



## Prospects for the Death of Europe: Islam, Christianity, the Future Identity of Europe

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## REVIEW ARTICLE

## Prospects for the Death of Europe: Islam, Christianity, the Future Identity of Europe

**The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam**, by Douglas Murray, London, Bloomsbury, 2017, 434 pp., \$16.50 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-4729-4224-1

**Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World**, by Tom Holland, New York City, Basic Books, 2019, 624 pp., \$28.80 (hardback), ISBN 978-0-456-09350-2

**Submission: A Novel**, by Michel Houellebecq, Translated by Lorin Stein. New York City, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015, 256 pp., \$17.00 (paperback), ISBN 125-0-09734-7

**The Camp of the Saints**, by Jean Raspail, Translated by Norman Shapiro. 6th American ed. Petoskey, MI, Social Contract Press, 1987, 384 pp., \$13.50 (paperback), ISBN 188-1-178038-4

### ABSTRACT

A recent theme recurs in the writing of cultural critics, like journalist, Douglas Murray and the speculative novelists, such as Michel Houellebecq, author of *Submission*, and Jean Raspail, creator of the influential and controversial rightwing work, *The Camp of the Saints*. All agree that Europe finds itself poised on the brink of carelessly losing its distinctive identity. These authors concur in blaming a combination of cultural and social sources for Continent's malaise. One the one side is the mass immigration of Muslims from conservative Islamic states and their resistance to integration into the European value mainstream. On the other side, European elites have been indifferent to and arguably complicit in Islamization, while the neglected population of traditionalist working class citizens have rebelled along racist and xenophobic lines. The alienation of the elites from the idea of Europe as a Christian civilization further feeds Europe's crisis of confused identity. In response to these disturbing scenarios, the present author questions the assumption of a program of "saving a culture," explores the comparative character of European national character versus the United States as immigrant nation. What are the difficulties of an actual re-Christianization, in light of European secularism, the obstacles to Tariq Ramadan's European Islam? Are Muslim immigrants in Europe fated to remain an unas-similable entity?

### KEYWORDS

Migration; Islam; Europe; identity; Christianity

We opened our doors wide to the influx and naturalization of foreigners. But it is becoming a terrific inundation ... and may at no distant day equal, and even outnumber the native population

The Catholic system is adverse to liberty, and the clergy to a great extent are dependent on foreigners opposed to the principles of our government ....

Lyman Beecher, *Plea for the West* (1835)

## Conservative polemic and European apocalypse

Conservative journalist, Douglas Murray, is Associate Editor of *The Spectator*, founder of the Center for Social Cohesion and a prolific British author. He believes a combination of massive Muslim immigration and European cultural and moral fecklessness threaten European civilizational integrity. Amply sourced, consistently polemical, and well-written, Murray directs *The Strange Death of Europe: Immigration, Identity, Islam* at highly-educated readers and persuadable opinion-makers. As history and social research, Murray's book models concerned engagement about major dangers to Western civilization's survival. For that reason, some readers may find it falls short of the empirical and statistical detachment expected to take on such a monumental task. But Murray seeks rather to begin a debate, not settle it with a massive data-dump.

For all the understandable suspicions *The Strange Death of Europe* may raise for being conservative anti-immigrant polemic, it, nonetheless, warrants being taken seriously.<sup>1</sup> This is mostly because Murray's case is far from extremist right-wing dogma, even though it has met resistance in progressive circles. He well appreciates the plight of refugees and asylum-seekers, even if he also believes that otherwise well-intentioned European hospitality to recent, particularly Muslim, immigration will hasten the demise of Europe as the bastion of Western civilization. His view of history is, then, classically tragic, rather than ideological.

If Murray's apocalyptic prospect rouses yet further suspicions, he is not alone in this view. Readers should know that several other serious contemporary works share Murray's melancholy. Here, I only mention Francesco M. Bongiovanni's *The Decline and Fall of Europe* (2012), Samuel Gregg's *Becoming Europe: Economic Decline, Culture, and How America Can Avoid a European Future* (2013). Even Tom Holland's *Dominion* is more a quest for the traces of Europe's lost soul, however made out to be a history of European Christianity. Likewise, the appearance of widely-read, disquieting novels like Michel Houellebecq's *Submission*, or the timely recent re-edition of Jean Raspail's dystopian, white nationalist classic, *The Camp of the Saints*, indicate that Murray has hit a raw nerve in the European psyche.<sup>2</sup> Apocalyptic or not, these visions of a possible future cannot just be written off. That, perhaps, is the best reason to engage Murray's book as part of an emerging genre of "political prophecy."

## States becoming nations; nations becoming states

Although Murray's book concerns Europe, similar unsettled and unsettling U.S. disputes over immigration, asylum and refugee policies provide a natural link with the same issues Murray highlights about Europe alone. It is well to remind Americans of the long U.S. history of often fierce resistance to non-European immigration, dating from the first days of the republic. The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited naturalization to "whites," and began a two-century string of legal acts, arguably inconsistent with the professed universal liberal values of the American founding.<sup>3</sup> The racist 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and its 1892 extension, The Geary Act, the essentially "Nordic" "whites-only" Immigration Act of 1924 and Operation Wetback of 1954 still weigh on the national conscience. Federal legislation also often reflected the vogue for popular nativist social movements, such as the Know-Nothings. Their attacks on Irish immigrants, or anti-Catholic campaigns like that led by the famous Lyman Beecher, should remind us of those days. Father of Harriet Beecher Stowe, the nativist Reverend Lyman Beecher loudly fulminated against the "dark-minded population from one country to another," referring to the new immigrants as "Clouds like the locusts of Egypt ... rising from the hills and plains of Europe, and ... coming over to settle down upon our fair fields."<sup>4</sup>

No matter how ethnically, racially, or religiously bigoted much American immigration policy has been, American liberal nationalists have always been able to appeal to the universality embedded in the U.S. founding documents. Notably, since 1965's Hart-Celler Act,

America's foundational traditions of being an "asylum," "refuge" or "immigrant nation" have lifted many of the discriminatory ethnic and racist barriers to U.S. citizenship.<sup>5</sup> Even in the present mood of the federal attempts to limit, or even curtail, asylum-seeking and refuge, liberal nationalists have been able to make effective legal appeals to America's foundational character as a refuge and asylum.

Despite their own robust liberal traditions, European liberals may not possess quite the same kind of constitutional and historical leverage in the matter of immigration as their American cousins. The United States was a functioning "state," decades before the existence of American "nationalism." *These United States* consisted of several independent states, inhabited by New Yorkers, South Carolinians, Pennsylvanians and so on. In addition to its own Native Peoples, who typically considered themselves members of their own indigenous nations, the population of "these United States" necessarily consisted of all sorts of transplanted folk, some forced and others unforced, asylum-seekers, refugees, settlers, and temporary immigrants, as well. As Thomas Paine said in *Commonsense*, America was "an asylum for mankind."<sup>6</sup> But not until the 1830's, do historians, like Jill Lepore, believe an American "nation" existed. Not until then is "United States" used commonly in the singular, identified routinely as a "nation."<sup>7</sup> By contrast, "For all its soaring, hallowed prose, the Declaration of Independence never described the United States as a nation and it invoked not national but universal ideas."<sup>8</sup> When from 1834 to 1874, George Bancroft wrote the "first major history of the American nation" .... He wrote a history that tried to turn the state into a nation."<sup>9</sup>

The history of many European countries tends to invert the American relation of nation to state. It was upon various European groups first being—or *believing* themselves to be "nations"—and to have a common ancestry or history—however mythologically *invented*—that Europeans (and, later, Jews) formed their own "states." When the Polish state was dismembered in the Partitions of the late eighteenth century, Poles still believed that a Polish "nation" existed. And, when Poland was recreated as nation-state, it was upon that ethno-national basis that it did so. This incidentally meant tragedy for Polish Jews, who were not—at least easily or unanimously—included in the ethno-national mythology and entity of early twentieth century Poland. Similarly, Turks learned to *believe* there were Turks long before there was Turkey, and Jews before Israel came to be. Prussians, Bavarians, Saxons existed before there were "Germans." But nationalist mythology taught Prussians, Bavarians and the like *to believe* there were "Germans" before there was a Germany. "Most Hungarians," say Lepore, "only found out that their nation had gotten its start in the year 896 ten centuries later."<sup>10</sup> By contrast, while there are Kurdish or Palestinian "nationals," no "states" called Kurdistan or Palestine yet exist. In Jill Lepore's words, European and American nationalisms and liberalisms differ because "the United States had gotten its start as a state-nation, instead of a nation-state, because Americans understood their nation as an asylum ...."<sup>11</sup>

Lepore's understanding of the differences between America and Europe may help us understand why a European like Douglas Murray is inconsolable regarding the perceived diminishment of European national identities. Most European states are, or at least —are *believed* to be—founded on nations. The heart of European nation-states is *the nation*—a group of people believed to share a common ancestry, customs, ethnicity, "blood" and so on. Because Murray sees European identity so bound to what are essentially national groups, he is outraged that Europeans should let themselves carelessly give way to alien peoples, many of whom are antagonistic to European values. Europe is doing nothing less than surrendering its soul before an influx of immigrants without giving it serious thought.

But given that the history of European state-formation may make ethno-national identity structurally more important to individual European countries than to the United States, how realistic are Murray's fears for Europe? Murray offers some startling facts and figures that are meant to justify his alarm—even if the data may fall short of the rigor social scientists demand of population projections.

## A Muslim population bomb?

Beyond some standard empirical data, Murray bases his fears on certain telling anecdotes about recent German population trends. In Germany, the low native birth-rate and the perceived need for more working-age residents combined with the large influx of Muslim immigrants to spark considerable public debate over the implications of these trends in the growth of the Muslim immigrant population. Giving exaggerated voice to such anxieties, Thilo Sarrazin, a former politician and Bundesbank board member wrote a controversial book—*Germany Is Abolishing Itself* (2010)—*Deutschland schafft sich ab*. Its title bookended Angela Merkel’s 2015 “Yes, We Can!” welcoming slogan to Syrian refugees, “*Wir schaffen das*,” with a sour “No, We Cannot!” (95). The book was extraordinarily popular in Germany, indicating that Sarrazin had at least tapped a national nerve. 47 percent of Germans felt, for instance, that Islam was not a religion that belonged in Germany (95). Murray’s discussion of Sarrazin’s book sadly offers no better statistical support than that for the German case. But, if we can extrapolate from Austria’s situation to Germany, what would it mean for Austria’s European identity, as well, if, by mid-century, forecasters correctly predicted that the majority of children under age fifteen in Austria would be Muslim (312)? Investigating Sarrazin’s impressions further, reports from the Pew foundation on population projections for Europe seem to support Sarrazin’s alarm.<sup>12</sup>

Other remarkable, if statistically uncontextualized, figures explain why a book like Sarrazin’s has had such an impact. If the fears about Germany were extended to Britain, for instance, Murray asks what would it mean for Britain’s identity if by 2050, that Christianity were to rank *third* among religions behind first place Islam (262)? What does it mean today that the most popular name for newborn British males in 2016 was Muhammad (313)? It is hard to say exactly what these data mean. But it is rather easy to tap into the fears of Europeans that the Muslim presence is problematic.

