The Pennsylvania State University

The Graduate School

REFRAMING IMMIGRATION THROUGH RELIGIOUS ADVOCACY: RHETORIC, COSMOPOLITANISM, AND THE DIVINE

A Dissertation

in English

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2020

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ABSTRACT

In the United States, nativist rhetoric is propelling increasingly violent attacks on immigrants[1] and other minority populations. Conversely, discourse taking a more *cosmopolitan* approach—positing border-transcending obligations to all humanity, unlimited by national or ethnic group—struggles to elicit a comparably passionate following, as I explain in the introduction (chapter one). Perhaps cosmopolitan rhetoric can gain persuasive power by joining forces with religion. In the realm of faith-based immigration advocacy, cosmopolitan arguments leverage appeals to divine, rather than merely manmade, imperatives toward love and fellowship. For many potential audiences in this country, the divine plays a potent role in their lives, as over 75% of Americans belong to a religion[2]—a statistic that suggests the influence of religious rhetoric. What resources can religious rhetoric provide to pro-immigrant arguments? By responding to this question, my project addresses a gap in studies of immigration rhetoric, which have hitherto overlooked the border-crossing potential of religious advocacy. The project also addresses a gap in studies of religious rhetoric, which have predominantly focused on Protestant Christianity, by drawing attention to the contributions of rhetors adhering to other religions.

Every world religion offers some cosmopolitan principles, and many also feature sacred stories of migration, as chapter two demonstrates. To elucidate how these elements invigorate arguments for hospitality toward immigrants, I analyze the rhetoric of Bahá'í, Catholic, and Islamic advocacy organizations through the lens of religious cosmopolitanism (a theory that chapter two elucidates). In each organization's advocacy, I find a model for reframing immigration rhetoric. In chapter three, I demonstrate how the Tahirih Justice Center uses the Bahá'í principle of nonpartisanship to enlist support across the aisles for its work on behalf of immigrant women. In chapter four, I survey the Kino Border Initiative's rhetoric of journeying, which draws from Catholic traditions to spiritualize undocumented migration. Chapter five presents Hijabis of New York, a social media campaign that claims public space for a much-maligned immigrant group, U.S. Muslim women.

All three of these organizations mobilize religious tenets that mandate universal justice and compassion. Through their arguments for border-transcending policies and dispositions, these organizations reframe the commonplaces of immigration, replacing the xenophobia that dominates discourse today with recognition of migrants' humanity and spirituality. This dissertation's discovery of innovative strategies in cosmopolitan rhetoric has several implications for research and teaching, as I point out in the conclusion (chapter six). In the arena of rhetorical research, my project shows that religion can contribute to arguments that *we* should welcome *them*—or, more radically, that there is no *them*, just a global *us*. It also implies the need for much more research in cosmopolitan theory even—and especially—in the face of rising xenophobia. The project also offers some practical takeaways for pedagogy, recommending anti-nativist teaching strategies. Overall, by bringing to light advocacy rhetorics that refuse to operate on nativism's terms, it offers the reader hope for humane responses to those who have come across borders.

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[1] I define immigrants as people who reside in a country other than that of their birth, as I explain in chapter one.
[2] "Religious Landscape Study," *Pew Research Center*, 2014, www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/.

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Acknowledgments

This dissertation results not only from my own efforts, but from those of my network of professional and personal support.

The support offered by the rhetoric and composition faculty at Penn State has been invaluable. Cheryl Glenn embraced me as an advisee and has put countless hours into reviewing my work, on top of her many other responsibilities. My other committee members—Suresh Canagarajah, Xiaoye You, and Ana Cooke—have likewise been generous with their time. Anne Demo served as a committee member at the stages of the comprehensive exam and prospectus, providing useful feedback. Beyond the committee, many other faculty members have helped me. Debra Hawhee, in her capacity as Director of Graduate Studies, facilitated my transition from the Master's to the PhD phase of the program. Stuart Selber has assisted me in my efforts to learn about technical and digital rhetorics. And last, but definitely not least, Jack Selzer has been a dedicated mentor, helping me see myself as a scholar and securing funding for two research trips I conducted to gather data for this project. I also thank the Center for Democratic Deliberation and its director, Brad Vivian, for providing me with a dissertation fellowship.

The sacrifices made by my family members have made my postsecondary education possible. My husband, Sergey Miron, has been my unfailing supporter throughout my five years of graduate education. Without his willingness to resettle in an unfamiliar region and to serve as the breadwinner, enabling me to devote my energies to my studies, I could not have completed this project or my degree. My parents, Nura and Robert Amerson, put their own finances on the backburner to fund my undergraduate studies at Mount Holyoke College, which paved the way for me to discover my interest in rhetoric and composition and pursue an advanced degree in the field. I recognize what a gift it is to have such a selfless spouse and parents; I dedicate this dissertation to them.

Chapter 1 Introduction: Human Mobility and Moving Advocacy

Imagine seeing our planet from space (Figure 1-1). The only borders are those where land ends and water begins; the national boundaries we know so well are invisible. Is this borderless world not ideal? This question animates the philosophy known as cosmopolitanism, born (so the story goes) when the Greek philosopher Diogenes proclaimed himself a citizen of the world.

Figure 1-1: An image of Earth.

"Earth" by Meredith Garstin is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0. Image has been cropped.

Back to the image. We can see hints of motion in the whorled clouds adorning the globe, but we cannot see the mobilities of humans—not even the mass migrations that are reshaping our world. Nor can we hear all the discourse generated on this topic. While cosmopolitanism allows serenity as we gaze at our gemlike planet freed of national borders, the field of rhetoric encourages us to plunge back to ground level, into the thick of human interaction. If cosmopolitanism, in its global vision, tends toward macroscopic idealism, rhetoric, in its attention to persuading specific audiences at certain moments, leans toward microscopic pragmatism. Combined, though, they can offer practical tools of persuasion to encourage audiences to pan outward and upward, gaining a planetary perception. This dissertation pursues the hope of such a fusion: a cosmopolitan rhetoric. Public arguments about immigration, where nationality and globality meet, form my testing ground.

Immigration as Rhetorical Exigence

For a society receiving new residents, immigration means change. Immigrants inevitably shift the status quo; even as they assimilate to their new nation, the nation changes because of their contributions (Chavez 213). Because immigration entails social change on both sides, it forms a rhetorical exigence as rhetors seek to manage that change. At the conservative end of the political spectrum, rhetors construct arguments for minimizing change, whether that means banning immigrants or efficiently assimilating them. At the liberal end, rhetors argue for the enriching effect of the changes immigration creates. In United States, the conservative side, which can be called *nativism*, has long dominated civic discourse around the issue.

Nativism, according to political scientist Aristide Zolberg, has been Western nations' default perspective on immigration since the early 1900s. Starting around the fin de siècle, as eugenic pseudoscience permeated political discourse, a "zero baseline norm" was widely instituted; labor demands were satisfied by temporarily importing workers forbidden from settling (1209–10). Such restrictive policies were motivated by nativism's assumption that a "healthy" nation perpetuates a homogenous polity through procreation, so immigrants are superfluous and even burdensome. In short, it asks, "Why [let in] anyone at all?" (1209). This attitude takes immigration as an exigence for protective, rather than receptive, action.

For centuries, the rhetoric of nativism has been louder, and apparently more persuasive to mainstream U.S. audiences, than arguments in favor of welcoming newcomers. Nearly every immigrant group arriving after the original English colonists has been greeted by a surge of nativist rhetoric, starting with the German "Aliens" decried by Benjamin Franklin in colonial times. Such rhetoric spawns restrictive immigration policies, as illustrated by a few examples. In

1798, anti-French panic spread by Federalists enabled the unconstitutional Alien & Sedition Act to be passed (Smith). In 1882, white resentment over supposed employment competition spawned a ban on Chinese immigration that lasted for sixty years. In 1924, eugenic distaste for "inferior" ethnicities led to a quota system favoring "Nordic" immigrants. In 2010, the growing obsession with U.S.-Mexico border control allowed racial profiling to be legalized in Arizona (Cisneros, "Looking 'Illegal'"). Such backlashes are particularly fierce in times of economic recession (Streitmatter). Indeed, nativism has only intensified since 9/11, because the catastrophe furnished a scapegoat—the immigrant-terrorist—for the socioeconomic insecurity already afflicting many Americans due to the neoliberal policies of the 1990s (DeChaine, "Bordering").

Anti-immigrant discourse thus accumulates over decades and targets groups that fall outside the lines of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture, eventuating in discriminatory policies (see Huntington for a recent example of this discourse). It also eventuates in violence; for example, the perpetrator of the 2019 massacre in El Paso echoed nativist discourse on Latinx "invasion" and "replacement" of whites in explaining his motive for targeting this group (Peters et al.). Rhetors have certainly produced numerous pro-immigration arguments, too, but they tend to bow to nativist logics; for instance, as Lisa Flores shows, advocates of Mexican immigration in the 1930s argued for their value as temporary, cheap, tractable labor, not as potential members of U.S. society.

A nativist view of immigration has set the terms of debate in the United States. Therefore, to gain an audience, rhetors responding to the exigence of immigration must typically deal with three overarching *topoi* (Beasley 10):

- *Economy:* Immigrants are economic units (only value is the wealth they generate)

- *Culture:* Immigrants are inferior (sickly, criminal, etc.) to "natives"[3]
- *Security:* Immigration control signifies national sovereignty

These *topoi* undergird mainstream arguments both *against* and *for* immigration, an ambivalence highlighted by Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop in *Shifting Borders*. Immigrants are either good because they provide cheap labor or special skills generating wealth for employers, or bad because they take jobs and social services that should belong to taxpaying citizens. Immigrants either require intervention to protect them from their own bad traits or should be ejected to protect the native populace. Immigrants should either be admitted after gaining proper documentation from the government or be taken into government custody and deported. Seldom are immigrants' status as economic objects, the benefits of assimilation, or a nation's right to control immigration called into question, because such questioning would violate the normative rhetorical framework.

Immigration is and has long been an exigence for rhetoric in the United States. The most vociferous responses to this exigence have taken a nativist stance; this imbalance creates its own exigence to defend immigrants. In the next section, I consider how religion has provided resources to immigration rhetoric, explaining why the rhetorical intersection of religion and immigration merits study. (For definitions of my key terms "religious rhetoric" and "immigrant," please refer to the section titled "Definitions.")

[3] As I completed this dissertation, a new iteration of the assumption that immigrants are disease-carriers surfaced in the U.S. coronavirus crisis. The president labeled COVID-19 a "foreign virus" and "the Chinese virus," playing into anti-Asian xenophobia (Shoichet). This is but the latest example of the persistence, century after century, of the immigration *topoi*.

RELIGIOUS RESPONSES TO THE EXIGENCE OF IMMIGRATION

In June 2018, the U.S. government began to separate asylum-seeking parents from their children, imprisoning both in detention centers. To many, including scores of religious leaders, this brutal policy appeared a nadir in the treatment of immigrants. Multitudes of "pastors, priests, rabbis and imams" denounced family separation as highly immoral (Boorstein and Zauzmer). For instance, the bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church condemned the oppression of immigrants, citing Matthew 24, Proverbs 3:31, and Romans 12:2, as well as this paraphrase of Deuteronomy 10:18–19: "God executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and loves the strangers (immigrants). . . You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Fugh et al.). Yet, some believers found Biblical justification for the policy; notoriously, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, a Methodist, cited Romans 13, a passage of the New Testament that he paraphrased as, "obey the laws of the government because God has ordained the government for his purposes" (Zauzmer and McMillan). Although many Christians condemned Sessions's assertion of divine justification, it was supported by other cabinet members—and reportedly by many evangelical Christians (Boorstein and Zauzmer), who comprise about 25% of the U.S. population, making them the country's largest religious group ("Religious Landscape Study"). In this case, Christian doctrine was used by religious rhetors both to condemn and to support the punishment of undocumented immigrants.

As this example demonstrates, religious rhetoric is ambivalent; in the United States, rhetors have long used religious arguments both against and for immigration. Religious arguments *against* immigration tend to revolve around the "culture threat" *topos* described above, therefore remaining within the dominant discursive framework. Religious arguments *for*

immigration fall into two camps in relation to this framework. Some arguments support the dominant *topoi* by promoting a paternalistic view of immigrants. However, others challenge these *topoi* in favor of an alternative set of arguments. The capacity of some religious rhetoric to reframe the debate merits closer examination.

Religious Rhetoric that Conforms to Nativism

In the United States, religion has often served the cause of nativism, drawing upon the culture *topos* to decry immigrants, who often belong to minority faiths, as a threat to the country's religious character. To recap, the culture *topos* holds that immigrants are inferior to "natives," whom they might contaminate. The first great religious backlash against immigrants began in the 1830s as increasing numbers of Catholics arrived (Stewart). Some Protestants, alarmed by the threat to their religion's dominance, organized against these newcomers, accusing them of a treacherous allegiance to the pope over the U.S. government. Religious antipathy, often generated by perceived threats to the majority religion, has continued to serve nativism, as is obvious in the case of the "Muslim Ban" implemented by the Trump administration. Perceived influxes of non-Protestant immigrants, whether Catholic, Muslim, or some other faith group, can serve as persuasive evidence in restrictionist arguments.

Beyond the culture *topos*, rhetors can also use religious evidence to support the security *topos*, thereby arguing for the restriction of immigration. The security *topos* equates immigration control with national sovereignty (the righteousness of which is assumed). For instance, in the family separation case described above, Sessions cited a passage from the New Testament to imply that the government has God's permission to enforce laws. Therefore, punishing those found in violation of immigration law is meritorious in the sight of God. A review of the history

of religious contributions to immigration rhetoric might well show that religion has done more to justify xenophobia than to combat it.

Religious Rhetoric that Defies Nativism: Two Camps

Nevertheless, at least in recent years, examples of pro-immigration religious rhetoric have abounded. Some of this rhetoric adheres to dominant *topoi*, replicating the culture *topos* in particular. This is the first "camp"; the second camp rejects nativist *topoi*.

To take a prominent example of the first camp, the Catholic Church has been critiqued for taking a patronizing tone in its pro-immigrant advocacy. In the controversy over undocumented immigration roiling California in the early 1990s, the Church sided with immigrants, protesting for their rights. The Church's rhetoric tended to highlight immigrants' vulnerability and innocence. Ono and Sloop suggest that Catholic depictions of migrants as vulnerable and childlike, the stranger needing shelter, supported a hidden agenda: perpetuating the Church's influence over Latinx people. Infantilizing portrayals align with centuries-old justifications for the Church's paternalistic control over indigenous Americans, they contend. The Church's moral arguments for protecting immigrants, then, may reflect its aspiration to govern "child" people, especially the ancestors of many Latinx undocumented immigrants (98). On the one hand, by highlighting immigrants' virtues, such as innocence, the Catholic Church certainly defies the demonization sponsored by nativism. On the other hand, by linking immigrants with vulnerability, they risk upholding the culture *topos* by implying a hierarchy where immigrants are childlike while "natives" are responsible adults.

A related concern is raised by Karma Chávez in *Queer Migration Politics*: some religious pro-immigration rhetoric upholds the family values *topos*. This *topos* is not among the three

topoi that dominate most immigration discourse, but it saturates conservative rhetoric today. By celebrating heterosexual nuclear families, it implicitly denigrates other family arrangements. The Catholic Church applies this *topos* to immigration to draw attention to how undocumented immigrants are often motivated by reunion with family members in the United States. The implication is that as members of nuclear families, immigrants share a trait with the majority and therefore should have the same right to live together. Chávez warns that this appeal to rights based on sameness excludes everyone who is different, especially LGBTQ people. Even when fighting nativism, appeals to conservative *topoi* keep social norms, like the primacy of the mother-father-child family, in place.

In contrast, in the second camp can be found pro-immigrant religious arguments that reject the commonplaces of economics, culture, and security; instead, they focus on morality as the essential issue. Such arguments typically contend that punishing immigrants is immoral because it violates tenets like the right of every human to seek a more dignified life by immigrating, compassion for those deprived of opportunities by their environments, charity for the poor, hospitality to the stranger, and so on. Admittedly, these arguments remain on the fringes of public discourse without much policy success to show—a risk borne by "outlaw," "utopian," or "cosmopolitan" activism that operates outside most audiences' norms (Ono and Sloop; Chávez; Cisneros, *Border*). Yet, there is some evidence of efficacy.

Despite its failings, the Catholic Church's rhetoric on undocumented immigration is singularly prominent. Indeed, it is the only religious rhetoric that has gained the attention of multiple rhetoricians studying immigration. Though the efforts of the Church have been critiqued for upholding dominant *topoi* (Ono and Sloop; Chávez), it has also argued outside these commonplaces. Indeed, it has questioned the legitimacy of the economic and security *topoi*.

In the Proposition 187 debate assessed by Ono and Sloop, the Church was one of the only voices with a broad platform arguing that immigrants should not be judged merely as economic producers/consumers. As Anne Demo points out, of the few pro-immigrant arguments made in the 1990s, most relied on the economic *topos*. The security *topos*, the assumption that the U.S. government has the right to control immigration forcibly, went nearly unquestioned. Demo analyzes one Catholic response that challenges the prioritization of national sovereignty, the binational pastoral letter "Strangers No Longer" (2003). The letter's authors argue that the value of human dignity outweighs national sovereignty; border security is less important than human wellbeing. The Catholic response, framing immigration as a moral rather than national issue, has been uniquely defiant—and powerful. Demo finds that the letter had an effect, inspiring some Evangelical groups to also take a progressive stand on immigration. What other effects might come of religious rhetoric that reframes the immigration debate?

Approaching the Critical Question: Prospects for Studying Defiant Religious Rhetoric

As I have hinted above with references to critiques by scholars such as Ono and Sloop and Chávez, significant problems have been uncovered in relation to pro-immigration rhetoric. For example, positionality always complicates messages; inclusionary arguments are exclusionary; and alternative arguments tend to remain marginal, too unfamiliar to gain mainstream uptake. Though the scholarly conversation about these issues is vibrant, it is hardly complete. The rhetorical obstacles to shifting the national conversation on immigration remain. One approach that has not been explored in a sustained manner is religious rhetoric, which may offer special resources in the pursuit of immigration justice.

Religious rhetoric has a special appeal that distinguishes it from secular arguments: its connection to the Divine (Jackson). A Divine Being, though called by various names, mandates a moral framework that is quite similar among world religions, centering on caring for others more than for the self—the Golden Rule. Given the centrality of this altruistic tenet, religious rhetors have access to a moral framework apart from the cultural/economic/security *topoi* that reduce immigrants to threats. Indeed, like the faith leaders who vociferously condemned family separation as immoral, various religious rhetors have drawn from this moral framework to advocate for immigrants. Of course, others have appealed to divine justification to argue *against* immigration.

Religion's influence on immigration rhetoric is ambivalent: I could as easily examine its alliances with nativism as its divergences therefrom. I choose the latter option, for I wish to see how religious rhetoric may be put to ends that, at least in my eyes, are ethical: advocacy for the rights and acceptance of immigrants. My optimistic take on religious rhetoric reflects what Suresh Canagarajah calls "a politics of hope" based on a belief that power is always negotiable and that humans have transformative agency—in contrast to "a politics of despair" that sees dominant ideologies as all-powerful forces co-opting every resistant effort (6). Rather than portraying nativism as inevitably co-opting religion because of its predominance, I want to focus on religion's negotiations with this powerful anti-immigration ideology and to contemplate the possibilities for transformation.

We arrive at the question driving this dissertation: What resources can religious rhetoric provide to pro-immigrant arguments in the contemporary (post-9/11) United States?

Addressing the Question: Definitions and Assumptions

According to the concept of grounded theory, the most ethical way to theorize is not deductively but inductively: to first examine what people are doing, then to derive theory by analyzing their practices. Along these lines, I address my research question with case studies. While case studies cannot necessarily represent widespread practices, they facilitate a recommended approach to studying immigration-related discourse: prioritizing concrete rhetorical situations over abstract postulations (De La Garza et al.). The idea of grounded theory resembles "cosmopolitanism from below" (Robbins 42), a development in cosmopolitan theory away from Immanuel Kant's allegedly Eurocentric vision of a world-state toward observing how people outside the academy think and act "beyond the local" (Pollock et al. 10). Of course, even *grounded* cosmopolitanism takes inspiration from cosmopolitan ideals of transnational coexistence; there is no purely empirical method free of initial assumptions. Any analysis depends on the analyst's terministic screen. In this section, to show how I will design and interpret my case studies, I inventory my terministic screen by defining my critical question's key terms, "religious rhetoric" and "immigrant," as well as clarifying my use of "moral" versus "ethical." I also disclose my interpretive assumptions as informed by the Bahá'í Faith and by cosmopolitan theory.

Definitions: Religious Rhetoric and Immigration

First, by "religious rhetoric," I mean discourse based on a belief in a superhuman, divine power. In this definition, I follow Brian Jackson, who argues for defining religious rhetoric as "persuasive symbolic action to, from, or about supernatural forces or beings *that assumes the existence of supernatural forces or beings*" (25, italics original). Religious rhetoric can be produced

by both institutions and individuals when they are addressing matters within a framework of belief in a Divine Being, and I will study both types of rhetors. While the rhetoric I will examine is most explicitly "about" immigration, it is also "about" supernatural forces because it assumes that God has sent humans moral guidance pertinent to this issue. Indeed, this characteristic, the idea of divine teachings, is the unique resource religion offers to any argument—for, if God has said something, who are we to disagree? Of course, this resource can be used for divergent purposes, since scripture is subject to diverse interpretations. My interest lies in studying how some interpreters channel divine teachings for the cause of immigration.

Relatedly, it is necessary to explain my use of the terms "moral" and "ethical," which appear frequently in the following chapters. Their denotations are similar, as both refer to knowing right from wrong—to questions like, "What kind of person do I want to be? How should I live my life? What does it mean to be a good person?" (Duffy). However, morality bears a religious connotation, while ethics, a secular or philosophical one. So, when referring to religious tenets, I typically employ "morality" and its derivatives. When, on the other hand, I refer to codes of behavior that arise not from belief in divine guidance but from secular philosophy, I use "ethics." Yet, some slippage inevitably occurs, as the examples of cosmopolitanism and nationalism show. As a secular philosophy, cosmopolitanism offers an ethical framework: the belief that humans have obligations to each other regardless of group affiliation. This ethical framework stands in contrast to that of nationalism, which says humans should primarily serve their co-nationals. Yet, both of these ethical frameworks mingle with religion. When a religion promotes cosmopolitan values, they become a moral matter, taking on an association with divine guidance. Likewise, when a religion upholds nationalism, patriotic

behaviors assume a moral cast. Therefore, while I attempt to constrain my usage of "ethics" to secular matters and "morals" to religion, some intermingling is inevitable.

Second, by "pro-immigrant arguments," I mean arguments in favor of admitting immigrants, accepting them into the host society, and/or granting them legal rights. As the foregoing sentence shows, "immigrant" needs some defining—who counts as an immigrant? Specifically, I must determine whether temporary migrants and undocumented immigrants should be grouped together with permanent residents and naturalized citizens under the umbrella of "immigrants."

The Pew Research Center defines "immigrants" as residents "born in another country" (Radford). By this definition, Pew finds that the United States is home to over forty million immigrants. Some two million of these immigrants, termed "temporary lawful residents," come to the United States to work, study, or otherwise live for a limited period. These temporary immigrants could also be called "migrants," a term conveying transience. For my purposes, the distinction between "immigrant" and "migrant" is not crucial; migrants often become immigrants. This transition from temporary to permanent status is the case for many international students who later gain permanent residency as employees of U.S. companies or as spouses of citizens. Conversely, some permanent residents decide to leave. Given the fluidity between migrancy and settlement, I opt to follow Pew's lead and define "immigrant" simply as U.S. residents, whether temporary or permanent, born in another country.

Yet, this generalization risks eliding important differences in legal status. About one-fourth of U.S. immigrants lack legal residency; these eleven million residents are known as "illegal," "undocumented," or "unauthorized." The distinction between legal and illegal status is critical in the day-to-day life of an immigrant. For example, a documented immigrant typically

has rights like employment, getting a driver's license, and re-entering the United States after traveling abroad. An undocumented immigrant has none of these rights, so in daily activities like driving or working, they are vulnerable to arrest and deportation.

While there are lived differences between undocumented and documented immigrants, mainstream rhetoric often conflates both groups into a monolithic immigrant threat. This conflation is especially blatant when it comes to Latinos, who tend to be seen as "illegal aliens" regardless of their actual status, burdened with what J. David Cisneros calls the "affect" of illegality ("Looking 'Illegal'"). Furthermore, both documented and undocumented immigrants face specialized policing. There are countless examples of how the government pursues undocumented immigrants; a notorious example is Arizona's SB 1070, empowering police officers to ask anyone giving "probable cause" (i.e., appearing Mexican) for their immigration papers. But as nativism continues to rise, even documented immigrants are subject to constant policing. For instance, the current administration is punishing legal residents for using public benefits by threatening to deny their applications for green cards (Rupar). Consider other recent efforts to block legal immigration altogether: proposed and confirmed policies halting so-called "chain immigration" (relatives sponsored by immigrants), the diversity lottery (green cards awarded to select applicants), lower-income immigrants (supposedly liable to become public charges), and immigration from Muslim countries. While I recognize the unique vulnerability of immigrants without documents, both the documented and undocumented are subjected to rhetorical scapegoating and discriminatory policies. Therefore, I maintain "immigrants" as a term encompassing all U.S. residents born in another country, whether documented or not.

Now the critical question can be rephrased from its initial formulation ("What resources can religious rhetoric provide to pro-immigrant arguments in the contemporary United

States?"). With its key terms defined, it can be restated thus: What resources can rhetoric produced within a framework of belief in a Divine Being provide to arguments for better treatment of people born outside the United States who now reside here? My response to this question will be filtered through my personal terministic screen, which combines secular and Bahá'í versions of cosmopolitanism.

Interpretive Assumptions

I approach the critical question from an angle of "Bahá'í-infused cosmopolitanism." My basic assumption is that immigration is a good thing; it makes possible the mixture of dissimilar people, potentially leading to an opening of minds to diverse lifeways and a concurrent erosion of prejudices. Of course, my idealistic vision sets aside current realities, in which segregation seems to predominate over mixture as populations remain ensconced in enclaves, seeing each other only from a distance—a formula for fomenting prejudice. Yet, as a Bahá'í, I cannot help but be an idealist. Bahá'í beliefs can be encapsulated in the concept of "unity in diversity," which holds that common endeavors toward social advancement (e.g., public education for all children, elimination of poverty, and environmental stewardship) can unite dissimilar people and eventually the nations of the world.

This unity-in-diversity belief has evident connections to secular cosmopolitan theory. On a political side, both Bahá'í and cosmopolitan systems of thought look toward a future where there is some effective structure for international cooperation. On an ethical side, both systems posit that humans have moral obligations to each other regardless of group affiliation. Since cosmopolitanism seems to be of growing interest to scholars in the humanities—as does religion in the postsecular turn—I believe a study of immigration rhetoric through my Bahá'í-inspired

cosmopolitan lens would be of interest to fellow thinkers invested in global perspectives, as I discuss in the next section.

RATIONALE FOR SUBJECT SELECTION: TOPIC AND SCOPE

This dissertation project ultimately aims to make a contribution to migration studies writ large, which spans the social sciences and humanities. While I hope it will find readers among a variety of scholars within this vast constellation, the project converses most directly with rhetorical studies, especially with scholarship that has come to be called "border rhetoric." In this section, I consider my study's scholarly contribution, reiterating the exigence for studying religious rhetoric about immigration. Since this topic is quite broad, I define the scope of my study in terms of the location and timeframe of cases I examine.

Rationale for Topic

Immigration rhetoric has great relevancy in our current political moment, as national leaders routinely promote anti-immigrant discourse. Within the community of rhetoric scholars, there appears to be substantial concern about such xenophobic rhetoric and a desire to critique it and suggest alternatives. In recent years, five monographs (Chávez; Cisneros; Dolmage; McKinnon; Ono and Sloop) and three collections (Beasley; DeChaine; Hartelius) have focused on this topic—not to mention monographs from the sibling field of composition studies (Lorimer Leonard; Vieira; Wan). As the quantity of major publications attests, there is significant scholarly interest in public discourse on immigration.

So far, though, no sustained study of *religious* rhetoric about immigration has been published. This gap merits attention because religious rhetoric remains a highly persuasive form

of communication—in fact, it might even be growing *increasingly* persuasive, if Laurent Pernot's prognosis of "the return of religion" (236), also called a postsecular turn, holds true. In the United States, over 75% of people belong to a religion ("Religious Landscape"). While some scholars have drawn attention to religious rhetoric's influence in this country, either as a danger (as in Sharon Crowley's *Toward a Civil Discourse*) or a strength (as in Jeffrey Ringer's *Vernacular Christian Rhetoric*), there have been few investigations of its influence on immigration discourse. Given the concurrence of two major rhetorical phenomena—(1) religious rhetoric's enduring power to move audiences and (2) the full-throated nativism saturating public discourse, with rhetorical attacks enabling material oppression of immigrants—it seems germane to examine their intersection. Therefore, my study earns its significance because it investigates a confluence of two powerful discourses, religion and immigration, that has thus far gone relatively unanalyzed.

Rationale for Scope: Location and Period

The United States is the best scene for examining this confluence for several reasons. First, the United States has for centuries both absorbed massive immigration flows and incubated nativist attitudes. This longstanding tension makes it an attractive site for examining rhetoric about immigration. Second, from a pragmatic perspective, living in the United States makes it the most accessible site for study. While a number of countries, such as Australia, Canada, and Germany, currently experience comparable immigration flows and controversies, I would face higher barriers to studying them, such as geographic distance and unfamiliarity with cultures and languages. Third, since my probable audience is U.S. scholars, I can assume mutual interest in

the country where we reside—a safe assumption given that nearly all extant rhetorical studies of immigration focus on the United States.

Regarding my study's timeframe, I have chosen to focus on the era after 9/11 because that national trauma had seismic effects on the public imagination—effects Inderpal Grewal would call "insecurity," the feeling of being under attack without governmental protection. One such effect was a renewed justification for xenophobia. As D. Robert DeChaine argues, nativism was invigorated by the resulting panic over foreign terrorists, transmuting all immigrants of color into potential jihadists ("Bordering"). In addition, again on a pragmatic note, materials produced in this era, many of them archived online, are relatively accessible to me. Finally, I can assume that most potential readers have an interest in the era we are living through. So, while I could select any period in U.S. history and likely find noteworthy cases of religious rhetoric about immigration, I see compelling reasons to focus on the post-9/11 era. At the end of this chapter, I say more about why I selected specific case studies within this scope.

Methods and Methodologies

In this section, I first explain my *methods*, by which I mean the techniques I use to gather data. Then, I explain the theoretical lenses through which I viewed this data as I analyzed it—my *methodologies*.

Methods

Emulating several recent monographs on immigration rhetoric, such as Chávez's *Queer Migration Politics* and Cisneros's *The Border Crossed Us*, I combine the study of published materials with human subject research. Such a combination of data sources allows a fuller

understanding of discourse as it circulates through both institutions (publications) and individuals (observation, interviews). In addition, by grounding my study in specific contexts and localities, the research on human subjects could help me satisfy the ethical imperative to use research on immigration to serve disenfranchised immigrants (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al.) and to intervene in public discourse (De La Garza et al.). To be specific, I employ five ways to gather primary sources:

- Research on published materials:
    1. Print materials (e.g., publications by immigration NGOs)
    2. Digital materials (e.g., social media pages of immigration NGOs; news articles and images to contextualize case studies)
- Research on human subjects:
    3. Interviews (e.g., interviews with Persian Bahá'í immigrants)
    4. Observation (e.g., participant-observation of NGO activities)
    5. Autoethnography (personal experience as a Bahá'í)

Ultimately, all five methods result in texts (primary sources) on which I conduct rhetorical analysis through the lens of theory—that is, methodology.

Methodologies

My overarching methodology, following disciplinary conventions, is rhetorical analysis in the Aristotelian tradition. This tradition assumes that discourse can have material effects—that, given an exigence resolvable through discourse, rhetoric "changes reality through the mediation of thought and action" (Bitzer 3). In regard to immigration, as relevant rhetoric persuades audiences, it shapes thoughts that lead to actions, such as policies and norms, that affect the lives

of immigrants. To find out how a given text (speech, image, book, etc.) tries to shape its recipients, rhetorical analysis considers elements such as context, rhetor, exigence, and audience. I merge this analytical framework with cosmopolitan theory, because the resulting combination attunes me to rhetorical elements germane to immigration and religion. To explain this attunement, I present a brief overview of cosmopolitanism's intersections with immigration and religion, and then show how cosmopolitan theory guides rhetorical analysis of contexts, appeals, and *topoi*.

Cosmopolitanism, Immigration, and Religion

For most of its life in the European philosophical tradition, from the Greek Cynics to the Roman Stoics to the early and medieval Christians, cosmopolitanism has upheld an ethical stance for realizing universal obligations and thus questioning intergroup prejudice—an alternative to identity categories that demand primary allegiance and imply that ethical obligations stop at the border of the tribe, the polis, the country. In the 1700s, Kant transmuted it into a political theory of international relations, which continues to generate discussions among political scientists. For my purposes, the ethical stance is of greater interest because of its applicability to rhetoric, especially to rhetoric about immigration. Cosmopolitan theory is a fitting lens for my critical question because of its attention to immigration as an ethical question and its historical relationship with religion.

Various thinkers see impoverished immigrants displaced by transnational capitalism as the vanguard of cosmopolitanism today (Pollock et al.; Bhabha). To these scholars, the reception of immigrants is the paramount test of cosmopolitan ethics (Derrida). Cosmopolitanism has particular relevance to immigration *rhetoric*, since such discourse can be boiled down to the

question of whether we have an obligation to admit anyone of another nationality, resembling the question of universal obligations at the heart of cosmopolitanism. Indeed, at least one rhetoric scholar, Alessandra Von Burg, has applied cosmopolitan theory directly to immigration rhetoric, considering cases in the European Union (Muslim immigrants in "Toward a Rhetorical Cosmopolitanism" and Roma nomads in "Stochastic Citizenship"). Much remains to be said about immigration rhetoric from a cosmopolitan perspective, especially within the unique context of the United States, which, unlike nations in the European Union, has been populated almost entirely by immigrants from overseas.

Furthermore, cosmopolitanism's historical relationship with religion makes it a natural fit for studying religious rhetoric. While in the crucible of Stoic philosophy, cosmopolitanism was influenced by a new religion, Christianity; a millennium later, progressive Christian thinkers like the School of Salamanca mulled over cosmopolitan ideas (Brown and Held). Moreover, cosmopolitanism's global scope reflects the global vision inherent to most world religions, which perceive universal principles uniting all humanity. For example, the Bahá'í Faith has prominent cosmopolitan characteristics, a connection noted by scholars like Nalinie Mooten and Ruth Williams. Admittedly, outside the abstract realm of theory and theology, cosmopolitanism and religion are not always friendly bedfellows; religious affiliation can defy cosmopolitanism by encouraging exclusive attachments to doctrines, coreligionists, and places of worship (Elshtain). Nevertheless, especially today, religious communities are often literally global, linked by immigrants (Levitt), as seen in Kate Vieira's study of transnational Brazilian Evangelical churches. Cosmopolitanism enables a balanced perspective on religious rhetoric both by highlighting its global aspirations and critiquing sectarian antipathies.

Cosmopolitanism and Rhetoric: Contexts

As the above discussion shows, cosmopolitan theory is fundamentally concerned with global contexts. Initially, this characteristic might appear to contradict a key principle of rhetoric: situatedness. After all, Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the faculty of observing in *any given case* the available means of persuasion" (1355b, italics added). However, the two foci, local cases and global contexts, need not exclude each other. Indeed, today, rhetoricians are increasingly investigating "globalization" (Royster and Kirsch) and "networked arguments" (Dingo). Therefore, cosmopolitanism's attention to phenomena that link nation-states is a boon to the study of rhetoric, especially rhetoric—like that of religion and immigration—that necessarily impinges on worldwide communities. Cosmopolitanism encourages me to think beyond the United States in my analysis.

Cosmopolitanism and Rhetoric: Appeals

Cosmopolitanism draws attention to rhetorical appeals because of an ongoing debate over whether *logos* or *pathos* better enables intergroup cooperation. In the Stoics-to-Kant tradition, emotional attachments to group identities were viewed as the primary stumbling block to universal identification. By prioritizing *logos* over *pathos*, people would realize that their dearest affiliations are arbitrary, for we are born into family and homeland purely by chance—a stance Martha C. Nussbaum recounts in her famous essay, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism." Though classical cosmopolitanism valorizes logic, cosmopolitan theorists today acknowledge that emotion holds special power to spark action. Indeed, even Nussbaum, considered the spokesperson of classical cosmopolitanism, admitted her pessimism about its persuasiveness, placing more hope in emotive storytelling ("Toward a Globally Sensitive Patriotism"). Others

likewise advocate infusing cosmopolitanism with emotion; for instance, Von Burg suggests face-to-face encounters with the cultural Other to lessen the emotional distance between ethnic groups and gain acceptance for immigrants ("Toward"). Similarly, Walter Fisher suggests that, despite the reliable appeal of us/them narratives, there exist stories that can convince communities of their ties to all humanity. What are these persuasive stories—does religion offer some examples? What kinds of appeals do religious rhetors make for immigrants?

