vatican Council, American liberal Catholics use dialogue with Muslims as a faith-strengthening tool for their Catholicism and to highlight their American-ness by showing a tolerance for pluralistic conversation. It is through these modes that American liberal Catholics construct identities as American Catholics—namely, by engaging in dialogue with Muslims in the United States as *American Catholics*, liberal Catholics act as representatives for proper American behavior in conversations with presumed unamerican Muslims.

The Legacy of *Nostra Aetate*

The Second Vatican Council was revolutionary for the Roman Catholic Church on numerous fronts. First, recall the tension that bubbled when Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical, *Testem benevolentiae*, condemning the new-found Americanism that was flourishing in the late 19th century. Pope Leo XIII's concern was of a Catholic theology that sought to reconcile Catholicism with a modernist liberalization that was intelligible to non-Catholic Christians in the United States. He feared this would “separate Catholics from the Church” more so than it would gain converts.²⁸⁴ The attempts at an Americanized liberalization of the Church during the 19th century were met with fierce institutional condemnation and the movement as a whole waned. This, coupled with Pope Pius IX's establishment of the doctrine of papal infallibility, which reinforced the authority of the pope to speak without error on matters of faith or morals at the end of the 19th century gave, added weight to the statements of the popes and highlights the importance of the

²⁸⁴ Pope Leo XIII, “Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae: Concerning New Opinions, Virtue, Nature and Grace, with Regard to Americanism,” Papal Encyclicals Online, accessed December 13, 2022, <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/113teste.htm>.

institutionalized, traditional hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. With the condemnation of Americanism from the papacy, the American Roman Catholic Church moved into a period of isolation within the American cultural sphere. While shut off from wider American cultural discourses, American Catholics were still engaged in a transnational institution that helped shape their identity. Even though Rome was halfway across the world from the United States, the liminal position of the popes in exile in the Vatican informed American Catholic politics and created “a constituent element of Catholic culture that, in the United States, generated boundaries separating Catholics from other Americans.”²⁸⁵ The role of the Vatican in shaping American Catholic identity is one that continues into the 21st century despite the Vatican’s physical location in Italy.

Based on thousands of years of tradition, the papacy and the hierarchal ordering of the bishops, priests, and deacons are a collective authority that still exists and functions in the 21st century, even after the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. While the Second Vatican Council spurred a transformation within the church (i.e., the People of God) where disagreements with the Church’s decisions became acceptable and, as we will see below, lay involvement in church affairs and teachings became permissible,²⁸⁶ the importance of the official hierarchy in the lives of lay Catholics remains. In the 21st century, “the papacy appears to enjoy more institutional power throughout the universal church than it did a century and a half ago before the first Vatican Council (1869-1870), indeed, more than it

²⁸⁵ Peter R. D’Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 3.

²⁸⁶ The publication of the *Humane Vitae* (the Church’s long awaited and official condemnation of artificial birth control) was one of the first instances of public lay Catholic dissent.

did at the time of Vatican II (1962-1965).”²⁸⁷ Yet this institutional, traditional power is also hanging in the balance for many Catholics. In the wake of the clerical sex abuse crisis and certainly the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the relationship that the laity has with the centralized authority of Rome can be contentious, if not paradoxical. Yet, importantly, for American liberal Catholics, the reliance on the traditional authority of the Church assists in the construction of their identity as proper American Catholics. On this specific issue, they tap into the overarching and highly respected authority of the Vatican and the papacy to make the case that interreligious dialogue is in fact a part of proper Catholic practice. This reliance on official Church doctrine and Church authority in order to advance a narrative of interreligious dialogue is one of the main ways that liberal Catholic anti-Muslim hostilities diverges from evangelical anti-Muslim hostilities. Liberal American Catholics tap into the Church’s authority to establish the necessity of dialogue, even while engaging in dog whistle tropes like that of monolithic Islam and the moderate Muslim. This is not something that is seen with evangelical forms of anti-Muslim racism or hostilities.

To return to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council as it relates to interreligious dialogue, the tradition of isolated Catholic intellectuals continued through the 1950s. As Patrick Allitt argues, “to be a Catholic in the 1950s was to be aware of oneself as a member of a minority group set apart from the rest of society by a pattern of beliefs, ritual actions, liturgical practices, food taboos, and even a distinctive view of the nation’s history and its

²⁸⁷ Michael J. Lacey, “Prologue: The Problem of Authority and Its Limits,” in *The Crisis of Authority in Catholic Modernity*, ed. Michael J. Lacey and Francis Oakley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

place in Western civilization.”²⁸⁸ Not only were Catholics united against rampant anti-Catholicism, but also through a jingoistic attitude towards the United States.²⁸⁹ Catholics were, as we saw in the first chapter, passionately anti-Communist, as parochial schools had been teaching the evils of Communism and socialism since Pope Leo XII decried them as atheist.²⁹⁰ Thus when Pope John XXIII announced Vatican II, many Catholics, both laity and clergy, expected it to be a formal approval of the Church’s conservative agenda. When Vatican II proved to be a much more liberalizing synod than predicted, the second major shakeup of the council emerged: the codification of conservative and liberal Catholics.

As we saw in chapter one, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the nascent conservative branch of the Church saw the reforms of Vatican II as the beginning of the decline of the church, as they revered “the 1950s as a lost Golden Age of authentic Catholicism: Paradise before the Fall.”²⁹¹ One major point of contention for conservatives was what they saw as “the emergence of a new era of almost unlimited pluralism.”²⁹² Where conservatives, including Joseph Ratzinger who would become Pope Benedict XVI, balked at this newfound support for pluralism, liberal Catholics celebrated the more pluralistic moves of the synodal council. The conclusion of Vatican was characterized by liberal “invocations of the spirit of Vatican II,” continuing the push for progress in the Church.²⁹³ Conservatives during the final decades of the twentieth century heavily

²⁸⁸ Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 7.

²⁸⁹ George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The American Catholic People: Their Beliefs, Practices, and Values* (Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company, 1987), 1.

²⁹⁰ Allitt, 23.

²⁹¹ Cuneo, 4.

²⁹² Cuneo, 12.

²⁹³ Komonochak, 22.

critiqued Catholic liberals who attempted, and potentially succeeded, in creating a completely American Catholic Church that was connected, but not fully a part of, the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.²⁹⁴ American Catholic liberals saw their interpretations of Vatican II as a means of actively taking up Pope John XXIII's call of *aggiornamento*. The liberal Catholics in question, however, were very specifically white American Catholics. In the wake of Vatican II, American Catholics of European descent had ascended to whiteness, while the population growth of Latino/a Catholics had not yet "taken off."²⁹⁵ *Nostra Aetate* provided American liberal Catholics with an invitation to imagine "a very different religio-racial project" in the United States that was "grounded in justice and mutuality."²⁹⁶ As we saw in the previous chapter, the religio-racial identity of many Americans was as white Christians. This national identity as a nation of white Christians was set in the nascent United States, where citizenship was often tied, or determined by, an individual's relationship with Christianity.²⁹⁷ Even after the Civil Rights Movement, the national imaginary of a white Christian nation favors those who closely resemble this ideal. As we saw in the previous chapter, the moderate Muslim is the most tolerated racialized typography of Muslims, as the moderate Muslim most closely resembles a white American Christian, though they remain Othered. For American liberal Catholics, *Nostra Aetate* gave permission for Catholics to engage with and recognize practitioners of non-Christian traditions, yet it's "underlying theology and rhetorical construction sent mixed messages

²⁹⁴ Cuneo, 29.

²⁹⁵ Jeannine Hill Fletcher, "Foreign to the Mind of Christ: *Nostra Aetate* in America's Religio-Racial Project," in *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen, eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 63.

²⁹⁶ Fletcher, 67.

²⁹⁷ Fletcher, 71. See also Ian Haney López, *White by Law* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

about racial and religious supremacy, which compromise its achievements in the areas of tolerance and mutuality.”²⁹⁸

The mixed message of racial supremacy within the document was complicated further by the clear stance of Christian supremacy.²⁹⁹ While the church “holds in esteem” Muslims, and “regards with sincere reverence” Hindus and Buddhists, it does not treat its dialogic partners as equals.³⁰⁰ Yet interreligious dialogue is a modern, post-Enlightenment endeavor frequently undertaken by Western Christians who rest “heavily on the assumption of religion understood as a genus differentiated into particular species, and since this, as we have seen, is already a colonial-era construction, it follow that the practice of interreligious dialogue is perhaps not as straightforwardly therapeutic or neutral or universalistic in its assumptions and applicability as it has seemed to many of its (predominantly Western or Western-influenced) advocates and practitioners.”³⁰¹ In short, proponents of interreligious dialogue, like American liberal Catholics, enter into

²⁹⁸ Fletcher, 67.

²⁹⁹ Fletcher argues that during the 1960s, when *Nostra Aetate* was written, the North American Catholic Church was a white Catholic institution that let the preferences and interests of white Catholics take precedence over those of Black Catholics. Furthermore, she argues that on the eve of *Nostra Aetate*, white Catholics had only recently “won their social standing,” which made many Catholics “unwilling to position themselves in ways that they feared would threaten this achievement” vis a vis the concurrent American Civil Rights Movement. Furthermore, “The Christ of *Nostra Aetate*’s Christocentric theology most likely appeared in American Catholic minds as a white Christ. Although *Nostra Aetate* is not explicitly racist in that it does not assert a white Christ, it is also not actively antiracist in challenging common cultural notions in the United States in the 1960s.” That white American liberal Catholics took hold of *Nostra Aetate* in the years following its publication *and* remained a highly segregated Church (where, in many instances, white Catholics actively worked to keep Black Catholics out of their parishes, see Cressler’s *Authentically Black, Truly Catholic* and McGreevy’s *Parish Boundaries*), that *Nostra Aetate* did not address a white-centric theology did not help dialogue within the Church itself. See Fletcher, 64-68.

³⁰⁰ *Nostra Aetate*.

³⁰¹ Thomas Albert Howard, *The Faiths of Others: A History of Interreligious Dialogue* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021), 11-12.

interreligious dialogue with preconceived notions, or categories, or religious traditions and religious practitioners.

As established in the previous chapter, many white American Catholics hold a racialized and monolithic understanding of Muslims in the United States and Muslim identity that situates Muslims as Other and incompatible with American identity. In other words, when entering dialogue with Muslims, many liberal Catholics come with preconceived notions that Islam as a tradition does not value liberal concepts like religious freedom, that it persecutes Christians, and that it does not believe in the separation of church and state, and its practitioners are inclined to terror. Therefore, both parties enter into these dialogues on unequal footing—Catholic dialogic partners choose to engage namely with Muslims whose practice is often intelligible to a Westernized, Christian audience. As one interviewee told Edward Pentin for an NCR article on dialogue, difficulty in dialogue comes from “not just listening to any old person and certainly not to rabble rousers.”³⁰² The colonial-era, post-Enlightenment nature of Western understandings of religious categorizations is intimately tied to understandings of secularism, specifically the idea of the separation of church and state, as well as liberalist principles like religious freedom. This leads to an inclination to attempt dialogue based on a very particular way of defining religion, and, more specifically, proper religiosity.

As we saw in chapter two, many Catholic commentators, both liberal and conservative, advance the idea that Muslims do not believe in the separation of church and

³⁰² Edward Pentin, “European Churches: Dialogue with Islam Is Difficult but Necessary,” *National Catholic Register*, April 10, 2006.

state, or as the editors for *Commonweal* noted, between “mosque and state. The insistence on secular governance in places like the United States makes “religion more rather than less salient to minority and majority identities alike.”³⁰³ With religion, and therefore religious difference, more prominent than not, “modern secular governance transforms—and in some respects intensifies— preexisting interfaith inequalities, allowing them to flourish in society and hence for religion to striate national identity and public norms.”³⁰⁴ In sum, the secular/religious divide in the United States contributes to interreligious inequalities and interreligious tension rather than decreasing it. The striation of national identity and public norms in the “secularized” United States is, in fact, a striation towards a Christian nationalism that fuses proper American civic behavior with white Christianity. It is within this arena that the inequalities of interreligious dialogue between liberal American Catholics and Muslims in the United States become plain: white liberal American Catholics engage in dialogue with Muslims in the United States as ambassadors for proper American civic behavior and American identity. This stance assumes that Muslims in the United States are not part of this American national imaginary, and thus require dialogue with American Catholics in order to integrate them, if possible, into the fold.

The focus on interreligious dialogue, though potentially contentious, is a hallmark of the liberal Catholic identity. It reveals that dialogue with Muslims serves as a conduit through which this identity construction occurs. This functions in two main ways: first,

³⁰³ Mahmood, 2.

³⁰⁴ Mahmood, 2.

liberal American Catholics emphasize dialogue with Muslims as a vehicle to strengthening their own Catholicism. Engaging in dialogue is more about advancing one's own identity and faith than it is about those with whom they dialogue. Second, liberal American Catholics frequently embed the importance for interreligious dialogue in institutional authorities, like the USCCB, *Nostra Aetate*, and Pope Francis, in order to assert the need of dialogue for one's Catholicism. The institutional authority of the Catholic Church, and liberal Catholics' usage of it as a framework for their theology of dialogue, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of liberal Catholic identity construction.

Interreligious Dialogue and Catholicism: Difficulties of Dialogue

On September 12, 2006, at a speaking engagement at the University of Regensburg, Pope Benedict XVI quoted the 14th century Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus and said, "Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as his command to spread by the sword the faith he preached."³⁰⁵ The comment immediately caused global controversy.³⁰⁶ Where conservative Catholics supported the Pope and his message, liberal Catholics were outraged. One *Commonweal* contributor noted that "the emperor was not merely accusing Islam of violence but calling into question the legitimacy of the religion itself."³⁰⁷ Many Muslims across the globe interpreted Benedict's usage of the controversial passage as a

³⁰⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason, and the University—Memories and Reflections" (lecture, University of Regensburg, Regensburg, Germany, September 12, 2006).

³⁰⁶ "Pope Benedict XVI in His Own Words," *BBC News*, February 11, 2013, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21417767>.

³⁰⁷ Francis X. Clooney, "Learning to Listen: Benedict XVI and Interreligious Dialogue," *Commonweal*, January 8, 2007.

condemnation of Islam from the papacy itself.³⁰⁸ Many liberal-leaning Catholics agreed. Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio (Pope Benedict XVI's successor, who would become Pope Francis), said "Pope Benedict's statements don't reflect my own opinions. These statements will serve to destroy in 20 seconds the careful construction of a relationship with Islam that Pope John Paul II built over the last twenty years."³⁰⁹

Benedict's comments regarding Islam and interreligious dialogue were upsetting to many liberal Catholics who felt the pope was brushing aside the importance of interreligious dialogue in the wake of Vatican II. A major critique of the pope's choice in quote was that he used the words of the Byzantine emperor "without any rejection, either explicit or implicit, of the view they set forth."³¹⁰ As is seen in the Regensburg lecture, the inequality between Catholics and those of other traditions in respects to dialogue and interreligious communications sets the stage for unequal dialogue before any conversation has taken place. Benedict's take on interreligious dialogue is "the mode of dialogue intended by *Nostra Aetate*: dialogue is sincere and positive, but it is not seeking consensus, not negotiating our core convictions, not believing that religions can be reconciled for some larger human goal, and not a concession to relativism."³¹¹ Relativism, a long-standing threat for Pope Benedict XVI within the church, is the essential assumption that all beliefs are of the same value and are equally true.³¹² Benedict's condemnation of relativism in the

³⁰⁸ See "Open Letter to His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI, 2006," <https://ammanmessage.com/media/openLetter/english.pdf>.

³⁰⁹ Alasdair Baverstock, "Pope Francis' run-in with Benedict XVI over the Prophet Mohammad," *Telegraph*, March 15, 2013.

³¹⁰ Peter C. Phan, "Speaking in many Tongues: Why the Church Must Be More Catholic," *Commonweal*, January 8, 2007.

³¹¹ Clooney, "Learning to Listen: Benedict XVI and Interreligious Dialogue."

³¹² James Heft, ed. *Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 9.

face of interreligious dialogue has led to critics of the late pope charging him with intolerance for other traditions. Catholic scholars have noted that this charge stems largely from the disparity between “his expert grasp of Christian tradition and his vagueness regarding other religions, which he seems never to have engaged in any depth.”³¹³ Yet despite this lack of engagement with other religious traditions, he “seems to agree that interreligious inquiry is necessary,” as long as it keeps true to the Catholic’s religious tradition.³¹⁴ This vague support for dialogue from the late emeritus pope is crucial for proponents of interreligious dialogue due to the Catholic Church’s hierarchy of authority.

While the Vatican faced backlash in liberal Catholic media condemning the pope’s harsh words as a setback in post-Vatican II efforts towards interreligious dialogue, more conservative media celebrated the pope’s brusque message.³¹⁵ Not long after the speech. Robert R. Reilly wrote a piece for conservative-leaning *Crisis* titled “The Pope and the Prophet,” wherein he bemoaned that “finally, a leader has spoken about the real, essential lam, as it emanates form a contest within Islam itself over the most important things.” Going on to give an overview of what Reilly sees as the theological sticking points of Islam, namely an Islamic “obsession” with God’s omnipotence, he writes that “as Benedict makes clear, the reason Christianity was insulated from an obsession with God’s omnipotence was the revelation of Christ as Logos in the Gospel of St. John... He is

³¹³ Francis X. Clooney, “Interreligious Learning in a Changing Church: From Paul VI to Francis,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 82, no. 4 (2017).

³¹⁴ Clooney, “Interreligious Learning.”

³¹⁵ As John L. Allen, Jr. noted in a separate article, “It’s not that Benedict created a more hawkish climate on Islam; those currents were always present, and gathered steam in the post-9/11 period. It’s rather that Benedict has unleashed them.” See John L. Allen, Jr., “Cardinal Pell on Islam and Traditions,” *National Catholic Reporter*, June 10, 2006.

reason.” The very issue at hand is that Islam denies Jesus as the son of God. Reilly continues to write that “radical Muslims translate their version of God’s omnipotence into politics of unlimited power... the problem today is that the side of reason in Islam is lost. The ultimate consequences of the rejection of reason and the loss of causality are playing themselves out across the Muslims world.”³¹⁶ Other conservative commentators claim that the Pope was “taken out of context by malicious persons” and that his speech was only tangentially about Islam.³¹⁷

Writing ten years after the fact in 2016, James Day argued that the Pope’s apology was unnecessary, stating “Now in the ten years since 2006, in the wake of the Arab Spring, expanding terrorist attacks, a media blitzkrieg by Islamic State touting beheadings of Westerners, Coptic Christians and others, global financial chaos, a Europe struggling in its own narrative, a United States enduring an identity crisis, the brilliance and bluntness of Regensburg remains.”³¹⁸ Drawing upon dog whistle tropes like the violence of Muslims and the plight of Christians, Day indicated support for the pope’s characterization of Islam. Day explicitly links the presence of Muslims in the United States to an American identity crisis. The focus on interreligious dialogue as an identity marker in the post-Vatican II period is characteristic of liberal Catholics, yet dialogue with Muslims is not a key-feature of identity construction for conservative Catholics. As we will see in chapter four, conservative-learning Catholics are highly concerned with Islamic gender roles and the

³¹⁶ Robert R. Reilly, “The Pope and the Prophet,” *Crisis*, November 1, 2006.

³¹⁷ David Warren, “The Idler: Defending Reason,” *Crisis*, November 1, 2006.

³¹⁸ James Day, “Benedict the Brave: The Regensburg Address Ten Years Later,” *The Catholic World Report*, September 12, 2016, <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2016/09/12/benedict-the-brave-the-regensburg-address-ten-years-later/>

creation of distance between Islamic and Catholic gender roles and norms, and this becomes a large focus of identity construction. For many conservative Catholics, dialogue is “difficult” or even “impossible,” negating its importance.³¹⁹ The insistence on interreligious dialogue as a key cornerstone for American Catholic identity is not one that is seen in conservative circles. Rather, conservative Catholics do not champion dialogue with Muslims and eschew it as a part of proper Catholic practice. The reliance on institutional authority sources as legitimizing forces for the necessity of dialogue to a proper Catholic practice is one key aspect that differentiates liberal Catholic from conservative Catholics and, certainly, from evangelical Christians. It is this anchoring in authority that sets liberal Catholics apart from both groups. The mere presence of Muslims

³¹⁹ In an interview with Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, John L. Allen, Jr. reports that the Jesuit thinks that “at a theological and dogmatic level, dialogue with Islam is impossible.” Citing doctrinal incompatibilities, like those between the Catholic dogma of the Trinity and the Islamic principle of *tawhid*, theological interreligious dialogue is simply out of the question. Pat Archbold, writing for the conservative *NCR* Register asks “what’s the point?” in dialoguing with Muslims. He writes, “While we tolerate and treat with respect Muslims in historically Christian countries, we will not allow you to set up alternative societies with your own laws. And we will not allow under any circumstances for you to impose your unreasonable and often barbaric culture on the rest of us. We will tolerate you, because that is how we roll, but don’t for a second think we will tolerate the imposition of Sharia or any such nonsense. Tolerance is not a suicide pact. That said, we will allow you to live your faith in peace as long as you do the same. And if you want that, guess what, you must start treating Christians in your countries with the same respect. The systematic persecution and expurgation of Christians living in predominantly Muslims countries must cease immediately. If you don’t want to do it because it is the right thing to do, then perhaps you will do it when we lead the charge for serious sanctions by all western countries on those countries that refuse to respect the rights of Christians. You want respect, give it. And lastly, the most important message that dialogue with Muslims should convey is that Jesus is Lord. Nobody comes to the Father but through the Son. Nobody.” Utilizing the dog whistle tropes discussed in the previous chapter, Archbold undermines the goals of dialogue by ending with the assertion that Jesus is God, precluding further conversation. Reporting on a Michigan elementary school that hired a cultural competency advisor, who was Muslim, *Church Militant* contributor Anita Carey claimed that the speaker “gave an unknown amount of student data to a Muslim apologist and subjected all of its teachers to Islamic indoctrination.” The speaker, Huda Essa writes about embracing diversity and cultural literacy. See Pat Archbold, “Islam and Dialogue: What’s the Point?” *National Catholic Register*, March 27, 2013; and John L. Allen, Jr., “Theological Dialogue with Islam ‘Impossible,’ Top Jesuit Says,” *National Catholic Reporter*, December 5, 2007; Anita Carey, “MI School District Offers Muslim Indoctrination for Teachers, Funded by Taxpayers,” *Church Militant*, August 22, 2019.

in the United States (or, at very least, the idea of Muslims being in the United States) stokes a battle over Catholic identity for conservative circles. However, in liberal-leaning Catholic media, interreligious dialogue with Muslims in the United States became a pillar for identity construction for their liberal American Catholicism.

In response to the backlash to the Regensburg lecture, the pope not only apologized, but began to make concrete efforts to reinforce the Holy See's commitment to interreligious dialogue. Yet even in liberal-leaning media, Muslim responses to the controversial speech were heavily critiqued. This is noted in biographical piece on Benedict in the wake of his death. Written for the liberal-leaning *America*, Gibson recounts the controversy of the Regensburg lecture as the result of "the tinderbox that is the Muslim world today," and that in the wake of the Pope's comments "politically and diplomatically, the situation grew ever more fraught and tragic as Christians came under increasing threat of violence in many Muslim societies."³²⁰ Benedict, the conservative pope, was "unable to stanch attacks on Christians or to expand a zone of even basic religious freedom."³²¹ Here we see Gibson engage in the dog whistle tropes that racialize Muslims as violent aggressors against Christians and as incapable and unwilling to practice religious freedom. The "Muslim world" is depicted as violent, reactionary, and illogical. Yet, even with these tropes utilized against Muslims, Gibson notes that one result of the Regensburg controversy was that "Vatican relations with Islam would improve significantly over the next few years, in large

³²⁰ David Gibson, "Pope benedict XVI, Defender of Orthodoxy Defined by Historic Resignation, Dies at 95," *America*, December 31, 2022.

³²¹ Gibson.

part thanks to the response from numerous Islamic scholars who petitioned the pope to engage in a broad dialogue” with them.³²²

The scholars in question were 38 Muslim clerics and scholars who signed an open letter to Pope Benedict XVI. The signatories wrote that “while we applaud your efforts to oppose the dominance of positivism and materialism in human life, we must point out some errors in the way you mentioned Islam as a counterpoint to the proper use of reason, as well as some mistakes in the assertions you put forward in support of your argument.” The letter not only systematically corrects “mistakes in assertions” that Benedict had made in regarding to Islam, like his incorrect explanation of the Quranic verse that says “there is no compulsion in religion.” Another point of contention in the letter is that the “experts” on Islam that Benedict cites are two Catholic scholars. They take issue with this as “On September 25th 2006 you reiterated your important statement in Cologne on August 20th 2005 that, ‘Inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue between Christians and Muslims cannot be reduced to an optional extra...’ Whilst we fully concur with you, it seems to us that a great part of the object of inter-religious dialogue is to strive to listen to and consider the actual voices of those we are dialoguing with, and not merely those of our own persuasion.”³²³ This was a direct critique of the Catholic tendency to dialogue only with

³²² Gibson.

³²³ The pope’s apology was expressing “sincere regrets” for offending Muslims, rather than expressing regret for his quote or characterization of Islam. Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone elaborated on the pope’s apology and said that the pope “thus sincerely regrets that certain passages of his address could have sounded offensive to the sensitivities of the Muslim faithful and should have been interpreted in a manner that no way corresponds to his intentions.” See “Pope ‘Sincerely Regrets’ He Offended Muslims,” *NBC News*, September 16, 2006.

those who they agree with on all counts, or that they can agree with on most counts, rather than engaging in a true dialogic exchange, as argued throughout this chapter.

Despite this critique from Muslims scholars, many liberal Catholics were heartened, or at least placated, to know that in response to criticism, Benedict began making some changes that seemed to signal a softening of the conservative Vatican towards dialogue with Muslims. NCR contributor John L. Allen reported that,

For those seeking signs of a new Vatican sensitivity to Muslim opinion, here's one: Since 1967, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and its forerunner, the Secretariat for Non-Christians, has issued an annual message of greetings to Muslims for the Feast of the Breaking of the Fast, *'Id al-Fitr*, at the end of Ramadan. Not once in that span of almost 40 years has a Vatican press conference been organized to mark the occasion. On Friday morning, however, the Vatican Press Office will probably have a full house, as the leadership of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue arrives to present this year's Ramadan message to the global media.³²⁴

While relativism was a concern for the conservative Pope Benedict and Benedict's concern for relativism a concern for more liberal-leaning Catholics, Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*, published seven years after the Regensburg controversy, struck a completely different tone than the one Benedict had cultivated in regards to Muslims. Pope Francis, who castigated Benedict's quote of Palaeologus in the Regensburg address, holds Christians *and* Muslims responsible for religious violence, citing "forms of fundamentalism on both sides."³²⁵ Jordan Denari Duffner, a liberal-leaning Catholic author and frequent commentator, took to *Commonweal* to note that "Francis is telling Catholics how they should understand and interpret Islam, discrediting some Catholics who argue

³²⁴ John L. Allen, Jr., "Vatican Press Conference for Ramadan a First," *National Catholic Reporter*, October 18, 2006.

