Making Islam *White:*

Race, Religion, Nation and the Construction of an American Islam

An Honors Thesis for the Department of American Studies

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Tufts University, 2018

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Introduction

On January 27, 2017, President Donald J. Trump signed Executive Order 13769, entitled “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States.” The order prohibited foreign nationals from seven majority Muslim nations from entering the country for ninety days, discontinued the Syrian refugee program, and banned the entrance of all other refugees for 120 days.[1] Immediately, the ban was widely recognized for what it was: a sinister attempt to bar Muslim immigration to the United States and frame the Islamic population as exclusively and homogeneously responsible for anti-U.S. terrorism.[2] Indeed, Trump’s own words revealed his intentions. In a December 2015 press release from Trump’s election campaign entitled “Donald J. Trump Statement on Preventing Muslim Immigration,” the President 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] Similarly, in an interview on ABC’s “Good Morning America,” Trump suggested that the ban was “no different” from the 1942 internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.[4] Trump’s Muslim ban faced several legal challenges but the U.S. Supreme

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[1] “Timeline of the Muslim Ban.” 2017. May 23, 2017. https://www.aclu-wa.org/pages/timeline-muslim-ban.

[2] Human rights organizations such as Amnesty International described the order as religious discrimination and an attempt to enact a “Muslim ban.” See “Seven Ways President Trump Has Sabotaged Human Rights.” n.d. Accessed April 7, 2018. https://www.amnesty.org.uk/seven-ways-president-trump-sabotaged-human-rights.

[3] “Donald J. Trump Statement on Preventing Muslim Immigration | Donald J Trump for President.” n.d. Accessed April 7, 2018. https://web.archive.org/web/20151219074920/https://www.donaldjtrump.com/press-releases/donald-j.-trump-statement-on-preventing-muslim-immigration.

[4] Barbash, Fred, and Derek Hawkins. 2017. “Trump’s Loose Talk about Muslims Gets Weaponized in Court against Travel Ban.” Washington Post, February 7, 2017, sec. Morning Mix. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2017/02/07/words-matter-trumps-loose-talk-about-muslims-gets-weaponized-in-court-against-travel-ban/

Court eventually allowed a watered down version to take full effect while legal challenges in lower courts were heard.[5]

Making and Remaking Muslim Identity in the Face of Public Scrutiny

Donald Trump's ban on Muslim immigration is but one example of public scrutiny of Muslims in the U.S. As this thesis will demonstrate, anti-Muslim scrutiny has persisted in the nation for centuries, beginning with the early days of American colonization. In the current moment, Muslim identities are often conflated with a terrorist threat to the United States. This thesis will trace the creation of this stereotype as it has developed over the past several decades. In responding to and contesting this public scrutiny, American Muslims have relatively few options. Many Islamic organizations attempt to demonstrate their loyalty to the nation by continually renouncing the minority of instances of U.S. terrorism enacted by terrorists who happen to be Muslim[6]. The religion of Islam is practiced by 1.8 billion individuals worldwide, and only a handful of these individuals support Jihadist terrorism. Peter Bergen, National Security Analyst for CNN and Director of the National Security Studies Program at the New America Foundation in Washington D.C., estimates that between 85,000 and 106,000 Muslim men are part of militant Jihadist groups around the world. This represents fewer than 0.01% of the Muslim population worldwide.[7] In renouncing terrorist

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[5] Liptak, Adam. 2017. "Supreme Court Allows Trump Travel Ban to Take Effect." The New York Times, December 4, 2017, sec. Politics. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/04/us/politics/trump-travel-ban-supreme-court.html.

[6] "Terrorism 2002/2005." n.d. Page. Accessed April 9, 2018. https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/terrorism-2002-2005

[7] "Jihadist Threat Not as Big as You Think (Opinion) - CNN.Com." n.d. Accessed April 7, 2018. http://us.cnn.com/2014/09/26/opinion/bergen-schneider-how-many-jihadists/index.html.

activity, American Muslim organizations hope to remind the public that the vast majority of Muslims are peace-loving and pose no threat of violence towards the United States.

In attempting to assert belongingness to the fabric of American society, Muslim Americans may pursue one of several trajectories. First is that they may modify their religious idioms and practices so as to become more palatable to their American (read: white) peers, a phenomenon that I term "whitening Islam." As will be discussed in this work, whitening Islam refers to the adoption of a religious culture and practice that accords to white, Protestant religious norms and values. Whitening Islam does not refer to the equitable merging of Islamic and American identity,[8] but rather the subordination of Islamic customs and values to Americanness with the ambition of achieving mainstream social and political acceptance. Values and customs are adopted for their potential to improve the palatability of Islam to white and non-Muslim neighbors while other practices are marginalized despite the potential for personal significance to community members. The impact of this trajectory, regardless of intention, is the erasure of Islamic religious practice as well as sincerely held beliefs, and the subordination of yet another *way of being* to the hegemony of American, Protestant whiteness.[9] Belief in the *necessity* of cultural assimilation among immigrant groups is long-

[8] Anzaldúa, Gloria. Borderlands : The New Mestiza = La Frontera. 4th Ed., 25th Anniversary. ed. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2012.
[9] Hirschman discusses this rich debate in Hirschman, Charles. "America's Melting Pot Reconsidered." Annual Review of Sociology 9 (1983): 397-423.

standing and can be found in works such as Peter D. Salin's 1997 book, *Assimilation, American Style.*[10]

Muslim Americans who seek assimilation to whiteness attempt to conceal religious and/or national customs and values that differ from mainstream, white Protestant practices. Individuals seeking this trajectory adopt practices that highlight their compatibility with these white norms. Whiteness is a complex phenomenological experience and learned behavior.[11] As a social construct, it is not merely a skin color or set of phenotypical characteristics, but rather an imagined phenomenon that nevertheless carries with it numerous privileges.[12] Whiteness is also a set of beliefs, values, behaviors, habits, and attitudes. Nevertheless, it exists as a state of unconsciousness—it is often unknown to whites and considered a normal or universal way of being.[13] Because of this unconsciousness, whites enjoy structural advantage due to the privileging of the white way of being in domains such as education, the economy/workplace, and government. Assimilation to this white ideology promises (but does not always deliver) upward mobility and improved socioeconomic status. Whiteness is furthermore a position of power in which the power holder determines who is considered white and who is not. It is predicated on relations and oppositions to

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[10] Support for this trajectory can be found in Salins, Peter D. Assimilation, American Style. 1st ed. New York: Basic Books, 1996.

[11] Ahmed, S. 2007. "A Phenomenology of Whiteness." Feminist Theory 8 (2): 149–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139.

[12] Frye, M. (1983). On being White: Thinking toward a feminist understanding of race and race supremacy. In T. Burg (Ed.), *Politics of reality: Essays in feminist theory* . New York: Crossing Press.; Kivel, P. (1996). *Uprooting racism: How white people can work for racial justice* . Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Press.

[13] Hooks, B. (1994). Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom . New York: Routledge.

other social groups as well as a racial hierarchy in which whites dominate other groups.[14] Assimilation to whiteness is thus contentious because it relies upon an appeasement of a white ideology that holds itself over and against non-white entities.

Another trajectory that American Muslims may pursue is a multicultural/accommodationist one. This trajectory prefers to organize social relations in such a way as to accommodate divergent values, norms, and interests. It seeks to reduce conflicts between varying groups of individuals and provide a social order in which all groups may coexist.[15] This trajectory involves maintaining fidelity to deeply held religious values and practices. The set of these retained values is not finite and is inclusive of a variety of cultural and religious expressions. These expressions may accord to conventional Americanness, or they may not; they may reflect an intermingling of traditional American and Islamic principles, or they may more heavily reflect American or Islamic culture; they may embrace American values or entirely reject them. The consequences of this trajectory are often severe and include continued religious oppression, the transgression of human and civil rights, and endurance of harsh interpersonal discrimination. The value of this trajectory, however, includes the preservation of

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[14] Frye, M. (1983). On being White: Thinking toward a feminist understanding of race and race supremacy. In T. Burg (Ed.), Politics of reality: Essays in feminist theory . New York: Crossing Press.

[15] In an early form, accommodation was first discussed in Park and Burgess' *Introduction to the Science of Sociology.* Park and Burgess discussed accommodation as a precursor to assimilation. See Park, Robert Ezra, and Burgess, E. W. Introduction to the Science of Sociology. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1924., pp. 460

sincerely held customs and values as well as an assertion of religious freedom and multicultural belonging to the United States.[16] [17]

Multiculturalism is beneficial to everyone. While the model of whitening Islam may benefit the social and political standing of a few individuals, the multicultural model asserts that a multiplicity of ways of life hold inherent value. Acceptance of an assimilationist (whitening) trajectory submits to the assumption that white American culture is a prerequisite to social and political acceptance. The practice of whitening Islam concedes the argument that white ways of being are preferable and superior to the culture and practices of immigrants and minorities. In doing so, the practice draws from and reinscribes white supremacist ideology. The multiculturalism vs assimilation debate is not unique to Islam or Muslim immigration. In the face of white supremacist attitudes that demand assimilation, a variety of communities have had to ask hard questions about how to contend with American expectations of assimilation.

One of the first examples of encounters between whites and non-whites in the Americas existed between white colonial settlers and native Americans. In this case, natives were given very little option between acceptance and non-acceptance of whiteness. In cases where native communities were spared of the horrors of genocide, Americans rounded up native children and brought them to boarding schools where white instructors attempted to Americanize them. While

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[16] For an analysis of the growing preference for multiculturalism, see Glazer, Nathan. "Is Assimilation Dead?" The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 530 (1993): 122-36.
[17] Skerry, Peter. 2001. "Do We Really Want Immigrants to Assimilate?" Brookings (blog). November 30, 2001. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/do-we-really-want-immigrants-to-assimilate/.

courageous native families were sometimes able to assert a small degree of agency over boarding schools' curricula,[18] children were nonetheless made to forsake many meaningful cultural practices in favor of whitened ones. For one, students were forced to abandon their given native American names and adopt whitened, Christian ones. They were forbidden from speaking in native tongues and forced to cut their long hair down to acceptable American styles.[19] Native children were also forced to participate in public performances that inculcated white ways of being. For example, in 1886 at the Albuquerque Indian School, young native American boys and girls were forced to take part in a Memorial Day parade. Boys were made to march in procession while wearing school uniforms and girls were made to ride atop a themed float while wearing white aprons. On either side of the float, white supremacist messages were printed on large banners. Messages included, "Anglo-Saxon civilization rules the world, we submit," Wise statemanship demands a homogenous population," "patriotism precludes allegiance to civil powers, independent of the United States," and "we are born; education confers knowledge and power to assert and maintain our freedom."[20] The goal of these institutions, as Captain Richard H. Pratt has famously said, was to "kill the Indian" and "save the man."[21] Americans were so adamant about

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[18] Gram, John R., and Theodore Jojola. 2015. Education at the Edge of Empire: Negotiating Pueblo Identity in New Mexico's Indian Boarding Schools. University of Washington Press. http://muse.jhu.edu/book/40510/.

[19] Churchill, Ward. 2004. Kill the Indian, Save the Man: The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools. San Francisco: City Lights.

[20] Gram, John R. 2016. "Acting Out Assimilation Playing Indian and Becoming American in the Federal Indian Schools." American Indian Quarterly 40 (3): 251–73. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5250/amerindiquar.40.3.0251.

[21] Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites," Americanizing

destroying native American culture that they often left natives with no choice but to assimilate.

Some natives were able to resist assimilation and protect their cultural beliefs and values. When children returned to their reservations after a stint in boarding school, they were subject to the rules of the tribe, which, in some cases, sought to enforce traditional native ways of being. The Taos Pueblo, for example, required all men to braid their hair and wear traditional clothing. Subjects were allowed to wear American pants, but only if the seat was cut out and a blanket was worn around the middle. The idea was that the altered garments resembled deerskin leggings worn up to the thigh and the breechcloth. Natives of the Taos Pueblo were also required to wear moccasins. If American-bought shoes were worn, the heels had to be cut off. These regulations were enforced with fines ranging from one to five dollars, or, in severe cases, with public whippings in the plaza.[22] Native resistance to assimilation ensured the continued survival of native American customs and traditions and prevented the erasure of many native cultural traditions.

Whitening Islam: The American Flag Hijab Controversy

In the face of President Trump's election, a controversial new symbol of Muslim resistance has arisen: a polarized image of a Muslim woman wearing an American flag-themed hijab (see below). The image itself was created by Shepard

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the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian" 1880–1900 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

[22] Waters, Frank. Masked Gods; Navaho and Pueblo Ceremonialism. Albuqerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1950.

Fairey, a white man who also created the “Hope” poster for Barack Obama’s 2008 election campaign. The image itself has been promoted by artist-activist groups such as the Amplifier Foundation, for which Fairey is part of the advisory board, and was used widely as a symbol of protest during Trump’s inauguration backlash as well as during the Women’s March on Washington. Munira Ahmed, who served as the subject of the image, discusses her own viewpoint on the image in an interview with reporter Christina Cauterucci. Ahmed argues that the image is symbolic of the union of American and Muslim woman identities. “What’s most apparent and symbolic in the image,” she says, “is that this is a Muslim woman and an American woman and she is both of these things and she is not compromising either.” She furthermore explains that both her American and Muslim identities are deeply ingrained in her sense of self.[23]

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[23] Cauterucci, Christina. 2017. “A Q-and-A With the Muslim Woman Whose Face Has Become a Symbol of Trump Resistance.” Slate, January 25, 2017. http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2017/01/25/a_q_a_with_the_muslim_woman_whose_face_has_become_a_symbol_of_trump_resistance.html.
[24] The Amplifier Foundation, (2017). We The People - Greater Than Fear. [image] Available at: http://theamplifierfoundation.org/downloads/people-shepard-fairey/ .

For other American Muslim women, however, the image is far more controversial and threatens to deculturize Islam in a fashion similar to native American assimilation. Muslim-Iranian Hoda Katebi, author of the Muslim fashion blog entitled JooJoo Azad, describes the image as “white-washed” and “sanitized.” In a January 23, 2017 blog post entitled “Please keep your American flags off my hijab,”[25] Katebi lists seven reasons she opposes the image. One of the most powerful reasons listed is that “Muslims are tired of having to ‘prove’ they are American.” Muslims, she argues, should not have to prove their American patriotism to deserve civil and human rights. After all, she writes, “One does not need to be American to deserve respect, humanity, dignity, equality, rights, and freedom from hate and bigotry.” She furthermore points out that demanding Americanness as a qualification for acceptance is harmful for Muslim immigrants, the targets of Trump’s travel ban. Demanding proximity to Americanness and whiteness only serves to further the agenda of extreme vetting of Muslim refugees, who are asked to prove their ability to remain loyal to the United States. Katebi concludes her post with a powerful message. “Know that if the only time you are comfortable uplifting Muslim woman is when her image has been crafted by a white man and is draped in the American flag, I cannot call you my ally. I understand the good intentions, but my liberation will not come from framing my body with a flag that has flown every time my people have fallen.”

[25] “JOOJOO AZAD | آزاد جوجو: Please Keep Your American Flags Off My Hijab.” n.d. JOOJOO AZAD | آزاد جوجو. Accessed April 8, 2018. http://www.joojooazad.com/2017/01/keep-your-american-flags-off-my-hijab.html.

Whitening Islam: Zaytuna College

Having described the multicultural and assimilation trajectories inherent to the debate over Muslim belonging in the United States, as well as the racial implications of these trajectories, I now turn to the case study to be examined in this thesis: Zaytuna College. Zaytuna is a small liberal arts college that has earned the distinction of becoming the first Islamic college in the United States. Its founders have carefully curated its curriculum, seeking to craft a set of studies that simultaneously illuminates classic Western as well as Islamic texts. The cornerstone of this curriculum is immersion in Western and Islamic thought, and the goal is this: to Americanize the Islamic religion and create an interpretation that favors American values. In pursuing this whitened and Americanized religious expression, the founders of Zaytuna concede the same white supremacist logics that perpetuate anti-Muslim sentiment. Simultaneously, the school community and other Muslim American groups who adopt the assimilationist strategy can hardly be considered at fault, owing to the intense social and political pressures placed on them.