Cosmopolitanism and Rhetoric: Topoi

Another issue cosmopolitanism raises for rhetoric is the ethics of *topoi*. For example, what does the commonplace of "international law" mean? For centuries, such universals have supported oppressive, colonial relations, with Europeans defining the way the world should work (Mignolo). Kwame Appiah recommends that cosmopolitans relinquish their traditional efforts at defining shared values in favor of practical cooperation. Indeed, shared values can actually constrain discourse by precluding alternative views, as exemplified by the immigration *topoi* critiqued at the opening of this chapter. Are all commonplaces as confining as the economy/culture/security triad? Can universals, so essential to religion, move audiences toward ethical purposes? Such rhetorical quandaries raised by cosmopolitan theory provide issues to guide my analysis.

RATIONALE FOR THE CASE STUDIES

This project revolves around three case studies of faith-based immigration advocacy organizations, which raises several questions. First, why *these* organizations? Second, what synergy is generated by combining these three case studies into a single project, and what is the

logic motivating their arrangement? This section answers these questions before transitioning into the next chapter, which elaborates my theoretical framework.

Selecting Focal Organizations

In selecting focal organizations, I had dozens, if not hundreds, of options among faith-based immigration advocacy organizations. How did I end up, then, with the Tahirih Justice Center (a Bahá'í organization), the Kino Border Initiative (a Jesuit/Catholic organization), and Hijabis of New York (an Islamic social media campaign)?

A desire to diversify rhetorical scholarship by shedding light on organizations based in traditions beyond Protestant Christianity motivates my selections. Understandably, much extant work on religious rhetoric in the United States focuses on various strains of Protestantism, a tradition to which nearly half of Americans adhere today ("Religious Landscape Study"). But a quarter of Americans belong to other faiths, ranging from Buddhism to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Many of these minority religions (including those of my case studies—the Bahá'í Faith, Catholicism, and Islam) have close ties with waves of immigration more recent than the ones that brought Protestants to these shores starting in the 1600s. Having ties with immigration from, for example, the Middle East, Ireland, Latin America, and South Asia may endow minority faiths and affiliated organizations with a unique perspective on borders and mobility (a view that seems to be confirmed by Peggy Levitt's aptly titled *God Needs No Passport*).

Of course, there are plenty of other immigration organizations associated with minority faiths, such as the laudable Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, that I could have selected. Serendipity played a role in my choice of case study organizations, as I discovered their work through my existing connections—to my religious community, to comics about migration, to my

college roommate—in a sort of personal snowball sampling process. Yet, the selection of the Tahirih Justice Center, the Kino Border Initiative, and Hijabis of New York was not arbitrary; each organization has special characteristics that justify its inclusion. For instance, in an apparent paradox, the Tahirih Justice Center stridently advocates for policy change while endeavoring to adhere to the Bahá'í injunction against partisan politics. The Kino Border Initiative presents undocumented migrants as spiritual beings—and, even more radically, as holy wayfarers comparable to Mary, Joseph, and Jesus on their involuntary journeys. Hijabis of New York simultaneously engages two distinct audiences, encouraging a form of eavesdropping. Moreover, as I go on to explain, each organization has a distinctive rhetorical approach when it comes to its audiences (civic and/or vernacular) and to its strategic foregrounding or backgrounding of its religious foundations. The diverse approaches represented by my three case studies are best displayed when the organizations are laid side by side.

Introducing the Focal Organizations

The Tahirih Justice Center (TJC), a Bahá'í-inspired NGO helping immigrants who have undergone gender-based violence to gain legal residency and other resources, forms the focus of chapter three, the first case study chapter. There are several reasons I chose this organization as a case study. For one, since TJC serves asylum-seekers, it pertains to the rhetoric of asylum, a form of discourse that can have life-or-death consequences for applicants. In an asylum system torn between international refugee law and home-bred nativism, the question of moral obligations often gets lost. To my knowledge, no rhetorician has yet assessed religious advocacy for asylum—a lacuna I seek to address by studying TJC. Second, TJC focuses on immigrant women, who have traditionally been neglected by migration studies because of the perception that they are merely

following male kin (Lorimer Leonard). Exploring TJC helps us understand how gender inflects immigration discourse. Third, by spotlighting it, I shed light on a minority religion, the Bahá'í Faith, that has thus far been neglected by our field. Non-Western religions like the Bahá'í Faith, marginal in the United States, may offer unique contributions to public discourse due to their outsider perspective. Examining non-Western faiths also contributes to rhetoric scholars' efforts to gain a more global perspective by appreciating discourses of cultures and traditions beyond our usual North Atlantic purview.

Chapter four turns to the Kino Border Initiative (KBI), examining its creative advocacy efforts promoting hospitality toward undocumented immigrants. The U.S.–Mexico border is the nexus of research on immigration rhetoric, inspiring studies on policies targeting undocumented migrants (Ono and Sloop), Latinx identity (Cisneros's oeuvre), border vigilantes (DeChaine, "Bordering"), and more. By taking KBI as a case study, I aim to enter this Burkean Parlor. To date, borderlands advocacy organizations have received only slight treatment in rhetorical scholarship. One reference occurs in Chávez's discussion of the Coalición de Derechos Humanos, a Tucson NGO, which collaborates with the Catholic Church. She sees the Church as a liability to the Coalición's LGBTQ outreach because it propagates family values discourse. But there is a compelling reason for an NGO to ally itself with Catholicism: the Church is an influential rhetor. Rhetoric scholars should try to understand how the Church uses its platform to advocate for undocumented migrants, because it is one of the foremost contributors to this discourse. While there are certainly other Catholic borderlands organizations, KBI is a good choice because of its creativity. Its advocacy work reached me all the way in Pennsylvania via a comic book it co-published, which I stumbled across in gathering resources for a term paper. The visual medium sparked my curiosity, as did the comic book's comparison of undocumented

immigrants to the Christian Holy Family. Considering the unusual medium and analogy, I thought, *Here is something new in immigration discourse.* As chapter four shows, KBI's creativity provides an innovative model for reframing immigration discourse.

Chapter five examines Hijabis of New York (HNY), a social media campaign that seeks to combat anti-Muslim discourses, especially those targeting veiled Muslim women. According to Pew's "Religious Landscape Study," the majority (81%) of Muslims in the United States are first- and second-generation immigrants, part of a wave of Asian immigration facilitated by a 1965 immigration reform. As immigrants belonging to a minority religion that, following 9/11, many Americans associate with terrorism, Muslims are doubly othered. They face a special brand of xenophobia, Islamophobia. Little work has been done in our field on Muslims in the West, and the few articles that exist tend to focus on how they are represented in mass media (e.g., Hartelius, "Face-ing Immigration," a study of *New York Times* articles). This chapter investigates how Islam, rather than being a mere liability for immigrants, can furnish resources for arguments for their acceptance in the United States. HNY constitutes a suitable case study for such an investigation because of how it uniquely melds faith, gender, and immigration. Like TJC, its focus is on women, further shining light on this neglected immigrant demographic. It is also a born-digital initiative that relies heavily on visual rhetoric, exemplifying how the affordances of social media can serve immigration advocacy.

Arranging and Synthesizing the Focal Organizations

The ordering of the case studies (TJC first, KBI second, and HNY third) represents a progression through strategies of public rhetoric—a spectrum of approaches to faith-based immigration advocacy with the following endpoints:

Civic audience/low religiosity → Vernacular audience/high religiosity

In this section, I elaborate upon the concepts of civic/vernacular audiences and religiosity, explaining how they motivate the arrangement of the body chapters.

The primary audience—*whom does the organization seem to want to reach the most?*—is the first factor behind the arrangement. In analyzing primary audiences, I find Ono and Sloop's heuristic of types of discourse to be invaluable. They break discourse into two types based on audience: civic (seeking a mainstream audience, often through mass media such as television) and vernacular (addressing a specific community, often through media such as email listservs) (12–14).[4] While this binary is an oversimplification, I believe it is a useful one, because it helps highlight some distinctions in my focal organizations: based on my observations, TJC addresses almost exclusively civic audiences; KBI addresses civic and vernacular audiences in equal measure; and HNY primarily addresses a vernacular audience, though it also anticipates a civic one. Table 1-1 explains these characteristics in greater detail. Thus, in terms of audience, the organizations are ordered from predominantly civic (TJC) to predominantly vernacular (HNY).

But why does considering the types of audience matter? I believe the movement from civic to vernacular demonstrates how cosmopolitanism can be promoted at varying levels, from sophisticated organizations that operate at a national level and rely on experts (TJC) to grassroots, volunteer-run ones (HNY). It also shows that diverse audiences, from native-born Americans to first-generation immigrants, all can respond to innovative immigration advocacy.

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[4] Ono and Sloop also have another dimension to their heuristic: dominant versus outlaw discourses (14–18). Dominant discourse—which, regarding immigration, relies on the economic, cultural, and security commonplaces—can permeate both civic and vernacular spheres. Outlaw discourse, which rejects the dominant commonplaces in favor of "radical" approaches like open borders, primarily exists in vernacular spaces, though it can sometimes enter civic discourse and (on the rare occasion) favorably change it. Ono and Sloop's idea of outlaw discourse influences my approach to "reframing" immigration.

Neither cosmopolitanism nor immigration advocacy is the preserve of a single demographic—for these convergent projects to succeed, they need contributors ranging from well-resourced attorneys to immigrants motivated by firsthand experience.

The second factor behind the chapter arrangement is the level of religiosity in each organization's advocacy work. By "religiosity," I mean how explicitly the organization draws upon religious principles and practices in its efforts to reach its various audiences. As one might expect, the organization most focused on reaching civic audiences, TJC, is the least openly religious. An audience member would need to do some digging to discover that it is inspired by Bahá'í principles. Similarly, KBI holds back from infusing Catholicism into its advocacy targeting civic audiences such as policymakers, as exemplified by its *logos*-driven white papers. On the other hand, it draws heavily from Catholic sources when it addresses vernacular audiences of believers and locals. HNY, primarily targeting a vernacular audience, makes a similar move, foregrounding Islam in nearly all its discourse—but it differs from KBI in that it does not produce distinct discourses for vernacular versus civic audiences. Instead, it innovatively provides a completely public platform for internal discussions and debates within Islam, accessible to vernacular and civic readers alike. (Table 1-1, below, summarizes the religiosity of each organization.) Just as the chapters are ordered from predominantly civic to predominantly vernacular audiences, they are also ordered from least to most explicitly religious.

One takeaway from this arrangement is that faith-based immigration advocacy organizations tend to modulate their displays of religiosity depending on their audience. That is hardly surprising: if the goal of a given piece of discourse is to persuade as wide an audience as possible to support or protest some policy, why risk alienating them by promoting a certain religion that many might find mysterious (the Bahá'í Faith), problematic (the Catholic Church),

or threatening (Islam)? Hijabis of New York becomes all the more noteworthy in its resistance to this rhetorical principle, as I assert in chapter five. Perhaps grassroots organizations like HNY are better at breaking the rules of rhetoric and generating alternative strategies than are more established institutions. Of course, each of the organizations is marginal in a way, aligning itself with a non-dominant faith community, and perhaps for this reason taps into a vein of innovation, as summarized by the final column in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Overview of Case Study Organizations

Ch. #	Organization	Main audience(s) of advocacy	Primary focus of advocacy	Level of religiosity in advocacy	Noteworthy faith-based rhetorical practices
3	Tahirih Justice Center (TJC)	*Civic:* Lawmakers and their electorate	Effect policy change to enhance protections for female immigrants	*Low:* Bahá'í tenets backgrounded	Political advocacy that refrains from partisanship
4	Kino Border Initiative (KBI)	*Civic:* Lawmakers and their electorate *Vernacular:* U.S. Catholics; residents of Nogales	Effect policy change to enhance protections for undocumented immigrants	*Medium:* Catholic tenets foregrounded for vernacular audiences	Emphasis on spiritual kinship over national citizenship
5	Hijabis of New York (HNY)	*Vernacular:* Muslims in U.S./West *Civic:* Non-Muslim "eavesdroppers"	Effect attitude change to enhance acceptance of Muslims, especially women	*High:* Islamic principles and practices foregrounded for all audiences	Publicizes internal dissensus in contrast to respectability politics

Each case study chapter exposes a unique approach to reframing immigration discourse—and also offers implications for writing pedagogy, marrying my analysis to praxis. Teaching is not, after all, so distant from advocacy: through dozens of tiny decisions every day, the instructor directs students' attention to the causes she cares about. For many rhetoric scholars, teaching composition furnishes their foremost opportunity to contribute to civic discourse by instilling ethics of communication in students, the rising generation of rhetors. As Bill Johnston has argued, "teaching is a profoundly value-laden activity" (1). A cosmopolitan disposition ought to be one of the values transmitted to students—and, as I will show, featuring immigration as a reading or writing topic offers a promising route toward doing so.

To contextualize the case studies in my theoretical framework, the next chapter demonstrates how religion—any world religion—can inform a cosmopolitan approach to immigration. Discussing Hinduism, Judeo-Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and the Bahá'í Faith, it argues that every world religion offers resources for cosmopolitan rhetoric. To provide more detail on how religion may support cosmopolitanism, I zero in the Bahá'í Faith, taking it as a case study for three reasons. First, it is my own religion, so elucidating its tenets helps the reader perceive my positionality. Second, it has arguably the most elaborated cosmopolitan program of any of the world religions, as its founder addressed the globalizing context of the nineteenth century. Third, so little has been said about this religion in the field of rhetorical studies that I view the focus on it in this chapter as well as in chapter three as a corrective to that gap. Ultimately, the Bahá'í example shows how a cosmopolitan worldview, when melded with faith in the divine, can take hold among millions around the globe. As I argue, every religion has the potential to diffuse such cosmopolitan rhetoric—the question is how to translate religious cosmopolitanism from principle into (rhetorical) practice.

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Chapter 2 Religious Cosmopolitanism in Principle and Practice

If ever you get the chance to visit Haifa, Israel, I would suggest taking a walk down Mount Carmel toward the Mediterranean so you can pass through several of the city's varied neighborhoods. This is a walk I took with my fellow new arrivals six years ago. We started from the garden-bedecked property of the Bahá'í World Centre. We walked downhill to Hadar, a district that has been a magnet for Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union, where Cyrillic joins Hebrew on the signs of countless little shops. We walked further downhill to Wadi Nisnas, the oldest part of Haifa, with curving lanes and timeworn stone buildings, home to Arab Christians; storefronts here feature Arabic signage. The city also houses smaller Arab Muslim and Druze populations, as well as the community of several hundred Bahá'í temporary residents to which I belonged for two years.

The diversity of Haifa and its relative dearth of ethnic conflict have made it a symbol of urban cosmopolitanism, an "island of sanity" amidst the Israel-Palestine conflict (Welsh), symbolized by its annual "Festival of Festivals" in which Hanukkah, Eid al-Adha, and Christmas are simultaneously celebrated. Resident Moad Ode, a Muslim, observes, "Haifa is not a special city . . . Haifa represents how normal human beings should live" (Welsh). Though the city is not a total utopia of coexistence, as its Jewish and Arab communities are fairly segregated (Black), it seemed to me a world apart from the interreligious hostilities plaguing its larger counterpart, Jerusalem.

While the Israel-Palestine conflict exemplifies the risks of ethnoreligious extremism, Haifa evokes the possibilities of cosmopolitanism. (Cosmopolitanism denotes an ethical stance for realizing universal obligations and thus questioning intergroup prejudice; for a fuller

definition, please refer to chapter one.) As Israel's third-largest city, Haifa is located in a country that epitomizes religious violence. Yet, this mountain city's relative serenity indicates the potential for religion to abet coexistence. As I have heard some Bahá'ís speculate, in early twentieth-century Haifa, the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (son of the religion's founder and well-known advocate for interfaith cooperation) might have helped the native and immigrant communities coexist, establishing a legacy of tolerance—a strain of religious cosmopolitanism—that persists today.

Haifa—and indeed, anywhere else south or east of Greece—falls outside the traditional canon of cosmopolitan philosophy, which has been dominated by European thinkers. The storied trajectory of cosmopolitan thought travels steadily north and west, from Diogenes the Cynic in ancient Greece to Immanuel Kant in seventeenth-century Prussia. But Europe does not hold a monopoly over cosmopolitanism. Looking beyond the Global North, to places like Haifa, might help to revive and enhance this ancient mindset by locating alternatives to the imperialistic undercurrents that muddy its European manifestation—the colonial tendency to dictate how the rest of the world should operate (Mignolo). Indeed, Sheldon Pollock, Homi Bhabha, Carol Breckenridge, and Dipesh Chakrabarty recommend expanding the cosmopolitan canon to embrace global contributors ranging from ancient Sanskrit poetry and the Renaissance-era University of Salamanca to Chinese port cities and Senegalese Muslim traders (586). These scholars muse on "how radically we can rewrite the history of cosmopolitanism and how dramatically we can redraw its map once we are prepared to think outside the box of European intellectual history" (586).

Other thinkers have echoed this call to decolonize cosmopolitan theory by learning from likeminded philosophies of the Global South. For instance, Ananta Kumar Giri sees Kant's

cosmopolitan theory as overly rational because it banishes the passions. In contrast, Kumar recommends bringing the emotional processes of self-development and self-transformation, as exemplified by Hindu and Buddhist traditions, into the philosophy. Learning from spiritual traditions beyond Judeo-Christianity can help cosmopolitan thinkers avoid the pitfall of Eurocentric imperialism, Kumar contends. For example, European cosmopolitanism imagines world citizenship, which prioritizes individual mobility. Cultures that valorize kinship, however, envisage membership in a human family generated by Mother Earth. Kumar suggests that these stances should be fused so that individualism and collectivity can balance each other, thus purging cosmopolitan theory of undesirable extremes.

In this chapter, I theorize religious cosmopolitanism, thus extending these scholars' efforts to weave a revitalized and decolonized cosmopolitan tapestry from threads around the world. I do so by investigating how world religions (faiths with members around the globe) can build harmony without erasing difference and thus invigorate cosmopolitan discourse. In my turn toward religion to find strategies for cultivating civic discourse, I follow other rhetoric scholars, such as Rasha Diab, who looks to Arab-Islamic peacemaking, or Jeffrey Ringer, who examines Evangelical Christian student writers. My particular focus is religion's contribution to cosmopolitan theory.

Why spend a chapter on cosmopolitanism in a project about immigration? Cosmopolitanism, by seeking to unsettle borders, aligns with arguments for the rights of immigrants, as I argued in chapter one. Indeed, by positing universal obligations that transcend borders, cosmopolitanism contravenes nativism and suggests the fruitfulness of transnational mobility for building intercultural understanding. Therefore, my investigation here lays the groundwork for subsequent chapters' analyses of immigration rhetoric: by confirming religion's

utility in advancing cosmopolitan concepts, its potential fruitfulness for immigration advocacy is revealed. Chapters three, four, and five bear out this connection, showing how advocacy organizations use principles and practices of the Bahá'í Faith, Catholicism, and Islam to craft cosmopolitan arguments on behalf of immigrants.

This chapter unfolds in two primary moves: first, it points out cosmopolitan principles in several religions; second, it demonstrates how these principles are put into practice. That is, it shows what religious cosmopolitanism is and how it works. It begins with an overview of principles of hospitality and inclusion in several world religions to demonstrate how each religion can offer threads to the cosmopolitan tapestry. Next, I zero in on the cosmopolitan threads in one of these religions, the Bahá'í Faith, as a case study for how unifying principles can be put into practice. Seeing believers "walk the talk" of cosmopolitanism is perhaps the best evidence of religion's potential contribution to this philosophy. After establishing what Bahá'í cosmopolitan principles are, I look at how they have shaped several prominent Bahá'í rhetors. Then I turn to the views of some "everyday" Bahá'ís who have firsthand experience with migration: Iranian refugees who came to the United States because of the persecution they face as religious minorities in their homeland. This final section makes explicit the links between religious cosmopolitanism and immigration implied in the previous sections. Overall, this chapter demonstrates that religious cosmopolitanism, motivated by a divine mandate for universal love and harmony, can enrich public arguments for the inclusion of Others such as immigrants.

Threads of Cosmopolitanism in the World's Major Religions

In their scriptures, most religions exhort followers toward peaceful coexistence with other groups. Consider, for instance, the following versions of the Golden Rule collected by artist Jeff Streiff:

- Hinduism: "This is the sum of duty: do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you."
- Judaism: "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire Law; all the rest is commentary."
- Buddhism: "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful."
- Christianity: "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you; this sums up the Law and the Prophets."
- Islam: "No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself."
- Bahá'í Faith: "And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbor that which thou choosest for thyself."

To dwell with that last religion, the Bahá'í Faith, for a moment, I would like to return briefly to 'Abdu'l-Bahá—the Bahá'í leader and peacemaker of Haifa introduced earlier in the chapter. His words explain my motive for the discussion that follows.

It is worth quoting at length from one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talks in the United States in 1912, as it synopsizes a religious cosmopolitan disposition:

> Prejudices of all kinds—whether religious, racial, patriotic or political—are destructive of divine foundations in man. All the warfare and bloodshed in human history have been

> the outcome of prejudice. This earth is one home and native land. God has created mankind with equal endowment and right to live upon the earth. As a city is the home of all its inhabitants although each may have his individual place of residence therein, so the earth's surface is one wide native land or home for all races of humankind. Racial prejudice or separation into nations such as French, German, American and so on is unnatural and proceeds from human motive and ignorance. All are the children and servants of God. Why should we be separated by artificial and imaginary boundaries? (*Promulgation* 287–88; see also Mooten 31–32)

In this passage, ʻAbdu'l-Bahá condemns prejudices of whatever kind for generating violent conflict. Prejudice is illogical, arising from "human motive or ignorance"—from calculated divisiveness or from lack of knowledge. The earth belongs equally to all humans; it is one giant homeland. The entrenchment of national borders—which are "artificial and imaginary"—contravenes this basic fact. ʻAbdu'l-Bahá's message of oneness echoes and expands upon the cosmopolitan teachings of older religions, to which I now turn.

Our planet hosts countless religions, ranging from local, indigenous beliefs to globalized, sophisticated institutions. To define a reasonable scope, here I focus on the latter—more particularly, on faith communities with at least half a billion followers worldwide. There are four religions that meet this criterion: Hinduism (1 billion), Christianity (2.4 billion), Buddhism (0.5 billion), and Islam (1.7 billion) (World Religion Database). This scope excludes the Bahá'í Faith, which has about eight million followers, so I reserve further discussion of its principles for later in the chapter.

Before proceeding, two caveats are in order. First, some adherents have used each religion as justification for persecuting "others"—the antithesis of cosmopolitanism. So, the sections

below consider each religion's *potential* for cosmopolitanism, rather than endorsing religion as having satisfactorily enacted it. Second, each world religion encompasses numerous conflicting sects; my description, intentionally taking a bird's-eye view, makes generalizations on the basis of teachings that are fairly consistent across denominations (for example, here I do not attempt to distinguish between Catholicism and Protestantism, regarding both as offshoots of Judeo-Christianity).

I discuss the faiths chronologically, in order of their formation. Hinduism is the most ancient; since it does not have a single prophet-founder, dating its beginning precisely is impossible, but it seems to have emerged by 1500 BCE. Moses, a founding prophet of Judeo-Christianity, lived around 1300 BCE (I will discuss Judaism and Christianity together since the two religions share scripture—the Hebrew Bible—and thus some doctrinal elements). Buddha was active around 500 BCE. Muhammad lived around 600 CE.

Hinduism: From Casteism to Tolerance

Like every major religion, Hinduism promotes a Golden Rule that seems vital to any kind of progress toward cosmopolitanism: "*dharma* ('duty' or 'justice') requires that 'One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to oneself,'" as David Hollenbach notes (7). Positive consequences of the *dharma* concept are displayed in contemporary times by India's welcome of Pakistani and Tibetan migrants (7). Hinduism's roots stretch back over several millennia into ancient India; during these thousands of years, the religion has developed countless branches—but modern interpretations yield the most promise for cosmopolitanism.

Prominent Hindus over the past two centuries—such as Sri Aurobindo, Swami A. C. Bhaktivedanta (founder of Hare Krishna), and Mahatma Gandhi—have proposed reforms that

move the religion from divisive traditions toward a more unifying vision (Hiltebeitel). At the same time that they encourage reform, they preserve the inspiring tenets of the faith; for example, Gandhi pursued "an ideal of dispassioned and nonviolent service to humanity, modeled on the *Bhagavadgita's* doctrine of *karmayoga*" (4008). In general, these reformers have contested Hinduism's longstanding support of the caste system, which, by installing strict borders between social groups, militates against cosmopolitanism. In addition, they have contended that "Hindu tolerance does not deny the truths of other religions" (4008). The result is a less hierarchical, more unifying vision of humanity. Even if this progressive perspective is not yet ascendant among Hinduism's billion adherents, it still reflects the potential of this ancient religion to promote cosmopolitan ideals.

Judeo-Christianity: Recognizing Marginalization, Showing Love

By the time of Jesus, Jewish history was already inflected with migration, exile, and diaspora. In the history recorded in the Hebrew Bible, Abraham—Judaism's founding prophet—initiated a pattern of migration by following God's call to move from Mesopotamia to Israel (Swartz). Later, the Jews, afflicted by famine, fled from Israel to Egypt, where they were enslaved. Moses led them back to Israel; this exodus continues to be commemorated annually with Passover—during which participants remember that "[i]n every generation one should see oneself as having come out of Egypt" (4986)—and Sukkot. After these Biblical episodes, forced migrations continued, with various conquerors of Israel sending Jewish leadership into exile; in particular, Greco-Roman rule generated a diaspora in which, by the ninth century, most Jews lived. The consciousness of refugees' struggles inculcated by these historical displacements is underscored by the Biblical teaching that "thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the

heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (*King James Bible*, Exodus 23:9). Today, some Jews recognize a special obligation to refugees; for instance, in response to the ballooning detention of asylum-seekers in 2019, Jewish activists started the "Never Again Is Now" protest movement (Zonszein).

Christians, who embrace Jesus as the Messiah prophesied by Judaism, generally accept faith, hope, and love as the bedrock of morality (Pelikan 1665). In addition to composing this famous triad, Apostle Paul averred that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). So, Christian love should have a universal reach, extending beyond the body of believers to encompass all humans (Pelikan 1671). In practicing universal love, Christians participate in the imitation of Jesus Christ, who ministered to people marginalized by society, showing special compassion for them (Allison). Beyond instilling personal morality, Christianity aspires to reform society in emulation of God's Kingdom; while interpretations of this goal vary widely, some, like Latin America's liberation theologists, promote a social gospel that implies a cosmopolitan Kingdom where intergroup barriers are overcome (Pelikan 1671). In chapter four, I expand on Christian cosmopolitanism as it manifests in Catholic social teachings.

Buddhism: Awakening to Social Justice

As Jesus provides a model of morality for Christians, so does Siddhartha Gautama, commonly titled "the Buddha," to Buddhists. The Buddha lived in India about 2,500 years ago; though he did not engage in migration *per se*, wandering was crucial to his spiritual development and teaching work (Irons). His initial wanderings were in pursuit of learning about the true condition of the world after rejecting his cloistered royal life. On this spiritual journey, he

discovered the importance of striking a balance between the extremes of hedonism and asceticism. After gaining enlightenment, his journeying took on a new purpose: sharing his message of moderation with others. Central to this message is the complementarity of wisdom and compassion—a combination surely conducive to cosmopolitan ends.

Throughout much of its lengthy history, Buddhism was primarily centered on individual, internal transformation, rather than social reform. Its early years, however, indicate its capacity for harmonizing social relationships: the monastic community formed by the Buddha relied on progressive principles such as equality and meritocracy; the Buddhist emperor Asoka similarly promoted "universal tolerance and social welfare" (Queen 2787). In the interim between this founding era and the present, personal morality superseded social unification—but today, that is changing. In the last half-century, some Buddhists have initiated social action intended to foster unity and peace, participating in a movement called "Engaged Buddhism." In short, Engaged Buddhists believe that mindful social action aligns with Buddhism's goal of relieving suffering and awakening human potential—for, if suffering is caused not merely by internal failings but by external injustice, collective effort is needed to remedy it. In traditional doctrines, Engaged Buddhists find justification for imbuing social relations with generosity, compassion, nonviolence, and interdependence. Engaged Buddhism has effloresced in the anti-caste movement in India, the monk-led antiwar movement in Vietnam, and a slew of humanitarian organizations founded in Asia and the West. These developments illustrate how Buddhist values such as nonviolence and the alleviation of suffering can address injustices that hinder the formation of a just and cosmopolitan society.

Islam: A History of Peacemaking and Tolerance

Muhammad positioned himself in the Abrahamic lineage alongside the prophets of Judaism and Christianity and thus foreswore exclusivism. In addition to this ecumenical perception of divine revelation unfolding across millennia, Muhammad offered a model of social justice for the marginalized in his decisions. Born in Mecca, a city in western Arabia, some 1,400 years ago, Muhammad taught a new system of social and ethical principles that angered the city's leaders (Armstrong). While Muslims were facing persecution in Mecca, a call for their teachings came from Yathrib, a city about three hundred miles to the north. In Yathrib, later renamed Medina, different tribes were struggling to coexist. In the tribal culture, unity depended on blood kinship; lacking this shared lineage, the tribes sought an alternative uniting factor in Islam. In response to the persecution at home and the invitation from the north, Muhammad and his followers left Mecca for Medina in a migration called the "Hijra." For the Meccan Muslims, the Hijra inflicted the pain of forced migration, severing their ties to home. But they were received warmly by their hosts, the Medinans, whose hospitality is praised in Islam, indicating the religion's regard for serving refugees. Indeed, according to the Qur'an, "emigrants (*muhajirin*) such as Abraham, the Jewish people, and, above all, the Prophet Muhammad and his companions in the *hijra* [fall] under the special care of Allah (Qur'an 9:100)" (Hollenbach 7). Muhammad's residency in Medina proved successful, as Islam furnished a shared belief system through which the tribes could cooperate (Armstrong; see also Diab's chapter "*We* the Reconciled"). As Islamic rule quickly expanded throughout and beyond Arabia, Muhammad's idea of the oneness of God, religion, and humanity required that it be tolerant of other faiths (Rahman).

Islam's emphasis on unity and reconciliation is evident in the practices of its followers. For example, Muslims recall the unity of Abrahamic faiths during the *hajj*, the obligatory pilgrimage to Mecca; since holy places in Mecca are associated with Abraham's wife Hagar, pilgrims are reminded of their symbolic relationship with this Biblical father's other spiritual heirs (Armstrong). On a more general level, according to the Qur'an, human conflicts arise from our narrow-mindedness, so Islam furnishes principles to help overcome this un-cosmopolitan tendency (Rahman). These precepts pay special attention to marginal groups, enjoining service to the needy through laws like *zakat*, an obligatory yearly payment toward charitable ends. Such principles inspire transcendence of traditional divisions, animated by the belief that God sent multiple prophets and regards everyone as equal. For instance, "The Qur'an notes that forced migrants, in their flight from oppression, continue to face special vulnerabilities, and that Muslims have special responsibilities toward them" (Hollenbach 7). With its emphasis on establishing the framework for a just society, Islam provides principles relevant to the cosmopolitan project today; chapter five discusses one cosmopolitan Islamic project, Hijabis of New York.

Synthesizing the Four Largest Religions' Cosmopolitan Threads

To recap, Hindu reformers like Gandhi prioritize nonviolence and universal love; many Jews feel special obligations to the displaced today; Christians are called to love all humanity; Buddhists promote universal tolerance and social welfare; and Muslims believe in the oneness of God, humanity, and religion. In addition, nearly all of these faiths involve sacred stories of journeying, from the Exodus of the Jews to the Hijra of the first Muslims. Evidently, each of the

four largest religions offers some resources, revolving around the principle of caring for others (i.e., hospitality), to cosmopolitan rhetoric.

Admittedly, religious cosmopolitan principles may or may not make their way into the words and actions of believers. Indeed, while all the religions promote some version of universal, unconstrained love, their contemporary manifestations often highlight borders between believers and non-believers. That is, in the interpretations that predominate today, each religion claims exclusivity—to be *the* ultimate Divine message—contravening the project of building a more open and just global society. Indeed, even Muslims, who adhere to Muhammad's comprehensive view of the Abrahamic religions as an unfolding revelation, generally claim that he is the Seal of the Prophets and thus the final word from God. What, then, is the use of cosmopolitan principles when they merely sit in the realm of doctrine, unacted upon?

In the remainder of this chapter, I set out to show that some believers *do* put religious cosmopolitan principles into practice, demonstrating the power such beliefs have to shape adherents' worldviews and, indeed, the rhetoric they produce to influence other people's views. To make the case for the praxis of religious cosmopolitanism, I examine the Bahá'í Faith and its followers.

A Closer Look at the Cosmopolitan Praxis of One Religion: The Bahá'í Faith

Why devote most of this chapter to theorizing religious cosmopolitanism through a relatively obscure religion, the Bahá'í Faith, rather than through one of the major world religions that I have already discussed? Three reasons motivate my decision.

First, this religion is nearly untouched in the field of rhetoric and composition. As evidence, in the 196-page bibliography of studies of religion in this field assembled by Paul Lynch and Matthew Miller in 2017, the Bahá'í Faith does not appear at all, while studies on Judeo-Christianity abound. But our field has been called to globalize its point of view beyond the West (Royster and Kirsch); devoting attention to the Bahá'í Faith, founded in nineteenth-century Iran, contributes to this endeavor. Indeed, the Bahá'í Faith is a globalized religion: though its membership is relatively small, it is nevertheless widespread, second only to Christianity in global diffusion (Stockman 29). Given its worldwide dispersion, attending to its cosmopolitan discourse helps broaden rhetoric's purview beyond the United States. And, from a practical perspective, the "Bahá'í 101" I provide in this chapter should prepare the reader to understand chapter three, which is about a Bahá'í-inspired organization, the Tahirih Justice Center.

Second, an inclusionary perspective on religion is at the core of the Bahá'í Faith. The religion's founder, Bahá'u'lláh, taught that God sends divine messengers to humanity periodically without cease. Each messenger brings teachings that build on what came before—so, for example, Bahá'í teachings build on Islamic ones, Islamic ones build on Christian ones, and so on. This concept is termed "progressive revelation." To accept Bahá'u'lláh as the most recent channel of God's teachings means to also embrace past prophets and to expect future ones. Bahá'ís see the apparent contradictions in the major religions as results of human misinterpretation; with such a view, it is possible to appreciate each faith as a step in an ongoing process of spiritual advancement rather than as another competitor for human souls. In a way, then, because Bahá'ís see their faith as the heir to Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam, examining this religion helps synthesize some of the precepts of these older religions that I described in the

previous section. To me, such a non-exclusionary perspective is key to religious cosmopolitanism.

Third, and relatedly, the Bahá'í Faith arguably provides the most elaborated vision of cosmopolitanism of any world religion. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh address the political context in which he lived, an era of nationalism and economic globalization—a milieu much different from that of other prophets like Muhammad and Jesus. Therefore, he laid out not only spiritual principles for unification but also practical guidance on a world federation that would remedy the excesses of nationalism. Before presenting these cosmopolitan concepts—and, crucially, their practical effects—a historical introduction to the religion is necessary, as it will be *terra incognita* for most readers.

The Youngest World Religion: Essential History and Tenets

The Bahá'í Faith arose in nineteenth-century Persia, where some Shia Muslims awaited a new prophet with a millenarian fervor akin to the Second Great Awakening gripping the United States at the time. In 1844, a young merchant, Siyyid Muhammad `Alí Shírází, claimed to be the gate—"The Báb"—to this expected divine messenger. The Báb also set forth new teachings to replace Islamic law. His message attracted a number of passionate converts; among them was the poet and theologian Táhirih, who will make an appearance later in this chapter and in the next. Islamic leaders, feeling their power threatened by the rising popularity of the Bábí movement, successfully pushed the government to endorse the genocide of Bábís. As part of this pogrom, the Báb was executed, as were thousands of his followers. A prominent Bábí, Mírzá Ḥusayn-`Alí Núrí, was imprisoned during the pogrom; while in Tehran's worst dungeon, he had a vision in which a heavenly maiden told him he was the one promised by the Báb, as well as by previous

religions (e.g., the Christian prophecy of the Second Coming). In 1853, he was banished to Baghdad as part of the Persian authorities' ongoing attempts to rid their country of Bábís.