³²⁵ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (Vatican City, IT: The Holy See, 2013), 251.

that Islam is an inherently violent religion, and also appears to be a subtle way of undoing the damage caused by remarks about Islam made by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in 2006.”³²⁶³²⁷

That liberal Catholics disagreed vocally with Benedict’s “intolerance” for interreligious dialogue and celebrated Francis’ embrace of dialogue points to the importance of traditional, institutional authorities’ support of dialogue with Muslims for liberal Catholics. An apostolic exhortation on the state of the gospel in the 21st century, Francis devotes about three hundred words of the text to the state of Christian-Muslim relations and interreligious dialogue among Catholics and Muslims. As noted above, Francis provides what Duffner sees as an advancement into new theological territory regarding interreligious dialogue with Muslims and Islam. The exhortation from the pope encourages Catholics to embrace a positive dialogue with Islam and is rooted “in the tradition of the Church and his predecessors, while at the same time forges new theological territory.”³²⁸ In order to give his call for dialogue legitimacy, Francis draws upon the *Nostra Aetate* and the spirit of Vatican II to indicate that dialogue with Muslims is a form of evangelizing the Gospel.³²⁹ Francis writes that

our relationship with the followers of Islam has taken on great importance, since they are now significantly present in many traditionally Christian countries, where they can freely worship and become fully a part of society... The sacred writings of Islam have retained some Christian teachings; Jesus and Mary receive profound veneration and it is admirable to see how Muslims both young and old, men and women, make time for daily prayer and faithfully take part in religious

³²⁶ Jordan Denari Duffner, “‘In Our Time’: Francis Moves beyond *Nostra Aetate*, *Commonweal*, December 8, 2013.

³²⁷ The Catholics who proclaim Islam is violent is a reference to William Kilpatrick, Robert Spencer, and other Catholic anti-Muslim activists.

³²⁸ Duffner, “*In Our Time*.”

services... In order to sustain dialogue with Islam, suitable training is essential for all involved, not only so that they can be solidly and joyfully grounded in their own identity, but so that they can also acknowledge the values of others, appreciate the concerns underlying their demands and shed light on shared beliefs. We Christians should embrace with affection and respect Muslim immigrants to our countries in the same way that we hope and ask to be received and respected in countries of Islamic tradition. I ask and I humbly entreat those countries to grant Christians freedom to worship and to practice their faith, in light of the freedom which followers of Islam enjoy in Western countries! Faced with disconcerting episodes of violent fundamentalism, our respect for true followers of Islam should lead us to avoid hateful generalisations, for authentic Islam and the proper reading of the Koran are opposed to every form of violence.³³⁰

The pope's apostolic exhortation engages in many of the discursive rhetorical moves by liberal Catholic proponents of interreligious dialogue. First, *Evangelii Gaudium* embraces the similarities between Christianity and Islam, which glosses over the strict theological differences between the two traditions and transforms the entire tradition of Islam into a more legible tradition that is similar to Catholicism and palatable to the Catholics to whom Pope Francis speaks. Second, Francis engages in the discourse of the monolithic, moderate Islam. By drawing a dichotomy of violent fundamentalism and authentic Islam, Francis argues that "proper" reading of the Islamic sources are opposed to violence, and, consequently, fundamentalism is not "true" Islam. Francis then condemns the lack of religious freedom available to Christians in Muslim majority countries, perpetuating the idea that Muslims are inherently opposed to free religious practice, a Western ideal. Finally, he refers to Muslim immigrants in "traditionally Christian" countries, implying that Muslims are always immigrants, never native citizens.

³³⁰ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*.

This authoritative document coming from the Bishop of Rome institutionalizes the dog whistle tropes about Islam. However, it also enables Duffner, a proponent of dialogue-as-theology, to argue that Francis is challenging Catholics to recognize “that spreading the joy of the Gospel isn’t about simply about proselytizing or conversion. Rather, telling the Good News is about encountering the Love of God and pointing it out, even when it appears in unexpected places. Francis challenges us to see that Love, those “rays of Truth,” in Islam, too.”³³¹ That the highest authority within the Roman Catholic Church advocated for Catholic-Muslim dialogue allowed for liberal American Catholics to argue that interreligious dialogue is a crucial part to American Catholic identity. Not only do Francis’ words challenge Catholics to find the positives in Islam, but it also offers a “strongly worded” corrective to Benedict’s Regensburg address.³³² The Regensburg address proved to be a sticking point for liberal Catholics who saw interreligious dialogue as an intrinsic part of being Catholic in the 21st century.³³³ Yet Francis’ exhortation supplanted the Pope Emeritus’ comments about Islam and therefore enables Duffner and other liberal Catholics to argue that dialogue is a cornerstone of Catholic practice. By tapping into and citing these authoritative voices, liberal American Catholics construct themselves as properly practicing American Catholics through the invocation of these authoritative sources.

³³¹ Duffner, “*In Our Time.*”

³³² Duffner, “*In Our Time.*”

³³³ As reported by Raymond J. de Souza, Benedict “held the view that there could not be authentic ‘interreligious’ dialogue because disagreement on the nature of God meant that strictly *religious* dialogue was impossible.” See Raymond J. de Souza, “On Islam, Francis Follows in Benedict’s Footsteps,” *National Catholic Register*, February 8, 2019. The view that interreligious dialogue between Muslims and Catholics is impossible due to theological differences is not uncommon. In an interview with John L. Allen, Father Peter-Hans Klovenbach argues that theological dialogue is impossible between Islam and Catholicism, but one can have Muslim friends. This view is more common among conservative-leaning Catholics. See Allen, “Theological Dialogue ‘Impossible.’”

Even while promoting positive engagement with Muslims in the United States, liberal Catholics engage in dog whistle politics that send coded messages about Muslims in the United States. These messages are racialized and indicate that Muslims are not truly American, even when this is implied rather than explicit. As discussed in the previous chapter, the tropes of monolithic Islam and a disdain for religious freedom are the two most commonly invoked tropes. Take, for example, Rand Richards Cooper's article in *Commonweal*, titled "Burqas and American Blasphemy." Cooper, who had written about Muslim women's veiling practices before³³⁴, writes in seeming defense of veiling in light of bans across Europe in 2016 and 2017, and states that these bans, "strike an adverse response among Americans, who possess a quite different sense of what living together means and requires. Even with all our post-9-11 anxieties and our stingy, occasionally ugly readiness to view Muslim immigrants and refugees with mistrust, it is hardly imaginable that we would try to use our laws to ban a garment on cultural-political grounds. It's just an instinctive non-starter for the overwhelming majority of Americans."³³⁵ For Cooper, there exists an understanding amongst non-Muslim Americans that practices like veiling should not be subject to the government. The spirit of "living together" is what makes the United States the United States compared to European governments which passed these bans. Yet even within this article that supports the rights of Muslims to veil within the United States, Cooper distinctly categorizes "Americans" and "Muslim immigrants and

³³⁴ Cooper's other articles dealing with veiling will be covered in the following chapter.

³³⁵ Rand Richards Cooper, "Burqas and American Blasphemy," *Commonweal*, October 26, 2017.

refugees,” displaying an implied notion that Muslims are not American citizens. He continues and writes that

... the burqa represents values that I personally mistrust and reject. But... so what? Who am I to tell a Muslim woman what she should wear? The American instinct for tolerance is partly a legacy of our frontier libertarianism, but more positively it also signals an abiding acceptance of democratic pluralism. Pluralism means pledging (and learning) to cohabit with styles, speech, habits, and values that are strange to you, and in some cases even repugnant.³³⁶

Here, Cooper intrinsically ties the value of pluralism, understood to be a civic value that champions difference among groups, and cohabitation to the identity of being American. Yet even within this passage that is encouraging a pluralistic attitude, Cooper’s wording indicates that Muslim veiling practices are “strange” and “repugnant,” establishing these practices as distinctly Other. Those who wear the burqa are symbols of values that Cooper, a pluralistic American Catholic, mistrusts and rejects.

In a July 2004 *Commonweal* article, Benedicta Cipolla engages in dog whistle politics by using religious freedom to racialize Muslims in the United States as Other. Cipolla writes that even while many accounts of Muslim violence against Christians are “incredibly one-sided” it remains the case that

in truth, dhimmitude is no longer a reality in many Islamic countries; one person involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue told me that most Islamic leaders have no interest in bringing it back... freedom of worship is certainly not guaranteed everywhere in the world the way it is in Western countries. Subtle forms of religious discrimination still exist in Muslim countries.³³⁷

Drawing on the Islamic concept of *dhimmi* (People of the Book) which upholds reverence for practitioners of the other Abrahamic religions, Cipolla claims that this is no longer a

³³⁶ Cooper, “Burqas and American Blasphemy.”

³³⁷ Benedicta Cipolla, “How Ecumenical?” *Commonweal*, July 3, 2004.

concern for “most” Islamic authority figures, implying that it is not important for lay Muslims, either. Further, Western countries allow freedom of worship fully, while “subtle” discrimination exists in the Muslim world. This implication is that discrimination of any kind—subtle or overt—on the basis of religion, is not present in Western countries. This is, factually, incorrect. In September 2011, publications of FBI training documents leaked to American news media sources that trained field agents to surveil Muslims in the United States. The documents called the Prophet Muhammad a “cult leader” and referred to religiously devout Muslims as more likely to be “violent.” Two years previously the FBI came under scrutiny for listing Robert Spencer’s infamously anti-Muslim *The Truth about Mohammad: Founder of the World’s Most Intolerant Religion* as recommended reading for counterterrorism field agents.³³⁸ Half a century earlier, Edgar Hoover led the charge of FBI surveillance of Black Muslim groups during the mid-20th century.³³⁹ This included to subvert surveillance of groups like the Moorish Science Temple, Malcom X, and Elijah Muhammad. The presentation of Muslim majority societies as bastions of religious intolerance, while simultaneously championing the tolerance of Western (specifically American) societies, conveniently hides the fact that the United States is not free from religious discrimination and often, as we have seen, this religious discrimination is intimately bound to racial discrimination.

³³⁸ “FBI Manual: Muslims Are Terror Sympathizers,” *Al Jazeera*, September 17, 2011; “FBI Chided for Training That Was Critical of Islam,” *New York Times*, September 16, 2011.

³³⁹ See, for example, Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, Book III, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations, 94th Cong., 2nd sess, S. Report 94-755 and *Moorish Science Temple of America*, U.S. Department of Justice, FBI Records, the Vault, accessed August 23, 2023, <https://vault.fbi.gov/Moorish%20Science%20Temple%20of%20America>.

Citing Catholic scholars, Cipolla concludes the article noting that “Islamic terrorism” has precluded dialogic efforts in the post-Vatican II world, placing the burden for dialogue on Muslims rather than Catholics.³⁴⁰ The assertion that Muslims are the threat to productive interreligious dialogue is also featured in Edward Pentin’s April 2006 article for *NCRRegister*, wherein he cites numerous people involved in Muslim-Christian dialogue who say “one problem for those engaged in interreligious dialogue with Muslims is the lack of an overarching authority or magisterium in Islam.” In an interview with *NCR*’s John Allen, Jr., Cardinal Schola says “it seems decisive to me that Muslims learn how to open themselves to the experience of Christians in the West,” indicating that the roadblocks to productive dialogue come from Muslims rather than from Christians. While Cardinal Schola seems amenable to the idea of interreligious dialogue with Muslims on the surface, it is clear that dialogue, for him, is not an evenhanded exchange of words and ideas. Rather, he indicates that in order to even be worthy of dialogue with Catholics, Muslims need to educate themselves on Western Christianity.

This insistence on the faults of Muslims is further indicated in Pentin’s above article, wherein interviewed sources claim that the lack of formal structure of Islam presents a problem for Catholics who wish to engage in dialogue. Rather than educating themselves on the differences between Islam and Catholicism at an authoritative level, the onus is placed on Muslims to educate themselves and become intelligible “dialogic” partners for Catholics. This understanding of dialogue, or rather the lack thereof, is

³⁴⁰ See Edward Pentin, “European Churches: Dialogue with Islam Is Difficult but Necessary,” *NCRRegister*, April 10, 2006; John L. Allen, Jr., “Interview with Cardinal Schola on Christian/Muslim Relations,” *National Catholic Reporter*, June 23, 2010.

inconsistent with conversational exchange or dialogue, but rather “as something that other can be counted on to perform or to accept” which leads to the exchange being “less a scene of mutual considerateness than an arena in which a contest or match is held. The purpose of the game is to preserve everyone’s line from an inexcusable contradiction, while scoring as many points as possible against one’s adversaries and making as many gains as possible for oneself.”³⁴¹ In other words, Pentin and other liberal Catholic commentators present their desire for interreligious dialogue with Muslims in the United States in a way that paints them as truly tolerant and accepting Americans, willing to engage in such a dialogue. Yet they simultaneously present their would-be conversational partners, Muslims, in a negative light. This coded, carefully constructed negativity puts Muslims in the United States in a position of defense, wherein they must carefully and tactfully deny that they are a problem and then performatively demonstrate why they are ideal conversational partners. In this way, the result of the “conversation,” or the “interchange,” is determined before it even begins.

That the onus is on Muslims to be perfect partners in dialogue is another manifestation of the construction of the moderate Muslim and is one that proliferates through liberal Catholic writings about Muslims and interreligious dialogue. However, finding the perfect partner in dialogue says more about who Catholics are *willing* to dialogue with than it does about the Muslims in question. It also obfuscates the fact that interreligious dialogue from a Catholic perspective “does seem to aim at the conversion of

³⁴¹ Goffman, 24.

individual non-Christians.”³⁴² Even if the conversion of Muslims to Christianity is not the primary goal of dialogue, by searching for the “right” kind of moderate, “Western” Muslim to dialogue with, the above authors aim to convert Muslims to the practice of a Christianized Islam that is intelligible to them. As discussed above, this impulse to alter the minority to fit the majority is a characteristic of secularist governance and a characteristic of those living within these societies. Much like governments that seek “not how to outsource Muslim spiritual leadership so as to maintain their allegiance to their native lands,” liberal Catholics entering into religious dialogue with Muslims very frequently are seeking “to fashion loyal Muslims citizens” that share and promote their values and outlooks.³⁴³ In other words, interreligious dialogue is not an even exchange. Rather, the goal that Catholic proponents of interreligious dialogue is frequently, *even if not overt or conscious*, to talk at Muslim conversational “partners” to convince them that Christian, American values, practices, and ideals are “proper” forms of American civic engagement. In these articles, we see examples of how liberal-leaning Catholics, even when trying to promote interreligious dialogue, engage in dog whistle politics. The following section analyzes manuscripts and the two rhetorical strategies that liberal Catholics use to construct their identities as American Catholics: strengthened faith through dialogue and tapping into institutional authority.

³⁴² Emil Anton, “Mission Impossible? Pope Benedict XVI and Interreligious Dialogue,” *Theological Studies* 78, no. 4 (2017): 881.

³⁴³ Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Tyler Golson, “Overhauling Islam: Representation, Construction, and Cooption of ‘Moderate Islam’ in Western Europe,” *Journal of Church and State* (2007): 488.

“How a Christian Can Become muslim”: Interreligious Dialogue as a Tool to

Fashion Catholic Identity

Sister Mary Margaret Funk is a Benedictine nun and the former executive director of the Dialogue Interreligieu Monsatique-Monastic Interreligious Dialogue Board (DIM-MID), which is an organization that exists to “promote and coordinate interreligious dialogue.”³⁴⁴ Originally established on the request of Carindale Pignedoli in order to have the men and women monastics of the Church take the lead on interreligious dialogue, in the 21st century the organization has “formally entered into dialogue with Muslims, whose religious practices, especially the observance of set times for prayer each day, are strikingly monastic.”³⁴⁵ Funk, a member of the Midwest Dialogue branch, which is cosponsored by the USCCB, led formal interreligious workshops with the Midwest Dialogue as well as the Islamic Society of North American (ISNA). These workshops and the reflections that came from them, became the subject matter of her book *Islam Is... An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion*. For Funk, the book “is written from the perspective of someone who has spent every day of the seven years of Muslim-catholic dialogue in dialogue with and practicing her own faith.”³⁴⁶

The theology put forth in Funk’s book is that dialogue with the Other strengthens one’s own faith. This is, as we will see, a frequent claim made by liberal-leaning Catholics. Her book is presented as “a clear picture of Islam for Western minds with open hearts,”³⁴⁷

³⁴⁴ “The Origins, Organization and Activities of DIM-MID,” *Monastic Interreligious Dialogue*, accessed May 17, 2023, <https://dimmid.org/>.

³⁴⁵ “The Origins, Organization and Activities of DIM-MID.”

³⁴⁶ Funk, 14.

³⁴⁷ Funk, 93.

yet dialogue serves to reinforce and strengthen one's own Catholicism. Dialogue strengthens Funk's faith, and she encourages her fellow Catholics to dialogue with Muslims in order to attain the same result. She writes, "In the flash of time that these years of dialogue represent, my faith has grown deeper because of dialogue."³⁴⁸ This "dialogue" enables Funk to better know her Catholicism, as "in the deepest dialogue in friendship with each other we share the same dimension of the one, true and universal experience of the holy."³⁴⁹ This universal experience is a crucial part of Catholic practice, as she argues that "all adherents have an identity forged through their particular faith, which, at some level, makes it necessary for them to relate to another faith in a particular way."³⁵⁰

For Funk, the relationship between Islam and Christianity, as Abrahamic religions, is one of similarities. While she notes that there are differences among the religious traditions, she spends a much of her introduction to Islam highlighting the similarities and obscuring the differences. She writes that, "When I was present for the Muslim *salaat*, I felt as though I was at home with my nuns in Beech Grove, Indiana. It was the same God, the same praise, and the same bended knee."³⁵¹ It is through the similarities that Funk can advance her theology of dialogue, which is not truly a dialogue, but rather can be seen as a reflection about one's self. Since Funk can see herself in the religious Other, she reifies her own Catholicism. Yet focusing on similarities obfuscates difference, which makes it possible for liberal American Catholics who emphasize dialogue to construct the ideal,

³⁴⁸ Mary Margaret Funk, *Islam Is... An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion* (New York: Lantern Books, 2003). Since 2005, Funk's book has sold more than 100,000 copies.

³⁴⁹ Funk, 18-20.

³⁵⁰ Funk, 67.

³⁵¹ Funk, 40.

moderate Islam with which they can dialogue. As Jerusha Tanner Lampety argues “this position results in a lack of engagement with religious difference and a form of inclusive domestication of the Muslim religious other.”³⁵² This obfuscation of difference by emphasizing sameness is a manifestation of soft Islamophobia. By focusing on similarities, this “domestication” of Muslims in the United States constructs a religious Other that is tolerable to Catholics, a religious Other that they are *willing* to converse with. Recall from chapter two that soft is a coded way of racializing Muslims that is frequently present in liberal spaces. Soft Islamophobia obscures the ways in which liberal proponents of interreligious dialogue racialize Muslims by molding “Muslim” and “Islam” into cultural categories that centers the aspects of Islam or Muslims that are pleasing, or at least tolerable, to “white persuadables.”³⁵³ This liberal form of anti-Muslim hostilities and racialization molds Muslims and Islam into something liberal Catholics can understand—or, rather, are willing to understand. The emphasis on transforming one’s own Catholicism through dialogue with the other is a manifestation of this soft, liberal anti-Muslim hostility. The type of dialogue for which liberal American Catholic advocate—one in which Catholics control the narrative and are highly selective of their conversational “partners”—demonstrates quite well the obfuscated discourse of soft Islamophobia.

Jordan Denari Duffner is an American Catholic who describes herself as “an author, educator, and scholar of Muslim-Christian Relations, interreligious dialogue, and

³⁵² Jerusha Tanner Lampety, “Beyond the Rays of Truth? *Nostra Aetate*, Islam, and the Value of Difference,” in *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 203.

³⁵³ Islam, “Soft Islamophobia.”

Islamophobia.”³⁵⁴ A doctoral candidate of Theological and Religious Studies at Georgetown University, her first book, *Finding Jesus among Muslims: How Loving Islam Makes Me a Better Catholic* argues that interreligious dialogue “is not as much an activity as it is an attitude. More than an event to put on the schedule, dialogue is the open, friendly spirit that we bring to an encounter with someone of another faith.”³⁵⁵ Interreligious dialogue’s main purpose “should be driven by the desire to seek God together,” rather than reasons like “ending conflict, working for justice, collaborating to preserve religious freedom” among others.³⁵⁶ Seeking God together, however, is a venture to deepen one’s own Catholicism through interactions with Muslims. Though Duffner’s claim is that dialogue is a joint effort, deepening own’s own faith is a one-way action rather than a collaborative exchange as is expected in dialogue.

Through dialogue with Muslims, Duffner does not aim to come to mutual understandings or have difficult conversations, rather, dialogue is a religious activity that enhances your own religiosity, as “the Catholic Church teaches that interreligious dialogue is part of our vocation as Christians.”³⁵⁷ Through the theology of dialogue, a Catholic dialoguing with a Muslims is following in God’s example, as “God dialogues.”³⁵⁸ Embracing the examples of Father Christian de Chegré, Duffner writes that dialogue is like “climbing on a ladder to God. One side-beam is Christianity, the other is Islam, and the

³⁵⁴ “About,” *Jordan Denari* (blog), accessed May 18, 2023, www.jordandenari.com.

³⁵⁵ Jordan Denari Duffner, *Finding Jesus among Muslims: How Loving Islam Makes Me a Better Catholic* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017), 5.

³⁵⁶ Duffner, 4.

³⁵⁷ Duffner, 3.

³⁵⁸ Duffner, 5.

many rungs are shared by both the Muslims and Christians who climb it.”³⁵⁹ The theology of dialogue is one wherein Catholics interact with Muslims to grow closer to God. Like the authors above, Duffner’s view of interreligious dialogue has provided “a new approach to encounter God. And, in a way I didn’t initially anticipate, these experiences have helped deepen my connection to my own Christian faith, too. My relationships with Muslims, my exposure to their faith, and my resulting reconnection to my Catholic roots draws me closer to God.”³⁶⁰ It is through contact with the Other that Duffner enhances her own religiosity. By obscuring the differences between Christianity and Islam, Duffner can focus on the similarities that exist between the two traditions and, consequently, between herself and her interlocutors. By focusing on similarities to seek God, Duffner can see herself in the religious Other. In this way, the religious Other— Muslims in the United States— function as a mirror. That is to say that the

moment of reflection is found in the recognition that the object reflected by the mirroring subject is not just any object but rather this subject’s symmetric Other— in other words, a representation of its alienated self. With such an alienating position of itself as object, its reflection truly becomes an act of bringing back, a recapturing recognition. In the reflection of the mirror-subject as an annulment of the mirroring subject’s former alienation, the reflection of Other becomes a reflection of self. The mirror’s self-reflection is the embracing whole that allows it to release itself into Other, which explains why it faces an object in the first place and why it returns reflexively to itself.³⁶¹

The similarities that Funk and Duffner see in their Muslim interlocutors is directly related to them seeing *themselves* in them. When they engage in what they view as dialogue with

³⁵⁹ Duffner, 5.

³⁶⁰ Duffner, 3.

³⁶¹ Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 21.

the religious Other, they are engaging in a dialogue with a part of themselves that is not practicing Catholicism in its ideal form. By engaging in dialogue, then, they can reflect on this “lacking” aspect of their faith, visualize it, and thereby strengthen their faith. These writings about contact and dialogue with Muslims tells us little about dialogic partners of Duffner and Funk yet does clearly indicate their own desires to advance their Catholicism through dialogue with the Muslim Other.

Importantly, both Funk and Duffner are lay women. Though Funk is a woman religious within the Roman Catholic Church, she is not part of the clergy (which is proscribed to women) and therefore technically operates in the space of the laity.³⁶² Both women, however, are operating as types of authority on interreligious dialogue, an activity that is often feminized. Where, as we will see below, many authors who advocate for interreligious dialogue in textual, academic sources are Catholic men, often members of the ecclesia, in these more confessional-style trade books, American Catholic women carve out spaces of interstitial authority in regards to the necessity of interreligious dialogue to a fulfilled American Catholic identity.

That women within the Roman Catholic Church operate in this manner— in ways that stake claims to Catholic identity and theology without being formal members of the clergy— is not an uncommon phenomenon.³⁶³ For many women, social justice issues

³⁶² Koehlinger, 50.

³⁶³ Katharine E. Harmon notes that laywomen were driving forces of the liturgical movement and Catholic Action during the mid-20th century. In an entirely different timeframe, Caroline Walker Bynum has demonstrated that 13th and 14th century Catholic women in Europe used food practices as a way to demonstrate their personal religious piety and that through their actions “women were not only followers, manipulated and circumscribed in their religious ideals by powerful clerics, they were also leaders and reformers.” See Katharine E. Harmon, “The Liturgical movement and Catholic Action: Women Living the Liturgical Life in the Lay Apostolate,” in *Empowering the People of God: Catholic Action before and after*

pertaining to the Church are the arena in which they are able to construct their identities as Catholic women. Take, for example, the nuns of the Civil Rights Movement, who abandoned traditional apostolic works in order to do unprecedented social justice work among non-Catholics.³⁶⁴ Similarly to the work of Funk and Duffner, the women religious in question were very frequently white women working in communities of color. During the Civil Rights Movement, they worked in Black communities and in the realm of interreligious dialogue, these women, who are white, advocate for dialogue with racialized Muslim communities. Importantly, however, is that their whiteness, coupled with their full, unhindered access to American civic identity, positions them in a way that is not equal to their interlocutors. The claims on authority and the necessity of interreligious dialogue to a Catholic practice is about their own identities as Catholic women rather than the conversational exchange that dialogue implies. This involvement in social justice teachings as they pertain to official Church stances is another direct result of the Second Vatican Council where, recall, the Church was rebranded into a “People of God.” The liberalizing changes of Vatican II saw, for the first time, priests and members of the ecclesia becoming more involved in worldly affairs, and, reciprocally, the laity became more involved in the workings of the Church.³⁶⁵ This was particularly true for Catholic women and remains the case today. Both Funk, a woman religious, and Duffner, a lay woman, use their manuscripts

Vatican II, ed. Jeremy Bonner, Christopher D. Denny, and Mary Beth Fraser (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 15.

³⁶⁴ Koehlinger, 2.

³⁶⁵ Jeremy Bonner, Jeffrey M. Burns, and Christopher D. Denny, “Introduction,” in *Empowering the People of God: Catholic Action Before and After Vatican II*, ed. Jeremy Bonner, Christopher D. Denny, and Mary Beth Fraser (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 3.

as mediums through which they advance a theology of interreligious dialogue as a necessary part of proper American Catholic practice *and* as a means to establish their identities as American Catholic women.