Founding of Zaytuna College

In the Fall of 2009, Hamza Yusuf, Hatem Bazian, and Zaid Shakir, three prominent Muslim scholars, launched Zaytuna College in Berkeley, California—the first accredited Muslim liberal arts college in the United States. The program evolved from Zaytuna Institute, an organization founded in 1996 with the intention of offering community-oriented programming such as community service, outreach, and Qur'an study. Over time, the institute's goals and intentions

evolved, and by 2008, the organization aspired to become an accredited Muslim college. Zaytuna moved from Hayward, California to the "Holy Hill" neighborhood in Berkley[26], just north of the UC Berkeley campus. It held its first classes in September 2010, and in 2015 it was accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.[27]

In its first year, the school attracted a mere fifteen students and offered but one degree program, "Islamic Law and Theology." Since then, it has grown to a student body of about fifty students. The school has diversified its course offerings, and now offers a variety of courses in Arabic grammar, Islamic jurisprudence, and American history. The school has a strong program in Arabic language, a requirement of all students.[28] The future of Zaytuna is uncertain, but bright. Farid Senzai, a member of the school's Board of Management, states, "many other colleges started out very small and we anticipate that we will start very small and slowly transition to a much bigger college over time."[29] Senzai's vision of the school is expansive, and he states, "we're seen as the Muslim version of Georgetown University, for instance." Other administrators are more cautious. Hatem Bazian, a founder of the school and chair of the management board, says of the Georgetown analogy, "That's setting the target way too high. I will be

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[26] Kamal, Sameea. 2011. "Seeds of Change: Zaytuna Shakes its Roots." Illume, December 20. Accessed December 8, 2017. http://archive.li/5l4KB.
[27] Winston, Kimberly. 2015. "Zaytuna becomes first accredited Muslim college." The Christian Century, 19 March.
[28] 2017. "College Catalog." Zaytuna College. Accessed December 08, 2017. https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwj0y-SR2IbYAhXo4IMKHR_wC-4QFggpMAA&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.zaytuna.edu%2Fassets%2Fdocuments%2Fzc_catalog_2017-18.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1-Z3PyonmDvAamVvFERziH.
[29] Redden, Elizabeth. 2009. "An Islamic College in Berkeley?" Inside Higher Ed. May 20, 2009. https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/05/20/zaytuna.

satisfied with [being akin to] a functioning community college that's not running in the red!"[30] Regardless, the school intends to become a permanent aspect of the American and educational landscape and has positioned itself for long-term prosperity.

Constructing a White Islam

What makes Zaytuna most unique is not its religious affiliation; instead, it is the institution's project and aspiration of crafting an *American interpretation* of Islam. Zaytuna, its founders purport, is most like Georgetown not only because it is a religious college, but also because it is a pillar in the process of Americanizing the religion. In the American past, Catholicism, as well as Judaism and Mormonism, suffered significant public suspicion. Many American Protestants rejected immigrant religious groups in search of mainstream American acceptance. It was only after significant time and assimilation that many Protestants were able to accept their non-Protestant neighbors. The American public required Muslims to adapt their religion to white Protestant expectations. Zaytuna College's founders and administrators are well aware of the school's role in crafting a mainstream American Islam, and actively seek to Americanize the religion. A post on the Zaytuna College blog makes this Americanizing agenda quite explicit. The post declares that Zaytuna students "represent the future of a decidedly American form of Islamic leadership," and that the school "was created

[30] *Ibid.*

with the dream of establishing an Islamic version of a classically western—and unmistakably *American—*institution: a faith-based liberal arts college."[31]

The goal of crafting an American interpretation of Islam is not race-neutral and relies upon a series of racialized assumptions about religion and national belonging. Many Muslim communities, including Zaytuna, have attempted to revise their cultural traditions and messaging, hoping to convince their American peers that Islam is in fact, an "American" religion. These attempts rely on the adoption of numerous white Protestant values that will be described in detail in Chapter One. There, I will raise the suggestion that these attempts have the effect of whitening the Islamic religion by rejecting elements that do not conform to white Western religious beliefs. I will draw from critiques of the assimilationist trajectory as well as the body of scholarly literature assessing the relationships between religion, race, and national identity.

To tell the story of how Zaytuna became a facilitator of whitened Islam, this thesis will begin by laying a theoretical foundation in Chapter One. I will discuss the ways in which religion has become deeply intertwined with racial and national identity, to the extent that each of these concepts have become reliant on one another. I will further discuss the ways in which white Protestants established a hierarchy of religious practice that ensured their supremacy over non-white, non-Protestant cultures. In Chapter Two, I will examine the history of Islamophobia as it pertains to Arab, Southwest Asian, and Muslim identity in the

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[31] Jenkins, Jack. n.d. "What It's Like To Attend America's First Accredited Muslim College." Accessed April 9, 2018. http://blog.zaytuna.edu/what-its-like-to-attend-americas-first-accredited-muslim-college-1.

United States. Specifically, I will highlight the ways in which Arab and Southwest Asian racial identities became conflated with Islamic religious identity, as well as the large black Muslim population that is neglected by this conflation. Additionally, I will examine the history of encounters between Americans and Muslims in the United States, as well as the denial of legal citizenship to Muslims. In chapter three, I will examine the emergence of modern Islamophobia, which I will describe as the conflation of Muslim identity with a terrorist threat to the United States. Under examination will be contentious political events involving the U.S. and Southwest Asian nations, as well as the shifting orientalist narratives surrounding these events. This chapter will highlight the role played by the media in perpetuating these effects and producing stereotypical images of Muslims and Islam. These chapters will culminate in Chapter Four, in which I will discuss the adaptations made by groups such as Zaytuna that served to (consciously and unconsciously) whiten the Islamic religion.

Chapter One: Theoretical Foundations

The story of Zaytuna College and its project of Americanizing its founders' religion is not a first in American history. For centuries, immigrants have struggled to join the American mainstream, a culture marked with whiteness and Protestantism. In pursuit of mainstream acceptance, many Immigrants have had to abandon their traditional cultural practices to satisfy their American peers. Arriving immigrants are thrust into a society that, upon encounter with difference, is quick to establish binary judgments and moral hierarchies. Newcomers must overcome sentiments of xenophobia before they may hope to achieve a semblance of the fabled American dream. For American Muslims, who have been present in the United States since its inception, the effort to join the American mainstream has continued to this day. Islamic organizations like Zaytuna have sought to craft an American interpretation of Islam that is palatable to their non-Muslim neighbors and peers. This adaptation of the religion carries significant implications for the national and racial identity of Muslims in the U.S.

This chapter will place the phenomenon of the Americanization of Islam into its theoretical context. Of particular importance will be Henry Goldschmidt's discussion of the interplay of religion, race, and nation, as well as Robert Orsi's discussion of the role played by white Protestants in creating a series of moralizing imperatives against which American religious groups, including Muslims, must contest. Goldschmidt's work highlights several important trends. First is that religion, race, and nation are often conceived *in light of each other.* In other words, Goldschmidt suggests that these concepts are co-constitutive of and

informed by one another. Examples of this include American conceptions of the U.S. as “a white, Christian nation,” as well as conceptions of Judaism as involving a divinely favored ethnic group with religious claims to territory (i.e. Israel). These constructions indicate a heavy intertwining of religion, race, and nation to the extent that each category must be deployed to define the others. Goldschmidt’s work is a reminder that conceptions of race, religion, and nation are not created in a vacuum, and that any attempt to discuss the effects of an evolving religion such as that found at Zaytuna may require an examination of the underlying national and racial implications.

Orsi’s work, meanwhile, places these concepts in the context of a nation in which persistent and deep-seated racial, religious, and national hierarchies are at work. Orsi highlights the many assumptions that Americans hold regarding religion. He exposes a typology of religious idioms and practices that favor white, Western religious culture, and pit Western religious beliefs against non-Western as well as non-Protestant practices. Orsi highlights that Americans expect religions to uphold Western practices, all while demonizing the practices of non-white religions. One example of this racial disparity would include American judgments against idioms such as speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, a practice that, while somewhat commonplace in the U.S., is much more prevalent in Latin

America and Africa.[32] [33] While Americans are comfortable with religious idioms such as community service and prayer, they are much more critical of phenomena such as glossolalia, or speaking in tongues. As we shall see in this chapter, American judgments against glossolalia stem from cultural preferences for religious idioms that are a reality of mind and spirit rather than a physical reality. Americans are less comfortable with the corporeal experience related to speaking in tongues than they are with prayer, which occurs in mind and spirit. Glossalia is read by many as a primitive and uncivilized practice. Another example that highlights the preference that Americans have for Protestant idioms includes anti-Catholic judgments against the papal organization of the Roman Catholic Church. Americans, particularly in the past, believed that Catholics could not be loyal citizens of the United States because of their allegiance to the Pope, a figure situated in Rome rather than in the U.S. Americans viewed the Catholic hierarchy as incompatible with American values such as democracy, self-sufficiency, and independence.[34]

Having established the theoretical links between religion, race, and nation, as well as the involved power dynamics affecting this landscape, this chapter will

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[32] Speaking in tongues enjoyed brief popularity in the United States following William J. Seymour's revival at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. Today, the practice is supported by many Pentecostal denominations in the U.S., to which at least four million Americans belong. Additionally, speaking in tongues is supported by millions more. See Green, Emma. 2014. "More Americans Are Speaking in Tongues." The Atlantic, September 12, 2014. https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/09/encounters-with-the-holy-ghost-in-american-churches/380118/.

[33] The Atlantic estimates that 20-25% of U.S. congregations experience speaking in tongues. See *ibid.*

[34] Consider, for example, Thomas Edward Watson's book arguing that the Catholic hierarchy undermines American values and Christian civilization. See Watson, Thomas E. 1915. The Roman Catholic Hierarchy: The Deadliest Menace to American Liberties and Christian Civilization. Jeffersonian PubCo,. http://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044081793820.

also examine crucial examples of religious groups that have already undergone an Americanization process. Whereas the United States began as a predominantly Protestant nation, it has come to accept the presence of groups such as Catholics and Jews. In place of the original conception of the U.S. as a “Protestant” nation, it has come to be known as a Judeo-Christian one. This latter conception is inclusive of both Jewish identities and Catholic ones. However, Americans did not wholeheartedly or immediately accept these religions. Rather, Jews and Catholics had to demonstrate their commitment to white and Protestant religious norms. In this context, Muslims are not the first religious group to undergo the process of Americanization. As we shall see, American Muslim communities such as Zaytuna have, in fact, attempted to mimic the path already paved by Catholics and Jews. Zaytuna, then, represents an important ingredient in the creation of an Islamic expression that would be palatable to the American public.

Henry Goldschmidt

Henry Goldschmidt’s work investigates the inseparably linked identities of race, nation, and religion. In his own words, Goldschmidt posits that “religion has been inextricably woven into both racial and national identities, to such an extent that “race,” “nation,” and “religion” have each defined the others.”[35] He furthermore argues that race, religion, and nation are not “clearly bounded categories” that “intersect,” but rather must be defined in relation to one another.

[35] Goldschmidt, Henry. 2004. "Introduction." In Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas, edited by Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth McAlister, 3-31. New York: Oxford University Press. pp.5

Goldschmidt's claim that these identities are interwoven rather than intersectional is a significant one. His argument is not that they intersect in ways similar to race, class, and gender; rather, it is that each category fundamentally relies on and cannot be articulated without the others. Drawing from recent theories of collective identity, Goldschmidt warns that a failure to critically examine the interplay of these categories is a failure to fully appreciate their impact on our world—past, present, and future.[36] Discourses on religious practice cannot be isolated from these racial and national intertwinings. Any attempt to understand the social changes undergone by American Muslims must likewise consider the intimate relationship between these categories.

Goldschmidt offers an example of the intersection of religion, race and nation. He describes the voyage of the Puritans to the Americas, a religious tale that serves a major role in the national identity of Americans.[37] The Puritans, who were exiled from England due to their religious beliefs, moved to the Americas in pursuit of the freedom to practice their religion. Goldschmidt argues that the Puritans drew heavily from the story of Exodus, in which the Israelites, God's chosen people, were delivered from oppression in Egypt and traveled forty years to the Promised Land of Canaan. The Puritans, he continues, drew many parallels between this Biblical fable and their own plight. They viewed their settlement in America as an "errand into the wilderness" not unlike Israel's journey in the Promised Land. In Goldschmidt's assessment, it would be impossible to separate

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[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid., pp .9

the religious and national aspirations of the Puritans. The project of establishing a colony in the Americas was the direct result of a religious vision in which the Puritans would establish a community in which they could practice their religion freely.[38] The American story cannot be articulated without the help of religious mythmaking. Examining these events in a historical context, one could further argue that these beliefs are racialized in that the Puritans identified themselves strongly with the Israelites, an ethnic group receiving God's favor.

The Exodus story was also crucial to the identities of enslaved black persons in the Americas.[39] Unlike their white peers who identified America with the Promised Land, African Americans viewed the Americas as the land of oppression and bondage. Black Christians, many of whom were kidnapped and brought to the Americas as slaves, associated the land with Egypt, and themselves with the Israelites promised freedom by God. In the South, black Christians preached assurance of divine deliverance from oppression as early as the antebellum period and as late as Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1968 sermon on Moses' trip to the mountaintop. This identification with the people of Israel served to create a sense of peoplehood amongst the black population. This religious sense of peoplehood, combined with other factors such as the economics of black enslavement, contemporaneous American politics, and the pseudoscience of eugenics, laid the groundwork that helped to *create* black identity itself. The Exodus story and the religious and national myths that accompany it are

[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid., pp. 9-10

inextricably linked to blackness' creation to the extent that blackness, religion, and the nation cannot be separated into individual categories.

The role that religion has played in the creation of racial identity and difference is often neglected. Although the concept of race did not arise until the late 18th century (and did not become salient until the 19th century), earlier related concepts did predate it.[40] European encounters with African as well as Asian and Native American peoples were not simply economic or political, but also embodied important religious components as well. As Europeans began to encounter non-Christian peoples, they regarded the populations they conquered as "heathens," or non-Christian. They believed that these heathen peoples must have had "blood" that was somehow different from that of Christian families.[41] This theory of blood, which predated the concept of race, was deeply intertwined with the concept of Christendom as well as the notion of "pure Christian blood." As Goldschmidt describes, 'the boundaries of Christendom shaped the boundaries of whiteness, and longstanding perceptions of heathenism shaped emerging perceptions of racial difference."[42]

The preoccupation of Europeans with blood purity likely arose from historic beliefs in the magical properties of bodily fluids, as well as Biblical accounts of biological ties as found in the Bible's "Table of Nations."[43] Whites believed that a person's blood was both a marker of difference and a determinant

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[40] Ibid., pp. 12
[41] Ibid., pp. 13
[42] Ibid., pp. 12
[43] Ibid., pp. 12-13

of an individual's character. European Christians often accused Jews of using their blood for magical and nefarious purposes. In Spain, these perceived differences were codified as law in the purity of blood statutes of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century. This system sought to stigmatize converted Christians as well as Christian descendants with Jewish and Muslim ancestors. The concept of blood purity likely seemed natural to Europeans as it resonated with biblical narratives found in the Bible's "Table of Nations." [44] Many believed (and, to this day, some still believe) that the three sons of Noah represent the three meta-races of "Negroid," "Caucasoid," and "Mongoloid." What's more, the Bible often discusses God's exasperation in the "stubbornness" of the Jews, suggesting to Europeans that this quality was essentially innate in the Jewish population. Thus, the concept of bloodline difference likely fueled beliefs in the importance of blood purity, eventually giving way to the concept of racial difference.[45]

Robert Orsi and the Hierarchy of Religious Idioms

Having demonstrated the intimate links between religion, race, and nation, particularly as they have worked together to inform one another, this thesis now turns to look at the ways in which Americans have established a hierarchy of religious practices that is deeply raced and nationalized. In his essay, "Snakes Alive: Religious Studies Between Heaven and Earth,"[46] Robert Orsi investigates

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[44] Johnson, Sylvester A. 2004. The Myth of Ham in Nineteenth-Century American Christianity: Race, Heathens, and the People of God. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
[45] Goldschmidt, Henry. 2004. "Introduction." In Race, Nation, and Religion in the Americas, edited by Henry Goldschmidt and Elizabeth McAlister, 3-31. New York: Oxford University Press.
[46] Orsi, Robert. 2006. "Snakes Alive: Religious Studies Between Heaven and Earth." In Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them, by Robert Orsi, 177-239. NJ: Princeton: Princeton University Press.

the history of American religious studies and the ways in which academic departments of religion have worked to inscribe a "good/bad" binary opposing conventional white, Western Protestant religious idioms over/against all other religious practice. Americans widely approve of those religious practices which coincide with their strongly held values but demonize those practices that may be associated with non-Western culture. Favored values are associated with White Christendom as it has developed in Europe and the Americas, while demonized values are associated with all other religions. As Orsi discusses, these white supremacist views have also been legitimized, in some cases, by American academic departments of religion.