In 1863, while in exile in Baghdad, Núrí—known to his coreligionists as Bahá'u'lláh, a title meaning "Glory of God"—declared his station as the divine messenger prophesied by the Báb. Most of the Bábís accepted him and thus became "Bahá'ís," followers of Bahá. The Baghdad exile proved only the first stop on a series of banishments precipitated by authorities' anxiety over Bahá'u'lláh's growing influence. From Baghdad, he was sent over a thousand miles west to what is now Turkey—first to Istanbul, then to the northern city of Edirne, where he lived from 1863 to 1868. He was then banished hundreds of miles southeast to Akko, a city in Palestine used as a penal colony, where he lived from 1868 until his death in 1892. Thus, like the lives of other prophet-founders (e.g., Moses, Muhammad), Bahá'u'lláh's life was shaped by forced migration—a history recalled by Bahá'ís when they go on pilgrimage to Akko and neighboring Haifa and to other sites associated with his exiles.[5] Throughout his exiles, through what Bahá'ís consider divine revelation, Bahá'u'lláh composed writings, which, along with texts by the Báb and by Bahá'u'lláh's successor, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, constitute the religion's scripture.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, son of Bahá'u'lláh and leader of the Bahá'í Faith from 1892 until his death in 1921, played a special role in developing the religion's teachings and spreading them to the West. During his three-decade ministry, 'Abdu'l-Bahá coordinated the diffusion of his father's message to Europe and North America. In addition to sending Bahá'í teachers there, he visited these continents himself from 1911 to 1913, speaking widely to sundry congregations and

[5] To give an example of how consciousness of forced migration permeates Bahá'í pilgrimages, in my visits to Bahá'u'lláh's houses in Istanbul and Edirne, the guide recalled the burdens of the Turkish sojourn; in Akko, pilgrims visit the gate through which Bahá'u'lláh was brought into the city after a difficult oversea journey.

societies on subjects related to world peace, advising his audiences to break down the racial, religious, and nationalistic prejudices plaguing Western society. Bahá'ís consider 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be the "Perfect Exemplar" of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, so his fervor for crossing borders to bring people together has been emulated by a number of followers.

Upon 'Abdu'l-Bahá's death in 1921, Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'u'lláh's great-grandson, became leader of the global community. During his thirty years of leadership, Shoghi Effendi developed the religion's administrative structure, which, rather than ordaining clergy, is based on electing assemblies at local, national, and international levels. Local assemblies implement programs suited to their communities, while national and international bodies ensure localities are working toward a common purpose. The international assembly is called the Universal House of Justice, which was formed and assumed leadership of the religion in 1963. At its various levels, Bahá'í administration aspires toward sensitivity to local contexts but coordination in global endeavors, reflecting the principle of "unity in diversity."

In addition to laying out a blueprint for Bahá'í administration, Bahá'u'lláh promulgated a host of spiritual principles. Many resemble the precepts brought by earlier prophet-founders such as Moses, Christ, and Muhammad: that there is one God, that the soul has an afterlife, that our worldly actions affect that afterlife. Some are more distinctive, responding to the exigencies of modernity; I now gloss these core tenets, which form the framework of Bahá'í cosmopolitanism.

As previously noted, the core Bahá'í tenet of progressive revelation holds that each divine messenger brings teachings suited to humanity's stage of development at the time. The current stage of maturation necessitates global cooperation, and key to that is the elimination of all forms of prejudice. Universal access to education and the empowerment of women are especially

crucial to social advancement today. Work done in the spirit of service is worship, so contributing actively to society is highly valued and monasticism discouraged. Global cooperation should be facilitated by the development of an effective world federation and a universal auxiliary language. While religion and science have long been foes, they must be harmonized, with spiritual concepts guiding scientific advancement and scientific knowledge guarding against religion's devolution into superstition. Indeed, every human has the obligation to independently investigate the truth rather than unthinkingly accepting what she has been told by others (a teaching related to the absence of clergy).

A skeletal Bahá'í cosmopolitanism is already evident from this summary of teachings; other scholars have begun fleshing out the nexus of Bahá'í belief and social theory. For example, social scientist Ruth Williams characterizes the Bahá'í Faith as a "cosmopolitan religion" because its members identify as "citizens of the world"; conscious of their participation in a global religious community, their faith identity takes priority over ethnic and national memberships (221). In the next section, I draw from the research of political scientist Nalinie Mooten to describe in greater detail how this religion advances cosmopolitan thought.

Cosmopolitan Implications of Bahá'í Teachings

Bahá'í cosmopolitanism has its basis in scripture, according to Mooten; many passages in the religion's holy writings imply that the foundation of a lasting world peace must be laid within the hearts of individuals. For instance, the Báb wrote, "We have created you from one tree and have caused you to be as the leaves and fruit of the same tree." The tree metaphor representing human oneness reappears in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh: "Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with

friendliness and fellowship. . . . So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth." Bahá'u'lláh also counseled humanity to expand its perspective beyond local concerns to encompass the entire planet: "Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self." Indeed, one of the most renowned passages of Bahá'u'lláh advises, "It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens"—a precept supporting the "citizen of the world" identity. As Bahá'u'lláh rejected divisive nationalism, he also prohibited religious antipathy: "Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship."

Paired with the "ethics of oneness" established in Bahá'í scripture is a practical vision of global governance (Mooten 6)—that is, Bahá'ís see cosmopolitan consciousness as eventually having political effects. In the Bahá'í view of humanity's evolution, unity has rippled out from family to tribe to city-state to nation (22). Nation-based unity is showing strain, however, since realms such as the economy are already globalized. Bahá'u'lláh arrived in this tense era, which Bahá'ís consider humanity's turbulent adolescence. As nationalism staggers forward in spite of globalization, old structures are falling apart, ideally making way for new ones better suited to global unity (25). Indeed, Bahá'ís see worldwide unity as the *telos* of human history (23).

The form of global governance anticipated by Bahá'ís is an international federation, which, rather than abolishing nation-states, joins them together for the common good. While the idea of world government often evokes dystopian nightmares of totalitarian rule, the "Bahá'í model . . . is holistic and based on grassroots values, [and] calls for the principle of 'subsidiarity' and 'decentralisation' in international affairs" (Mooten 38). Such a model does not forbid "sane patriotism" (46), but it does limit the autonomy of individual nations, which should expect international intervention if they violate human rights (24). Bahá'ís see the League of Nations

and the United Nations as steps along the way to effective international governance and have participated in their efforts (21). It is rumored that Bahá'í principles influenced the creation of the League of Nations (Pearsall)—and it is fact that the Bahá'í international community has been represented in the United Nations since 1948 (BIC).

The doctrinal attention to global governance is one unique aspect of Bahá'í cosmopolitanism; Mooten points out some other noteworthy elements. For one, the Bahá'í Faith, as an Eastern religion, complements the Western perspectives that have dominated most cosmopolitan thought (6). For example, where secular cosmopolitanism à la Kant relies solely on human agency, Bahá'í teachings mesh human action with divine revelation (68). In this view, "without recognizing that oneness has a spiritual source, cosmopolites will struggle to transcend the myriad material distinctions between humans in developing their universal love" (Miron, "Laura Barney's Discipleship," 16). For another, the Bahá'í principle of unity in diversity supports "the 'sensitive turn' taken by cosmopolitanism, which stresses diversity, in the sense of abandoning a domineering and homogeneous universalism" (Mooten 65). By promoting collaboration rather than competition between local and global interests, Bahá'í teachings could reconcile postmodernism's wariness of homogeneity with cosmopolitanism's end goal of international unity (68).

Overall, Bahá'í teachings support the traditional concerns of cosmopolitanism—"the promotion of the common good, the need for more global and peaceful forms of communities, and [the rejection of] the view that human nature is inherently belligerent" (Mooten 68). They also make unique contributions: a vision of an international federation, a focus on unification as a spiritual, not just a political, process, and an emphasis on unity in diversity. The foregoing discussion has remained abstract; how do Bahá'ís actually implement these cosmopolitan tenets?

I offered one example before: the yoking of local and global endeavors in Bahá'í administration. Bahá'í history yields additional examples, especially in the intercultural relations fostered as the community spread beyond the Middle East.

Bahá'ís Practicing Cosmopolitan Tenets: East-West Connections

From the final years of the nineteenth century, when Middle Eastern Bahá'í missionaries arrived in the United States, Bahá'í communities in these two regions have had a special relationship (Miron, "A Persian Preacher's Westward Migration"). The nascent U.S. community eagerly looked to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who was imprisoned in Palestine until 1908, for direction; many new Bahá'ís made pilgrimages to learn from him, staying in his household and thus gaining exposure to Persian culture, and to visit the shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Some went farther east, visiting the Bahá'í holy places in Persia and serving in Bahá'í schools and clinics there. Persian Bahá'ís also supported the U.S. community—for instance, they helped fund the construction of the Bahá'í House of Worship for North America near Chicago, a building that itself blends Eastern and Western architecture.

It was an exciting time for this new faith community, which is why much of my previous research has focused on this era, especially on the inspiration U.S. Bahá'ís gained from this Middle Eastern religion, as evidenced by their writings and speeches. As I have argued elsewhere, while rhetoric scholars tend to focus on how Western thought has flowed *eastward* to affect the Middle East (e.g., Aristotle's influence on Islamic philosophy), the flow of ideas in the newly transoceanic Bahá'í community was distinctively *westward*. This section outlines the construction of this East-to-West channel, presenting three peripatetic Bahá'í rhetors: Laura Barney, Martha Root, and Bahiyyih Nakhjavani.

Laura Barney was among the earliest U.S. Bahá'ís, converting in 1900; her zeal drew her from her Parisian residence to Palestine (Miron, "Laura Barney's Discipleship"). Though she was a wealthy, well-educated American, her mission in the Middle East was to humbly learn from ʻAbdu'l-Bahá, happily joining his confinement in Akko. During her extended visits, she learned Persian so she could communicate with him and his family. Conversing with him at mealtimes, she posed questions on spiritual topics, many relating to Bahá'í views on Judeo-Christian doctrine. She collected his responses and in 1908 published them as *al-Núr al-abha fí mufáwadat ʻAbd al-Bahá* (Persian) and *Some Answered Questions* (her English translation). This book, which entered the canon of Bahá'í scripture, particularly helped Bahá'ís from Western Christendom connect the two religions. Several years later, when ʻAbdu'l-Bahá went on his journey to the West, Barney assisted with his European sojourn by hosting and translating some of his talks. She helped prepare a resulting volume, *Paris Talks: Addresses Given by ʻAbdu'l-Bahá in 1911*, and its later French edition.

In "Laura Barney's Discipleship to ʻAbdu'l-Bahá," I demonstrate how the teachings of ʻAbdu'l-Bahá presented in *Some Answered Questions* and *Paris Talks*—books with which Barney was, of course, intimately familiar—influenced her own rhetoric. In particular, I examine texts she authored during her period of close association with ʻAbdu'l-Bahá, which include speeches delivered in the United States and various creative writings (plays set in Persia, a memoir about travels to East Asia and the eruption of World War I, and a collection of poems and stories). The talks, which she delivered in 1909 in the United States, provide the most direct evidence of her uptake of ʻAbdu'l-Bahá's teachings. One talk shares the insights gained during her sojourns in Akko, praising ʻAbdu'l-Bahá's exemplification of Bahá'í tenets such as universal love and compassion; as she comments, Akko serves as a spiritual nexus "owing to the Example set by

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s life which radiates to all Bahá’í centers in all parts of the world” (qtd. in Miron 20). Another talk recounts a journey she undertook to Persia at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s request. In interacting with Persia’s sizeable Bahá’í community, she found them “more advanced” socially than Westerners due to their implementation of Bahá’í teachings. Debriefing with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá after her return to Palestine, she asked him when the United States would reach Persia’s spiritual status and when global peace would arrive; this would occur, he replied, when Westerners and Easterners unite, and “when love and unity is established in the hearts of the People” (qtd. in Miron 20). Barney’s query reveals her perception of Middle Eastern Bahá’ís as role models for their Western counterparts, an attitude likewise evident in her 1910 play about Táhirih. In its preface, Barney acclaims Táhirih as “an example of what the disciple of truth can accomplish despite hampering custom and violent persecution” (qtd. in Miron 23). In both her work compiling ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s guidance for a Western audience and in her own talks and writings, Barney sought to channel teachings that had arisen in Persia westward, deepening the spiritual relationship between the continents. Barney was thus an early exemplar of Bahá’í cosmopolitanism.

Another exemplar is Martha Root, who also joined the religion in its early years in the United States, converting in 1909 (Miron, “Martha Root’s Interwar Lectures”). Her contributions to Bahá’í cosmopolitanism unfolded after World War I. In 1919, she responded to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s call to Americans to spread the Bahá’í message, embarking on a two-decade journey through Europe, Australia, Asia, the Americas, and Africa. Having worked as a professional speaker and journalist, Root employed her rhetorical savvy to publish countless articles and deliver unnumbered talks about the Bahá’í vision of world peace. In my article on Root, I glean her

rhetoric of unity from twenty-five speeches, demonstrating how she theorized a cycle of "cosmic education" (a term appearing in a talk she delivered in 1938).

In short, Root gave audiences two options for getting involved in what she considered the universal obligation of promoting world peace (Figure 2-1). One option was to identify with all other humans by recognizing that, in a globalized world, individuals face the repercussions of events occurring far afield. Appealing to self-preservation, pointing to the dangers of world war, Root pushed her audiences to realize their personal investment in global welfare. This realization would engender a cosmic perspective. The other option was to get involved in direct peacemaking action; Root suggested a few possible methods, with learning Esperanto—an invented language she spoke fluently—prominent among them. She envisioned this language bringing learners into contact with the worldwide Esperantist community and thus enabling intercultural relationships. She also encouraged audiences to get involved in school curriculum "to see that universal peace is stressed; that great humanitarians and scientists are glorified rather than wars" (qtd. in Miron 147). Either option would naturally lead to the other one: universal identification would inspire action, and action would inspire universal identification, as summarized in Figure 2-1. By suggesting multiple paths to peacemaking, Root attempted to enroll all her listeners in this cosmic, cosmopolitan project.

Figure 2-1: Cycle of cosmic education.

"I travel and write and speak because I know there can be an education to peace," Root once observed (qtd. in Miron 136); her faith in the potential for peace stemmed from her Bahá'í convictions. Like Barney, Root was deeply inspired by her Middle Eastern coreligionists, drawing

spiritual sustenance from her visits to Shoghi Effendi in Palestine and the Bahá'ís in Iran. Nowhere is her admiration more evident than in her encomiastic biography of Táhirih (1938), in which she wrote, "Your spiritual, courageous individuality will forever inspire, ennoble and refine humanity, your songs of the spirit will be treasured in innumerable hearts" (qtd. in Miron 150). This line hints at Root's perception of spiritual kinship with Táhirih despite their disparate contexts; indeed, Root sought to bridge East and West by inserting Táhirih into the history of the women's movement alongside Western suffragists. Root's transnational, transhistorical sisterhood with Táhirih instantiates universal identification. As I argue in my article, through her biography of Táhirih, Root "acts upon the exhortations she made over two decades of lecturing, offering a lesson plan in the curriculum of cosmic education: here is a figure with spiritual qualities that, if imitated, would foster world peace. Identifying with her, thus transcending linguistic, cultural, and religious differences between reader and exemplar, could engender a universalistic orientation and stimulate action" (151).

The endeavors of Westerners like Barney and Root to diffuse cosmopolitan principles are equaled by their Eastern counterparts, such as Bahiyyih Nakhjavani (b. 1948), a Bahá'í writer who was born in Iran, grew up in Uganda, and has lived her adult life in the United Kingdom, the United States, and France. Like Barney and Root, Nakhjavani has taken inspiration from the life of Táhirih, authoring *The Woman Who Read Too Much* (2015), a work of historical fiction based on Táhirih's final years, which, in its representation of nineteenth-century Anglo-Persian relations, raises a number of questions about cosmopolitanism (Miron, "A Persian Preacher's Westward Migration"). Nakhjavani features Lady Sheil, wife of the British envoy to Iran, as a prominent character. In interacting with the shah's court, Sheil finds the Persians rude and backwards; the Persians find her awkward and foreign. These tensions encapsulate Persian

resentment about British interference, which burst into war in 1856. While Nakhjavani exposes cultural and political barriers to transnational cooperation, she also provides a kernel of hope by paralleling Sheil with a Persian princess: both women, dependent on their politicking male kin, separately try to prevent Táhirih's execution. Admiration for Táhirih crosses lines of identity, Nakhjavani shows—as she writes in the afterword, "Tahirih has become a universal figure. She is the first modern Iranian woman to belong to the world" (qtd. in Miron 1).

Nakhjavani has pursued such explorations of the promises and perils of transnational relations, evoking the Bahá'í principle of global unity, in other writings. In 2017, her fourth novel, *Us&Them*—about contemporary Iranian immigrants in the West—was published. Reflecting on her book in an essay titled "A Wandering Alien," she shares her perspective on immigration: "There is no 'us' and 'them'—we're aliens when we can't identify with others." The Bahá'í tenet of universal love for humanity permeates her essay. Regarding the polarization of immigration discourse, she argues that "immigration does not need to be either a threat or banishment. A diaspora community can also be enriching to all concerned. It can widen perspectives; it can help to overcome prejudice and transcend fear." For example, she contemplates how, in becoming minorities in the West, Iranian immigrants can gain awareness about their own (mis)treatment of minorities in their homeland. She also asserts that all humans are complex, requiring both stability and freedom. Her encouragement to find the commonalities beneath superficial differences, especially beneath the label of "alien," resonates with Bahá'í teachings on the spiritual oneness of humanity. As she observes, "We are all settlers and simultaneously nomads, bound to a loved land and breathing the air. Deep down in every one of us, there is an exile, a wanderer looking for that eternal home."

Nakhjavani is one of millions of Iranians living outside their homeland; for instance, my maternal grandfather moved from Iran to the United States in 1955 in pursuit of medical education. The Iranian diaspora swelled after 1979, when the Islamic Revolution installed a theocratic government that persecuted political dissidents and religious minorities—especially Bahá'ís—pushing many to seek more liberal environs. Today, Iranian immigrants comprise a sizeable portion of the U.S. Bahá'í community. In the next section, I present the perspectives of eight Iranian-American Bahá'ís to complement those of Barney, Root, and Nakhjavani. These three writers exemplify how prominent Bahá'í thinkers have interpreted and enacted the religion's cosmopolitan tenets—Barney's channeling of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's guidance to the West, Root's promulgation of cosmic education, and Nakhjavani's nuanced depictions of intercultural relationships. In addition to presenting these luminaries, I want to feature the voices of "everyday" Bahá'ís; doing so aligns with a recent shift in cosmopolitan theory toward vernacular practices, balancing the traditional focus on great intellectuals with attention to cosmopolitanism from below (Robbins). The next section extends the examples presented above, showing how contemporary believers take up religious principles to forge cosmopolitan dispositions, especially regarding immigration.

Perspectives of Iranian Bahá'í Refugees in the United States

Scholars have noted that refugees and other immigrants who move because of global inequities are in the vanguard of cosmopolitanism, for, failed by capitalism and nationalism, they have an urgent impetus to push against these systems (Pollock et al.). As of this writing, the UNHCR counts nearly seventy-one million people forcibly displaced from their homes worldwide, including more than twenty-five million who have fled across national borders.

Iranian religious refugees belong to this growing population of displaced people—but unlike many other refugees, they are fleeing not conflict but the status quo of their country, where the government and populace use sometimes subtle, sometimes violent tactics to push out those who do not adhere to the state-sponsored belief system. This persecution affects Bahá'ís and Christians—who comprise the largest faith minorities in Iran, each community numbering about 300,000 (U.S. Department of State)—as well as Jews, Zoroastrians, and Mandeans. Some seek resettlement through refugee programs designed for Iranian religious minorities; Canada spearheaded the development of such programs in the early 1980s, followed by some twenty-five other countries (Cameron). A U.S. program for Iranian religious minorities, established in 2004, is named after its sponsoring lawmakers, Frank Lautenberg and Arlen Specter.

To apply to the Lautenberg-Specter program, eligible Iranians take a westward path, sometimes with extended waits in Turkey, that eventually culminates in a processing period in Austria. As they wait in Vienna, usually for about half a year, a Jewish refugee organization, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), prepares them for emigration. As the HIAS website notes, since 2001, its Vienna office has served more than twenty-five thousand Iranian religious refugees. However, under the Trump Administration, an "unprecedented" number of applicants have been refused, leaving them in limbo (Parvini). For the Iranian refugees who *do* make it to the United States, they join a larger community of about half a million Iranian Americans. Forty percent of this population lives in California, most of them in "Tehrangeles" (Taxin)—the Los Angeles area, that is, which attracts newcomers because of its well-established community of Iranian expatriates and its Tehran-like weather (Etehad).

Because of California's importance as a destination for Iranian immigrants, including Bahá'í refugees, I chose it as the setting for my interviews with Iranian Bahá'ís. An Iranian friend

in Penn State's international law program, Sahar Noroozi, served as my co-researcher, recruiting eight participants from her social network. In May 2018, we both visited California, traveling from San Francisco to San Diego, and talked to these participants; they are profiled in Table 2-1.[6] In the subsequent sections, I introduce the cosmopolitan vision espoused by several of the participants. Next, I describe the participants' motives for leaving Iran and their experiences with integrating into the United States. Then, I analyze their responses to questions about their stance on immigration and the influence of Bahá'í teachings thereon. Finally, I consider takeaways from these interviews in terms of how religion affects dispositions toward immigration. Overall, this qualitative study illuminates the connections between religious cosmopolitanism and immigration advocacy, demonstrating how cosmopolitan spiritual precepts influence discourse on borders and migration.

Table 2-1: Interview Participant Profiles

Name (pseudonym)	Profession	Year immigrated	Region	Note
Zahra	Architect	2010	Bay Area	Married couple
Shayan	Computer scientist	2003		
Mehri	Schoolteacher	2000	Los Angeles Area	Married couple
Ehsan	Postal worker	2000		
Pegah	Accountant	2011	Los Angeles Area	
Farzaneh	Manager of therapy center	2011	San Diego Area	
Negin	Computer scientist	2011	San Diego Area	
Sepideh	College student	2017	San Diego Area	

[6] Research funds for this project (IRB STUDY00009524, approved on May 7, 2018) were arranged by Dr. Jack Selzer. I am thankful for his financial support, as well as for Sahar's coordination of the interviews.

Envisioning a More Cosmopolitan World

What does Bahá'í cosmopolitanism look like to the participants? Zahra and Shayan, a married couple, provide one answer to that question in their explanation of how the Bahá'í principle of global unity applies to immigration. Shayan stated that all Bahá'í concepts "align with this concept of welcoming refugees, welcoming diversity," recalling an admonition by Bahá'u'lláh that "if anyone comes to your country as a refugee, you should accept them." Zahra opined that, per the Bahá'í teaching of "the unity of mankind," people should be free to travel unimpeded by borders or stringent documentation requirements: "You, as a human being, shouldn't be judged and defined and identified based on your geographic identity." If this vision of open borders seems like an unattainable ideal, that is because we still rely on nationalism; she argued that the consequent isolationism is selfish and self-defeating, since internal issues in any country eventually affect the world. So, she concluded, it is time for effective world governance. Complementing Zahra's emphasis on the unification of humanity, Shayan explained that "unity in diversity" debars homogenization. While the Bahá'í Faith does promote universal ideals, he said, it also encourages "indigenous" approaches, a principle he sees instantiated in Bahá'í houses of worship, which share some design elements worldwide but also reflect the style of their locale.

As Shayan and Zahra's overview makes clear, Bahá'í cosmopolitan tenets are not merely enshrined in doctrine—they are held dear by adherents and are a source of inspiration to those who face discrimination. Indeed, all the participants had firsthand experience with discrimination, having left Iran because of religious persecution, which stymied their educational and career aspirations. In the interest of grounding their cosmopolitan visions in their lived experiences as refugees, I briefly explain the sociopolitical context driving my participants'

migration to the United States. This background demonstrates that religious cosmopolitanism emerges at the nexus of principle and practice, of spiritual beliefs and material struggles.

An Iranian Bahá'í Diaspora

Bahá'ís underwent violent persecution in the aftermath of the 1979 Revolution: over two hundred were executed or disappeared, students were expelled, cemeteries and holy places were destroyed, property was confiscated, and "virtually all citizenship rights were stripped" away, including the right to leave the country, according to political scientist Geoffrey Cameron. By the 1990s, "while Baha'is were still denied most basic rights, the arbitrary imprisonment and violent persecution had mostly stopped" (Cameron). My participants all left Iran in this period, in which the government is using subtler forms of discrimination—in particular, the denial of higher education—to marginalize Bahá'ís. The Iranian college admissions process requires applicants to disclose their religion, and applications marked "Bahá'í" are rejected. In response, in 1987, the Bahá'ís established their own underground university system, the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE). Most of my participants had studied with BIHE; as interviewees Zahra and Shayan opined, it represents a resilient response to oppression. It also exemplifies a cosmopolitan approach to higher education, as it relies on volunteer instructors around the world. Nevertheless, due to its marginality (it faces periodic attacks by the government), it cannot offer students resources commensurate to a traditional university's. Moreover, even with a degree from BIHE, Bahá'ís face limited employment prospects due to discrimination.

These are the factors that push some Iranian Bahá'ís to immigrate today—they want to earn advanced degrees and put those degrees to use in their careers. Departure is not a decision taken lightly; as Mehri commented, if her country were a good place, she would rather stay there

with her relatives. Sepideh recalled taking five years to decide whether to immigrate. But the desire for an unconstrained education and career can tip the scale. For example, Farzaneh stated that she left because she wanted to earn a graduate degree in her field, which was unavailable through BIHE at that time. After immigrating, she earned a Master's in psychology and now manages a family therapy center. Pegah confronted not only educational but employment discrimination in Iran; working at a private company, she heard rumors that her employer was planning to fire her because of her religion, so she resigned before he could do so. While the refugees I spoke with were achieving their educational and professional goals in the United States, they often had to play catch-up upon arriving. Sepideh, for instance, was redoing her undergraduate education. Pegah expressed feeling "ten years behind my age": she was thirty when she arrived but felt like she reverted to twenty, perhaps because she was back in school, working on a Master's, rather than established in a career and family like some of her peers. This observation suggests the complexity of integrating into the United States as a refugee.

Integrating as New Americans: "People's Minds Are Changing"

While some participants commented on the challenges of immigrating, many concurred that the United States had been welcoming to them, suggesting that the foundations of cosmopolitanism already exist here. Farzaneh, for example, found the experience of immigration harder than she had expected; yet, after the "Muslim ban"[7] debarred entrants from Iran, she found that "my classmates, a couple of them were asking a question about me, if I have family over there—but those were people who never talked to me about my issues, they never were

[7] This executive order, initially passed in January 2017, sought to ban entries from seven majority-Muslim countries; though its constitutionality was challenged, a version of it is still in force as of this writing.

curious about that—but after that . . . they wanted to tell me that they care . . . I think people's minds are changing." The restrictive policy sparked a new compassion for immigrants in some Americans, she speculated. Zahra also found native-born Americans to be "sympathetic" about the ban; on its first day, not only her coworkers, but her CEO, asked her how she was faring. Before that, she had also encountered Americans interested in her experience: "When I was in Berkeley, they always wanted to know more about my story, they published it, they interviewed me over and over." Pegah remarked that she had never had a bad experience as an immigrant—and the country's religious liberty enabled her to finally be "a free Bahá'í." Comparing her time spent in Austria to that in the United States, she found adjusting to Los Angeles much easier because of its diversity; the presence of fellow Iranians assuaged her homesickness. Of course, California might be a uniquely cosmopolitan state in terms of its hospitality toward immigrants, as Negin noted; nearly one-third of its residents are foreign-born (Johnson and Sanchez). Yet, even if Iranian Bahá'ís settle in an area with few immigrants, if there are some coreligionists present, they can expect at least one welcoming community.

Nearly all the participants affirmed that their local Bahá'í communities had aided with their social integration; this eagerness to welcome newcomers can be linked to the emphasis the religion places on the paradigmatically cosmopolitan concept of world citizenship. Even Sepideh, who does not actively practice the religion or associate with the community, remarked that Bahá'í concepts, especially that of world citizenship, make it easier to live anywhere. In the words of Shayan, Bahá'ís belong to "a worldwide community, and you're connected anywhere you go." His wife Zahra fondly recalled her time participating in San Diego's Bahá'í community; she learned most of her English from friends she made there. Other participants also recalled being welcomed by their new Bahá'í communities. Farzaneh, for example, found that attending

community events helped her through her initial homesickness. Negin, lacking friends or family in the area she settled, also found the Bahá'í community an important source of support. Pegah reflected that "the love we get from the Bahá'í community" offsets "the challenges of immigration" by fostering "belonging": "wherever I go, I feel I have family and friends." After her own immigration, she served on a taskforce for welcoming Iranian Bahá'ís to Los Angeles, encouraging them to participate in the community's activities. Larger communities like Pegah's can sustain formal initiatives for Bahá'í immigrants, but often integration happens through casual friendships. For instance, when Mehri and Ehsan arrived, a Bahá'í woman offered them low-cost housing in her home, which they accepted; by living with this local Bahá'í, Ehsan learned English. Thus, when it comes to welcoming immigrants, Bahá'í communities facilitate institutional and personal cosmopolitan practices.

It was not only camaraderie with local Bahá'ís that helped the new immigrants adjust but their own deeply held Bahá'í principles, such as peacemaking, neighborliness, and respect—all of which, by promoting intergroup unity, relate to cosmopolitan ethics. Shayan highlighted the religion's valuation of good citizenship, recounting a story of nineteenth-century Iranian Bahá'í immigrants to Ashgabat who were persecuted by the locals but, rather than retaliating, interceded with the government to ask forgiveness for their attackers. Such a conciliatory disposition might aid in integration even in hostile contexts. Mehri reflected that her family's spiritual disposition helps them befriend the native-born parents who bring their children for playdates; these parents tell her they feel uniquely safe leaving their kids in her household. She believes this feeling of comfort comes from "the Bahá'í spirit in the house." In addition, Ehsan stated that his religious beliefs, especially in the equality of women and men, helped him adjust. He reports to a female supervisor, which inverts the gender dynamic prevalent in Iran. Yet, the

Bahá'í tenet of gender equality made this hierarchy easier to accept. Both the social support offered by the local Bahá'í community and inner reliance on Bahá'í principles aided the interviewees in their integration into the United States. Next, to explore commonplaces of religion that might serve as contributions to cosmopolitanism and correctives to nativism, I turn from participants' personal experiences as immigrants to their reflections on immigration.

Transnational Mobility's Perils and Promises

Though the interviewees were quick to laud the civil rights they had gained by immigrating to the United States, they also pointed out the downsides of immigration. Leaving home behind is an ambivalent undertaking, even when fleeing persecution. In this section, I first present their perspectives on the problems with immigration, then on its benefits; taken together, they offer a balanced perspective on immigration as often driven by social injustice yet potentially enriching for immigrants and receiving countries alike. Such a perspective contributes to a mature cosmopolitan vision that understands transnational mobility as ambivalent rather than as purely liberating.

Perils: Immigration as a Consequence of Injustice

For immigrants who leave home because of oppression or poverty, injustice—whether discrimination at home or the unequal distribution of wealth globally—drives their departure. Zahra noted her hope that, someday, there will be no refugees. Ehsan similarly advocated an end to illegal immigration, which he likened to slavery, with migrants subject to low pay and border violence. He remarked that the United States should help the sending countries to make emigration unnecessary. Likewise, regarding the global refugee crisis, he viewed it as a result of

governments' impunity in mistreating their residents. Evoking the Bahá'í vision of a global federation (an idea resembling Kantian cosmopolitanism), he envisioned proactive interventions into persecution and conflict that would halt the conditions that produce refugees.

Mass exoduses can lead to suffering not only for immigrants but also for their host countries, in Ehsan's opinion. Uniquely among the participants, Ehsan valorized what he termed the "Anglo-Saxon" political culture of the United States. While acknowledging that immigrants enhance this cultural bedrock, he feared that sudden influxes may erode it. More extreme than Ehsan's view were the cases Negin had witnessed of a few Iranian Bahá'í immigrants touting their support for immigration restrictions, even the Muslim ban. She speculated that maybe these immigrants wanted to display their integration into the United States by siding with nationalist policies. Such resistance to multiculturalism is unusual among Bahá'ís—Ehsan's views were the only conservative ones on immigration policy among the interviewees, and Negin registered her shock that Bahá'ís, especially immigrants, would support restrictions. These outlier views in favor of restrictionism demonstrate that religious cosmopolitanism is never uniform; its expression varies according to the way individuals apply spiritual precepts to material realities.

Promises: Immigration as the Engine of the United States

Most of the interviewees took a cosmopolitan perspective on immigration, celebrating the contributions of immigrants to the United States, which they characterized as a nation built by immigrants (Zahra, Negin), powered by their talents and diversity (Pegah), and made more progressive by their activism for social change (Farzaneh). They noted their own appreciation for their fellow immigrants—an appreciation that, as Mehri noted, is common among Bahá'ís, who tend to enjoy learning from people of other ethnicities (an expression of religious

cosmopolitanism). Mehri lauded the diversity of her fellow schoolteachers, recounting how she benefits from the different points of view brought by a teacher of Latina descent or one of European heritage. Her goal is to compile a "multi-culture," taking the best of each culture she encounters—an opportunity she sees as unique to the United States, where one can freely associate with people of sundry nationalities, whereas in Iran, immigrants are more segregated, limited to menial jobs. Mehri concluded that pursuing diversity is inherent to the Bahá'í principle of "race unity," the view that humanity is a single family. This Bahá'í ideal clashes with the antipathy toward cultural and racial Others that was dominating the U.S. political stage at the time of the interviews (May 2018), a milieu that the participants denounced.

Recognizing and Responding to Nativism: Personal Practices of Religious Cosmopolitanism

The interviewees, many of whom had benefited from the formerly effective Lautenberg-Specter program for Iranian religious refugees, readily acknowledged the negative consequences of the more restrictive policies under the Trump Administration. The Muslim ban was of particular concern, as it affected their fellow Iranians' ability to enter the United States. Besides critiquing these reversals in immigration policy and the underlying upsurge of xenophobia, they also offered some thoughts on how to constructively respond. This section thus signals the participants' awareness of prejudice and their cosmopolitan vision for combating it.

Critiquing Prejudice Against Immigrants

Several of the interviewees remarked on the difficulties created by the travel ban, which, though dubbed a *Muslim* ban, also hurt members of minority religions in the targeted countries who had been trying to immigrate to the United States. Rather than simply wanting to travel, as

Zahra pointed out, refugees are leaving involuntarily—a point often lost in nativist portrayals of asylum-seekers as freeloaders. Sepideh, who had spent time in Turkey during her immigration process, expressed concern for the Bahá'ís waiting there for visas, some of whom had already been in limbo for years. Along these lines, Shayan had heard that some refugees processed through HIAS in Vienna were being sent back to Iran. Negin connected the travel ban and the trouble it was causing refugees to a larger deterioration of Americans' "welcoming" attitudes toward immigrants. She, on the other hand, believes in a patently cosmopolitan "world without any border," so she feels hurt when she hears Americans claiming that this country needs to care for its own instead of letting others in. Similarly, Mehri held the Trump Administration responsible for a disunifying, anti-immigrant atmosphere, which she associated with the valorization of European heritage. She critiqued this white nativism as fallacious, since only indigenous people can claim to be truly "native." Moreover, every culture, including Euro-American ones, contains a mixture of negative and positive qualities, she contended—and immigration, rather than ruining the country, has generated its wealth. Given these participants' strong anti-xenophobia stances, what steps could they take to address the upsurge of prejudice?

Productive Responses to Nativism

Farzaneh offered one strategy: her unremitting hope for social change, which she combined with a strong identification with other immigrants in her cosmopolitan vision of advocacy. She expressed an aspiration "to be a voice of new immigrants and refugees," impelled by her belief that immigrants can best help each other due to their shared experiences. But non-immigrants also have a role to play, and she wanted to help them become more hospitable and vocal about immigrants' rights. She recognized substantial obstacles to this mission, especially

the nativism unleashed by the 2016 election—an event that angered her. Nevertheless, she tapped into a wellspring of hope—"I believe that it's going to change"—not for only policy change but also for an immigrant rights movement, which she envisions as a successor to the Civil Rights Movement. Her optimism about reform aligns with the Bahá'í vision of a brighter spiritual future for the United States, which she linked to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talks in the country a century ago, many of which underscored the necessity of eradicating racism (one such talk is excerpted earlier in this chapter). Farzaneh saw the amity between black and white Bahá'ís indicating the potential for such social transformation. Drawing faith that the United States could overcome racism and xenophobia from the Bahá'í teachings and community, she imagined her commitment to immigrants as eventually becoming mainstream. This hope, treasured by Farzaneh despite current setbacks, reflects the unremitting faith in divinely ordained social change that characterizes religious cosmopolitanism.

In terms of specific advocacy methods, Sepideh and Mehri both offered examples of workplace activism. In addition to being a university student herself, Sepideh teaches Farsi in the San Diego area; she said she incorporates the Bahá'í vision of world peace into her lessons. Perhaps this theme could inspire students to think globally, thus practicing cosmopolitanism. Mehri, also a teacher, likewise stated that Bahá'í principles inspire her at work, as exemplified by a pro-immigrant speech she delivered at a school assembly. With the Trump Administration's threats of mass deportations, anxieties among students with immigrant parents had been running high, so administrators asked some instructors to give speeches affirming the value of immigration following a standard outline: name, origin, and struggles and hopes as an immigrant. Mehri, pondering Bahá'í principles, developed this speech:

> My first name is "Human", and my last name is "Being." Put it together: I'm a Human Being . . . You are asking me where I am coming from . . . As an immigrant, when I stepped in here, they gave me a paper and they put alien number for me. But I'm not coming from another planet. Why do they call the immigrant "alien"? I'm coming from Planet Earth! . . . I have Russian in my background, Turkish in my background, I'm from Persia. Turkish, Russian, Persian: I'm coming from Planet Earth! . . . You are talking about struggles . . . Don't we go through the same struggles? We all have fear of failing, we all have—imagine all those struggles that everybody goes through. It just doubles for an immigrant. We have insecurity of being an immigrant, not knowing stuff, and fear of failing. And what is my hope? . . . I hope one day we all understand that we are all human beings, we all come from Planet Earth, we all have the same fears and failures, and we all work together to make this planet a better place to live.