In a similar book to both Duffner's and Funk's, George Dardess places an emphasis on approaching dialogue "as if Islam and the reader were engaged in a human acquaintanceship, the reader testing Islam's boundaries, probing for areas for mutual agreement, hoping for but not forcing intimacy."³⁶⁶ Dardess, a Catholic deacon, details throughout his book interreligious experiences like attending a local mosque for Arabic lessons, attending *jumma* and learning how to pray properly, studying the Qur'an with a *hafiz* (one who has memorized the Qur'an), and taking lessons from a professional Quranic reciter. Like Funk's, Dardess' view of interreligious dialogue is that it enables Christians (Catholics, specifically) to enhance their own religiosity. In his first chapter, "Islam and 'Thy Will Be Done,'" Dardess has a subsection titled "How a Christian can become muslim." Notably, "muslim" is intentionally spelled with a lowercase m, rather than a capital m like a proper noun would typically have— like "Christian" has in the same heading. Within this section, Dardess recounts watching waves crash upon rocks on the beach in Gloucester, Massachusetts during a Jesuit retreat. He recounts how the waves and rocks "surged and crashed in perfect accord with nature's laws," and how everything around him was acting just as God intended, "yielding to the laws ordained for them by God."³⁶⁷ While meditating on the Qur'an, he says

³⁶⁶ George Dardess, *Meeting Islam: A Guide for Christians* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2005), v.

³⁶⁷ Dardess, 17.

...I began to hear a little voice in my imagination. It was a voice that seemed to speak for the waves and the rocks. It said something like this: *You're quite right, George. We ARE muslim. And because of that, every action of ours is in accordance with the wishes of the One who made us. But that's not the question. The question is rather: What about you? How muslim are you?*³⁶⁸

As he continues to explain this state of being muslim, Dardess reveals that Islam and “being muslim” is a steppingstone to deepening his own Catholicism.³⁶⁹ Being muslim is not about Islam or Muslims. Rather, being muslim is a Christianized state of the other’s religiosity that primes an individual for a reawakening of their Catholicism. Dardess siphons off the parts of Islam and Muslim identity that he sees as beneficial to his own Catholicism and appropriates them for this Christian practice. By using “muslim” as an adjective, Dardess, like Duffner and Funk, mirrors himself and his own Catholicism in conversations with Muslims and his learning about Islam. Though he frames this action as “dialogue,” again we see a relationship that is not completely symbiotic. Dardess does not engage with Muslims or Islam in a way that would lead to a meaningful, equal exchange of ideas and values. Rather, Dardess approaches Islam in a manner that gives the tradition meaning *through its use to Catholicism*. In other words, Dardess legitimizes Islamic practice in so far as the practices and rituals can be used to further strengthen his own faith and Catholic practice. By deploying little m muslim as an adjective, Dardess lays bare a softly Islamophobic attitude towards Islam and Muslims. For Dardess, Islam is legitimized because it contains practices and rites that are appealing to Dardess for his own

³⁶⁸ Dardess, 18. Emphasis original.

³⁶⁹ “Muslim” here is being used as the Arabic form of “one who submits.”

Catholicism. Being “muslim” means that you are acting in accordance with God’s intentions for you—in other words, being “muslim” means being *Catholic*.

In an extended passage where he mulls over his relationship with Christianity during the retreat, Dardess writes

I began by acknowledging that my resistance to Islam, to handing oneself over to God, is one of the chief issues in this Gospel [Gospel of John]. For example, we’re told in the very first chapter of John that “He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. Again and again in this Gospel Jesus explains his message of friendship and healing to us mortals and backs that message up with a series of what the Gospel also calls “signs.” (Like the Qur’an’s “signs,” Jesus’ “signs” in the Gospel of John challenge us to recognize God’s mercy.) We see this resistance take ominous shape beginning in the sixth chapter after the multiplication of the loaves. Here Jesus explains himself to the people and they reject his claim to be the Bread of Life. This is a rejection of what I’m tempted to call “Christian Islam,” because it is the rejection of Jesus himself. I’m tempted because, as we follow Jesus’ words and actions through the Gospel of John, we discover that in Jesus himself we see what the human person is supposed to be... Returning to Christianity from Islam in this way was a gratifying if exhausting feature of my Eastern Point retreat.³⁷⁰

Dardess explains his initial hesitation to learning about Islam and Muslims by drawing on the Gospel of John. Through this comparison, Dardess uses Islam as a conduit towards a deeper understanding of his Catholicism. Most telling is his construction of “Christian Islam.” While Dardess draws upon similarities between the two religions, he uses Islam as a negative—the rejection of Jesus by Christians through their actions is “Christian Islam” because Muslims reject Jesus’ divinity. Therefore, being “muslim” is possible. If being “muslim,” lowercase m, is a frame of mind, then Christian muslims do not have to reconcile with the inherent theological differences between Catholicism and Islam. This allows Christians to use Islam as an enhancement for their own religious identities. Rather than

³⁷⁰ Dardess, 20-21.

being an equal exchange, Islam only has value in so far as it is usable by Catholics. Even more than that, by coining the rejection of Jesus as “Christian Islam,” Dardess castigates Islam into a negative role, wherein Islam is sinful and denies the divine nature of Jesus. Rejecting Jesus and his divinity is “Islam,” and by recognizing this via dialogue with Muslims one is able to “return” to their Catholicism “from Islam.” As Dardess writes, “the effort to think of myself as muslim, as a person striving to yield him or herself to God, has led me to engage my own Christian faith with renewed vigor.”³⁷¹

Funk, Dardess, and Duffner all prioritize deepening their own faith to the conversation, rather than dialogue and learning from their dialogic partners. This discursive move is not one that aims to integrate Muslims into the American national imaginary, as white Catholics had been in the 20th century, but rather as a faith strengthening tool. Each author briefly gestures to the differences between Islam and Christianity but spends much of their page count discussing the similarities between the two traditions. Duffner sites the “shared religious belief and heritage” of Catholics and Muslims to be a prime reason that the Church encourages dialogue among the two groups.³⁷² A common theme amongst these three books is that dialogue takes place between an individual Catholic and “Islam” or “Muslims” collectively. Not only is this framing— that of a monolithic Islam or Muslim identity— a common trope amongst Catholic authors writing about Islam, but it also highlights the individuality of the Catholic authors themselves, rather than highlighting their participation in a larger social group: the Roman Catholic Church.

³⁷¹ Dardess, 22.

³⁷² Duffner, 8.

Highlighting their own individual faith as it relates to dialogue is a product of their understanding of Catholic identity, as members of the dominant cultural group in the United States—white Christians—they are “capable of imposing a view of the world in which the norm or the point of reference in relation to which other people are defined comes from the centre where the power resides.”³⁷³ In other words, their conceptions of dialogue and exchange are not equitable to their conversational partners. In writing about dialogue as a tool for Catholic faith-strengthening, this “dialogue” is not a true equal exchange. The ability to focus on their individual growth as Catholics is a product of “the privilege of social power.”³⁷⁴

In approaching dialogue with the attitude that the conversational other is there to enhance yourself, rather than advance a mutual conversation, the relationship begins on uneven ground. This uneven ground is a characteristic in post-*Nostra Aetate* dialogues among Catholics and their interlocutors. Charles L. Cohen, editor of a volume celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* to be discussed below, notes that the *Nostra Aetate*, while revolutionary, presents a problem as a basis for dialogue as it “constitutes a rickety platform for launching further progress in interreligious dialogue because it does not treat non-Christian interlocutors as equals.”³⁷⁵ One of the critiques that Cohen leveled at other

³⁷³ Henri Tajfel, “Introduction,” in *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 5.

³⁷⁴ Tajfel, 5. Tajfel argues, in full, that “the social categorizations imposed upon those who are in peripheral or dominated groups account for much of the way in which they define themselves and are defined by others. The achievement or the *construction* for oneself of full individuality is the privilege of social power.”

³⁷⁵ Charles L. Cohen, “Introduction: Some Declarations on the Relation of the Non-Christian Religions to the Church,” in *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen, eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 7.

commemorations of *Nostra Aetate* is that the hosting organizations were mainly Roman Catholic and typically had Roman Catholic clergy in attendance. This is reminiscent of another discursive move made by liberal Catholics advancing the call to interreligious dialogue: calling upon institutional authorities to justify their cause. Recall from chapter one that in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the institutional Church shifted from a distant, overbearing authoritative body to a “people of God,” that made the authority of the Church more accessible for lay members. These changes included performing the Mass in local languages, facing the congregation during Mass, and doing away with Gregorian chants. In all, the Church, as discussed previously, held a “spirit of Vatican II” that allowed for liberal Catholics, both lay and elite, to advance a liberalizing agenda in the United States, and for many liberal American Catholics, that agenda included interreligious dialogue.

Academic Celebrations of *Nostra Aetate* and the Call to Dialogue

In honor of *Nostra Aetate*'s 50th anniversary, academic publishers produced numerous edited volumes and articles.³⁷⁶ Two of them, *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims* and *The Future of*

³⁷⁶ See Jim Fredericks, “Dialogue of Suffering, Liberation, and Fraternity: A Report on the Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 36 (2016); Gregory Baum, “The Fiftieth Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 50, no. 4 (Fall 2015); Phillip A. Cunningham, “The Sources behind ‘The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable’ (Rom 11:29): A Reflection on the Theological Questions Pertaining to Catholic-Jewish Relations on the Occasion of the 50th Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*,” *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 12, no. 1 (2017); Kristin M. Colberg, “The Omnipresence of Grace: Revisiting the Relationship between *Ad Gentes* and *Nostra Aetate* 50 Years Later,” *Missiology* 42, no. 2 (2014); Noam E. Marans, “The Place of John in Christian-Jewish Relations Fifty Years after *Nostra Aetate*,” in *John and Judaism: A Contested Relationship in Context*, R. Alan Culpepper and Paul N. Anderson, eds. (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017); James L. Fredericks and Tracy Tiemeier Sayuki, eds., *Interreligious Friendship after Nostra Aetate* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Francis X. Clooney, “Interreligious Learning in a Changing Church: From Paul VI to Francis,” *Irish Theological Quarterly* 82, no. 4 (2017).

Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate, will be discussed here. Published by The Catholic University of America Press, *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims* contains 25 essays and responses written by leading Catholic scholars and dialogic partners. The volume is the product of the Catholic University of America's golden jubilee conference for *Nostra Aetate*, and includes contributions from the university's president, three cardinals, as well as a priest who was present during the construction of *Nostra Aetate* and provided his own translation of the document for the volume. The format of the edited collection's Catholic-Muslim interreligious dialogue section is as follows: a Catholic scholar wrote, or presented, a piece, followed by a response from a Muslim scholar, which was then followed by a response from a Catholic scholar. Noting the Catholic contributors to the volumes and the positions of authority that they occupy is a clear signal to the importance of interreligious dialogue to leading a Catholic life. John Garvey, the Catholic University of America's president, noted that the cardinals' "presence speaks to the great significance the Church places on dialogue with other faiths and— together with their distinguished respondents— marked another public instance of that dialogue in action."³⁷⁷ This introduction sets the tone for the rest of the volume as a "celebration" of interreligious dialogue, with the authoritative backing of the clergy and a Vatican II attendant. By having cardinals, some of the highest-ranking members of the Roman Catholic ecclesia, contribute to the volume and respond to essays by Muslim scholars, the volume strikes an

³⁷⁷ John Garvey, "Introduction," in *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), xiii.

authoritative tone that verges on the preclusion of dialogue. In other words, by framing the contributions of cardinals, some of whom were key in instrumenting institutional change regarding interreligious dialogue, the parameters of the “conversation” are already set before the exchange has begun.

The opening chapter by Pim Valkenberg, a Dutch theologian with a professorship in the department of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America, notes that while the Second Vatican Council and its documents were highly Euro-centric, “the influence of the world church has made *Nostra Aetate* the document that it has become.”³⁷⁸ As noted above and in the first chapter, liberal American Catholics saw *Nostra Aetate* and the changes implemented at the Second Vatican Council not only as revolutionary, but as calls to continue their work advancing social justice causes and interreligious dialogue. While *Nostra Aetate* may not have been constructed with the American liberal Catholic community at the forefront of the committee’s mind, liberal Catholics in the United States took the document and ran with it, as evidenced by this volume itself. The Roman Catholic Church was amenable to the embrace *Nostra Aetate* received from many Catholics, and, as Valkenberg notes, “the church no longer takes itself as a point of departure in thinking about its relationship with others, but now it actively promotes dialogue between religions.”³⁷⁹ In other words, the Church moved beyond

³⁷⁸ Pim Valkenberg, “*Nostra Aetate*: Historical Contingency and Theological Significance,” in *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church’s Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 7.

³⁷⁹ Valkenberg, 7.

acknowledging interreligious dialogue as an action that may be taken by Catholics, and now the Church's official position is that interreligious dialogue *should be taking place*.

To substantiate his claim, Valkenberg links *Nostra Aetate* to Pope Paul's *Ecclesiam Suam* as well as to another synodal document: *Lumen Gentium*. Both documents, according to Valkenberg, reinforce that even through the tumultuous creation of *Nostra Aetate* as a document originally intended to address the Church's relationship with Judaism only, *Nostra Aetate* and the Church's call to interreligious dialogue is "solidly grounded in the self-awareness of the Catholic Church."³⁸⁰ In short, by connecting *Nostra Aetate* to other official documents, the call to interreligious dialogue is best understood as an explicitly and authentically Catholic practice. Of note, however, is that this position is one that was originally taken up by conservative Catholic commentators of Vatican II, as Valkenberg notes that he agrees with the conservative interpreters of the synodal council that documents like *Nostra Aetate* do not exist in a vacuum and must be understood alongside other church teachings. Yet Valkenberg deviates from the conservative position with his understanding of the necessity of interreligious dialogue to Catholicism.³⁸¹

Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran, the late president of the PCID and member of the Roman Curia, contributed a chapter titled "The Catholic Church in Dialogue with Islam since the Promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*."³⁸² Cardinal Tauran's inclusion in this volume, which was published by an American Catholic university press (The Catholic University

³⁸⁰ Valkenberg, 17.

³⁸¹ Valkenberg, 20.

³⁸² Created by Pope Urban II during the eleventh century, the Roman Curia is comprised of the administrative bodies of the Vatican and its members consists of mainly cardinals, though some bishops hold positions.

of America) based on a conference held by that American university in the nation's capital, provides an authoritative stance on the necessity for interreligious dialogue. Tauran notes that *Nostra Aetate* was integral to changing Catholic perspectives on interreligious dialogue and now, thanks in part to the foundational document, interreligious dialogue is "a normal religious activity."³⁸³ Per the chapter's title, Tauran takes a special interest in the dialogue between Christians (specifically Catholics) and Muslims. A high-ranking authority figure himself, Tauran still roots his argument in other authoritative church documents and statements, much like Valkenberg and Madigan. Tauran notes that since *Nostra Aetate* reoriented the Church's stance on dialogue with Muslims, numerous documents and establishments have reinforced this message, namely the PCID, as introduced above. In addition to the VSCN/PCID, Pope Paul VI also established the Commission for the Religious Relations with Muslims (CRRM), which should be understood as a papal confirmation "for the need of study, reflection, prayer, and consultation for fruitful dialogue with Muslims. The fact that CRRM has no other parallel excepting that of the Commission for Religious Relations with Jews shows the special status Islam enjoys and the importance given to it by the Catholic Church."³⁸⁴

Tauran leverages the fact that the PCID has released messages for the end of Ramadan since 1967 as a note for the official necessity for dialogue, noting that each annual message pontificates on a theme for reflection "with the possibility also for discussion

³⁸³ Jean-Louis Cardinal Tauran, "The Catholic Church in Dialogue with Islam since the Promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*," in *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 94.

³⁸⁴ Tauran, 94-95.

between Muslims and Christians.”³⁸⁵ Beyond annual messages of good will, the PCID also created formal, institutionalized dialogues with Muslim institutions across the globe, including the Center for Interreligious Dialogue of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization in Tehran and the International Islamic Forum for Dialogue in Jeddah. Dialogues with Muslims “need to be encouraged and promoted at the local levels, in the families, schools, colleges, universities, workplaces and every circumstance,” making perfectly clear the importance of dialogue to a well-rounded Catholic life.³⁸⁶ Yet, despite this positive take on interreligious dialogue among Catholics and Muslims, Tauran engages in dog whistle tropes. First and foremost, Tauran explicitly states that the PCID is “the organ of the Universal Church for the relations of the Roman pontiff and *the competent dicasteries* with the people of other religions.”³⁸⁷ As discussed above, liberal Catholic proponents of dialogue often do not approach dialogue on equal footing, and as this volume demonstrates, Catholic understandings of dialogue tend to focus more on what they have to say than about what their conversational partner responds. In this instance, Tauran, as the president of the PCID, makes judgement on which groups of Muslims qualify as “competent” dialogue partners, already undermining the equality of the conversation. By selecting dialogue partners that he sees as “competent” enough to dialogue with, Tauran sets the parameters of the conversation from the beginning, not allowing too much difference to originate in the conversation. Dialogue with Muslims is presented as “a challenge” as “Islam, we must remember, is one at the same time a religion, a political

³⁸⁵ Tauran, 95.

³⁸⁶ Tauran, 97.

³⁸⁷ Tauran, 94. Emphasis added.

system, and a civilization.”³⁸⁸ Coming from the highest reigning authority on interreligious dialogue in the Roman Curia, this statement establishes the understanding of Islam as a monolithic entity, whose values make dialogue “difficult.” The PCID officially

Recognize that Muslims are living in a difficult period of their history and are facing many challenges. One of these challenges is the necessary and not-so-easy dialogue with modernity. Another challenge is of a legal nature. It is the recognition of human rights, including those of women, the challenge of full citizenship to non-Muslims living in countries where they have emigrated, and the challenge of a sound religion between religion and politics.³⁸⁹

This single quote from the president of the PCID engages with the dog whistle tropes of Muslims being dangerous, non-Western, unmodern, hostile to women and non-Muslims, and difficult to dialogue with. Though the tone of the paragraph is one wherein Tauran attempts to show support to Muslim communities around the world, the result others Muslims and clearly positions Catholics and Muslims as opposites.

In response to Sayyid Syeed’s essay “Why Muslims Celebrate *Nostra Aetate*,” Bishop Dennis Madden, the Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore and Chairman Emeritus of the Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the USCCB, calls upon the authority of Pope Francis to argue that dialogue with Muslims is an important call from God for practicing Catholics.³⁹⁰ Much like the other contributors to this volume, Madden situates himself as an authority on Catholic dialogue due to his position within the Catholic hierarchy, but also as a leader in one of the Church’s centers for dialogue. As an authority

³⁸⁸ Tauran, 93.

³⁸⁹ Tauran, 98.

³⁹⁰ Dennis Madden, “Response to Dr. Sayyid Syeed’s Essay, ‘Why Muslims Celebrate *Nostra Aetate*,’” in *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church’s Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli, eds. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 128-132.

on interreligious dialogue, Madden uses other authoritative sources to establish the importance of such dialogues. While he discusses *Nostra Aetate*, he spends a majority of his response discussing Pope Francis, who “has expanded on the seeds for dialogue and understanding that were planted with *Nostra Aetate* and challenges us to take responsibility for our own education and to truly live out our understanding of the gospel: to love God by loving others, in part by recognizing the valuable truths that exist in other religions.”³⁹¹ To emphasize the importance of dialogue with Muslims, rather than interreligious dialogue in general, Madden points to Francis’ *Evangelii Gaudium*, which “emphasizes the traditions that unite religions,” a discursive move that, as we have seen, favors sameness over difference in order to make Islam and Muslims more intelligible to Catholics. Madden also draws attention to the anti-Islamophobic stances that the USCCB and PCID had formally taken, which “made quite clear the stance of the Church with regard to this abhorrent behavior leveled against our Muslim brothers and sisters.”³⁹² The abhorrent behavior in question was support for Terry Jones, the Florida pastor who attempted to host “Burn a Koran” day and Catholic opposition to the Cordoba House initiative. In response to Jones, the PCID released a statement on September 8, 2010, condemning Jones’ “outrageous and grave gesture against a book considered sacred by a religious community.”³⁹³ In the wake of the “Ground Zero Mosque” controversy, a group of interreligious community leaders gathered to release a statement titled “beyond Park 51: Religious Leaders Denounce Anti-Muslim Bigotry and Call for Respect for America’s Tradition of Religious Liberty.” In

³⁹¹ Madden, 130.

³⁹² Madden, 130.

³⁹³ “Statement from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue,” *Agenzia Fides*, September 8, 2010.

support of this statement, the USCCB released responded, stating that “as chairmen of the Committees on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Domestic Justice and Human Development, and International Justice and Peace of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, we voice our solidarity with these leaders.”³⁹⁴ Madden uses these institutional press releases to reaffirm the Church’s stance on interreligious dialogue and the necessity of engaging in productive dialogue with Muslims in the United States.

Another academic volume centered on *Nostra Aetate* is *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, edited by Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen. This book, based on a conference that took place at a public university, the University of Madison-Wisconsin, and was sponsored by an academic center the Institute for the Study of Abrahamic Religions. The editors note that these characteristics set this volume apart from others in the genre. However, the volume was published by Orbis Books, a publishing house that offers “a wide range of books on prayer, spirituality, Catholic life, theology, mission and current affairs.”³⁹⁵ Both celebratory and critical, this volume argues that in the wake of *Nostra Aetate*, the goal of interreligious dialogue now is “how to further demilitarize relationships between all religions and create not merely a truce among them but an alliance to promote human well-being and spiritual growth.”³⁹⁶ Paul F. Knitter, an ordained priest and the Paul Tillich Professor of Theology, World Religions and Culture at Union Theological Seminary at the

³⁹⁴ “Bishop-Chairmen Respond to Anti-Muslim Prejudice,” *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, accessed June 9, 2023.

³⁹⁵ “About Orbis Books,” Orbis Books, accessed June 9, 2023.

³⁹⁶ Cohen, 20.

time of publication, argues in his chapter that *Nostra Aetate* was revolutionary not because it instructed Catholics on how to think about other religious traditions, but rather it was revolutionary because of “what it says about how Christians should *act* toward other religious believers.”³⁹⁷ Through the verbiage of *Nostra Aetate*, interreligious dialogue was not only permitted, but it became a religious obligation for Catholics.³⁹⁸ The call to dialogue that *Nostra Aetate* set in motion is ahead of its time. Knitter argues that it has “moved far ahead of the traditional theology that understands Christ and Christianity as the end point of all religious history,” and in order for dialogue to be constructive for all Catholics, the Church needs its “theology to catch up with dialogue.”³⁹⁹ Knitter argues that *Nostra Aetate* and the spirit of the Second Vatican Council call upon Christians, Catholics specifically, to “collaborate with” and “engage with” practitioners of other traditions, and he notes specifically that “the *doing of dialogue* will help us clarify the *knowing of theology*.”⁴⁰⁰ As discussed above, not only do we see a tendency to frame dialogue as a means of knowing the Church, but Knitter also employs the doctrinal authority of the Church as a way to emphasize the importance of this dialogue to a complete Catholic practice. While Knitter’s essay does not mention Islam and dialogue with Muslims specifically, his essay illuminates the Catholic perspective on dialogue and the necessity of dialogue with other religious traditions.

³⁹⁷ Paul F. Knitter, “*Nostra Aetate*: A Milestone in the History of Religious? From Competition to Cooperation,” in *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen, eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017), 45.

³⁹⁸ Knitter, 46.

³⁹⁹ Knitter, 55.

⁴⁰⁰ Knitter, 56.

Academic volumes dedicated to Catholic calls to interreligious dialogue were not limited to 50th anniversary celebrations. In 2012, Oxford University Press published an edited volume titled *Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue*. Edited by James Heft, a Marianist priest and Professor of Religion at University of Southern California, the volume is the result of an ongoing series of “dialogues” from the Institute for Advanced Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California during the 2007-2008 academic year. Heft is also the founding president of the Institute for the Advancement of Catholic Studies at the University of Southern California, which houses the Generations in Dialogue Program. This program “creates a multi-generational community of scholars that allows participants, following the examples set by the traditions of the Catholic Church, to explore how faith informs scholarship and scholarship informs faith.”⁴⁰¹ The goal of *Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue* is to “provide an overview by leading Catholic scholars of the current state of interreligious dialogue between the Catholic Church and five other world religions. None of these scholars supports relativism; all of them, however, give ample evidence of the complexity, challenges, possibilities, and necessity of interreligious dialogue.”⁴⁰² Heft’s introductory essay extrapolates on the Church’s relationship with dialogue, where he argues that while Vatican II opened the door for interreligious dialogue amongst Catholics and practitioners of other faiths. Heft asserts that the point of interreligious dialogue according to the authority of the Church is twofold: promoting the

⁴⁰¹ Institute for Advanced Catholic studies, “Father James L. Heft, SM Generations in Dialogue Program,” *University of Southern California Dornsife*, accessed June 5, 2023.

⁴⁰² James L. Heft, “Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue,” in *Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue*, James L. Heft, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3-4.

gospels and “understanding the other.”⁴⁰³ Yet the two goals conflict with one another. Promoting the gospels and carrying out the evangelizing mission of the Church precludes the attempt to “understand the other” in a way that is genuine and not contingent on the potential of conversion. Interreligious dialogue, again, is serving the interests of the Church and the Catholic participant rather than the conversational partner. Unlike conservative Catholics who argue that interreligious dialogue is impossible between Muslims and Catholics, Heft argues that not only is it possible, but it is a serious form of intercommunal cooperation that transcends mere tolerance of the other or “trivial” interactions that lack true religious conviction, rather it is predicated on serious engagement. He argues that “a loss of religious conviction and theological depth trivializes interreligious dialogue.”⁴⁰⁴ Though he advocates in this selected passage for a dialogue that takes seriously religious conviction of both parties, by coming to the conversation with a primary goal of spreading the gospels, the theological conviction of the other party becomes a moot point for the Catholic participants.

As we have seen above, while promoting interreligious dialogue, Heft makes clear that engaging in dialogue is not only a positive activity for strengthening one’s faith, but also a calling for Catholics. Throughout, he anchors his argument that interreligious dialogue “has become increasingly important—sometimes a matter of life and death, or peace or war” in institutional authorities.⁴⁰⁵ Beyond citing *Nostra Aetate*, Heft points to numerous other institutional authorities that portray the importance of dialogue for

⁴⁰³ Heft, “Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue,” 7.

⁴⁰⁴ Heft, “Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue,” 10.

⁴⁰⁵ Heft, “Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue,” 21.