Other popular books, like Houellebecq’s novel, *Submission*, actually stoke European fears of a Muslim “population bomb” by imagining a conversation on Muslim birth rates in the newly Islamizing France of the novel. There, Houellebecq proposes that Muslims may be plotting to become a majority simply by exploiting the kinds of demographic trends Murray mentions. Tanneur, a friend of the novel’s central character, François, has had intelligence agency experience. He claims that what Muslims chiefly “care about” is “birthrate and education. To them it’s simple,” Tanneur says, “whichever segment of the population has the highest birthrate, and does the best job of transmitting its values, wins. If you control the children, you control the future. So, the one area in which they [Muslims] absolutely insist on having their way is the education of children.”<sup>13</sup> Unlike those who might write of changes brought on by spasms of communal violence, the demographic changes, that Houellebecq and Murray respectively note, move slowly, broadly and under the radar. But, as these shifts in demography continue apace, many Europeans, Murray in the lead, believe that Europe will find itself in a very different place than it has been for centuries—in this case significantly Islamized.

## Terror, civic violence, and civilizational change

In addition to demographic issues, Murray assigns special significance to the elevated levels (and character) of crimes attributable to Muslim immigrants. Murray worries, however, that these crime statistics have a significance far beyond the obvious. They are symptoms of what Murray sees as the larger problem with Muslim immigration into Europe—the depth of cultural incompatibility painful incorrigibility between Europe and its new Muslim immigrants.

Consider Murray’s crime statistics—and the types of crime involved—that Murray recites more than a few times in his book. For example, the incidence of sexual crimes committed by young Muslim male immigrants. While, in 1975, only 400 or so rapes were reported to Swedish

police, after the large influx of young Muslim males in 2014, that number exploded to an annual figure of nearly 7,000! By 2015, only Lesotho exceeded Sweden in number of per capita rapes of any country in the world (215). Does Murray's case, at least, deserve serious attention?

Shaken especially by these statistics of sexual crimes committed by Muslim immigrant men against European women, Murray implicitly asks how one could expect things to be otherwise. Angela Merkel's "can-do" attitude of "*Wir schaffen das!*" welcomed more than a million Syrian refugees arriving in Germany from 2015. The introduction of masses of displaced young men, raised in cultures suppressing female sexual expression, and then thrown into one where women seemed to be inviting sexual advances, was bound to end badly.

It would be risky to generalize Murray's alarm about immigrant-caused sexual crimes into something more significant. But independent empirical studies back up the impression of, at least, the seriousness of immigrant criminality that Murray only justifies in terms of rather slim evidence about the occurrence of sexual crimes. By broadening the range of criminal acts to terrorism and other acts of civic violence, Murray's citations of immigrant-caused sexual crimes can be placed in a larger civilizational interpretive context. The numbers suggest that European leaders, at least, ought to take Murray in earnest.

Just to check, I researched the issue of immigrant lawlessness in Western Europe further. For example, between 2010 and 2018, the number of terrorist attacks "failed, foiled and completed" in the EU numbered 1,689.<sup>14</sup> In the EU, 3,016, presumably immigrant, jihadi or other religiously associated persons were arrested in connection with terrorism between 2014 and 2018.<sup>15</sup> Most recently, Europol reports that in 2018, the numbers of "failed, foiled and completed" attacks has dropped with only twenty-four of 129 classified as jihadi. Ethno-nationalists and separatists lead the statistics for 2018 at eighty-three of a total of 129 "failed, foiled and completed" attacks.<sup>16</sup> But, in terms of arrests for the year 2018, presumably immigrant, jihadis accounted for the greater number—511 of 1056, with France accounting for 273 alone.<sup>17</sup>

The comparable statistics for the United States conforms to what many have pointed out, namely, that the great majority of terrorist violence in the United States issues from its own native nationalists, not from immigrants, Muslim or otherwise, as is the case in Europe.<sup>18</sup> Thus, by contrast with Europe, in the U.S.A., between 2001 and 2019, terrorists arrested, either native born, naturalized or permanent residents, numbered 392. Of that number, 232 of the 392 terrorists arrested were *native-born* Americans. Only fifty-nine similar individuals were either refugees, asylum-seekers, non-immigrant visa holders or undocumented persons—13 percent. Recall that in the EU, between the years 2014 to 2018, 3016 jihadi or other religiously associated persons were arrested. On the other hand, 51.4 percent of U.S. terrorists were *native-born*. Aggregating native-born, naturalized and Green Card holders, accounted for 86.9 percent of U.S. terrorists versus the 13 percent of various classes of migrants.<sup>19</sup> Europe and the U.S. seem, then, to have diverged in the matter of the perpetrators of terrorist attacks.

However many the differences within Europe, the European crime statistics related to immigrant populations, one might better understand Murray's alarm about the long-term meaning of sex crimes. Because European nationalism tends toward an *ethnic* nationalism, one might expect greater alienation between immigrants and native Europeans—than say in a "nation of immigrants," like the U.S.. Immigrants represent the arrival of people identified with their original nationalities. The residence of immigrants of alien nationality in Europe, based on nations, thus would tend more to look and feel like a nation-within-a-nation. Such a mixture would seem, on the face it, potentially combustible, if not downright alienating. It is not surprising then that hostilities from both hosts and immigrants should be greater than in the U.S.. The sex crimes Murray identifies would then be symptoms of the friction generated by different, perhaps incompatible, nations seeking to occupy the same space.

Murray—and with him, Holland, Houllebecq, and Raspail—look to the mismatch of civilizations between Islam and the West as causing the anger, frustration and hatred by

certain immigrant groups for what they see as a decadent unwelcoming Europe. Combine such resentments with a Europe, lacking the moral courage to push back where appropriate, and one has pretty much summed up the malaise as Murray sees it. Murray, therefore, is not charging that Muslims arrive in Europe with some essentialist hatred toward the West. Europe is at fault as well for not standing up to the violence. In effect, Murray believes that civic violence caused by Muslim immigrants in Europe may amount to a kind of cultural intimidation.

### **Feckless morality, shameless tolerance**

Is there anything to such a charge? Put European weakness to one side for the moment. Murray notes that even Muslim reformers have had to hide behind pseudonyms, seek police protection, or in some cases yield to the intimidation from their own radical coreligionists (264). Fear of retaliation was pervasive. But, why, Murray asks, did so many European leaders seem just “to ignore the problem and lie about it” (113)? Murray wonders why a “liberal society is going quiet on such bigotry just because it was coming from a community of immigrants” (149)? Answering his own questions, Murray believes that liberal guilt and political correctness (PC) played major roles—what philosopher, Pascal Bruckner called “a moral intoxicant in Europe” (174). Sexual assaults by immigrant men upon European women and boys raised the specter of deeply disquieting racist libels of dark men preying upon white women. Hence, “nobody wanted to discuss and everybody was terrified of discussing” these racist memes. “It was something nobody wanted to speak or hear about. There was something so base, and so rank somehow, in even mentioning it” (194). So, no one, or at least, not enough people, did.

Murray raises the issue of the morally flabby reactions to egregious atrocities such as the murder of Dutch gay activist, Pim Fortuyn by “Volkert van der Graaf, 33, a vegan animal rights campaigner.” Murray is quick, however, to qualify the description of the killer, vegan or not, since van der Graaf “said his goal was to stop Mr Fortuyn exploiting Muslims as ‘scapegoats’.”<sup>20</sup> But even knowing van der Graaf’s motive, Dutch leaders made no references to the obvious issue of Muslim homophobia. Instead, prominent Dutch authorities blamed Fortuyn’s gay flamboyance for his murder! A leading Dutch Labor Party leader even issued a pass to Fortuyn’s murderers by piling on against the gay activist as “an extremely inferior human being” (137). Such attitudes as these may be why American author, Bruce Bawer, “started to wonder why a society [like the Netherlands] that prided itself on its liberalism seemed to be worrying about offending Muslims more than it worried about protecting gays” (149).

Murray then delves more deeply into the causality of Dutch inability to come to terms with the possibility of Muslim homophobia’s role in Fortuyn’s death. The causes are complex, but Murray finally believes it is possible that “Dutch society was trying to pretend that its own tolerance could coexist with the intolerance of the fastest-growing portion of the society.” But critics, like Pim Fortuyn did not—and did so vocally (136). Religious tolerance made it almost impossible to argue that, say, *Muslim* intolerance of homosexuals might need to be addressed. In cases such as assaults on European homosexuals, the elites Murray indicts could not even raise critical questions about the possible relation of such violence to the stubborn tenacity of Muslim sexual taboos. Tellingly, even in cases where such a Muslim factor seemed plausible, European elites were unable to raise this possibility.

So, in effect, the transgressors got a pass in part because they were associated with a particular religion. That, in turn, tapped into European sympathies for Muslims as colonized peoples. Since religion to European liberals is seen to be something essentially “good,” and since Islam is a religion, the obvious conclusions are drawn. “After nearly every terrorist

attack,” by jihadis, Murray says, “the political leaders of Europe informed their publics that this had nothing to do with Islam, and that Islam was in any case a peaceful religion” (234). Thus, a religion of immigrants, like Islam, could never be interrogated about its role in civic violence. Islam is a “religion of peace,” after all. Sadly, symptomatic of this inability to assign culpability for egregious acts of violence to Islam or individual Muslims was the way Murray mentions how French “Foreign Minister, Laurent Fabius” attacked the magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, for the jihadi fire-bombing of the publication’s offices. “Is it really sensible to pour fuel on the fire,” the “tolerant” Fabius asked (227). Over the longer term, evasions of such painful questions, in turn, paralyzed law enforcement in the face of civic violence that may indeed have had the civilizational roots Murray believes it had all along.