Her speech stood out for its creative response to the prompt, and students and staff praised it. Mehri saw it as illustrating how Bahá'ís can apply the tenet of the oneness of humanity (a distinctly cosmopolitan concept) to immigration discourse. She also viewed her own behavior as potentially persuading others of the value of immigration; one coworker told Mehri that she serves as an example of how immigrants contribute to society. So, besides speaking up, another way to promote the principle of unity is to engage with the local community and thus make observers rethink their stereotypes and maybe even take the Bahá'í view that, as Mehri put it, "Earth is just one country." Mehri's border-effacing philosophy, born in the crucible of Bahá'í teachings and her own transnationality, suggests the potency of both religion and migration to (re)construct cosmopolitanism.

Refugees: The Vanguard of Cosmopolitanism?

For Bahá'í refugees, their religion, which marks them for persecution in their homeland, can serve as a springboard into their adopted countries. Ruth Williams studied the experiences of seven Bahá'í refugees who immigrated to Australia from Iran after the Revolution, in the 1980s, in an effort to understand how their faith affected their integration; due to the overlaps between her study and mine, it is worth reviewing her findings. In interviews, the refugees indicated that a number of cosmopolitan Bahá'í principles and practices helped them adjust. For example, Bahá'í principles urge everyone to get involved in society through education and work. Since work done in the spirit of service is seen as worship, gaining employment and volunteering are important; advancing one's education is also valued. Such involvement provides a pathway toward integration. Marriage between people of differing backgrounds is also celebrated in the Bahá'í Faith, which might encourage immigrants to forge familial relationships outside their ethnic community. Indeed, Bahá'í institutions ask Iranian refugees to avoid congregating in enclaves. Overall, Williams concludes that the religion helps immigrating believers become active members of their adopted societies by reason of its cosmopolitan principles and practices.

Regarding my participants' accounts of their integration experiences, my findings align with Williams's. Both her interviewees and mine gained support from their Bahá'í communities, which served as a home away from home. Both groups also tapped into Bahá'í teachings as they worked to integrate into the new society. The commonalities between the two studies, one in Australia with immigrants who arrived in the 1980s, the other in the United States with immigrants who mostly arrived in the 2010s, suggest the consistency of Bahá'í tenets throughout the global community, as well as their applicability to differing eras and locales. Indeed, despite

having had struggles along the way, both groups of participants appeared quite well integrated into their new countries.

This integration is no mirage. As Geoffrey Cameron has documented, in the 1980s, the unusual adaptability of Iranian Bahá'í refugees was noticed by the Canadian government, which noted that "the employment record of Baha'i refugees is very impressive. More than 90% find jobs within the first year." Quotas for Iranian Bahá'ís were consequently raised. Evidently, the principles of the Bahá'í Faith, especially its emphasis on the oneness of humanity—on cosmopolitanism—encourage immigrants to make inroads into their new culture, as Cameron's research on Canada, Williams's on Australia, and mine on the United States indicate. Where my study diverges from Williams's is in eliciting participants' views on immigration—as global phenomenon, as policy, as discourse—in addition to their personal experiences. Adding this dimension reveals not only how religion can help newcomers adapt but also how they envision adapting their new society.

The eight Bahá'í refugees I interviewed advocate for a cosmopolitan approach to immigration. They critique the causes of forced migration and suggest that international cooperation is required to redress them. Despite the unjust circumstances driving much global migration, including their own, they see immigrants as improving their new countries—they credit immigration with the success of the United States. Many Americans apparently do not share this view, given the efficacy of xenophobic arguments in the 2016 election; the interviewees decry the recent surge in nativism. Yet, they hold out hope that this nativism will be conquered by a new social movement for immigrants' rights, and they find ways in daily life to channel the Bahá'í principle of global unity toward this end.

Immigrants, who must acutely observe national borders as they cross or are obstructed by them, have a central role to play in advancing cosmopolitan ideas. Refugees in particular are well-positioned to assess the hospitality of host countries, which, because of conditions in their homelands, they must rely on. My participants had left Iran under duress, blocked there from advancing their educations and careers, and had undergone periods of waiting in countries like Turkey and Austria before receiving approval to immigrate. These experiences of involuntary transnational movement no doubt sharpened their attention to the treatment of immigrants. In combination with the (painful) insights that come from living in between national identities, my participants also had their religion, which guides them to prioritize global unity. Together, these elements informed the philosophies they shared with me, revolving around visions of a more just world, more open national borders, a more hospitable United States—philosophies that find expression in their daily lives, as typified by Mehri's speech at her school's assembly. Their progressive views indicate that cosmopolitanism is not, as Martha Nussbaum fears, too elitist and colorless to influence humanity beyond the ivory tower. Indeed, the everyday tenets of immigrants and the religious, such as Iranian Bahá'í refugees, promise to unfold a more vibrant and persuasive cosmopolitanism. Perhaps religion, especially when informed by its transnational adherents, offers the marriage of cosmopolitan ideals to emotional—or better, *spiritual*—convictions that Nussbaum has found lacking in the realm of political philosophy.

MINING RELIGIOUS RHETORIC FOR ALTERNATIVES TO NATIVISM

Let us travel from Haifa, the city with which I began this chapter, six thousand miles west to Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Haifa is where I met my husband, Sergey, who is from Moldova. Williamsport is where he naturalized as a U.S. citizen. At the federal courthouse there, in May

2019, several dozen immigrants from an array of countries, together with their family members, gathered for the naturalization ceremony. As part of this ceremony, the presiding judge gave a speech on American exceptionalism, which, as he explained, means that the United States is distinguished from other nations by a special mission. He related how this mission, in the form of Manifest Destiny, drove the nation's westward expansion in the nineteenth century, and how it has made the United States a protagonist in international politics, as it seeks to spread democracy around the world. What the judge did not mention were the violent consequences of American exceptionalism for the indigenous people exterminated and displaced in the name of Manifest Destiny, for the Africans brought as slaves to power the country's expansion, and for the denizens of countries ranging from Chile to Vietnam that have been subject to U.S. intervention or invasion. In sum, the talk made Sergey and me squirm.

In the judge's talk were entwined immigration, nationalism, and—implicitly—religion. The audience was immigrants, who were being welcomed into the citizenry of an "exceptional" nation. They were also being educated about the proper disposition toward the United States: one of awe at the singular accomplishments of this country. The exceptionalism promoted by the judge is intensely nationalistic, since it sets this nation apart from, and above, the rest of the world. What is the rationale for the country's superiority? That rationale is exposed by the judge's reference to Manifest Destiny, which is where religion quietly enters his argument.

Manifest Destiny stems from dominion theology, a strain of U.S. Christian thinking that envisions church and state joining forces to make the United States into the Kingdom of God (Crowley). The term "manifest destiny" was coined in 1845 by John O'Sullivan, who wrote of "our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions" (qtd. in Wilsey 3). Thus, Manifest Destiny,

along with its corollaries of expansionism and exceptionalism, rests on the faith that divine providence propels the enlargement and power of the United States. Supporters of this belief cite a Bible passage as justification: "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28). By a leap of logic, dominion theology links God's mandate to the first humans to the political destiny of the United States. Given the religious background of Manifest Destiny, the judge's argument—while not mentioning religion—rests on the assumption that God has mandated the United States to lead the world.

Indeed, in that courtroom, Sergey and I witnessed the pedagogy of nationalism, which rests on faith that this land is special. Whether the judge's lesson was persuasive to the new citizens arrayed before him in pew-like benches, I cannot say, but his choice of topic indicates the enduring ascendancy of exceptionalism with its almost religious reverence for the United States. Though in this case applied to the conversion of immigrants into citizens, ironically, this ideology undergirds nativism: if the nation is special, those with roots therein are also special, and all outsiders are inferior.

The pedagogy of nationalism and the nativism it ultimately justifies rely on deep-seated faith in religious concepts such as destiny, providence, and dominion. How can the pedagogy of cosmopolitanism compete? In this chapter, I have suggested that cosmopolitanism, too, can draw strength from faith. Instead of lessons on how to distinguish between *us* and *them*, cosmopolitanism teaches us to look beyond national borders and ethnic prejudices. In my opinion, the fate of the world—not just of immigrants—rests on whether cosmopolitanism can gain a foothold against nationalism, as urgent threats such as climate change can only be

addressed with international cooperation. I also believe that the transformation of international governance hinges on the diffusion of a cosmopolitan disposition from the grassroots into the upper echelons of power: instead of judges teaching immigrants how to love their adopted country, immigrants should teach judges how to love the world as a whole. The cosmopolitan practices of the Iranian Bahá'í refugees I interviewed offer glimmers of hope for such a transformation, as they endeavor to live out Bahá'u'lláh's teaching that the "earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens." Thus, I contend that cosmopolitan rhetoric matters greatly, and it needs to gather persuasive power from diverse resources beyond its traditional Kantian lineage, which thus far has failed to stir hearts outside the academy.

Every world religion can provide some resources to this project. As I showed, the four largest religions—Hinduism, Judeo-Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam—all offer cosmopolitan principles and, in some cases, sacred stories of migration that call nativism's morality into question. The Bahá'í Faith, founded in the era of nationalism, provides an even more elaborated perspective on cosmopolitanism; though its ideas have yet to attain mainstream uptake, they have gained a fervent following worldwide, inspiring followers ranging from globetrotting writers (e.g., Barney, Root, and Nakhjavani) to Iranian immigrants to forge transnational and intercultural connections. Religious rhetoric has great capacity to move people to action. As the case of the Bahá'í Faith shows, that action can be directed toward cosmopolitan ends—including protecting immigrants. In the next chapter, I continue investigating the influence of Bahá'í principles, examining the rhetoric of an organization that has helped over twenty-five thousand female immigrants gain legal residency in the United States.

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Chapter 3 Asylum Policy Advocacy—Beyond Partisan Politics? Tahirih Justice Center

"You can kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women." These are reputed to be among the last words spoken by the Persian poet and theologian Táhirih (pronounced "Ta-hooray"; c. 1817–1852) before her executioner strangled her. Táhirih refused to submit to traditions that upheld the power of men, especially of clergymen, over women. After embracing the message of the Báb, who announced a spiritual revolution, she strategically violated her society's norms—for instance, she celebrated the Báb's birthday instead of observing a Shia day of mourning, she defied the custom of veiling by baring her face to men, and she rejected the king's offer to join his harem if she recanted her views. By spurning patriarchal conventions, choosing to travel and orate, Táhirih spread the message soon to be taken up by Bahá'u'lláh but paid the ultimate price.

Táhirih stands as an emblematic figure of Bahá'í cosmopolitanism, globally renowned in this faith community. In keeping with her message of spiritual transformation and women's advancement, she asserted unusual physical mobility in male spaces across Persia and Iraq, migrating from city to city. Her mobility has continued posthumously as her story has been taken up by Bahá'í artists around the world, adapted in plays, novels, poems, and songs.[8]

In addition to inspiring these artistic tributes, Táhirih also has lent her name to a U.S. non-governmental organization devoted to defending immigrant survivors of gender-based violence: the Tahirih Justice Center (hereafter "the Center"), headquartered near Washington,

[8] For more information on the life and rhetorical afterlives of Táhirih, please refer to my manuscript titled "A Persian Preacher's Westward Migration: Táhirih's Transnational Rhetoric, 1817–2015."

D.C. Although the Center is young, founded in 1997, it is arguably the largest and most well-known Bahá'í-inspired NGO in the United States. It serves as a manifestation of the Bahá'í cosmopolitanism I discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, it is one of the few immigration NGOs devoted to a historically neglected population, female immigrants.

Táhirih, according to Layli Miller-Muro (b. 1972), attorney and founder of the Center, inspires her work on behalf of women seeking asylum from gender-based violence because she "organized women to tell them that a new spiritual dawn had come" ("Layli Miller-Muro Interviewed"). Since Táhirih represents "the equality of women and men," her name was chosen "to honor her memory and her legacy." As a woman renowned for championing gender equality, Táhirih is a fitting symbol for this Bahá'í-inspired organization's efforts to combat misogynistic persecution. Moreover, "[l]ike Tahirih, our clients have decided for themselves to refuse the violence and oppression imposed upon them. By the time they arrive at our doors, in the legacy of our namesake, they are already heroes" ("Who Was Tahirih?"). The Center depicts its clients as following in Táhirih's footsteps by fighting against patriarchal subjugation.

With its name, the Center inscribes itself into a cosmopolitan lineage with Táhirih as foremother. How else does it draw upon religious resources in its pro-immigration rhetoric? To address that question, I first provide background on asylum law and rhetoric, as well as on the Center. Then I move into an analysis of this chapter's case study: the Center's responses to two major asylum setbacks that coalesced in June 2018 as the U.S. federal government pursued its immigration-reduction agenda by (1) escalating the separation of asylum-seeking families and (2) ruling against domestic violence as a basis for asylum. From this case study, I consider how

the Center draws from Bahá'í tenets in its policy advocacy and how it works with the dominant *topoi* of immigration: the culture, economy, and security triad.[9]

I find that several rhetorical resources drawn from Bahá'í teachings, revolving around appeals to morality, shape the Center's policy advocacy. Yet, the Center also deploys the dominant *topoi* in its arguments. These *topoi*, however, are redefined and subordinated to cosmopolitan morality: that is, the Center prioritizes humanistic values like compassion (regardless of group affiliation) over nationalistic ones like border security. To reframe immigration discourse while reaching mainstream audiences, the Center acknowledges the dominant *topoi* while shifting attention toward an alternative set of values.

THE RHETORIC OF ASYLUM: WHY INVOLVE RELIGION?

Refugees, who may go on to become asylum-seekers, are customarily distinguished from economic migrants because they are fleeing persecution rather than poverty (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al.). International asylum policy is a test of the United Nations' cosmopolitan aspiration of encouraging cooperation around basic principles. In its landmark Refugee Protocol, which encompasses legislation passed in 1951 and updated in 1967, the United Nations defines refugees as having "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of [1] race, [2] religion, [3] nationality, [4] membership of a particular social group or [5] political opinion" (Article I.A.2). The United States is among the 147 countries that have ratified this legislation.

[9] To recap chapter one's discussion of the immigration *topoi*, these three commonplaces are nativist assumptions that underlie nearly all U.S. civic discourse on immigration, whether for or against it. The culture *topos* holds that immigrants are inferior (sickly, criminal, etc.) to "natives"; the economy *topos*, that immigrants are economic units (their only value is the wealth they generate); and the security *topos*, that immigration control equates with national sovereignty.

The United Nations' definition of a refugee does not mention persecution on the basis of gender or sexuality, leaving female and LGBTQ refugees fleeing abuse, especially sexual violence, outside of its purview, as Sara McKinnon has shown. Her research has been pathbreaking in rhetorical studies for its attention to asylum law and public discourse on refugees; previously, there were only occasional studies of the topic (Aune; Bostdorff). By analyzing legal discourse on asylum, primarily in the 1990s and 2000s, as well as associated media coverage, she limns a rhetorical history of asylum law. She points out that, since the 1980s, asylum-granting states including the United States have moved towards acknowledging gender-based violence, but as no pertinent international policy exists, the United States judges gendered asylum claims case by case and by precedent. Based on her analysis of the U.S. government's discourse on gender-based asylum, McKinnon determines that it considers women an add-on sixth category to the U.N. definition of refugees. She evaluates how the state (courts and various agencies) constrains seekers of "gendered asylum" to frame their pleas in ways that support U.S. interests, especially its self-image as a savior of victims suffering under enemy (i.e., socialist) regimes.

In this chapter, on the other hand, I de-center the state by focusing on how an independent organization crafts its rhetoric. Critiquing governmental rhetoric certainly has value, but when such critique is not complemented with an exploration of solutions, it can degenerate into pessimistic finger-pointing and induce fatalistic resignation. To pursue my interest in how human agency operates even *within* unjust state systems and pervasive ideologies like nativism, I assess the policy advocacy the Center produces, which yields insights into this dissertation's critical question (*What resources can religious rhetoric provide to pro-immigrant arguments in the contemporary United States?*). By spotlighting religion in asylum rhetoric, I fill a gap in the scholarship. McKinnon treats religion incidentally as it impacts some asylum-seekers,

such as Iranian women who refuse the state-mandated veil, but not as a focal theme. The closest I have seen rhetorical scholarship come to the religion-asylum nexus is James A. Aune's "Can the Alien Speak? The McCarran–Walter Act and the First Amendment," which briefly touches on religious advocacy for refugees in the 1950s. Aune notes that Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant religious organizations involved in resettling refugees prominently opposed the restrictionist Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (160). Aune's reference hints at the role religious institutions have long played in sponsoring refugees and promoting pro-refugee discourse—a role that merits further consideration as it continues today.

Although one of the longstanding Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant refugee agencies could certainly comprise a case study, I am instead focusing on a relative newcomer to asylum advocacy: the Tahirih Justice Center, which takes inspiration from the Bahá'í Faith. Investigating the Center enables me to delve further into the rhetoric of this understudied religion and thus to extend chapter two's discussion of Bahá'í cosmopolitanism. Moreover, the Center merits attention because it prioritizes *female* immigrants, who have traditionally gotten short shrift in immigration scholarship in every field. As Rebecca Lorimer Leonard notes in *Writing on the Move*, scholars are now turning toward the "feminization of migration" as an overdue recognition that not all migrants are men, as well as a reflection of a real shift in how many women migrate—not just to follow husbands but to work (22). The Center draws attention to women who immigrate or seek legal status to establish lives free of gender-based violence. Thus, the Center's rhetoric intersects with both religion and gender, a pairing extended in chapter five's study of Muslim immigrant women's rhetoric, allowing me to shed light on gender as a crucial dimension of immigration.

TAHIRIH JUSTICE CENTER: A RELIGION-INSPIRED NONPROFIT SEEKING TO RESHAPE POLICY

Founded in 1997, the Tahirih Justice Center grew out of attorney Layli Miller-Muro's experience starting two years earlier in a widely publicized and precedent-setting asylum case, *Matter of Kassinga* [*sic*]. At age seventeen, Fauziya Kassindja fled a forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM) in Togo. She sought refuge in the United States, only to be jailed for one and a half years in conditions including solitary confinement and maximum-security cells shared with felons. The publicity around Kassindja's case, which she won in 1996, led many immigrant women in similar situations to seek Miller-Muro's help. According to the Center, immigrant women are twice as likely to experience violence as the general population is ("Domestic Violence"). Like all women, they are vulnerable to partner violence, but they face especially steep barriers to getting help, including the threat of deportation if they lack legal status. Miller-Muro could not find many existing resources to help these survivors ("Our History"), so she used the proceeds from a book co-authored with Kassindja, *Do They Hear You When You Cry*, to create the Center ("Q&A"). Her goal was to help immigrant survivors of gender-based violence already living in the United States—"courageous immigrant women and girls who have rejected violence" ("Who We Serve")—gain legal residency and material resources for a safe life, as well as to reshape the systems that victimize them in the first place.

The "Bahá'í-Inspired" Tenets of the Center

The Tahirih Justice Center is the lone Bahá'í-inspired immigration NGO in the United States, to the best of my knowledge. Therefore, one of its distinctive traits is its religious principles. While the Center is not formally affiliated with Bahá'í institutions, its "Bahá'í-

inspired" mission means it tries to enact the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. This enactment includes relatively minor choices, such as adhering to the religion's teetotalism by not financing alcohol at fundraising galas, and more overarching applications of moral tenets throughout its activities. On a webpage titled "Our Values," the Center explains that Bahá'í teachings guide its activities in ways including celebrating unity in diversity, seeing humanity as one, behaving with compassion and respect, practicing consultation, empowering women, and nonpartisanship. In this section, I focus on three of these values—the concern for human rights, emphasis on empowering women, and nonpartisanship—as these tenets have an immediate bearing on the Center's public rhetoric.

The Center's concern with human rights, especially the rights of immigrants, aligns with the Bahá'í cosmopolitanism discussed in chapter two. Indeed, Bahá'í cosmopolitanism evidently drew the Center's founder to human rights work, which then led her to practice law, as explained in *Do They Hear You When You Cry.* "First and foremost, I would like to thank God and the teachings of the Bahá'í faith for providing me with direction and inspiration," writes Miller-Muro in her Acknowledgments (524). Kassindja likewise affirms that "much of Layli's seriousness of purpose has to do with her family's religion—the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'ís are very committed to a global vision of peace and justice for all" (159). She recounts how Miller-Muro "first felt called to devote her life to good works" when listening to a speech by a Bahá'í working at the United Nations (160), thereafter choosing a career path that led her to investigate FGM from a legal perspective, laying the groundwork for her to take up Kassindja's case (a coincidence that Kassindja, a devout Muslim, attributes to the will of God) and to found the Center. In large part, the impetus for Miller-Muro to pursue human rights and immigration law arose from her religion's "global vision of peace and justice for all"—its cosmopolitan worldview.

The Center's focus on *women and girls* can likewise be seen as a direct outgrowth of Bahá'í beliefs. The Center explains that it takes gender equality as a "foundational Tahirih principle," citing this passage from Bahá'í scripture: "The world of humanity is possessed of two wings: the male and the female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength, the bird will not fly" ("Our Values"). Like many groups, Bahá'ís believe that social transformation is impossible without women gaining equity with men—but Bahá'ís see this empowerment not only in terms of social justice but as a divine mandate. With teachings such as the privileging of girls over boys in situations of limited educational resources, Bahá'u'lláh mandated the equality of women and men and emphasized the need for women's empowerment. "The center is based on the belief that the recognition of the equality of women and men is a moral imperative and a practice necessary for the advancement of society," as the backmatter to *Do They Hear You* explains (526). That is, "Until all women and girls enjoy equality, society cannot progress" ("Violence Against Women"). The Center further explains that Bahá'í teachings lead them to perceive men—not just women—as "essential in the achievement of equality and progression of society" ("Our Values"). The Center interprets the Bahá'í stance on gender equality to mean that female survivors of violence, especially vulnerable immigrants, merit protection by the law as a pathway to their full participation in society.

In addition, the Center adheres to the Bahá'í teaching of *nonpartisanship*. According to this principle, while Bahá'ís are expected to fulfill their civic responsibilities including voting, they should not align themselves with a political party, campaign for office, or use partisan means to advance policy objectives. So, a Bahá'í may prefer a candidate and vote accordingly, but she should keep her preferences private. This teaching arises from the Bahá'í belief that partisan affiliation "entails repudiation of some or all of the principles of peace and unity proclaimed by

Bahá'u'lláh" (Hornby 445); at an individual level, it may poison relationships, while at a societal level, it may produce opposing camps resistant to collaboration. Even if a candidate's or party's aims are noble, the competition for power can result in unity only *within* the party or campaign, with opponents excluded.

To understand this teaching, I find it useful to distinguish the blatant party affiliation of *partisanship* from *politics*, which I define as activities related to policymaking. Though Bahá'ís do not campaign for politicians, that does not mean they are uninterested in social policy; they are not *apolitical*. Indeed, many Bahá'í teachings—such as international cooperation, racial reconciliation, cultural diversity, the equality of women and men, environmental protection, and the elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty—could be considered controversial, as they contest systems like nationalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, and capitalism. They could also be called *political*, in that they suggest certain policies.

Nonpartisanship often necessitates navigating a gray zone between the poles of political quietism and activism, according to my observations. In practice, there seems to be a spectrum of nonpartisanship inspired by Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. On one end, Bahá'í institutions avoid direct commentary on governmental policies, with rare exceptions—namely, expressing support for resolutions against the persecution of Bahá'ís by the Iranian government. On the other end, the Center (a Bahá'í-*inspired* organization, not a Bahá'í institution) frequently comments on governmental policies that affect asylum-seekers, its client population. The Center operates as a political—that is, policy-oriented—group, yet it refrains from overtly partisan activities such as endorsing politicians or even taking a stance on the legalization of abortion ("Our Values"), an issue polarized by the Democrat-Republican divide. Moreover, the Center pairs its protests against policy with obedience to the law; for instance, it implements the federal government's E-

Verify program to ensure its employees have work authorization. Overall, especially in a two-party system like that of the United States, interpreting and practicing Bahá'í nonpartisanship is a challenge; I will continue to explore the complexity of nonpartisan policy advocacy—which admittedly might sound like a paradox—in my analysis of the Center's rhetoric.

Cosmopolitan morals, women's empowerment, and nonpartisanship: these three spiritual tenets inform the Center's work on behalf of immigrant women and girls. I will return to them later, assessing how they play out in the policy advocacy produced by the Center. The Center's policy advocacy should be understood in the context of its overall operations.

Policy Advocacy: A Core Area of Action

The Center aims to combat gender-based violence through a three-pronged approach: direct services to immigrant women, training and education, and policy advocacy. Currently, most recipients of direct services—about three-quarters—are from Latin America ("2017 Impact Report"). To help their clients gain legal residency, the Center guides them through immigration processes, which include applying for asylum (about 40% of clients) and for U visas for survivors of violence who assist law enforcement (about 30%) ("2017 Impact Report"). This free legal representation is made possible for thousands of clients by the sizeable pro bono network of lawyers the Center has assembled. Thus far, the Center has represented over 25,000 clients and won 99% of their cases, compared to a 15% rate for women without legal representation ("Impact"). In addition, the Center connects its clients with social services to ensure their basic needs, such as housing, food, and healthcare, are met. The second prong of activity involves training "frontline professionals" involved with immigrants, including lawyers, doctors, and law enforcement agents, to better protect survivors of gender-based violence. In addition, to reshape

the laws that affect its clients, the Center engages in policy advocacy on issues such as child marriage, the "mail-order bride" industry, and gender-based asylum ("Celebrating History"). My focus in this chapter will be on this third prong of the Center's work.

To achieve its policy objectives, the Center creates texts addressing several audiences, as indicated on its webpage titled "Policy Advocacy." The branches of government involved in generating and implementing policies form a crucial audience; the Center targets the executive branch by reaching out to the White House and federal agencies, the legislative branch by supporting bills that protect immigrant women and opposing those that reduce these protections, and the judicial branch by changing laws through impact litigation (fighting cases with consequences for larger groups). To achieve its policy objectives, the Center must succeed in persuading governmental actors. Such influence happens not only in D.C. but on popular media, as the Center tries to engender support for asylum-seekers among a lay audience that could exert pressure on politicians. As the Center states regarding "Media Engagement," it seeks to "inform public debate on immigration and violence against women and elevate policymakers' understanding through online, print, radio, and television news sources." The Center thus correlates "public debate" and media outreach with "policymakers' understanding"; if enough voters can be swayed to support protections for immigrant women, their political representatives might follow suit. Indeed, the Center asks supporters to engage in forms of activism that bridge popular and political audiences: on the one hand, to spread the word via social networks of friends and family, both on- and off-line; on the other hand, to petition government agencies about policies the Center identifies in "Action Alerts." The Center identifies efforts to appeal to the grassroots as complementing more direct lobbying of the government.

To see the Center's policy advocacy in action, I examine rhetoric—mostly targeting a popular audience—that it produced in response to the asylum policy cataclysm that unfolded in June 2018. This month forms my timeframe because within that period, there came to light two policies that demonstrated the Trump Administration's plan with regard to blocking asylum-seekers. Since the controversy over the treatment of asylum-seekers dominated civic discourse for at least that month, culminating in nationwide marches, this subject should be of interest to any scholar of U.S. rhetoric. In the next section, I review this watershed moment, which created the exigence for the Center to respond with a new campaign, "Building Bridges to Safety," aiming to generate public support for asylum-seekers.

JUNE 2018: A WATERSHED IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO DETER ASYLUM-SEEKERS

By June 2018, the implications of the Trump Administration's "zero-tolerance" stance on unauthorized crossings from Mexico into the United States became visible to the public eye. National media flocked around the federal government's practice of separating asylum-seeking parents from children while waiting for legal processing. A second policy, the Administration's attempt to discount gender-based persecution as a basis for asylum, also received coverage.

Zero tolerance, a policy the Administration announced in April 2018, mandates the *criminal* prosecution of anyone who crosses the U.S.–Mexico border without authorization; by categorizing asylum-seeking parents as criminals, the government justified taking their children. Before zero tolerance, first-time border crossing was considered a misdemeanor processed in immigration, rather than criminal, courts. With the shift in policy, the Department of Homeland Security took custody of parents, while a separate federal agency, Health and Human Services,

took the children. The Administration piloted this strategy as early as October 2017 and escalated it after announcing zero tolerance in April 2018. As information about the strategy came to light in Spring 2018, an outcry arose from immigration advocates, including the Center, which viewed the practice as an injustice against the asylum-seeking women it serves. By mid-June, public attention to the controversy peaked (Hegarty). On June 20, 2018, Trump signed an Executive Order to halt family separation, "Affording Congress an Opportunity to Address Family Separation," indicating a return to the earlier practice of incarcerating asylum-seeking families together.[10] The Center viewed this change as substituting one abusive practice for another, as children remained subject to imprisonment.

Coinciding with the furor over family separation, the Trump Administration moved to end gender-based asylum with a ruling by Attorney General Jeff Sessions on June 11, 2018, on the asylum case *Matter of A-B-*. His involvement in the case of Ms. A.B. appeared to be motivated by the Administration's mission to reduce asylum claims, given that he departed from standard procedure by taking her case from the Board of Immigration Appeals—which had previously ruled her eligible for asylum ("Backgrounder")—so he could rule on it. According to the U.N. Refugee Protocol, one of the five kinds of persecution legitimizing an asylum claim is "membership of a particular social group." Over the past few decades, lawyers defending female asylum-seekers have used this category to argue their cases. They set a precedent for women in some highly patriarchal societies to be considered a "particular social group" subject to

[10] According to a report by journalist Jasmine Aguilera, as of September 2019, at least twenty-seven children who had been separated from their parents before the 6/20/2018 Executive Order still remained apart from their parents involuntarily. In addition, some one thousand children had been separated from their parents *after* the Executive Order. The number of separations conducted under the Trump Administration totaled more than five thousand.

persecution, and for domestic abuse to be understood as persecution. For example, a government may view wives as the property of their husbands; therefore, if a woman is beaten by her husband, the police would not intervene. This woman may have a valid asylum claim, because she belongs to a *particular social group*—married women in her country—that is subject to persecution. It was this kind of claim that Sessions wanted to prevent. In his thirty-one-page decision, he argues against the foundation of gender-based claims, essentially denying that women in certain situations can comprise a "particular social group" and that that so-called "private behavior" like domestic abuse can comprise persecution. By aspiring to set a new precedent, this ruling undermined the cases of all asylum-seeking women fleeing from domestic violence—including many of the Center's clients.

TAHIRIH JUSTICE CENTER RESPONDS: "BUILDING BRIDGES TO SAFETY" CAMPAIGN

In response to the federal government's attacks on asylum-seekers in June 2018, the Tahirih Justice Center generated a bevy of commentary, including videos, policy briefs, social media content, and interviews with news outlets. They grouped these texts into a new campaign called "Building Bridges to Safety," which they define as their "response to the administration's attempts to deny asylum seekers access to safety and justice." Introducing a moral theme that pervades much of the campaign's rhetoric, they argue,

> As a nation, we have long recognized that when a woman or child takes a life-threatening journey to escape systemic fear, violence, and lack of protection in their home country, we must treat them with care and respect. These courageous individuals are risking their lives to get to the U.S., and are relying on us to not only uphold our own laws and treaties,

> but to embody the American values that serve as a beacon of hope to them and their families. ("Building Bridges to Safety")

American values, which are a "beacon of hope"—not merely an ideal but a widespread, deep-rooted tradition, as implied by the phrase "we have long recognized"—entail "care and respect" toward women and children fleeing persecution. These values complement our nation's "laws and treaties" on refugees. The passage contends that the United States has both moral and legal obligations toward asylum-seekers. The campaign homepage goes on to state that "those laws and values are under attack" from the "current administration," as exemplified by family separation and Sessions's ruling. Finally, calling their readers to action, they affirm that "there is something that everyone can do," followed by nine hyperlinks recommending ways to learn more and get involved; Table 3-1 provides an overview.

Table 3-1: Components of the "Building Bridges to Safety" Campaign

Component Name	Description
Letter from Tahirih's Chief of Policy	Letter from Archi Pyati to Center supporters asking them to defend asylum-seekers by donating, spreading the word, and petitioning members of government. (6/22/18)
Donate to Our Efforts	Fundraising page for "Building Bridges" campaign.
Use Our Social Ambassador Toolkit	Material designed for sharing on social media: graphics sharing facts and stories about domestic violence and immigration, and textual posts decrying the Administration's actions.
Watch Our Video Explanations	Pair of videos on "Asylum Seekers [*sic*] Access to Safety and Justice": one in English analyzing Sessions's ruling on *Matter of A-B-* (6/12/18); one in Spanish providing guidance on asylum to refugees fleeing gender-based persecution (6/18/18).
Read about Tahirih in the News	Compilation of news media (articles, videos, and audio) published since June 2018 that feature commentary by Center staff. (As of February 2019, there were about 75 stories.)

Read Our *Matter of A-B-* Analysis	Summary of Center's juridical concerns with Sessions's ruling on Ms. A.B.'s asylum case (6/11/18).
Read Our *Family Separation Executive Order* Analysis	Summary of Center's legal and humanitarian concerns with the Executive Order on family separation and detention (6/22/18).
Read "What I Saw at the Border" – A Firsthand Account	Article by Anne Chandler (Director of Center's Houston office) about her observations of asylum-seekers' conditions as they were processed in a Texas courtroom (6/18/18).
Subscribe to Our Listserv for Breaking News	Signup page to receive Center's emails.

By following these hyperlinks, I explored the campaign, paying attention to how the Center applies rhetorical resources mined from religion to the asylum debate. In the following sections, I contextualize and analyze the Center's responses to the two major controversies of June 2018, drawing from the campaign materials. My analysis tracks the three dominant *topoi* of immigration discourse, devoting particular attention to the security and culture commonplaces, which undergird the Trump Administration's zero-tolerance rhetoric. As the following sections reveal, the Center's campaign texts acknowledge these *topoi* but reframe them in terms of morality. Most of these texts were composed by, or contain comments from, two attorneys who work as Center executives: Anne Haenel Chandler and Archi Pyati. Chandler has been practicing law in Texas with a focus on gender-based asylum since 1998 and has directed the Center's Houston office since it opened in 2009 (Erdoğdu). Pyati entered the legal profession in the early 2000s, also focusing on gender-based violence, and joined the Center as Chief of Policy in 2014 ("About Archi").

Responding to the Family Separation Crisis

The family separation crisis and the responses it engendered should be understood in the context of immigration detention. Incarcerating asylum-seekers is not a new practice, having escalated in the 1990s as the government favored detention policies (Detention Watch Network). Recall that, during the Clinton Administration, Fauziya Kassindja, Layli Miller-Muro's first client, was imprisoned for over a year waiting for her case to be processed. The incarceration of asylum-seekers is usually invisible to the public; even Miller-Muro felt "shock" at Kassindja's prison conditions (*Do They Hear You*, 412). More recently, the Obama Administration came under fire for incarcerating asylum-seeking parents with their children in prisons such as Pennsylvania's Berks County Family Residential Center, which has faced allegations—and convictions—of abuse (Feltz). Detaining asylum-seekers is a policy crossing party lines.

Proponents justify incarceration by arguing that if asylum-seekers are freed while their cases are processed, they will abscond, adding to the undocumented immigrant population. This is the perspective the Trump Administration has perpetuated with its derision of "catch and release." Moreover, detention proponents suppose that if prospective immigrants saw asylum-seekers going free, they would abuse the system, inventing asylum cases to obtain entry into the United States—and the floodgates would open. In reality, in a pilot program that allowed asylum-seeking families to live in society under some surveillance, only two percent of participants absconded; yet, in 2017, the Administration abolished this program (Timm). Given this decision, it is clear that the Administration employs detention not merely to prevent asylum-seekers from absconding while their cases are pending but also—and perhaps primarily—to deter refugees from coming to the United States. Why are refugees seen as such a threat?

The answer lies in the security *topos*, the assumption that immigrants threaten the safety of native-born Americans, which undergirds the Trump Administration's drive to dissuade and punish asylum-seekers who come to the southern border. According to this *topos*, the U.S.–Mexico border's permeability is a cause for deep anxiety because it putatively reveals the erosion of national sovereignty. Yet, by law, refugees should have the opportunity to seek asylum at a point of entry by claiming credible fear of return to their homeland, regardless of their legal documentation (USCIS). The strength of the security *topos* overrides this law, as border officials under the Trump Administration sometimes prevent asylum-seekers from approaching points of entry. Asylum-seekers face two options. The "legal" option is to wait indefinitely in Mexican border cities, which often harbor criminals who prey on Central American migrants—Tijuana, for instance, is one of the world's most violent cities (Campoy). The "illegal" option is to proceed with their search for asylum by crossing the border without authorization. Asylum-seekers taking the latter option hope to be apprehended by U.S. officials so they can present their claim—but the security *topos* construes their crossing as a crime, a purposeful violation of the law that deserves punishment. As Sessions commented regarding the zero-tolerance policy for "criminal illegal entry,"

> To those who wish to challenge the Trump Administration's commitment to public safety, national security, and the rule of law, I warn you: illegally entering this country will not be rewarded, but will instead be met with the full prosecutorial powers of the Department of Justice. To the Department's prosecutors, I urge you: promoting and enforcing the rule of law is vital to protecting a nation, its borders, and its citizens. (Department of Justice)

This passage relies on the security *topos*, as it implies that criminal prosecution of immigrants, including asylum-seekers, is a just application of "the rule of law" for the sake of "protecting" the United States.