The dichotomies and normative expectations held by white, Christian Protestants are quite extensive. The binaries employed include good/bad, civilized/primitive, universal/local, mature/infantile, modern/primitive and other judgments. These binaries are used to demean particular religions despite the subjective nature that each dichotomy embodies. For instance, much has been written regarding the presumed "modernity" or "backwardness" of Fundamentalist interpretations of various religions that have arisen in response to globalization. Many have been quick to label this Fundamentalism as a traditional, primitive, or "backwards" ideology. Yet others have contended that this Fundamentalism is, in fact, a modern phenomenon. After all, it has arisen in the face of, and in reaction to, globalization. My point here is not to comment on whether or not Fundamentalism is, in fact, modern; rather it is to highlight the socially constructed nature of such discourse. Despite methodological attempts to

justify academic judgments of non-white religions, determining whether a religion is 'modern,' 'civilized,' 'good,' or 'mature' cannot be said to be a scientific exercise. Rather, it is a subjective judgment made for/against the religion and relies upon socially derived beliefs and expectations. Thus, while many Americans believe their religion to be 'mature' and 'rational,' these assumptions are not the result of fact but rather cultural construction.

Likewise, Americans hold an extensive set of values that they expect religions to embody. Americans prefer values such as community service, capitalism/work ethic, democracy, monotheism, and rationality. Many of these values sit at the heart of Western culture and can be seen throughout virtually all Western and American institutions, including the economy, education, and government. Americans also prefer religious idioms that they consider ethical, noncoercive, respectful of persons, mystical (rather than ritualistic), and emotionally controlled. They expect religion to be a reality of mind and spirit (rather than body and matter) and concerned with ideals (rather than actual things or presences in things). Furthermore, as Orsi articulates, religions must move their participants towards "emotional, spiritual, and existential maturity," while also ensuring the "unity, success, and happiness" of religious participants. Good religions are socially integrative, stable, and promote social solidarity.[47] As can be seen, the expectations that Americans have of religions are wide-reaching. Religion is expected to play a key role in community building and personal happiness. The expectation that all religions embody these values ignores the role

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[47] Ibid.

that religion may play in non-Western societies, as well as the unique values that may be held dearly by non-whites.

Orsi also discusses the historic use of discourse on religion to control and dominate non-white Western groups. These discourses developed alongside European encounters with the religious cultures of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Orsi writes, “Discourse about ‘religions’ and ‘religion’ was key to controlling and dominating these populations, just as religious practice and imagination were central to the way that the dominated themselves submitted to, contested, resisted, and reimagined their circumstances.”[48] As an example, Americans encountering Hindu rituals echoed long-standing anti-Catholic criticisms. Many white Protestants criticized these rituals, arguing that corporeal religious idioms were inferior to other, more mystical practices. Many viewed these practices as “bad” ritualistic expressions and likely associated them with paganism, a religious label heavily scorned by many. These criticisms said less about the actual practices of the Hindus and more about deep-seated Western religious expectations and ongoing Protestant theological beliefs. Furthermore, these discourses attempted to rationalize and support overlapping racist assertions against peoples practicing Hinduism.

American Encounters with Catholicism

To illustrate the concepts outlined in Goldschmidt and Orsi’s work, this thesis will now approach the topic of American encounters with Catholicism to

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[48] Ibid., 178

demonstrate the consequences of Goldschmidt and Orsi's work. Catholic immigrants to the United States enrolled in a nation that was understood to be Protestant in orientation and Anglo Saxon in composure. Not only were immigrants marked as religious outsiders, but many were also seen as ethnic inferiors. The American public rejected Catholics as well as their religious idioms and practices. Many of these rejections were based on the lack of, or perceived lack of, compatibility between dominant white, American norms and Catholic practices. As has been briefly discussed, Islam is not the first religion to have undergone Americanization. Catholics and Jews also needed to overcome American suspicions in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, shifting from distrusted "bad religions" to accepted "good religions."

Catholics faced widespread distrust and, in a few cases, physical violence for their beliefs. Anti-Catholicism among Protestants has its roots in Martin Luther's Reformation. The Reformation produced strong sentiments on the part of Protestants against Catholic practices such as the clerical hierarchy and its Papacy. During the Reformation, Protestant leaders bitterly decried what they felt were drastic theological errors perpetuated by the Church. Many British colonists, including the Puritans and the Congregationalists, had moved to the Americas principally to escape religious persecution at the hands of the Church of England, a church they heavily criticized as possessing similar religious practices to those of the Catholic Church.[49] In the U.S., many Protestant groups criticized Catholicism for its perceived ritualistic practices as well as its belief in the cult of

[49] Bremer, Francis J. 2009. Puritanism: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford University Press.

the saints, or the practice of praying to saints. Many Protestants viewed these idioms as holdovers from ancient pagan rituals practiced during the Roman Empire, calling into question the religion's monotheism. These Protestants also rejected the Catholic Church's belief in Sacred Tradition, which is the teaching authority of the Catholic Church established by oral and written communications of church clergy dating back to the original twelve apostles. Americans feared that Catholic trust in the hierarchy of the Church would make it impossible for them to remain patriotic citizens. The hierarchy limited the freedom and independence of Catholic practitioners, inhibiting them from pursuing the independent thinking that would allow them to reach religious conclusions on their own.[50]

For over 200 years, Protestants accused their Catholic peers of being a foreign threat to the republic, arguing that they were loyal to the Pope in Rome.[51] Protestants argued that this allegiance was undemocratic and feared that it would lead to a treasonous political alliance with the European church. Catholic acceptance of the hierarchy, Protestants believed, rendered the religion irrational and unscientific. One article in the *New Republic* charged that Catholicism was a culture "based on absolutism" that encouraged "obedience, uniformity and intellectual subservience." This was contrasted with "Americanism" which was deemed "a culture which encourages curiosity, hypotheses, experimentation,

[50] Dolan, Jay P. 2002. In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
[51] Wood, F. (2016). Anti Catholicism. In S. Bronner (Ed.), Encyclopedia of American studies. MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/login?auth=tufts&url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/jhueas/anti_catholicism/0?institutionId=991

verification by facts and a consciousness of the process of individual and social life as opposed to conclusions about it."[52] These anti-Catholic sentiments were used to question the ability of Catholics to be true American citizens capable of participating in the democratic project. As a result of these beliefs, Catholics were often required to take oaths promising allegiance to the crown rather than the church and undergo other tests of their loyalty.[53]

The case of Catholicism is a prime example of the interplay of religious and national identity. For American Protestants, the Catholic religion came to be associated with anti-democracy, and as such, was not compatible with national belonging. In order to participate in American society, Catholics needed to renounce loyalty to their Church and instead adopt a series of Protestant values related to rationality, democracy, and objectivity. But what is also interesting is the ways in which anti-Catholic sentiment and nativist assertions were co-constituted. American criticisms of Catholicism came at a time where nativist sentiments were high, and where many sought to create racial distinctions within European ethnicities. Catholics posed not just a religious and national threat to the republic, but also a racial one.

Between 1840 and 1924, a wave of over 30 million Europeans immigrated to the United States. Much of this immigration was fueled by the Irish potato famine. The result of this wave of immigration was a massive change in the Catholic population of the United States. Prior to the 1840s, Roman Catholics

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[52] Dolan, Jay P. In Search of an American Catholicism : A History of Religion and Culture in Tension. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002., pp.166
[53] Wood, F. (2016).

were a small, tight-knit minority composed mostly of well-educated, English aristocrats. Following the Irish potato famine, however, millions of Irish Catholics fled to the United States, prompting the American Catholic population to change drastically. Catholics became a much more diverse group of urban and rural immigrants speaking a multitude of languages, socioeconomic statuses, and heritages. Catholics grew from representing five percent of the U.S. population in 1850 to seventeen percent by 1906. The rapid and extensive change in the ethnic and religious makeup of the nation sparked backlash and anti-Catholic sentiment. The newcomers were much maligned by their peers. In 1834, Boston's Charlestown Convent was burned to the ground, and in 1850, the xenophobic Know Nothing party gained prominence in American politics. The 1890s saw the rise of "No Irish Need Apply" signs. Each of these xenophobic actions simultaneously targeted the newcomers for their ethnic, national, and Catholic affiliations.[54]

In the late 19th century, as Catholic Europeans continued to immigrate, concerns regarding their fitness for citizenship escalated. With the rise of the pseudoscience of Eugenics, scientists began classifying degrees of whiteness, which included "Anglo Saxon," "Celtic," "Hebrew," and "Asiatic." Many believed, both in popular cultural and scholarship, that multiple white races existed, but that some white races, notably the Celts, were inferior to others. The American public believed that Anglo Saxons were a superior white race

[54] "Roman Catholics and Immigration in Nineteenth-Century America, The Nineteenth Century, Divining America: Religion in American History, TeacherServe, National Humanities Center." n.d. Accessed April 9, 2018. http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/nromcath.htm.

possessing higher intelligence, energy, and attractiveness. Anglo Saxons were also associated with Protestantism. The Celts, on the other hand, were stereotyped as intellectually deficient, brash, unattractive, and alcoholic. Celts were associated with Catholicism. Many American Protestants believed that the Celtic race was "not quite white," and possessed innate qualities that rendered Celts unfit for American citizenship.[55]

In the 1920s, rising Catholic and immigrant influence and a nativist revival fueled the rebirth of the Ku Klux Klan, which enforced its WASP (white, anglo-saxon, Protestant) ideology and supremacy. In opposing Catholic and immigrant presence, the Klan sought to define "one hundred percent Americanism." Opposition to these relative newcomers served to stoke American nationalism and solidify a sense of identity among long-standing Americans who had once held majority political control.[56] The fury of the Klan and anti-Catholic Americans can be seen in the presidential campaign of Al Smith. In 1928, Smith became the first American Catholic to win the Presidential nomination of a major political party. Many Protestant groups feared that Smith's belonging to the Catholic Church presented a threat to the democracy and national autonomy of the American public. They asserted that the President would receive private

[55] "Celts, Hottentots, and "white Chimpanzees":: THE RACIALIZATION OF THE IRISH IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY." In Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race, 30. Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2012.
[56] Pegram, Thomas R. One Hundred Percent American : The Rebirth and Decline of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s. Chicago : [Lanham, Md.]: Ivan R. Dee ; Distributed by National Book Network, 2011.pp. 47–88.

directions from the pope, who represented an "un-American" Church as well as an "alien culture."[57]

By the late 19th and into the 20th century, however, the tide began to turn on anti-Catholic sentiment. In the election of 1960, John F. Kennedy used his Catholic faith to gain the electoral support of American Catholics for his successful Presidential election. Catholic and immigrant presence had grown to the point where Catholics now held majorities in several districts.

At the end of the 19th century, the Catholic Church became concerned that some of its American members, including bishops, had adopted beliefs that affirmed American values but were contrary to the teachings of Catholic Tradition. On January 22, 1899, Pope Leo XIII addressed his apostolic letter *Testem Benevolentiae* to Baltimoire's archbishop, James Cardinal Gibbons.[58] Leo XIII expressed concern that some American bishops had adopted beliefs that could lead "to the detriment of the peace of many souls."[59] These beliefs were based on American cultural and political values such as democracy and individualism. The letter was issued after an 1897 French translation of a biography of Isaac Thomas Hecker, who founded the Paulist Fathers missionary. Hecker, as the biography alleged, believed that the Church should minimize those doctrinal traditions that might hinder Americans from converting to

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[57] Slayton, Robert A. (2001). Empire statesman: the rise and redemption of Al Smith. Simon and Schuster. ISBN 0-684-86302-2.
[58] "Americanism | Roman Catholicism." n.d. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 25, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Americanism.
[59] Leo XIII, Pope. 1899. "Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae." Papal Encyclicals (blog). 1899. http://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/l13teste.htm.

Catholicism.[60] Leo XIII describes this belief in his letter, writing that "Many… contend that it would be opportune, in order to gain those who differ from us, to omit certain points of her teaching which are of lesser importance, and to tone down the meaning which the Church has always attached to them." Leo XIII addresses what he perceived was growing support among Catholics for the separation of church and state as well as individualistic thinking as opposed to acceptance of Catholic dogma and Tradition.[61] Leo XIII declared this set of beliefs heretical. Despite Pope Leo XIII's letter, many members of the American Catholic Church hierarchy denied the prevalence of Americanism, calling it a "phantom heresy." American bishops unanimously denied support for the ideas. The extent of the Americanist heresy's acceptance among American Catholics remains contested to this day, with some denying its existence while others assert its widespread acceptance.[62] The Americanist controversy highlights the intertwined nature of religion and national identity. American Catholics hoped that a de-emphasis on Catholic values such as the union of Church and state as well as a renewed focus on democracy would strengthen their religion's appeal to the American public. This phenomenon will be explored in additional detail in chapter four.

[60] "Americanism | Roman Catholicism." n.d. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 25, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Americanism.
[61] Leo XIII, Pope. 1899. "Testem Benevolentiae Nostrae." Papal Encyclicals (blog). 1899. http://www.papalencyclicals.net/leo13/l13teste.htm.
[62]Reher, Margaret Mary. "Pope Leo Xiii and "Americanism"." Theological Studies 34, no. 4 (1973): 679-89.

Conclusion

The example of Catholic immigration to the United States highlights a number of key themes that will be of relevance to this thesis. First, it highlights the deeply intertwined nature of racial, religious, and national identities. In the Catholic example, it would be impossible to imagine anti-Catholic bias without also taking into consideration the national and racial animus that informed its deployment. Catholics were unfit American citizens due to their loyalty to the foreign, European pope and their resulting inability to demonstrate unwavering allegiance to the nation. They were furthermore marked by their apparent lack of conformity to values such as rationality, independence, democracy, and monotheism, self-reliance, and individual thinking. American residents further weaponized Whiteness in order to exclude Celts, who were largely Catholic, from gaining the privileges of Whiteness. They drew boundaries around Whiteness that coincided with Protestantism.

The relationship between race, religion, and nation is similarly complex in the example of contemporary Muslim immigration to the United States. Americans today conflate Muslim identity with racial and ethnic groups such as Arabs and South West Asians. Despite the prevalence of black Muslims that have existed in the United States since early American history, the Arab race has quickly become conflated with the Islamic religion. In some cases, Arab and Southwest Asian Muslims may experience forms of Islamophobic discrimination that are not frequently deployed towards African American Muslims. This may

include salient tropes such as the myth of the Muslim terrorist, as well as the subdued Muslim woman.

In the example of anti-Catholicism, we furthermore see a hierarchy of religious expression strongly enforced by the American public. The perceived lack of democracy within the Catholic hierarchy was used to justify rampant discrimination against Catholic communities. Lack of accordance to this deeply-held American value was enough for Protestants to question the feasibility of extending citizenship to Catholic immigrants. Protestants used the Catholic hierarchy to demean the religion and ensure that Protestantism enjoyed a privileged religious status. Anti-Catholicism was further used to stoke American nationalism and create a national understanding of the "American" as being a white, anglo-saxon Protestant. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan utilized physical violence to express opposition to the changing demographics of the nation and further cement the myth of the "100-percent American."

As we shall see, Muslims in the United States have faced similar charges against their religious traditions. Muslims have been accused by some of practicing uncivilized, divisive, and/or oppressive religious customs. These assertions are used to demean the religion as a whole, despite the diversity of religious practice found in the Muslim faith (there are, after all, 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide).