### The “acid” of multi-culturalism

Amidst all the moral fecklessness he perceives, Murray thinks he knows precisely how and why Europe has been so incapable of candor about religiously-informed hate crimes. Murray argues that a parade of inter-related cultural fads and fashions induced helplessness into Europe’s psyche before the intimidation that came later. Murray indicts social theories such as “multi-culturalism” for special disdain. While Murray does not doubt that all cultures and civilizations merit respect and due recognition, he believes that multi-culturalism has undermined Europe’s sense of the value of its own culture. Conceived as a compassionate means gradually to integrate Europe’s new immigrants, in practice, multi-culturalism meant that “the culture that had allowed all these other cultures to be celebrated in the first place”—European liberal culture—quietly became “the only culture that couldn’t be celebrated” (101). Liberal guilt for its imperial past made Europeans feel and act “that they had to do themselves down, particularly focusing on their negatives” (101). Taken to these extremes, Murray accuses multi-culturalism of having exposed itself as an “anti-Western ideology” by encouraging European “self-abnegation” (102).

Murray thinks such “self-abnegation” has gone to bizarre extremes. He observes how the feelings of post-colonial cultural guilt generated in some European cultures even led to the idea that Europeans lacked distinctive cultures. Murray recounts how Ingrid Lomfors, a leader of Sweden’s “Living History Forum,” a “Holocaust education body,” captures the self-abasement spawned by multi-culturalism. In a “much-praised speech,” she “insisted upon three things: that immigration to Sweden is nothing new, that everyone is a migrant really, and that in any case there is no such thing as Swedish culture” (127). In *Submission*, Houellebecq, in effect, channels Murray by noting how defeatist the French became about their own culture. At one point of crisis, François, the novel’s main character, admits to himself that he finally “wasn’t really convinced the republic and patriotism had ‘paved the way’ for anything”—except perhaps the death of Europe itself.<sup>21</sup> The rise of ethno-nationalist populist parties showed that “members of the public could see what the policy-makers could not”—nationalist culture! They saw Europe’s being overwhelmed by alien masses and unable “to assimilate the new arrivals,” and had decided they didn’t like it at all (114). “The people,” however, cherish their cultural distinctiveness to the point of embracing rightist hyper-nationalist politics with enthusiasm.

Making matters worse, Murray does not see Muslim migration into Europe slackening anytime soon. Nor, does he see Europe’s “political class” reconsidering their policies of relatively open immigration, and, even less, any coerced mass deportations (308). The political class will simply put off difficult decisions for a future generation to face. “And so, in time,” Murray glumly forecasts, “during the present century, in the major cities first and then across whole countries, our societies will finally become those ‘nations of immigrants’ that we pretended for a period we always were” (309). China, India, Russia, Eastern Europe will still look as they have for centuries. But “Western Europe will at best resemble a large-scale version of the United Nations. Many people will enjoy living in such a Europe. Many people will welcome this, and it will have its

pleasures of course. Certainly not everything about it will be a catastrophe .... There will be an endless influx of new neighbors and staff, and there will be many interesting conversations to be had. This place where international cities develop into something resembling international countries will be many things. But it will not be Europe anymore” (309–10).

Again, Murray blames European leaders for such a “European society ... ever less recognizable” because “it chose to wage a war on its own design” by inviting mass migration from very different cultural centers (310). Like a ship at sea, Murray sees a compassionate Europe taking on more drowning refugees than its capacity will allow. Inevitably, as this cargo of rescued souls grows beyond containment, “we will capsize the only vessel that we, the peoples of Europe, have” (311). Europeans are thus soon to discover that “in the lifespan of people now alive they would become minorities in their own countries” (312).

### Un-meltable Islam?

But surely, the critic might ask, Murray discounts the way immigrants normally assimilate to their host societies? Murray thinks the present wave of Muslim immigrants will prove exceptions to this rule. Murray feels cheated by the “assurances and expectations, [that] the people who came into Europe did not throw themselves into our culture and become part of it.” Instead of joining Europe, they became indigestible elements in it: “They brought their own cultures. And they did so at the precise moment that our own culture was at a point that lacked the confidence to argue its own case” (276). Adopting the cuisines and social customs imported by the new immigrants is one thing; yielding to intellectual censorship, elimination of women from the public sphere, or anti-Semitism, as Murray notes, is another.

Murray expects that a Europe of religious *cantonment* inevitably encourages a future of religious frictions, or worse. Given how illiberal the Islam of many Muslim countries preoccupying the mind of the West are, Murray believes that massive Muslim immigration into Europe threatens to import a scheme of values inconsistent with Europe’s liberalism. Thus, Murray attributes his growing alarm *not* to a change in “evidence,” since, according to Murray, “that evidence was there all along. What changed was a growing awareness that other cultures now increasingly among us *did not share all of our passions, prejudices, or presumptions*” [my emphases] (261). Murray simply doesn’t want to see Europe dominated by unreconstructed Muslims from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, or Saudi Arabia. Further evidence of the un-meltable of Europe’s Muslims is their continuing to dwell in the unassimilated, insulated immigrant population pockets. Moroccan, Indonesian, Iranian, Somali, Pakistani, or Turkish Islam may exist *inside* Europe, but they are not *of Europe*, as Ramadan wishes they would be. On the whole, these immigrants to Europe have not evolved into what Ramadan means by a *European* Islam, any more readily than British colonials, holed up in their exclusive compounds under the *Raj*, made for an *Indian* Christianity. Murray agrees (100).

Murray is furthermore not encouraged by how European tolerance offered little resistance to this brand of illiberal Islam. Too many good European liberals looked the other way, Murray believes, when Muslim authorities issued *fatwas* against writers like Salman Rushdie, threatened cartoonists for depicting Muhammad satirically as done in Denmark, or resisted equality of the sexes, women in public life, freedom of conscience, freedom of sexual expression, state-church separation, and so on. Murray thus fears for Europe’s future because he does not believe such an unreconstructed Islam could ever become a *European* Islam. It would certainly not be the kind of “European” Islam for which prominent Muslim reformers like Tariq Ramadan hope.<sup>22</sup> So instead of Tariq Ramadan’s optimistic vision of a “European Islam,” latest trends point to one or several “Islams” inside Europe.

In the face of such facts, Murray lets loose a pained cry for the European ethno-national identities slowly ebbing away before what seems to him the irresistible force of Muslim immigration and population growth. Any remedies? Murray argues for severe limits on Muslim immigration. As to those immigrants already resident in Europe, one can imagine Murray pleased about a recent Danish policy of schooling all immigrant children, most of whom are Muslim, for “at least 25 hours a week ... for mandatory instruction in ‘Danish values,’ including the traditions of Christmas and Easter, and Danish language.”<sup>23</sup> The Danes have decided that they cannot tolerate the existence of nations-within-the-nation any more than they can a state-within-a-state. Were the demography of Europe to tip in favor of populations subscribing to illiberal Muslim values, Europe, as it has been known for some time, would be challenged by a parochial alien culture.

But does this have to be the story of Islam in Europe? One glaring weakness in Murray’s attitude toward Muslims in Europe is his apparent ignorance of Muslim reformers. As already noted, Oxford’s Tariq Ramadan has, in fact, argued consistently that Muslim immigrants to Europe need to let go of the cultures of their home countries. They should *adapt*—but not surrender—the Islam of their home countries to the dominant values of a liberal, if post-Christian, Europe. Running hard against the Salafist conservative currents of Sunni Islam, Ramadan argues that Islam can adapt sufficiently to make a home in Europe because the “doors” of *ijtihad*—legal and theological hermeneutics—can be opened to permit adaptation.<sup>24</sup> Ramadan holds out optimism for his project of cultural integration in ways that regrettably never enter Murray’s mind or *Europe’s Strange Death*. Unlike Muslim cultural conservatives, Ramadan is ready to negotiate a *modus vivendi* with Western values. That, in turn would assume that more creative freedom in domains of religious reasoning—a revived exercise of *ijtihad*—won consensus approval in enough quarters of Muslim jurisprudence and *kalam*, Muslim theology. Ramadan is targeted Muslim immigrants to Europe to sell them on the idea that they can and should both creatively adapt to European cultural fashion and structures. In addition, Muslims should be free to practice and promote Islam in Europe, just as much as any other religion in Europe would. But Ramadan’s optimism aside, the jury is still out as to whether the doors of *ijtihad* will open sufficiently to permit a “European Islam” to pass through. One hears little or nothing of such changes from the centers of Muslim authority in Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, even less from militant jihadists like Al Qaeda or ISIS. Doubtless, Tariq Ramadan’s optimism about a revival of an active *ijtihad* marks him in the lineage of the Islamist-founder and his grandfather, Hassan Al-Banna, his great-uncle, the liberal reformer, Gamal Al-Banna, and his own Muslim Brotherhood leader and father. Islamists have long since accepted the principle of the contemporary viability of *ijtihad*.

Interestingly enough, Murray generally discounts racism, xenophobia and other sorts of European hostility to Muslim immigrants. Instead, he dwells on prominent problematic cases, such as how Angela Merkel’s invitation to Syrian refugees fleeing the civil war may have contributed to the rise of rightist movements in Germany such as the *Alternative für Deutschland* (205–6, 289–90). But of course, native European ethnic, religious and racial biases have their own history in discouraging integration and creative cultural fusion. Symptomatic of Murray’s indisposition in this regard is his failure to acknowledge and engage Ramadan’s widely-publicized project, however aspirational it may remain. It is precisely for tending to see the glass half empty that reviewers like *The New Statesman*’s John Gray or *Middle East Eye*’s Ian Almond rightly have called Murray out.<sup>25</sup> There are arguments to be made about the prospects for success of Ramadan’s brave program. The “gates of *ijtihad*” do not seem ready to swing open any time soon. But, if Murray is going to raise an alarm about the clash of Muslim values with Western ones, he weakens his own arguments by his avoidance of Ramadan’s substantial efforts to address precisely the “clash of cultures” troubling Murray.

## De-Christianization

Europe's steady de-Christianization, Murray (as well as others) is frequently cited as a major culprit in Europe's slow death. Even though Christianity's contribution to the identity of the West had often been contested, by the 1980s and 1990s, even secular intellectuals came around to accepting that religion mattered. John Paul II's role in the end of the Soviet Union, the ethno-religious traumas of the Yugoslav civil wars, the emergence of a politicized Islam in Iran, all put into relief how much the West owed its Christian past. Especially as Muslim immigrants began making their values felt in the West, Murray tells us how the West learned that "not everybody who came to our societies shared our views. They did not share our views about equality of the sexes. They did not share our views on the primacy of reason over revelation. And they did not share our views on freedom and liberty"—views "catalyzed by the Christian religion and ... the Enlightenment" (261). The myth of the "Withering away of Religion," like the Marxist dream of the "Withering away of the State," itself began to wither as these lessons came to be learned—however late (128).