One of Center's aims is to "inform public debate on immigration and violence against women . . . through online, print, radio, and television news sources" ("Policy Advocacy"). To that end, they provide interviews and comments to the press. Demand for the Center's perspective skyrocketed in June 2018, as suddenly, the government's treatment of asylum-seekers dominated national news. Whereas in May, the Center identified two news articles featuring their comments ("Latest Updates"), in June, they amassed twenty-four such stories ("Tahirih in the News"). Due to her two decades of immigration law experience and to her involvement with immigrants at the Texas–Mexico border, Anne Chandler commented on behalf of the Center for the majority of these news stories. She drew from her decades in the field to provide context, comparing family separation to the Obama Administration's detention of asylum-seeking families but emphasizing the unprecedented nature of the separations. In addition, she offered the press her firsthand observations of family separation, drawing from her team's interviews with over one hundred asylum-seeking parents in court and in detention to reveal their experiences with government agencies (Vine). In addition to these appearances in national and regional outlets like *MSNBC* and *Texas Tribune*, the Center used their website and social media pages to publish their own texts, such as videos, white papers, and an article by Chandler. To understand how the Center contributed to the "public debate" on family separation, I analyze Chandler's rhetorical strategies, which hinge on the prioritization of morality.

Collapsing the Culture Topos, Condemning the United States for Inhumanity

In her article published on the Center's website in mid-June, "What I Saw at the Border Broke My Heart," Chandler implicitly questions the culture *topos*, which positions immigrants as a threat to Americanness. On June 4, in the border city of McAllen, Texas, Chandler attended a mass hearing of asylum-seekers charged with illegal entry. She positions herself as a witness to injustice, the article as a testimonial: "What I witnessed was, as one attorney put it, a 'manufactured crisis.'" Extending the concept of witnessing, she repeats the phrase "I saw" four times, beginning with this statement: "I saw people denied basic human needs, like water, food, and a shower. I saw refugees who have done nothing but ask for help treated like criminals." She limns the misery of the parents: they are in "shackles," "packed" into benches, looking "bleary eyed" and "famished," and emoting "anguish and desperation." According to her description, these are not criminal migrants but parents suffering physical and psychological distress. By emotively depicting the suffering that parents experienced because of the family separation policy, Chandler questions the culture *topos*. How could these suffering parents possibly undermine American culture?

Indeed, Chandler inverts the conventional dichotomy between supposedly inferior immigrants and superior "natives" by chastising the United States for its immoral behavior. By comparing the current treatment of asylum-seekers to what she has observed in her two decades practicing immigration law, she sets up a history of moral decay:

> Our system has always had flaws, but I believed our nation honored its obligations under the international laws governing the treatment of refugees. I also believed we would do our best as a nation to uphold the values of freedom and fairness. Most of all, I believed we would always strive to treat one another as human beings.

She acknowledges that the immigration system has always been imperfect but contends that in the past—sharply split from the present by the repeated preterit in "I believed"—it aspired to meet standards of legality (following international law) and ethics (freedom, fairness, humaneness). This moral baseline for the treatment of immigrants has now been violated: "But I saw something different in McAllen." By returning to the phrase "I saw," she underscores that she is witnessing firsthand the United States behaving immorally. The nation has sunk to coercion and deception, promising parents their children in exchange for pleading guilty; "Where is the fairness in that?" she queries. The nation is acting inhumanely, forbidding parents from consoling their panicking children as officers take them away. Rather than blaming the Administration, she distributes responsibility to all Americans—the "we" accountable for "our nation." In fact, she barely mentions government actors, with the closest being a "U.S. official." Not only policymakers, but the entire U.S. public, must heed her message, then.

In contrast to the depravity of the United States, the asylum-seekers behave nobly, thinking first of their children's wellbeing rather than their own suffering. Chandler lauds the parents' selfless behavior: they have left behind "everything they know" to make an "arduous, unsafe journey" to "find an end to violence." She recounts parents yearning to know how the government was treating their children: were they being fed and given healthcare—or being shackled? Chandler concludes by contending that rather than migrants being criminals and Americans being noble, the reverse is true: "My first impression in that courtroom was that we are treating these people like animals. But I came away feeling that we are the animals here, for treating people in this horrifying way." By implementing family separation, U.S. citizens—"we"—have vacated any claim to moral righteousness, she suggests. The culture *topos* then collapses,

because an ignoble polity has no right to judge the actions of immigrants, no right to prosecute asylum-seekers for crossing the border, and no basis for claiming superiority.

Chandler's remarks found an eager audience among press outlets as public consciousness of family separation increased. Early in June, a reporter for *The Nation,* Michelle Chen, picked up this passage from her article: "I saw dozens upon dozens of heartbroken parents who didn't know the whereabouts of their children. One father was shaking as he explained that he didn't know if his child had been fed or is being mistreated. Another parent asked if his son would have to wear shackles to court." Nearly a dozen other news stories featuring Chandler's comments followed in the same month. Her vignettes of individual asylum-seekers, in combination with her knowledge about the family separation process and her condemnations thereof, found uptake in the media, extending the reach of her inversion of the culture *topos*.

Although Chandler's full comparison of migrant parents' morality to U.S. degeneracy could not be conveyed in her brief appearances in news stories, she provided comments pushing the audience toward that conclusion. A typical example comes in an *LA Times* article on family reunifications. In her comments, Chandler juxtaposes an asylum-seeker's desperation for reunion with his daughter with the government's disingenuous communications:

> Anne Chandler, Houston director of the Tahirih Justice Center, a national immigrant advocacy organization, was working with a Central American immigrant father detained in Houston who had agreed to be deported after a Homeland Security official told him he would be reunified with his 12-year-old daughter at the airport after being separated for more than a month.

> "I just want some clarity from the government," Chandler said. She wondered if the immigrants are "giving up their asylum claims . . . because they're so desperate?" (Hennessy-Fiske and Ulloa)

On the one hand, a father yearns for his child so intensely he is willing to accept deportation. On the other hand, the government coerces refugees into giving up their asylum claims—without necessarily following through on the promised reunifications. The inversion of the culture *topos* is implied through Chandler's juxtaposition of a sympathetic asylum-seeker with a heartless government.

Such vivid characterizations can lead to policy change, as exemplified by the Trump Administration's response to images of distraught asylum-seekers. Trump attributed his Executive Order halting family separation to his emotional response to photographs of separated children: "I didn't like the sight or the feeling of families being separated" ("Remarks"). The Center decried the Order for substituting one inhumane policy for another, as children remained in detention. They advocate for deeper systemic reform, an approach evident in Chandler's comments to the press about the need for a national reckoning with immigration policy. In these comments, she continues to prioritize the moral values at stake in U.S. policy.

Calling Americans to Deliberate on Asylum and Reckon with the Security Topos

In several interviews, Chandler presented family separation as an exigence for civic dialogue, calling for a national conversation on immigration policy (i.e., zero tolerance and the treatment of asylum-seekers). On June 21, the day after the Executive Order, two podcasts featuring Chandler were published, one on *Vox* (Rameswaram) and the other on *Houston Public Media* (Fletcher). In both, she concludes her remarks by calling for deliberation on immigration

policy, appealing to morality as she pushes against the dominant security *topos*. As previously discussed, in policy statements like its announcement of zero tolerance, the Trump Administration framed the prosecution of border-crossing migrants as demonstrating its "commitment to public safety, national security, and the rule of law" since "enforcing the rule of law is vital to protecting a nation, its borders, and its citizens" (Department of Justice). In this familiar instantiation of the security *topos*, the nation's sovereignty depends on its ability to control who enters (what Anne Demo calls "sovereignty discourse"). This law-and-order argument sometimes taps into religious resources by justifying enforcement policy as the government's God-given prerogative, as exemplified by Sessions's citation of a Bible passage to defend family separation (see chapter one). Speaking a few days after Sessions's infamous justification, Chandler subordinates the rule of law to the rule of morality.

In her concluding remarks in the *Vox* interview, Chandler calls upon Americans to rethink the framing of border security. Comparing Chandler's to Sessions's rhetoric, we see how moral values extracted from religion can be used to argue both sides of an issue—to support either punishment or compassion. In keeping with the Center's avowed values, Chandler prioritizes compassion:

> And I hope that the horrific kind of reality that we're experiencing, this family separation moment, will also give us a moment to pause at the other aspects of zero tolerance and even the nature of zero tolerance itself. Yes, our country is a country of laws, and yes, we need to ensure that the border region is safe. But nothing about the zero-tolerance policies—that I can see—moves us toward a more safe, humane way. (Rameswaram)

Chandler asks Americans to "pause" and consider whether seeking law and order justifies "the horrific kind of reality" of zero-tolerance policies like family separation. She does not dismiss law

and order as unimportant, but ranks a "more safe, humane way" to stabilize the border region as paramount. In conceding the significance of security, she seeks common ground with border enforcement proponents—but she also redefines it from a punitive to a protective concept. Humaneness, in her definition, is key to security, as is safety—implicitly, not only the safety of U.S. citizens, but also that of migrants. She thus encourages her audience to imagine another way, a moral way, to accomplish the goal of a secure border.

Chandler is not alone among Center representatives in applying this strategy, claiming common ground on a dominant immigration *topos* in order to reframe it. Pyati, discussing zero tolerance in an op-ed titled "A Manufactured Crisis at Our Border" published a week after Chandler's *Vox* interview, employs this strategy. She proclaims,

> Everyone should be able to agree that we are solving nothing and wasting too much time and money on family separation, family incarceration, and "zero tolerance" prosecutions, even while we turn away deserving refugees, abandon our sense of dignity, reduce our own humanity, and cede our global moral authority.

As Chandler affirms the security *topos*, Pyati nods to the economy *topos*—which frames immigration as a purely fiscal issue—with her criticism of wasted time and money. Yet, just as Chandler concludes by alluding to morality, so does Pyati, warning that the nation's "moral authority," its "dignity" and "humanity," are at stake. (Pyati's claim also resembles the inversion of the culture *topos* discussed in the previous section.) Reframing immigration discourse does not entail wholesale rejection of the familiar *topoi* but acknowledging them while shifting attention toward an alternative set of values.

Chandler gestures more explicitly toward the alternative set of values that could replace the current *topoi* at the end of her interview with *Houston Public Media*. She depicts the family separation crisis as an exigence for civic deliberation on the treatment of asylum-seekers:

> I think where we go from here is to try to pull politics—you know, when it comes to how America should treat mothers, fathers, and children who have gone through the type of unspeakable horrors that some of these families have gone through in their home country, and come here and say, "We need asylum." That we can just step back and have a real conversation of what that asylum process needs to look like and how can we compassionately care for these families while they are putting the evidence together . . . (Fletcher)

With the phrase "pull politics," Chandler seems to suggest that Americans set aside partisan prejudices to "have a real conversation," deliberating on how the nation treats asylum-seeking "mothers, fathers, and children," especially while they are building their case after first making their claim—a period when many languish in detention. Chandler suggests that, instead, care and compassion should characterize the asylum process, implying that these morals represent the only adequate response to people fleeing "unspeakable horrors." Here, Chandler sets aside the dominant immigration *topoi* by suggesting that morality, especially hospitality toward the downtrodden, should guide policymaking on asylum.

Overall, the Center's media commentary regarding family separation and detention, spearheaded by Chandler, attempts to inject moral values, especially empathy with human suffering, into the national debate over immigration. The dominant *topoi* of culture, economy, and security are acknowledged but positioned as secondary to moral values like humaneness and

compassion. The Center's rhetoric on detention corresponds to a religious rhetorical resource, Bahá'í cosmopolitanism, as I will discuss later in the chapter.

In responding to another crisis in asylum policy that arose in June 2018, Sessions's ruling on *Matter of A-B-*, the Center's representatives—this time led by Pyati, its Chief of Policy—likewise emphasized moral values. The Center's effort to fight a policy that "cuts at our core mission" ("Tahirih Files Amicus Brief") provides a case study in how it practices nonpartisanship.

Responding to the *Matter of A-B-* Ruling

"We should connect all of this to what's happening at the border. Prosecuting immigrants seeking asylum and separating families at the border are part of the same exercise. The attorney general is creating a very effective legal wall to block women and children trying to seek asylum in this country. And Monday's decision was one more brick in that wall," said Pyati in an interview with *Slate* shortly after Sessions released his *Matter of A-B-* ruling (Stern). As she contends, family separation and the ruling against asylum-seekers fleeing gender-based persecution together formed a rhetorical wall to discourage refugees from approaching the United States. The coincidence in timing was not accidental but reflective of the Administration's coordinated assault on immigration. The Center doggedly generated texts opposing this assault on both legal and moral grounds.

For several months before the gavel fell in June, the Center worked to avert the crisis for female asylum-seekers brewing in Sessions's review of Ms. A.B.'s claim. In March 2018, when Sessions defied standard procedure by taking *Matter of A-B-* from the Board of Immigration Appeals, the Center began monitoring his intervention in the case. That month, it started an

online petition, "Tell Jeff Sessions: Domestic Violence Victims Need Asylum," which accumulated seventy-five thousand signatures within two months. In April, with three other organizations, it submitted an amicus (friend of the court) brief to him in support of Ms. A.B.'s claim and of asylum protection for domestic violence survivors in general ("Corrected Brief")—a brief that, along with ten others in support of Ms. A.B., Sessions apparently found unconvincing.

On June 11, 2018, the day Sessions released his decision, the Center immediately published a critical response. In a white paper titled "Brief Analysis of Attorney General's Decision in *Matter of A-B-*," they enumerated legal problems in his ruling, summarizing eight concerns regarding his attempt to overturn precedent and his misstatements about asylum law. Given the brief's analytical, legalistic approach, it seems to target readers in legal professions. Yet, a noteworthy caveat appears in its introduction: "Its technicality does not intend to understate the decision's possible harmful impact on the asylum and immigration adjudication system, the women and children who may face an even more limited pathway to safety, and the reputation of the United States as a beacon of hope." The brief thus weds humanitarian morality—compassion for refugees seeking "safety"—with legal analysis, demonstrating the multipronged approach, combining litigation with public outreach, that the Center employs in policy advocacy.

The next day, June 12, the Center offered another analysis of Sessions's ruling, this time focusing on public outreach by targeting a lay audience likely comprised of its followers on social media. This analysis was broadcast as a live-streamed video on Facebook (later uploaded to YouTube), lasting about half an hour, in which Archi Pyati discusses the decision ("*Matter of A-B-* Decision Explained"). She seeks a middle ground between politics and partisanship, linking policies to morality but avoiding condemnation of specific politicians or parties. To showcase this approach, I conduct a close reading of the last six minutes, in which, after having countered

various arguments in Sessions's ruling, she reflects more broadly on its moral implications. The concluding statement should be contextualized in her preceding points, which include an opening reflection, explanation of asylum, and counterarguments to Sessions's decision.

Navigating between Politics and Partisanship: "Matter of A-B- Decision Explained"

In her opening comments, Pyati compares the current constriction of asylum to previous administrations' policies, both to prove her impartial perspective and to emphasize the uniqueness of the present shifts. This strategy resembles Chandler's comparison of family separation to the family detentions escalated by the Obama Administration, as described above. Pyati recalls that, after the crisis of 9/11, she observed the G. W. Bush Administration curbing some protections for asylum-seekers—but keeping others in place. Even witnessing the policies implemented during that catastrophic period did not prepare her for the current situation, she claims. From the video's start, then, she exposes the exceptionality of the Trump Administration's attacks on asylum-seekers, arguing that they eclipse even post-9/11 restrictions.

In addition, to indicate the possible illegality of the Administration's policies, Pyati places them in the context of international and national asylum law. To counter the "floodgates" argument she attributes to the Administration, she explains that the United States gives asylum to about twenty thousand applicants per year—a small number, in her view. Furthermore, because the United States ratified the U.N. Refugee Protocol, it must allow asylum-seekers with a credible fear of persecution to apply. Against this backdrop, she spotlights Sessions's ruling, pointing out a number of its legal flaws. Her critique of Sessions's contradictions of asylum law valorizes law and order, an aspect of the security *topos*, but unlike the Administration's use of this concept to justify punishing asylum-seekers, she uses it to stress the government's obligation

to abide by its own policies. After twenty-eight minutes, she segues into her *peroratio*, an impassioned jeremiad about the federal government's abdication of national values.

Pyati denounces the mischaracterization and mistreatment of asylum-seekers by Sessions and the rest of the Trump Administration, walking a fine line between protesting policy and denigrating politicians. Her conclusion begins with a consideration of two potential reasons for Sessions's decision: either he badly misunderstood asylum law, or he intentionally undermined it to pursue an anti-immigration agenda; the latter, manipulating an asylum-seeker's claim for a political project, would be more reprehensible. Despite the force of her condemnation, Pyati avoids commenting on Sessions's character, instead remarking on his actions: he "doesn't understand," not *he is ignorant*; his ruling might result from a "personal biased motivation," not *he is biased.*

She maintains this style of critique, scrutinizing actions rather than making ad hominem characterizations, when she turns to the entire Trump Administration. She decries their demonization of and policy attacks on immigrants:

> We know this administration has called immigrants crossing the border "animals"; we know that it is systematically cutting away at due process in the courts, it is systematically cutting away at . . . other protections . . . We know that it is separating families at the border. . . . We know that folks who are coming across the border very clearly are being separated from their children as a way of dissuading them from seeking asylum.

This litany of injustices conveys Pyati's sense of outrage, but the rhythmic repetition of "we know" underscores the rationality of her argument. She thereby combines the ardent *pathos* of her jeremiad, conveyed by the distressing scenes of "mothers being ripped from their children" she recounts, with the *logos* of factuality. Knowing the facts of the Administration's wrongdoing

necessitates siding with asylum-seekers, she suggests. Again, she never directly describes the Administration, attaching no adjectives to it. Instead, by factually reporting its actions, she confines her condemnations to policies rather than politicians, in an apparent effort to uphold the Center's value of nonpartisanship.

Rather than portraying the treatment of immigrants as solely the problem of the Administration, Pyati envelops all Americans in accountability. She expresses chagrin that the United States has forfeited "our values" in terms of protecting the vulnerable, welcoming needy immigrants, and upholding national and international law. She repeatedly calls today "a very sad day" and Sessions's ruling a "heart-breaking" and "shocking" departure from national ideals. Although she does not name these ideals, she communicates them through three examples: the country's ratification of the U.N. Refugee Protocol "many decades ago"; "the Statue of Liberty standing at our shores"; and the early "European settlers" who came to escape religious persecution. These examples perhaps evoke stronger associations in the minds of her viewers, conjuring images of hopeful but destitute immigrants crossing the Atlantic, than naming abstractions like "liberty" and "equality" would. Throughout her meditation on national values, she repeats "we" nearly a dozen times, highlighting the responsibility for immigration policy borne by the entire U.S. polity—for instance, after Sessions's decision, "*we* don't stand for the protection of women, *we* don't stand for the upholding of international law, *we* don't stand for rule of law in general." This assertion of collective culpability (speaker included) via the repeated "we" resembles Chandler's indictment of the entire nation for the mistreatment of asylum-seekers in her article "What I Saw at the Border." Pyati likewise implies that all Americans are morally answerable for our government's policies—building to her culminating call to action, inviting viewers to join the Center in combating Sessions's ruling.

Pyati underscores this call to action by naming the moral stakes of the current situation and asking viewers to transcend partisan divisions. She says,

> I think the test of who we are as a community—no matter what our political persuasion is, no matter whether we are Republican, Democrat, Independent, you know, whether we vote, don't vote—the test of who we are right now as a community and as a society is going to be whether we raise our voices on behalf of the women and children who need us right now. So, I encourage you to join us, and I welcome you.

Pyati positions the treatment of immigrants as a "test" of the morality of the United States. If Americans "raise our voices" on behalf of asylum-seekers, we will pass this test. The test has nothing to do with "political persuasion," she says, suggesting that the treatment of the vulnerable is not a partisan but a moral issue. In this closing statement, Pyati frames asylum policy around a *topos* of morality, implicitly overturning the dominant *topoi* of security, culture, and economy. The concept of a moral test recurs in other rhetoric by the Center, such as Pyati's op-ed ("A Manufactured Crisis"), in which she concludes that "[o]ur nation's empathy has been put to the ultimate test, and we will all be judged by how we choose to respond." When it comes to the moral exigence of protecting people suffering harm "right now," she indicates, other considerations become secondary.

Calling Supporters to Defend Asylum-Seekers

With calls to action like Chandler's appeal for national deliberation on asylum law and Pyati's warning of a moral test, the Center aimed to recruit supporters to its Building Bridges Campaign. But how, in more concrete terms, did the Center envision supporters translating their knowledge of and moral stance on asylum policy into action? In a letter from Pyati to the

Center's "Friends" dated June 21, 2018—a day after Trump signed the Executive Order—she recommends several forms of activism. After reviewing this letter, I examine one such form of activism, the Social Ambassador Toolkit.

Pyati's letter, titled "Take Action for Refugees and Immigrants," begins by underscoring the urgency of helping asylum-seekers, as policies are changing—for the worse—rapidly. She recounts the latest news on asylum policy: the criminal prosecution of all unauthorized border-crossers, including asylum-seekers, under zero-tolerance; the blow to asylum-seekers fleeing domestic violence in *Matter of A-B-*; and the Executive Order that "substitutes one inhumane practice for another" by replacing family separation with family detention. This opening paragraph sets out the exigence for activism. Next, she affirms the Center's ongoing commitment to fighting "for women and children fleeing violence." But the Center cannot work alone; it needs supporters: "Now more than ever, we need your help to stand with refugee women and families." She continues, "We must work together to ensure our justice system honors our nation's proud history, enshrined in U.S. law, of offering protection to women, men, and children fleeing persecution and violence." Here she pairs legal obligations—"enshrined in U.S. law"—with moral values—"offering protection" to the vulnerable, a pairing that frequently recurs in the Center's rhetoric. The aspiration of honoring the nation's history requires practical action, as "there is something that everyone can do."

That "something" can take several forms, according to Pyati, including both traditional lobbying methods and newer modes of online activism. On the traditional side, Pyati asks supporters to sign the Center's petition to Jeff Sessions protesting his repeal of protections for domestic violence survivors and to call Congress members to express concern about the treatment of asylum-seekers. These familiar methods take policymakers as the primary audience.

A different audience, the supporter's "social network," including online contacts as well as "friends and family," forms another target for activism. As the Center provides a script for calls to legislators, they also furnish a "Digital Toolkit"—also called the "Social Ambassador Toolkit"—containing content for supporters to circulate on social media. This form of activism takes an indirect route to policy change, aiming to "increase awareness, raise funds, and motivate your friends and family to join Team Tahirih." The goal of raising awareness and motivation at the grassroots finds expression in the toolkit.

Social Media Activism: The Social Ambassador Toolkit

Though social media activism is dismissed by some as "slacktivism" with limited value in fostering immigration reform (Harlow and Guo), the Center makes a case for how circulating pro-asylum messages online engenders solidarity. On the "Social Ambassador Toolkit" webpage of the Building Bridges Campaign, a supporter can find images and text to post on social media. This content is prefaced by a note: "Thank you for using the power of your social network to stand with immigrant women and girls who refuse to be victims of violence." The phrase "stand with" echoes Pyati's letter, conveying a sense of solidarity with asylum-seekers; in this context, it implies that circulating relevant rhetoric through a social network generates this solidarity. "*Your voice* will bring us closer to a world where all women and girls enjoy equality and live in safety and with dignity" (italics original), the note continues, arguing for the power of individual rhetors—of "your voice" as activism. While the toolkit provides templates, the note advises that "the best messages are ones that come from the heart, so please feel free to personalize your outreach." The ideal social media activism would blend Center-authored content with a personal touch, producing a "voice" that "stands with" immigrant women. The page goes on to furnish

material for social media: graphics, including some with statistics and others with brief testimonials, and text.

The graphics featuring statistics make a quantitative case for the extent of the problems facing immigrant women who experience violence. They announce, "Up to 70% of women experience violence in their lifetime," "Immigrant women are 2x more likely to experience domestic violence than the general population" (Figure 3-1[11]), and "Only 2% of immigrants facing removal from the United States are able to obtain pro bono representation." These statistics are superimposed on photographs of women and girls with plaintive expressions intensified by a blue tint. The combination of facts with emotive portraits implies that the statistics are not abstract numbers but reflect the suffering of individuals.

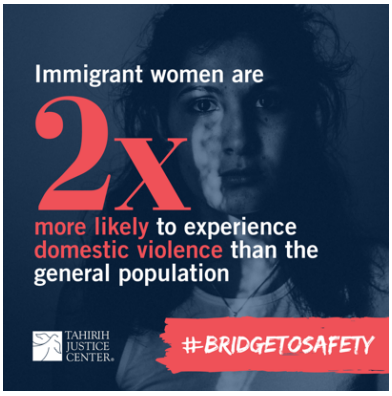

Figure 3-1: "Fact & Stat" image from the Social Ambassador Toolkit

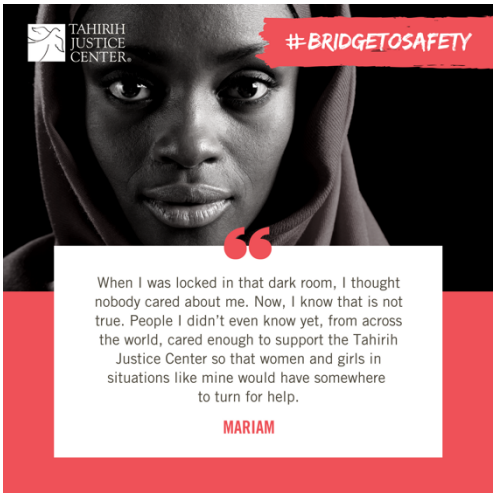

Figure 3-2: "Quote" image from the Toolkit

The focus on individuals deepens in the graphics featuring brief stories from the Center's clients. Each graphic pairs a black-and-white portrait of a woman, in some cases holding a child, with her first name and story. For instance, one image (Figure 3-2) features a young woman, "Mariam," gazing boldly at the viewer, with this quotation: "When I was locked in that dark room, I thought nobody cared about me. Now, I know that is not true. People I didn't even know yet, from across the world, cared enough to support the Tahirih

[11] Figures 3-1 and 3-2 are from www.tahirih.org/give/buildingbridges/social-ambassador-toolkit/ and are reproduced here under Fair Use.

Justice Center so that women and girls in situations like mine would have somewhere to turn for help." The other stories similarly contrast the clients' lives before receiving help, when they faced life-threatening abuse and detention, with their progress after the Center intervened. Each of these graphics makes a case for how the Center empowers women, a message amplified when comparing this set of images, with its beaming portraits, to the statistics images, with their sorrowful ones. A narrative coalesces: immigrant women are at risk of becoming a statistic, but with the Center's help, they gain the power to resist abuse.

In addition to these graphics, which tap into the visual-driven nature of social media, the toolkit also offers textual posts designed to be shared on various online platforms. Many of these posts reference the nation's values and ask readers to "stand up" on behalf of asylum-seekers; for instance, one sample Tweet proclaims, "Stand up to preserve our nation's values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"; another declares, "As a nation we have long committed to protecting survivors of violence & persecution who rely on us to embody the American values that serve as a beacon of hope. Now, those values are under attack." These posts emphasize the Americanness of values enshrined in the Declaration of Independence ("life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness") and glorify them as "a beacon of hope" to the vulnerable—a beacon now "under attack." By suggesting that the basic moral character of the United States is at stake, they appeal to a sense of patriotism and national dignity.

The posts reflect the balancing act between politics and partisanship seen in the Center's other rhetoric. Some posts critique the Trump Administration's actions: "The administration is chipping away at protections for immigrant families"; "Recently, Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued a legal decision that seeks to deny asylum to women seeking protection from severe domestic violence." For the most part, though, the posts return to the pairing of legal obligations

with morality seen in Pyati's letter, as in, "These courageous individuals are risking their lives to get to the U.S., and are relying on us to not only uphold our own laws and treaties, but to embody the American values that serve as a beacon of hope to them and their families." As in its other advocacy, the Center makes the asylum issue not the problem of one partisan cabal but of the entire country.

What are these circulating messages supposed to achieve—what concrete result could arise from sharing them on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram? They could encourage donations, enabling the Center to serve more clients. They could also add to a wave of public pressure to change policies, as one post insinuates:

> Most recently, a heart-wrenching child family separation policy that had been quietly underway for months finally exploded into the public eye. Soon after, the President signed an Executive Order that states that it is "the policy of this Administration to maintain family unity, including by detaining alien families together". This shows that our voices matter! But it is far from over.

The post draws a direct connection between the explosion of public attention to family separations and Trump's decision to halt them, deducing, "This shows that our voices matter!" Public outrage can influence federal policy. The Center thus tries to harness the networks of its supporters to "create" and "leverage the public's outrage" toward repealing restrictive asylum policies, as Shana Tabak, the Center's Atlanta Director, puts it (Wicker). Social media activism complements the other tools Center recommends, including the more traditional practices of calling and petitioning representatives, by cultivating popular attention and mustering it to exert political pressure. As Pyati suggests, "Members of Congress are most swayed by their voters—and that's you" ("A Manufactured Crisis").

How Resources of Faith Contribute to Discourse on Asylum

In this section, I return to the dissertation's critical question, "What resources can religious rhetoric provide to pro-immigrant arguments in the contemporary United States?" As previously shown, several Bahá'í beliefs motivated Layli Miller-Muro to found the Tahirih Justice Center. Religious tenets inform the Center's mission, but how do they play out in its rhetoric? Drawing from the above analysis of the Building Bridges Campaign, I reflect on how each key tenet—Bahá'í cosmopolitanism, empowerment of women, and nonpartisanship—affects the Center's policy advocacy. In addition, I consider the larger implications of the Center's religion-influenced rhetoric for immigration discourse.

Bahá'í Tenets in the Center's Policy Advocacy

The Center's representatives enact a form of religion-inspired cosmopolitanism in their calls for reforming the treatment of asylum-seekers. For example, Chandler calls for a nationwide reckoning on the asylum process and border enforcement, advocating for compassion to form the bedrock of policy. She suggests that citizens' sense of superiority to immigrants is unfounded, as she witnesses asylum-seekers behaving nobly and Americans behaving brutally. Her valuation of compassion and her countering of nativism has parallels to Bahá'í teachings on the elimination of prejudice and the oneness of humanity. It is, however, worth pausing to acknowledge that nowhere in the Building Bridges Campaign texts I examined does Chandler or any other Center representative explicitly mention Bahá'í teachings. There are likely a few reasons for this quietness on religion. For one, Chandler and Pyati, the de facto spokeswomen of the Campaign, do not seem to be Bahá'ís. But I infer another, more important reason: the Center attempts to

appeal to a broad swath of Americans, a diverse audience that might find mention of a religion, especially an unfamiliar one, off-putting, thus posing a barrier to connection.

Therefore, instead of quoting Bahá'í scripture to establish the moral values relevant to immigration policy, the Center employs a more widespread, familiar frame: national values. Consider, for instance, Pyati's repeated warning that the United States is facing a test of its traditional values, which, in her telling, require welcoming downtrodden immigrants. Or consider the social media posts included in the Social Ambassador Toolkit, which highlight "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" as the United States' "beacon of hope" to refugees. By celebrating the traditional ethics of the United States, the Center appeals to patriotism, which, as Martha Nussbaum notes in "Toward a Globally Sensitive Patriotism," has been the most effective unifying mechanism in the history of humanity, capable of bringing millions of people together around a common purpose. While the Center draws from the global-minded Bahá'í values that helped inspire its creation, it defines these values as American to persuade Americans of all stripes of the righteousness of its mission. If the nation's values are under attack, any patriot should rush to defend them. To appeal to its audience, the Center weaves a hybrid moral framework—the warp spiritual cosmopolitanism, the weft patriotic values.

As for the Bahá'í tenet of empowering women, much of the Center's policy advocacy in June 2018 focused on women's asylum, as it protested the erosion of gender-based protections. Regarding the family separation policy, which affected fathers and mothers alike, its response focused on parents regardless of gender, in line with its Bahá'í-inspired belief that men are "essential in the achievement of equality and progression of society" ("Our Values"). Sessions's *Matter of A-B-* decision, however, called for a woman-centered response, due to the ruling's arguably sexist discrimination against (female) survivors of so-called "private crime" (333). Such

a response can be seen in the graphics included in the Social Ambassador Toolkit; all the portraits feature women, and all the testimonials come from female clients.

These images and stories, which craft a narrative of empowerment following persecution, intersect with questions in rhetorical studies about how women are portrayed in human rights discourse—questions stemming from a concern that such discourse sustains the "white savior." This is a concern that permeates McKinnon's *Gendered Asylum*, as she sees the United States instrumentalizing asylum to glorify itself as the global protector of women's rights, in contrast to "backwards" regions. It also pervades Wendy Hesford's *Spectacular Rhetorics*, in which she critiques Western human rights discourse for making the welfare of people in the Global South dependent on Global Northerners seeing and identifying with them. Regarding women, stories of their suffering due to human rights abuses like rape warfare and sex trafficking can uphold the imbalance in power, as the U.S. viewer voyeuristically watches distant atrocities, seeing affected women as victims without agency. Yet, because it accentuates clients' agency, the Center's portrayals of women diverge from those Hesford critiques. For instance, the toolkit's testimonials highlight clients' choices. They *choose* to leave abusive situations: "Escaping his abuse was the greatest ordeal of my life. It took everything I had to find the courage to go to the police for help." They also *choose* to reconstruct their lives in the United States: "Today, I am rebuilding my life and healing." In addition, the Center's website abounds with praise for its clients as "courageous" and "heroes"; for instance, "By the time a woman or girl arrives at our doors, she is already a hero" ("Success Stories"). A similar slogan appears at the bottom of each page: "Your gift empowers women and girls who refuse to be victims." Given that the Center lauds its clients' heroism and denies the "victim" label, it seems to position itself not as a savior but as a stage in a woman's journey toward a safe life.

Finally, in terms of nonpartisanship, the Center vocally criticizes federal policies, but avoids directly criticizing politicians or censuring one party. As exemplified by Pyati's criticism of *Matter of A-B-*, while she attacks the ruling on legal and moral grounds and explains Sessions's role, she stops short of impugning individual politicians or the Republican Party. Further, she articulates an explicitly nonpartisan call to action, asking people to act regardless of their Republican or Democratic sympathies. In addition, Chandler and Pyati treat the major parties evenhandedly by commenting on the three most recent administrations—two Republicans, Bush and Trump, and one Democrat, Obama—pointing out that each enacted some policies harmful to asylum-seekers. Their observations imply that party affiliation is irrelevant to the treatment of immigrants. Admittedly, despite its efforts to transcend partisanship, the Center's criticism of Trump's policies could certainly be interpreted by his supporters as a Democrat-sponsored attack; yet, the Center's success in mustering diverse donors indicates that its efforts have borne fruit. Its list of "Partners" includes a wide range of organizations: several multinational corporations, including BP, Exxon, and Shell; government agencies including offices of the federal Department of Justice and of state governments in both "red" and "blue" states; and progressive and religious nonprofits like Baltimore's Fund for Change and Houston's branch of the National Christian Foundation. Its partners span the spectrum from conservative to liberal leanings. It seems the Center's religion-based nonpartisan approach helps it avoid rhetorical pitfalls like ad hominem attacks on politicians, instead generating rhetoric persuasive to a range of supporters.

Using Religious Resources to Reframe the Dominant *Topoi* of Immigration

Three rhetorical resources drawn from Bahá'í teachings (cosmopolitan morals, women's empowerment, and nonpartisanship) shape, and arguably strengthen, the Center's policy advocacy. What are the implications of the Center's approach for immigration rhetoric—in particular, for reframing the dominant *topoi* of economy, culture, and security? The Center strategically deploys—and revises—these *topoi* in its arguments on behalf of asylum-seekers.

Of the three *topoi*, the economy *topos* appears least frequently in the Center's rhetoric, though it is mentioned in regard to zero tolerance and the attendant family separations. Pyati lambasts the "time and money" squandered by the policy. Yet, in the same sentence, she also accuses the policy of "moral" failings. The economy *topos* is likely used by the Center occasionally to appeal to lay audiences concerned with how their tax dollars are being used. But this *topos* is not left to stand independent; rather, it is paired with morality, making zero-tolerance policies appear doubly condemnable, both fiscally wasteful and ethically reprehensible. Humane policies that do not involve detention tend to be cheaper. The conventional economy *topos*—which reduces immigrants to economic units, valued only for the wealth they generate or consume—transforms into an economy-morality *topos* in which fiscal concerns merge with humanitarian regard for immigrants' wellbeing.