Catholics. First, recall that Pope Paul VI took a special interest in *Nostra Aetate* and was heavily involved in its creation. In addition to orchestrating the creation of *Nostra Aetate*, Pope Paul VI published an encyclical titled *Ecclesiam Suam* wherein he outlined the qualities of productive dialogue: clarity, meekness, trust, and pedagogical prudence. Through these four qualities, Heft argues that “it is difficult to imagine how anyone who approaches interreligious dialogue with these attitudes could be thought to be without genuine respect for those who believe differently.”⁴⁰⁶ Yet, Heft remains concerned that those engaged in dialogue may not “clearly articulate the faith or proclaim the gospel.” This concern displays once again the impulse to prioritize evangelizing the religious other over a mutual religious dialogue, as it is clear Heft is not open to the idea of being evangelized by the religious other and is only interested in having Catholics as evangelizers. Dialogue, which is necessary per the church, is not about seeking common ground with the religious Other, but rather about conversion of the Other. This is made amply clear when Heft cites Pope Benedict XVI’s controversial Regensburg comments. Warning fellow Catholics to not criticize the pope’s words too harshly, Heft argues that “a good case can be made that what he [Benedict] is really doing is asking people to trust their experience and their reason to make moral judgements that make obvious that not all practices contribute to human flourishing equally.”⁴⁰⁷ In other words, Heft’s interpretation of Benedict’s comments about Islam imply that Muslims and Islamic practice do not contribute to human flourishing in the same way that Catholic practice does. This, coupled

⁴⁰⁶ Heft, “Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue,” 11.

⁴⁰⁷ Heft, 9.

with Heft's insistence that promoting the gospels is the main priority of interreligious dialogue, lays bare the inequalities between Catholic and Muslim participants in interreligious dialogue from the Catholic perspective. As we have seen above, it remains questionable how much dialogue is truly taking place in these instances rather than one-way monologuing designed to convert.

While Heft works to establish the importance of interreligious dialogue for Catholics broadly, in the same volume, Daniel Madigan writes specifically about Catholic-Muslim dialogue. Madigan, an Australian Jesuit who holds a professorship in the department of theology at Georgetown University, argues that "in dialogue, therefore, the task is to construct a new first-person plural, one neither based simply on the rejection of 'them,' not on too-easy affirmation of similarity, but rather on a preparedness to question and be questioned."⁴⁰⁸ As discussed throughout this chapter, dialogue for liberal Catholics functions as a medium for identity construction. This is seen clearly in the first goal presented by Madigan, wherein the task for dialogue is "to construct a new first-person plural," or, in other words, a new "us." As interreligious dialogue in this instance is between Catholics and Muslims, the new "us" is a distinctly Catholic identity juxtaposed against the Muslim Other. Though Madigan addresses the impulse to see the self in the Other and to reject the Other in favor of the self, the goal is clearly and explicitly labeled as Catholic identity construction. While Madigan's essay blatantly eschews many of the dog whistle tropes Catholics used to discuss Muslims, specifically those of the monolithic Islam and the idea that Muslims condemn religious freedom, he still frames much of his essay with

⁴⁰⁸ Madigan, 65.

Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* thesis.⁴⁰⁹ Huntington's controversial thesis *does* essentialize Islam into a monolith and sets "Islamic" civilization against Western, Christianized civilization. Madigan argues that most critiques of Huntington have either misunderstood or not fully read his work. Rather than dispelling Huntington's notion of Western versus Islamic cultural clashes, he uses his framework to state that

the people of different civilizations, Huntington tells us, have different views on the relations between God and humanity, individual and group, citizen and state, parents and children, husband and wife. They also have differing views of the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, liberty and authority, equality and hierarchy. These civilizational differences are real, fundamental, and enduring, more so than ideological or political differences.⁴¹⁰

Even though Madigan dismisses the idea of a monolithic Islam, as discussed in chapter two, he nevertheless deploys this trope by shoehorning Muslims into an "Islamic" civilization opposite a Western civilization. He makes it explicitly clear that the religious Other has different conceptions of "rights" as well as relationships with other individuals and with religious Others. Through this framing, even though Madigan dismissed the essentialized Islam earlier in his piece, he slips into the dog whistle tropes he attempted to circumvent. In this Huntington-inspired framing, Muslims are part of an overarching Islamic civilization that has different understandings of all facets of life, regardless of where they are living. Muslims in Western cultures are Islamic and not Western. Through this framing, Madigan constructs an explicitly Catholic identity through dialogue with the religious Other, Muslims in the United States.

Concluding Thoughts

⁴⁰⁹ Madigan, 62.

⁴¹⁰ Madigan, 63.

This chapter demonstrated the ways in which liberal American Catholic deploy the concept of interreligious dialogue in order to construct their identities as liberal Catholics. For the Catholics discussed herein, interreligious dialogue is a key cornerstone of proper Catholic, specifically American Catholic, practice. Crucially, however, is the fact that the dialogue championed by liberal Catholics does not always function as a true, equitable dialogue. Rather, this “dialogue” is often a one-sided conversation that functions to enhance one’s faith and construct their identity in place of prioritizing a two-way exchange of ideas. Nevertheless, liberal Catholics advance the importance of interreligious dialogue to a liberal American Catholic identity by tapping into the institutional authority of the Roman Catholic Church. In the following and final chapter, we turn our attention to the gendered nature of conservative Catholic discourses on Islam in the United States. Of particular interest is the ways in which male conservative Catholic authors construct their identities as American men against the religious Other of Muslim men in the United States.

Chapter Four: Conservative Catholics: Protecting Women, the Nation, and Their Americanness

In 2016, Muslim women's beach fashions were at the center of debates by non-Muslim Europeans and Americans. Multiple municipalities in France, including Cannes, banned full-body coverings at the beach (known colloquially as the "burkini"). Many non-Muslim French citizens and American commentators viewed full-body beach coverings as physical representations of the oppression of women.⁴¹¹ This is not surprising, considering that commentary which considers veiling as a sign of patriarchal control of women is ubiquitous.⁴¹² But the international scope of the so-called burkini bans was novel. American Catholic news media sites began contributing article after article. From the liberal-leaning *Commonweal* to conservative *Crisis Magazine*, the authors were abuzz. But what did French beach towns have to do with American Catholicism? And how were Muslim women's beachwear choices a global concern? The debate about beach attire

⁴¹¹ See Neeti Upadhye, "Pushback on the 'Burkini Ban,'" *New York Times*, August 25, 2016, video, <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/europe/100000004612036/pushback-on-the-burkini-ban.html?searchResultPosition=1>; Celestine Bohlen, "The Multifaceted 'Burkini' Debate," *New York Times*, August 22, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/23/world/europe/france-veil-burkini-hijab.html?searchResultPosition=2>; Dan Bilefsky, "France's Burkini Debate Reverberates Around the World," *New York Times*, August 31, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/01/world/europe/burkini-france-us-germany-africa.html?searchResultPosition=10>; Kathleen Parker, "Burkini Bans Continue a Long History of Men Controlling Women's Beach Wear," *Washington Post*, August 16, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/burkini-bans-continue-a-long-history-of-men-controlling-womens-beachwear/2016/08/16/b07b5986-63ee-11e6-be4e-23fc4d4d12b4_story.html; "Burkini Incident at Upscale Hotel Highlights Divisions in Egypt," *Washington Post*, September 16, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/09/16/burkini-incident-at-upscale-hotel-highlights-divisions-in-egypt/>; James McAuley, "France's Burkini Debate: About a Bathing Suit and a Country's Peculiar Secularism," *Washington Post*, August 26, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/frances-burkini-debate-about-a-bathing-suit-and-a-countrys-peculiar-secularism/2016/08/26/48ec273e-6bad-11e6-91cb-ecb5418830e9_story.html.

⁴¹² See Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Lila Abu-Lughod *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); Wendy Brown, "Civilizational Delusions: Secularism, Tolerance, Equality," *Theory & Event* 15, no. 2 (2012); Juliane Hammer, "Center Stage: Gendered Islamophobia and Muslim Women," in *Islamophobia in America: The Anatomy of Intolerance*, ed. Carl W. Ernst (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

became a debate about “proper” Western behavior. Marine Le Pen, the then leader of the National Front in France supported the burkini bans as a measure to save the “soul” of France, writing, “This is the soul of France that is in question. France does not lock away a woman’s body, France does not hide half of its population under the fallacious and hateful pretext that the other half fears it will be tempted.”⁴¹³ The French context for the burqa bans relied on the deeply French notion of *laïcité*. *Laïcité* is the French principle wherein public displays of religiosity are forbidden in a drive to keep public spaces secular. In the 21st century, this emphasis on public secularism has heavily focused on Muslim populations in France, specifically women who veil. Proponents of *laïcité* argue that the burqa, hijab, niqab, or the burkini, are too religiously obvious for public spaces. While the concept of *laïcité* is not immediately translatable to the American context wherein religious freedom is held in high esteem, there are some elements to the French context that are recognizable in the American context.

In response to La Pen’s blog post, *Commonweal* contributor Rand Richards Cooper asked, “Can you imagine any American—let alone the leader of a rightwing political party—waxing patriotic about nudity, insisting that the very soul of the country depends on women being allowed to disport themselves like movie stars on the nation’s beaches?”⁴¹⁴ But even Cooper paused at the thought of fully-covered women on the beach, arguing that “Americans are habituated, much more than Europeans, to a live-and-let live

⁴¹³ Marine Le Pen, “Derrière le burkini,” *Carnets d’esperances* (blog) August 17, 2016, <https://carnetsdesperances.fr/2016/08/17/derriere-le-burkini/>.

⁴¹⁴ Rand Richards Cooper, “The Battle of the Burkini,” *Commonweal*, August 26, 2016, <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/battle-over-burkini>.

way of life. But that too has its limits.”⁴¹⁵ For many American Catholic commentators, the niqab, burqa, and hijab represented a cultural practice that had no business taking root in the United States. *New York Times* journalist Amanda Taub argues that French burkini bans are more than about the protection of women—they are not “primarily about protecting Muslim women from patriarchy, but about protecting France’s non-Muslim majority from having to confront a changing world: one that requires them to widen their sense of identity.”⁴¹⁶ A similar process takes place in the United States among conservative American Catholic authors. While the French controversy is highly contextual to time and place, that France is a majority Catholic country with a large Muslim population is of note for comparative purposes. In the American Catholic press, the French burkini bans became a vehicle through which they were able to cite a proxy war over American Catholic identity via Muslim women’s bodies. The limits that Cooper discusses represent an impulse to understand veiling, and even other non-Christian practices, in Western liberalist terms that value the privatization of religious and cultural practices that are not entirely legible by American Christianity, without taking the step to contextualize non-Christian practices. The veiling habits of Muslim women in France translated into the American context, as many Catholic commentators saw Muslim women in the United States veiling as deviations from the American Christian majority. They became indicative of what conservative

⁴¹⁵ Richards Cooper, “The Battle of the Burkini.”

⁴¹⁶ Amanda Taub, “France’s ‘Burkini’ Bans Are about More than Religion or Clothing,” *New York Times*, August 18, 2016.

Catholic commentator William Kilpatrick argued was “...more than a civil rights issue. It might even be an issue of civilizational survival.”⁴¹⁷

This chapter analyzes the gendered nature of discourses about Islam and Muslims within conservative American Catholic media spaces. Specifically, this chapter argues that white conservative American Catholic men reify– and hold on to– their identities as white American Christians through an intense othering of Muslims. Interestingly, conservative American Catholics focus largely on Muslims in Europe rather than Muslims in the United States. This serves two functions. First, by focusing on European countries, American conservative Catholics can use horror stories about Muslim men as a kind of canary in the coal mine to warn other American Catholics of the dangers of pluralism. By focusing on the horrors of a pluralistic Europe, conservative American Catholics attempt to strengthen the need for a steadfast American Catholic identity to protect the nation. Second, the focus on Muslims in Europe operates as a smoke and mirrors diversion tactic. The hyperfocus on Muslim men’s sexual deviance and their maltreatment of women in Europe functions to other Muslims while simultaneously reifying white conservative Catholic’s Americanness. These authors, desperate to keep their status as full Americans, draw American cultural ire towards Muslims and their described bad behaviors in an attempt to cover– or silence– inappropriate or dangerous behavior within the American Catholic community, like the sex abuse crisis. The second major argument that develops simultaneously within this chapter is that conservative American Catholics establish their

⁴¹⁷ William Kilpatrick, “The Burqa, the Baker, and the Bishops,” *Crisis Magazine*, June 12, 2018, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/2018/burqa-baker-bishops>.

identities as *conservative* American Catholics by distinguishing themselves explicitly from “effeminate” liberal Catholics. Where the previous chapter explored the integral nature of interreligious dialogue to a liberal American Catholic identity, this chapter explores how conservative American Catholic men actively critique the liberal Catholic desire to be in conversation with the religious Other and construe the impulse to dialogue as effeminate and dangerous.

American Catholic and Muslim Masculinities

The masculinity of Muslim men is constructed as overt, toxic, immature, and threatening. The discourse of the dangerous Muslim man uses highly racialized dog whistle tropes about Muslim masculinity—namely the qualities of aggression, hyper-sexuality, and subjugation of women—and, frequently, blatant racism, to construct the ideal Catholic male identity. This identity is characterized by a jingoistic love of nation and a defense of the nation’s women and children. Throughout this chapter, we will see how ideal Catholic masculinity is constructed opposite *assumed* Muslim masculinity. Two important notes: first, the assumed masculinity of Muslim men in conservative Catholic media outlets is a monolithic male Muslim identity, akin to the trope of the monolithic Islam analyzed in chapter two. This assumption treats all Muslim men across time and space as having singular, essentialist qualities due to their practice of Islam and/or their heritage linked to Muslim majority countries. Relatedly, the second important point to note is that the Muslim men in question are specifically the *racialized Muslim man*, as established in chapter two. That is, the Muslim men these articles discuss are not representative of actual demographics of Muslim men in the United States or, as we will see, Europe. Rather, the

Muslim men discussed by conservative commentators are an imagined and are coded as Muslim due to their physical appearance and heritage. As discussed in chapter two, this is namely men of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent and does not include Black Muslim men, especially not Black American Muslim men.

Discussions of the Muslim man in turn construct the ideal American Catholic man, who is the antithesis of the unamerican Muslim. Masculinity is constructed, moldable, and context-dependent, rather than being an innate quality to the biological sex of male.⁴¹⁸ For conservative American Catholics, this masculinity is one wherein men function as protectors in two main ways. First, they protect American women and children. As we will see, reported violence against women and children at the hands of Muslim men is a major concern for conservative Catholic commentators who fan flames of outrage towards Muslim communities using these stories. Second, and relatedly, the ideal Catholic man protects the nation. The conservative commentators below establish themselves as Paul Revere-type figures warning other Americans about the dangers that Muslims pose to the nation itself. The construction of Muslim men as dangerous terrorists who hate American ideals allows conservative Catholic men to establish themselves as staunch protectors of the Christian nation. In this way, they are reified as true blooded American Catholic men. By vilifying Muslim men as dangerous and anti-American, white American Catholic men distance reify their belonging as American Christians. Recall from chapter one that American Catholics were Othered by Protestant Americans as dangerous and un-

⁴¹⁸ Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 3.

American. Protestant men claimed that Catholic men, priests specifically, were sex-crazed threats to women, and simultaneously depicted Catholic nuns as victims of enslavement by the Catholic church. Anti-Catholic Protestants weaponized gender roles and dynamics within the Catholic Church to present Catholicism as an identity antithetical to an American identity. A similar discursive process is at work here. Catholic commentators deploy gendered rhetoric and stereotypes of Muslim men to highlight their un-Americanness. Simultaneously, by operating as the other-ers rather than the Othered, conservative American Catholics distance themselves from the history of Catholics as un-American and insert themselves firmly in the American Christian cultural sphere and identity.

This protector identity is reinforced through the frequent condemnation of liberal American Catholics who are portrayed as being effeminate, feminized, and weak. As we will see below, the liberal American Catholic desire to dialogue with Muslims in the United States is a negative for conservative American Catholics, who reject the usefulness of dialogue and instead claim that dialogue is a surreptitious tool used by overtly masculine Muslims to gain access to the nation. Because masculinity and notions of manhood are socially constructed, conservative American Catholic men are able to use the religious Other— Muslim men— in order to set discrete boundaries for appropriate American Catholic masculinity.

The juxtaposition of American Catholic manhood and purported Muslim manhood is intimately linked to concepts of nationhood. The continuous discourses of Muslim masculinity and sexuality reifies white Catholic manhood as an identity that is “continually (re)attached to objects, behaviors, and identities through various processes of social

production and reception.”⁴¹⁹ As we will see below, American Catholic masculinity is distanced from descriptions of Muslim masculinity, like overt violence against women, and is instead tethered to values like patriotism and protection of women, children, and nation. The construction of a monolithic Muslim masculinity relies heavily on the dog whistle tropes discussed in chapter two, namely those of the violent terrorist and the assumed hatred of religious freedom. As discussed in chapter two, anti-Muslim hostilities are largely driven by the underlying belief that Muslims, specifically Muslim men, are inherently drawn to committing acts of terrorism and violence against non-Muslims. Those who racialize Muslims through the use of the “Muslim as terrorist” trope often claim that Islam inherently invites Muslims to commit acts of violence.⁴²⁰ Yet conservative American Catholic commentators often take this discursive rhetoric a step farther and argue that Islam does not just invite Muslims to commit acts of violence and terrorism, but rather Muslim men *themselves* are inherently violent due to Islam, which heightens the danger of allowing Muslim immigrants into the country and even through dialoguing with them. Violence is imbued into Muslim masculinity and therefore they are always a threat. As William Kilpatrick emphasizes in *Crisis*, one of the more conservative publications discussed within this project, “third world Muslim men are raised from the cradle to despise and fear women and to treat them as inferior.”⁴²¹⁴²² Drawing on the assumption that Muslim men

⁴¹⁹ Matthew W. Hughey, “Backstage Discourse and the Reproduction of White Masculinities,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 134

⁴²⁰ Recall chapter two’s discussion of Cardinal Pell and his claim that “Islam is a much more war-like culture than Christianity.” See chapter two, section “The Moderate Muslim and the Terrorist.”

⁴²¹ William Kilpatrick, “Migration and the Islamization of Europe,” *Crisis*, October 15, 2009.

⁴²² Kilpatrick is the most prolific conservative author analyzed in this project. While his voice is amplified in this chapter due to his fascination with the topic, he is not, as we will see, the only author who is contributing to these conversations.

are not American in any capacity and come from “third world” countries, Kilpatrick presents Muslim men as inherently holding a disdain for and violence towards women.

Protectors of Women and Love of Country

As liberal American Catholics embrace dialogue with Muslims in the United States and do not take the stance that Muslim men are inherently dangerous, the apparent alliance among liberal American Catholics towards perceived violent Muslims in the United States draws the ire of conservative Catholics who view these interreligious relationships as signs of an effeminate Catholic masculinity that ought to be quashed. That Muslim men are dangerous is not a question, it is a fact for conservative Catholic authors. Consequently, conservative American men must act to protect white American women. In a 2011 article written for *Crisis*, anti-Muslim activist Robert Spencer argues that interreligious dialogue and multiculturalism are evil heresies threatening Western Christendom. In an article that juxtaposes “the human dignity or cultural achievements of Christians, and particularly Catholics, American and Europeans, Spencer laments that

So apparently the rampant and systemic oppression of Muslim women—the veiling, seclusion, divinely-sanctioned beatings (disobedient women are to be beaten, according to Koran 4:34), the devaluation of inheritance rights and testimony, polygamy, and all the rest—has nothing to do with Islamic law or culture; it is merely a byproduct of “orientalism and the recent wars in the Middle East”—in other words, it is the West’s fault. This is Multiculturalism in its purest form.⁴²³

Recall the previous chapter’s argument that interreligious dialogue and a support of pluralism is a hallmark of liberal American Catholicism. Spencer is explicitly clear in his rejection of multiculturalism, which he argues blames “the West” for the “rampant and

⁴²³ Robert Spencer, “Is Multiculturalism Evil?” *Crisis*, November 8, 2011.

systemic oppression of Muslim women.” Imbued in this passage is the implication that rather than being a byproduct of Western interventions in Muslim majority countries, the problems in the Middle East are in fact the result of the practice of Islam. Spencer connects the treatment of Muslim women not only to the faults of Muslim men who practice Islam, and therefore see maltreatment of women as “divinely sanctioned,” to the liberalist value of multiculturalism. Here we see that he is differentiating himself and other conservative American Catholics not only from Islam and Muslim men, but also from liberal Catholics who appear to not only sanction this behavior but blame the West for the issues in the Middle East.

In a similar piece to Spencer’s, William Kilpatrick takes aim at “gender theorists,” who seek to ensure children are “indoctrinated with the latest gender fads as soon as they enter school.”⁴²⁴ writing that “one of the fashionable new theories is that traditional expressions of masculinity, such as roughhousing among boys, are ‘toxic’ and ought to be eliminated. But whatever the dangers posed to society by masculine aggression, a greater danger arises when men lack the instinct to resist aggression.”⁴²⁵ The instinct to resist aggression is one that should be embraced, within reason, per Kilpatrick, as this instinct is necessary to protect oneself and the nation. He argues that

If there ever was a time when males in Western societies needed to be unconfused about their gender, this is it. We’re surrounded by enemies and potential enemies who are unapologetic about their gender identity and are quite prepared to rule over those weaker cultures that prefer appeasement to confrontation. Islam, which is a hypermasculine religion, is the world’s fastest growing religion. Indeed its appeal to basic masculine psychology is one of the chief reasons for its success. In military-like summer camps across the Islamic world, young boys are taught who their

⁴²⁴ Kilpatrick, “Christianity’s Masculinity Crisis.”

⁴²⁵ William Kilpatrick, “Christianity’s Masculinity Crisis,” *Crisis*, February 8, 2019.

enemies are, and they are taught survival skills, hand-to-hand combat, and weapons use. Along with developing fighting skills, the boys also develop a sense of camaraderie and even brotherhood. And, because the training includes religious study, they often acquire a sense of transcendent purpose. Because this type of life—let’s call it “purpose-driven strife”—is highly appealing to many young men, the jihad doesn’t have a recruitment problem.⁴²⁶

The concern that Kilpatrick displays is multifaceted. First is a concern that Western Christian men are unclear about their gender roles, leaving them effeminate and weak, which exposes the United States to foreign threats. The foreign threats are, quite clearly, Muslim men. Second, Kilpatrick argues that the monolithic Islam instills an overtly masculine sense of manhood into Muslim men. The hypermasculinity, per Kilpatrick, is the reason that Islam has such a high conversion rate. The masculine activities— survival skills, hand-to-hand combat, and weapons use— are tied to religious practice, which leads to a communal sense of hypermasculinity as divinely sanctioned. This hypermasculinity of Muslim men combined with an effeminate Western manhood is a threat to the United States and Americanism. Here we see a Kilpatrick display an understanding of what proper American Catholic masculinity should look like: it should not resist aggression, but at the same time, American Catholic men should not be overtly masculine in the ways that Muslim men are. They must walk a fine balance, by clearly not behaving in a way that “gender theorists” approve of or in a way reminiscent of Muslim masculinity is inappropriate, undesirable, and dangerous to the nation. The anxiety displayed by Kilpatrick is not just due to the growth rate of Islam. Rather, the anxiety is that the hypermasculinity of Islam may in fact rule over “weaker cultures.” Kilpatrick continues,

⁴²⁶ Kilpatrick, “Christianity’s Masculinity Crisis.”

critiquing the “emasculatation” of Western society and the church. The feminization of Western men is linked to the hesitancy to level criticism at Islam and Muslims for fear of being condemned of Islamophobia:

To men of previous generations, such behavior would have seemed irresponsibly passive. And it seems so to many men and women today—particularly to parents who have families to raise and protect. They sense that the persecution of Christian communities and the abduction and enslavement of Christian girls out to evoke a stronger response than “Hush! You might offend them.” The Church is in trouble today not because it is perceived as too masculine, but because it is perceived as too feminine—that is, feminine in the pejorative sense of the word as used to described one who is too yielding, too submissive, too absorbed in frivolous pursuits, and too concerned with appearance over substance.⁴²⁷

The men of the Church today place fear of negativity over the masculine quality to protect their families. Of crucial importance, published in 2019, this article refers to the official Roman Catholic Church, during which time Pope Francis, a liberal Catholic theologian, led the Vatican. A direct critique of the liberal Catholic wing of the Church, Kilpatrick take issue with the feminized Church, one that is submissive and vain and places appearances of tolerance and pluralism ahead of the protection of Christian girls. Liberal men are also feminized, when they should be assertive, dominant, concerned with substance, and working towards the defense of the Catholic family and Western civilization. These attributes are masculine, while the masculine activities of Muslim men, as described above, are too masculine and cross a line of appropriate American Catholic male behavior.

Proper displays of masculinity are a requirement for proper Catholic practice, yet this type of masculinity needs to be modeled to young men and boys so that they are not

⁴²⁷ Kilpatrick, “Christianity’s Masculinity Crisis.”

taken in by overt displays of improper, uncatholic masculinities. Kilpatrick writes that while

Men still have a religious impulse and also a need to establish their masculinity, we can expect more conversions to Islam... Islam has a serious masculinity problem of its own, but on a superficial level it seems to fit with basic masculine psychology. Islam lacks a sense of Fatherhood of God and, as a result, it lacks the sense that masculine maturity has more to do with family and fatherhood than with conquests on the battlefield or in the bedroom. However, since many elements of Islam do mesh with a boy's or young man's immature conception of masculinity, it remains attractive to many.⁴²⁸

Catholic theology elevates men from an immature masculinity to one that has matured and focuses on things that, in Kilpatrick's calculation, really matter: family and fatherhood. While Islam promotes a masculinity that taps into "basic" masculine impulses, the leadership of God the Father figure is what separates the Muslim man from the American Catholic man. Akin to chapter one's discussion of Catholic immigrants as heathen, this construct of the immature masculine Muslim man functions in a similar way. Here Kilpatrick argues that Muslim men are tapping into primal, basic, almost animal-like basic instincts, while Catholic men have transcended from these primal needs and are able to control their heathenish impulses to focus on family rearing and leading a positive life that only responds to aggression when provoked, rather than focusing on "conquests on the battlefield of in the bedroom."

The proper displays of American Catholic masculinity, namely as protectors of the nation and its non-adult male inhabitants, is crucial for many conservative Catholic commentators. The American Catholic man must walk a tightrope of proper manhood:

⁴²⁸ Kilpatrick, "Christianity's Masculinity Crisis."

one cannot be too yielding to submissive but must be in control of one's emotions. He must protect women and children, yet he must not go on the offensive out-right. Proving one's proper masculinity in the form of responding to violent acts of aggression is a common litmus test for America men.⁴²⁹ This masculine litmus-test often comes in responses to violent crimes and terrorist attacks. Proving to be "man enough" in response to crisis is a quality desired by many white American men.⁴³⁰ Kilpatrick taps into this desire for masculinity by calling fellow Catholic men to reject the "feminized" Church and to stand up to the threats posed by Islam in the United States. Kilpatrick argues that "violence is part of the warp and woof of Islam itself," which makes the need to stand against Muslim men a pressing issue.⁴³¹ The American Catholic man's current status is a potential risk to national security and to women and children globally:

Right now, women and girls all over the world are being abused and often murdered in the name of Islam. Today, men in Western societies say nothing about the abuse because they are paralyzed by the fear of offending against multiculturalist dogmas. They lack the manly courage to stand up and speak out because they have been cowed by Islam on the one hand and by self-imposed sensitivity codes on the other.⁴³²

⁴²⁹ Jackson Katz notes that masculinity is a driving force of presidential elections. The demonstration of being "man enough" is key to garnering electoral support. He provides the example of Michael Dukakis' debate with George H. W. Bush in 1988. Dukakis, who did not win the election, was asked about favoring the death penalty if his wife were to be raped and murdered. Dukakis, Katz maintains, did not answer the right question. Responding with "there are better and more effective ways to deal with violent crime" Dukakis appeared diminutive and weak. What he *should* have answered, per Katz is, "Bernie, I would want to kill that man myself, but the question here is whether the death penalty is sound social policy. I don't believe it is a deterrent—and research confirms this. And what if we convicted the wrong guy?" See Jackson Katz, *Man Enough? Donald Trump, Hilary Clinton, and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity* (Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2016), 9-11.