Murray acknowledges some unspecified place for Christianity in the formation and continuing psycho-social identity of the West. He cites "atheist theologian," Don Cupitt, one "that 'Nobody in the West can be wholly non-Christian. You may call yourself non-Christian, but the dreams you dream are still Christian dreams.'" Even the "modern Western secular world is *itself* a Christian creation" (213). In this way, Murray describes something quite unlike anything, for example, approaching "ethnic conflict," and consequently, something more far-reaching, if harder to grasp. But the problem is whether too much damage has already been done, even to reconnect with these historical Christian roots? Euro-pessimists argue that Europe has now been so totally sapped of its essentially Christian religious energies that they cannot be revived. *That* Europe, rooted in Christianity, is dead or dying at the roots. Gradually, for some years, it had been falling victim to replacement by the religious traditions of an alien culture as Muslim immigrants continued to populate the Continent. It is that proximate cultural replacement that makes up at least half of the "strange death of Europe" of which Murray writes.

In a companion work of controversial contemporary fiction, the novel *Submission*, by "the emblematic writer of our age," Michel Houellebecq (277), Murray's gloomy forecasts receive vivid actualization. Houellebecq places the reader in a recently Islamized France of the very near future. There, we meet Robert Rediger, a Muslim convert and newly appointed chancellor of the University of Paris, explaining how Christian life bled out of Europe. After all, Rediger triumphantly declares, "Without Christianity the European nations had become bodies without souls—zombies."<sup>26</sup> The iconoclasm and disenchantments of secularization, de-Christianization, the Enlightenment left behind a spiritual vacuum into which Islam's stepped in to take ownership of Europe's soul.

While one can broadly agree with Murray's general sense of Christianity's place in the formation of the West, he tells a rather pale story to the one Houellebecq does. Says Murray: "To put it another way, the unusual European settlement, drawn up from ancient Greece and Rome, catalyzed by the Christian religion and refined through the fire of the Enlightenment, turned out to be highly particular inheritance" (261). Although such a script is bound to please a certain kind of Christian neo-nativist desire to connect modern Europe directly to the glories of ancient Greece, the real story differs substantially. Here, *immigrants*, not natives, were decisive. Historians of Christianity and culture in Western Europe, such as social historians Peter Brown, Marc Bloch, or Harold Berman for instance, relate how the remnants of the Roman Empire were smashed and remade by waves of Germanic, in particular, Frankish *immigrants*. Brown and the others dwelled less on the mythic ideals of Greece and Rome, and rather more on how European Christianity was defined by this alien, pagan Frankish warrior culture.<sup>27</sup> Brown brings out the defining materiality of Western European Christianity, its cult of the local saints and their physical remains, relics remade the liturgy and ecclesiastical architecture. Their strange materialist spirituality likewise drove the Frankish Crusader

imperative to occupy the Holy Land, while the Byzantines remained indifferent to such crass projects. Bloch, for his part, demonstrates how the imposition of Frankish feudalism shaped everything from the ethos of dedication to authority to the reason people pray with folded hands instead of uplifted arms. Berman relates how extensively Germanic folk law dominated the Middle Ages until the recovery of Roman law in Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis*. Karl der Grosse's Holy Roman Empire was, as Voltaire noted, neither holy, nor Roman.

Taking the Gothic immigrant invasions seriously would mean realizing that the Christian legacy that Murray wants modern Europeans to save is itself the product of deeply disruptive, presumed unwelcome, invasions of strange, immigrant "barbarians" into the continent. Murray and Houellebecq both have perhaps drunk too deeply of the refined "wine" of cultural romanticism when they might better have been serving up the cruder "beer" of Europe's immigrant Germanic origins. But that would have made for a less smoothly digestible story—one marked by disruptions and unexpected outcomes.

### **Houellebecq's France submits apathetically to Islam**

While Murray condemns the whole of Europe for bringing on its own death, Houellebecq, for instance, concentrates on the apathy of the French in the face of the across-the-board Islamization of their nation. In *Submission*, François, the novel's middle-aged central character is cast as an academic specialist in the Decadent literature of Joris-Karl Huysmans. A dejected sort himself, he sees his own diminished personal life mirroring a civilizational decline common to Murray's forecast of Europe's "strange death." But while Murray sees the rash of Muslim terrorism as prelude to Europe's demise, Houellebecq sees final Muslim ascendancy happening without any outbreaks of ethnic violence or murmurs of resistance. Crowned by the election of France's first Islamist president, the old civilization of Europe slowly fades away, while another, Islamized one, grows up in its stead.

*Submission* might be interestingly read for dramatizing unforgettable scenes of ordinary life in an Islamized France. At work, in restaurants, in bed, the predictions of Murray's imagination come to life. New Islamized social arrangements, piece-by-piece slowly come into fashion in the wake of France's election of its first Muslim president, Mohammad Ben Abbas. Yes, debates "had begun to form ... around the new domestic policies of Mohammed Ben Abbas," François lazily notes. Although the government enacted these policies "very slowly, very gradually, without great animus," one in particular was quite disconcerting to an academic like François: the University of Paris—Sorbonne sold to a wealthy Saudis, subsequently reconstituted and led by Rediger as the *Islamic* University of Paris—Sorbonne.<sup>28</sup> Sexual segregation hits the schools, businesses, transport, and indeed, all public space. Public piety became both conspicuous, even ostentatious, and worst of all, fashionable. And, in a genius move, Houellebecq conjures Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* by noting how the state's institutionalization of polygamy reasserted patriarchy. With polygamy's consequent infantilization of women, all the many hard-won triumphs of modern feminism are swept away. François explains.

Under an Islamic regime, women—at least the ones pretty enough to attract a rich husbands—were able to remain children nearly their entire lives. No sooner had they put childhood behind them than they became mothers and were plunged back into a world of childish things. Their children grew up, then they became grandmothers, and so their lives went by. There were just a few years where they bought sexy underwear, exchanging the games of the nursery for those of the bedroom—which turned out to be much the same thing. Obviously, they had no autonomy, but as they say in English, *fuck autonomy*.<sup>29</sup>

Murray could not have imagined a better metaphor for a dying Europe than Houellebecq's portrayal of France's "general atmosphere of tacit and lazy acceptance" of its Islamization. In

conversation with François, Robert Rediger, the Islamic University of Paris' new chancellor admits, "I subscribed more and more to Toynbee's idea that civilizations die not by murder but by suicide."<sup>30</sup> Besides, the obvious signs of decline were everywhere. "How could anyone argue that Europe wasn't in decline?" François earlier muses to himself.<sup>31</sup> François' friend, Tanneur, an intelligence officer, shares the same view: "The French Revolution, the republic, the motherland ... yes, all that paved the way for something, something that lasted a little more than a century."<sup>32</sup> And, now that *something* has spent its energy, leaving behind a dying nation. "Today," adds Tanneur, "who believes in French patriotism? The National Front claims so to do, but their belief is so insecure, so desperate. The other parties have already decided that France should be dissolved into Europe."<sup>33</sup> But just what mechanism engineered this "strange death" Houellebecq scarcely says. That is left to Murray, and to some extent to Jean Raspail's, *The Camp of the Saints*.

### "The Camp of the Saints"

Murray's anger over Europe's moral cowardice, cultural defeatism, and well-meaning, but feckless, hospitality for recent Muslim migrants, explains the tone of apprehension permeating his book. Sometimes Murray's alarm reaches hysterical levels. This at least may explain why he takes pains to entertain the dystopian visions of Jean Raspail's fevered anti-immigrant novel, *The Camp of the Saints* (115–20). It also offers good reasons, as well, for readers of this review to give it their attention.

In its dissection of Europe's passivity in the face of Third World immigration, Raspail's book joins Murray and Houellebecq in their shared phobias.<sup>34</sup> Of the three, *The Camp of the Saints*, however, stands out for the dark panic conveyed in its depiction of Third World immigration to Europe. That level of fear in some ways typifies many of the white supremacist movements lately much in the news. The Southern Poverty Law Center's Heidi Beirich identifies one of the main articulations of that panic, noting that "For some 30 years, *Camp of the Saints* has been one of the top two books in white supremacist circles."<sup>35</sup> Testifying to its influence in white supremacist circles, Beirich's SPLC colleague, Michael Edison Hayden goes on to say that "While *The Camp of the Saints* was relatively obscure then, websites such as VDARE and the white nationalist American Renaissance helped make it a fixture in the white nationalist community. VDARE created an entire searchable tag called "Camp of the Saints."<sup>36</sup> (VDARE stands for Virginia Dare, reputedly, the first English child to be born in the New World.) Its dubious literary and ethical qualities aside, the prophetic cult status of *Camp of the Saints* among white supremacists on both shores of the Atlantic, makes it essential reading along with other reflections on mass immigration.

Bringing *Camp of the Saints* directly into present-day American white supremacist politics about immigration, the *New York Times* reported in November 2019 that "White House senior adviser Stephen Miller encouraged Breitbart staffers to write about *The Camp of the Saints* in emails leaked earlier this month."<sup>37</sup> Miller's e-mail of September 6, 2015 read: "... you see the Pope saying the west must, in effect, get rid of borders. Someone should point out the parallels to *Camp of the Saints*."<sup>38</sup> Trump administration policy-makers like Stephen Miller clearly believe *Camp of the Saints* conjures up some sort of appropriate images for thinking about immigration. Iowa House Representative, Steve King, another anti-immigration hawk, praised it roundly as well.<sup>39</sup> Alone making it worth reading, *The Camp of the Saints* also appeared on a list of Steve Bannon's favorite books.<sup>40</sup> No matter how often its message is hateful and its tone apocalyptic and hysterical, *Camp of the Saints* is, therefore, not a book to be ignored in any discussion of immigration policies such as Douglas Murray's.