The Center also reframes the culture *topos*, excising its nativism while strategically highlighting national values. Especially in Chandler's article against family separation ("What I Saw at the Border"), the culture *topos* is denied and inverted, revealing that, contrary to nativist ideology, Americans are no better—and actually behave worse—than immigrants. She ennobles migrant parents and deplores inhumane U.S. policies. Yet, the Center does not simply denigrate the United States; that would be counterproductive, alienating its audience of potential donors

and supporters. Instead, in the pattern of a jeremiad, it suggests that, while the United States has abandoned its traditional values, it can reclaim its former glory as a "beacon of hope" by reforming its immigration system. The Center thus taps into the culture *topos* by claiming that the once-admirable status of the United States is waning, appealing to its audience to halt that decline by changing unjust policies. So, while it partially mimics the culture *topos* in singling out the United States as a (former) land of justice, it simultaneously rejects the notion that the native-born are superior to immigrants—a strategic ambivalence that turns caring for immigrants into a patriotic duty. Perhaps this appeal to patriotism would enable it to reach Trump's supporters.

In this pursuit of common ground, the Center also strategically intervenes in the security *topos*. For example, Chandler acknowledges the importance of law and order along the border. However, she also pushes back against the *topos*, which promotes walling off national borders at all costs, by prioritizing morals. She envisions a safe and humane approach to borderlands immigration as the best security method, ensuring the security of citizens and migrants alike. The Center thus shifts the security *topos* from an obsessive focus on leaky borders and threatened sovereignty toward a more inclusive vision of safety for all who dwell in the borderlands. In another revision to the security *topos*, Pyati echoes Chandler in acknowledging the importance of abiding by laws—but rather than applying this concept to the border, she leverages it to critique the Trump Administration for violating laws like the U.N. Refugee Protocol. With a shift in emphasis, the security *topos*—frequently employed to support punitive, zero-tolerance border enforcement—can be used to argue for more compassionate and global-minded governance.

Overall, by consistently returning to the idea of a set of national values that mandate the fair treatment of asylum-seekers—which reflects the Center's adaptation of Bahá'í cosmopolitanism—the Center reframes each of the three dominant *topoi*. It acknowledges that

economics, culture, and security are all relevant concerns in the immigration debate but subsumes them under the transcendent call to morality. Economic wastefulness becomes a consequence of immoral policy; cultural pride becomes an exigence for urgent reform; security now encompasses the welfare of border residents and crossers alike. Thus, the Center provides one model for how religious principles can reframe the timeworn commonplaces of immigration discourse, pulling them toward a more cosmopolitan vision of human rights.

From the Tahirih Justice Center to the Composition-Rhetoric Classroom

This chapter has examined the Tahirih Justice Center from a rhetorical perspective, an examination that may yield implications for rhetoric's partner, composition studies, too. At first blush, the work the Center does on behalf of women in desperate situations bears little resemblance to the relatively privileged space of the college writing classroom. But the Center's balancing act between politics and partisanship is worth noting. Whether the classroom should be a safe space providing an island of inclusion, or a contact zone forcing students to leave their comfort zones, is an ongoing question in composition studies. Either option presents challenges. The apolitical approach, with its purely academic focus, can appear to students to be irrelevant to their lives or society. Indeed, when I was a college student, I came to feel that my English classes lacked social purpose; what did close readings of John Donne's poetry have to do with the injustices unfolding outside our campus gates? The political approach, however, can strike some students as liberal indoctrination by left-leaning humanities instructors, posing a real risk of alienating conservative students. I suggest that the Center's interpretation of the Bahá'í value of nonpartisanship could fruitfully be applied to this ongoing debate.

Indeed, while many composition-rhetoric scholars concur that current events and even politics should play a role in the classroom—the "cultural studies" approach to first-year composition enjoys popularity (McLeod)—the question of *how* remains open. Various methods have been suggested, such as Krista Ratcliffe's "rhetorical listening" to promote intercultural dialogue, Adam Banks's "digital griot" perspective on community engagement, and Barry Kroll's infusion of mindfulness into argumentation—to name just a few. All these methods point toward inculcating open-minded dispositions among instructors and students, a crucial quality for good writing and civic deliberation alike.

Nonpartisanship could be added to this toolkit as a method for embracing the discussion of governance, even politics, in composition classes, both in class discussions and student projects. The Center focuses its critical eye on policy, leaving aside the characters of individual politicians or parties; its approach could be mirrored in classroom discourse. The approach, if explained by the instructor, could facilitate the productive aspects of the contact zone while dissuading attacks on individuals or political groups. For example, around the time of the 2016 presidential election, during the proposal argument unit of a first-year rhetoric and composition class, I organized a class activity on the border wall project advocated by Trump. I asked half the students to write and present proposals for the border wall, and half to make proposals against it, applying the rhetorical strategies we were studying (precedent, consequence, and principle) and targeting an audience of both Democrats and Republicans. With policy, rather than politicians or parties, as the focus, the debate proceeded civilly and furnished an opportunity for us to both consider a hot-button issue and practice the proposal genre. Indeed, a nonpartisan approach to politics makes sense for a rhetoric-based curriculum: it enables a rhetorician to find common ground with an audience regardless of political affiliation, and it deters the ad hominem fallacy,

thereby encouraging thoughtful evaluation of issues rather than easy attacks on individuals. Perhaps this practice, in combination with the myriad methods for engaging the world beyond the classroom walls proposed by other composition scholars, could help foster civic engagement, initiating deliberations more civil than those that have overtaken contemporary U.S. politics.

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Chapter 4 Undocumented Immigration and Sacred Journeying: Kino Border Initiative

December 9, 2017: I have just crossed from Nogales, Arizona, into Nogales, Mexico. Along with my research partner, Mehr Mumtaz, I am here to participate in the Bi-National Posada.[12] Traditional Mexican *posadas*, which occur during Christmastime, re-enact Mary and Joseph's search for a place to birth Jesus in Bethlehem. This version likewise features actors playing Mary and Joseph, complete with a donkey for Mary to ride, but it re-contextualizes the pageant in contemporary immigration. The traditional focus on innkeepers' inhospitality to the Christian Holy Family is transferred to various state actors who deny refuge to undocumented immigrants. Organized by two Catholic bodies, the Kino Border Initiative (KBI) and Dioceses without Borders, the Bi-National Posada conveys a religious protest against the mistreatment of undocumented immigrants.

In fact, I arranged this research trip to Nogales—a town split by the border wall—so that I could observe the Posada. A bilingual comic book I encountered a few months earlier, which was co-published by KBI and a partner organization, had introduced me to the event. In the book, titled *Migrant: Stories of Hope and Resilience* (Korgen and Pyle), the Bi-National Posada occupies the final chapter. Vibrant panels portray the Bi-National Posada wending along the looming border wall (Figure 4-1, below[13]). The contrast between the small figures and the enormous structure struck me. I was also struck by the artists' imaginative rendering of the Posada's conclusion; they write, "Mary and Joseph come to the end of their journey. How will they be

[12] Funding for my on-site research at KBI was arranged by Dr. Jack Selzer. I am grateful for his support, as well as for the work of my co-researcher, Mehr Mumtaz, which I draw from at times. Our research plan (STUDY00008420) was approved by the Penn State IRB on November 21, 2017.

[13] Figures 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3 are reproduced from Korgen and Pyle's *Migrant* under Fair Use.

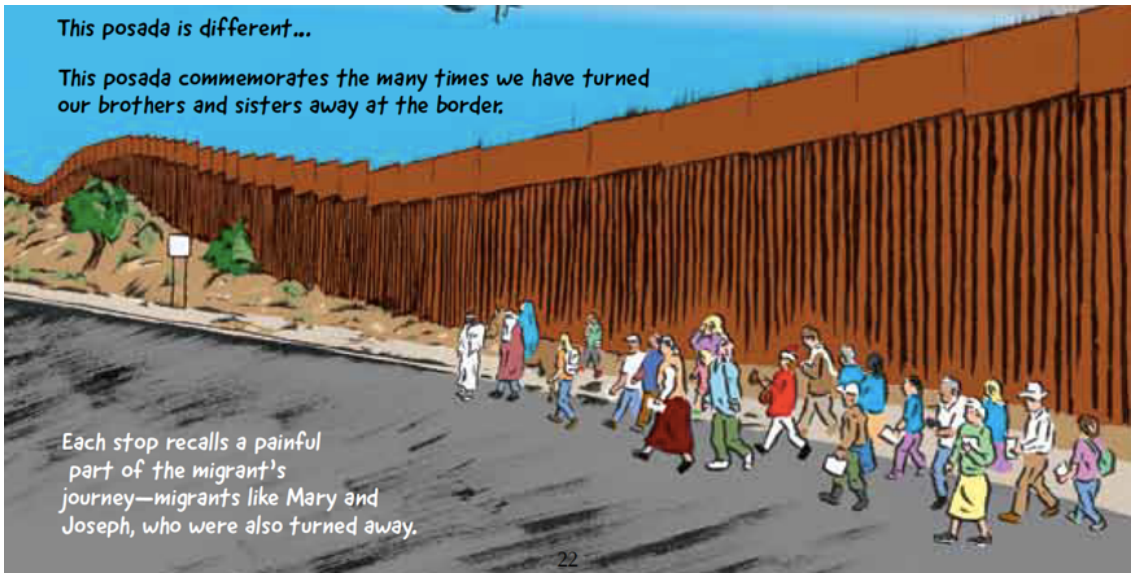

Figure 4-1: Panel from page 22 of Migrant

received?" (23). The next page, which concludes the book, portrays an opening in the border wall through which Mary and Joseph walk with the pope, surrounded by a diverse crowd (Figure 4-2). Above this gathering, in a turquoise sky, hang questions for the reader: "How will you receive them? What will you say to the migrant at your door? Will you give them shelter? Will you give them your heart?" (24). By picturing Mary and Joseph crossing from Mexico into the United States, this image draws a clear parallel: the Holy Pilgrims are forebears of the migrants trying to cross the border today. Intrigued by this analogy, I decided to see the pageant firsthand.

Figure 4-2: Part of the full-page panel on page 24 of Migrant

Now, having walked into Mexico with Mehr and other Posada attendees, I stand in the sunny, lively Plaza Pesqueira, a pedestrian mall several hundred feet south of the omnipresent

border wall, waiting for the Posada to begin. The gathering crowd, which eventually numbers about sixty, includes Latin- and Euro-American participants. I note the confluence of privileged white Americans like me with KBI's clients, migrants from Mexico and Central America, some recently deported, some preparing to cross the Sonora, a few of whom talk to Mehr and me during the event.

The Posada begins: scripts are handed out. Clergymen from both sides of the border deliver a bilingual introduction. We start to walk along Calle Internacional, a street that runs along the wall. Up close, I can see that the wall has been adorned with pictures and messages protesting division and policing: a boy shot to death by the Border Patrol gazes from a portrait, tiny crucifix memorials sprout from the earth in their dozens, and painted slogans shout from the wall's bollards—for instance, "Nuestros sueños de justicia no los detiene ningun muro" (Our dreams of justice won't be stopped by any wall). The wall, dwarfing Calle Internacional, dwarfing us, underscores the Posada's protest against divisive immigration policies.

Scripts in hand, Mehr and I follow along with performances—songs and skits performed at intervals along the two-mile walk—that dramatize the plight of undocumented immigrants in both the United States and Mexico. The skits (to which I return later in this chapter) re-read Jesus's death sentence by trying his persecutors, who are analogized to today's immigration authorities: the Border Patrol and the current U.S. and Mexican presidents. Though my rusty Spanish skills limit my comprehension, I am impressed by the strident critiques leveled at the authorities—and at all those who stand by silently as migrants suffer. Yet, an atmosphere of fellowship pervades the Posada, solidified with a dinner served near KBI's migrant aid center, or "Comedor," at its conclusion.

With the Posada, KBI and its co-organizer reverse the default demonization of immigrants by comparing their suffering to that of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. As KBI's director says, immigrants "evangelize us, truly. They teach us so much: they teach us about the strength of the human spirit, they teach us what it means to trust in God, they teach us what it means to give everything out of love for your family" (Burr). What are the rhetorical affordances of portraying undocumented immigrants as noble, even sacred? To address this question, I first furnish background on rhetoric about undocumented immigration, as well as on KBI. Next, I turn to this chapter's case study: KBI's educational programs targeting U.S. residents, specifically their Bi-National Posada and immersion experiences. In my analysis, I consider how religion informs KBI's outreach and affords rhetorical resources to challenge the dominant *topoi* of immigration rhetoric, especially the security paradigm so predominant in discourse about the border.

I find that KBI launches its strongest challenge to the securitized border through its rhetoric of journeying. This rhetoric draws from both the spiritual world of the Bible—especially narratives regarding the forced mobility of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph—and the material world via communal walking. Journeying's embodied lessons complement another centerpiece of KBI's pedagogy: direct encounter as the most persuasive method of shifting an attitude from suspicion to hospitality. As KBI implies, hospitality is the moral response to migration, which tests obedience to the divine imperative to care for the stranger. Stemming from deep-rooted religious traditions, KBI's rhetoric supplants nativism's *topoi* with powerful Catholic commonplaces of human dignity, community, and global solidarity.

UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRATION: A FLASHPOINT OF CIVIC RHETORIC

Undocumented immigration to the United States is, in most political rhetoric, associated with unauthorized U.S.-Mexico border crossings—even though most new undocumented immigrants today entered legally on visas but overstayed (Gonzales). In fact, the concept of (un)documented immigration as we know it dates back only a century. With xenophobia's flames fanned by World War I, Western countries, including the United States, implemented a restrictive immigration regime requiring would-be travelers to obtain documents such as passports and visas (Zolberg).[14] For example, with a 1929 federal law, the documentation regime turned what had been a default mode of migrating into the United States, crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, into a felony (Flores 375). "[H]uman beings as such have ceased to exist for quite a while . . . since passports or birth certificates, and sometimes even income tax receipts, are no longer formal papers but matters of social distinction" (118–19), opined Hannah Arendt, who entered the United States as a refugee in 1941. Documentation requirements, together with race-based quotas, suppressed entries for many decades, with the immigrant share of the U.S. population dropping from 14.7% in 1910 to 4.7% in 1970 (Migration Policy Institute).

Nevertheless, humans continued to move without passports and visas, prompting additional attempts at immigration control. By the 1980s, the stage was set for border

[14] The documentation regime has its roots in earlier immigration restrictions, which used to be primarily enforced upon *arrival*, giving rise to the well-known stories of immigrants rejected at Ellis Island. Regarding the initiation of "remote control," or immigration control at the point of *departure*, Aristide Zolberg writes, "The implementation of such a restrictive international movement regime required a vast increase in state power by way of the issuance of reliable identity documents and border-crossing permits . . . In the United States, for example, the imposition of visa requirements for visitors as well as immigrants required a fundamental transformation of consular services from a largely honorific part-time organization staffed by natives of the countries where they were located into a U.S.-staffed bureaucracy trained to police newly imposed U.S. entry requirements" (1209). While Zolberg dates the regime to the 1920s, John Torpey differs, finding its roots in the Chinese exclusion laws passed in the late 1800s.

militarization to become the norm, as the War on Drugs (today complemented by the War on Terror) justified crackdowns on border-crossers, conflating them with drug traffickers (Chávez, "Border Interventions"). The Soviet Union's collapse intensified the border fixation, as the United States turned its attention from its fallen nemesis to supposed internal threats, including undocumented immigrants (Ono and Sloop). In the 1990s, border anxiety generated a security paradigm called Prevention through Deterrence, which funneled migrants away from urban borders into the Sonoran Desert; this terrain's lethality would hypothetically deter crossings (De León). The terrain has proven lethal but not a deterrent. Prevention through Deterrence remains in force, with its apparatuses like detention, the border wall, and surveillance systems swelling with federal dollars.

Recognizing the prominence of the U.S.-Mexico border in political discourse, rhetoric scholars have conducted numerous studies on this motif. In *Shifting Borders* (2002), Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop published the first extended rhetorical analysis of this issue, assessing the debate around Proposition 187, California's attempt to deny public services to undocumented immigrants. Their analysis revealed the underpinnings of rhetoric around undocumented immigrants, which characterizes them as economic units, criminals, and disease-carriers—the economy, security, and culture *topoi*. Subsequent studies have extended Ono and Sloop's findings. For instance, Anne Demo, J. David Cisneros, and Karma Chávez have each critiqued authorities' framing of border control—for depicting faceless masses surging across the border ("Sovereignty Discourse"), for attributing "illegal affect" to all U.S. Latinos ("Looking 'Illegal'"), and for justifying militarization by imagining an insurgency in the borderlands ("Border Interventions"), respectively. These scholars complement critiques of state rhetoric with attention to the oppositional rhetoric of advocates, ranging from documentarians (Demo,

"Online Documentaries") to marchers (Cisneros, *The Border*) to LGBTQ-migrant coalitions (Chávez, *Queer Migration*). They find that many activists use dominant *topoi* (e.g., mobilizing the economy *topos* to claim neoliberal citizenship for migrants). Yet, some reframe the conversation—for instance, questioning the entire documentation regime or highlighting migrants as holistic human individuals. Despite this apparent interest in how migrant advocates reframe public discourse, scholars have largely dismissed the role of religion—especially of the Catholic Church, the faith group most actively speaking about this issue in the United States.

Catholicism's Contested Role in Undocumented Immigration Advocacy

Catholic immigration rhetoric has been designated as tainted by Ono and Sloop as well as by Chávez. Ono and Sloop acknowledge that the Church sided with immigrants during the Proposition 187 furor, protesting for their rights. Nevertheless, they question the Church's motives, suggesting that it acted not out of moral outrage but to perpetuate its influence over Latinos, maintaining its colonial legacy (98). Another concern is raised by Chávez, who points out that, while advocating for immigrants, the Church endangers LGBTQ individuals by propagating family values discourse (*Queer Migration*). Thus, Church involvement can undermine efforts to unite multiple oppressed groups, the migrant and LGBTQ communities.

These legitimate concerns point toward the disadvantages of powerful rhetors' participation in social justice advocacy; institutions like the Church carry a great deal of baggage. But what about the advantages? The Church has a significant audience—a billion Catholics worldwide—and a storehouse of rhetorical resources assembled over two millennia. Positions of power must be used to speak for oppressed others when doing so will empower them (rather than simply amplifying the rhetor's voice), according to Linda Martín Alcoff. Despite its

tarnished reputation, the Church may still serve the cause of the oppressed. To understand how the Church attempts to channel its vast power into migrants' empowerment, I focus on its advocacy efforts.

Despite its overall conservatism, the Catholic Church has been a primary agent of progressive rhetoric on immigration in the post-WWII era. In 1952, for example, Pope Pius XII issued an encyclical comparing the Holy Family's forced movements to contemporary migration. This rhetoric was put into action; for instance, in the 1980s, some Catholic churches, along with other Christian denominations, defied the U.S. government's prosecution of undocumented Central American refugees by providing them sanctuary (Hoye). The Catholic social teachings—a set of seven principles guiding Catholics to apply their "understanding of human life and human dignity" to social problems (USCCB)—undergird this advocacy work, encouraging a cosmopolitan, border-transcending perspective on migration as a universal right.

The exigence for immigration advocacy has only increased in the era of Prevention through Deterrence and Proposition 187. By the 1990s, the right of the U.S. government to forcibly control immigration went unquestioned, with the few pro-immigrant arguments relying on the *topos* of economic value (Demo, "Faithful Sovereignty"). The Catholic response, framing immigration as a moral rather than national issue, was therefore unique. Indeed, in the Proposition 187 debate, the Church contributed one of the sole arguments that positioned immigrants as full humans, not just economic units (Ono and Sloop). Continuing this advocacy work, in 2003, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and its Mexican counterpart published "Strangers No Longer," a letter that, as Demo shows, prioritizes human dignity—the universal right to seek a fulfilling life—over national sovereignty ("Faithful Sovereignty"). Immigration is more central than ever to Catholic rhetoric thanks to Pope Francis, elected in 2013, who has

made it the cornerstone of his pontificate, linking it to humanity, opportunity, and the Gospel (Guzik).[15] As this synopsis of its advocacy from Pius XII to Francis demonstrates, the Church, both in the United States and globally, has worked to frame immigration within Christian morals and narratives.

To further illuminate Catholic immigration advocacy, KBI is a useful case study for several reasons. For one, KBI operates in the U.S.–Mexico borderlands, literally straddling the border; therefore, it relates to the scholarly conversation on "rhetorical border studies" (De La Garza et al.). In addition, as a small organization—it has about fifteen staff—it complicates the depiction of large faith groups as monoliths by some rhetorical scholarship (e.g., Ono and Sloop on Catholicism; Crowley on Evangelical Protestantism). KBI's activities exemplify how religious rhetors, even when allied with global parent institutions, adapt their discourse to local contexts. To understand KBI's situatedness in the borderlands, it is worth reviewing its history, mission, tenets, and activities.

The Kino Border Initiative: A Jesuit Organization Intervening in the Borderlands

In 1665, about one century after it was founded to promote Catholicism, the Society of Jesus initiated a new member: Padre Kino, or Eusebio Francisco Kino (c. 1645–1711) (Rolle). He embraced the evangelistic duties of Jesuit life, spending thirty years on a mission from Spain to its American empire. In Sonora, a region that today straddles Arizona and Mexico, he roved

[15] In Pope Francis's *Migrants and Refugees*, he explicitly condemns the commonplaces of nativism: "Many destination countries have seen the spread of rhetoric decrying the risks posed to *national security* or the *high cost* of welcoming new arrivals, and thus demeaning the human dignity due to all as sons and daughters of God" (51, italics added). He also notes that the resulting "violence, racial discrimination and xenophobia" are "matters of great concern for all those concerned for the safety of every human being."

freely. With no border to delay him, he mapped, colonized, and proselytized, founding twenty missions. Despite his colonizing project, the "Apostle of Arizona" demonstrated concern about Europeans' treatment of the region's indigenous people.

It is this trait of their namesake—Kino's role as "a defender of native peoples and a protector of their rights" ("Kino Teens")—that KBI strives to emulate. In 2009, after identifying a need for a ministry serving migrants along the Arizona–Mexico border, six Jesuit and Catholic organizations founded KBI ("Who We Are"). Nogales, a hub of border-crossing and deportation in the middle of a migration corridor (the Border Patrol sector typically logging the most apprehensions [De León 6]), was chosen as the location. Offices were founded on both sides of the border-split town since "migration is a multinational phenomenon" ("What We Do"). This U.S.-Mexican organization's mission is "to respond to the most critical needs by respecting the God-given dignity of the human person and by fostering bi-national solidarity through humanitarian assistance, education and research/advocacy" ("What We Do"). In the next section, I expand on KBI's motives for "fostering bi-national solidarity" by presenting its perspective on undocumented immigration.

KBI's Political Exigence: Migration Injustice

Migrant, the comic book introduced earlier, encapsulates KBI's perspective on the causes and human consequences of undocumented immigration, using vignettes drawn from the authors' interviews with KBI clients and other immigrants. Available for free online, the book is intended as an educational tool; its producers aim to diffuse it widely, hoping teachers will assign it to students, according to my interviews. *Migrant* instructs the reader to unlearn

commonplaces, for the "push and pull factors are not always what you might think—or hear on cable news channels" (1).

The reader learns about how these push-pull factors bring Latin Americans across the border and about their fate if apprehended. Four reasons undocumented migrants come to or remain in the United States structure the book: (1) fleeing violence from organized crime, especially in Central America; (2) seeking better income than can be earned at home due to the economic effects of NAFTA and of gang extortion, with U.S. earnings often supporting relatives via remittances; (3) reuniting with U.S.-resident relatives, including parents, spouses, and children; and (4) growing up in the United States after being brought as children (the situation of DREAMers). Contrasting with these reasonable motives, Prevention through Deterrence has made the Sonoran Desert into "a weapon of enforcement" that has killed thousands (6), made all the more deadly by the Border Patrol's punitive treatment of migrants (8). If a migrant is apprehended, she could be incarcerated before deportation. Figure 4-3 illustrates several pathways in the Border Patrol's "Consequence Delivery System" (10–11): mass judicial processing through Operation Streamline, in which a judge sentences dozens of migrants at a time; possible imprisonment for felonies such as multiple border-

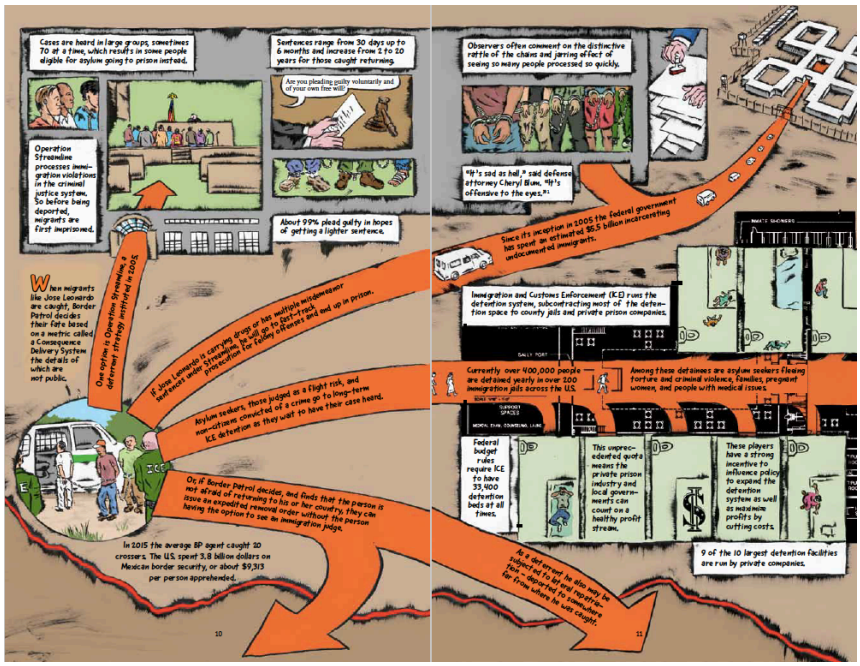

Figure 4-3: Pages 10 and 11 of Migrant

crossings; detention in centers operated by Immigration Customs and Enforcement and its private contractors; and expedited removal, in which the Border Patrol deports migrants without a hearing.

After providing these facts, the authors query, "Statistics give us part of the story—but who are these migrants who cross at their own peril?" (6). The book focuses on migrants as individuals. "You are made in the image of God—and you have dignity. From your dignity flow human rights" (13), a KBI staff member tells migrants at the Comedor in one vignette. Migrants are not made in the image of a criminal but in that of the Creator. Indeed, family unity—a virtue modeled by the Holy Family—motivates the northward journeys of all the migrants in the comic, who desire either to reunite with relatives in the United States or to remit funds to family back home. Thus, KBI presents the border "crisis" as the result of unjust situations that spur people to seek better lives for themselves and their families. It is a moral, not a security, crisis. This view emanates from KBI's Christian tenets.

KBI's Christian Tenets: Dignity, Community, Solidarity

"I think that religion is important because it . . . gives us incredible hope in the midst of really desperate circumstances," reflected Jody, who manages KBI's education and advocacy, in an interview.[16] KBI is guided by values including "human dignity," "compassion," "bi-nationality," "collaboration," and "justice" ("Values"). These values stem from beliefs that "Christ is present in everyone – migrants, helpers, neighbors, and government," that "Catholic social teaching supports the right of the individual to migrate to create a better life," and that "there is a

[16] All names of KBI staff members and associates are pseudonyms.

spiritual dimension to the crisis of deportation that we are uniquely positioned to address." To explain KBI's tenets further, which I do using interviews Mehr and I conducted with staff, I group them around three themes: *human dignity*, *community*, and *global solidarity*.

When I visited KBI, I noticed that *human dignity* came up in nearly every conversation, which indicates this tenet's centrality. Human dignity denotes the spiritual value of every human life. It stems from beliefs about how the spirits of God and Christ permeate every human. Regarding God's spirit, Father John, KBI's director, explained that "man and woman are made in God's image and likeness, and that gives us . . . dignity with rights and responsibilities." About Christ's omnipresence, he paraphrased Matthew 25, in which Christ tells his followers that "whatever you did for the least of my sisters and brothers, you did it for me"; this Gospel leads KBI to recognize Christ in people, "especially in the vulnerable migrant, deportee," and to serve them—through both humanitarian work and policy advocacy—as a way of "serving him." Human dignity also means respecting "the ranchers or Border Patrol," perceiving their humanity despite potentially divergent views, as Gillian, KBI's education coordinator, pointed out. Jody provided a synopsis: "every single migrant who walks into the Comedor is made in the image of God and is a representation of Jesus. . . . it's not that we only feed you and serve you water, but that *you* have so much to offer to *us*." The Catholic teaching of human dignity thus motivates KBI to envision service recipients not as victimized masses but as spiritual beings, individuals with "a name and a story" who have not only needs but also contributions ("Values").

Closely connected to the principle of human dignity is that of *community*, which encompasses values like family unity and fellowship. The Catholic social teachings emphasize the participation of each individual in social units, especially family and local community. The parent-child relationship, which is threatened by deportation, is therefore a major concern of

Catholic immigration advocates and has been analyzed in KBI's white papers (e.g., *Our Values on the Line: Migrant Abuse and Family Separation at the Border*). Beyond family unity, the principle of community leads KBI to facilitate fellowship; referring to an image of the Last Supper, Jody explained, "that's what we're looking out for—gathering around a table and living the Eucharist in a way that isn't just Mass, but that [is] also building community through this idea of unity that we get from the Church teaching." KBI's acts of hospitality, like providing meals eaten communally, participate in this project of "gathering around a table." Such gatherings, when they bring together migrants and U.S. residents, could replace alienation with fellowship. With Pope Francis's guidance, there is a "real focus on hospitality right now, and direct contact with the migrants," according to Father John; these direct encounters might change public attitudes toward migrants so that "their human dignity can be recognized" and "more just policies can become a reality." In sum, the tenet of community leads KBI to prioritize issues like deportation and efforts like building transnational fellowship.

Beyond community at a local level, *global solidarity* inspires a cosmopolitan, rather than nationalistic, approach to immigration. Reading the Bible as a "migration story," as Gillian put it, inspires a view of migration as a positive aspect of human life with ties to religious movements such as pilgrimages and exoduses. Moreover, the Bible also conveys the obligation to extend hospitality beyond one's immediate circle (e.g., "Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" [*King James Bible*, Exodus 22:21]). As Father John remarked, "Scriptures are very *clear*, it's care for the stranger, it's reach out to this person in need." The belief in obligations across borders reflects the Christian vision of the Kingdom of God uniting the world; as Jody explains, a key principle of KBI is

> the idea that Christianity is a global religion. There's a sense of brotherhood at a global scale. So, our identity as KBI is that we are binational, and I think that's important because the Church exists across borders and there's nothing easy about being binational, but we see it as being prophetic of the Kingdom of God, [as] that is something that doesn't have borders.

This cosmopolitan vision puts the Catholic perspective on immigration at odds with the mainstream prioritization of national sovereignty. Catholic social teachings recognize that if a person cannot attain a dignified life in her homeland, she has the right to migrate, as Father John explained; countries "have a right to protect their border, but not at the expense of human dignity"—a belief arising from perceiving "the common good" not "just as existing within a country or within boundaries, but . . . for human beings in general." As he concluded, "the common good doesn't stop at the border." This Catholic cosmopolitanism motivates KBI to challenge the U.S. governments' methods of policing immigration.

The tenets of human dignity, community, and global solidarity inspire KBI's efforts on behalf of undocumented immigrants. Later, I will assess how these tenets play out in its rhetoric as exemplified by the Posada and immersion program. These two activities belong to a larger, three-pronged roster of humanitarian aid, policy advocacy, and education.

Education and Outreach: A Core Area of Action

Kino Border Initiative's humanitarian aid, the first prong, revolves around its migrant aid center ("the Comedor") in Nogales, Mexico. The Comedor is a small building near the Mariposa Port of Entry, where deportees are frequently deposited. After the ordeal of migration, detention, and deportation, now penniless and homeless in gangster-ridden Nogales, often a thousand miles

from home, many deportees face bleak prospects (De León). Hence, KBI offers two hot meals per day to migrants—mostly Mexican deportees, as well as some Central American asylum-seekers—along with other social services, including first aid, check cashing, phone calls, donated clothing, and legal counsel. In 2017, it reported serving 40,659 meals and providing first aid to 4,024 clients (*Sharing the Journey* 4). Near the Comedor, it maintains Nazareth House, an apartment for female migrants and their children, which sheltered 360 clients in 2017.

KBI utilizes its daily intake of migrants to gather data, mostly via surveys, that it uses in policy advocacy. From migrants' reports on their treatment by authorities, KBI produces white papers in collaboration with visiting researchers and fellow Catholic organizations on topics including deportations from the U.S. interior; family separation due to detention and deportation; abusive apprehension, detention, and deportation procedures; flaws in the Customs and Border Protection complaints process; and impunity in Mexico for crimes against migrants. The U.S. and Mexican governments are the audiences of this advocacy; a broader swath of the U.S. public, particularly residents of the Southwest, is the audience of KBI's educational efforts.

In general, KBI's educational programs seek to broaden and complicate participants' views on immigration. These programs include introductory presentations about the issue (88 in 2017), short retreats and longer immersions in the Nogales area (104 and 56, respectively), and high school clubs called "Kino Teens" (12 so far; *Sharing the Journey* 4). I also place the annual Bi-National Posada in the category of education because it encourages the U.S. participants (as well as the Mexican ones) to reflect on their role in immigration justice. In the remainder of this chapter, I take a rhetorical lens to the Posada and the immersion program to illuminate how KBI's educational activities persuade U.S. residents to interrogate their views on immigration. Both programs take an embodied and spiritual approach to this divisive issue, encouraging

participants to critically examine dominant immigration discourse and to shake off its calcified *topoi* (the culture-economy-security triad).

POSADAS AND MIGRATION: SEARCHING FOR HOSPITALITY

In annual reenactments of the Holy Family's travailing travels, the Via Crucis and the Posadas, Catholics symbolically follow the footsteps of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The Via Crucis (Stations of the Cross) re-enacts Jesus's route through Jerusalem (Vidal), while the Posadas trace Mary and Joseph's journey in Bethlehem. It is no accident that both rituals retrace paths determined by human inhospitality, for Jesus's "homelessness, exile, and exclusion from shelter" are central to the New Testament, as Elaine Scarry observes (218). Since, in Christian Scripture, "the body carries the force of confirmation" (215), walking in the Via Crucis and Posadas reaffirms faith. That these commemorations evoke the presence of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph contrasts with "modern liberal notions," which presume that "the gods are not available by touch, taste, sound, or sight" (Orsi 13). Conversely, for believers, the divine can be sensed, even embodied—for instance, the expectant Virgin Mary appears via a local girl in the Posadas.

The Posadas (meaning "inns") arose from Spanish Catholic missionaries' employment of skits to catechize indigenous Mexicans. Spanning nine nights before Christmas, they represent Joseph and Mary's search for housing in Bethlehem, which ended with delivering Jesus in a manger. Nativity folklore portrays multiple innkeepers turning the couple away. Posada participants playing Joseph, Mary, an angel, and innkeepers enact this story. An accompanying choir musically petitions the innkeepers for lodging; for instance, one local petition song implores shelter for the "viajeros" (travelers) (Brandes). The first few innkeepers refuse, also in song, but finally, one offers shelter; one song of welcome entreats the "santos peregrinos" (holy

pilgrims) to accept the humble abode (Norquest). All participants then celebrate with refreshments and a piñata.

Highlighting the Holy Family's forced movements, whether Mary and Joseph's search for lodging, the family's flight to Egypt, or Jesus's path to crucifixion, enables an analogy to be drawn between these *viajeros* and contemporary migrants. Starting in the twentieth century, if not earlier, the Catholic Church has made this analogy explicit in texts such as Pope Pius XII's 1952 encyclical:

> The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil.

Pope Pius XII binds the Holy Family to "every migrant," both those seeking asylum from violence and those who migrate out of "want" or economic need. U.S. Catholic leaders draw similar parallels. For example, Catholic organizations have used the Via Crucis to advocate for undocumented immigrants and to reflect on refugees' hardships (Jones; Zauzmer). The analogy also inspires Posadas around the United States that aim "to draw attention to the struggles of migrants" (Benevento). The Bi-National Posada in Nogales is one such spiritual protest.

Bi-National Posada 2017: Critiquing Immigration Policy via Jesus's Tribulations

Enacting a quasi-Biblical narrative with audience involvement, the Bi-National Posada follows the tradition of processions like the Posadas and Via Crucis. This rich tradition, linking movement with the Holy Family, saturates its rhetorical situation: the Posada "gathers folks from both sides of the border to remember the plight of the Holy Family [in their flight to Egypt] just as migrants crossing the border are forced to search for a room at the Inn" (Kino Border Initiative and Dioceses without Borders). Furthermore, the Posada sounds a call for reform: "Through the bi-national Posada we celebrate today, we draw attention to current U.S. immigration law, which separates families and causes great harm to human dignity."

Using the script I received at the 2017 event, I first summarize, then analyze, the Bi-National Posada. Like the event itself, this script is in Spanish. Though it names no author besides the two sponsoring organizations, KBI and Dioceses without Borders, I learned from a KBI staff member that a Mexican nun employed by KBI, who helps run the Comedor, composed it. This text is complex, bursting with allusions to the New Testament and to contemporary U.S. and Mexican politics. It is also substantial: nearly five thousand words long, it took about two hours to perform, including walking time. It is divided into four stations, most involving an explanation of purpose, skit, song(s), and prayer. The stations are prefaced by an introduction.

The "Introducción" explains the analogy underlying the performance, describing how "[l]a posada que vamos a celebrar hoy, será un poco diferente" (the Posada we're going to celebrate today will be a little different).[17] It explains that in their sufferings at the hands of the

[17] Translations are my own.