Chapter Two: Islamophobia in the United States: Deep Roots

The legacy of Islamophobia in America has predated Zaytuna and the current historical moment by hundreds of years. Like racism, it is endemic to the history of the nation, and has existed since its very beginning. The founders of Zaytuna, with their project of Americanizing and, as I argue, whitening Islam, contest centuries of anti-Muslim scrutiny perpetuated by non-Muslim Americans. This chapter explores Islamophobia in the United States by applying the frameworks discussed in Chapter One, particularly those of Henry Goldschmidt and Robert Orsi. This history will reveal the ways in which American non-Muslims swiftly developed a national identity that excluded Islam and enacted barriers that legally precluded Muslims from attaining citizenship on the basis of perceived racial differences.

When attempting to discuss the history of Islamophobia in the United States, one must defeat the belief that "Muslim Americans" form a coherent or unified group, as well as the expectation that Islamophobia uniformly targets an explicit group of people.[63] The Muslim experience in the United States is as diverse and varied as the religion itself. American Muslims come from as many as sixty-five different nationalities, speak a wide range of languages, and express a diversity of cultural, economic, sectarian, and ideological beliefs.[64] Likewise, the experience of Islamophobia is similarly fractured across many identities. In recent

[63] Miller, Lisa. 2015. "The Oxford Handbook of American Islam." Reference Reviews 29 (8): 14–14. https://doi.org/10.1108/RR-07-2015-0173.
[64] "Demographic Portrait of Muslim Americans." 2017. Pew Research Center: Religion & Public Life. July 26, 2017. http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/demographic-portrait-of-muslim-americans/.

studies, Islamophobia may be said to affect "Muslims," "Arabs," or "Middle Easterners."[65] However, a significant number of Middle Easterners do not practice Islam, and many Muslims do not occupy Arab or Middle Eastern identities. In fact, the majority of Arabs and Middle Easterners in the United States are not Muslims, but rather practice Christianity.[66] Likewise, the majority of Muslim Americans in the United States are not Arabs. Muslim American communities include not just foreign immigrants but also native born Americans, including a large number of African Americans.[67]

Islamophobia and American Identity Formation

Since the early days of colonization, Americans have defined themselves as above and in opposition to Islamic practitioners. Early American political and philosophical thought revolved around a repudiation of the specter of tyranny and despotism. The nation viewed itself as a survivor of British tyranny,and defined itself as above and in opposition to all forms of despotism. In constructing this self-definition, the young nation drew from Enlightenment thought—a European philosophical movement dating back to the 17th century. Enlightenment thought often portrayed Islamic government as inherently despotic. In 1788, for example, the New Haven Gazette reported that "The faith of Mahomet, wherever it is

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[65] Love, Erik. "Confronting Islamophobia in the United States: framing civil rights activism among Middle Eastern Americans." *Taylor & Francis.* 43, no. 3-4. (2009). 401-425. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220903109367

[66] Hertz, Todd. n.d. "Are Most Arab Americans Christian?" Accessed April 23, 2018. https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/marchweb-only/3-24-22.0.html.

[67] Alsultany, Evelyn , "Arabs, Muslims, and Arab Americans" , in The Routledge Companion to Media and Race ed. Christopher P. Campbell (Abingdon: Routledge, 06 Dec 2016), accessed 23 Apr 2018 , Routledge Handbooks Online.

established, is unified with despotic power." Americans viewed their democracy in diametric opposition to this perceived despotism.[68]

One factor contributing to the fascination of the American public with Islam can be located in the rise of the "Barbary" pirates that seized and enslaved Christian sailors. The term 'Barbary' was a derogatory term used by Americans to refer to North African powers. It is related to the term "barbarians," which reflects Americans' negative views of the Muslim and Mediterranean peoples. The term Barbary could be used to describe individuals from the North African region or to describe individuals who did not fit into conventional racial profiles such as black or white. The term was also used to describe individuals who refused to cooperate with the dominant faith or commercial systems.[69] Saint Augustine, a prominent figure in Western Christian thought, for example, referred to non-Christians in his home region (today Algeria) as "barbarians."[70] Barbary pirates posed a major threat to the American economy, as well as American hopes of increasing global power. Americans as diverse as sailors, traders, diplomats, and military officers necessitated safe passage to ports in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, which was proximally close to the Barbary states of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. The Barbary threat eventually inspired the formation of the U.S. Navy. [71]

Many of the first Americans to encounter Islam in foreign lands were sailors, merchants, and officials travelling to eastern Mediterranean Sea ports that

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[68] Marr, Timothy. 2006. The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
[69] Kidd, Thomas S. 2009. American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press., pp.2
[70] Ibid., pp.2
[71] Marr, Timothy. 2006. The Cultural Roots of American Islamicism. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press., pp.28

were not far from the Barbary States of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli in North Africa. Travelers described the region as a "savage desert" that was "fraught with the most detestable depravity in human nature."[72] They strongly disliked the inhabitants of this region due to their practices of pillaging European traders and ransoming Christian prisoners. Americans described these practices as "tyrannical" and blamed Britain for encouraging its North African allies to target American ships. Americans associated the tyranny of the Barbary States with the oppression they faced during British colonization. Furthermore, they wrongfully attributed this tyranny to the Islamic religion rather than to the specific economic practice of piracy.[73]

The pirates and pillagers of Algiers posed a significant threat to the American colonies and early Republic, leading the young nation to associate the North African state with political tyranny. Americans viewed the pirates as easily-manipulated agents of a despotic Sultan, and also believed that the Sultan was in collusion with King George III, further reifying their association of Algiers with despotism. Within five years of the colonial experiment, Barbary pirates from the Moroccan port of Salee entered into the British Channel and overtook two Plymouth Ships. In the period lasting from 1609 to 1616, Barbary pirates had captured 466 English ships, and by 1637 four to five thousand British subjects had been captured. In 1644, Massachusetts merchants and traders filed a petition to Britain for protection at sea, leading to the commissioning of ships to pursue the

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[72] Stevens, James Wilson. 2007. An Historical and Geographical Account of Algiers; Comprehending a Novel and Interesting Detail of Events Relative to the American Captives. http://name.umdl.umich.edu/N24799.0001.001., pp. 3.
[73] Marr (2006), pp. 28.

pirates. American committees and charities rallied together to raise funds for the redemption of captured colonists.[74]

During the 18th century, the situation involving the Barbary pirates reached a temporary respite. The British had negotiated treaties with the Barbary threats and paid regular tributes for the right to travel through and trade in the Mediterranean. Merchants and traders were issued passes that indicated that the British were current on their payment obligations. This respite ended once Americans declared their independence from Britain. Once again, Americans were besieged, robbed, and kidnapped by Barbary pillagers. Americans believed that these acts were encouraged by their new enemy, King George III. In 1793, these events came to a peak when nine American ships were captured within three weeks between October 8th and 23rd, resulting in 120 captivities. Once again, Americans worked together to form charities, societies, committees, and benefits to redeem the captured citizens.[75] The crisis resulted in a two month embargo on American shipping, a rapid increase in the cost of marine insurance, and a rise in inflation. The crisis finally ended on July 12th of 1796, when the federal government signed a treaty freeing the remaining captives. The government was required to pay a cash ransom, give consular gifts with the arrival of each new official, and make an annual tribute of military provisions. Perhaps most embarassing to the republic was the gift of one of the earliest naval ships—a

[74] Ibid. pp. 28-29

[75] Wilson, Gary E., "American Hostages in Moslem Nations, 1784-1796, The Public Response," *Journal of the Early Republic* 2 (Spring 1982): 133-7; Bartlett, Harley Harris, "American Captives in Barbary," *Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review 61* (Spring 1959): 239-54.

thirty-six-gun frigate—to the daughter of a Barbary governor. [76] These events played a major role in forming the American perception of the Barbary states, driving Americans to associate what they saw as despotism and a lack of civilization with dark skin and Islamic religion.[77]

With the dramatic events of the Algerian crisis at the forefront of the American imagination, Islamophobia played a key role in shaping the American self-concept and surfaced in religious and political media. Religious figures such as Cotton Mather played a role in rallying fundraisers for captured Americans, while others such as Roger Williams used Islam as an example of a deceitful and oppressive human system. In Roger Williams' *G. Fox Digg'd out of His Burrowes (1676),* Williams articulated harsh criticism against Catholicism, Islam, and Quakerism, drawing contrasts between these religions and what he viewed as the true Christian religion. He wrote that his Protestant followers might live to see "the Pope and Mahomet.. Flung into the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone."[78] Elsewhere, American political figures such as Thomas Paine conflated Islam with monarchical government, using the religion to articulate American ideals such as liberty and democracy. In *Common Sense* (1776)*,* Paine denounced monarchy and argued that the United States should become an "asylum for liberty." In crafting this argument, Paine deployed anti-Catholic and Islamophobic thought, writing that "monarchy in every instance is the Popery of government," and that the divine right of a monarch to rule was a "superstitious

[76] Marr (2006), pp.33
[77] Ibid., pp.33-34.
[78] Williams, Roger. 1676. George Fox Digg'd Out of His Burrowes, Or, An Offer of Disputation on Fourteen Proposals. John Foster., pp.10-11

tale, conveniently timed, Mahomet like, to cram hereditary right down the throats of the vulgar."[79] Later, during the Sedition Act of 1798 passed during the John Adams administration, James Lyon of Humphrey Connecticut argued in *The True Nature of Imposture, Fully Display'd in the Life of Mahomet* that John Adams was the new Muhammad. Lyon, whose father, Matthew Lyon, was a Congressman imprisoned for violation of the Sedition Act, argued that the concentration of power and religious zeal were threats to the American republic, and were qualities found expressly in Islam.[80]

Early Protestant eschatology aided in the construction of Islamophobia throughout the colonial and antebellum periods. Some believed that biblical scripture revealed Islam as a challenge to Christianity. In an Islamophobic and Orientalist narrative, many Protestants constructed an image of the "Eastern Antichrist," which was used to understand global events happening around them. Many American Protestants viewed the rise of Islam as the result of the fifth trumpet described in the book of Revelation. According to Biblical prophecy, this trumpet reveals the "angel of the bottomless pit" who would ascend amid smoke to punish a corrupt Christianity. Under this interpretation, the smoke became a symbol of the false religion of Islam that was believed to have distorted Christianity. The locusts that arose from the smoke were seen as symbolic of Muslims spreading their religion across the globe. Protestants following this

[79] Paine, Thomas. Common Sense. Philadelphia: printed. And sold by W. and T. Bradford [1776]; Bartleby.com, 1999. www.bartleby.com/133/.
[80] Prideaux, Humphrey. 1718. The True Nature of Imposture Fully Display'd in the Life of Mahomet: With a Discourse Annex'd for the Vindication of Christianity from This Charge.;

interpretation further argued that Muhammad was the "angel of the bottomless pit" itself. [81]

In the 1810s, a new American missionary movement became popular in the United States. The movement, which was inspired by the concurrent Second Great Awakening and led by descendants of Jonathan Edwards, encouraged Americans to plant missions in majority-Muslim areas of the world. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) vocalized concerns that the Middle East population, composed of Jews, Muslims, and few Christians, was "in a state of deplorable ignorance and degradation," and "destitute of the means of divine knowledge, and bewildered with vain imaginations and strong delusions."[82] The ABCFM assigned the establishment of a mission in Palestine to Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons. Fisk proclaimed that a successful mission in Palestine would ensure that "some of the strongest fortresses of error and sin will be taken."[83] This missionary impulse was fueled by the eschatological beliefs that many Protestants held. Missionaries hoped that the evangelical impulse would harken the destruction of the Catholic Church while also bringing about the end of the Ottoman empire. This prompted an era of Protestant gaze upon the foreign Muslim community as a site to be converted to Christianity.[84]

American missionary efforts to convert Muslims abroad proved difficult. For one, proselytizing Muslims was prohibited under Ottoman law. Americans

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[81] Kidd (2009), pp.12-13; 19
[82] Ibid., pp. 37
[83] Ibid., pp.37
[84] Ibid., pp.37-38

could not seek to directly convert Muslims to Christianity without facing legal consequences. Because of this statute, the ABCFM made the conversion of Orthodox Christians its first goal of evangelism. The organization assumed that because of their location in the Middle East, the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman empire could not be more than nominally religious. Reforming Orthodox Christians, it was believed, would set a positive example for neighboring Muslims and Jews, and would inevitably cause them to convert to Christianity. Rufus Anderson, who served as secretary and historian of the ABCFM, argued that Turkish Muslims would not convert "unless true Christianity can be exemplified before them by the Oriental Churches." In addition to the legal challenges facing the ABCFM's agenda, missionaries were also plagued with a lack of funding as well as environmental challenges such as illness and disease. By 1825, both Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons had succumbed to disease and died on the mission field. Because of these difficulties, American missionaries were forced to grapple with their depictions of Muslims as easy targets for conversion and mere pawns in the history of God's salvation. Muslims did not fall neatly into the eschatological expectations that they would be subdued in the end times. Why was it, missionaries pondered, that their Islamic contemporaries would not accept the doctrine of Christ? [85]

The lack of Christian converts from Islam hardened anti-Islamic thought among Americans. James Merrick, an ABCFM missionary to Persia, wrote that "an awful cloud of curses hangers over this people [Muslims], which no merciful

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[85] Ibid., pp. 38-39

wind from heaven can wholly dissipate."[86] Merrick further wrote that without the intervention of the Holy Spirit, "we must utterly despair of ever seeing a single Moslem turn from the error of his belief."[87] In 1866, G. Winfred Hervey published *The Story of Baptist Missions in Foreign Lands,* in which he described the challenges facing American missionaries. He described Muslims as evangelistic competitors, writing that "the Mahometans are almost the only false religionists who are making proselytes among the heathen." Muslims appeared to be fierce adversaries to the mission of evangelizing Christ.[88] By the 1860s and 1870s, Americans viewed Muslims as uniquely exclusive and closed-minded. Henry Jessup, an ABCFM and Presbyterian missionary to Syria, wrote that the typical Muslim "is a man of unrestrained passions, full of falsehood and blasphemy… He has no love of God, and no hope of heaven. And the moral character of the Moslem is a fair representative of the character of *all* the different religious sects of the East. They are all, alike, corrupt and immoral…"[89]

In 1860, war broke out in Mount Lebanon, resulting in the massacre of a large number of Maronite Christians. These Christians were killed by local Druzes, practitioners of an offshoot interpretation of Islam primarily based in Lebanon. One missionary said of these events that the Muslims, like "wild beasts… joined in mercilessly slaking their thirst in the blood of Christians." Many missionaries viewed these events as evidence that Muslims lacked moral

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[86] Ibid., pp. 41
[87] Ibid., pp. 39
[88] Hervey, Winfred G., *The Story of Baptist Missions in Foreign Lands.* (St. Louis, MO, 1886). pp.570-571, 578, 580.
[89] Jessup, Henry H. "Mohammedanism," *Missionary Herald* 56, no. 3 (March 1860): 86.

character. In *The Mohamedan Missionary Problem* (1879), Jessup described Middle Eastern Muslims as hypocritical, immoral, and anti-woman, coining the term "Ishmaelitic intolerance" to describe this disposition[90] Jessup discussed Islamic oppression of women at length, writing that Muslim women were "uneducated, profane, slanderous, capricious, [and] never trained to control their tempers or their tongues for a moment." He further wrote that "Women are treated like animals, and behave like animals."[91]

For many Americans, fears of Muslim brutality appeared to be confirmed by the Armenian genocide (1915-1917)—a massacre in which the Ottoman Empire executed roughly 1.5 million Armenians primarily located in eastern Anatolia—as well as the Hamidian massacres taking place between 1892 and 1896. In 1896, Frederick Greene published *Armenian Massacres, or, The Sword of Mohammed*. Greene, a member of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), was a missionary to the Armenians and was able to collect testimonies from Armenian Christians. One testimony argued that Turkey had adopted a policy of "crushing the Christians." It called on "Christian Europe" to "prohibit Turkey from acting the part of Anti-Christ." Greene blamed the Islamic government of Turkey for persecuting Armenians on religious grounds.[92]

Appended to Greene's book was Henry Northrop's *The Mohammedan Reign of Terror* in Armenia. In this text, Northrop argued that the Islamic religion was used to justify the killing of Christians. He wrote that "most" Muslims "think

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[90] Kidd (2009)
[91] Ibid., pp. 48-49
[92] Greene, Frederick Davis. 1896. Armenian Massacres: Or The Sword of Mohammed. To Which Is Added, A Full Account of the War Between Turkey and Greece. J. R. Jones.

that the killing of a Christian is a sure passport to heaven."[93] Although both authors made extensive attempts to create nuanced arguments that did not villainize all Muslims or construe the genocide as a clash of religions, this sentiment would lead many Americans, such as missionary William Miller, to interpret the genocide as the result of "devilish Moslem fanaticism." In both pieces, Islamic theology and government was primarily blamed for the massacre of Armenians—fueling Orientalist and Islamophobic sentiments already in place. As a result, American missionaries fled the violence in Turkey, and by 1915, the ABCFM's missionary work had been reduced by half.[94]

Denial of Citizenship

Americans excluded Islam not merely discursively but also literally through the enactment of laws that aimed to preclude Muslim citizenship in the United States. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the United States courts issued rulings that sought to legitimate a definition of "whiteness" that excluded Muslims on the basis of conflated religious, racial, and national identities.