⁴³⁰ Katz makes careful note that the masculinity in response to crisis is a characteristic of white manhood.

⁴³¹ William Kilpatrick, "Nothing to Do with Islam?" *National Catholic Register*, July 16, 2015. Of note, the headline image of this article is of six men in orange jumpsuits who are about to be executed kneeling in front of men dressed in all black, faces covered, holding knives to their throats. The implication of the image is that Muslim men are the executioners.

⁴³² Kilpatrick, *Christianity, Islam, and Atheism*, 175.

The fear of the feminization of the Western Catholic man poses a security risk not only to women and children, but to the West itself. Engaging in interreligious dialogue or “multiculturalist dogmas” is understood as a submissive action induced by fear. They lack “manly courage” and because of this lack of manly courage, Kilpatrick blames them for the harm of women and girls around the world, specifically harm committed by Muslim men. Kilpatrick draws a clear distinction between conservative American Catholic identity, liberal Catholic identity, and the monolithic Islamic identity.

Like Kilpatrick, Raymond de Souza is concerned with the overt masculinity of Muslims.⁴³³ In a May 2022 article titled “Islam and Toxic Masculinity” de Souza argues that because of the campaign against so-called toxic masculinity... a large number of men have gradually become effeminate. But this transformation happens only in the Christian West, never in the Islamic East.”⁴³⁴ The proliferation of effeminate Christian men is a concern for de Souza, like it is for Kilpatrick, and like his colleague, he lays blame on feminists who “fail to criticize Islam for being a centuries-long oppressor of women.”⁴³⁵ Again engaging with the trope of a monolithic Islam that assumes a strict, single interpretation and practice of the tradition, de Souza claims that feminists emasculate Christian men, when the real dangers lie with Muslim men. He argues, “Islam is thus far unlike Christianity, especially Catholicism, which has elevated women to their rightful place as companions of men in sacred matrimony in fulfillment of God’s plan for all

⁴³³ Though De Souza is Canadian, he is writing for a website based in the United States with a majority of American subscribers, making his article’s inclusion within this chapter necessary and logical.

⁴³⁴ Raymond de Souza, “Islam and Toxic Masculinity,” *Church Militant*, May 11, 2022.

⁴³⁵ de Souza.

humanity.”⁴³⁶ The oppression of women is a main concern for de Souza, who presents the mistreatment of women as a moral failing on behalf of all Muslim men. Not only are Muslim men treating Muslim women in negative ways, but in a discussion of sexual slavery, de Souza writes that “Over the centuries, thousands of Jewish and Christian women were subjected to this oppression. In Sura 33:50, Muhammed allowed his soldiers to rape and enslave women for this purpose. He himself impregnated at least one such unhappy woman. And it goes without saying that Muslim women are not allowed to have sex slaves. Toxic masculinity!”⁴³⁷ De Souza coopts the term “toxic masculinity” from liberal-leaning circles to demonstrate that Muslims, with whom liberal American Catholics desire dialogue, are in fact perpetrators of “toxic” masculinity, as opposed to conservative Catholics. The ideal Catholic masculinity that de Souza constructs through negative depictions of the “toxic” Muslim masculinity walks a fine line between the “feminized” Western man and the overt, hypermasculinity of Muslim men.

This is a sentiment again echoed by Kilpatrick in an article titled “The Multicultural Myth, Anti-Semitism, and Misogyny” where he writes “what else can we expect as Muslim migration into the West increases? One doesn’t have to be a Nostradamus to predict an increase in misogyny and a rise in the mistreatment of women.”⁴³⁸ Kilpatrick links this negative behavior to a general negative disposition among Muslims, Kilpatrick adds that the majority of Muslims are anti-Semitic, and thus these two bad behaviors serve as reasons

⁴³⁶ de Souza.

⁴³⁷ de Souza.

⁴³⁸ William Kilpatrick, “The Multicultural Myth, Anti-Semitism, and Misogyny,” *Catholic World Report*, March 19, 2017.

for why the immigration of peoples from Muslim majority countries should be feared. In an argument reminiscent of de Souza's and Spencer's above, Kilpatrick states that

The Koran says that "Men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other" (4: 34). The same passage authorizes husbands to "admonish them [their wives] and send them to beds apart and beat them" (4: 34). Moreover, an authoritative Hadith records that Muhammad gave his comrades permission to rape non-Muslim women captured in combat (Sahih Muslim, vol. 2, no. 3371). Since Islam considers itself to be in a permanent state of war with the non-Islamic world, this is often interpreted by some Muslim men to mean that non-Muslim women in non-Islamic countries can be raped with impunity. Should it come as a surprise, then, that as Muslim immigration into Europe has increased, so has the incidence of rape and other sexual assaults against girls and women? When arrested and brought before courts, the perpetrators are often puzzled. They don't see anything wrong with their behavior, and they argue that in their own countries, uncovered women are fair game. In similar fashion, their lawyers frequently trot out the "they-come-from-a-different-culture" defense. And it frequently works. Judges in Europe tend to give astonishingly light sentences to Muslims who are found guilty of rape.⁴³⁹

Citing the Qur'an and hadith, Kilpatrick argues that these verses and sayings of Muhammad are interpreted by "some" Muslim men to assault women "with impunity." Yet his stance indicates that he believes all Muslim men are a danger to women because of their religiously-sanctioned, dangerous sexuality, as indicated by his claim that "Islam considers itself to be in a permanent state of war" with non-Muslim majority countries. The issue for Kilpatrick, as it was with Fitzgerald, is that the men in question practice Islam rather than Westernized Christianity." He notes that when charged, the assailants do not understand their crimes, as in their "Islamic" culture, the assault of uncovered, Christian women is entirely permissible. Despite that "Pope Francis has acted as an advocate for Islam. He has portrayed it as a religion of peace, the moral equivalent of Catholicism,"

⁴³⁹ Kilpatrick, "The Multicultural Myth, Anti-Semitism, and Misogyny."

Kilpatrick argues that the above instances are proof that in fact, “Pope Francis... has left millions of Christians unprepared for the escalating threat that is now facing them.”⁴⁴⁰ Conservative American Catholic identity is constructed opposite two other identities: an assumed monolithic identity and that of the liberal Catholic identity. The commentators reinforce the need for non-Muslim women to have Catholic men (or, at the very least, non-Muslim men) as their protectors. Not only do they prescribe a type of protective patriarchy, but they also advance the notion that Muslim men are threats to women and children through fearmongering

Kilpatrick’s article, which takes to task Pope Francis for leaving “millions of Christians unprepared” for the threat of Islam due to his championing of interreligious dialogue and religious pluralism, and the aforementioned articles that also critique the liberal-leaning Vatican leadership, might seem at odds with a conservative Catholic identity that, in theory, supports the Catholic hierarchy and the Church’s authority on all matters. Recall from chapter one that in the post-Vatican II period, tensions circulated among the newly demarcated liberal and conservative theological positions in the Church. Where liberal Catholics felt the reforms of the Church were positive, many conservatives felt that the reforms themselves were “misconstrued by liberal extremists to allow for a total disregard of church doctrine in favor of individual choice.”⁴⁴¹ This was highlighted by the re-branding of the Church as a “people of God” rather than the traditional hierarchy that had been the status quo for centuries previously. Before the reforms of the Second

⁴⁴⁰ William Kilpatrick, “Pope Francis, Indifferentism, and Islamization,” *Crisis*, December 31, 2018.

⁴⁴¹ Manning, 376.

Vatican Council, open disagreements with the Church hierarchy were unheard of, particularly from the laity. Yet in the postconciliar period, a pluralism of theologies emerged. This, over time, opened the door for public dissent by the laity. While the laity may have disagreed with the Vatican behind closed doors (as conservatives did, recall, with the Church's decision on artificial birth control in 1968) in the decades that followed, publicly disagreeing with the Church was no longer taboo. In short, public conservative Catholic disagreements with and critiques of the liberal-leaning Vatican leadership are a manifestation of Catholic cultural changes in the post-Second Vatican Council period. These disagreements with liberal Catholics, even authoritative figures, function to construct a distinctly conservative American Catholic identity.

Underlying the intense theological distinctions that conservative Catholic commentators make between themselves and liberal Catholics is the American political distinction between liberals and conservatives. Before the 1960s, and the reformations of the Second Vatican Council, there existed a "Catholic vote," wherein the demographic of Catholics, writ large, could be counted on to vote as a unit and the Catholic laity represented a monolithic community to the rest of the country, due in large part to the tradition of laity deference to the clerical hierarchy.⁴⁴² However, since the mid-twentieth century, there no longer exists a Catholic vote.⁴⁴³ While the conservative/liberal theological distinction does not routinely map along the political conservative/liberal spectrum, conservative Catholics regularly identify with conservative politics, due to the perceived anti-Catholic bias of

⁴⁴² For a discussion of this transition from deference to the disbandment of the "Catholic vote" post-Vatican II, see Allitt *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics*.

⁴⁴³ Casanova, 203-204.

liberal politics.⁴⁴⁴ Take, for example, Rodney Pelletier’s article “Islam, Catholicism, and Modernism,” where he laments

Why do liberals and evil-minded anti-Catholic culturalists look the other way when it comes to the threat of Islamic extremism and terror? Doesn't it seem weird that the very people who decry Catholic Church teaching on the evil of sodomy are the virtual cheerleaders for a religion whose members maraud all over the Islamic world executing homosexuals? Same thing with women. Why would the hoi polloi of the liberal effete crowd feel so threatened by Catholic teaching when their supposedly worst fears are the day-to-day reality for hundreds of millions of actual women today in Islamic countries?⁴⁴⁵

Here we see two assumptions at work: first, liberals, both theological and political, blatantly ignore the dangers posed to Islamic terrorism. Not only that, they purposefully do so to the detriment of Catholicism. Second, Pelletier blatantly associates liberalism with a negative femininity. That is, liberal men are effeminate and *threatened* by Catholicism and its teachings. Pelletier makes a clear distinction between effeminate liberal Catholics and American political liberals and the propriety of conservative American Catholicism. Herein he claims that while liberals— both theological and political— are threatened by Catholics, they should truly be threatened and frightened by Muslims and their treatment of women. It is this thread of Muslim misbehavior that perfuses many articles produced by conservative Catholic commentators.

The Canaries in the Coal Mine

While conservative American Catholic commentators are careful to draw distinctions between themselves and liberal American Catholics who champion

⁴⁴⁴ Andrew Pieper has demonstrated that perceived anti-Catholic bias is directly correlated to choice of political party and this perceived bias frequently favors the republican party. See Andrew L. Pieper, “Loyalty Lose: Catholics, Liberals, and the Culture Wars,” *Journal of Media and Religion* 12, no. 3 (2013): 146.

⁴⁴⁵ Pelletier, “Islam, Catholicism, and Modernism.”

interreligious dialogue and pluralism, they also construct their identities as protectors of the nation by sounding the alarm against the immigration of Muslims into the United States. By focusing on the misdeeds of Muslim men across Europe, white conservative American Catholics use Europe as a warning of what could come to pass in the United States if measures to protect the nation and its inhabitants are not taken seriously. Simultaneously, by focusing on the atrocities occurring in Europe at the hands of Muslim men, white conservative American Catholic commentators draw the eye away from misdeeds among Catholics in the United States in order to maintain their status as virtuous, true Americans. This once again puts them at odds with liberal Catholics who do not fear monger immigration. As we will see below, where the anti-Muslim hostilities displayed by liberal American Catholics frequently fall under the categorization of soft Islamophobia or the usage of dog whistles, many of the articles and commentators rely on blatant racism coupled with dog whistle tropes like those of the monolithic Islam and the violent Muslim in order to establish their identities as protectors of Americanness.

In a 2018 article in *Crisis*, William Kilpatrick argues that the threat of immigration from Muslim majority countries to Europe serves as a warning for American Catholics of what could come to pass if immigration from Muslim majority countries continues in the United States. He writes that “one of the chief complaints about migration to Europe is that the migrants are bringing too much of their culture with them. Muslims, for example, come from cultures where women are, by Western standards, badly treated. Thus, it should be no great surprise that sexual assaults have increased markedly in Sweden, Germany, the U.K.,

and elsewhere.”⁴⁴⁶ Kilpatrick equates a constructed and monolithic Islamic culture with the mistreatment of women. It is specifically Islam that makes Muslim men so dangerous. Through this juxtaposition, he establishes Catholic identity and Muslim identity, specifically masculinities, as binary opposites. He writes “according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the effects of original sin are not pretty— “disobedience,” “lust,” “domination,” “corruption,” and “evil.” Ignorance of the fact that man has a wounded nature inclined to evil gives rise to serious errors in the area of education, politics, social action, and morals.”⁴⁴⁷ That Muslims do not adhere to Catholic theology that the crucifixion of Jesus Christ atoned for original sin leads to the negative qualities of disobedience, lust, domination, corruption, and evil. As Catholic men do believe in this theological stance, they are cleansed of these qualities.

As a demonstration that Muslims “participate in an immoral system,” Kilpatrick cites “Pakistani rape gangs in England” as a primary example for the immorality of Muslim men, whom he describes as “men who grew up in a culture with a low opinion of women, and an even lower opinion of non-Muslim women.”⁴⁴⁸ Two things of note happen in Kilpatrick’s discussion of the so-called rape gangs. First, Kilpatrick engages in the racialized, dog whistle trope that assumes racialized Muslim men are not “Western.” These rape gangs are juxtaposed against the “English teen victim,” and described in terms that clearly mark them as non-Western religious Others. Second, Kilpatrick distinguishes between two types of women: those presumed Muslim and non-Muslim, Christian women.

⁴⁴⁶ William Kilpatrick, “Are the Vast Majority of People Moderate?” *Crisis*, May 7, 2018.

⁴⁴⁷ Kilpatrick, “Are the Vast Majority of People Moderate?”

⁴⁴⁸ Kilpatrick, “Are the Vast Majority of People Moderate?”

The treatment of Muslim women, which is never described in positive terms, serves to warn American Catholics of the threat that Muslim men pose to non-Muslim, American women. The examples of Muslim men's danger to women are often at the expense of the abject Muslim woman. Abjection describes "those forces, practices, and things which are opposed to and unsettle the unconscious ego, the 'I.'"⁴⁴⁹ In other words, those who are considered abject bristle the normal social bounds of "us" and "them." Within conservative Catholic media spaces, Muslim women are oft described in abject ways that establish social and structural conditions for inclusion and exclusion. Abject Muslim women function in two ways for American Catholic authors: first, their mere existence and ways of being serve as physical challenges to proper Christian Americanism. Second, by describing their maltreatment at the hands of overtly masculine Muslim men, they become abject objects of warning. A degraded Muslim womanhood serves as an omen for Catholics as to the dangers of Islam, and Muslim men in the United States specifically.

Kilpatrick continues, arguing that the English Pakistani rape gangs should come as no surprise given that "in Pakistan, the rape of a Christian girl is hardly worth noticing, let alone reporting... That's because Christians in Pakistan are widely seen as 'untouchables,' and as less than human... Such incidents occur frequently. Christian girls are considered goods to be damaged at leisure. Abusing them is a right. According to the [Muslim] community's mentality it is not even a crime."⁴⁵⁰ Kilpatrick engages in the racialized trope of Muslim persecution of Christians to make his point, but he takes it a step further and

⁴⁴⁹ Imogen Tyler, "Against Abjection," *Feminist Theory* 10, no. 1 (2009): 79.

⁴⁵⁰ Kilpatrick, "Are the Vast Majority of People Moderate?"

emphasizes the dangers that Muslim men pose to Christian women and children by claiming that Muslims do not see Christian women and children as people. He weaponizes fear and presents Muslim men as callous sexual predators who still carry the stain of original sin. In this way, Muslim men are the direct opposite of Catholic men who were cleansed of the qualities of disobedience, lust, domination, corruption, and evil.

Writing for *Church Militant* in a similar article, the most conservative outlet analyzed, Stephen Wynne reported in 2018 that “in Denmark and Sweden, the number of rapes reported to police is skyrocketing, but few leaders openly acknowledge it.”⁴⁵¹ Directly linking an increase in violent sexual offenses to an influx of migrants from Muslim majority countries, Wynne reports that the timeline of violent sexual offenses increasing by nearly 200% “coincides with the government’s decision to open Denmark to migrants, flooding in from the Islamic world.”⁴⁵² Much like the articles from Spencer and Kilpatrick, the state of European countries serve as a warning to American Catholics about the dangers of Muslim men. Wynne supports his claims of violence committed by Muslim migrants by quoting a Swedish police officer who said

Here we go. This is what I've handled from Monday–Friday this week: rape, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, rape-assault and rape, extortion, blackmail, assault, violence against police, threats to police, drug crime, drugs, crime, felony, attempted murder, rape again, extortion again and ill-treatment.⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ Stephen Wynne, “Nearly 200% Increase in Rapes in Denmark Linked to Migrant Influx,” *Church Militant*, August 3, 2017.

⁴⁵² Wynne.

⁴⁵³ Peter Springare in Stephen Wynne, “Nearly 200% Increase in Rapes in Denmark Linked to Migrant Influx,” *Church Militant*, August 3, 2017.

The crimes listed are all violent offenses. According to Bureau of Justice Statistics, 79% of violent offenses are committed by men.⁴⁵⁴ While this data is specific to the United States, the fact that a vast majority of violent crimes are committed by men is globally generalizable. This indicates that the perpetrators of the crimes listed above are men. Specifically, Muslim men. Wynne continues to quote the police officer:

Countries representing all the crimes this week: Iraq, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Somalia, Syria again, Somalia, unknown, unknown country, Sweden. Half of the suspects, we can't be sure about because they don't have any valid papers. Which in itself usually means that they're lying about their nationality and identity.⁴⁵⁵

Barring one Swedish individual, the rest of the named perpetrators come from Muslim majority countries. The unsaid implication in the tweet Wynne cites and the driving impetus of his article is this: Muslim men are violent and a threat to Western, Christian societies. Wynne uses the countries of origin to highlight that the violent offenders in question are Muslim men, and notes that “such figures are provocative to politically correct elites across the West and among many of the world’s Muslims. They seek to silence criticism of Allah, Mohammad, and Islam.”⁴⁵⁶ Again we see that conservative Catholics find any perceived protection or defense of Muslims is fallacious and that liberal proponents of multiculturalism will not face the facts, or as Wynne writes, the figures. Wynne presents his article as being truthful in the face of an elite-controlled society that aims to preclude negative assessments of Muslims and Islam. Yet, for Wynne,

⁴⁵⁴ Rachel E. Morgan and Alexandra Thompson, *Criminal Victimization* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022).

⁴⁵⁵ Springare in Wynne.

⁴⁵⁶ Wynne.

this is dangerous, as evidenced by his frequent citation of violent crimes committed by assumed Muslim men. Writing about Turkish Muslim men in Germany, Kathrine Ewing argues that “the stigmatization of the Turkish Muslim man opens a space in the German national imaginary for a positive cultural identity as German that nevertheless remains implicit.”⁴⁵⁷ In a similar discursive process to that in Germany, by highlighting Muslim men’s negative behavior, Wynne and his fellow conservative commentators discretely separate Muslim manhood and American Catholic manhood as binary opposite identities. The threat of Muslim men to American ideals and the nation itself is evidenced by their misdeeds and is again reinforced through a stigmatization of them as deviant predators. While the negative attributes of Muslim masculinity are directly and blatantly linked to Islam, this simultaneously reinforces white conservative Catholics as positively American.

The plight of Europe as a warning to the United States is a common theme, particularly among the more conservative outlets, like *Church Militant*. This is more than evident in coverage of the 2015 New Year’s Eve celebrations in Germany, where a reported 1,200 women were sexually assaulted. The majority of the perpetrators were allegedly men of North African descent, which *Church Militant* assumed to mean Muslim. The majority of the perpetrators were allegedly men of North African descent, which *Church Militant* assumed to mean Muslim. Ryan Fitzgerald writing for *Church Militant* reported that “on December 31, 2015, one of the largest outbreaks of sexual violence in modern European history took place in Germany, and it was concentrated right in front of the most

⁴⁵⁷ Ewing, 224.

recognizable symbol of German Catholicism: the Cologne Cathedral.”⁴⁵⁸ Ryan goes on to argue that higher rates of Muslim immigrants correlates to a higher number of sexual assaults and that the cause of this correlation is religion.

The description of sexual assaults by Muslim men taking place in a non-Muslim majority country in front of the “most recognizable symbol of German Catholicism” is a clear comparison of Catholic virtues that respect women and alleged Islamic virtues that provide the right to rape and degrade women. The implication is clear: the presence of Islam within a country is a detriment to the safety of women, specifically non-Muslim, Western women. The article goes on to claim that “from 1997 to 2013 in Rotherham, South Yorkshire in England, Pakistani gangs sexually assaulted hundreds of native English girls, aged 12 and up,” with Fitzgerald claiming the gangs attacked more than 1,400 English girls.⁴⁵⁹ The problem in both instances, per Fitzgerald, is Muslim immigration to non-Muslim majority countries. He writes that “more and more evidence indicates that wherever Muslim migrants are invited into a country, rape rates increase dramatically.”⁴⁶⁰ The problem with Muslim immigration is a violent masculinity that is sanctioned by Islam. Fitzgerald writes that “the cause isn’t the race of the migrants; it’s the religion. A substantial number of the Muslim migrants to Europe... believe they have a divine right to the women of those with whom they’re at war. And since many Islamic scholars and Muslim leaders insist there’s a war at hand between Islam and the West (the infidels), a lot

⁴⁵⁸ Ryan Fitzgerald, “Muslims’ Alleged Right to Rape Non-Muslim Women,” *Church Militant*, March 6, 2016, <https://www.churchmilitant.com/index.php/news/article/muslims-alleged-right-to-rape-non-muslim-women>.

⁴⁵⁹ Fitzgerald, “Muslims’ Alleged Right to Rape Non-Muslim Women.”

⁴⁶⁰ Fitzgerald, “Muslims’ Alleged Right to Rape Non-Muslim Women.”

of devout Muslims behave as if native European women are effectively their spoils of war, i.e., their sex slaves.”⁴⁶¹ This establishes Islam and Muslims as a dangerous religious Other that is the binary opposite of the Christian West.

Once again using Europe as a canary in a coal mine, the American publication *Church Militant* warns against Muslim migration by highlighting the innate danger that Muslim men pose to “native European women”, and thus “native” American women. Much like the discussion of American identity in chapter two, here “native European women” calls upon a distinctly racialized understanding of who constitutes a European—namely, white Christians. By pinpointing Islam as the problem with migrants and sexual assault, Fitzgerald taps into a strategy seen throughout this chapter: conservative American Catholics casting religious minorities as the perpetrators of sexual abuse against white women and children in an attempt to differentiate between true Christian Americans and the distinctly unamerican. The narratives about vicious, sexually predacious Muslim men works to reinforce the whiteness of American Catholics while simultaneously othering Muslims in the United States. Despite sex abuse and sexual assault not being unique to religious minorities, “public outrage about religious sex abuse also belies how often sex abuse happens in every American community, and how seldom Americans intervene to protect or redress sex abuse.”⁴⁶² This tendency to draw the eye to the religious Other functions to loudly place blame for bad, seemingly unamerican behavior on the Other, while reinforcing one’s own identity as an American. Fitzgerald ends by saying “so when

⁴⁶¹ Fitzgerald, “Muslims’ Alleged Right to Rape Non-Muslim Women.”

⁴⁶² Goodwin, 1.

feminists complain, as they often do, of a ‘rape culture,’ they are onto something real, though unintentionally. Only, it isn’t ‘white male frat culture’ – it’s Wahabbist Sunni Islam, the very group for which leftist politics remains an outspoken champion.”⁴⁶³ Fitzgerald argues that white men (supposedly Catholic or Christian men, based on the religious positionality of *Church Militant*) are not dangers to women. Rather, Muslims pose the greatest risk to women, specifically feminists who are concerned with rape culture and issues surrounding violence against women.

On February 17, 2016, about six weeks after the New Year’s Eve attacks in Germany, *Church Militant* published the following:

A Polish magazine is calling out the Islamic migrant inundation of Europe, describing it as the “hell and suicide of Europe. The magazine wSieci shows a woman wrapped in the flag of the European Union (EU) being assaulted by men with darker skin, accompanied by the headline ‘The Islamic Rape of Europe.’ The picture and article are considered shocking since countries like Germany, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom are using measures some consider draconian to quash any dissent on the accommodation of Muslim men in Europe.”⁴⁶⁴

The imagery is disturbing, striking, and highly racialized. The cover photo depicts a white woman wearing a silken European Union flag, grasping on to it as numerous men’s hands with dark complexions grab at the flag, trying to rip it off of her while she appears to scream. The image is accompanied by the headline “The Islamic Rape of Europe.” The blatantly racist article and its accompanying imagery, however, are not “shocking” to *Church Militant* author Rodney Pelletier – instead, he mockingly notes that the images are

⁴⁶³ Fitzgerald, “Muslims’ Alleged Right to Rape Non-Muslim Women.”

⁴⁶⁴ Rodney Pelletier, “Polish Magazine: Islamic Migrants ‘Raping Europe,’” *Church Militant*, February 17, 2016, <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/polish-magazine-calls-out-islamic-migrants-as-raping-europe>.

only shocking to other European countries who are attempting to “quash any dissent on the accommodation of Muslim men in Europe.” Pelletier here taps into the tendency of conservative Catholics to distinguish themselves from liberal identities that seek to accommodate religious pluralism, as discussed above. In support of *wSieci*, which received backlash for blatantly racist and xenophobic imagery, *Church Militant* lists more instances of sexual abuse and assault on non-Muslim Europeans to convey the point that “Muslims carry a conflict with the Western world in itself as a part of its consciousness.”⁴⁶⁵ Recall chapter two’s discussion of Muslims inherently hating Western values due to the cultural incompatibility of Islam and the Christian West. This trope is at play here in Pelletier’s article and defense of the Polish magazine. Pelletier goes on to claim that video taken at a “refugee camp in Calais, France shows angry, rioting, military-aged Muslims” and that at this same camp “French aid workers are regularly harassed there and some have been raped” by Muslim men.⁴⁶⁶ He also notes that “in Austria, a Muslim man from Iraq raped a 10-year-old boy at a public pool, claiming he had a sexual emergency.”⁴⁶⁷ He then finally cites that “Germany has been plagued with problems, especially in the form of sexual violence” and links this to Muslim immigration.⁴⁶⁸ In all of these instances, Pelletier presents Muslim men as vicious sexual assailants who are unfit to live in Western Christian nations.