A cursory reading makes it easy to understand why *The Camp of the Saints* has made such an impression on white supremacists. Raspail's tale is at once dramatic and compelling. It is

also, arguably, pure frenzied xenophobia, contemplating a massive flood of refugees from the Third World. Raspail's horror at Europe's being overwhelmed by Third World migrants shows these writhing, unwashed hordes flooding into France—here from India, not from the Muslim world. The way Raspail sets scenes of the mad carnage and chaos threatening to engulf Europe says volumes about the dark subconscious terrors driving its xenophobic mythology forward. As refugees wait to climb aboard one of a host of derelict freighters bound to transport them somewhere in the south of France, their miseries already challenge the imagination: "There, on the docks by the Ganges," the refugee rabble wait to climb aboard ship. Their numbers are enormous, where "500,000 souls were already massed by the water's edge, ... every road to the port was submerged beneath a human flood ...."<sup>41</sup> From a vantagepoint safely above the melee crowding aboard, Raspail observes further horrors developing before his eyes, below: "At the top, a small patch of empty deck appeared to the waiting hordes on the pier quite able to hold them all. And so they began to edge forward, slowly at first in a single, solid mass, like some gigantic beast with a million legs and hundred heads ...."<sup>42</sup> Inevitably, the crush of so many takes its toll, even before suffering Europe's hostility to the surge of desperate humanity awaiting them.

Down under the pier, the river was teeming with corpses, floating among the wooden pilings, and their saris, flowing there, spread the black waters with a carpet of light. A few were still struggling but most of them had already drowned, quite dead, some since that morning, some since the night before, or the morning before, dropping like so much excess fruit from some prolific tree ... .

Atop the pier, things were no better. Desperation was everywhere, and unstoppable.

... no one bent down or held out of hand. Why bother? The ones who were pushed to the edge knew only too well that their turn would come, that they too would fall, pressed by the huge throngs swarming through the port, on every dock; and the plunge to the water deep held no meaning of death, but rather of life, as they felt themselves drawn on, at last, by a resistless force that nothing could possibly stop.<sup>43</sup>

Nor do refugees surviving this perilous voyage find that their situation is much better. Once landed in the south of France, millions of migrants find Europe already choked with their own miserable kind. Yet, many Europeans welcome the refugees, nonetheless. Thirty Nobel peace prize winners urge their admission and rapid resettlement.<sup>44</sup> The Vatican reacts by calling upon European Catholics to open "their hearts, souls and worldly wealth" to these wretched of the earth. "There is no road save charity for a Christian to follow .... This is the hour when all of us must answer the call of that universal love for which Our Lord died on the cross," declared Pope Benedict XVI in his official, yet improvident, pronouncement.<sup>45</sup>

But nothing had been able to withstand the migrant mobs. "After all, 5 billion growling human beings, rising over the length and breadth of the earth, can make a lot of noise!"<sup>46</sup> As the masses of refugees move deeper and deeper into Europe and across to the UK, and they spread unimaginable mayhem. "Terror on the highways. Shakedowns left and right, kidnappings. Ransoms." And, inevitably, as if Murray's obsession with immigrant sexual assaults were contagious, Raspail goes on, "This one's daughter, abducted .... This one's bride, hardly paid for, carried off by some gang ... whisked off by young toughs ...."<sup>47</sup> The invader's numbers were so great that in short order they displace all the existing governments of the Continent, and revel in their triumph over the privileged inhabitants of Europe. In London, for example,

at Number 10 Downing St., negotiations are in progress. The Non-European Commonwealth Committee has taken over London, politely as you please. Simple question of statistics. They compare the figures and draw their conclusions. Really how stupid! We never imagined but there could be so many! The Queen received the leaders of the 'Paks,' stands aghast at one of their non-negotiable demands. Namely that her younger son marry a Pakistani to destroy a symbol, or to make it their own. We could argue forever.<sup>48</sup>

The tattered remains of a resistance, doubtless Catholic supremacists, fought on. Some tried to push back the refugees, after the official army shrinks from the task: “Oh those thousands of men, and officers and generals! Words . . . , that’s all! Words dressed in uniforms hiding their weakness behind that veneer of soldierly steel and ready to run at the first sign of action.”<sup>49</sup> For a while, a ragged band of armed resisters forms. Made up of toughened army veterans and other volunteers, they are ready to kill to protect their share of a shrinking turf. As if recapitulating in reverse the French withdrawal from Algeria, they too sing loudly Piaf’s “No, No Regrets.”<sup>50</sup> Most of all, they try to maintain morale.

The captain sat pounding the dashboard with his fist. At each “no, no regrets” every rifle butt smashed against the floor of the truck . . . If we probe the innermost feelings of this brawling band, the first thing we find is a kind of drunken *esprit de corps*. The festive ecstasy of tribal togetherness, the feeling of belonging. Few as they are, so few you count them, they still thumb their noses at the rest of the world.<sup>51</sup>

Yet, for all the resistance’s bravado, “there’s something else too, something more like desperation. The child, whooping it up, at night, on the lonely road, to forget that he’s alone.”<sup>52</sup> At one point, just before a trumpet’s mess call, one resister thinks to himself, “Given the words the French soldier thinks of when he hears those notes—‘it ain’t shit yet, but it will be soon!’—one imagines them bursting against the Western sky, and sounding an accent a prophetic doom . . .”<sup>53</sup> And, doom it was, “France has given in. The inevitable has happened. Now there’s no turning back, despite a few isolated accommodations worked out here or there, when the two opposing forces could find some common ground.”<sup>54</sup>

With defeat now complete, that evening’s radio announcement from the newly established “Paris People’s Radio Cooperative” of the formation of the “Paris Multiracial Commune” confirmed the worst of France’s submersion beneath a Third World tide.<sup>55</sup> All sorts of humiliating policies were swiftly enacted. A deliberate policy that white women could choose only nonwhite mates was among the first acts in the extinction of the white race. But with no color bar, because no color differences existed any longer, the desired “genetic results aren’t long in coming . . . Prejudice will be dead and the only race will be the human race.”<sup>56</sup>

As if not apocalyptic enough, Raspail leaves off his account of Europe’s submersion (and North America’s as well) only to break the news of vast armadas of refugees setting out to swamp Australia, New Zealand.<sup>57</sup> Only Switzerland withstands the invasion, at least for a while. There, the remnant of the resistance flee, in “an effort to hang onto something that we loved: a Western way of life, with our own kind of people.”<sup>58</sup> But, consistent with Raspail’s despairing vision, even the Swiss eventually succumb, leaving the world transformed, and the readers of the novel traumatized.

## Counting the costs to Europe and her migrants

What Jean Raspail conveys in fiction, Murray communicates with anecdotal reports of immigrant violence, packed ghettos, non-white-minority cities and the gradual, but sure, supplanting of white Europe by brown migrant masses. In this light, it is hard not to see nostalgias for an ethno-nationalist Europe behind the selection of facts Murray brings forward. That white nationalists like Stephen Miller engage the imaginary of *Camp of the Saints* tells us something surely about Murray’s own orientation. At the very least, it tells us that Murray believes Europe is headed pell-mell toward a radical cultural crisis brought about by Third World immigration and European moral decline—even perhaps reaching levels of hysteria in his telling. Murray really believes that the great costs of these demographic changes dramatized by Jean Raspail will bring tragedy to both migrants and their hosts alike, however differently. The air of alarm induced by Raspail may explain Murray’s frequent references to incidents of

sexual assaults on European women and boys by Muslim immigrants. But knowing that Murray traffics in such a cultish work as *Camp of the Saints* should also caution us to demand empirical justification for Murray's arguments. And, once we obtain some numbers, do they stand up to comparison? How do we evaluate them? To what extent has Murray's mind become poisoned by the mad hysteria of *Camp of the Saints*? Or, to what extent is Raspail's book prophetic, a harbinger of traumas to come, despite its dubious provenance?

Here are some empirical considerations to bear in mind. First, although the EU (3.9 million square miles) and the U.S.A. (3.8 million square miles) are roughly equivalent in area, the EU's population density at 143 persons per square mile is a good 50 percent greater than the U.S.A.'s of ninety-threepersons per square mile. From a population density perspective alone, hosts like both the EU and U.S.A. look privileged when compared to supplier nations with much higher population densities per square mile like El Salvador (8,000), Guatemala (294), Bangladesh (1150), India (386), Pakistan (215), Syria (266), Turkey (237) or Vietnam (672). Nonetheless, the differences in population density between the EU and U.S.A. would help make sense why European, like Murray, would resist immigration more than Americans.

Second, even given their relative population densities, the numbers of migrants entering Europe are impressive. In 2010, fifty thousand or so migrants applied for asylum in Germany. By 2015, largely because of the Syrian civil war, they numbered 1.5 million! By 2006, annual—mostly Muslim—net migration into France was 193,000. Murray claims that by 2013, the number had risen to 235,000, adding to a population rise of 2.6 million over the past eight years (119). By 2017, the Muslim population of Europe—excluding Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and other members of the former Soviet Union—numbered about 26.8 million, or roughly 4.9 percent of Europe's 400 million population. Of these 26.8 million, countries like the UK, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden each counted from 6–8.8 percent of their populations as immigrant Muslims.<sup>59</sup>

Third, while these numbers by nation seem relatively small, their *concentration* into major European cities produces quite another perception. Compare, for instance, UK's 6.3 percent Muslim population with London's 12 percent, Birmingham's 29 percent and Blackburn's 30 percent.<sup>60</sup> Or, consider France's 8.8 percent overall Muslim population with Marseille's 20 percent.<sup>61</sup> Likewise, compare Belgium's total of 7 percent Muslim immigrants or so with Brussels' of 25 percent.<sup>62</sup> Figures like these invariably contribute to the hysteria about a continent overrun by Muslim immigrants.