One of the earliest acts governing U.S. citizenship was the Naturalization Act of 1790. The act provided that "any alien, being a free white person, may be admitted to become a citizen of the United States,"[95] following fulfillment of a handful of residency requirements. But what, exactly, qualified an individual as

[93] Ibid., pp.457
[94] Kidd (2009), pp.69.
[95] "An Act to Establish a Uniform Rule of Naturalization." March 1, 1790.

‘white?’ For Muslims and other groups in the United States, the effect of the act went beyond the mere exclusion of individuals with dark skin colors. Individuals hoping to gain citizenship in the nation were required to prove to the courts that they fell within the boundaries of whiteness, a sociocultural construct. As case law would establish, the markers of whiteness included not just physical appearance but also religion and national origin. Muslims, the courts argued, were unassimilable and could not be expected to intermarry with the general American public. They furthermore posed a threat to the national identity and security of Americans.[96] The Naturalization Act remained in effect until 1952, although it was amended in 1870 to extend citizenship to "aliens of African nativity and to persons of African descent,” and in 1940 to extend citizenship to “races indigenous to the Western Hemisphere.”[97]

In November of 1909, George Shishim, a longtime resident of the state of California and native of the Mount Lebanon Province of the Ottoman Empire sought American citizenship. At the time, courts defined the statutory boundaries of whiteness in terms of the ability to conform to mainstream American culture. While this proved to be an exceedingly vague test that did not rely upon concrete criteria, the courts imagined that members of the “Arab” or “Muslim world” could not demonstrate compatibility with American culture because of their cultural and religious differences. In making his argument, Shashim attempted to demonstrate his compatibility with American norms. Shishim had lived in California for

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[96] Beydoun, Khaled A. 2017. “Muslim Bans and the (Re)Making of Political Islamophobia.” University of Illinois Law Review 2017: 1733–74., pp. 1741-1742
[97] “Naturalization Act of 1870.”; “Nationality Act of 1940.”

twenty-five years where he served as a police officer for the Los Angeles Police Department. He wore his police uniform to his naturalization hearing in an attempt to demonstrate his ability to pass as an American man. Shishim also highlighted that he had previously lived in Venice, Italy for many years, and that this experience demonstrated his assimilability and proximity to whiteness. Despite Shishim's arguments, the court seemed poised to rule against him. A Naturalization Examiner had contended that Shishim's citizenship claim must be thrown out on the grounds that Arabs immigrating from Shishim's region were hostile to both American democracy and Christianity. The Naturalization Examiner was able to convince the court that these trends made immigrants from the region a "class of inassimilable aliens." Shishim's case, however, was saved by a last-minute appeal to compatibility with Christianity. Shishim argued to the court, "If I am a Mongolian, then so was Jesus, because we came from the same land." Shishim highlighted his Christianity as evidence of his compatibility with Americanness and used the birthplace of Jesus as proof that his home region was compatible with Christianity. Shashim became the first immigrant from a majority-Muslim country to become a naturalized American and white citizen before the law.[98]

For Arabs who were able to demonstrate Christian identity, litigating whiteness was often much easier. In the December 1909 case of twenty-three-year-old Syrian immigrant Costa George Najour, the plaintiff filed his first papers

[98] Beydoun, Khaled. 2013. "Between Muslim and White: The Legal Construction of Arab American Identity." New York University Annual Survey of American Law 69 (January): 29–887.

and fulfilled the required five-year residency and English proficiency requirements of the U.S. Naturalization Law. Instead of basing his argument on his compatibility with American norms, however, Najour argued that ethnological evidence proved that Syrians were white and therefore within the statutory definition of whiteness. He argued that he fulfilled the racial requirement of the law, which required that an individual be a free white person or of African nativity or descent. Najour received strong support from his lawyer as well as a Syrian voluntary association, and was able to successfully win citizenship, making Syrians the first ethnic group to successfully litigate their status as free white persons in a U.S. federal court.[99] In his ruling, Distric Judge Newman found that although many Syrians possessed fair or dark skin, the statutory definition of whiteness did not refer to color but rather to race. Syrians, he ruled, were Caucasian, as evidenced by ethnological evidence.[100]

Another ethnic group that was able to litigate its whiteness included Armenians. In United States vs. Cartozian, Judge Wolverton heard ethnological evidence that argued "it would be utterly impossible to classify them [Armenians] as not belonging to the white race." The court found that Armenia was a majority Christian nation, and that this Christianity was tangible evidence that its people "held themselves aloof from the Turks, the Kurds," and other groups that the court conflated with Muslim identity. Another finding of the court was the Armenians could claim belonging to whiteness without the level of skepticism

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[99] Gualtieri, Sarah. 2009. Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora. University of California Press.
[100] Beydoun (2013).

applied to Syrian Christians. Their homogenously Christian culture set them apart from other nations in the region.[101]

The court's concern over the purity of Christian Syrians proved injurious to some seeking citizenship. In the 1913 case of Faras Shahid, a Christian immigrant from Zahle (in present-day Lebanon), the court ruled that Shahid's "walnut" colored skin was evidence of intermingling between Shahid and Muslim others. Judge Smith argued that Shahid was "about [the color] of walnut, or somewhat darker than is the usual mulatto of one-half mixed blood between the white and the negro races." Shahid's dark skin was an indication of racial miscegenation between Shahid's family and Muslims that undermined his appeal for U.S. citizenship. Shahid was denied American citizenship on these grounds.[102]

The 1942 case of Ahmed Hassan, a Michigan resident and Yemeni Muslim immigrant seeking naturalized citizenship in the United States, is another example of religion and nationality being used as markers for whiteness. Hassan was denied citizenship in the United States not only because of his skin color, but also because of his Yemeni origin and practice of Islam. Hassan, like many others seeking inclusion in the act's construction of whiteness (such as Jews and individuals of Asian descent) filed suit, arguing that he should be considered white before the law. Hassan's nation of origin, Yemen, was outside of what Congress called the "Asiatic Barred Zone," a geographic location whose nationalists had been excluded from obtaining U.S. citizenship. In building his case, Hassan assembled a series of affidavits written by ethnologists who declared

[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid.

that "the Arabs are remote descendants of and therefore members of the Caucasian or white race, and that [Hassan] is therefore eligible for citizenship."[103] Upon presenting such evidence to a U.S. District Court judge, however, Hassan's petition was denied not on the basis of his physical characteristics, but on the basis of his religion. In an opinion written by Judge Arthur J. Tuttle, the court found that

> Arabs are not white persons within the meaning of the [Nationality] Act… Apart from the dark skin of the Arabs, it is well known that they are a part of the Mohammedan world and that a wide gulf separates their culture from that of the predominantly Christian peoples of Europe. It cannot be expected that as a class they would readily intermarry with our population and be assimilated into our civilization.[104]

Christian religion as well as the ability to adopt mainstream American values played a vital role in the court's interpretation of "whiteness."[105]

Conclusion

Islamophobia has served as a driving force in the United States since the early days of American colonialism. Americans defined themselves as over and above the Orient, establishing binaries that created a perception of opposition between themselves on one hand, and North Africa and the Middle East on the other. Binaries such as good/bad, civilized/primitive, democratic/despotic,

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[103] Ibid., pp. 846
[104] Ibid., pp. 845; 847
[105] Ibid.

liberty/tyranny were established both as a means of defining American values and also as a way of subjugating the Orient. Americans quickly conflated categories of religion, race, and nation, assuming that Muslims composed a race of "walnut-skinned" individuals that were therefore non-white. American courts assumed that foreign-born Muslims could not become American citizens because of an incompatibility between their religious culture and that of the United States. National groups that were able to demonstrate compatibility with Christianity were better able to attain the legal status of whiteness.

Chapter 3: Emergence of Contemporary Islamophobia

Beginning in the 1940s, the stereotypes surrounding Muslim, Arab, and Southwest Asian communities became increasingly violent. Contemporary Islamophobia centers around a discourse that conflates Islam with a terrorist threat to the United States. This discourse gained prominence as the fledgling American nation began to develop on the international stage. Following WWII, in particular, the nation began to emerge as a global superpower. During this period of rising foreign entanglements, a series of tense relations with majority-Muslim nations began to impact mainstream representations of Islam. Representations of Muslim men as terrorists began amidst events such as the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the Arab-Israel war, and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories in 1967. The Middle East geography became associated with violence and war.

The emergence of the terrorist stereotype relied upon a conflation of religious, national, and racial identities—a phenomenon largely perpetuated by the American media and government. Representations of the Middle East began to shift from Orientalist images of a wealthy desert terrain characterized by rich oil sheiks, seductive belly dancers, alluring harem girls, and veiled oppressed women to images of vicious war and violence. Americans soon associated the Middle East geography, its nationalists, and its religion—reductively and incorrectly assumed to be Islam—with violence. The mainstream media furthermore supported the creation of a stereotypical “Muslim-looking” phenotype. Contemporary television shows depicted Muslims as possessing a set

of racial phenotypes that would come to be associated with Muslims. Due to the overwhelming racial and ethnic diversity within the Islamic religion, the development of this phenotype is necessarily misleading. The creation of the "Muslim-looking" phenotype represents the racialization of Islam. Applying Goldschmidt's conceptualization, this phenotype involves the imaging of national and religious identities in light of a racialized lens.

The development of the terrorist stereotype would have injurious impacts on the American Muslim community, and increase the public scrutiny faced by Muslims. These effects can be found in government surveillance programs that spied on Muslim, Arab, and Middle Eastern communities in urban centers such as New York City. In the eyes of the U.S. government, membership as part of the Islamic religion prevented Muslims from being loyal and trustworthy American subjects. A March 2013 report entitled *Mapping Muslims: NYPD Spying and Its Impact on American Muslims,* produced by the Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition, reveals a widespread program of state-sanctioned Islamophobic surveillance. The report details the New York Police Department's surveillance of Muslim Americans while also discussing the implicit approval of the program from the U.S. Congress. Such programs reveal the deep conflation between Muslim American identities and terrorism, as well as the non-Muslim public's deep suspicion of the Muslim community. Such programs are also strong forces demanding the assimilation of Muslim communities into whiteness.

The emergence of the terrorist stereotype also facilitated a number of additional judgments against Muslims, their religious practices, and ways of life.

In imagining Islam as a religion of violence, Americans ascribed other judgments to the religion. Islam, many believed, must be an inherently backwards and primitive religion. It must be coercive, immature, Fundamentalist in orientation, and antithetical to democracy. As shall be seen, American elites articulated these expectations in the form of government conferences as well as addresses to the American public.

Orientalist Stereotypes

Beginning in the 19th century, Arab and Muslim Americans became the subject of a number of different stereotypes. Arabs were rich oil sheiks, seductive belly dancers, alluring harem girls, and veiled oppressed women. Beginning in 1945 with the Arab-Israeli conflict and carrying into the modern time period, however, these stereotypes began to shift from images of exotic and alluring foreigners to something even more pernicious: Arabs began to be stereotyped as terrorists and a violent threat to the security of the United States. This evolution of the Arab stereotype can be found throughout media depictions of Arabs and Muslims, including in news media, tv shows and film.[106]

The earliest representations of Muslims and Arabs on television included silent films such as Fatima (1897), the Sheik (1921), and The Thief of Baghdad (1924). These films depicted the Middle Eastern region as an exotic, distant, and mythical location easily associated with Bible stories and children's fairy tales. The Middle East was depicted as a desert terrain populated by belly dancers,

[106] Alsultany, Evelyn (2012). Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11., pp. 7

harem girls, and rich Arab men as well as magical elements such as genies, flying carpets, and mummies.[107] The Sheik, for example, is a silent romantic drama taking place in a desert landscape in which Arab slave traders sell Arab women to the "Lords of Harems." The film features many images that played into American stereotypes of the Middle East, Arabs, and Muslims:

- The protagonist, Lady Diana Mayo, is a white woman kidnapped by a Sheik after she sneaks into a casino dressed up in an Arab dancer's attire. Inside, she finds Arab men gambling for new wives. The Sheik successfully devises a plan to kidnap the woman, capturing her and forcing her, against her will, to dress in Arab women's garments. These images misrepresent the Orient as a location in which 'sexy' harem girls are objectified, submissive, and voiceless, as well as seductive and promiscuous.
- Diana is captured by a bandit who attempts to sexually assault her, but is rescued by the Sheik, who is wounded in combat. Diana holds the Sheik's hand and remarks that his hand is too large for an Arab. The Sheik's close friend, Raoul, replies that the Sheik is not Arab after all, but that his father was British and his mother Spanish. The Sheik's parents had died in the desert, and he had been raised by the old Sheik. After Ahmed wakes up, Diana reveals that she loves him. The implication here is that a villainous figure assumed to be of Middle Eastern descent is suddenly converted into a white person after he heroically saves a white woman. This reifies a

[107] Alsultany, pp. 7-8

good/bad binary in which bad Arabs are represented as diametrically opposed to good whites.[108]

Such stereotypes remained prevalent with the introduction of technicolor and sound in films such as Arabian Nights (1942), Road to Morocco (1942), and Harum Scarum (1965). These films were created simultaneously with European colonization of the Middle East and provided a discourse that legitimized Middle Eastern colonization.[109] Key tropes in these films included the "good Arab/bad Arab" typecast as well as the white savior stereotype. Whites played lead roles as protagonists saving the day from bad Arab bandits and rapists, saving good Arabs and rescuing white women from captivity.[110] These stereotypes and media images served to define the Middle East as an exotic and foreign location worthy of subjugation. Nevertheless, they represent a set of stereotypes that, in large part, are quite different from those deployed today. The remainder of this chapter will explore how a new set of stereotypes emerged that altered and displaced those preceding it.