Romans, including the inhospitable circumstances around Jesus's birth, the Holy Family lived in solidarity with the world's poor, including most migrants, whose lives are circumscribed by oppressive systems. The introduction concludes, "Jesús, a quien hoy recordamos, fue condenado a muerte porque se puso del lado del pobre. Presenciemos una relectura de esta condena a muerte" (Jesus, whom we remember today, was condemned to death because he sided with the poor. Let us witness a rereading of this death sentence). Thus, the Posada positions Jesus as an advocate of migrants and rereads his condemnation—his arrest and trials presided over by rulers of Judea and Galilee including Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas—in this light.

At the first station, the focus is on corrupt authorities "vendidos al sistema" (sold to the system). These authorities are literally put on trial in a skit, which was performed on a trailer parked on Calle Internacional. Before a judge there appears Pilate, who is compared to Donald Trump in three ways: both are the highest authority in their land (Judea and the United States, respectively); both separate families (Pilate by depriving Mary of her son, Trump by separating immigrant parents from their children); and both claim to defend their land against threats (Jesus and Mexicans). After the skit, the first station concludes with a song and a prayer; then, participants walk to the next station while singing traditional Posada lyrics: "Ya se va José – Con su esposa amada – Porque en esta casa – No hallaron posada" (Joseph is leaving with his beloved wife because in this house they found no lodging). This sequence—trial, song, prayer, then walking while singing—recurs in the following stations.

The second station names its theme as the separation of families, with the Biblical story of Mary and Joseph's anguished search for their young son in Jerusalem analogized to the "tragedia" of deportations that divide kin. Through another trial, this theme is connected to leaders who fail to act against injustice: Herod Antipas and Enrique Peña Nieto (then Mexico's

president). Again, three comparisons are drawn: both leaders are puppets (Herod of the Romans, Peña Nieto of the United States, organized crime, and other politicians); both fail to intervene in injustice (the former to stop Jesus from being handed back to Pilate, the latter to help deportees); and both mock these victims (by costuming Jesus as King of Jews, and by lavishing riches on relatives while claiming to support deportees, respectively).

The third station, focusing on the sufferings of migrants in the desert, concludes the trials. The skit centers on a Roman captain who, according to some Gospel accounts, arrested Jesus. This captain is analogized to the Border Patrol: both hunt and arrest the innocent (Jesus and migrants, respectively); both track and capture them; both silence their conscience as they blindly obey orders; and both ignore the grief of the vulnerable (the Virgin Mary and migrant mothers and children).

Finally, the fourth station concludes the Posada on a brighter note, honoring "a todos los servidores que realizan un trabajo insustituible a favor de los migrantes" (all the volunteers who perform irreplaceable work for migrants). There is no trial in this station, only a celebration of hospitality and humanitarianism that peaks in a sung finale, which I analyze in a subsequent section. Before coming to this song, I analyze two other elements that reframe immigration: the trials' closing arguments and the petition songs' vocalization of migrants' perspectives. These elements exemplify KBI's moral critique of nativism.

Putting the Audience on Trial: From Individual Blame to Universal Accountability

As traditional Posadas embellish the Gospels' account of Mary and Joseph's search for lodging, the Bi-National Posada invents a new chapter in the narrative of Jesus: the court trials of his persecutors. These trials reverse the power dynamics of Jesus's condemnation, trying the men

who tried him. In so doing, the skits suggest the unhappy fate of unjust leaders; the once-great Roman Empire is now ancient ruins, its leaders largely forgotten, while Jesus is now venerated by more than two billion followers. However, rather than ending by smugly sentencing Jesus's persecutors, each skit concludes by accusing the audience. Who is on trial here, in the end? It is ultimately not Jesus's persecutors, or even their analogues, today's immigration authorities. It is us, the polities of the United States and Mexico. We are on trial for complicity in migrants' mistreatment: the defense lawyer indicts us for passivity, selfishness, and blind obedience in the three closing arguments. Each argument peppers the audience with rhetorical questions that ask us to acknowledge the egocentrism we share with the defendants: Who among us does not want a cushy life? Who wants to risk losing status and job by advocating for the oppressed?

In the first trial, the lawyer contends that "Trump es inocente, perdón, Pilato es inocente" (Trump is innocent—excuse me, Pilate is innocent). For the audience to condemn these leaders would be hypocritical—"Si Ustedes lo condenan se condenan a sí mismos" (If you condemn them, you condemn yourselves)—because we likewise perpetuate injustice. The limelight now turns toward Mexicans, whom the lawyer accuses of complicity in the conditions forcing their compatriots to migrate and in the abuse of Central American migrants. But, like Pilate, "se han lavado los manos" (you have washed your hands) of these abuses, "culpando a otros de su tibieza, de su indiferencia" (blaming others for your tepidity, your indifference). Passive in the face of migrants' suffering, we are content to blame Trump and other leaders.

This indictment of the audience recurs in the trial of Herod/Peña Nieto; the lawyer again warns, "Si ustedes condenan a este hombre, se estarán condenando ustedes mismos" (If you condemn this man, you will be condemning yourselves). As Herod and Peña Nieto prefer preserving their comfortable lives to intervening in injustice, so do we. Indeed, "¿Quién de

ustedes ha levantado su voz para defenderlos [migrantes] de tanto abuso cometido en contra de ellos por las mismas autoridades, quién?" (Who among you has raised your voice to defend migrants from the abuses committed by authorities, who?). Selfishly concerned with our own ease, we abandon migrants to their fate as Herod left Jesus to his.

Similarly, we unthinkingly follow orders, so to condemn the Roman captain and Border Patrol for this fault would be hypocritical (". . . se están condenando a sí mismos"). We do as we are told, "producto de la sociedad de consumo que nos impone modas, artículos, costumbres, diversión y que nos dice que es lo que tenemos que comprar" (products of a consumeristic society that mandates fashions, items, customs, and entertainment and tells us what to buy). Moreover, when we have a good job, we obey our higher-ups to keep it. How then can we condemn Border Patrol agents? Indeed, "ellos trabajan de la mejor manera para honrar a su país y tener ascenso en su puesto" (they work in the best way to honor their country and get promoted). We conform to our materialistic culture and to the directives of our superiors, so we have no grounds to criticize Border Patrol agents for similar conformity.

What if the trials excised these three closing arguments and simply ended with the judge sentencing Pilate, Herod, and the Roman captain, stand-ins for Trump, Peña Nieto, and the Border Patrol? By holding the U.S. and Mexican authorities to account not only for the wellbeing of their native polities but also of migrants, such an outcome would call into question the assumption underlying nativism: that natives matter more than migrants. The trials imply that authorities are responsible for *all* their residents, whatever their origin—whether Galilee or Central America—and if they betray this duty, they will be remembered as villains akin to Pilate and Herod. Yet, with this outcome, the audience, the "público," could rest easy, enjoying self-righteousness by finding fault in politicians. Such a show trial would function like an encomium,

strengthening communal values through the ceremonial exercise of praising or blaming some public figure. An encomiastic exercise, intended to solidify rather than destabilize commonplaces, could not radically disrupt the dominant *topoi* of immigration.

However, by moving the audience from the jury box to the defendant seat, such disruption becomes possible. Every U.S. and Mexican citizen, save those who have risked their ease to protest, is called to account for our governments' crimes against migrants. The turn from accusing another toward examining the self, in the vein of Jesus's injunction to "judge not, that ye not be judged" (*King James Bible*, Matthew 7:1), serves as a call to action. To remedy our moral failings, to avoid the divine punishment meted out to Jesus's persecutors, we must stand up for migrants. Thus, the trials take two steps away from nativism. First, they implicitly disdain the dominant *topoi*'s concern with natives' culture, economy, and security as signs of "su tibieza, de su indiferencia"—as morally reprehensible. Second, by vilifying such apathy, they admonish the audience toward virtues of courage and compassion. The petition songs following each trial reinforce this moral message.

Afuera vs. Adentro: Migrants' Claim to Moral Authority in Petition Songs

The traditional call-and-response songs, in which the outdoor group petitions and the indoor group refuses, are remixed in the Bi-National Posada. Part of the audience takes the role of the choir accompanying Mary and Joseph, playing "Afuera" ("Outside"—in this case, Latinos outside the United States hoping to enter). The other part, analogous to the inhospitable innkeepers, acts as "Adentro" ("Inside"—within the United States). At each station, Afuera sings a three-stanza petition, then Adentro responds with a symmetrical rejection. As I recall, the part of Afuera was given to a small group that accompanied the Posada on the U.S. side of the border

wall, while the main group, standing on the Mexican side, played the inhospitable Adentro—another reversal of power dynamics. For clarity, I will term Afuera "migrants" and Adentro "natives." Contesting nativist views, the petition songs articulate a vision of migrant identity.

The first petition provides two perceptions of migrants: the migrants represent themselves as victims needing refuge, while the natives denigrate them as criminals. The migrants explain that "los explotados latinos / Víctimas de la pobreza" (the exploited Latinos, victims of poverty) come to escape death and crime. Moreover, they remind the natives that they are relied on to perform the worst jobs—an ambivalent argument for acceptance that could support the economy *topos*, in which migrants are (de)valued as cheap labor. In any case, the natives reject the argument, refusing entry to Latinos, whom they demean as "[f]lojos y males vecinos" (lazy and bad neighbors). They further warn, "Quiero limpiar mi país / De ladrones y asesinos" as well as "violadores" (I want to cleanse my country of thieves and murderers, as well as rapists). The natives thus express the security *topos*, which attributes inborn criminality to migrants. But is the migrants' self-representation as needy victims much better? Catholic depictions of migrants as vulnerable, childlike strangers needing shelter have been critiqued by Ono and Sloop, who claim this analogy supports centuries-old justifications for the Church's paternalistic control over indigenous Americans. Calling migrants "exploited victims" could constitute neocolonial condescension. Yet, the second petition complicates this flattening representation.

Now, the migrants gain ferocity, upbraiding the United States for deporting parents from their children. Speaking as deportees, they demand to be reunited "[e]n nombre de Justicia" (in the name of justice), lamenting their "corazón desgarrado" (torn heart). Swerving from lamentation to reproach, the migrants rebuke the natives: "tú no tienes / Derecho a desintegrar"

(you don't have the right to separate us). They warn, "Este crimen, oficiales / Caro lo van a pagar" (officials, you'll pay dearly for this crime). The migrants thus assume the authority of a moral judge, using the language of rights and crime and sentencing immigration agents to a loss of "dignidad" (dignity). Unfazed, the natives respond that they do not care about the migrants' family or problems, again denigrating them: "flojos y criminales / Denigran nuestro país / Son causa de muchos males" (lazy and criminal, you degrade our country, causing many evils). Rhetorically walling off "nuestro país," the natives persist in arrogant nationalism.

The third petition follows nearly the same pattern, except the migrants become even more strident in denouncing the natives, claiming divine authority. Decrying the danger of border crossing, the migrants allege that "[l]os muertos en el desierto / Claman a Díos por justicia / Hasta las piedras reclaman / Y denuncian tu avaricia." (the dead in the desert cry to God for justice until even the stones call out and denounce your greed). Thus, they hold U.S. greed accountable for migration through the desert. Still, though, they seek solidarity with the natives, contending, "Eres parte de nosotros / Saliste de nuestra raza / ¿Por qué razón nos traicionas / Torturas y hasta nos matas?" (You are part of us, you came from our race; why do you betray, torture, and even kill us?). The focus on the "raza" might allude to the previous trial, which denounces Latino Border Patrol agents who "tratan a sus connacionales con la punta del pie" (mistreat their [migrant] compatriots). Or perhaps this claim makes a broader gesture of oneness. In any case, the natives scornfully laugh off the migrants ("me llena de risa"), asserting, "Soy parte del gran imperio / Olvidé ya mis raíces" (I am part of a great empire; I forgot my roots). The natives' attitude remains static.

Though the natives persist in deprecating migrants, the migrants' lyrics evolve from the first petition to the subsequent ones. They move from identifying as vulnerable victims of

poverty and crime in the first petition to channeling God's wrath at the deportations separating families and the policy-driven deaths in the Sonora in the second and third. While the migrants' identity progresses, increasing in moral authority, the natives continue to deride them as lazy and criminal and persevere in debarring them from the United States. The immobility of the natives' responses evokes the longevity of the dominant immigration *topoi*, which have changed little throughout U.S. history. Yet, in the context of the skits, the natives' pride in the United States seems to forebode a fall; the reference to the nation as a "gran imperio" links it to the Roman Empire and thus to inevitable decline. Will the natives ever change, remembering their "raíces" and realizing their oneness with migrants? Reconciliation forms the theme of the final station, in which Afuera and Adentro sing a concluding song.

Reaching the Final Station: A Lyrical Vision of Christian Cosmopolitanism

As traditional posadas conclude with a final stop at which the Holy Family is welcomed, the Bi-National Posada likewise concludes with a reconciliation. This fourth and final station proposes an alternative to the apathy, injustice, and inequality excoriated in the previous three. Instead of judgment, it offers praise for "todas las personas que tienen el corazón abierto al dolor humano para acogerlo, curar sus heridas y ser un oasis en medio del desierto" (all those with hearts open to human sufferers, who welcome them, cure their wounds, and are an oasis in the desert's midst). A vision of Christian cosmopolitanism, of borderless care, finds expression in the petition song.

As in previous stations, the migrants (Afuera) begin the song by protesting against their ill treatment. They explain that "Nos sentimos inseguros / Ya ni de allá ni de acá" (We feel insecure, from neither here nor there). This rootlessness, however, is transmuted from a cause of

anxiety into an argument for cosmopolitan hospitality, continuing, "La verdad es que la tierra / De nadie es propiedad" (In truth, the earth is no one's property). If no one owns land, then borders are prideful human incursions on God's creation; indeed, the migrants conclude the petition by demanding "compasión, / Porque si eres cristiano / Abrirnos es tu mission" (compassion, because if you're Christian, opening up to us is your mission). The petition thus argues that immigration reform is required by Christian morality; it is not a choice, but a divinely mandated *mission*, to welcome migrants.

In the reply of the natives (Adentro), they finally respond to the migrants' admonishment to Christian compassion. The natives depart from their former xenophobia to concur with the migrants' cosmopolitan vision, replacing enmity with fraternity. "Bienvenidos, son hermanos / Tenemos gran corazón / No se pongan deprimidos / Pasen a nuestra mansión" (Welcome, you are our siblings. We have a big heart. Don't be sad; come into our mansion), they sing. They even ask forgiveness, apparently for their past nativism. The song implies that hearts can change; erstwhile xenophobes can welcome migrants.

Indeed, the final round, in which the natives and migrants sing together for the first time, celebrates fellowship. It argues for brotherhood and faith: "Bienvenidos, son hermanos Y PAISANOS / Dios con ustedes está" (Welcome; you are our siblings and countrymen; God is with you). The final stanza proclaims, "Vamos juntos como pueblo, como pueblo, / como hermanos a sembrar, / la justicia en la frontera, la frontera, / el respeto amor y paz" (We go together as one people, as one people, as siblings, to sow justice at the border, the border, [and] respect, love, and peace). The imagery of the unified peoples of Mexico and the United States planting seeds of justice and peace along the border encapsulates this final song's message, recalling the imaginative portrayal of the Posada crossing the border in *Migrant* (Figure 4-2).

The fourth station asks the audience—Christians in particular—to envision themselves as a single, borderless community with obligations to each other. By ending with a welcome of the tired migrants, followed by a celebratory meal, it follows the outlines of traditional Posadas. Indeed, both traditional Posadas and KBI's version end with an optimism about human morality that revises actual events: Joseph and Mary find hospitable lodging instead of a manger; migrants find a warm reception. This optimism might seem not only revisionist but also unrealistic given the ascendancy of nativism today; yet, it emanates not from the practicalities of a secular policymaking framework but from a religious one in which God can intercede. In this framework, spiritual change can happen, vice yield to virtue, and nativists transform into loving hosts. Indeed, the closing song sweeps aside the dominant immigration *topoi* in favor of an alternative set of commonplaces: Christian mission, compassion, respect, love, and peace. While the culture-economy-security *topoi* dictate a posture of suspicion toward migrants, these alternative *topoi* prescribe a resounding "bienvenidos." How does this cosmopolitan idealism inform KBI's other educational programs?

IMMERSION EXPERIENCES: HUMANIZING, ACCOMPANYING, COMPLICATING

The day after the Bi-National Posada, Mehr and I joined a three-day immersion; the first activity was a desert hike. The concurrence of these two events structured around communal walking, though happenstance, affirmed for me the rhetorical potency of moving together. Both used movement to encourage reflection on migration, though with different approaches: the Posada relied on a rich framework of Biblical stories and Christian morality to suggest a utopian vision; the desert hike offered a more secular, humanitarian view, underscoring migration's material and political conditions.

KBI's immersions unfold in the context of Catholic secondary and postsecondary education. Other Catholic institutions in the Southwest offer similar programs, bringing students to the border to learn about migration, according to my interviews with organizers of border immersions at the University of San Diego and Loyola Marymount University.[18] KBI, I discovered, is well known in these circles, and its immersions are in high demand. In general, border immersion programs share a goal of humanizing undocumented immigrants in participants' minds. Direct encounters between participants and migrants, what KBI terms "accompanying," are crucial to the pedagogy of humanization. KBI also aims for participants to "complicate" their understanding of immigration by listening to divergent perspectives. Participants come from Catholic high schools and colleges; most are students, but some, like the group Mehr and I joined, are faculty and staff.

During their stay in Nogales, immersion groups participate in some or all of the following activities, interspersed with debriefing sessions and concluding with a goal-setting exit interview: helping at the Comedor and talking to migrants there; taking an off-trail hike in a desert area frequented by migrants; attending Mass at a church in a U.S. border town, Arivaca, and listening to talks by local ranchers there; participating in a visa application simulation; attending a presentation on immigration law and policy; visiting Nazareth House; attending deportation hearings in Tucson; touring the Nogales Border Patrol facilities; and having dinner with a migrant family in Tucson. Mehr and I participated in all but the last two activities. In the next section, I narrate the desert hike and related activities; I choose to dwell on this Day One of the

[18] These two interviews were performed as part of IRB STUDY00009524, approved on May 7, 2018.

immersion experience both because of its resonance with the Posada and because Mehr and I found it particularly moving, indicating its rhetorical efficacy.

Glimpsing the Traces of Migrants, Hearing the Fears of Ranchers: A Day in Arivaca

Sunday, December 10, dawns sunny and cool as we prepare for the day's activities: a ninety-minute drive from Nogales to Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge, a hike of over an hour, and a three-hour visit to Arivaca's Catholic church where Sunday Mass is celebrated, lunch is served, and several locals address the group. Last night, at the end of the Bi-National Posada, Mehr and I met the group we will accompany, some ten employees of a Jesuit university. We have also already met the day's guide, Gillian. With Gillian and the immersion group, we will travel the seventy miles to Arivaca.

This desert town surrounded by vast ranches is a hub of undocumented migration. After Prevention through Deterrence pushed migrants into the Sonoran Desert, Arivaca became a nexus in the journey north because its small highway, Arivaca Road, intersects with I-19. Countless migrants have hiked through the scrubland of the Wildlife Refuge to reach vehicles waiting on Arivaca Road. Border Patrol crackdowns and the U.S. recession have reduced migrant traffic here, but some still pass through. Because of Arivaca's recent history as a migrant corridor, KBI takes immersion groups there to experience the terrain and to hear from locals.

Desert Walk

The group drives to the Wildlife Refuge, breezing through a Border Patrol checkpoint on I-19. After arriving, we congregate around a picnic table near the trailhead, where Gillian has placed a backpack. She says the backpack holds items dropped by migrants in this area. She takes

them out—there are maybe twenty objects, including baby bottles, a Bible, family photos, food packages, identity documents, and toiletries—while explaining them. For example, about a black water jug, she says that migrants sometimes buy these—a hot commodity in Mexican border towns—instead of typical transparent bottles because they believe the dark surface is less visible to Border Patrol agents. Nevertheless, the black jugs pose their own risks, as they heat up fast, fostering bacteria. She asks us to pass the objects around and to keep in mind that many of them were not abandoned freely; some migrants might become too exhausted to carry all their items, drop them to run from danger, or lose them when arrested. Later, in an interview, Gillian speculates that seeing these belongings "makes people realize how much about migration in this area or policy creation or . . . human rights violations happen out of sight"; making visible the traces of migrants has a "humanizing" effect.

We now assemble at the trailhead, where some participants are reading a sign about the birds that migrate through the Wildlife Refuge; they comment that the sign fails to mention migratory humans. This park provides migrants a sort of sanctuary. Paradoxically, refuge comes from the terrain's difficulty: its brambles and arroyos obscure migrants but make the walk more arduous, as Gillian explains. She announces that she will take us off-trail, into these very brambles and arroyos. She says she does this *not* to simulate a migrant's experience, which we cannot comprehend, but to convey some physical realities of migration; to that end, she will set a fast pace, since migrants do not stroll. As we begin to walk, Gillian points out belongings on the ground, such as a black water jug and backpacks.

It is hard for me to push through the thorny brambles and still walk fast. The thorns catch my clothing and scratch my hands. As I get tired, I find it harder to keep up. I am worried about an injury, a sprained knee that is mostly healed; will the pain return, forcing me to limp through

the desert? I'm already feeling warm; I cannot imagine doing this hike in the sweltering summer. The desert seems to exacerbate every bodily disorder. We do, however, make several stops, permitting some recuperation. On the stops, which I order below according to my recollection, Gillian talks about challenges migrants might confront in this terrain.

Stop 1. Gillian has us discuss the various health threats migrants face in this remote area, where even minor injuries could become life threatening. She says that when she leads student groups, she asks them to think about how their common athletic injuries could, for a migrant, prove deadly.

Stop 2. Gillian asks us to consider how a migrant would feel walking through this area. Whereas we are taking care of each other—for instance, warning about thorns and holding back branches—migrants are often traveling with strangers who might lack such a caring bond. We also have the privilege of communicating loudly, while migrants would need to stay quiet. If they are traveling at night to avoid surveillance, it is hard to see obstacles; if walking in summertime, the grasses grow to eye level, obscuring hazards like huge ant nests. With risks abounding, every rustling bush could provoke anxiety.

Stop 3. Gillian leads a discussion of regional animals. We do not encounter wildlife aside from some insects, but biting ants, bees, tarantula hawks (wasps), rattlesnakes, javelinas (peccaries), deer, coyotes, cougars, and jaguars live here, any of which could injure migrants. The predators are most dangerous, but javelinas can be aggressive, cattle might charge when startled, and tarantula hawks can inject excruciating venom.

Stop 4. Gillian has us talk about other humans in the area: beyond birdwatchers, there are Border Patrol agents, vigilante militiamen, hunters, and humanitarians. She belongs to the last group as a member of No More Deaths, which tries to prevent migrant fatalities by depositing

water canisters and managing a first-aid camp. Both these projects have been threatened by militiamen and Border Patrol agents.

Stop 5. At another stop, Gillian describes how bodies decompose in the desert. Citing Jason De León's forensic study, she informs us that animals quickly find the bodies, skeletonizing them and scattering their belongings. Identifying the remains, if they are found at all, is a challenge. She mentions the Colibrí Center, which works to match remains with missing migrants.

Stop 6. Gillian shows us a "drop site." When Arivaca was a popular thoroughfare for migrants, they would meet vehicles around here, first dropping their spare belongings. There used to be a sea of backpacks here. Now there are a few objects, including a lonely backpack; I wonder about its owner's fate.

Throughout Gillian's talks, she reminds us that she has a humanitarian's perspective. She encourages us to listen for differences between her views and those of the ranchers we will hear later. For example, regarding drug trafficking, she notes that some smugglers are impoverished migrants who carry drugs to earn their passage. The ranchers would categorize *all* drug runners, regardless of their motives, as criminal. With this kind of guidance, priming us to recognize discordant viewpoints, Gillian imparts rhetorical savvy for parsing immigration discourse.

Finally, we finish the loop. In a clearing, we can see a mountain, Baboquivari Peak, which Gillian has told us is sacred to the indigenous Tohono O'odham people. We stop to take photos. The landscape is beautiful until you have to move through it: visually, it is striking; physically, it is exhausting. Of course, what I considered a challenging hike, even a health risk, would be a small segment of a migrant's journey. Later, Gillian tells us that for students, the hike furnishes an opportunity to "recognize the privileges that they have in interacting with that environment in

a recreational way versus when they think about people doing it out of desperation and having spent several thousand dollars to attempt crossing through it." Indeed, I had access to resources—a van, my water and food, a first aid-trained guide, a companionable group—that many migrants lack. Recognizing inequalities in privilege is a first step in understanding why undocumented immigration happens. Deliberating on what should be done about it is a subsequent, and likely more contentious, step.

Rancher Talk

We clamber into the van and drive to noontime Mass in Arivaca's chapel, which Father John leads. After Mass, the small congregation welcomes us to their potluck lunch. Mehr and I sit with Jimmy, who owns a ranch that extends to the border. We chat about cattle. After lunch, we return to the pews to listen to local ranchers, including Jimmy and his wife. On the one hand, the ranchers express sympathy for non-drug-carrying migrants and understanding about the socioeconomic factors driving them. On the other hand, they express frustration at the violence unleashed in their area by drug cartels. To protect their community from gangsters, they advocate for reinforcing the border with a wall and more Border Patrol infrastructure.

The first rancher to speak, Beatrice, describes how unsafe she feels walking around her ranch because of the presence of cartels; she carries a gun outside. She sees the effects of the cartels on migrants she finds on her land: a dead woman, visibly raped, by her cow pond; a weeping woman who "jumped" into her arms, having been attacked by her *coyotes*. In each wounded migrant, Beatrice sees Jesus, so she ministers to them—until entrusting them to the police (who, one hopes, take them to a hospital). Beatrice's harrowing anecdotes testify both to

the brutal fates of some migrant women and the daily anxiety experienced by rural borderlands residents.

While Beatrice's narrative strikes an emotional chord, the next presentation, by Jimmy and his wife, Trudy, hits an intellectual one; they submit a plenitude of firsthand evidence for their policy proposals. Visuals, large photographs displaying the ease of crossing the wire fence that separates their ranch from Mexico, underscore their message. Like Beatrice, they express sympathy for "good" migrants but fear the "drug packers," who have caused the murders of some friends. They see their ranch as a no man's land: Border Patrol is unwilling to police it due to the cartel's power and the terrain's difficulty. To address this dearth of protection, they endorse completing the wall and enhancing the Patrol's infrastructure. As public advocates for the wall, they know they are often portrayed as racists, xenophobes, and "deplorables." (I feel chagrined—I do tend to categorize all wall-boosters as nativists.) But they are not anti-immigrant, they explain; rather, they seek immigration reform via amnesty and a guest-worker program. After their presentation, I thank Trudy for sharing her perspective; she says, "Yes, well, it's the perspective of the people who *live* here." This firsthand testimony, though not winning me over to the security *topos* entirely, was persuasive; it made me question whether, stationed in an ivory tower in Pennsylvania, I had any right to opine about the border.

Gillian sees the rancher talks playing a significant role in the immersion program. When we interview her, she remarks that the ranchers "bring the unique perspective of being concerned for the safety and security of their community and for themselves, and I think that's a great opportunity to ask students, 'What [do] safety and security mean to you?'" The presentations are "a moment for introducing new language and kind of raising students' skepticism of all border analyses," encouraging "nuance"—for instance, probing good versus "bad guy" dichotomies,

since some migrants are forced to serve cartels. On the drive back to Nogales, Gillian helps us reflect on the presentations, which she says challenge students who are unused to listening to perspectives they disagree with.

Security and Its Consequences: Lessons from Immersion

Like those students, I found the day's activities challenging. Our hike was taxing both physically and emotionally. It made me speculate that I probably would not survive a desert migration. Would I even have the stamina to get through a daylong walk? Thus, the hike made me identify with undocumented migrants, *humanizing* migration by feeling a bit of it in my own body. At least for myself as a participant—and, based on Mehr's fieldnotes, also for her—KBI made a successful intervention into immigration discourse through the hike, making us feel national security's human consequences. Going from the hike to the presentations by the ranchers *complicated* my empathy, because I also empathized with the fear they expressed as they recounted stories of friends murdered by a Mexican cartel. Moreover, the ranchers defied my stereotype of ignorant nativists; they seemed to know the transnational context of Latinx migration, and they advocated for a blend of conservative border securitization and liberal immigration reform. As they said, they are not mere deplorables. I could hardly dismiss their wish for a wall since it is grounded in their daily fears. For me, the Arivaca day both *humanized* and *complicated* undocumented migration, setting me up to continue thinking hard about my perceptions over the immersion's remaining days. My own experience can be taken as a sample of the personal transformation of immersion participants anticipated by KBI, which the staff explained in interviews.

Our interviewees expressed hope that participants transform their understanding of immigration. According to Gillian, "we're trying to move people to feel kind of a sense of . . . outrage at injustices and recognition that laws and policies can violate universal human rights." She encourages visitors to sit "next to someone who has had a very different set of opportunities than you," an encounter that is "really important to growing that sense of rage at those realities." Father John echoes Gillian's point: "what has the biggest impact is the direct contact with the people we serve." Thus, Gillian and Father John envision participants having strong affective responses to the immersion activities and thus becoming conscious of injustice.

While, as a participant, I did not need much persuading to consider immigration in terms of social justice, some participants arrive steeped in the security *topos*, seeing migrants as the problem and law enforcement as the solution. For many groups, realizing that "this is really my country that's creating the suffering" of migrants is "a really challenging space," Jody explains. Not all visitors come ready to sympathize with migrants. Especially with high school students, some might come because "their friend said it was cool, they go because their other friend is going on the immersion, they go because they want to go on an international trip." But Jody sees change even in right-leaning visitors who initially perceive migrants as "criminals": "after two days here they say, 'wow, you know, I'm really learning that these are, they're humans.'" She recalled one very conservative participant who acknowledged, "'You know, I believe in borders and I believe in controlling who can come in and out, but also today I was talking to this guy from Honduras, and I could really understand why he wanted to cross the border. I know why he wants to cross the desert, and I want him to make it.'" She reflects that it is having "the chance to sit down with migrants and talk to them" that can change minds. Through direct encounters

facilitated by faith-based education, it seems immigration opponents can be persuaded to reframe their perspective—a triumph for religious immigration advocacy.

After participants depart, they are expected to channel their newfound awareness into action. As Jody notes, "It's not just a matter of understanding it, or seeing it, or being moved by it. But it's a matter of actually making life decisions on the basis of this reality that you're seeing." Similarly, Gillian tells students, "I encourage you all not to go away and say, 'Oh that was sad, or that was tragic, or it's really disgusting what's happening at the border and what's happening to these people'—to not have pity or hopelessness, but to turn that into growing their own activism and advocacy." KBI asks groups to take steps toward activism and keeps records of schools' reports on groups' follow-up activities. These activities include sharing the immersion experience through publications or presentations, reaching out "to the local immigrant population," and getting "involved in advocacy." KBI expects the effects of the immersion to unfold over both the short term of a student's time in school and the long term of their adult life. By stimulating personal engagement with migration and critical reflection on discourse, KBI's curriculum could germinate young cohorts of rhetorically savvy migrant advocates. These activists could influence people in their hometowns and thus diffuse KBI's challenge to dominant immigration discourse.

Humanize, Accompany, Complicate: KBI's Challenge to Dominant Discourse

The Bi-National Posada, the immersion experience, and even the comic book indicate how KBI employs multiple channels to persuade audiences to reconsider their views on undocumented immigration—to humanize, accompany, and complicate the issue. To respond to this dissertation's critical question—*What resources can religious rhetoric provide to pro-*

immigrant arguments in the contemporary United States?—I synthesize the findings from the close readings above. In so doing, I consider how KBI's rhetoric defies the dominant immigration *topoi* and how it furnishes viable alternatives drawn from a deep well of religious tradition. Its success, as evidenced by Jody's account of immersion participants' transformation, suggests that spirituality should not be overlooked by rhetorical border studies.

Uprooting One Set of Commonplaces, Planting Another

Among the three *topoi* of mainstream immigration rhetoric—security, culture, and economy—security exerts the greatest sway over discourse regarding the border. Where the security *topos* identifies the act of border-crossing as a threat, KBI positions it as a justifiable choice. The security *topos* provokes anxiety over a leaky border, likening undocumented migrants' movements to the spread of disease or pollution, which must be contained via walls and surveillance. KBI likewise puts the act of moving through the desert in the center of its advocacy, but it does not fixate on the border. Instead, it highlights the sacred resonances of migration done for the sake of family, as exemplified by the Bi-National Posada's analogization of Mary and Joseph's search for lodging to migrants' journeys. By reading current events through the lens of the New Testament, it argues that migrants are not a threat; rather, our cruel security systems and our apathy are the true threats, as the lackeys of the Roman Empire were in the time of Jesus. In its immersion program, KBI similarly encourages participants to see migrants as individuals with often noble motives for crossing, echoing the principle of seeing Jesus in the stranger. Moreover, it makes migrant deaths grievable (cf. Demo, "Animating Death"), bringing participants into reverent contact with the possessions of migrants with unknown fates. The hike

evokes national security's human consequences, as participants glimpse the physical realities of migrating through the Sonoran Desert.

The movement so crucial to the Bi-National Posada and the desert hike harnesses the Catholic tradition of communal processions, drawing participants into embodying the mobility that defines migration. This mobility certainly cannot mirror that of migrants in the desert. Yet, in the confluence of the physical action of walking with the discursive action of the stops and stations—in embodied rhetoric—the Posada and hike humanize undocumented immigration. Hearing a story of suffering while traveling in the landscape where it occurred taps into a profound spiritual imagination, as any religious pilgrim knows. There is certainly a risk to such spiritual imagination, since sacralizing migrants could reinforce a savior complex in which they are seen as pitiable innocents afflicted by misfortune and in need of rescue by the United States. This is the kind of pitfall Ono and Sloop see in Catholic discourse on immigration; portraying migrants as pathetic upholds the power of natives, perpetuating the culture *topos* by keeping the native-immigrant hierarchy intact.

But KBI resists the simplistic portrayal of the vulnerable migrant. For one, harkening to the Catholic social teachings on poverty, it does not depict migrants as inherently disadvantaged but as oppressed by economic inequality and therefore seeking a life of dignity outside their homelands. Thus, KBI infuses the economy *topos* with the Catholic concept of social justice, identifying economic disparities as the main driver of undocumented immigration. In fact, in the immersion program, which typically begins with the day in Arivaca, it is the politically conservative ranchers who first argue this point, demonstrating to participants that it is not just a liberal chestnut.

In addition, while the Bi-National Posada does emphasize migrants' vulnerability to exploitation on both sides of the border, it also makes them a mouthpiece of divine judgment. A complex characterization results: migrants are vulnerable yet morally authoritative. Their authoritative voice comes out in the petition songs and is also reflected in the trials' closing arguments, which hold all Mexicans and Americans accountable for migrants' mistreatment. Migrants thus take on a judicial role, evaluating nations' moral fiber by the quality of their reception. Hence, the culture *topos* is inverted, as the supposedly superior culture of the United States is exposed as deeply unjust, and the supposedly inferior migrants become arbiters. Migrants belong here because of their spiritual quality—their human dignity—regardless of their documentation status, the Posada implies (indeed, religious belonging offers some undocumented immigrants an alternative "citizenship," as Kate Vieira has shown).

While KBI makes a strong argument in favor of accepting migrants, it also enables dissent as a spur to critical reflection on what global solidarity entails. Bringing immersion participants into interaction with ranchers and Border Patrol agents challenges the idea of migration as a zero-sum game—either you support migrants or you support nativists. Instead, migration is shown to affect a vast network of people on both sides of the border. Recall the imagery in the Bi-National Posada's final song of Mexicans and Americans together planting seeds of justice along the border. These seeds evoke the alternative set of commonplaces KBI sows, harvested from a global faith community. Indeed, KBI's grandest rhetorical gesture seems to be its message about how *catholic*—that is, how all-embracing—migration is. Though migration is a global phenomenon, its vast scale does not obviate personal involvement, since Christian principles call for active engagement with those in need. Belief in the Kingdom of God necessitates a cosmopolitan stance on migration, KBI suggests.

Toward Spiritual Rhetorical Border Studies

> "Many activists think that spiritual work is not a form of activism but a cop-out; however, this view is too limited and ignores the greater picture. . . . To maintain our connections, we must cultivate liberating insights/conocimientos and radical realizations that burst through the cracks of our unconscious and flow up from our cenotes." —Gloria Anzaldúa (92)

KBI not only complicates the commonplaces of immigration; it asks its audiences to uproot them and replace them with a new set of commonplaces. The security *topos* is redirected to attention to the sacred resonances of journeying. The economy *topos* is replaced with social justice. The culture *topos* shifts to praise the moral authority of migrants. This alternative set is drawn from Catholic social teachings, Biblical narratives of journeying, and the Christian vision of a global, borderless faith community. These rhetorical resources are rooted in over two thousand years of Christian faith and therefore offer the possibility of using that tradition-steeped power to rival the dominance of the culture-economy-security triad. Religion's power can thus be productively channeled into borderlands advocacy, as spiritual beliefs reframe immigration.