Fourth, the character of European nationalism may play a role. On this view, for the most part, at least since the Treaty of Westphalia, European countries (and Israel) were "nations"—or *imagined* themselves to be *nations*—before they became (nation-) "states." Thus, there were—or were *imagined*—Germans, Italians, and Jews for great lengths of time before the "nations" of Germany, Italy and Israel came into existence. This would seem to suggest greater difficulty in assimilating immigrants of other *nations* than, say, for the U.S.A.. It would, in effect, be to invite the existence of nations-within-the-nation. Such an oft-troubled situation exists, perhaps less in practice, although, still in a good deal of law, with the Native American "Nations" existing inside the U.S.A.. But, on the whole, the United States was a "state" decades before it became—or, came to believe itself to be—a "nation." In the early decades after the adoption of the Constitution, Americans still considered their collective political identities as primarily, or even exclusively, connected to their individual states of residence—Pennsylvanians, Virginians, Vermonters, etc, rather than "Americans." As noted earlier, Jill Lepore argued that the *national* identity, "American," and hence American *nationalism*, did not come about until the 1830s.<sup>63</sup>

In connection with this emergent American nationalism in the 1830s, it is worth considering how well European Islamophobia resembles the ugly combination of nativism and anti-Catholicism greeting the Irish immigrants who began coming to America in their numbers as early as 1830. To this end, it would be instructive to refer to parallels with a famous early-nineteenth century American nationalist work warning of the impact Irish Catholic

immigration to America. This is Lyman Beecher's widely-cited anti-immigrant book, *Plea for the West*.<sup>64</sup>

Beecher, an East Coast Presbyterian minister and prominent nativist, feared that the new Irish Catholic immigrants, beginning to enter the country in significant numbers in 1830 or so, would flood the newly opened "west," and upset the plans for Protestant religious hegemony there.<sup>65</sup> Beecher feared the Irish Catholics would come to dominate the new territories in ways contrary to then existing values of American culture as Beecher knew them. Parallels with the themes, substance and tone of Murray's alarm about Muslim immigration into Europe rather leap out at one. At the very least they are thought-provoking. Beecher fears "floods of" Irish Catholic immigrants.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, "... the world has never witnessed such a rush of dark-minded population from one country to another, as is now leaving Europe ... Clouds like the locusts of Egypt are rising from the hills and plains of Europe, and ... are coming over to settle down upon our fair fields."<sup>67</sup> Jean Raspail could easily have written the same in *The Camp of the Saints*.

For some objective perspective, between 1830–40, approximately 300,000 Irish immigrants entered the U.S.A. which, during the same period, had an average population for the decade of about 15 million. By 1840, the so-called "flood" of Irish immigrants Beecher so feared, therefore numbered only 2 percent of U.S. population. Still, Beecher demanded "... an immediate and energetic supervision of our government ... to check the influx of immigrant paupers."<sup>68</sup> Like Murray, Beecher seldom protests Irish-instigated acts of civic violence, but he most fears the cultural incompatibility of Irish Catholics with America's liberal democratic values: "This danger from ... foreign emigrants," says Beecher, like Murray of Ayatollah-worshipping, *fatwa*-wielding Muslims, is because "the greater part [are] unacquainted with our institutions, unaccustomed to self-government, inaccessible to education, and easily accessible to prepossession, and inveterate credulity, and intrigue ...."<sup>69</sup> Like Murray, again about the incompatibility of Islam with liberal values, *religion* is at the heart of the problem: "There is in this country, beside the Catholic, no denomination, any principles of whose religion are anti-republican, or whose influential officers denounce republican institutions, free inquiry, and the liberty of the press, as they have been denounced by the reigning pope,"<sup>70</sup> and the Church "*has always been and still is the inflexible enemy of liberty of conscience and free inquiry and ... republican institutions ....*"<sup>71</sup> Like the opponents of Muslim immigration, Beecher finally wishes to halt the flow of Catholics into this nation of immigrants: "the rapid influx upon us of such masses ... demand an immediate and earnest national supervision, on the same principles of self-preservation that would dyke out the ocean."<sup>72</sup>

The predictable stereotypical phobias that Murray and Beecher so uncannily share against alien immigrants should give us pause. How much of their alarm about immigration reflects a pathological fear of the Other, and how much accurately reflects reality? First, Beecher's—and specifically, Raspail's—use of metaphors like "clouds," "floods" and "inundations" suggests a subjective tendency to exaggerate the number of immigrants. It also expresses an unsavory inclination to depersonalize immigrants by treating them as an undifferentiated mass—a "flood."<sup>73</sup> Objectively considered, does a European Muslim population of 4.9 percent seem like an inundation? Further, if given a chance to participate as equals with native Europeans, how many of this 4.9 percent will remain the Khomeini, Salafi or Wahhabi Muslims they had been, if they remain Muslims at all? How many will realize Tariq Ramadan's dreams of a new kind of Islam—a "European Islam?" In this vein, what threat to democracy is Sadiq Khan, the popular Labor Party son of Pakistani Muslim immigrants, recently elected mayor of London by a wide margin?

Second, just as Murray warns of immigrant illiberalism deriving from Islamic authoritarianism itself, so also Beecher cautioned his readers about Catholic antipathy to democracy, republican forms of government, free speech, free inquiry, self-government, the civil and religious rights of man, and liberty of conscience. What would Beecher find undemocratic

about Joe Biden, the Kennedys, Nancy Pelosi, or John Courtney Murray, for instance? By contrast, the only president impeached for dictatorial violations of the Constitution claims to be like Beecher, a Presbyterian! Beecher urged Americans, as do Murray's anti-immigrant Europeans, to recognize—and fight back against—threats posed by immigrants and their dogmatic religion. In light of this comparison, one might wonder, then, how much of the alarm sounded by Murray is dictated by similar subjective pathological factors to Beecher's?

This is not to say that Murray's concerns about maintaining liberal Western European values are unreasonable or without merit. Certainly not. But we do need better measures both of the objective validity and the relevant subjective factors of his fears. Objectively speaking, the values for which the Catholicism of mid-19th century stood drew from a fiercely anti-liberal Pope Pius IX in the Vatican and the notorious "The Syllabus of Errors" of the Catholicism Beecher knew. Without even invoking the specter of Steve Bannon's hyper-conservative Catholicism, progressives could maintain a line of criticism against the political influence of the Church by pointing to the uniformly rightward leanings of the Catholic members of the Supreme Court and the Catholic leadership of the Federalist Society. Of course, one would need to balance this wing of the Church off against the Catholicism of Pope Francis, Liberation Theology and encyclicals on religious tolerance, universal human rights, climate change and so on. So, answering the question of the relation of religious values to political ones presents serious challenges.

While Murray fixates on the dangers to European identity, the grievous costs for migrants, well documented in the media, merits attention and compassion. Beyond the thousands dying miserably in anonymity *en route* to Europe by plying the Mediterranean, trekking across the deserts of Iraq, Syria and Jordan, trudging up through the Balkans, many thousands, left behind, languish in the physical and spiritual limbo of refugee camps. Hundreds of thousands idly bide their time here and there in Libya, Turkey, or impounded on tiny Greek or Italian Islands bursting with broken souls. For those fortunate enough to land on the continent, Europe greets them with homelessness, chronic unemployment, racism, poverty, crowding into ethnic ghettos and teaming housing estates, when not faced with the constant need to move to the next "better" place. Their numbers may simply overwhelm Europe's ability to receive and assimilate the newcomers, made worse by their concentration in urban ghettos (156). Through it all, Murray is far less moved by the untold sufferings of migrants, dramatized with pornographic savor by Jean Raspail, than by the social and cultural costs to his beloved "Europe." How does what appears a callous lack of charity square with those precious Christian values? Holland, Houellebecq, Murray and others believes define the Christian soul of Europe they seek to preserve?

### **What Europe is, has been, and could become**

It is hard to know, then, just how to assess Murray's concerns objectively, since he does not really supply sufficient criteria by which we could judge how, whether, and to what extent, a given host culture *should* be protected from change by immigration. Like many readers, I too love much of the way Western European culture has taken shape by the energies of what one might call Europe of the North—a product of British, Dutch, French, German, Renaissance Italian, Slavic and Scandinavian national movements? Murray feels that Muslim immigration and its aftermath will, however, be so radical that it will dilute beyond recognition what that Europe has produced at least since the 1500s. But what is so sacred about that "Europe of the North," so to speak? Why could it not be argued that "Europe" itself should be re-conceived to include all shores of the Mediterranean basin—just as it was at the height of the reign of Emperor Augustus?

The idea of Europe as defined by a unified Mediterranean has tantalized some great, contrarian minds, such as Albert Camus. As the Algerian War threatened, he, notably, supported Arab civil rights in Algeria, yet while wanting France and Algeria to remain integrated into one trans-Mediterranean, “rainbow” nation. And, as recently as 2008, as well, President Nicholas Sarkozy proposed the more modest “Union for the Mediterranean,” largely to promote economic prosperity and cultural exchanges in the Mediterranean basin. Some devotees of historical nostalgia also remind us that “the West” of Augustus Caesar had embraced all the peoples along the entire shoreline of the Mediterranean and Black Sea. Along these lines, Houlebecq teased readers with the pan-Mediterranean schemes of France’s Muslim president Mohammad Ben Abbes to be a new Augustus Caesar, who restored the polyglot cultural and political unity of the Mediterranean, albeit on Islamist terms.<sup>74</sup>

At any rate, that was then; this is now. At least half a millennium of history bisected the Mediterranean basin, posing a Germanic-Latin Christian north and west against an Arab-Turkish Muslim south and east. Whatever an earlier, more inclusive, geography, may have described, both sides of the Mediterranean have lived in a bifurcated world long enough to inscribe their opposition, or at the very least, their contrast, onto one another. This is the divided world Murray addresses, and one he believes should stay divided, in order that the North maintain its identity as “Europe.” So, even though thinkers of substance have contemplated such a reunion of the Mediterranean’s now alien shores, Murray believes Europe, as it has come to be known for half a millennium, lacks the moral resources to resist being dissolved into a Mediterranean *Dar-al-Islam*. At best, Europe will be a formless “place where international cities develop into something resembling international countries .... But it will not be Europe anymore”—at least not the “Europe of the North” (309–10). To maintain itself as a “Europe of the North,” further Muslim immigration ought to be minimized.

In real terms, however, Islamic migrations into the North pose the policy question of whether and to what extent the host nations of the north are *willing*, and wise, to reunite the Mediterranean’s shores. Because of higher Muslim birthrates and the “birth dearth” of the North Murray believes such a reunion would likely be *Muslim terms*. Murray and (Houlebecq, too) are pessimistic about the wisdom of such prospects. Both see the defeatist West prostrate before long-term Islamization by its feckless failure to reproduce its own populations and to mobilize Europe to grasp its, ultimately Christian, cultural identity.

### **What is Europe willing to save; what is worth saving?**

Of course, Murray’s fears raise the underlying question of the value of saving *any* particular iteration of European culture at some given point in its development. It is a truism that over the millennia, Western Europe has sustained wave upon wave of migration. But the problem always remains whether—if possible—to resist or welcome *this* particular wave? In the past, Europe’s host cultures have typically had little or no choice in the matter of accepting migrant incursions. Were the *Neanderthals* in a position to resist the arrival of *Homo Sapiens*? Who voted to welcome the Celts, Goths or Franks? Perhaps the only recorded instance of successful resistance to a mass (albeit armed) migration into Europe was the repelling of the Ottoman Turks at the 1683 Battle of Vienna. From that time onward, the Western European colonial and imperial powers have been leading the major global incursions into other parts of the world. But if the Celts, say, had had a choice about the migration of the Franks into their territory, what attitudes would they have had about how much of pre-Frankish Celtic culture to *save*? Had the Ottomans overwhelmed Jan Sobieski’s forces at the Battle of Vienna, would “Austrians” of that time have been willing (or able) to save anything of pre-Ottoman (Viennese) culture, any more than had the conquered peoples of the Ottoman Balkans?