Emergence of the Terrorist Stereotype amidst Violent Political Events

In 1945, a series of important historical events took place that would alter American depictions of the Middle East. This year saw the conclusion of World War II, a rebuff of European colonization, the initiation of the Cold War, the contentious formation of Israel, and a new era of the United States as a global

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[108] Shaheen, Jack. "Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 588 (2003): 171-93.
[109] Alsultany, pp. 8
[110] Ibid.

superpower. In the backdrop of events such as the Arab-Israeli wars of 1948, 1967, and 1973, the occupation of Palestine, the rise of Libya's Muammar Qaddafi and Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, and the emergence of Palestinian resistance movements, Americans were inundated with a new stereotype of Arabs as terrorists. Americans associated the Middle East geography with unscrupulous violence, quickly surmising that all Arabs posed a violent threat to national security. For Arab men, stereotypes shifted from lazy sheikhs and rich oil barons to dangerous terrorists threatening national security. For Arab women, stereotypes departed from exotic harem girls and belly dancers that were popular in the pre-World War I era. Between the late 1940s and early 1970s, Arab women were often absent from media portrayal altogether. They returned in the 1970s as erotic but threatening terrorists and evolved in the 1980s into veiled and oppressed captives of male Arab terrorists.[111]

Inequitable News Coverage

Violent events taking place in the Middle East remained a mainstay in American news coverage of the Middle East and Arab Americans were further damaged by negative news coverage of events such as the Munich Olympics of 1972, the Arab oil embargo of 1973, the Iran hostage crisis of 1979-1980, and the airplane hijackings of the 1970s and 1980s.[112] The news media played a key role in shifting American understandings of the Middle East as the location of the

[111] Alsultany, pp. 8
[112] Ibid., pp. 8-9

Christian Holy Land and Arab oil wealth to a geography of Muslim terror. [113] This emerging viewpoint was particularly troubling as Protestant Americans possessed both religious and economic interests in the region. The Holy Land included the location in which biblical events ranging from the reign of King David to the birth of the Christian messiah took place. For some Christians, these violent events indicated eschatological developments. The Middle East also represented significant economic and political interests. In her book, *Epic Encounters,* Melani McAlister argues that American interests in the Middle East have included oil and political influence as well as cultural power and racial identity. She furthermore contends that the Middle East has been important in the expansion of U.S. global power.[114]

Across each of these dramatic events, the mainstream American media exhibited favoritism and bias that portrayed Islam and Arabs in a negative light. Arabs and Muslims were portrayed as essentially violent figures. In *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception,* Yahya Kamalipour points out that the "American public often has very little knowledge of the Middle East. Hence the constant barrage of disasters, *coups,* uprisings, conflicts, [and] terrorist activities reported routinely by the U.S. media, [which] fosters a gross misimpression of the Middle Eastern peoples and cultures."[115] Kamalipour explains that reports on the Middle East in the media are dominated by a Western

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[113] Ibid., pp. 9
[114] McAlister, Melani. Epic Encounters : Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000. American Crossroads ; 6. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
[115] Kamalipour, Yahya R. 1995. The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception. Contributions to the Study of Mass Media and Communications ; No. 46. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press.

worldview and utilize a framework based on secularism as well as the ideological agendas of the Cold War.[116]

In a content analysis of articles published in *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines, Mahboub Hashem, a scholar of communications, found that these magazines wrote from a heavily biased perspective privileging negative news stories of interest to American business and foreign policy. The magazines reported extensively on issues such as the Gulf War, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the oil crises, but contained few stories that portrayed positive or even neutral developments in the Middle East. Most of the coverage was related to the Persian Gulf region, which contains an abundance of valuable oil, gas, and minerals. These issues were considered important because of their implications for U.S. foreign policy. Hashem found that, as far as coverage of the Middle East is concerned, the magazines rarely departed from coverage of these issues and these localities.[117] The focus on the Persian Gulf region and its turmoil reifies the image of a violent Middle East geography. American news reporters presented stories of attacks, crises, invasions, kidnappings, killings, peace treaties, and wars. Hashem's research also revealed an improvement in favorable coverage of the Middle East following the development of new alliances of several Arab nations with the United States during the Gulf War. The newsmagazines saw these new allies in a more favorable light than they had prior to the initiation of the

[116] Ibid.
[117] Hashem, Mahboub. (1995). Coverage of Arabs in two leading U.S. newsmagazines: Times and Newsweek. In Y. R. Kamalipour (Ed.), The U.S. media and the Middle East: Image and perception (pp. 151-162). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 154

alliance.[118] Hashem next identifies several specific images found in the news coverage. These include “middle east region on decline,” “fundamentalist movement growing,” “democracy lacking,” “arab unity a facade,” “arabs live in the past,” “slavery exists in parts of the arab world,” and “political climate changing.”[119] Hashem concludes that newsmagazines have depicted Arabs and the Middle east as lacking democracy, unity, and modernity. These same values are coded as white and American. In defining the Middle East geography against these values, the news media reinscribes the same hierarchy of religious idioms discussed by Robert Orsi, as well as the “bad Arab” stereotype.

The Iran Hostage Crisis

The Iran hostage crisis captured the attention of the American public and became one of the most heavily covered news stories in American history. For 444 days, from November 4, 1970 to January 21, 1981, Americans were transfixed by the story, many using yellow ribbons and white armbands to demonstrate their solidarity with the captives. With each passing day, Americans became more and more fascinated with the event. A Kennedy School of Government report wrote that “Instead of receding with time, eclipsed by fresh-breaking news, the story of the ‘hostage crisis’ mushroomed, becoming a virtual fixation for the nation and its news organizations throughout much of the fourteen-month embassy siege.”[120] Very quickly, the event began to contribute to

[118] Ibid., pp. 154-155
[119] Ibid., pp. 156-159
[120] McAlister, Melani. 2001. Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East, 1945-2000. American Crossroads ; 6. Berkeley: University of California Press., pp.198.

the emerging terrorist stereotype of the Arab and Muslim communities. On the day the hostages were released, President Ronald Reagan announced in his inaugural address that "terrorism" would replace "human rights" as the nation's flagship foreign policy interest. For the first time, Americans, rather than Israelis, were the primary victims of "Arab terrorism." A discourse of terrorist threat began to complicate stereotypes depicting the Middle East as the land of oil wealth or Christian Holy Lands, constructing the region as a location practicing Islam and terrorism.[121]

The Iran hostage crisis played a major role in popularizing the conflation of Arab, Muslim, and Middle Eastern identities. Iran, which is not an Arab country, became strongly associated with Arabs, the Middle East, Islam, and terrorism, a collection of terms quickly used interchangeably by the American public.

The American news media framed the event as both the result of Iranian actions as well as what it called "Militant Islam." Lengthy editorials in major news media outlets described "Islam" as a religion with a strong inclination to express faith through politics and violence. Such editorials had a tendency to simplify the diverse Muslim beliefs and practices as essentially violent in nature.[122] The U.S., meanwhile, was described in opposition to this violent religion. The news media highlighted the United States as a Christian nation. On December 21, 1979, the anchor of ABC's *America Held Hostage* program commented that Americans and Iranians were "worlds apart in their view of the

[121] Ibid., pp. 200-201
[122] McAlister (2001), pp. 211

world, their values, their principles, and surely in their demonstrations." This strongly worded statement was made following coverage of an American demonstration in which a group of foreign service officers and marines marched silently in Washington, D.C. before gathering for a short service in which they sang "God Bless America" as well as a handful of other songs. Many of these songs held Christian religious significance. One white marine, fully dressed in uniform, sang "Go Down Moses" before the crowd. The song, which holds significant connotations with black Christian slavery and the Exodus story, was now reappropriated as a nationalist symbol. Each repeat of the phrase "let my people go" symbolized not the black struggle for freedom, nor the struggle of nations against colonialism, but the entire American nation whose citizens were being held hostage.[123]

International Conference on Terrorism

In July 1979, the First International Conference on Terrorism convened in Jerusalem. The conference, which took place one year before the hostage crisis, established a definition of terrorism based on the hijackings and airport massacres of the 1970s. The international conference defined terrorism as "the deliberate and systematic murder, maiming, and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political ends." While the first conference was well received and benefited from positive press coverage, it was eclipsed by the Second International Conference, which took place in 1984. Between the end of the first conference and the start of

[123] Ibid., pp. 211-212

the second, many changes had taken place on the international scene. Not only had the Iran hostage crisis taken place, but also the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the U.S. military intervention of Lebanon, the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, and the ongoing Iran-Iraq war. Moving the conference from Israel to the United States served as a symbol that the American public now viewed itself, not just Israel, as the victim of terrorism.[124]

The Second International Conference on Terrorism brought with it several implications for Muslims and the stereotype of Islamic militancy. Several conference participants singled out Islam as possessing a uniquely intimate relationship with terrorism. Although the scope of the conference included terrorist activities in Europe, Latin America, and Asia, only Islam had been singled out as the source of terrorist threat. Three reasons were given for this relationship. First, as explained by Bernard Lewis, the nation's top expert on Islam, Islam was a "political religion" because its founder, Muhammad, was the leader of both a state and a faith. Islam, by its fundamental nature, Lewis argued, was intricately linked to politics. Second, the "Muslim world" had invented terrorism. Two of the three experts discussed the rise of the Assassins, a tenth-century Muslim sect, as an early example of Islamic terrorism. The experts argued that the Iranian government could be best described as practicing "harsh medieval rule." The experts associated Islam itself as a medieval religion unable to fit in with modern, civilized Christianity. Third, the experts argued that a fundamental

[124] Herman, Edward S., and Gerry O'Sullivan. 1989. The Terrorism Industry: The Experts and Institutions That Shape Our View of Terror. Pantheon Books., pp.104–106; Dobkin, Bethami A. 1992. Tales of Terror: Television News and the Construction of the Terrorist Threat. Praeger., pp. 95.

opposition existed between Islam and the West. P.J. Vatikiotis, an author recognized for several popular books on Middle Eastern politics, posited that Islam was incompatible with ideals of democracy and pluralism, as well as with the Western concept of the nation-state itself. Vatikiotis argued that Muslims saw their nation religiously as a "community of believers," and that this orientation was incompatible with the notion of a nation-state. Many of these criticisms of Islam—including judgments of Islam as unmodern, uncivilized, and incompatible with the modern notion of a nation-state—served to define Islam in opposition to white, Western values. These judgments were made to suggest the superiority of whiteness, America, and Christianity over Islam.[125]

The 9/11 Terrorist Attacks

On the morning of September 11, 2001, four passenger airplanes were hijacked by members of the terrorist group al-Qaeda and were crashed into American buildings. Two of the planes were used to destroy the twin World Trade Center buildings in New York City. One airplane was crashed into the Pentagon, resulting in the partial collapse of its Western side. The remaining airplane, which was also aimed towards Washington D.C., crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania after its passengers resisted the terrorists' plot. The day's events resulted in the deaths of nearly 3,000 people as well as the injury of over 6,000 others.[126]

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[125] Ibid.

[126] Schemann, Serge. 2001. "Hijacked Jets Destroy Twin Towers and Hit Pentagon." New York Times, September 11, 2001.

The September 11th attacks paved the way for continued reification of the Muslim terrorist threat. One manner in which this was done was through the political addresses of then-President George W. Bush to the nation. On September 20, 2001, a week after the terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush delivered his "Address to the Joint Session of the 107th Congress."[127] In the speech, the President called for a universal and worldwide rejection of terrorism while painting a black-and-white portrait of the conflict that depicted foreign terrorists as "enemies of American freedom." He furthermore used religious rhetoric, arguing that God takes the side of "justice"—the side that, in this rhetoric, is embodied by the United States. President Bush framed the attacks as part of a greater effort to "disrupt and end" the American "way of life." He called the 9/11 attacks "an act of war against our country," and insisted that Americans view the attacks as part of a larger conspiracy against the nation. Bush further framed the war as extremely vast and encompassing all parts of the globe. He said, "Every nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists." Nations, he argued, can only pick one side— the "American" side or the "terrorist" side; the side of civility or the side of terror. This ideology was strategic and encouraged responses from nations across the globe. In effect, Bush drafted the entire international community into a global U.S. project aimed at enforcing American hegemony over and against the terrorist conflict. For Bush, the stakes were extremely high. He said, "What is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight.

[127] Bush, George W. 2001. "An Address to a Joint Session of the 107th Congress and the American People."

This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom." Bush later utilized the Islamophobic binary to justify U.S. intervention in Afghanistan—an Arab and predominantly Muslim country.

In the final moments of the speech, Bush added religious idioms to his rhetoric. He argues that "Freedom and fear, justice and cruelty, have always been at war, and we know that God is not neutral between them. Fellow citizens, we'll meet violence with patient justice— assured of the rightness of our cause, and confident of the victories to come." Bush positions God as an enemy of the terrorists, a framing that is particularly interesting given that religious connotations were present on both sides of the conflict.

Throughout this speech, Bush articulated "good" American values as existing in diametric opposition to "bad" Muslim terrorists. These terrorists, he asserted, were most unlike Americans in that they opposed progress, pluralism, tolerance, and freedom. The transgressions of the terrorists lay not merely in their violent assault on American infrastructure, but also in their presumed opposition to a series of white, American values. Bush's speech implied that terrorists were bad not simply because they were terrorists, but also because they failed to subscribe to whiteness and American values. They threatened not just the safety of Americans but also the privileged status of whiteness.

President Bush went to great lengths to articulate that not *all* Muslims posed a threat to the American public. However, his speech nevertheless played into an American imagination that divided practitioners of Islam into "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims." Muslims were either enemies of the American

public and threats to American freedom, or allies to be recruited as assets in the War on Terror. While Bush made an attempt to assert multicultural belonging of Muslims to the United States, this assertion was a hollow one given his speech's complicity in reproducing belief in the supremacy of white, American, and Christian values over/against all other values.

Creation of the "Muslim-Looking" phenotype

An important factor contributing to the conflation of Arab and Muslim identities includes casting for TV and films. Casting decisions made by Hollywood have promoted the construction of a fictional phenotype of an Arab/Muslim race. This phenotype of "Muslim-looking" individuals is especially damaging to the Muslim and Arab American communities because it perpetuates the myth that these communities can be racially profiled. In American television and films, Arab characters are not always portrayed by actual Arabs. Instead, individuals who fulfill a certain phenotypical image are casted, regardless of racial, ethnic, or national identity. Oded Fehr, a Jewish Israeli actor, plays an Arab/Muslim terrorist character in the American TV show, Sleeper Cell (2005-2006). He is also cast in an Arab role in The Mummyfilms (1999, 2001). The TV series 24 casts a number of non-Arab actors and actresses in Arab/Muslim roles. In season 2, Francesco Quinn, a Mexican American actor, plays the role of an Arab terrorist. Arnold Vosloo, a South African actor, plays the Arab/Muslim terrorist Marwan Habib in the fourth season of the show. Vosloo was also cast as Arab in The Mummy (1999, 2001). Nestor Serrano, a Latino, Shoreh Aghdashloo, an Iranian, and Jonathan Adhout, also Iranian, are cast as members of a family

sleeper cell in the show. Other terrorist roles are played by Tony Plana, who is Cuban American, and Anil Kumar, who is South Asian. Alexander Siddig, who is Sudanese British, plays a reformed terrorist in the sixth season, and Marisol Nichols, who is Mexican-Hungarian-Romanian, plays a "good Arab American" CTU agent. Casting these characters as Arab and Muslim serves to reify the notion that that there is a Muslim-looking phenotype of people.[128]

[128] Shaheen, Jack (2001). Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People.

Chapter Four: Americanization of Islam

With the rise of the Islamophobic image of the Muslim terrorist, Muslims found themselves increasingly scrutinized in the public eye. Americans questioned whether their Muslim and Arab peers could remain loyal citizens, arguing that they were instead loyal to a foreign religion practicing anti-American violence. In 2010, one American Muslim author, Qasim Rashid, responded to an e-mail in which he was asked whether Muslims are "even allowed to be loyal to the United States." In his response, which was published in the *Huffington Post*, he argued that "For a Muslim, loyalty to the United States is not simply lip service but a fundamental requirement of faith." Like many Muslims today, Rashid responded to Islamophobic attacks by asserting that his religion, rather than representing a threat to national security, is instead deeply compatible with American values and patriotism. Rashid is one of a number of American Muslims who has highlighted his proximity to white, Protestant norms as a means of combatting anti-Muslim sentiment. This chapter will explore Muslim attempts to attain acceptance within American society by conforming to white, Protestant customs and values. The broader history of religio-racial groups seeking assimilation to whiteness will likewise be discussed. Furthermore, it will be argued throughout this chapter that attempts to assimilate to the white mainstream necessarily perpetuate cultural racism and white supremacist ideology.

Zaytuna College

Among the varied attempts by some Muslims to negotiate the compatibility of Islam with American values lies the institution of Zaytuna

College. What makes Zaytuna unique is not its religious affiliation; instead, it is the institution's project and aspiration of crafting an American interpretation of Islam. Zaytuna, its founders purport, is most like schools such as Georgetown University not only because it is a religious college, but also because it is a pillar in the process of Americanizing a religion.[129]

As has been discussed in Chapter One, the goal of crafting an American interpretation of Islam is not race-neutral and relies upon a series of racialized assumptions about religion and national belonging. The religious tenets adopted by the founders of Zaytuna are reflective of the values and normative expectations of white Protestants. In effect, the founders' agenda of Americanizing the religion whitens Islam, allowing the founders to gain upward social mobility by approaching whiteness. This process is reflected in the Americanization of Catholicism, Judaism, and Mormonism. Muslims are certainly not the first group of individuals to approach whiteness.[130] In addition to these religions, ethnic immigrant groups such as Italians and Southern and Eastern Europeans (SEEs) have adopted white American norms and faded into the mainstream. In the case of SEEs, immigrant groups were able to overcome a classification as "close to, but

[129] Oppenheimer, Mark. 2013. "At Zaytuna College, Western Traditions Alongside Koran." The New York Times, April 12, 2013, sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/13/us/at-zaytuna-college-western-traditions-alongside-koran.html.
[130] See Goldstein, Eric L. 2006. The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity. Princeton: Princeton University Press.; See also Martínez, Anne M. 2014. Catholic Borderlands - Mapping Catholicism onto American Empire, 1905-1935. UNP - Nebraska.; See also "Roman Catholics and Immigration in Nineteenth-Century America, The Nineteenth Century, Divining America: Religion in American History, TeacherServe, National Humanities Center." n.d. Accessed April 9, 2018. http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/nromcath.htm.

not quite white," and faded into the mainstream whiteness from which they benefit to this day.[131]

Contextualizing Americanization

In the American past, Catholicism, as well as Judaism and Mormonism, was treated with significant suspicion. American Protestants, who composed the dominant religion of the U.S., rejected immigrant religious groups that sought acceptance in American society. It was only after significant time and assimilation that Protestants came around to their non-Protestant neighbors. To attain acceptance, immigrants were required to adapt their religion to Protestant expectations. With the Zaytuna project, the founders of the college hope to play a role in facilitating the creation of a mainstream American interpretation of Islam. In fact, they actively hope to contribute to the creation of such an interpretation.