⁴⁶⁵ Pelletier, “Polish Magazine: Islamic Migrants ‘Raping Europe.’”

⁴⁶⁶ Pelletier, “Polish Magazine: Islamic Migrants ‘Raping Europe.’”

⁴⁶⁷ Pelletier, “Polish Magazine: Islamic Migrants ‘Raping Europe.’”

⁴⁶⁸ Pelletier, “Polish Magazine: Islamic Migrants ‘Raping Europe.’”

The threat that Muslim men pose to Western, non-Muslim women is to do with being *Muslim* rather than being men. William Kilpatrick warns American readers that in Germany, the UK, Ireland, and the Netherlands, “the European penchant to bend over backward to accommodate Muslim cultural differences” results in women being assaulted by Muslim men, yet the attackers receive light sentences, if any, because “the defense attorney will typically claim that his client didn’t know that rape is a crime, and the judge will typically give the defendant a sentence that is only a fraction of what a native European would receive.”⁴⁶⁹ This is the hallmark of cultural incompatibility, per Kilpatrick, and ignoring such incompatibility is willful, dangerous ignorance. Regarding a case in Hanover, Germany, where three Syrian refugees, referred to as “the Muslims,” attacked a German woman, Kilpatrick states that the defense attorney argued that the perpetrators did not know attacking the victim was wrong because of cultural differences. He argues that “the accused knows from his culture that conflicts are resolved with the knife... If one is insulted, one may stab. In severe cases, one may kill the person ... he [the accused] states that his behavior was not wrong according to the rules of his religion, and does not understand why he must be detained. In short, ‘my culture made me do it.’ To paraphrase from *West Side Story*: Gee, Officer Krupke, You gotta understand, It’s just our bringin’ up-ke, We was raised in another land.”⁴⁷⁰ A highly racialized passage, Kilpatrick indicates that ingrained cultural differences cause Muslim men to sexually assault women. As the article cites numerous cases of Muslim men with varying nationalities and ethnic backgrounds

⁴⁶⁹ Kilpatrick, “Islam: Who Are We to Judge?”

⁴⁷⁰ Kilpatrick, “Islam: Who Are We to Judge?”

assaulting European women and children, the presumed culture is the monolithic Islamic culture.

That judges give harsher sentences to “native Europeans” suggests that these offenders should know better than to rape women because of their native cultural sensibilities and morals, yet men from Islamic cultures do not know better than to attack women and children because that is part of their ingrained culture. This characterization of all Muslims as stagnant and essentialized effectively casts Muslims as threats to non-Muslims and to American identity. By highlighting the crimes of Muslim men committed against European women and children, conservative American Catholic commentators warn other Americans of the dangers of the immigration of religious minorities to the United States and establish themselves as protectors of the nation and its inhabitants. Yet, while they talk of the crimes of Muslims, they are also obfuscating the crimes and misdeeds of Catholic men.

What the Silence of Catholic Men Says about Catholic Identity

In the articles discussed above, as well as those to be discussed, the conservative Catholic commentators in question say much about the crimes of Muslim men, but they noticeably do not say anything about the crimes or misdeeds of Catholics. Notably missing is a discussion of the sex abuse crisis.⁴⁷¹ Circumventing any discussion of the sex abuse

⁴⁷¹ In 2002, *The Boston Globe* published a two-part investigative report that found that within the American Roman Catholic Church (and, eventually, the Roman Catholic Church globally), there was a consistent and calculated pattern of covering up the sexual abuse of children by clergy members. The *Globe*'s bombshell article led to numerous lawsuits against the Church and the realization that the number of victims within the United States alone numbered in the thousands. See Michael Rezendes, Matt Carroll, Sacha Pfeiffer, and Walter V. Robinson, “Church Allowed Abuse by Priest for Years,” *Boston Globe*, January 6, 2002.

scandal, the conservative Catholic authors in question engage in a discourse that emerged in the 1970s: following their acceptance into the white Christian American national imaginary, American Catholics and their stances on sexual moral ethics proliferated through the general American civic sphere in a way that saw American sexual morals begin to mold into a distinctly Catholic shape:

Allegations of sexual licentiousness, coercion, and corruption had made for particularly effective anti-Catholic rhetoric in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But by 1980, Roman Catholicism was co-constructing a notion of American values that painted religious outsiders as sexual threats to American families and domestic sovereignty, and transgressive sexuality as a threat to the soul of our nation.⁴⁷²

As seen in previous chapters, during the 20th century, American Catholics began to engage in discursive moves that separated them, newly white American Christians, from groups outside of this national identity. White Catholics not only sought to distinguish themselves from Catholics of Color, namely Black Catholics during the 20th century, but also from groups of religious Others. These discourses were reminiscent of the racialized tropes used to Other Catholics during previous centuries, yet Catholics then weaponized them once they achieved American cultural citizenship. One of these discourses is that of the sexually deviant religious Other. Conservative American Catholic commentators use this discursive move to paint Muslims as dangerous threats to American identity and national security while simultaneously holding on to their places as all-access members to American cultural citizenship and whiteness.

⁴⁷² Goodwin, 19.

One sticking point for many of the conservative commentators discussed herein is the fact that Islam and Catholicism are related through a shared deity and prophetic lineage. The close proximity between the two traditions bristles the feathers of the conservative Catholic authors who then feel compelled to outline exactly how Muslim masculinity is different from American Catholic masculinity. The issue of the proximate other is one that scholar of religion Jonathan Z. Smith argues causes the most problems for identity formation. He writes that

while difference or ‘otherness’ may be perceived as being either LIKE-US or NOT-LIKE-US, it becomes most problematic when it is TOO-MUCH-LIKE-US or when it claims to BE-US. It is here that the real urgency of the theories of the ‘other’ emerges, called forth not so much by requirement to place difference, but rather by an effort to situate ourselves. This, then, is not a matter of the ‘far’ but preeminently of the ‘near.’⁴⁷³

The close relationship between Islam and Catholicism strikes a nerve. Added to the fact that immigration from Muslim majority countries into the United States flourished in the wake of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the proximate religious other is not only theoretically near, but also physically. To distance themselves from Muslims, conservative Catholic commentators often discuss the crimes of not just Muslim men, but of *the* original Muslim man: the Prophet Muhammad. Kilpatrick argues that this immature Islamic manhood is due to the “paradigmatic” example set by Muhammad who has been described in numerous articles as a deviant.⁴⁷⁴ Kilpatrick writes that

⁴⁷³ Jonathan Z. Smith, “Differential Equations on Constructing the Other,” in *Relating Religion: Essays in the Study of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 245.

⁴⁷⁴ For a list of articles that describe Muhammad in negative terms, please see: William Kilpatrick, “The Multicultural Myth, Anti-Semitism, and Misogyny,” *Catholic World Report*, March 17, 2019; William Kilpatrick, “The Tyranny of Fashion,” *Catholic World Report*, February 19, 2020; William Kilpatrick, “Ex-

His behavior sets the standard for what is permissible and impermissible. If 99.9% of Muslims reject radical Islam, then, to be consistent, the same percentage would have to reject their own prophet. By 21st-century standards, Muhammad was a moral monster. We would expect a good person to reject much of his behavior. If a Muslim rejects Muhammad, however, he is considered a bad Muslim and an apostate — and is therefore deserving of death.⁴⁷⁵

Muhammad is the ideal Muslim man par exemplar, yet by Catholic standards is a “moral monster.” He is also the archetype on how not to behave for Catholic men. Muslim men, per Kilpatrick, must behave in a way reminiscent of Muhammad’s example, and therefore must behave in ways that are antithetical to proper American Catholic male behavior. Similarly, in his book *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*, Robert Spencer also highlights the Prophet Muhammad’s role of exemplary figure for Muslims as a negative. He argues that “the followers of Muhammad read his words and imitate his actions, which leads to an expression of faith quite different from Christians.”⁴⁷⁶ Muhammad is depicted as a violent raider, an assassin, murderer of non-combatants, a violent prophet of war, and a sexual deviant. He is contrasted to Jesus throughout the book, who is depicted as benevolent, kind, and defensive rather than offensive. Given that Jesus is upheld as exemplar for Christians, a point that Spencer is quick to note, the portrayal of Muslim men heeding the example of a violent prophet implies the violence and aggression of Muslim men.

Muslim Women Rip Veil off Islam’s Pervasive Oppression of Women,” *Turning Point*, May 3, 2020; Steven D. Greydanus, “Islam and Violence: Actually, It’s Complicated,” *National Catholic Register*, March 20, 2019; William Kilpatrick, “Is Sex Slavery Sanctioned in Islam?” *National Catholic Register*, September 8, 2015; Stephen Wynne, “Nearly 200% Increase in Rapes in Denmark Linked to Migrant Influx,” *Church Militant*, August 3, 2017; Raymond de Souza, “Islam and Toxic Masculinity,” *Church Militant*, May 11, 2022.

⁴⁷⁵ William Kilpatrick, “99% Nonsense: ‘Muslim’ Does Not Equal ‘Islam,’” *National Catholic Register*, March 3, 2015.

⁴⁷⁶ Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*, 4.

In a clear example of the juxtaposition of the dangerous and hypersexual Muslim man, and the moral Christian man, Robert Spencer details what he sees as the duplicitous views of homosexuality for Muslims:

[The] paradoxical attitude toward homosexuality runs through Islamic history. Even the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, was open about this proclivity. While the conquered city was still smoldering, Mehmed turned his mind away from wars and battles and demanded that the famously handsome teenage son of a Byzantine official, Lukas Notaras, be brought to him. Notaras went to the sultan and told him he would rather see his sons killed before his eyes than turned over to Mehmed's pleasures. Mehmed obliged him, then had Notaras himself beheaded.⁴⁷⁷

This passage is revealing in numerous ways. Spencer introduces Mehmed II in a way that highlights his exceptionalism as a ruler: he is the sultan who conquered the great city of Constantinople. However, he is still a Muslim and is open about his "proclivity" for homosexuality. This deviant behavior is so consuming that immediately after battle, Mehmed calls for a beautiful boy to be brought to him for his enjoyment. Comparatively, the Christian Byzantine father of the handsome teenager is so disturbed by the request that he would wish *death* upon his children rather than submit them to Mehmed's proclivities. Mehmed, the violent sexual deviant, then kills the sons and the father in retaliation. This passage demonstrates that Muslims are hypersexual to the point of violence. However, Christian Lukas Notaras is stoic in the face of this request and upholds his Christian morals to the point of death.

In a similar passage, Spencer cites Qur'anic descriptions of Paradise's virgins and tells his readers that "the Qur'an describes Paradise in terms that make it clear that it is a

⁴⁷⁷ Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*, 104-5.

place merely to indulge one's physical appetites... Paradise is guaranteed only to those who 'slay and are slain' for Allah."⁴⁷⁸ In contemporary American discourses, broadly, Muslim men are depicted as sexualized monsters.⁴⁷⁹ The monstrous sexual violence of Muslim men is frequently credited to an unsatisfied, voracious sexual appetite.⁴⁸⁰ This sexuality is fetishized further by Spencer who continues:

But Paradise would not be a bore for Muslims with different proclivities. Allah also promised his blessed that in paradise, "round about them will serve, devoted to them, young male servants handsome as pearls well-guarded" (Qur'an 52:24), "youths of perpetual freshness" (Qur'an 56:17): "if thou seest them, thou wouldst think them scattered pearls" (Qur'an 76:19).⁴⁸¹

The citation of these Qur'anic books with a tone that seeks to inspire shock and disgust denotes that these alternate "proclivities" are also monstrous. Yet, the role of the proximate Other is very much alive in this passage. Though Spencer depicts Mehmed's homosexuality as deviant and completely unbecoming of Catholic identity, there is a long and tenuous history of homosexuality and homoeroticism within the Catholic Church.⁴⁸² This is evident in the "paradox of the Catholic Jesus, the paradox created by an officially homophobic religion in which an all-male clergy sacrifices male flesh before images of God as an almost naked man."⁴⁸³ It is this paradox that leads to the Church's loud silence about widespread homosexuality amongst Catholic clergy members. This, coupled with the widespread sexual abuse of children— in France alone, an estimated 216,000 children

⁴⁷⁸ Spencer, 99.

⁴⁷⁹ Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," *Social Text* 72, no. 3 (2002): 119.

⁴⁸⁰ Puar and Rai, 124.

⁴⁸¹ Spencer, 103.

⁴⁸² James F. Keenan, *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

⁴⁸³ Keenan, 7.

(the vast majority boys) were abused by Catholic priests between 1950 and 2020—highlights the silence of Spencer on atrocities committed by Catholics.⁴⁸⁴ Drawing the eye away from the Catholic Church and towards the monstrous issues with Muslim men demonstrates the almost desperate attempts to maintain a pristine American identity at the expense of religious minorities.

The treatment of women at the hands of Muslim men is another arena where the obfuscation of Catholic positions on gender constructs a monstrous religious Other in the name of maintaining white American cultural identity. The hyper-focused attention given to Muslim women's veiling practices is a hallmark of anti-Muslim discourses, specifically among conservative Catholic commentators. Women are used as sites of contestation and negotiation. The debates surrounding what Western women—American women—wear in public spaces demarcates what contributors understand to be proper American-ness. Speaking of non-Muslim Western women who wear hijab in solidarity with Muslim women, Kilpatrick writes that

Women in the West who don the hijab for a day to declare their solidarity with Islam may discover that a day will come when they dare not go without it. We're in a culture war with Islam, and the hijab is not an insignificant part of it. You may see the hijab as a lifestyle choice, but many Islamists view it as a key strategy for Islamization. This is why several European countries have paced restrictions on wearing the hijab while enforcing outright bans on its cousins, the burqa and the niqab.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ “The Numbers: France’s Report on Church Sex Abuse of Children,” *Associated Press*, accessed September 11, 2023.

⁴⁸⁵ William Kilpatrick, “Hijab Jihad,” *Crisis Magazine*, May 6, 2019, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/2019/hijab-jihad>.

Veiling practices are not benign, nor do they fall under the purview of religious freedom for authors like Kilpatrick. Rather, veiling practices that deviate from Western Christian societal norms represent visible threats to American identity writ large. The veil is not a religious choice—it is a war strategy that Muslim men use to spread Islam throughout the globe. “The hijab is not just a fashion statement,” writes Kilpatrick.⁴⁸⁶ “It can also be a political statement—a way to establish a distinct identity while also establishing Islam in new neighborhoods and voting precincts as a powerful presence.”⁴⁸⁷ By choosing to veil, even in solidarity rather for religious reasons, women who veil are complicit in the spread of Islamist ideas throughout the West. This is a concern for Kilpatrick and is one that is shared by Robert Spencer, whose book *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* has an entire chapter titled “Islam Oppresses Women.” Under the subheading “The Great Islamic Cover-up,” Spencer argues that “in our own day, this covering has become the foremost symbol of the place of women in Islam.”⁴⁸⁸ The symbolic place of women is not a positive one, per Spencer and his contemporaries. More than just a symbol of patriarchy, it is a physical representation of the control of Muslim men over Muslim women. Spencer presents a case from Saudi Arabi wherein the *mutawa* (or the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice) prevented schoolgirls in Mecca in March of 2002 from leaving a burning school because they were not properly veiled. The fire resulted in 15 deaths. A tragedy to be sure, Spencer uses this case as an exemplar to

⁴⁸⁶ William Kilpatrick, “The Tyranny of Fashion,” *Catholic World Report*, February 19, 2020.

⁴⁸⁷ Kilpatrick, “The Tyranny of Fashion.”

⁴⁸⁸ Robert Spencer, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2005), 68.

demonstrate the dangers of veiling and the dangers of Muslim men. Positioned as the religious and cultural opposite to Islam, Christianity, namely Catholicism, is antithetical to the violence and subjugation of the veil. American Catholic women need not worry about their safety if Islam is kept at bay. The hijab is deployed rhetorically as both a symbol of Muslim women's oppression by Muslim men *and* as a symbol of the incompatibility of Islam with the West.⁴⁸⁹

Discourses on veiling repeat time and again the trope of Muslim women as victims and perpetuate the stigmatization that they are violently oppressed by Muslim men. This trope constructs an idea of Muslim masculinity that is the antithesis of proper Western, Catholic male behavior. Many conservative Catholic thinkers argue that the veil represents the downfall of Western civilization at the hands of Muslims. Rather than being an empowering choice for women, veiling is a physical, visual threat to the national imaginary enjoyed by Kilpatrick and his contemporaries.⁴⁹⁰ "The burqa, in short, is not just a personal fashion preference; rather, it's one way that fundamentalist Muslims have of staking a territorial claim," writes Kilpatrick. "Where burqas abound, sharia, no-go-zones, and virtue patrols soon follow. And non-Muslims begin to move out. So the burqa is far more than a statement of modesty. It's a statement on the part of the Muslim community that these streets belong to us. Thus, the burqa can become an effective weapon for advancing Islamic law and culture."⁴⁹¹ Rather, this discourse is contingent on the construction of the abject,

⁴⁸⁹ Juliane Hammer, "(Muslim) Women's Bodies, Islamophobia, and American Politics," *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 42, no. 1 (February 2013): 33.

⁴⁹⁰ Kilpatrick goes as far to compare the wearing of the burqa to intimidation tactics weaponized by the Ku Klux Klan.

⁴⁹¹ Kilpatrick, "The Burqa, the Baker, and the Bishops."

unable to choose Muslim woman who fails to see that veiling is a tactic of Islamist men who weaponize it to spread Islamic ideals throughout the non-Muslim world

Despite the conservative push that insists veiling is a sign of women's submission and oppression and best, and a national security threat that signals the decline of Western Christendom at worst, none of the aforementioned articles make note of the tradition of women religious veiling or wearing habits. Before the Second Vatican Council, wearing of the habit was prescribed for women religious within the Roman Catholic Church. Yet one of the revolutionary changes of the synod included "challenging the culture of quasi-cloistered seclusion that characterized Catholic religious orders of consecrated women in the 1950s," specifically in the American context.⁴⁹² Shedding the obligatory habit and moving beyond cloistered seclusion for women religious, *and* removing the obligation for lay women to veil during Mass, represented a symbolic step into the American Christian mainstream and "fundamentally altered the identity of women religious, making it possible for them to think of themselves as competent professionals, not just nameless servants in the Church."⁴⁹³

While the reforms of Vatican II, namely the shift of the role of women within the church, may explain the hesitancy (if not outright disdain) many American Catholics have for veiling and the role of women, the conservative Catholic longing for pre-Vatican II reforms, as discussed in chapter one, does not. In the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church, a push from traditionalist conservative Catholics to practice the Latin Mass in its

⁴⁹² Koehlinger, 24.

⁴⁹³ Koehlinger, 29-34.

pre-synodal form has been a point of contention between traditionalist conservatives and non-conservative clergy and laity, including the Vatican.⁴⁹⁴ One of the practices experiencing a resurgence alongside that of the of the Latin mass women, particularly younger women, wearing a chapel veil during the religious proceedings.⁴⁹⁵ A hotly debated topic, this is largely a practice of conservative Catholic women.⁴⁹⁶ Articles discussing the choice to wear a chapel veil note that the choice to veil during Mass is no longer an obligation, but rather a choice and indicates “whether a woman’s spiritual life leads her to believe she is or is not being called to express her reverence and devotion through use of

⁴⁹⁴ Michael Cuneo articulates quite clearly that traditionalist conservative Catholics are a distinct subset of conservative Catholics. Comprised of clerics and laity, traditionalist conservatives believe “the crisis currently confronting Roman Catholicism, they claim, runs far deeper than incompetent bishops, self-aggrandizing theologians, and philandering clergy. Infidelity and heresy, in their view, have invaded the highest reaches of the Church’s authority structure, including the papacy itself, and only in small bands of the truly faithful is authentic Catholicism still kept alive. Most of these Catholics reject both the Second Vatican Council and the new Mass, and most regard the conservative Catholics who were the subject of the previous two chapters as not much better (and in some respects as far more dangerous) than theological liberals.” In the 21st century, specifically during the papacy of Francis, traditionalist conservatives have been engaged in what some call “liturgical wars” over the role of the Latin mass. In 2007, Pope Benedict issued *Summorum Pontificum*, which decreed that in certain instances, Latin mass may be performed. This was a huge win for traditionalists conservatives who felt that Pope Benedict XVI validated their rights to practice in the most orthodox manner. Yet in 2021, Pope Francis revoked many of the instances where Latin Mass could be practiced, much to the dismay (and ire) of traditionalists. *Church Militant*, a publication historically critical of the liberal Bishop of Rome, reported that a Vatican whistleblower stated that Francis was “Abusing the apostolic authority and the power of the Holy Keys for a purpose opposed to that for which they were instituted by the Lord” and that this “represents an unheard-of offense against the Majesty of God and a sin for which he will have to answer to the One whose vicar he is.” Then, in 2023, Pope Francis issued *Traditionis Custodes*, which further restricted the Latin Mass and abrogated previous papal documents that conflicted with the latest, including that of Benedict. *Church Militant* accused the pope of “marginalizing trads,” operating a “charade” at the Vatican, and of promoting a “Protestant” form of Catholicism. Part of the traditionalist push for Latin Mass also includes the obligation for women to veil. See Cuneo, *The Smoke of Satan*; Pope Benedict XVI, *Summorum Pontificum*, July 8, 2007; Pope Francis, *Traditionis Custodes*, 2023; Jules Gomes, “Francis Cancels Benedict’s Latin Mass Decree,” *Church Militant*, July 16, 2021; Jules Gomes, 2023; Brain Saint-Paul, “Some of Us Are Owed an Apology: Traditionalists and the Latin Mass,” *Crisis*, June 11, 2008.

⁴⁹⁵ Emma Cieslik, “Why a New Generation of Catholic Women Is Wearing Chapel Veils,” *Religion and Politics*, February 8, 2022.

⁴⁹⁶ Jodi Marlin reports that this choice is contentious due to the former obligation of the practice. Catholic women who remember the pre-Second Vatican Council era associate veiling with a Church “that took little interest in inviting women to participate in the life and leadership of the Church.” See Jodi Marlin, “Voluntary use of Pre-Vatican II Veil Obligation Growing,” *Today’s Catholic*, May 1, 2018.

the chapel veil is a deeply personal and individual question.”⁴⁹⁷ Similarly, an article published by *Church Militant* notes argues that

According to St. Paul, women are to use the veil for the glory of God and to keep the focus on the worship of God. The veil is an external sign of their unique submission to God’s authority and their personal respect for the Presence of Our Lord in the the [sic] tabernacle. The abandonment of the veil has contributed to the loss of reverence we owe to our Blessed Lord. This rebellion has led Catholics to disregard what is holy. It's one of the devil's tactics to infiltrate and destroy that which appears at first glance to be little or petty so as to eliminate reverence for Christ in the Tabernacle.⁴⁹⁸

Unlike article coverage during the same time period on *Church Militant* regarding Muslim women’s veiling choices, in this article, the chapel veil is presented as a religiously significant choice made by Catholic women to indicate their “submission to God’s authority.” The lack of modern prescription for the chapel veil is directly linked to a societal decline and a lack of respect for God. Catholic women’s veiling is her own decision, whereas Muslim women’s veiling is distinctly a byproduct of immature, aggressive Muslim masculinity that seeks to control women through their clothing choices and to distinguish among Muslim and non-Muslim women. In an article written for *Crisis* wherein she describes her decision to wear a chapel veil, Mary Cuff describes her husband’s reaction to her admission that she wanted to begin veiling during Mass: “The previous week, while cooking dinner for my then-fiancé, I had broken down crying and told him that I really wanted to follow that old tradition. My fiancé (now husband) was bewildered why this would make me cry. But he told me that if I wanted to, then I should go out and get one

⁴⁹⁷ Marlin.

⁴⁹⁸ Merisela Olaizola, “A Woman’s Glory,” *Church Militant*, July 12, 2015.

and do it. I could always take it off.”⁴⁹⁹ Compared to the Muslim men discussed in articles above, Cuff’s husband is supportive of her choice and reminds her that she can remove the veil if she finds it does not suit her. In contrast, Muslim women’s veiling is described as obligatory to the point that not veiling threatens bodily harm. Cuff’s husband has the proper, Catholic male reaction: supportive of his wife, not demanding.

The disconnect between how Muslim men and the abject Muslim woman are presented are manifestations of what Charles Long names as the signification and silencing of the Other at the hand of Western powers. The silence of Muslim men and women coupled with the present voices of Catholic men and women in these articles denotes an impulse to speak on behalf of the othered and construct an identity against this spoken-for minority. Yet, as Long notes, what is not said, the silence of the signified, is “internal to Western culture itself,” and indicates that much of *authentic* Western, or in this case, conservative Catholic, identity can be found in the silences of their work. In other words, what Catholics ascribe to Muslims in the United States without ascribing to themselves tells us much about conservative Catholic identity and anxieties. In this way, it becomes evident that in not mentioning issues like veiling within the Church and the sex abuse crisis, the desire to castigate the religious Other as perpetrators of violence rather than one’s own group maintains conservative Catholic identity.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter analyzed the gendered aspects of conservative Catholic discourses on Muslims in the United States and, surprisingly, Europe. It argued that conservative

⁴⁹⁹ Mary Cuff, “Re-Asserting a Feminine Tradition,” *Crisis*, January 26, 2018.

American Catholic commentators establish and maintain their identities as part of the white American Christian cultural identity through an intensive othering of Muslims and a denigration of an assumed (and monolithic) Muslim masculinity. Much like the othering of Catholics during the 19th and 20th centuries, as discussed in chapter one, Muslim men are demonized as vicious and anti-American threats to the nation and its citizens. Drawing on the dog whistle tropes analyzed in the previous chapters, this chapter argued that by presenting Muslims as dangerous threats to women, children, and Christian nations, white conservative American Catholic men establish themselves as protectors of women, children, and the United States itself. This discursive move works to intertwine Catholic manhood with American identity. In the wake of the Catholic Church's sex abuse crisis, by focusing on the assumed civic sins of Muslim men in the United States and Europe, conservative American Catholic commentators draw the eye of the American public away from the Catholic Church and, therefore, maintain their identities as American. Simultaneously, this chapter argued that while doing so, conservative American Catholics also establish conservative Catholic identity as totally distinct from liberal American Catholic identity through a condemnation of interreligious dialogue and religious pluralism. Tied to conceptions of masculinity, nationhood, and notions of proper Catholic decorum, conservative Catholic commentators juxtapose themselves— the *true* Americans— against “effeminate” liberal Catholics who do not condemn the religious Other and rather choose to engage with the religious Other. This condemnation of dialogue and pluralism is a hallmark of conservative American Catholicism in comparison to their liberal American Catholic counterparts.