Elevating the notion of the value of “saving” a culture for its own sake raises the further question of the *criteria* for so doing. Is every culture worth preserving, and according to which criteria? Using *subjective* criteria, *any* feature of *any* culture might be felt invaluable and worth conserving. But then does Nazi culture merit being saved? Is American white nationalist culture worth preserving—for any but white nationalists? And, if *objective* criteria are cited, just what is this invaluable “white” culture that must be saved by any means necessary? Are the valuables of American white nationalist “Aryan” culture something to be conserved more than, or instead of Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Maimonides, Spinoza, Nina Simone, W. E. B. Dubois, Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Mencius, Gautama, René Fleming, Rumi, Saul of Tarsus, Akhenaten, Jessye Norman, Carson McCullers, Susan Sontag, Philip Roth, Ibn Khaldun, Joseph Conrad, Lev Tolstoy, Chinua Achebe, Orhan Pamuk, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Courtney Murray or Madame Curie? While a case could be made for the *objective* superiority of the *culture* represented by these examples of “high culture,” candor dictates that we admit such a choice as specific to the culture already invested in this list. How and why then does Murray’s European culture, as it has been known for the last 500 years, say, merit being saved from “strange death of Europe”?

Murray’s strongest case for preserving Europe pretty much “as-is” would seem to be that becoming a “place where international cities develop into something resembling international countries” will be structurally unstable. In such a case Europe “will not be Europe anymore” (309–10). The United States was a *state* (decades) before it became a *nation*, while all European countries were *nations* (often centuries) before any became *states*.<sup>75</sup> On the surface, in its ethno-national diversity, such an “international” Europe would resemble the United States. But European states would be at war with their deep histories as springing from ethnic nations. If we are to believe Jill Lepore that the United States was such an international country from birth, unlike virtually all European states, then Europe, or indeed any European state *should* not try to be an “immigrant” polity in the way that the United States has and can continue to be an “immigrant nation.” Europe would be in conflict with its own original state template. European (and Israeli) nationalisms will, at the very least, *tend* to be “ethnic” nationalisms, no matter how universal they are made out to be, while American nationalism will be universal, however “ethnic” some—such as the Confederacy or today’s U.S. white nationalists—would make it out to be. Murray therefore presumes, in effect, that Europe and the United States are, respectively, based on different templates as nation-states, because of the different conditions of their respective origins of as nation-states. They risk calamity by deviating from those origins. Europe needs solutions to its own problems with immigration and cultural difference.

## Remedies?

Taking up the challenge, Murray concludes with a series of seven—classically—conservative policy solutions to the malaise he has been outlining. Due to considerations of space, I can only elaborate some of them. What then does Murray think should be done about the problems he’s identified?

Although conservative, in the sense of valuing the past, tradition, the local and what is politically “realistic,” Murray cannot be written off as right-wing ideologue. Leaving aside the question of where and how sharp Europe’s borders should be drawn, Murray first believes nations need borders, and that a policy of “open borders” can only spell disaster. He, therefore, believes that Europe should commence a program of deporting undocumented migrants who are *neither* asylum-seekers nor refugees (298).

Critically, Murray does not stop there but then, second, he immediately argues that people forced to flee their home countries are the world’s moral responsibility—even though protecting refugees does not *requires* their coming to Europe. What matters to forced migrants is refuge,

safety and a chance to continue living a fulfilling life. In many cases, these can be found in countries nearer in culture and distance than Europe. Murray believes this would be better than upsetting Europe with mass Muslim immigration and forcing refugees to adapt to an alien culture. The world community, therefore, ought to help refugees find temporary safety and life opportunities in countries closer to their home countries. As recent innovative studies have argued, this means something like seeing refugees as “resources,” and not simply “warehousing” them for long periods of time in “camps” (298). As an alternative to permanent settlement in Europe, Europe should, third, offer generous provisions for *temporary* asylum and refuge (300).

Fourth, Europeans should consider policy proposals about immigration now made only by conventional right-wing thinkers—but *only* if they are neither racist, nor fascist. European elites, in effect, should give nationalism a serious hearing. They, in effect, need to reconsider the practicality of their liberal universal ideology in light of the dangers Murray has brought to our attention. Across-the-board attempts to squelch or deny national feeling may only give exclusive ownership of these perennial emotions and policies to the extreme right-wing (304). This, ironically entails that, fifth, Europe should embrace its own *national* past. It should do so not because these national identities have been flawless, but because national identity is a human perennial. Besides, every nation is saddled with a flawed past. But, deracination or a—necessarily aspirational—cosmopolitanism do not solve the problem of collective identity. Europe should embrace its past, but realistically, “warts and all” (305). Sixth, while it may neither be possible nor desirable to revive the moral bases of Europe’s by an oft-proposed revival of Christianity, European elites need to realize how important fundamental values are. They should then promote a sense of seriousness about life. Murray indicts Europe belief for enabling a “life in modern liberal democracies [that] is to some extent thin or shallow and that life in modern Western Europe in particular has lost its sense of purpose” (258). Mere consumerism, hedonism and materialism cannot sustain a great civilization, as innocent as these attitudes may be (306). Seventh, and finally, Europe is blessed with a rich cultural diversity; Europeans should celebrate it.

I would finally like to take the liberty of developing two major questions that run through the books under review here. First, is the question of the relation of Europe to Christianity. Holland, a liberal Christian, and Raspail, voicing the views of Christian supremacists, approach this subject as Christian partisans. For them, Europe obviously should claim its Christian heritage, and promote it. But atheists, Houellebecq and Murray, understand that Europe’s identity is bound up with Christianity—but a painfully vague and unsatisfactory way. For them, then, the situation is particularly awkward because, as nonbelievers, they can neither find an authentic way to articulate how present-day secular Europeans should regard the Continent’s Christian past, not how the future of a secular Europe could have anything to do with Christianity! Can we do better? The second question speaks to the issue of the integration of Muslim immigrants into European society. Is there a way to do this—short of multi-culturalism—that dignifies both host and immigrant cultures alike, but without pretending there to be a false equivalence?

### **Is authentic re-connection with Europe’s Christian past possible?**

Murray, Houellebecq, Raspail and Holland all believe Europe is vulnerable to a loss of identity because it has no acceptable way of reconnecting with the Christian, and less so, Enlightenment, Jewish, and other historical foundations of its identity. I, therefore, leave aside for the present, the complications of speaking of Western civilization as more than principally indebted to Christianity, mostly because the authors under discussion have. This means that while I do recognize, for instance, the contributions of the New World, the Enlightenment and the Jewish presence in making Western civilization, doing justice to each

would be the work of an entire book. Thus, limitations of space constrain me to focus on the arguments the authors under review have made for de-Christianization's playing the central role in the civilizational malaise that Murray calls the "strange death of Europe."

Let us then assume for the sake of argument that Murray and the others are right that de-Christianization has played a major part in the malaise of the West's civilizational identity. What then does an historically and morally defensible notion of Christianity's contribution to Western identity demand? What does a notion of Christianity's contribution to Western identity remain true both to the *historical facts* of Western identity, and the prevailing imagination of their meaning, demand? And, what notion of Christianity's contribution to Western identity squares with the *moral imperative* of being part of the human family, of recognizing the dignity of the civilizations of others who share this globe with the West?

Murray is deeply pessimistic, as we would expect. He dismisses the most obvious alternative of wholesale re-Christianization: "People cannot force themselves into sincere belief ... " (262). Besides, "most branches of European Christianity have lost the confidence to proselytize or even believe in their own message ...." Worse still, "the message of the religion has become a form of left-wing politics, diversity action and social welfare projects" (264). And, even the alternative of a "cultural Christianity" seems unlikely to speak to the deeper issues troubling Europe's sense of its own purposes: "Just because you are part of a tradition does not mean you will believe what those who originated the tradition believed even if you like and admire its results" (262). So, Murray glumly concludes " ... how long can a society survive once it has unmoored itself from its founding source and drive? Perhaps we are in the process of finding out" (262).

Murray suggests answers to these challenges in the form of an arts-led re-ritualization of certain moments of life. Murray is moved by the power of sacred music in certain special settings spontaneously to rekindle a sense of the sacred, "something strange and out-of-time." Something significant is at work here, even though these experiences trade heavily on the memory of what went before, not something fresh and in the making (273). But is this "thanks for the memories" Christianity enough? Clearly not—which is why Murray resorts to Houellebecq's attempted escape from the same sterile dead-ends Murray sees before the West.

For, to Murray's mind, only Houellebecq makes a good-faith effort at reclaiming authentic and robust Christian identity (277–83). Houellebecq insists on tantalizing us with the possibility of countering the threats of such a great replacement with an actually revived Christianity, not by some esthetic reverie, hinted at by Murray. Thus, Houellebecq's atheist protagonist, François, full of doubts about the lasting value of present-day secular liberal politics, goes for the real thing. He often retreats for stays at an ancient monastery. These meditative sojourns attempt reconnection with France's lost spiritual underpinnings in medieval Christianity. Why?