For Roman Catholics, assimilation to white Protestant norms offered an opportunity to broaden the religion's appeal to the American public. Catholics with visions of a prominent and influential Catholic Church feared that the monarchical hierarchy of Catholicism would repel potential converts.[132] They instead hoped to assimilate to white Protestant norms such as modernity and democracy. One supporter of Americanization was Issac Hecker. Hecker envisioned a "Catholic America" in which Catholicism was the dominant religion

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[131] "Roman Catholics and Immigration in Nineteenth-Century America, The Nineteenth Century, Divining America: Religion in American History, TeacherServe, National Humanities Center." n.d. Accessed April 9, 2018. http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nineteen/nkeyinfo/nromcath.htm.

[132] Dolan, Jay P. 1998. "Catholicism and American Culture: Strategies for Survival." In *Minority Faiths and the American Protestant Mainstream,* edited by Jonathan D. Sarma. 61-80. Chicago: University of Chicago Press., pp. 62

of the nation. Hecker expressed support for a Catholic version of Manifest Destiny. He viewed it as Providential destiny that American would become Catholic. Hecker argued that it would become important that American Catholics "put aside European ways and adapt to American conditions."[133] In a letter written to several of his colleagues, he wrote, "So far as it is compatible with faith and piety, I am for accepting the true American civilization, its usages and customs; leaving aside other reasons it is the only way in which Catholicity can become the religion of our people."[134]

In seeking to Americanize their religion, Catholics altered several of their religious customs to reflect white Protestant expectations. For one, Catholics quickly adopted the trustee form of church government, a church structure favored by the American legal system. The trustee system allowed for participation in four aspects of the democratic experience, including the sovereignty of the people, democratic elections, religious freedom, and a written constitution.[135] American Catholics called on the church to privilege and adopt white American norms. For example, John Caroll, the first bishop of Baltimore, believed strongly in Enlightenment principles such as religious toleration, the separation of church and state, the personal, interior dimension of religion, and support for benevolent causes.[136] By 1800, American Catholics were split on the subject of assimilation. Some desired to adapt their religion to American practices while others preferred to maintain the Church model used in Europe.

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[133] O'Brien, David J. 1992. Isaac Hecker: An American Catholic. Paulist Press., pp.154
[134] Ibid.
[135] Dolan (1998), pp.63
[136] Ibid.

Jews often entered the United States after fleeing intense persecution abroad. Many Jews believed and wholeheartedly appreciated the role that the U.S. has historically played in offering refuge to Jewish peoples. The U.S. was the first nation in modern history to offer religious freedom and political liberty to the Jewish minority.[137] Many Jews believed that the United States was an inclusivist nation offering religious freedom, democracy, separation of church and state, and religious pluralism. Jews were able to assert their belonging in American culture by aggressively emphasizing shared values and religious idioms with white Protestants. Jews highlighted a common Judeo-Christian patrimony in which Judaism played a significant part in biblical myths that, in some cases, played a large role in the foundation of the nation and its culture. Examples include Puritan and Protestant myths that drew from Jewish scripture, language, and concepts that undergirded national culture from its foundation.[138] Jews also adapted their European-style institutions to American tastes. Synagogues and temples, for example, began to reflect Protestant styles of worship as well as architecture. Jews increasingly incorporated English into their weekly services and altered their organizational constitutions so as to reflect American preferences for democracy. Jews similarly began to mimic their American counterparts' values of community service. By the turn of the twentieth century, Jews began inaugurating professionalized welfare and community service organizations, much like their Protestant peers had previously. Jews applied rationalized procedures isomorphic

[137] "Kraut, Benny. 1998. 'Jewish Survival in Protestant America.' In Minority Faiths and the American Protestant Mainstream, Edited by Jonathan D. Sarma. 15-60. Chicago: University of Chicago Press." n.d., pp.23
[138] Ibid., pp.25

to Protestant ones that maximized the social benefit of these charities and service organizations.[139]

The assertion of Jewish compatibility with American whiteness was not without controversy within the community. In 1907, anthropologist Maurice Fishberg remarked that "The Jews are… paying a high price for their liberty and equality—self-effacement." He argued that in assimilating to whiteness, Jews were muting the characteristics that marked them as a people. American Jews had to learn how to enjoy embracement from white, American Protestants while simultaneously maintaining the boundaries that defined their community.[140]

Nawawi Foundation

It is in the backdrop of these previous historical bids for assimilation to white American culture that we find the most recent religious group to seek assimilation—American Muslims. In 2004, the Nawawi Foundation published "Islam and the Cultural Imperative," in which Umar Faruq Abd-Allah argues that American Muslims must develop a distinct Muslim American identity in order to protect their own safety while citizens of the U.S. He calls for the creation of safe spaces in American society for Muslims.[141] Abd-Allah's thoughts are echoed in Omid Safi's volume entitled *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism.* Safi calls on the Muslim public to integrate into American society by

[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Abd-Allah, Umar Faruq. n.d. "ISLAM AND THE CULTURAL IMPERATIVE." Nawawi Foundation, 19.

melding together their interpretations of Islamic scripture with the values of the American public.[142]

Founders of Zaytuna

The project of Zaytuna is best understood placed in the context of its founders, each of whom are part of a far-reaching network of organizations and individuals that have worked to enhance the Americanization of the religion. The founders of Zaytuna—Hamza Yusuf, Zaid Shakir, and Hatem Bazian—longed for an Islamic college that would attain prominent attention in the media whilst highlighting the Islamic religion's proximity to American norms. Their desire was to depict Islam in a way that defied the common assumption that Islam is a non-American religion, incompatible with mainstream norms. In doing so, the founders of Zaytuna unintentionally worked to "whiten" the Islamic religion and improve their social standing in a nation that empowers whiteness at the expense of other groups.

Hamza Yusuf

Hamza Yusuf, born in Walla Walla Washington, is a prominent Islamic scholar and convert to Islam. In addition to being President of Zaytuna, Yusuf plays a major role in a variety of organizations, including George Russell's One Nation, The Global Center for Guidance and Renewal, and the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies. Together, these institutions elucidate

[142] Safi, Omid. Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender and Pluralism. 2003.t

Yusuf's religious agenda, which seeks to craft and promote an American, and, therefore, whitened, interpretation of Islam. The mission of Zaytuna College can be understood in relation to a network of similar institutions, to many of which Yusuf has close ties.

As part of One Nation, Yusuf serves as a member of the board of advisors. One Nation, which was formed following the September 11 terror attacks, aims to improve depictions of Muslims in the U.S.[143] One Nation seeks to create interfaith and community service events with the goal of promoting pluralism and inclusion.[144] For example, in 2011, the organization hosted One Chicago, One Nation, an event attended by 120 people that included a food drive as well as community-building activities such as painting a gardening shed, planting an organic garden, and holding a slam poetry contest. The intention of this and other One Nation events is to promote an image of Islam that highlights its compatibility with mainstream American values such as community service, as well as to bridge divides between Muslim and non-Muslim communities.[145]

Community service as a means to accelerate assimilation and improve public perception was also used by marginalized Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish populations that sought assimilation in American society. Throughout the 20th century, many of these marginalized groups established professionalized charities

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[143] Warren, James. 2011. "One Nation, One Chicago Strives for Interfaith Understanding." The New York Times, August 4, 2011, sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/05/us/05cncwarren.html.
[144] "George F. Russell, Jr. | EastWest Institute." n.d. EastWest Institute. Accessed April 25, 2018. https://www.eastwest.ngo/profile/george-f-russell-jr.
[145] Corbett, Rosemary R. 2016. "For God and Country: Religious Minorities Striving for National Belonging through Community Service." Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation 26 (2): 227. https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2016.26.2.227.

and volunteer organizations that were isomorphic to the Protestant organizations that came before them. Their desire was to demonstrate an ability to contribute as much to the welfare of the nation as did white mainline Protestants. After World War II, Muslim groups increasingly began to establish these service-oriented associations that worked to foster social and political acceptance from their American peers.[146]

Yusuf also serves as the Vice-President of the Global Center for Renewal and Guidance (GCRG)[147]. This organization seeks to improve the pedagogy and curriculum of Muslim religious institutions and is part of a larger movement called the Islamization of Knowledge. As explained by Dr. Abdullah Omar Naseef, Chairman of the Center, "Islam is comprehensive and includes every aspect of life. We thought about Islamization of knowledge and Islam as a curriculum… we felt the need to improve our curriculum in our universities, as we found that the quality of graduates coming out of Shariah and other religious institutions in the Muslim world, was not up to the mark, they don't have the inclusive and comprehensive perception of Islam."[148] The Islamization of knowledge is a theme that will continue to present itself in the pedagogy and curriculum of Zaytuna College. This curriculum encourages a moderate and, as I argue here, "whitened" version of Islam. It hopes to promote pluralism and the "Middle Way of Islam," as well as to train students on various Islamic schools of

[146] Ibid., pp. 42-44
[147] Haque, Mozammel. n.d. "Introducing Global Center for Renewal and Guidance." Accessed April 25, 2018. http://binbayyah.net/english/introducing-global-center-for-renewal-and-guidance/.
[148] Ibid.

thought. In an interview, Dr Naseef explains the goals and objectives of the organization:

> "The main objective of the Center is to do research and train people and give the true, authentic image of the Middle Way of Islam and the Straight Path which it is to eliminate the narrow-mindedness and fundamentalism which is not wise and not in anyone's interest… The idea is to sit together, and to work to project the middle way of thinking and how to renew our way of teaching and make people aware of the real Islam, the great Faith which was instrumental in changing societies of Makkah and Madina and of the whole world."

This quote reveals much about the Center's ability to whiten the Islamic religion. For one, it vaguely asserts the existence of a "true, authentic image" of the "Middle Way of Islam." The presumed superiority of this "middle way" is located in its opposition to "narrow-mindedness" and "fundamentalism," as well as in its ability to "change societies" of the whole world. Furthermore, the Center presumes that this rational interpretation of Islam can best be achieved through conversation between scholars. It calls on Muslims to work together on this project, highlighting the community-centric nature of the agenda. It's no coincidence that the set of these values—broadmindedness, moderation, and rationality—are shared by white Protestants. As discussed by Orsi, many of these same values were used to assess the maturity of various world religions as well as to label individual religions as "good" or "bad." In distancing their institution

from Fundamentalism, sometimes considered to be a narrow-minded interpretation of scripture and embracing the Middle Way, the founders hope to distance themselves from the stereotype of the "bad Arabs," as well as to assert compatibility with these white values.

Yusuf is also vice-president of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim societies, which espouses similar aims to the GCRG. The organization's website[149] describes its goal as being to "clarify to the world that Islam is a religion of peace and justice." To do so, the organization works to address issues such as poverty, addiction, environmental safety, protection for refugees and the homeless, and others. The website describes Islam as fundamentally a religion which values "love, peace, and humanitarianism" as well as "justice, mutual consultation (shura), mercy, philanthropy, tolerance and social harmony." Many of these values aim to ally Islam with white, Western religious values and judgments concerning what "good religion" ought to look like.[150]

Zaid Shakir

Zaid Shakir is a Muslim American scholar and co-founder of Zaytuna. Like Yusuf, he is a convert to Islam. He converted during his time as part of the United States Air Force. Shakir has become a major voice calling for improved relations between Muslim and non-Muslim Americans following the September 11 terror attacks. He says, "People all over the world have felt the repercussions and the

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149 "منتدى تعزيز السلم في المجتمعات المسلمة." n.d. Accessed April 25, 2018. http://www.peacems.com/ar/default.aspx.

150 Ibid.

reprisals for the senseless brutality of 9/11's perpetrators. Our best hope is to attempt to move beyond the pain, strife and hatred unleashed. Trusting in the power and promise of God we will be able to do just that."[151] Shakir also founded organizations including the Masjid al Islam in Connecticut, the Tri-State Muslim Education Initiative and the Connecticut Muslim Coordinating Committee. In 2009, the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre listed Shakir as one of the 500 most influential Muslims in the world in its annual report, edited in chief by Professors John Esposito and Ibrahim Kalin—both, themselves, renowned scholars of Islam.[152]

Shakir is known for his ability to preach in a manner that culturally resonates with American Muslim youth. Despite being a convert to the faith and natural-born American, Shakir speaks flawless and fluent Arabic—without so much as an American accent.[153] He appeals to Muslim youth seeking a mentor able to relate to the intersection of Muslim and American identities. When preaching, Shakir melds together Koranic passages with quotes taken from rap and hip hop and entertains his followers with mimicries of American accents representing youth cultures such as "ghetto" and "valley girl." So popular is Shakir that he draws followings that fill theaters, mosques, and auditoriums. His books and CD's are popular with Muslim youth, some of whom refer to him as

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[151] "9/11 - The Day The World Changed." n.d. Emel- The Muslim Lifestyle Magazine. Accessed April 25, 2018. http://www.emel.com/article?id=89&a_id=2470.

[152] Centre, Royal Islamic Strategic Studies. 2012. The 500 Most Influential Muslims 2009: The Muslim 500 - 2009. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

[153] Goodstein, Laurie. 2006. "U.S. Muslim Clerics Seek a Modern Middle Ground." The New York Times, June 18, 2006, sec. U.S. https://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/18/us/18imams.html.

the new Malcolm X.[154] Shakir's ability and desire to meld Islamic preaching with American cultural tenets lends another interesting element to the Zaytuna project. His preaching style reflects a desire to impact the culture of American Muslims and to mark it with a distinct American flavor. Shakir situates himself as a model of American Islamic preaching and custom. His preaching style subverts the image of the foreign Imam out of touch with American culture. His relatability asserts a preference for modernity and adaptation to present cultural moment.

Hatem Bazian

Hatem Bazian is a co-founder and Professor of Islamic law and Theology at Zaytuna. Bazian also serves as a lecturer at University of California, Berkeley in the Departments of Near Eastern and Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies. Bazian is the founder of the Islamophobia Research and Documentation Project (IRDP) at the Center for Race and Gender at Berkeley. This project seeks to research the othering of Islam and Muslims, and finds itself deeply concerned with the state of anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States. Among other goals, it aims to publish research on Islamophobia as well as an annual report on the status of Islamophobia in the U.S.[155]

In the Spring of 2012, Bazian founded the Islamophobia Studies Journal, a bi-annual publication featuring research conducted at several institutions, including Zaytuna College, the Islamophobia Research and Documentation

[154] Ibid.
[155] "About IRDP at UC Berkeley." n.d. Islamophobia Research & Documentation Project (blog). Accessed April 25, 2018. https://irdproject.com/about/.

Project at the University of California at Berkeley, the Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Initiative for the School of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University; the Center for Islamic Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, and the International Centre for Muslim and non-Muslim Understanding at the University of South Australia. In its inaugural edition, the journal sought to explore the importance of justice as it pertains to the Muslim community. Bazian and Maxwell Leung write in the editorial statement that the inaugural issue is "an attempt to forge the bonds for strengthening our commitment to justice, to be accountable and responsible for the work that we produce, and more importantly, to focus our passions – the basis of the human condition – as we strive to work in our collective and related projects for justice."[156] Associating Islam with social justice and humanitarian efforts seeks to demonstrate how Islamic religious beliefs lead to the same ethical and moral conclusions made by white Protestants. It furthermore demonstrates the ways in which Muslims groups can be servants of the nation, contributing to public life through service.[157] Much like that of Shakir and Yusuf, Bazian's body of work demonstrates a desire to integrate Islam into the fabric of American society.