Conclusion

During the summer of 2020, I was at a loss. My previous dissertation project— an in-person, ethnographic analysis of Muslim women’s space making practices— was no longer feasible. I was home in Southern Missouri visiting family when one of my family members asked me about my doctoral program. They said to me “well, why haven’t Muslims apologized for 9/11?” I responded with the usual “what are you talking about? There were plenty of statements in the wake of 9/11 from Muslim communities condemning the actions. Were you seeking out apologies? Why do you think all Muslims have to apologize for 9/11? I haven’t heard an apology from your parish about the sex abuse crisis?” The back and forth was one with which I was familiar. “Well,” they said, “that’s just different, not all priests are like that. It’s a sad thing, but it’s certainly not reflective of all Catholics!”

This conversation has played over in my mind repeatedly since that day. There was such a disconnect in that conversation, and it’s one I’d seen in plenty of spaces before, particularly in online spaces. The insistence that “we,” Catholics, were nuanced, multifaceted, diverse, and (regrettably) sometimes rotten, while “they,” Muslims were always surreptitious, always owing “us” something, and always on the outside is a common rhetoric. The assumption that “we” are different, and “we” know that “not all priests” are capable of committing heinous acts while the same allowance is not afforded to the religious Other was so casually worked into conversation. It is this essentializing and lack of acknowledgement for the multiplicities of the Other that is at the heart of what is written here. Whenever I thought about this conversation, I started researching in Catholic spaces

how Muslims in the United States and Islam were talked about. The previous pages are the result of my perseverance.

Through an analysis of Catholic media outlet publications about Muslims and Islam in the United States, this project argued that white American Catholics deploy dog whistle tropes about Muslims in the United States to construct their identities as truly American and truly Catholic, while simultaneously situating Muslims in the United States as incapable of being fully American. This project is historically situated, and chapter one explores how Catholics of Anglo-Saxon descent transformed from a racialized, ethnic Other in the 18th and 19th centuries into fully white American Christians, part and parcel of American cultural identity by the mid-20th century. This transformation was not quick. As we saw, anti-Catholicism flourished in the United States, as Catholics were demonized as unamerican traitors by groups like the KKK, the Know Nothings, and, crucially, by ordinary people. Yet this transformation is foundational to understanding 21st century Catholic thought on identity, race, and American citizenship. Concurrently, this chapter explored the firm emergence of theologically conservative and theologically liberal branches of Catholicism, particularly within the United States. I demonstrated that in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the theological stances that differentiated conservatives and liberals within the American Roman Catholic Church continue to influence the stances each of these groups takes regarding Muslims in the United States.

This analysis continued into my second chapter, “Racialized Muslims and White American Catholics,” where I argued that newly “white” and “American” Catholics in the

United States produce and deploy racialized rhetoric against Muslims in the United States that is reminiscent of anti-Catholic prejudice in previous centuries. This chapter demonstrated that a driving force of the anti-Muslim hostilities among American Catholics in the United States can be traced to Catholic news media sites and Catholic anti-Muslim activists like Robert Spencer and William Kilpatrick. While, as we saw, Catholic media sources across the conservative/liberal theological spectrum utilize dog whistle tropes like the idea of the global Muslim, the terrorist Muslim, and assumed Muslim hatred of American ideals like religious freedom, conservative media outlets tend to use more blatantly discriminatory and racist language while liberal outlets employ more coded and subtle forms of dog whistles. The language used to discuss Muslims in the United States racializes them as anti-American, violent, anti-democratic, and anti-Christian.

Chapters three and four examined the specific ways liberal media sources and conservative media sources, respectively, discuss Islam and Muslims in the United States. Chapter three, “Interreligious Dialogue and the Spirit of Vatican II,” took us back to the Second Vatican Council and the most pertinent document to emerge regarding interreligious dialogue: *Nostra Aetate*. After demonstrating the legacy of *Nostra Aetate* in liberal American Catholic thought about the religious Other, specifically Muslims in the United States, this chapter hinged on a two-part argument. First, it demonstrated that through what I call a “theology of interreligious dialogue,” liberal American Catholics legitimize dialogue as a means of practicing a proper American Catholicism. Yet, the theology of interreligious dialogue focuses on advancing one’s own Catholicism and strengthening a relationship with God rather than on an equal-footed conversation with

Muslims in the United States. The need for dialogue as a means of engaging in a well-rounded Catholic practice is legitimized through the use of institutional authorities within the Roman Catholic Church, like the Vatican, papal decrees, and statements by the USCCB.

Finally, chapter four, “Conservative Catholics: Protecting Women, the Nation, and Their Americanness,” focused on conservative Catholic discourses on Muslims in the United States and the gendered nature of these conversations and publications. Examining articles in conservative-leaning publications, this chapter demonstrated that the language and rhetoric used to discuss Muslim men in fact constructed the ideal Catholic man as the Muslim man’s opposite through an intensive, and highly racialized, process of Othering. Where the Muslim man is aggressive, violent, hypersexual, and dangerous, the Catholic man is a protector of the nation and its inhabitants, and is, therefore, a true American. Simultaneously, conservative Catholics distinguish themselves from their liberal coreligionists through a condemnation of pluralism and interreligious dialogue.

Examining discourses of the Other in Catholic media sources matters. There are an estimated 51 million Catholics in the United States, with nearly 60% of those 51 million being white, making Catholicism the single largest religious denomination in the US. In the twenty-first century, Catholics do not vote uniformly and are almost equally divided among liberal and conservative political parties, making US Catholic perspectives a fruitful lens through which to look at larger American cultural rhetoric.⁵⁰⁰ They are also quite evenly distributed across the United States, with about a quarter of the population in each

⁵⁰⁰ See José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* and Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).

major quarter of the country. Due to the demographic spread of white American Catholics, focusing on their debates about Islam and Muslims in the United States adds a necessary viewpoint to the study of American Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hostilities.⁵⁰¹ These conversations among white American Catholics are taking place at a time when white middle- and upper-class Catholics are now part of the mainstream American Christian establishment, and they participate frequently in public discourses on Islam in the United States. Not only are they participating in public discourses, but they are also participating in these conversations in Catholic-specific circles and on Catholic platforms, making a focus on Catholics rather than Christians writ-large an important line of analysis. It is my hope that this project's attention to Catholic discourses on Muslims and Islam in the United States adds a necessary, but previously lacking, dimension to the study of anti-Muslim hostilities and the racialization of Islam in the United States.

One of the key takeaways from this dissertation is that how we talk about people, how we talk about the Other, is not benign. This project laid bare that rhetorical devices, coded language, and even blatant discrimination, are produced and reproduced across media platforms. In turn, individuals take in these dog whistle tropes and the reproduce and disseminate them themselves. As discussed in chapter two, very frequently consumers of Catholic media are not seeking out specific articles dedicated to Islam. Rather, they are reading articles that appear on their feeds, on their homepages, and in their inboxes. This makes attention to language choice critical for understanding how the racialization of Muslims and the othering of Islam in the United States functions and circulates. Further

⁵⁰¹ “7 Facts about American Catholics,” *Pew Research Center*, October 10, 2018.

analysis of this topic could potentially investigate social media usage, article sharing, and comments sections from articles and social media postings. Exploring how Catholics deploy the previously discussed dog whistle racialization tropes in spaces that are not exclusively Catholic could prove a fruitful line of inquiry. How are both Catholic and Evangelical anti-Muslim actors and groups joining forces to perpetuate negative stereotypes of Muslims? Would this be akin, in some way, to the merging of Catholic and Protestant anti-abortion activists in the 1970s? Other lines of inquiry include exploring how the changing demographic landscape of Catholicism in the United States impacts opinions on immigration and citizenship writ large.

This project largely dealt with the racialized Muslim in the United States and the imagined, racialized, essentialized version of Islam that exists in the imaginaries of my interlocutors. However, as was highlighted throughout this project, Black Muslims in the United States are often excluded from this Catholic-constructed category of “Muslim.” How, I wonder, do Black Muslims challenge the constructed category of Muslim for white American Catholics and, consequently, their own conceptions of citizenship, race, and belonging? How do the experiences of Black Muslims in the United States complicate the narrative surrounding American identity? Relatedly, Tisa Wenger argues that during the twentieth century, white American Catholics positioned themselves to align with white Protestant majorities on political and social issues and did so by positioning themselves against other non-majority groups, like Black Americans, including Black Catholics.⁵⁰² How do the experiences of Black Catholics in the church, as well as the experiences of

⁵⁰² Wenger, *Religious Freedom*, 39.

Latino/a Catholics within the Church complicate white Catholic narratives of Catholic identity and Americanness?

Namira Islam begins her article “Soft Islamophobia” with a vignette about her participation in a seminar designed to discuss combating anti-Muslim hate. She details how “despite organizers choosing to center Muslims, the agenda included no time for any of the daily prayers and there was no space designated for prayer for the Muslim attendees.”⁵⁰³ An examination of interreligious community events— including scheduling, programming, locations, speakers, etc.— hosted by Catholic institutions or by non-Muslim institutions could serve as an entry point into the little discussed phenomenon of soft Islamophobia, particularly in interreligious spaces.

A final thread that ran throughout this project that was not discussed: many of my digital interlocutors used examples from Europe as either signs of warning to the dangers of pluralism (ala William Kilpatrick and *Church Militant*) or as exemplars for how best to function in an interfaith setting. The anchoring force of Europe in the imaginaries of American Catholics speaks to a transatlantic connection to the continent, specifically Italy, as the home of Catholicism. Peter R. D’Agostino argues in *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* that Catholicism in the United States during the 20th century, was not a function of ethnicity, but rather of a transnational institution. It is the relationship Catholics have with Rome that unites the Church— liberals and conservatives look to the papacy for guidance and authority, even when they question it. How then, I wonder, does the transnational pull of the Vatican

⁵⁰³ Islam.

function in American Catholic identity creation in the face of hyper-polarized views on race and immigration in the 21st century? How does Europe function in the imaginaries of American Catholics as the home of Catholicism and how does immigration to traditionally Catholic-majority European countries serve as either a dire warning *or* as an attainable, positive goal of pluralism?

In the end, this project is one that analyzes how the words we use, the words we write and share, construct our identities. In this case, I examined how American Catholics establish their identities as American and Catholic vis-à-vis a racialization of the Other on Catholic media sites. As I hope I have made clear, this identity formation and the intergroup relations between American Catholic and their approaches to Muslims in the United States cannot be understood without taking into account the wider social contexts in which these discourses arose.

Bibliography

- Abdullah, Zain. "American Muslims in the Contemporary World: 1965 to the Present." In *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*, edited by Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Aglialoro, Todd M. "Your Handy Guide to Celebrity Pundits." *Crisis*, May 2003.
- Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Alexander, Scott C. "Anti-Catholicism, Islamophobia, and White Supremacy in the United States." In *Overcoming Orientalism: Essays in Honor of John L. Esposito*, edited by Tamara Soon. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Allen, Jr., John L. "Cardinal Pell on Islam and on Translations." *National Catholic Reporter*, June 10, 2006.
- . "Fall Out from Benedict's Comments on Islam." *National Catholic Reporter*, September 22, 2006,
- . *The Global War on Christians: Dispatches from the Front lines of Anti-Christian Persecution*. New York: Image, 2016.
- . "Interview with Cardinal Schola on Christian/Muslim Relations." *National Catholic Reporter*, June 23, 2010.
- . "NY School at Eye of Storm over Islam, Terrorism, and Church/State Relations." *National Catholic Reporter*, August 27, 2007.
- . "Theological Dialogue with Islam 'Impossible,' Top Jesuit Says." *National Catholic Reporter*, December 5, 2007.
- . "Vatican Press Conference for Ramadan a First." *National Catholic Reporter*, October 18, 2006.
- Allitt, Patrick. *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- Anderson, R. Bentley. *Black, White, and Catholic: New Orleans Interracialism, 1947-1956*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005. s

- Archbold, Pat. "Islam and Dialogue: What Is the Point?" *National Catholic Register*, March 27, 2013.
- Ashley, Benedict M. "The Loss of Theological Unity: Pluralism, Thomism, and Catholic Morality." In *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America*, edited by Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby, 63-87. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Aziz, Sahar. *The Racial Muslim: When Racism Quashes Religious Freedom*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2022.
- Bacevich, Andrew. "The Islamic Roots of Democratic Pluralism and the Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria." *First Things*, April 2002.
- Bail, Chris. *Terrified: How Anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations Became Mainstream*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Baker, Kelley J. *The Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK's Appeal to Protestant Americans, 1915-1930*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011.
- Bellah, Robert. "The New American Empire." *Commonweal*, October 25, 2002.
- Blanton, Dana. "Fox News Poll: Views on (Trump's) Proposed Ban on Non-U.S. Muslims." *Fox News*, July 10, 2017
- Blanton, Trey. "Child Bride Goes Home." *Church Militant*, December 29, 2021.
- . "Christian Girls Raped by Muslims." *Church Militant*, July 31, 2020. <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/christian-girls-raped-by-muslims>.
- . "Oklahoma Partners with Terrorists." *Church Militant*, July 29, 2021.
- Beydoun, Khaled A. *American Islamophobia: Understanding the Roots and Rise of Fear*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018.
- "Bishop-Chairmen Respond to Anti-Muslim Prejudice." *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, accessed June 9, 2023.
- Boone, Joseph Allen. *The Homoerotics of Orientalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

- Bonner, Jeremy, Christopher D. Denny, and Mary Beth Fraser Connolly, eds. *Empowering the People of God: Catholic Action before and after Vatican II*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.
- Bottum, Joseph. "What Violence is For." *First Things*, December 2001.
- "Britain's Worst Grooming Scandal: 1,000 Girls Beaten, Raped, Pimped over 40 Years." *Church Militant*, March 11, 2018.
- Brown, Wendy. "Civilizational Delusions: Secularism, Tolerance, Equality." *Theory & Event* 15, no. 2 (2012).
- Buckley, Jr., William F, and William Clancy. "The Catholic in the Modern View." *Commonweal*, December 16, 1960.
- Bynum, Caroline Walker. *Holy Feast, Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Casanova, José. "The Politics of Nativism: Islam in Europe, Catholicism in the United States." *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 38, no. 4-5 (May/June 2012): 485-495.
- . *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Carey, Anita. "Boko Haram Kidnaps More Christian Girls." *Church Militant*, April 5, 2017. <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/boko-haram-kidnaps-more-christian-girls>.
- . "Dutch Children Forced to Submit to Islam." *Church Militant*, July 24, 2018.
- . "MI School District Offers Muslim Indoctrination for Teachers, Funded by TaxPayers." *Church Militant*, August 22, 2019.
- Carey, Patrick W. "Hecker, Isaac Thomas (18 December 1819-22 December 1888)." *American National Biography*, February 2000.
- "Catholic Schools Rule Out Islam for Religious Studies: Muslim Leaders Hit Back." *Church Militant*, November 9, 2015.
- Celock, John. "The Soul and September 11." *Busted Halo*, September 13, 2006.
- "Central African Republic Bishops: Christians Subject to Pillage, Rape." *National Catholic Reporter*, accessed September 1, 2022.

- Chittister, Joan. "But Is That What's Really Going on Here?" *National Catholic Reporter*, September 15, 2006.
- . "Freedom of Religion Has Its Own Demands." *National Catholic Reporter*, January 23, 2007. <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/where-i-stand/freedom-religion-has-its-own-demands>.
- . "Mistaken Identity— Or No Real Identity at All?" *National Catholic Reporter*, June 23, 2006.
- . "Our Childhood Is Killed in Iraq." *National Catholic Reporter*, April 10, 2006.
- . "Religion in a Different Voice; Politics of a Different Tone." *National Catholic Reporter*, May 29, 2006.
- . "Working for Gender Justice Saves Lives." *National Catholic Reporter*, April 26, 2010. <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/where-i-stand/working-gender-justice-saves-lives>.
- "Churches in Sri Lanka Closed for Second Week in Fear of New Attacks." *America*, May 7, 2019.
- Cieslik, Emma. "Why a New Generation of Catholic Women Is Wearing Chapel Veils." *Religion and Politics*, February 8, 2022.
- Cipolla, Benedicta. "How Ecumenical?" *Commonweal*, July 3, 2004.
- Clarke, Kevin. "An Interreligious Call to Protect Houses of Worship." *America*, May 27, 2019.
- . "The Future for Iraqi Christians Has Rarely Looked Grimmer." *America*, December 20, 2019.
- Classen, Albrecht. "The Self, the Other, and Everything in Between: Xenological Phenomenology of the Middle Ages." In *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, edited by Albrecht Classen, xi-lxxiii. London: Taylor and Francis, 2002.
- "Clerics Urge Interfaith Education for Muslims, Christians." *National Catholic Reporter*, April 6 2007.
- Clooney, Francis X. "Interreligious Learning in a Changing Church: From Paul VI to Francis." *Irish Theological Quarterly* 82, no. 4 (2017): 269-283.

- . “Learning to Listen: Benedict XVI and Interreligious Dialogue.” *Commonweal*, January 8, 2007.
- Cochran, David Carroll. “After 9/11 and Afghanistan, Does Just War Theory Have a Place in Catholic Thought?” *America*, September 16, 2001.
- Cohen, Charles L. “Introduction: Some Declarations on the Relation of the Non-Christian Religions to the Church.” In *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*. Edited by Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017.
- Cohen-Almagor, Raphael. “Indivisibilité, Sécurité, Laïcité: the French Ban on the Burqa and the Niqab.” *French Politics* 20 (2022): 3-24.
- Cooper, Rand Richards. “The Battle of the Burkini.” *Commonweal*, August 26, 2016. <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/battle-over-burkini>.
- . “Burqas and American Blasphemy.” *Commonweal*, October 16, 2017.
- Corbett, Rosemary R. *Making Moderate Islam: Sufism, Service, and “The Ground Zero Mosque” Controversy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017.
- Cosgrove, Jim. “Blaming Islam.” *National Catholic Register*, July 24, 2005.
- . “Religious Freedom Meets Islam.” *National Catholic Register*, February 8, 2004, <https://www.ncregister.com/commentaries/religious-freedom-meets-islam>.
- Cressler, Matthew J. *Authentically Black and Truly Catholic: The Rise of Black Catholicism in the Great Migration*. New York: New York University Press, 2017.
- Critchley, Mark. “Donald Trump’s ‘Muslim Ban’ Supported by Stoke City Defender Geoff Cameron.” *Independent*, February 3, 2017.
- Crocker III, H. W. “The Case for American Empire.” *Crisis*, October 4, 2004.
- Cuff, Mary. “Re-Asserting a Feminine Tradition.” *Crisis*, January 26, 2018.
- Cullen, Joseph. “Faith Hits Ground Zero: Eyewitness Accounts.” *National Catholic Reporter*, September 21, 2001, <https://www.ncregister.com/news/faith-hits-ground-zero-eyewitness-accounts>.

- Cuneo, Michael W. *The Smoke of Satan: Conservative and Traditionalist Dissent in Contemporary American Catholicism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Curtis, Finbarr. *The Production of American Religious Freedom*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.
- Curtis IV, Edward E. "The Study of American Muslims: A History." In *The Cambridge Companion to American Islam*, edited by Juliane Hammer and Omid Safi. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- D'Agostino, Peter R. *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Day, James. "Benedict the Brave: The Regensburg Address Ten Years Later," *The Catholic World Report*, September 12, 2016, <https://www.catholicworldreport.com/2016/09/12/benedict-the-brave-the-regensburg-address-ten-years-later/>.
- Delshad, Carmel. "Meet the Modern Face of Islam." *Busted Halo*, September 22, 2010.
- De Souza, Raymond. "Islam and Toxic Masculinity." *Church Militant*, May 11, 2022.
- . "On Islam, Francis Follows in Benedict's Footsteps." *National Catholic Register*, February 8, 2019.
- Dear, John. "Life and Death at Ground Zero." *National Catholic Reporter*, September 8, 2008.
- Dolan, Jay P. *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.
- Dowland, Seth. *Family Values and the Rise of the Christian Right*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- Drake, Tim. "It's Been a Tough Year for Some of 9/11' Heroes." *National Catholic Register*, September 8, 2002.
- Druding, Vincent. "Ground Zero: A Journal." *First Things*, December 1, 2001.
- Duffner, Jordan Denari. *Finding Jesus among Muslims: How Loving Islam Makes Me a Better Catholic*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2017.
- . "'In Our Time': Francis Moves beyond Nostra Aetate." *Commonweal*, December 8, 2103.

—. “Review: An Accurate Look at Muslim Beliefs.” *America*, October 24, 2018.

—. “Wait, I thought That Was. Muslim Thing?!” *Commonweal*, February 13, 2014.

Duffner, Jordan Denari, and The Bridge Initiative. *Danger and Dialogue: American Catholic Public Opinion and Portrayals of Islam*. Washington, DC: Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, 2016.

Dufresne, Beth. “A View from the Edge.” *Commonweal*, February 11, 2013.

Dula, Peter. “The War in Iraq.” *Commonweal*, November 30, 2004.

Dulles, Avery Cardinal. “Religious Freedom: Innovation and Development.” *First Things*, December 2001.

Egan, Anthony. “Dealing with Terrorism.” *America*, October 1, 2001.

El Cheikh, Nadia Maria. *Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.

Elfenbein, Caleb Iyer. *Fear in Our Hearts: What Islamophobia Tells Us about America*. New York: New York University Press, 2021.

Eli, Bradley. “Second Muslim Doctor Arrested for Child Genital Mutilation.” *Church Militant*, April 24, 2017.

Elmore, Trey. “British Court Orders Christian Girl Taken from Muslim Custody.” *Church Militant*, August 30, 2017.

Enten, Harry. “Will Trump’s Refugee Ban Have Public Support?” *FiveThirtyEight*, January 28, 2017.

Ewing, Katherine Pratt. *Stolen Honor: Stigmatizing Muslim Men in Berlin*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008.

“Faith Leaders Support ‘Ground Zero Mosque.’” *National Catholic Reporter*, August 16, 2010, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/faith-leaders-support-ground-zero-mosque>.

Farrelly, Maura Jane. “American Slavery, American Freedom, American Catholicism.” *Early American Studies* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 69-100.

“FBI Chided for Training That Was Critical of Islam.” *New York Times*, September 16, 2011.

“FBI Manual: Muslims Are Terror Sympathizers.” *Al Jazeera*, September 17, 2011.

Fenton, Elizabeth. *Religious Liberties: Anti-Catholicism and Liberal Democracy in Nineteenth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Ferullo, Joe. “When Catholics were Muslims in America.” *National Catholic Reporter*, October 10, 2010, <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/when-catholics-were-muslims-america>.

Fiedler, Maureen. “What Is It about Women’s Heads?” *National Catholic Reporter*, July 10, 2009.

Fields, Barbra J. “Ideology and Race in American History.” In *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, edited by J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, 143-177. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982.

Fink, Steven. “Fear under Construction: Islamophobia withing American Christian Zionism.” *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 2, no.1 (Spring 2014).

Fisher, James T. *Communion of Immigrants: A History of Catholics in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Pres, 2000.

Fitzgerald, Ryan. “Muslims’ Alleged Right to Rape Non-Muslim Women.” *Church Militant*, March 6, 2016.
<https://www.churchmilitant.com/index.php/news/article/muslims-alleged-right-to-rape-non-muslim-women>.

Fletcher, Jeannine Hill. “Foreign to the Mind of Christ: *Nostra Aetate* in America’s Religio-Racial Project.” In *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, edited by Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017.

Flott, Anthony. “Why the Church Condemns Torture.” *National Catholic Register*, July 15, 2008.

Fortun, Mike, Kim Fortun, and George E. Marcus. “Computers in//and Anthropology: The Poetics ad Politics of Digitizations.” In *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*, edited by Larissa Hjorth, Heather Horst, Anne Galloway, and Genevieve Bell. London: Routledge, 2019.

- Fox, Thomas C. "Burqa in Public Places? Yes or No?" *National Catholic Reporter*, June 4, 2010. <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/burqa-public-places-yes-or-no>.
- Francis, Krishan. "Sri Lankan Church Schools to Reopen after Easter Bombings." *America*, May 9, 2019.
- Funk, Mary Margaret. *Islam Is... An Experience of Dialogue and Devotion*. New York: Lantern Books, 2003.
- Gallup Jr., George and Jim Castelli. *The American Catholic People: Their Beliefs, Practices, and Values*. Garden City, NY: Double Day & Company, 1987.
- Garvey, John. "Introduction." In *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, edited by Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016.
- . "When Christians Kill." *Commonweal*, June 15, 2004.
- Gasché, Rodolphe. *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Gebel, Christina. "Paying the Ultimate Price: What Martyrs Can Teach Us about Sacrifices for Our Faith." *Busted Halo*, April 30, 2015.
- Gelfer, Joseph. "Identifying the Catholic Men's Movement." *Journal of Men's Studies* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2008): 41-56.
- George, Robert P. "Responding Justly to Terrorism." *Crisis*, November 1, 2001.
- Gibson, David. "Pope Benedict XVI, Defender of Orthodoxy Defined by Historic Resignation, Dies at 95." *America*, December 31, 2022.
- Goffman, Erving. *Interaction Ritual: Essays in Face-to-Face Behavior*, 2nd ed. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005.
- Gomes, Jules. "Cdl. Burke: Opposing Mass Muslim Migration a 'Responsible Exercise' of Patriotism." *Church Militant*, May 20, 2019.
- . "Catholic Don: Muhammad Is First Anti-Racist." *Church Militant*, July 29, 2020.
- . "Francis Cancels Benedict's Latin Mass Decree." *Church Militant*, July 16, 2021.