By contrast with the shallow history of secular liberalism, François's friend, Tanneur, impresses him with the remarkable fact that, unlike modern secular liberalism's short life, the "Christian Middle Ages lasted a millennium and more."<sup>76</sup> Finally, Tanneur urges François to shake off his cultural despondency and set out to connect with the durable stuff of Christianity and its role in making Europe. For François, the Romanesque period of Christianity's high Middle Ages sets the standard. This entailed making a spiritual journey to one of Romanesque France's principal sites—the spectacular walled mountain city in the south of France—Rocamadour—

one of the most famous shrines in the Christian world. Henry Plantagenet, Saint Dominique, Saint Bernard, Saint Louis, Louis the Eleventh, Philip the Fair—they all knelt at the foot of the Black Virgin, they all climbed the steps to her sanctuary on their knees, humbly praying that their sins be forgiven. At Rocamadour you'll see what a great civilization medieval Christendom really was.<sup>77</sup>

François succeeds in understanding the hidden nature of Rocamadour's spiritual gift. Its secret lay in its "Romanesque vision" of a "communal" Christianity, so thoroughly lacking in François's own time. "Moral judgment, individual judgment, individuality itself, were not clear ideas in the mind of Romanesque man," François concludes. For a Romanesque Christian, death meant "the believer fell into a deep sleep and was laid in the earth" with all the other believers. At the end of time, when "all the prophecies had been fulfilled and Christ came again, it was the entire Christian people who rose together from the tomb, resurrected in one glorious body, to make their way to paradise." Although his times would not permit him to feel his "own individuality dissolving" in this rapturous ancient Christian way, François tries to recover its spirit from the ravages of time, "the longer I sat in my reverie before the Virgin of Rocamadour," he tells us.<sup>78</sup>

That François does not succeed in connecting with Romanesque Christianity's legacy, tells us more about Europe's failure to meet his spiritual yearnings than about their nobility and sincerity. "The facts were plain: Europe had reached a point of such putrid decomposition that it could no longer save itself, any more than fifth-century Rome could have done." It could not save François.<sup>79</sup> In this François, in effect, accepts Chancellor Rediger's doubts whether in France "could Christianity be revived." Rediger begins by saying "I thought so for several years—with growing doubts"—until those doubts finally overwhelmed him so that he sought reception into Islam.<sup>80</sup> So, Houllebecq leaves us with François sliding toward conversion to Islam just as had Rediger—but not to the virgin of Rocamadour or the Church.

Far from the liability French nativists and Christian supremacists like those featured in *Camp of the Saints* saw in the massive Muslim immigration into Europe, in this new light, it promised to do service to Europe's morale in a way that Christianity no longer could. "This wave of new immigrants, with their traditional culture—of natural hierarchies, the submission of women, and respect for elders—offered a historic opportunity for the moral and familial rearmament of Europe. These immigrants held out the hope of a new Golden Age for the old continent."<sup>81</sup> Murray stays pathetically aloof from the place of possible re-engagement with Christendom where Houllebecq leaves François.

Quite a different contrarian proposal comes from Tom Holland's recent best-seller, *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World* (2019). Holland, in effect, denies the thesis of the essential de-Christianization of the West. The West's Christian foundations are still there, still potent, and more globally adapted than one might imagine. "To live in a Western country is," for Holland, therefore, "to live in a society *still actually saturated* by Christian concepts and assumptions" and "moored to its Christian past." (my emphasis)<sup>82</sup> Holland's view is thus far more robust than Murray's tepid, even tentative, view that "Western liberal societies may, in fact, owe something to the religion from which they arose" (261). Holland instead announces unambiguously that Christianity shapes "how we in the West came to be what we are, and to think the way that we do."<sup>83</sup>

More than in the West, "Christian influence" has, in Holland's view, "spread most widely, and then most enduringly into the present day" across the globe—even if Europe's secular elites are not sufficiently "*woke*" to the fact.<sup>84</sup> Holland quite literally means that Christianity holds the keys of "universal" modernity. Moreover, it "continues to structure the way much of the world organizes itself" (12). In this, Holland is joined by unlikely allies, like Daniel Boyarin who, in his *A Radical Jew*, declares that Christianity is "the most powerful hegemonic cultural system in the history of the world."<sup>85</sup> A Christian hegemony thus dominates the expectations of global modernity, among which are, to Holland's mind, that the "workings of conscience are the surest determinants of good law," that "Church and state exist as distinct entities," or that—*pace* Houellebecq's eroticized future Islamic successor to Christianity—"polygamy is unacceptable."<sup>86</sup> The task, then, for Western folks is just to *wake up*, affirm and celebrate Christianity's pervasive and vital role in world-making. There's not much point in

reconnecting with a Christianity from which one has actually never been materially cut off—except in conscious appreciation of the fact!

In my view, neither of these alternatives speaks with sufficient authority to the malaise Murray discusses. But somewhere between these two poles, a serious thinker, like atheist philosopher André Comte-Sponville, may have devised a robust *via media*. Connecting authentically with its Christian history does not require inauthentic conversion of modern Europeans, much less the sacrifice of the intellect that Houellebecq suggests comes with either submission to Christianity or Islam. Nor, does it require Holland's faith in the potency of Europe's "hidden," but frankly, denatured Christianity, either. In his *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*, Comte-Sponville distinguishes between being "faithful" to a religious history over against having "fidelity" to it. "Faith," he says, "is a belief; fidelity ... is more like an attachment, a commitment, a gratitude. Faith involves one or several gods; fidelity involves values, a history, a community. The former calls on imagination or grace; the latter on memory and will."<sup>87</sup> Being "faithful" is the stuff of the orthodoxy, scrupulous observance, piety, fundamentalism, intransigence, High Papalism, or being "born again." "Fidelity is what remains when faith has been lost."<sup>88</sup> "Fidelity" means owning our debt to a certain historical transmission and formation.

In that respect, one reconnects with Christianity without sacrificing integrity. Fidelity means *embracing* the past for making us who we are, as much as claiming the genetic heritage disclosed to us from Ancestry.com. And, fidelity is extremely important, continues Comte-Sponville, because "Renouncing a God who has met his social demise ... does not compel us to renounce the moral, cultural and spiritual values that have been formulated in his name."<sup>89</sup> Like Holland, Comte-Sponville agrees that "We all know that, historically speaking, these values grew out of the great religions ... [specifically] in our countries, by the Catholic and Protestant churches ..."<sup>90</sup> But, unlike Houellebecq's Islam-bound François, "This does not prove, however, that these values need God in order to subsist." And, yet, responding to Murray's legitimate call for serious spiritual connections, Comte-Sponville concludes that "On the contrary, everything tends to prove that we need them—an ethics, a sense of communion and fidelity—in order to subsist in a way we find humanly acceptable."<sup>91</sup> For *un-faithful* Christians, but for those, like Comte-Sponville, who are rich in "fidelity," they gain the ability to regard themselves as "Christian atheists," as surely as we now as we speak of "atheist Jews." That is to say that "they are atheistic—but still consider themselves to be Jewish ... they recognize and value their appurtenance to a specific, history, tradition and community."<sup>92</sup> Comte-Sponville, I would offer, has suggested a robust way to stay connected with historical reality and the moral stuff defining Western civilization, while leaving one's conscience free to be authentic.

### **A humane formula for cultural integration?**

But at best, Comte-Sponville only speaks to *Europe's* identity crisis. Yet, surely those very values of Christian fidelity, in turn, compel Europe's "Christian atheists" to speak to the dilemmas of Muslim immigrant integration into a European society in a way that dignifies both them and their hosts alike.

Let me suggest that one begin with candor. Murray's righteous ire takes square aim at moral poverty of European political correctness. If legitimate "criticism of Islamism or mass immigration—even criticism of terrorism and rape attacks—can be seized upon by anyone else as a demonstration of racism, xenophobia or bigotry," how can immigrant communities be expected to confront dysfunctional behavior for effective integration into European society, Murray, in effect, asks (241)? Well-meant though it may be, PC evasion of moral crises serves

only to insulate ethnic and religious minorities from the need to reexamine their doomed resistance to the liberal values of their new Occidental homes.

Despite the overwhelmingly the gloomy picture Murray paints of Europe's moral failures, he does mention one hopeful effort to facilitate a humane way to integrate Muslim immigrants into Europe. Here, Murray ironically lauds the work of a Syrian immigrant to Germany, Bassim Tibi, for offering a formula for immigrants and host populations alike to have the best of both mono- and multi-cultural alternatives. Tibi's solution is for immigrants to go beyond the potential ghettoization enabled by multiculturalism. He has coined the term *Leitkultur* (Core Culture) to identify the host culture that he (and Ramadan, in effect) believe immigrants should embrace, but without needing to undergo radical deracination (104). In actuality, such a staggered solution to cultural identity seems to have been the way Americans have so successfully balanced local identity with integration into the nation. Striking such a delicate balance of identities may present more difficulties for European countries than for the United States, as my adaptation of Jill Lepore's work argued. Since the United States was a "state" decades before it became a "nation," it differed profoundly from European countries who became "states" by virtue of their being "nations" in the first place.<sup>93</sup> Its very lack of national origins—in some ethnic "nation"—permitted the United States to define its *national* character as being an "asylum" nation, a "nation of immigrants" in a way no European country could be.<sup>94</sup> European nationalism is not similarly structured for mass immigration, and perhaps should not even try so to be, in effect, what the United States has been?

But Tibi offers an arguably elegant solution to such dilemmas by providing a formula for a constructive solution to what otherwise would be a tragic "clash of civilizations" between European states tracing their origins to ethnic nationhood and Muslim immigrants of non-European nationality.<sup>95</sup> Murray's critiques of European immigration policies arise precisely from such concerns. Oddly, even though Murray introduces Tibi to his readers, he does not seem able to grasp the profundity of the solution Tibi proposes. Murray is, therefore, surprisingly unmoved by Tibi's optimism about a resolution of the struggle between of mono-culturalism and multi-culturalism. I shall argue, however, a reading of Lepore might enlighten Murray to the point where he might grasp the wisdom of Tibi's formula to resolve what may seem an insoluble problem.

That is to say that, given the differences of European and American nationalisms, Europe requires a different solution to the integration of immigrants of non-European nationality than the United States. Despite talk of "un-meltable ethnics" in the United States, for the most part, immigrant nationalities have, on the whole, been *expected* to, and in fact, *have* tended to assimilate to an American mainstream. It is with reason that the American "melting pot" has been contrasted with the Canadian "cultural mosaic."<sup>96</sup> What Tibi, in effect, offers is something between the U.S. and Canadian models. While the binational nature of Canada balancing English over against French tries to equalize the two with respect to one another, Tibi suggests a *hierarchical* solution to the cohabiting of nationalities in Europe in a way neither Canada or America do. Immigrant nationalities enter Europe and sit alongside preexisting European nationalisms. In order not to clash and do so violently, Tibi suggests they must be *ranked* with respect to one another. Specifically, they must be arranged *hierarchically*—with European *Leitkultur* and a non-European immigrant *Folgenderkultur* (my word). Tibi suggests a hyphenated immigrant identity in which the preexistence of European ethno-nationalism is given priority. The local national European identity takes the lead, and immigrant identities follow. Both are mutually respected even though the long-lived prior existence of Europe's many nationalities is recognized as setting a kind of foundation upon which the newer immigrant identities are added. Obviously much more needs to be said about Tibi's proposal. But I would leave readers with it as an indication of how the fears of Murray might be respected without yielding to the more hysterical and pessimistic aspects of his otherwise challenging and important book.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## Notes

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