[156] "Islamophobia Studies Journal (Spring 2012, Volume 1, Issue 1) | UCB Center for Race & Gender." n.d. Accessed April 25, 2018. https://www.crg.berkeley.edu/crg-publications/islamophobia-studies-journal-spring-2012-volume-1-issue-1/.
[157] Corbett, Rosemary R. 2016. "For God and Country: Religious Minorities Striving for National Belonging through Community Service." Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation 26 (2): 227. https://doi.org/10.1525/rac.2016.26.2.227.

Zaytuna College

The work of Zaytuna's three founders, Yusuf, Shakir, and Bazian, is reflected in the mission and ethos of Zaytuna College. Zaytuna itself lies at the intersection of the ideologies that each of the founders brings to the table. It is yet another project among many that whitens and Americanizes Islam. In pursuit of Americanization, the founders have worked to craft a culture, pedagogy, and curriculum that favors a whitened practice of Islam. They have worked to project a community that embodies American values such as pluralism, community service, moderation, and justice, values that are mirrored by white Protestants. They have further worked to establish credibility in their community so as to construct an institution that asserts compatibility between white and Islamic values.

Zaytuna and the Americanization Mission

Zaytuna's mission of Americanization is made transparent in the school's selected name, motto, and academic mission statement. On the mission page of the school's website, Zaytuna explains that its name means "olive tree," which is "considered blessed by all three Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam."[158] Embedded into the very name of the institution is an attempt to appeal to American neighbors by associating Islam with the two faiths that are deemed adequately American—Judaism and Christianity. The founders hope to signal the historic ties between the three faiths, each of which trace their religious lineage

[158] "Mission." n.d. Zaytuna College. Accessed April 25, 2018. https://zaytuna.edu/mission.

back to the patriarch Abraham. The website details the relevance of the olive branch to scripture, specifically referencing texts that are held sacred by both Christians and Muslims alike, including texts about Jesus, who is considered a prophet in Islam as well as the messiah in Christianity.

> "In the biblical Book of Deuteronomy, the Prophet Moses describes Palestine as a 'good land, a land of olives.' The Book of Genesis says that, after the Flood, a dove brought an olive branch to the Prophet Noah as a sign that land was near. According to the Psalms, a man's children are like 'the slips of olive trees.' The Prophet Jesus also made references to the olive tree. Additionally, God swears an oath by the olive, saying, 'By the fig and the olive, and Mount Sinai, and this secure city, We have made man in the finest order' (Qur'an 95:1-4). The Prophet Muhammad said, 'Anoint yourselves with olive oil because it comes from a blessed tree.'"

In selecting a school name that resonates with Christian, Islamic, and Jewish traditions, Zaytuna is able to assert its proximity to Christianity and whiteness by highlighting the common history between Islam and these two other religions.

The school's motto, "where Islam meets America," is interesting in that it centers the institution's agenda of crafting an American Islam. Rather than selecting a motto that highlights the school's scholastic endeavours, its religious nature, or its desire to inculcate "adab—" an arabic word which refers to proper Islamic etiquette (i.e. good morals and decent behavior)—the founders felt it most

important to highlight the school's role in facilitating the creation of an American Islam. In this motto, the founders signal that their program offers a marriage of Islamic and American traditions. They communicate to the American public that the essence of their faith tradition has been mixed with American motifs. The school's motto has been used to assert its compatibility with white America rather than its own unique identity as the first Islamic college in the United States.

Zaytuna has a highly precise mission and agenda for its students. It hopes to produce students that adopt its interpretation of Islam. Throughout Zaytuna's curriculum and lectures, it becomes clear that the faculty of the school hope that their students will reject fundamentalist interpretations of the Koran and instead adopt the Americanized religion presented to them. The school's mission statement is this:

> "Zaytuna College aims to educate and prepare morally committed professional, intellectual, and spiritual leaders who are grounded in the Islamic scholarly tradition and conversant with the cultural currents and critical ideas shaping modern society."

The school hopes that its students will simultaneously gain a background in the Islamic scholarly tradition and also utilize their knowledge to promote this interpretation of Islam. In many ways, the school's mission of dictating the religious beliefs of its students actually departs from white Protestant values which stress personal interpretation and independence. Nevertheless, in inhibiting students from pursuing their own interpretations of Islam, the founders ensure that the overall body of Zaytuna's values are passed on to and, eventually, reproduced

by the student body. Furthermore, the founders' mission of producing uniform citizen-graduates is a problematic framework that does mirror many American schools and has the effect of promoting the value of citizenship. Students are treated as projects of the school and citizens-in-the-making rather than autonomous adults with valid knowledges and ways-of-being. The school itself hopes to strip students of their non-American, non-white backgrounds, deculturalizing them and instead assimilating them to whiteness. [159]

To illustrate this, consider the example of Shaykh Muhammad Al-Yaqoub's lecture, "Refuting ISIS." In this lecture, posted on the podcast of Zaytuna, Al-Yaqoub decries fundamentalism as well as all personal interpretations of Islam.[160] Al-Yaqoub blames the ISIS terrorist threat on individuals and Imams who interpret the Koran themselves and take verses out of context. He warns the Zaytuna student body against partaking in individual analysis of scripture. The Shaykh argues that Islam is to be interpreted not by everyday Muslims nor even by common Imams. Rather, Islam is to be interpreted by the Muslim elite. Al-Yaqoub's lecture demands that the student body take Zaytuna's teachings and interpretations to heart and avoid crafting individual understandings of Islam.

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[159] See Ladson--Billings, G. 2000. Racialized discourses and ethnic epistemologies. N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (eds). Handbook of Qualitative Research; Brayboy, Bryan Mckinley Jones, and Emma Maughn. 2009. "Indigenous Knowledges and the Story of the Bean." Harvard Educational Review 79 (1): 1–21. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.1.l0u6435086352229.; Eduardo Bonilla-Silva author. 2018. Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America. Fifth edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
[160] Al-Yaqoub, Shaykh Muhammad. "Refuting ISIS." *Podcast of Zaytuna College*. Podcast audio, July 2017. https://zaytuna.edu/seek-knowledge

Zaytuna's Pedagogy: Combining Islam with Whiteness

To say that Zaytuna's curriculum and pedagogy are infused with whiteness is to say the least. The Zaytuna catalogue illuminates the pedagogical decisions made by the faculty of the school. Zaytuna teaches what it calls a "Muslim Liberal Arts" education. The curriculum of the school is modeled on a "Great Books" program, in which students read prominent historical texts that have been deemed influential to Western thought. This model was utilized by Harvard College among other universities in the ninteenth century. Unlike Harvard, however, the Zaytuna curriculum combines the study of classical Western texts with Islamic ones. Whereas traditional Western great books schools study the Bible, Greek, Latin, and Plato, Zaytuna strives to teach the Koran, Arabic, and Plato.

Zaytuna's decision to combine Western and Islamic texts is yet another example of the school whitening Islam. Rather than focusing primarily on the texts that served as the foundation of Islamic society, the founders have stressed a curriculum that merges white, Western scholarship with Islamic scholarship. Rather than adopting a classically Islamic curriculum or religio-ethnic epistemology, the school instead adopts a historically white model based on a canon of literature that has glorified white and Western voices. The curriculum serves to orient non-American students towards American history and values. The course catalog describes the educational philosophy of the school:

> The Zaytuna curriculum emphasizes: key foundational texts from the Western and Islamic traditions, both selective memorization and critical

> analysis, a command of the Arabic language, a familiarity with Islamic sciences, and grounding in subjects from history and philosophy to mathematics and astronomy.

The resulting pedagogy is, at worst, the same white, Western educational model used by white institutions for centuries or, at best, an Islam-themed version that superficially exposes students to Islamic thought but does not pedagogically support Islamicness.

Contesting Extremism to Associate with White, Western Values

Zaytuna College, like many Islamic organizations in the United States, has had to contest images of violent and extremist Islamic practices. Opposing violent extremism such as that found in Jihadist terrorism asserts values such as peace, patriotism, and moderation. Many American Muslim groups have been burdened with explaining to their non-Muslim neighbors that most Muslims do not support terrorism and that they instead practice a peaceful religion compatible with Americana citizenship. In the case of Zaytuna, contesting extremism also assimilates the school community to the American value of moderation. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, moderation has emerged as a value that is deeply intertwined with notions of modernity and pluralism. Moderation became especially important with the rise of the Fundamentalist movement later in the twentieth century, which contested many modernist idioms and religious practices such as the notion that religion ought to remain hidden in or confined to

the private realm.[161] In pursuing the value of moderation, Zaytuna hopes to project an image of itself as a modern institution and ally to white, Protestant religious values.

In many ways, Shaykh Muhammad Al-Yaqoub's lecture, "Refuting ISIS,"[162] echoes the moralizing and binary structure first used by the George Bush administration to define the United States over and against Jihadist interpretations of Islam. The lecture, which is published on the Zaytuna College official podcast, decries these violent interpretations of Islam, arguing that the true religion of Islam is quite opposite. True Islam, the Shaykh contends, is rational, moderate, and universal. It is based on objective truths and laws found in the Koran and proven through almost jurisprudential reason to be truthful tenets of the faith. True Islam is interpreted by the greatest and most influential Imams, who are careful to analyze and consider each proposed interpretation. The Real Islam, Al-Yaqoub contends, is unlike Fundamentalist interpretations in that it pursues the Middle Way. This assertion marks Islam as a moderate and modernist religion. Practice of the religion should not cause one to make compromises in one's life. Shari'a law, he contends, should not be interpreted so strictly as to interfere with other objectives such as life, honor, wealth, sanity, and religion (a reference to what Muslim religious scholars call the five higher objectives of Islamic law[163]). It is the spirit of the law, not the letter of it, that must be obeyed. To illustrate this

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[161] Corbett, Rosemary R. 2017. "Moderation in American Religion." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion, May. https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.013.384.
[162] Al-Yaqoub, Shaykh Muhammad. "Refuting ISIS." Podcast of Zaytuna College. Podcast audio, July 2017. https://zaytuna.edu/seek-knowledge
[163] Al-Shatibi, Abrahim Ibn. 2012. The Reconciliation of the Fundamentals of Islamic Law: Al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Shari'a, Volume I.

principle, Shaykh Al-Yaqoub states that if your shoes are stolen while you are reciting prayer, you may interrupt your prayer and chase after the thief. Authentic Islam, he claims, would not require you to continue your prayers and allow your shoes to be stolen because life and wealth are higher objectives than the letter of shari'a laws regulating interruption of prayer. He states that "you are not supposed to lose something when you come closer to God. There is no compromise on your life or on your wealth."

The Shaykh uses his opposition to violent interpretations of Islam to construct a definition of Islam as a "good" religion, over and against the "bad" interpretation of Jihadists. Islam, he contends, is good, civilized, modern, rational, and moderate. It deserves acceptance by white American society because it shares these values that are deeply held by white Protestants. Al-Yaqoub's lecture decries interpretations of Islam that depart from these values, going as far as to suggest that they are not "authentic" practices of Islam. The Shaykh depicts violent and immoderate interpretations of the religion as diametrically opposed to this "authentic" interpretation adopted by himself as well as Zaytuna. In making these binary assertions, he seeks to ascend the hierarchy described by Robert Orsi and posit that True Islam's values mark it as worthy of acceptance by the world public. He appeals to the moralizing imperatives made by white Protestants to assess and argue for the value of Islam.

Conclusion

As a growing religious minority in the United States, Muslims face tough choices ahead of them relating to their place in the fabric of American society.

Muslims who seek acceptance from their peers may chart one of several trajectories, the first being assimilation—a path well-worn by groups such as Catholics, Jews, and Mormons. As this chapter has demonstrated, the assimilationist trajectory adopted by Zaytuna serves to deculturize Islam and, as I argue, whiten it. The founders of Zaytuna, in seeking to Americanize their practice of Islam, have adopted the same binaries used by white Protestants to establish a hierarchy of religious idioms. Like all religious discourses, this hierarchy relies upon national and racial assumptions and cannot be understood without an examination of these intertwined concepts. In adopting white, Protestant values in place of Islamic ones, the founders of Zaytuna concede to the notion that white values are superior to non-white ones, that American values are a legitimate measuring stick for cultural worth, and that Protestant idioms are preferable to the religious practices of non-Protestant groups. To assert belonging to the American nation, Zaytuna projected values such as community service, pluralism, broad-mindedness, moderation, modernity, justice, peace, and rationality. Each of these values resonate with the broader white, Protestant expectations imposed by American society. In its quest to conform to these American expectations, Zaytuna has subordinated Islamic culture, curriculum, and pedagogy to white ways of being, thus enacting cultural racism and erasing the values and unique customs of the religion.

Zaytuna expressed its peacefulness and moderation by contesting violent Islamic Jihadism. Co-opting discourse used by the federal government, the school utilized binary judgments to cast violent interpretations of Islam in opposition to

its own interpretations. Specifically, the school articulated its moderation through opposition to Fundamentalism, cautioning students to pursue the Middle Way of Islam. Pedagogically, the school employed a model of education that is associated with white, Western education. Rather than pursuing an Islamic epistemology and pedagogy, the school chose to decontextualize Islamic knowledge by presenting it through culturally white schooling methods, preferring an American educational model to an Islamic one.

In seeking to understand the tension between Muslims and non-Muslims, this thesis has investigated the history of Islamophobia, examining this history through the lens of Henry Goldschmidt's theory regarding the intersection of religion, race, and national identity, as well as Robert Orsi's discussion of the hierarchy of religious idioms. This history has revealed several important conclusions regarding the history of Islamophobia in the United States. First is that Islamophobia is endemic to American society in many of the same ways that racism is. As early as the colonial era, Americans imagined themselves and their values as existing in diametric opposition to "the Orient," a vague construction defining the East in relation to the West. In articulating values such as democracy, freedom, and liberty, Americans deployed mythic tales of despotic rulers in the East, including the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire as well as the Barbary pirates of Algiers and North Africa. American values were seen as civilized and uplifting, while Oriental values were seen as barbaric and primitive. These constructions were deployed to create the American identity.

For Americans, religion, race, and national identity were quickly conflated as evidenced by the litigation of whiteness by Muslim and Arab communities in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, a time where whiteness was a prerequisite for citizenship. Muslims were often denied American citizenship not because of ethnological assertions defining them as non-white (in many cases, ethnological beliefs posited that groups such as Syrians were white rather than non-white), but rather because of a belief that Muslim religion was incompatible with American society. Muslims and Arabs hoping to attain whiteness had to also prove proximity to Christianity. In some cases, successful litigation was accomplished by demonstrating a national culture that practiced Christianity. In other cases, whiteness was denied despite practice of Christianity due to the belief that Christians in the Middle East mixed excessively with non-Christian groups.

Beginning in the 20th century, a volatile stereotype depicting Muslims and Arabs as terrorist threats to the United States began to emerge. The iconography of the Middle East in the media shifted from one emphasizing rich oil sheiks and exotic belly dancers to one emphasizing terrorism and extreme violence. Scholars have demonstrated the inequitable news coverage received by the Middle East in the American media, which became mesmerized by events such as the Iran Hostage Crisis, the Arab-Israeli War, and the oil embargo of 1973. Government policy on the Middle East similarly conflated the region, along with Muslims and Arabs, with terrorism. Government discourse such as that articulated by George W. Bush following the September 11th terrorist attacks reinscribed binary judgments against Muslims by organizing American Muslims into categories of

"good" and "bad." Good Muslims were those that expressed patriotic sentiments and could serve as ideal allies in the War on Terror, whereas bad Muslims were those who failed to assimilate to whiteness and eschewed values such as democracy, modernity, and civilization.

The discursive landscape surrounding American Muslims is not friendly to their integration in American society. If Muslims hope to assert multicultural belonging to the United States, they will need to overcome much public scrutiny and distrust. Assimilation, while a much easier and more well-trodden path, offers Muslims and other non-whites only superficial acceptance rather than complete liberation.

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