- . “Trads Fend off Pope Francis’ Anti-Latin Mass Rescript.” *Church Militant*, February 24, 2023.
- . “Vatican Woos Funder of Islamic Terrorism.” *Church Militant*, November 27, 2020.
- Goodno, James B. “Airport Security.” *Commonweal*, June 17, 2004.
- Goodwin, Megan. *Abusing Religion: Literary Persecution, Sex Scandals, and American Minority Religions*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2020.
- Gordon, Michelle Y. “Midnight Scenes and Orgies”: Public Narratives of Voodoo in New Orleans and Nineteenth-Century Discourses of White Supremacy.” *American Quarterly* 64, no. 4 (December 2021): 767-786.
- Gray, Mark M., and Mary E. Bendyna, “Between Church, Party, and Conscience: Protecting Life and Promoting Social Justice among U.S. Catholics.” In *Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension between Faith and Power*, ed. Kristin E. Heyer, Mark J. Rozell, and Michael A. Genovese, 75-92. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008.
- Greydanus, Steven D. “Douthat on Moderate Islam and Imam Rouf.” *National Catholic Register*, August 30, 2010.
- . “Islam and Violence: Actually, It’s Complicated.” *National Catholic Register*, March 20, 2019.
- Griffin, Robert. “The Hook: A Week in the Life of a Catholic Preacher.” *Crisis*, July 13, 2010.
- Griffiths, Paul J. “Just War: An Exchange.” *First Things*, April 2002.
- Guhin, Jeffrey. *Agents of God: Boundaries and Authority in Muslim and Christian Schools*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Haddad, Yovonne Yazbeck, and Tyler Golson. “Overhauling Islam: Representation, Construction, and Cooption of ‘Moderate Islam’ in Western Europe.” *Journal of Church and State* (2007): 487-515.
- Hammer, Juliane. “Center Stage: Gendered Islamophobia and Muslim Women.” In *Islamophobia in America: The Anatomy of Intolerance*, edited by Carl W. Ernst, 107-144. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

- Hananoki, Eric. "White Nationalists Praise Trump's Muslim Ban: 'God Bless You,' 'Feel Like Crying' with Joy." *Media Matters for America*, January 30, 2017.
- Harmon, Katharine E. "The Liturgical Movement and Catholic Action: Women Living the Liturgical Life in the Lay Apostolate." In *Empowering the People of God: Catholic Action before and after Vatican II*, edited by Jeremy Bonner, Christopher D. Denny, and Mary Beth Fraser Connolly. New York: Fordham University Press, 2013.
- Harrod, Andrew. "William Kilpatrick Makes the Catholic Case for Counter-Jihad." *Jihad Watch*, October 12, 2020.
- . "(Muslim) Women's Bodies, Islamophobia, and American Politics." *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 42, no. 1 (February 2013): 29-36.
- . *Peaceful Families: American Muslim Efforts against Domestic Violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019.
- Hayes, Mike. "Soul Mates: 9-11." *Busted Halo*, September 14, 2002.
- Hays, Charlotte. "Islam and America." *America*, September 10, 2011.
- Heft, James, ed. *Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- . "Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue." In *Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue*, edited by James L. Heft. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Heyer, Kristin E., and Mark J. Rozell. "Introduction." In *Catholics and Politics: The Dynamic Tension between Faith and Power*, edited by Kristin E. Heyer, Mark J. Rozell, and Michael A. Genovese, 1-10. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2008.
- Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Hine, Christine. "From Virtual Ethnography to the Embedded, Embodied Everyday Internet." In *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*, edited by Larissa Hjorth, Heather Horst, Anne Galloway, and Genevieve Bell. London: Routledge, 2019.
- "Hit and Run." *Commonweal*, June 14, 2004.

- “Homeland What?” *Commonweal*, June 14, 2004.
- Hoopes, Tom. “Obama, Notre Dame, and Islam.” *National Catholic Register*, June 6, 2009.
- Howard, Thomas Albert. *The Faiths of Others: A History of Interreligious Dialogue*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021.
- Hudson, Deal W. “Can Obama Use Iraq to Win the Catholic Vote?” *Crisis*, April 9, 2008.
- . “John McCain Is Losing the Religious Right.” *Crisis*, June 2, 2008.
- . “Sed Contra: The End of Narcissism.” *Crisis*, November 1, 2001.
- . “Sed Contra: Enough Is Enough.” *Crisis*, February 4, 2004.
- Hughey, Matthew W. “Backstage Discourse and the Reproduction of White Masculinities.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 132-153.
- Hynes, Chris. “Ground Zero Became His Parish.” *National Catholic Register*, October 21, 2001.
- “In First Month, Views of Trump Are Already Strongly Felt, Deeply Polarized.” *Pew Research Center*, February 16, 2017.
- “In a Time of War.” *First Things*, December 2001.
- “Islam, Catholicism, Modernism.” *Church Militant*, August 25, 2015.
- Islam, Namira. “An Anti-Muslim Narrative Has Shaped Policy for Decades. The Travel Ban Will Make It Worse.” *Vox*, June 27, 2017.
- . “Soft Islamophobia.” *Religions* 9, no. 9 (2018).
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Johanson, Todd. “Pluralistic Inclusivism and Christian-Muslim Dialogue: The Challenge of Moving beyond Polite Discussion toward Reconciliation and Peace.” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 51, no. 1 (Winter 2016).
- Johnson, Jenna. “Trump Calls for ‘Total and Complete Shutdown of Muslims Entering the United States,’” *Washington Post*, December 7, 2015.

- Karabell, Zachary. "Can't We All Just Get Along?" *Commonweal*, May 14, 2007.
- Karim, Jamillah. *American Muslim Women, Negotiating Race, Class, and Gender within the Ummah*. New York: New York University Press, 2009.
- Katz, Jackson. *Man Enough? Donald Trump, Hilary Clinton, and the Politics of Presidential Masculinity*. Northampton, MA: Interlink Books, 2016.
- Kazimi, Hussain. "I Started Working as an Afghan Interpreter for the U.S. Military at 16. My Family Still Isn't Safe from the Taliban." *America*, August 15, 2022.
- Kean, Tom. "Head of 9/11 Commission on Five Ways to Prevent the Spread of Terrorism." *America*, December 7, 2018.
- Keenan, James F. *The Silence of Sodom: Homosexuality in Modern Catholicism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Kennedy, Arthur "The Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*." In *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition*, edited by Matthew L. Lamb and Matthew Levering, 397-409. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Khabeer, Su'ad Abdul. *Muslim Cool: Race, Religion, and Hip Hop in the United States*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.
- Kilpatrick, William. "Are the Vast Majority of People Moderate?" *Crisis*, May 7, 2018.
- . "The Burqa, the Baker, and the Bishops." *Crisis Magazine*, June 12, 2018.
- . "Catholics Blind about Islam Should Read New Exposé Book *Black Wave*." *LifeSite News*, February 24, 2020.
- . *Christianity, Islam, and Atheism: The Struggle for the Soul of the West*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012.
- . "Christianity's Masculinity Crisis." *Crisis Magazine*, February 8, 2019.
- . "Do Catholics Have Legitimate Fears about Immigration?" *Crisis*, April 9, 2018.
- . "Ex-Muslim Women Rip Veil of Islam's Pervasive Oppression of Women." *LifeSite News*, May 1, 2020.

- . “Fool’s Paradise: The Appeal of Jihad.” *Crisis*, October 3, 2014.
- . “Hijab Jihad.” *Crisis Magazine*, May 6, 2019.
- . “Islam: Who Are We to Judge.” *Crisis Magazine*, September 26, 2018.
- . “Jihad and the Complexities of Immigration,” *Catholic World Report*, April 20, 2021.
- . “In Denial about Islam.” *Crisis*, November 21, 2016.
- . “Is Sex Slavery Sanctioned in Islam?” *National Catholic Register*, September 8, 2015.
- . “Migration and the Islamization of Europe.” *Crisis Magazine*, October 9, 2015.
- . “The Multicultural Myth, Anti-Semitism, and Misogyny.” *Catholic World Report*, March 17, 2019.
- . “None Dare Call It Treason.” *Crisis*, September 18, 2018.
- . “Nothing to Do with Islam?” *National Catholic Register*, July 16, 2015.
- . “Pope Francis, Indifferentism, and Islamization.” *Crisis*, December 31, 2018.
- . “Rethinking Narratives about Islam.” *National Catholic Register*, February 16, 2015.
- . “Time to Tell the Truth about Islam.” *National Catholic Register*, August 30, 2015.
- . “The Top Five Lies about Islam You Probably Learned in Church.” *The Stream*, August 31, 2021.
- . “The Triple Threat to Christians and the Church.” *Catholic World Report*, January 5, 2020.
- . “The Tyranny of Fashion.” *Catholic World Report*, February 19, 2020.
- . “What Catholics Can Learn about Islam from a Former Muslim.” *Crisis Magazine*, April 24, 2017.
- . *What Catholics Need to Know about Islam*. Manchester, NH: Crisis Publications, 2020.

- . “Why I believe in Islam.” *Crisis*, January 4, 2021.
- . “Why the Odds Favor Islam. *Crisis*, June 12, 2017.
- . “9/11: The Day that Changed America– Or Did It?” *Catholic World Report*, September 13, 2021.
- . “99% Nonsense: ‘Muslim’ Does Not Equal ‘Islam.’” *National Catholic Register*, March 3, 2015.
- Koehlinger, Amy L. *The New Nuns: Racial Justice and Religious Reform in the 1960s*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- Komonochak, Joseph A. “Interpreting the Council: Catholic Attitudes toward Vatican II.” In *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America*, edited by Mary Jo Weaver and R. Scott Appleby, 17-36. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Korb, Scott. “Looking for Its Luther.” *Commonweal*, September 2005.
- Knitter, Paul F. “*Nostra Aetate*: A Milestone in the History of Religions? From Competition to Cooperation.” In *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*. Edited by Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017.
- Kraut, Alan M. *Silent Travelers: Germs, Genes, and the Immigrant Menace*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.
- Lacey, Michael J., and Francis Oakley, eds. *The Crisis of Authority in Catholic Modernity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Lampety, Jerusha Tanner. “Beyond the Rays of Truth? *Nostra Aetate*, Islam, and the Value of Difference.” In *The Future of Interreligious Dialogue: A Multireligious Conversation on Nostra Aetate*, edited by Charles L. Cohen, Paul F. Knitter, and Ulrich Rosenhagen. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017.
- Lefevere, Patricia. “Hans Küng, Celebrated and Controversial Swiss Theologian, Has Died.” *National Catholic Reporter*, April 6, 2021.
- Lewin, Lyric. “In Support of a Travel Ban.” *CNN*, accessed July 14, 2023.
- Lewis, Andrew R. *The Rights Turn in Christian Politics: How Abortion Transformed the Culture Wars*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

- Light, Andrew, and William Chaloupka. "Angry White Men: Right Exclusionary Nationalism and Left Identity Politics." In *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, edited by Tamar Mayer, 329-350. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Lincoln, Bruce. *Holy Terrors: Thinking about Religion after September 11*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Long-García, J. D. "Thousands of Afghan Refugees Fled to America in Search of a New Home. Too Many Are Still Waiting." *America*, September 15, 2022.
- Longenecker, Dwight. "Ugly Americans: The United States in the Eyes of Europe." *Crisis*, 2005.
- López, Ian Haney. *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Lopez, Kathryn Jean. "'Francis in Iraq: A New Documentary Explores What a Historic Papal Trip Meant for Persecuted Christians.'" *America*, March 21, 2022.
- Love, Erik. *Islamophobia and Racism in America*. New York: New York University Press, 2017.
- Luban, Daniel. "How the 'Good War' Turned Bad." *National Catholic Reporter*, August 27, 2008.
- Lum, Kathryn Gin. *Heathens: Religion and Race in American History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2022.
- Macrae, Paul James. "This Battle over Sex Education Isn't Being Led by White Conservatives but by Muslim Parents." *America*, August 22, 2023.
- Madden, Dennis. "Response to Dr. Sayyid Syeed's Essay, 'Why Muslims Celebrate *Nostra Aetate*.'" In *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, edited by Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016.
- Madigan, Daniel A. "Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Difficult Times." In *Catholicism and Interreligious Dialogue*, edited by James L. Heft. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Mahmood, Saba. *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016.

- Mallon, Elias D. "Who Speaks for Islam?: Muslim Authorities Call for an End to Militant Violence." *America*, March 15, 2015.
- Malloy, Richard G. "The Way Beyond Iraq." *Busted Halo*, March 22, 2007.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: American, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. New York: Three Leaves Press, 2005.
- Mandel, Jay. "A War for Oil." *Commonweal*, June 17, 2004.
- Manning, C. J. "Women in a Divided Church: Liberal and Conservative Catholic Women Negotiate Changing Gender Roles." *Sociology of Religion* 58, no. 4 (1997): 375-390.
- Marlin, Jodi. "Voluntary use of Pre-Vatican II Veil Obligation Growing." *Today's Catholic*, May 1, 2018.
- Marsden, George M. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Marshall, Paul. "Islamic Counter-Reformation." *First Things*, August 2004.
- Martin, Diarmuid. "Theological and Moral Perspectives on Today's Challenge of Peace." *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*. Washington, D.C. November 10, 2003.
- May, Mike. "Nebraska Knights of Columbus Join Effort to Help Persecuted Christians in Iraq, Syria." *America*, March 9, 2018.
- Mayer, Tamar. "Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Setting the Stage." In *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation*, edited by Tamar Mayer, 1-22. London: Routledge, 2000.
- McDannell, Colleen. *The Spirit of Vatican II: A History of Catholic Reform in America*. Philadelphia: Basic Books, 2011.
- McGarvey, Bill. "Busted: The Stoning of Soraya M." *Busted Halo*, June 18, 2009.
- McGreevy, John T. *Catholicism and American Freedom A History*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.
- . *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016.

- McLaren, Angus. *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- “Migrant Rapes Surge 133% in Austria.” *Church Militant*, December 8, 2016.
<https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/migrant-sex-attacks-skyrocket-in-austria>.
- Morgan and Rachel E. Alexandra Thompson. *Criminal Victimization*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2022.
- Moss, Candida. *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invested a Story of Martyrdom*. New York: HarperOne, 2013.
- Moyski, Martina. “Miss Michigan Stripped of Crown for Refusing to Wear Muslim Hijab.” *Church Militant*, July 22, 2019.
- Muyco-Tobin, Trish. “Women and Religion: An Interfaith Discussion.” *Busted Halo*, September 7, 2006.
- Nacos, Brigette L., and Oscar Torres-Reyna. *Fueling Our Fears: Stereotyping, Media Coverage, and Public Opinion of Muslim Americans*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007.
- Nasr, Reem. “Pope Pens Personal Message to Muslims.” *Busted Halo*, August 13, 2013.
- Nelson, Eliot. “The KKK and Their Friends Are Overjoyed with President Trump’s First 10 Days.” *Huffpost*, January 31, 2017
- “Niger Bishops Extend Invitation for Dialogue to Muslim Community.” *Church Militant*, December 30, 2015.
- Nuechterlein, James. “Hard Thoughts in Wartime.” *First Things*, January 2002.
- Neuhaus, Richard John. “Internationalisms, etc.” *First Things*, December 2004.
- . “Nasty and Nice in Politics and Religion.” *First Things*, March 2004.
- . “Religious Freedom in a Time of War.” *First Things*, January 2002.
- . “September 11– Before and After.” *First Things*, November 2001.

- O’Keefe, Mark. “One Year after 9-11, American Hold Confused Feelings about Islam.” *National Catholic Register*, September 8, 2002.
- O’Grady, Ellen. “A Primer on Islamism Today.” *Busted Halo*, August 1, 2006.
- O’Loughlin, Michael. “New York’s Cardinal Dolan Calls for Greater Respect following Deadly Attack.” *America*, October 31, 2017.
- . “State Department Religious Freedom Report Focuses on Threats by ISIS.” *America*, August 15, 2017, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2017/08/15/state-department-religious-freedom-report-focuses-threats-isis>.
- O’Malley, John W. *What Happened at Vatican II*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008.
- O’Rourke, William. “What We Saw.” *Commonweal*, June 14, 2004.
- Olaizola, Merisela. “A Woman’s Glory.” *Church Militant*, July 12, 2015.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Parini, Jay. “An American in Egypt.” *Commonweal*, June 7, 2006.
- Pelletier, Rodney. “DePaul Censors Discussion on Muslim Treatment of Women.” *Church Militant*, June 5, 2017.
- . “Muslims Threaten to Pray in the Vatican.” *Church Militant*, November 15, 2016.
- . “Polish Magazine: Islamic Migrants ‘Raping Europe.’” *Church Militant*, February 17, 2016. <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/polish-magazine-calls-out-islamic-migrants-as-raping-europe>.
- . “The Sword of Islam.” *Church Militant*, March 25, 2021.
- . “UK Ignores Muslim Rapists, Claims Child Protective Services ‘Transformed.’” *Church Militant*, January 31, 2018. <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/u.k.-ignores-muslim-rapists-claims-child-protective-services-transformed>.
- Pentin, Edward. “European Churches: Dialogue with Islam Is Difficult but Necessary.” *National Catholic Register*, April 10, 2006.

- . “Islam and the Holy See.” *National Catholic Register*, May 8, 2007.
- Peppard, Michael. “Executive Disorder about Islam.” *Commonweal*, January 13, 2017.
- . “Removing a Veil.” *Commonweal*, October 20, 2016.
- Pfeifer, Michael J. *The Making of American Catholicism: Regional Culture and the Catholic Experience*. New York: NYU Press, 2020.
- Phan, Peter C. “Speaking in Many Tongues: Why the Church Must Be More Catholic.” *Commonweal*, January 8, 2007.
- Pieper, Andrew L. “Loyalty Lost: Catholics, Liberals, and the Culture Wars.” *Journal of Media and Religion* 12, no. 3 (2013).
- Pinault, David. “The Shade of Swords.” *Commonweal*, June 3, 2004.
- Pope Benedict XVI. *Summorum Pontificum*. Vatican City: Vatican, July 8, 2007.
- Pope Francis. *Evangelii Gaudium*. Vatican City, IT: The Holy See, 2013.
- . *In-Flight Press Conference of his Holiness Pope Francis from Istanbul to Rome*. Papal Flight: the Vatican, 2014.
- . *Traditionis Custodes*. Vatican City: Vatican, 2023.
- Pope Leo XIII. “Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae: Concerning New Opinions, Virtue, Nature and Grace, with Regard to Americanism.” Papal Encyclicals Online. Accessed December 13, 2022. <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/113teste.htm>.
- Pope Paul VI. *Humanae Vitae*. July 25, 1968. https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_25071968_humanae-vitae.html.
- . *Nostra Aetate*. October 28, 1965. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.
- Pope Pius IX. “Quanta Cura: Condemning Current Errors.” Papal Encyclicals Online, Accessed December 8, 2022. <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius09/p9quanta.htm>.
- Powell, Kimberly A. “Framing Islam/Creating Fear: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism from 2011-2016,” *Religions* 9, no. 9 (2018).

- Puar, Jasbir. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017.
- Puar, Jasbir K., and Amit S. Rai. "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots." *Social Text* 72, no. 3 (2002): 117-148.
- Reed-Bouley, Jennifer. "'I Belong! And I'm Here to Stay!' U.S. Black Catholics' Faith and Faithfulness." *Ecclesial Practices* 2 (2015): 177-197.
- Reilly, Robert R. "The Iraq Debate: Robert R. Reilly's Closing Statement." *Crisis*, December 14, 2007.
- . "The Pope and the Prophet." *Crisis*, November 1, 2006.
- . "The Iraq Debate: Robert Reilly's First Response." *Crisis*, December 13, 2007.
- Reynolds, Gabriel Said. "When Martyrdom Isn't a Metaphor." *Commonweal*, January 27, 2014.
- . "Where Islam and Christianity Meet." *Commonweal*, June 15, 2004.
- Riccardi, Andrea. "The Tumultuous Opening Days of the Council," In *History of Vatican II*, vol. 2, *The Formation of the Councils Identity: First Period and Intersession October 1962-September 1963*, edited Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph A. Komonchak, 1-67. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1997.
- Richard, Mark Paul. *Not a Catholic Nation: the Ku Klux Klan Confronts New England in the 1920s*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015.
- Roberts, Tom. "Abu Ghraib, a Thumb Nail Look." *National Catholic Reporter*, December 30, 2008.
- Romanowsky, Zoe. "Breasts That Kill... And Not in the Way You're Thinking." *Crisis*, March 26, 2010.
- . "Should Muslim Women Renounce or Redefine Their Faith?" *Crisis*, June 18, 2010.
- Royal, Robert. "Seeing Things: Breaking with Etiquette." *Crisis*, April 2, 2002.
- . "Seeing Things: Epic Struggles." *Crisis*, January 2002.
- . "Seeing Things: The Old Urbanism." *Crisis*, September 1, 2003.

—. “Seeing Things: Seven Modern Martyrs.” *Crisis*, June, 2002.

Russello, Gerald J. “Catholic Teaching and Torture.” *National Catholic Register*, February 13, 2006.

—. “Progress and Religion.” *First Things*, March 2002.

Rutler, George W. “Cloud of Witness: William F. Burke, Jr.” *Crisis*, December 1, 2006.

Ryan, Thomas. “Christian-Muslim Efforts for Peace in Our Time.” *Busted Halo*, September 25, 2014.

Sadowski, Dennis. “Meeting Pope at Ground Zero Brings Tears to Sept. 11 Survivor.” *National Catholic Reporter*, April 29, 2008.

Saint-Paul, Brain. “Radical Islam and the Left: A Conversation with Dinesh D’Souza.” *Crisis*, February 7, 2007.

—. “Some of Us Are Owed an Apology: Traditionalists and the Latin Mass,” *Crisis*, June 11, 2008.

Schall, James V. “Sense and Nonsense: October, Election Year.” *Crisis*, October 1, 2004.

Schiffer, Kathy. “3 Books That Teach about Islam.” *National Catholic Register*, January 2, 2019.

Scott, Joan Wallach. *The Politics of the Veil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Schrag, Zachary M. *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021.

Sehat, David. *The Myth of American Religious Freedom*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Seligman, Adam B., Rahel R. Wasserfall, and David W. Montgomery. *Living with Difference: How to Build Community in a Divided World*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2015.

Selod, Saher. *Forever Suspect: Racialized Surveillance of Muslim Americans in the War on Terror*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2018.

“September 11, 2001.” *Commonweal*, June 14, 2004.

- Shaw, Russell. "The Iraq Debate: Russel Shaw's Closing Statement." *Crisis*, December 14, 2007.
- . "The Iraq Debate: The War Was Unjust." *Crisis*, December 12, 2007.
- Sherkat, Darren E., and Derek Lehman. "Bad Samaritans: Religion and Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Muslim Sentiment in the United States." *Social Science Quarterly* 99, no. 5 (November 2018).
- Simmel, Georg. *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Edited by Donald N. Levine. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Simonson, Zubair. "Is Islam a Religion of Peace, or of War?" *National Catholic Register*, January 5, 2021.
- Smith, Peter Jesserer. "Muslims vs. 'Outlaws of Islam.'" *National Catholic Register*, January 4, 2016.
- Slavsky, Alexander. "Leader of DC Women's March Accused of Covering Up Sex Abuse." *Church Militant*, December 18, 2017.
- "Soul Searching." *Commonweal*, June 14, 2004.
- Spencer, Robert. "Is Multiculturalism Evil?" *Crisis*, November 8, 2011.
- . *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam (and the Crusades)*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2005.
- . "What Makes the West the Best." *Crisis*, February 2, 2012.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271-313. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- "Statement from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue." *Agenzia Fides*, September 8, 2010.
- Steinfels, Margaret O'Brien. "Two Years Later." *Commonweal*, June 25, 2004.
- Steinfels, Peter. "Reinventing Liberal Catholicism." *Commonweal*, June 17, 2004.

- Susanka, Joseph. "The Problem of the 'Ground Zero Mosque.'" *Crisis*, August 3, 2010, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/opinion/the-problem-of-the-ground-zero-mosque>.
- Tajfel, Henri, ed. *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- Tauran, Jean-Louis Cardinal. "The Catholic Church in Dialogue with Islam since the Promulgation of *Nostra Aetate*." In *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church's Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, edited by Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016.
- Taylor, Jessica. "Trump Calls for 'Total and Complete Shutdown of Muslims Entering' U.S." *NPR*, December 7, 2015.
- Thomas, Jeffrey L. *Scapegoating Islam: Intolerance, Security, and the American Muslim*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015.
- Trollinger Jr., William Vance. "Hearing the Silence: The University of Dayton, the Ku Klux Klan, and Catholic Universities and Colleges in the 1920s." *American Catholic Studies* 124, no. 1 (Spring 2013).
- Trump, Donald. Executive Order 13769, "Protecting the Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into the United States." *Federal Register* 82, no. 8977 (January 27, 2017): 8977-8982.
- Tyler, Imogen. "Against Abjection." *Feminist Theory* 10, no. 1 (2009): 77-98.
- "Twenty Years of War: America Magazine's Coverage of Afghanistan." *America*, August 19, 2021.
- Twohig, Dan. "Final Farewell." *Busted Halo*, September 11, 2002.
- Uhlmann, Michael M. "Late Edition: Sings of Weakness, Sings of Strength," *Crisis*, November 1, 2001.
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. "A Pastoral Message: Living with Faith and Hope after September 11." *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*, November 14, 2001.
- Valkenberg, Pim. "Nostra Aetate: Historical Contingency and Theological Significance." In *Nostra Aetate: Celebrating 50 Years of the Catholic Church's*

- Dialogue with Jews and Muslims*, edited by Pim Valkenberg and Anthony Cirelli. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016.
- “Veteran Catholic Peacemaker Reaches Out to Muslim Women.” *National Catholic Reporter*, December 10, 2009.
- Volp, Leti. “On Culture, Difference, and Domestic Violence.” *American University Journal of Gender, Policy, and the Law* 11, no.1 (2002): 393-99.
- von Dohlen, Josephine. “Bill to Aid Genocide Victims in Middle East Goes before Senate.” *America*, June 8, 2018.
- Walters, Joanna, Edward Helmore, and Saeed Kamali Dehghan. “US Airports on Frontline as Donald Trump’s Travel Ban Causes Chaos and Protests.” *The Guardian*, January 28, 2017.
- “War & the Common Good.” *Commonweal*, June 14, 2004,
- “The War on Terrorism.” *Commonweal*, June 25, 2004.
- Warren, David. “The Idler: Defending Reason.” *Crisis*, November 1, 2006.
- . “The Idler: Just War.” *Crisis*, September 1, 2006.
- Warrick, Joby. “Jihadist Groups Hail Trump’s Travel Ban as a Victory.” *Washington Post*, January 29, 2017
- Weaver, Mary Jo and R. Scott Appleby, eds. *Being Right: Conservative Catholics in America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.
- Weber, Max. *Economy and Society*. Trans. Keith Tribe. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019.
- Weisenfeld, Judith. *New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity during the Great Migration*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.
- Wenger, Tisa Joy. *Religious Freedom: The Contested History of an American Ideal*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.
- Whitehead, Andrew L., and Samuel L. Perry. *Taking America Back for God: Christian Nationalism in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

- Wilde, Melissa J. *Vatican II: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Change*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.
- Williams, Daniel K. "The Partisan Trajectory of the American Pro-Life Movement: How a Liberal Catholic Campaign Became a Conservative Evangelical Cause." *Religions* 6 (2015): 451-75.
- Willis, Grace Anne. "Our Pilgrimage of Prayer Ground Zero." *National Catholic Register*, January 13, 2002.
- Winstead, Kevin. "Authentically Black, and Truly Catholic": A Survey of the Study on Black Catholics." *Sociology Compass* 11, no. 10 (October 2017).
- Wooden, Cindy. "Top Vatican Official Discusses ISIS Terrorist Threat, Immigration Debate." *America*, August 28, 2017.
- "The Wrong Punishment." *Commonweal*, 2006.
- Wynne, Stephen. "Nearly 200% Increase in Rapes in Denmark Linked to Migrant Influx." *Church Militant*, August 3, 2017.
<https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/increase-rapes-denmark-migrants>.
- Yaccovazzi, Cassandra L. *Escaped Nuns: True Womanhood and the Campaign against Convents in Antebellum America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Zmirak, John. "Say No to the Ground Zero Victory Mosque." *Crisis*, September 8, 2010, <https://www.crisismagazine.com/opinion/say-no-to-the-ground-zero-victory-mosque>
- "72 Terrorists Come to U.S. from Seven Banned Muslim-Majority Countries." *Church Militant*, February 15, 2017.

Curriculum Vitae