Spirituality, therefore, merits consideration in rhetorical border studies as a fifth element complementing the foci of "critique," "agency," "affect," and "public pedagogy" proposed by Antonio Tomas De La Garza, D. Robert DeChaine, and Kent A. Ono in their review of this field. The rich resources of religious rhetoric enable innovative yet tradition-steeped challenges to the border like those composed by KBI. These religious arguments deserve rhetorical study along with their secular counterparts; even advocates associated with a faith like Catholicism that might fail a test on overall progressivism can advance the project of reframing, and ultimately

reforming, immigration. Religious immigration activists' focus on morality and divinity, while potentially alienating to outsiders, could prove highly persuasive to audiences of believers. Indeed, utopian visions of a borderless world that fall flat when shared in a secular framework (Chávez, *Queer Migration*) could find uptake when presented in spiritual contexts like the Bi-National Posada. As Gloria Anzaldúa—a longtime challenger of borders—contends, activism benefits from the world of the spirit, from "radical realizations that burst through the cracks of our unconscious" (92).

As rhetorical border studies can arguably benefit from a more sustained investigation of faithful rhetoric in the borderlands, so too can composition studies. My case study offers a model for revising invidious commonplaces by tapping into alternative communal values. While in KBI's case, these values emanate from a faith community, we as writing educators can think broadly about the alternative traditions we could access to reframe unproductive commonplaces. For instance, perhaps we could draw upon the spiritual tenet of human dignity to resist the neoliberal pressure to prioritize credentials and career preparation over recognizing students as holistic beings. In the final section, I consider additional takeaways from KBI's educational work, particularly from its immersion program, for composition pedagogy.

Hospitable Rhetoric: Linking KBI's Pedagogy to the Writing Classroom

As writing educators, our job entails teaching students, but our work involves building inclusive spaces hospitable to diverse learners. Today, that effort necessitates confronting an increasingly blatant form of exclusion: the oppression of immigrants. As we grapple with xenophobia, we can learn much by looking beyond academia toward alternative forms of

education like KBI's immersion experiences. Though these immersions might seem irrelevant to college writing instruction, there are overlaps. For one, KBI targets young adult students, as do we. For another, it engages students in a form of rhetorical training: sensitizing them to multiple perspectives, asking them to think critically about each perspective, and finally helping them plan their own advocacy efforts. For instance, as Gillian said regarding the activities in Arivaca, "I appreciate it as a moment for introducing new language and kind of raising students' skepticism of all border analyses." There are lessons to be learned from KBI's efforts to transform participants and to support long-term application of their learning.

While writing educators need not challenge students' views on immigration or turn them into activists, we *are* called to instill rhetorical awareness. This awareness entails the metacognitive capacity to recognize one's own assumptions and those of one's audiences, a capacity requisite for making persuasive arguments and also for ethical behavior. Ethics is about how one receives others—as Jacques Derrida argues, it is synonymous with hospitality. So, rhetorical training in learning to comprehend one's stance and that of interlocutors instills a form of ethics, of hospitality. This connection between rhetoric and hospitality brings us back to KBI's pedagogy of immersion. They inculcate awareness primarily through direct encounters with the Other, whether that Other is migrants or those who police migrants (Border Patrol agents, immigration judges, even ranchers).

Arranging such direct encounters might be challenging for a composition class, but some strategies could produce similar effects.[19] A popular strategy for having students confront perspectives they find disagreeable is assigning readings from a spectrum of perspectives. The

[19] For examples of how to harness the Internet to set up intercultural encounters, see Wu; You; Zhang.

concomitant task, then, is to foster a willingness to listen rhetorically (Ratcliffe) to divergent views. A related strategy is to assign argumentative genres, which necessitate investigating the assumptions of the audience, who must hold some views different from the writer to make persuasion worthwhile. Audience analysis entails seeing from another's perspective, an exercise that could contribute to transforming one's understanding of an issue. KBI emphasizes the role of accompaniment, being with another, in gaining such understanding. We could likewise consider how to connect students with individual members of their chosen audience rather than relying on abstract audiences invented for an assignment, which can easily devolve into strawmen. Linking a face and name to a rhetorical opponent could lead to better writing and even to more hospitable dispositions.

Inspired by KBI's attention to follow-up action, we can consider how our one semester with a student fits into their long-term development as both a rhetor and a human. True, we already do so when we encourage students to see connections between our lessons and their other coursework or their future careers. But what about connections to their lives as members of society? What will they do with their skills in persuasion? In religious contexts, we could consider the moral purposes of rhetoric, but even in secular contexts, we can promote *hospitable*—that is, ethical—ends. As the next chapter shows, even a single rhetor can make inroads into shifting social discourse toward hospitality.

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Chapter 5 Re-Presenting Muslim Immigrants: Hijabis of New York

On July 28, 2016, Ghazala Khan stood upon the stage of the Democratic National Convention with her husband, Khizr. Thirty-six years earlier, the Khans, natives of Pakistan, had immigrated to the United States. Twelve years earlier, they had lost a son, Humayun Khan, a captain in the U.S. Army, in the Iraq War. Though Ghazala did not speak, her sober face and quiet sighs conveyed intense emotion, and her modest attire, including a hijab[20] veiling most of her hair, expressed her religious devotion—a silent but present complement to her husband's criticism of the Islamophobia propagated by then-candidate Trump and account of the sacrifice their son made to protect his fellow soldiers ("Khizr Khan's"). Soon, Trump retaliated. He used Ghazala's silence to tap into the deep-seated Western belief that Muslim women are oppressed by Muslim men, suggesting that she either "had nothing to say" or "wasn't allowed to have anything to say" (Turnham). But silence has many meanings (Glenn). As Ghazala explained, "without saying a thing, all the world, all America, felt my pain. I am a Gold Star mother. Whoever saw me felt me in their heart" (Khan). She defended her family from Trump's charge of misogyny, recounting that, rather than oppressing her, Khizr had asked her to speak—but she feared she would lose her composure when talking about Humayun, for whom she grieves daily. Moreover, she critiqued Trump for ignoring "the real Islam and Koran," which teaches "that all human beings are equal in God's eyes," with husband and wife as partners. Ghazala argued that her silence during the speech was a decision she made due to her bereavement; xenophobes pounced on the silence to support their caricature of Islam as a misogynistic religion.

[20] "Hijab" is a general term for the veils worn by some Muslim woman. Most of the references to it in this chapter pertain to a veil that covers the hair but leaves the face exposed.

On May 20, 2019, at the first-ever *iftar* (Islamic fast-breaking dinner) at the U.S. Capitol, a speaker recounted the backlash to Ghazala Khan's silence some three years earlier: "I remember watching Mr. Khan give his speech, and I remember the occupant of the White House mocking [Mrs. Khan] and saying, 'I don't know if Muslim women are allowed to speak.' Little did they know they were going to get the two *loudest* Muslim women in the country in Congress . . ." ("Rep. Ilhan Omar"). The speaker, Ilhan Omar, was referring to herself and Rashida Tlaib, both of whom won the 2018 midterms in their districts, thus becoming the first Muslim congresswomen (Allam). Omar is also the first hijab-wearing congressperson (thanks to her election, Congress lifted its longtime ban on head coverings). In 1992, Omar immigrated to the United States as a refugee of Somalia's Civil War. Her multiple minority identities—a young woman politician, first-generation immigrant, member of the African diaspora, Muslim, and hijabi—made her a public symbol when she leapt onto the national stage. *What* she symbolizes, though, depends on one's political leanings. For some, Omar's election to Congress epitomizes the promise of equality, a reminder of the American Dream for immigrants. For others, however, she is "a symbol of America's broken immigration system" (Edevane), because, by speaking out against U.S. racism, she refuses to play the grateful guest, as expected of refugees (Boustany). Indeed, conservatives ranging from grassroots white supremacists to Trump himself have tried to discipline her into silence, twisting her sometimes brash comments on controversies like the Israel–Palestine conflict and immigration reform into a caricature of Omar as an anti-Semitic, anti-American extremist—exactly the kind of immigrant the United States should eject for its own security. Some have even volunteered to do so, threatening assassination. Omar's truculent remarks and trenchant critiques have violated the Western expectation of the silent Muslim woman and "mortified" Islamophobes, as she pointed out in her *iftar* remarks.

Ghazala Khan was slandered for her silence; Ilhan Omar is attacked for her volubility. For Muslim women, especially for those who publicly wear their religious identity through the hijab, Islamophobia creates a lose-lose situation: silence affirms the stereotype of Islamic misogyny; outspokenness confirms the stereotype of the inassimilable (and inadmissible) immigrant. Hijabis thus face a rhetorical paradox, an apparent assurance that no matter what they do or do not say, their discourse (and even their mere existence as veiled women) will be taken as evidence that Muslim immigrants do not have a place in the United States.

In this chapter, I do not pretend to offer a solution to this hateful manifestation of nativism's illogicality. Instead, I seek to listen carefully to the public rhetoric of hijabis to understand how they (re)frame immigration. To do so, I examine a local effort at intervening in Islamophobia, Hijabis of New York (HNY), a grassroots social media campaign that was active from 2014 to 2018 and was spearheaded by one young activist. Using Facebook and similar platforms, the campaign published photographs of and statements by hijabis, mostly residents of New York City. Before turning fully to HNY, I elaborate on the relation between Islam and U.S. immigration, limning the dominant and resistant rhetorics around this nexus of nativist anxiety. With this context established, I dive into the case study, exploring HNY as an initiative to reframe Muslim immigration.

I find that the campaign practices a noteworthy form of advocacy in its simultaneous address of two audiences. Many of its posts seem intended for a primary audience of U.S. Muslims, but the campaign's public nature facilitates "eavesdropping" by a secondary audience of non-Muslims. By "eavesdropping" on internal debates, this secondary audience could discover the diversity of viewpoints in Islam, defying the dominant tendency to generalize about (and thereby dehumanize) this faith community. Some posts more directly address non-Muslims'

(mis)treatment of Muslims, posing a more obvious challenge to nativist commonplaces, especially regarding immigrants as security and culture threats. By combining the two strategies, the campaign augments its potential to persuade its secondary audience, balancing an appealing display of diversity with more strident declarations of agency and critiques of U.S. prejudice.

MUSLIM IMMIGRATION: A NEXUS OF NATIVIST ANXIETY

Most U.S. Muslims immigrated to the United States in recent decades. To be precise, sixty-four percent are first-generation immigrants, seventeen percent are second-generation, and eighteen percent are third-generation or higher (Pew)—so it is fair to say that, overall, U.S. Muslims are a relatively new immigrant group. In 1965, the lifting of discriminatory immigration quotas opened a path for Middle Eastern, North African, and South Asian immigration, which over the past few decades has converged with strife in many Islamic nations to draw Muslims to the United States (Smith 53–54). Despite the apparent abundance of U.S. Muslims projected by media attention, adherents reportedly comprise a mere one percent of the national population (Mohamed).

The diasporic spread of Muslims in the United States coincided with two rhetorically potent global shifts: the end of the Cold War and the rise of Islamism and its jihadist factions (Ono and Sloop). The former left a rhetorical lacuna, an absent enemy for U.S. politics; the latter helped to fill that gap. Muslim immigrants became a scapegoat, reviled for purportedly sponsoring violent extremism and threatening democracy; for instance, the 2017 executive orders banning entry of people from certain Islamic nations implicitly equate Muslims with terrorists. Thus, unfortunately for Muslim immigrants, their arrival has proven *kairic* for politicians seeking to evoke unity against a common enemy. Islamophobic discourse finds a

special target in the veiled Muslim woman, whom it casts as either oppressed (e.g., the Khan controversy) or as the ultimate Other clinging to her Otherness (e.g., the Omar controversy).

Discourses on the Islamic Veil

Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism: women following conservative interpretations of all these religions cover their hair. Despite this pluralism of veiling, in post-9/11 political discourse in the United States, the coverings worn by Muslim women in obedience to the Islamic code of modesty called "hijab" have singular visibility. Women have long recognized the rhetorical significance of their sartorial choices; historically, non-normative apparel has been publicly scrutinized and derided (Mattingly). Hijabis in Western nations today meet with such derision; there are, however, potent messages they want to communicate through the veil, both to themselves and to onlookers. The veil is not just a means of self-expression, but also a medium "to control or modify" the ways other people interact with the wearer by signaling her moral convictions (Tarlo 10). U.S. Muslims articulate the veil as defining Muslim identity, monitoring moral behavior, resisting sexual objectification, eliciting greater respect, preserving intimate relationships, and eschewing obsession with looks (Droogsma). Beyond faith and identity, veiling can also convey political solidarity (Afshar 424), often in service of postcolonial consciousness. Yet, these messages seldom align with the meanings ascribed to the veil in mainstream political discourse.

The veil has become a fetish for the Western press during the ongoing War on Terror, usually symbolizing Islam's repression of women. Thus, veiling justifies Islamophobia—the rejection of Islam as utterly inimical to other cultures—as "an almost respectable prejudice" (Afshar 417). Critics including Myra Macdonald, Haleh Afshar, Sirma Bilge, and Leila Ahmed

have deconstructed this discourse. Macdonald comments, "Within Western traditions that read both sexual availability and (more recently) sexual self-expression against display of the body, veiling has operated as a primary signifier of the widely publicised suppression of female Muslim sexuality" (13). Such discourse denies Muslim women's agency in choosing to wear the veil when living in democratic contexts. When such agency *is* acknowledged, however, veiling is viewed as an act of political resistance to Western values. Veiling is left to denote either subordination or resistance (Afshar 420). Bilge critiques the reductionism of such discourse, which paradoxically portrays covered women as victims of Islam *and* threats to the West (10). While such Islamophobic readings of the veil are very contemporary, they arise from "the historical meanings with which it has been imbued since the rise of European imperialism," according to Ahmed, which have ossified into "master-narratives" ("The Veil Debate" 248).

One such master-narrative, the Western view of unveiling as a step toward modernity, signals Europe's troubled relationship with the Middle East, which Edward Said famously critiqued. According to his analysis, Orientalism seeks to hold "the Orient"—particularly the Near East—apart from the West by highlighting its purported inferiority. Islamophobia as a fear of immigrants polluting the West with an inferior culture and religion might be relatively new (Afshar 414), but the "fear of a monotheistic, culturally and militarily formidable competitor to Christianity" has provoked European anxiety for centuries (Said 342–43). Christian discourse "turned Islam into the very epitome of an outsider against which the whole of European civilization from the Middle Ages on was founded" (70); today's Islamophobia shows "absolutely no change over the virulent anti-Islamic polemics of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance" (287). Moreover, according to Lila Abu-Lughod, Orientalism conscripts Muslim women into its narrative: "Tradition and Modernity. Harems and Freedom. Veiling and Unveiling. These are the

familiar terms by which the East has long been apprehended (and devalued) and the West has constructed itself as superior" (108). Taking a long view of Western anxiety around Islam, stretching back more than a millennium, helps contextualize the contemporary hostility toward Muslim immigrants and the veil in the West; this hostility is beginning to attract attention in rhetorical studies.

The Veil and Muslim Womanhood in Rhetorical Studies

One of the first rhetorical studies on Muslim immigrants, produced by Bradford Vivian some twenty years ago, recognizes how the fraught history between Europe and the Middle East saturates the veil. Vivian examines the French government's longstanding battle against the hijab, linking its 1994 public school veiling ban to its colonization of Algeria. Relating imperial history to present-day sentiments in France, he finds the veil has various visibilities to non-Muslim French, including "resistance to French national identity" and "geographic difference" (120). He concludes, "the veil itself is a terrain upon which power relations elemental to the organization of nationalism, citizenship, and geography are conceived and deployed" (132). That is, the veil is taken as a synecdoche for Islam in general—as *the* fundamental symbol of Islam.

Following Vivian's entry into the (mis)representations of Muslim immigrants by mainstream Western discourses, several other rhetoric scholars have investigated this subject. Alessandra Von Burg examines the rhetoric of Muslim immigration in the European Union, advocating for cosmopolitanism. She contends that, thus far, E.U. natives have failed to truly encounter Muslims; interaction could foster identification, as "people who meet as 'strangers' would be encouraged, by virtue of the encounter, to imagine what is like to be the other" (124). *Media-driven* encounters between Westerner and Muslim immigrant, on the other hand—even

when facilitated by a sympathetic intermediary—have the potential to perpetuate stereotypes. For example, regarding *New York Times* articles about Arab Muslims, E. Johanna Hartelius finds that these immigrants are represented rather simplistically as assimilated newcomers, patriots, or victims (319). Immigrants' foreignness spurs such public discourse to focus on "knowing and understanding" them, an urge she critiques for "reflecting an almost compulsive attempt to generate a graspable concept" (329). Also critiquing Western media about Muslims, Bethany Mannon looks at the gap between how the U.S. editors of a digital storytelling initiative, the *Afghan Women's Writing Project*, frame the Muslim women who publish on the site and how these writers represent themselves. The editors perpetuate a white savior complex by portraying the women as individual victims in need of rescue, fixating on the burqa as a symbol of oppression. The writers, however, challenge Western readers to view them as agentic and powerful—irreducible to a garment.

As Mannon's case study indicates, Muslims' unmediated self-representation in the West offers a refreshing counterpoint to the reductions enacted by dominant rhetors. Increasingly, rhetoric scholars are turning from critiquing Islamophobia—still an important project—toward seeking productive responses to it. For instance, Susan Jarratt and Jonathan Alexander interviewed Muslim activists enrolled at their university who became known as the "Irvine 11" after a protest over Palestine. This protest, a public demonstration, took a traditional form. Newer options for Muslim self-expression enabled by social media have drawn the attention of other scholars in rhetoric and beyond[21]; Fatema Mernissi, a leading thinker on veiling, announces

[21] In sum, scholars have explored how the internet provides virtual agoras for Muslims, especially those living as minorities in the West, to enhance their community life (e.g., Mishra and Semaan). Across the Islamic world, the Internet has shifted the way the Muslim community and religious authority are imagined—which could herald a change for women. As in other Abrahamic religions, women have

an online revolution of historic proportions, with the web "reviving the oral tradition of Islam started by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina" (54). In rhetoric and communication studies, Rosemary Pennington and Kyle Larson both have investigated Muslim bloggers on Tumblr. Pennington assesses how Muslim bloggers (primarily women)—many of whom live in Western countries—use the site as a third space apart from dominant discourse, giving them room to fashion hybrid identities merging Islam and Western culture. Similarly, Larson observes Tumblr's potential for fostering counter-publics, enabling solidarity among minority groups like U.S. Muslim women. He analyzes the rhetoric of a U.S. Muslim immigrant who uses her blog to lambast mainstream feminism for propagating narratives of Muslim women's oppression, fostering a supportive community while fending off trolls.

Given the recent spate of studies on the rhetoric of Western Muslims, especially on women (Mannon; Pennington; Larson), it seems there is growing interest in illuminating how they use language to build community and to construct their own identities even in the face of intense public hostility. The prominence of platforms like websites and blogs in this scholarship suggests the importance of looking online for such vernacular discourse—a lesson I heed in my choice of case study. While previous studies on Western Muslims' online rhetoric have raised crucial points about identity, agency, race, and faith, none have yet spotlighted this discourse as an intervention into U.S. *immigration*. To contribute to the growing conversation on Western

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historically been excluded from clerical positions and interpretive authority in Islam, but online forums could facilitate women's exegeses. Forums furnish meeting places for Muslim women to discuss gender issues from differing perspectives, as Anna Piela has found; the persistence of conversation despite disagreement "signals a departure from localised Islamic identities and a potential to negotiate new, global ones based on a celebration of commonalities and an awareness of differences" (433–4). Much of the groundswell in online activity arises in the West because of the increased research migrant Muslims need to do while learning to live as minorities, the greater freedom of speech and religion permitted by liberal democracies, and the lingua franca of English uniting coreligionists of diverse origins (Kort 367).

Muslim rhetoric, I assess the potential of a U.S. Muslim social media campaign to reframe mainstream immigration discourse.

HIJABIS OF NEW YORK: A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN FOR MUSLIM WOMEN

In 2010, fifteen-year-old Rana Abdelhamid experienced an assault on her hijab that would launch her commitment to social change. Abdelhamid's parents had immigrated from Egypt to the United States in 1992, settling in Queens, where she was born (Abdelhamid). As she walked through her borough, an assailant grabbed her hijab from behind and tried to pull it off. As she struggled to escape, she turned to see "pure hate in his eyes." Unfortunately, this was not her first encounter with xenophobia; she had heard hateful comments—"'Go back to where you came from,' 'Learn English,' 'Stupid immigrant'"—in her childhood. But the hijab incident, targeting her as a Muslim woman, catalyzed her to launch self-defense trainings for other *Muslimahs*. These training sessions grew into an organization called Malikah. Alongside running this organization, in October 2014, Abdelhamid founded a social media campaign that similarly aims to empower Muslim women despite a context of rising Islamophobia: Hijabis of New York.

Seeking to "Inspire the world, one hijabi at a time" (HNY, "About"), the project was initiated by Abdelhamid and her collaborators to offer a counter-narrative to negative portrayals of Muslims. Perceiving a "marked increase" in Islamophobic attacks, the campaign founders chose to spotlight hijabis "to empower those who are most vulnerable to this hate": women "who are most visibly Muslim" (HNY, 6 Oct. 2014). That is, the activists chose to focus on hijabis because these women are easy targets due to their conspicuous Muslimness:

> We focus on hijabis mainly to bring hijabi women to light because of the adversities they face in New York and the western world. The headscarf truly has separated women seeing

> them as the "other" in our times. That is why this page strives to show that we are the same just as non-hijabis. (HNY, 27 Sept. 2015)

The campaign posts profiles of individuals consisting of commentary in their own words accompanied by a photo. Profiles of nearly two hundred women have been published. Though present on Tumblr and Instagram, HNY's main outlet seems to be its Facebook page, which, as of this writing, has gained more than thirty thousand "likes." The profiles mainly feature college-aged women; the majority live in New York or in other U.S. Muslim hubs, but HNY has also featured a "global series" with women in Jordan, Spain, and England, as well as a pilgrimage series in Saudi Arabia. The overall focus on New York, besides imitating the popular "Humans of New York" photo blog, makes sense considering the sizeable Muslim presence in that area (Smith 58), as well as Abdelhamid's personal roots there. Although HNY no longer appears to be active, with the final post published on July 19, 2018, all the content produced in its four years of activity remains publicly available.

HNY serves as a useful case study of immigration advocacy by Muslim rhetors for several reasons. For one, because of its polemical nature as a campaign, it presents strong arguments for social change. Profile subjects argue against constraints they confront both from fellow Americans who view them with fear and from fellow Muslims who expect them to conform to tradition. Another reason is its grassroots nature. HNY is a personal project made possible through the volunteer labor of Abdelhamid and a few collaborators (two fellow photographers, Jiniya Azad and Aniqa Hassan, are named in a *PBS* article [Sarabia]), relying on simple resources like cameras and free social media accounts. As the smallest and least institutional of my three case studies, it gives a window into *vernacular* cosmopolitan efforts. Finally, with its unique nature as a repository for comments of hijabis across the political spectrum, it provides a sample

of varied approaches to Muslim womanhood. The diversity of its rhetoric, an amalgam of nearly two hundred women's voices, helps avoid generalizing about a minority religion's rhetoric on the basis of a single rhetor (as critics of Ghazala Khan and Ilhan Omar have done). The site showcases the rich debates and dissent found even in a single immigrant community.

Values of the Campaign: Agency and Diversity

Because of the heterogeneity of opinions featured in the campaign, precisely correlating HNY with Islamic principles is a challenge. Furthermore, unlike my other case study organizations, HNY does not furnish statements explicitly linking its work to religion; the leaders say little about the Islamic underpinnings of their campaign besides foregrounding Muslim womanhood as an identity meriting celebration. Devotion to Islam certainly emerges as a core theme in the statements by profile subjects, with many reflecting on reliance on God (i.e., Allah), reverence for Muhammad, prayer, faith, tests and rewards, and other spiritual topics. It would be risky, however, for me to speculate on how Islamic tenets inform the overall mission of the campaign; doing so could contradict its central purpose, which is to let Muslim women speak for themselves without the noise of Euro-American narratives. So, rather than trying to extrapolate some coherent religious platform of the campaign from its content, I present Abdelhamid's comments on her project's values of *agency* and *diversity*.

The empowerment HNY aims to foster arises from a belief in U.S. Muslim women as agentic and vocal decisionmakers. Wearing hijab is a woman's *decision*, as Abdelhamid explains to *Elle* (Rodulfo): "For me, the hijab is an empowering part of my identity and is my choice." The veil, along with other sartorial and cosmetic choices, displays a woman's agency, which is why photographic portraits are key to HNY. Abdelhamid told *PBS*, "It's not just about the words . . .

You can tell so much about a young woman just by the way whether or not she wants me to take a picture of her face on the side, or whether she wants me to take a picture 30 times or just once" (Sarabia). But choices about appearance are just one sign of a woman's agency among many; Abdelhamid reflects, "I am really tired of conversations about Muslim women being only focused on what we wear." Social media platforms including "blogs that elevate Muslim women" give them the opportunity to redirect the conversation away from the mainstream's veil obsession. Abdelhamid told *Village Voice* that "having access to these types of resources . . . allows us to convey our own narrative," an "empowering" trend (Connor). The value of *agency*, recognizing and celebrating the various choices Muslim women make, ties to another core value, *diversity*.

A vision of a diverse, transnational Islamic community suffuses HNY. Profile subjects, even within New York City, represent varied immigrant backgrounds, hailing from regions such as the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Abdelhamid also brought the series beyond New York City when her work took her outside the metropolis, to states such as Texas and Florida, as well as abroad. By bringing Muslim women from several continents together on a single page, HNY links New Yorkers to the broader Islamic world. It thus promotes Islamic transnationalism, a cosmopolitan *ummah*. While this cosmopolitan solidarity is undergirded by shared faith practices and principles that stretch across borders, the campaign also highlights the heterogeneity of Muslim womanhood. As Abdelhamid told *Elle*, "My goal was to use photography and social media to show the rest of the world the vibrancy and diversity of Hijabi women" (Rodulfo). Displaying this diversity undermines Western stereotypes of a monolithic oppressed Muslim woman: "People will assume that veiled women are really conservative, soft spoken, docile and not career-oriented." On the contrary, the campaign demonstrates a range of personalities and opinions. Abdelhamid commented, "There are so many badass hijab-wearing

Muslim women. If people aren't getting to know us, they're seriously missing out! Get to know us." This invitation to "get to know us" merits further discussion, as it implies an audience beyond Muslims. Whom is HNY meant to reach—and how?

Two Audiences of the Campaign: Western Muslims and Western Non-Muslims

To address that question, I can take my own introduction to HNY as an example. I first encountered the campaign via my Facebook newsfeed; as I recall, I got a notification because my first-year college roommate, a hijab-wearing Bangladeshi American raised in the Bronx, had interacted with its posts. Intrigued, and interested in learning more about her social context, I "liked" the page. As my experience shows, HNY is accessible to non-Muslims, though likely most findable for those who already have a social connection to a Muslim or who are actively searching for Muslim content.

Indeed, the page's *primary* audience appears to be Western Muslims, based on the specialized Islamic discourse that characterizes many posts and the predominance of apparently Muslim commenters. Though the posts are in English, they frequently feature Arabic terms for Islamic practices—for example, "*deen*," "*dhikr*," "*dunya*," "*dua*," "*ibadat*," "*tahajjud*," and "*taraweeh*." Given that these terms are left untranslated, it seems likely that the editors anticipate a primary audience of Muslims for the page; as an "outsider," I must research these phrases to fully comprehend a given post. In addition, some posts seem geared toward an audience of fellow Muslims, like one about the duty of "*dawah*," teaching the religion to non-Muslims (which elicited a few accusations of proselytism from non-Muslims). Moreover, based on post comments, HNY content appears to mostly circulate within the religion. Based on commenters' names, most are women from Middle Eastern or South Asian backgrounds. That Muslim women

are the primary audience makes sense given Abdelhamid's mission of empowering this demographic. Channeling inspiring messages from hijabi profile subjects to hijabi readers could enhance self-esteem, furnishing a safe house where emblems of Muslim identity denigrated in mainstream discourse, such as the veil and other signs of religiosity, instigate bonding.

Nevertheless, the page has attracted attention beyond the Muslim community. Starting in December 2015, mainstream media outlets, including *PBS*, *Elle*, and *Huffington Post*, began publishing laudatory articles on it (Sarabia; Rodulfo; Blumberg). HNY's uptake by national news sources indicates that it has a substantial secondary audience. While U.S. Muslim women are the primary audience, the secondary audience seems to be non-Muslim Americans with an interest in women's rights or interfaith understanding. In the post comments, occasionally, a member of this secondary audience appears, their name and profile picture marking them as Euro-American. Based on my observations, white women generally express support and a view of HNY as fitting into a broader program of women's empowerment. For example, one woman responded to a post about overcoming family resistance to the hijab, writing, "Since I started following this page, I have come to really appreciate the beautiful faces framed by their [hijabs]. You have taught me, a Christian woman, a lot about your culture and about the lives and personalities. Society has told me we are different, but clearly we are more alike than different" (14 Feb. 2016). White male commenters tend to be more critical; for example, one reacted to a post celebrating hijab as an expression of freedom with the comment, "Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage. We all think we are making our own choices" (25 Aug. 2016). Receiving both support and criticism from white commenters, the campaign evidently enjoys some circulation among a secondary audience of non-Muslim Americans.

One caveat is in order: the primary and secondary audiences overlap, and I do not intend to draw too bright a line between immigrant and non-immigrant, Muslim and non-Muslim. For instance, the youth culture permeating the site pulls together disparate influences; in one popular profile, the subject says, "As long as I have something to eat and my hijab on fleek, I'm happy" (see Table 5-1, Profile #11). She casually unites the U.S. slang term "on fleek," meaning good-looking, and the Islamic term "hijab," with no sign of dissonance. Moreover, critiques of the profile subjects come not only from the usual suspects (white men) but occasionally also from fellow Muslims. Thus, there is much ambiguity in defining insiders and outsiders in the campaign, but for convenience, I distinguish between a primary audience (Muslims) and secondary one (non-Muslim Americans).

Moving into the subsequent sections, I keep the secondary audience in mind. The primary audience certainly matters in terms of HNY empowering Muslim women; yet, other scholars have already assessed the ways online forums can create supportive enclaves for this group (e.g., Piela; Larson; Pennington). To make a difference in mainstream immigration discourse, HNY would need to go beyond nurturing a subculture. Indeed, the majority of U.S. Muslims already lean left (Pew), an orientation commonly associated with greater receptivity toward immigrants. Nativism, for obvious reasons, tends to reside not in immigrant communities but in those who claim deep roots in the nation. In assessing HNY's rhetoric, therefore, I will consider how it could influence a majoritarian audience.

Overview of Profiles: Personal Reflections and Public Advocacy

Taking a bird's-eye view of the campaign helps contextualize the ten profiles I focus on in subsequent sections. Across all posts made since its inception in 2014, the journey toward

deciding to wear hijab is—unsurprisingly, given the title of the campaign—a popular theme. But other choices facing young women also appear frequently. Many posts consider education, praising opportunities for learning or discussing ways to manage academic stress. Others discuss coming to self-acceptance, finding supportive friends, and dealing with familial conflicts. Beyond personal reflections, many profile subjects employ the platform offered by HNY to advocate for social change. Much of this advocacy pertains to Islamic immigrant communities: profile subjects critique traditional approaches to mental health, career aspirations, modesty, and marriage, among other issues. Instead of presenting a glossy image of Islam, HNY publishes diverse, and often critical, perspectives on challenges hijabis face both in their religious communities and in their Western locales. Indeed, some profile subjects direct their attention to mainstream U.S. society. This attention is not necessarily critical; some praise the United States. Others share experiences with Islamophobia and advocate for eliminating discrimination.

To select posts to analyze closely, I focused on profiles that attained relatively high circulation. Since, with my dissertation's critical question about immigration discourse in mind, I am interested in HNY's potential to reach mainstream readers, circulation is a significant factor. I set the cutoff for high circulation at one thousand "likes"; eleven profiles meet this standard, as Table 5-1 (below) shows. It seems safe to assume that the higher the number of "likes," the more a post circulates among primary and secondary audiences alike. Indeed, if I "like" a post, this action might show up in my friends' newsfeeds, prompting them to view the post (as happened with me seeing my roommate's "like" of HNY content) and perhaps also to "like" it. Also, in general, the more popular a post in terms of "likes," the higher the number of "shares" ("sharing" a post embeds it in a user's own homepage) and the number of comments. For example, the most popular post (Profile #1, below) accumulated some 7,256 "likes," was shared (reposted) 2,548

times, and received 559 comments. While setting one thousand "likes" as a standard is admittedly arbitrary, confining my scope in this way enables me to read individual posts closely.

Table 5-1: Profiles with over 1,000 likes, ranked by popularity[22]

Photo	*Rank*	*Likes*	*Shares*	*Com-ments*	*Date Posted*	*Topic*	*Word Count*
	1	7.2K	2.5K	559	16 Dec. 2015	Patriarchal expectations for women's modesty	607
	2	5.9K	3.1K	498	22 Apr. 2016	Judgment from other Muslims about depression as a spiritual fault	253
	3	2.8K	762	239	12 Jul. 2016	Oppressive Islamophobic narratives about Muslim women	596
	4	2.8K	540	182	9 Dec. 2015	Problematic cultural belief that medicine is the only worthwhile career	851
	5	2.6K	669	301	16 Apr. 2016	Judgment from other Muslims on propriety of her hijab style	307
	6	1.3K	177	96	27 Feb. 2016	Disconnect with parents' perspective on faith and culture	407
	7	1.2K	394	99	8 Mar. 2016	Harassment and detention by authorities	282

[22] When above one thousand, Facebook rounds the number of "likes" and "shares" to the nearest hundred. Numbers are accurate as of June 2019. Photos are © Hijabis of New York and are reproduced here under Fair Use.

	8	1.1K	187	78	2 Jan. 2016	Sexist constraints limit girls from exploring the world	492
	9	1.1K	129	46	4 Jan. 2016	Perseverance in a male-dominated STEM field	154
	10	1.1K	115	29	4 Mar. 2016	Rejection of Islamophobic attacks on the hijab	107
	11	1.1K	91	92	15 Sept. 2015	Positive attitude simply requires hijab on "fleek" and good food	28

The following sections discuss the top ten profiles (#11 was already described), grouping them into two major themes. First, applying the method of "eavesdropping," I assess profiles that critique issues *within* Islam. Second, I present profiles that address the treatment of immigrants, especially Muslims, in the United States.

Eavesdropping on Community Concerns: Posts about Islam

As part of her theory of rhetorical listening, Krista Ratcliffe suggests a strategy called "eavesdropping." She defines it as "a rhetorical tactic of purposely positioning oneself on the edge of one's own knowing so as to overhear and learn from others and, I would add, from oneself" (90). Specifically, it involves listening to "conversations in which eavesdroppers are not directly addressed" (91). Listening from an outsider's perspective, performed to learn rather than to invade privacy, may build the eavesdropper's understanding of others, helping her discover some "common ground" (92). As an example, Ratcliffe envisions watching a commercial from a disliked political candidate. Rather than instinctively reacting with disgust, she tries to eavesdrop

on how the intended audience of supporters may receive the ad. She thereby may gain insight into (and perhaps sympathy for) their values and desires.

Reading HNY posts as a non-Muslim in many cases entails eavesdropping. Especially when the profile subject is calling for reform *within* the U.S. Muslim community, non-Muslims—the campaign's secondary audience—are not being addressed. But, following Ratcliffe, I perceive eavesdropping on these internal conversations as potentially enabling outsiders to build understanding. In this section, I focus on several such internal deliberations, regarding (1) judgmental attitudes, (2) cultural traditions, and (3) patriarchy. After conducting close readings, I return to contemplating how eavesdropping may contribute to one of HNY's goals: shifting the mainstream understanding of hijabis.

Arguing for Withholding Judgment of Coreligionists

Many HNY profile subjects describe their journeys toward self-acceptance; several identify the judgment passed by fellow Muslims as a barrier to this development. For instance, one grinning young woman states that she realizes the wider society will judge her as a representative of Islam—but when fellow Muslims judge her, "it hurts the most because I'm sure Islam does not support judging others" (3 Nov. 2016). She entreats her readers to refrain from passing judgment on "brothers and sisters" in Islam, since "you do not know who they are or what they're going through." This admonishment to stop judging coreligionists and to consider the impossibility of knowing their spiritual state from outward appearances also occurs in two of the site's most popular profiles, which recount criticism regarding the hijab and mental health.

It is for God alone, not for coreligionists, to judge, argues a woman who relates the disparagement she has received for her loose hijab style (Profile #5 in Table 5-1). In her portrait,

she smiles, her hands joined demurely in front of her. Under her hijab, some hair shows—and that is the exigence for her statement, since she is told "on a daily," "Take off your hijab, since you don't wear it properly," and "you're a hypocrite because your hair shows." She compares such comments to telling "someone to never pray again because they missed one prayer" or "to never give charity because they stole once." With these analogies, she alludes to two pillars of Islam, prayer and philanthropy. Though hijab is not a pillar of Islam, the allusion links it to these lifelong efforts, representing it as a process rather than a fixed state. Some coreligionists, however, make her hijab a synecdoche of her spiritual status: "Somehow my whole faith is represented by a scarf." But this interpretation is wrong; she questions "how we are so okay to let someone's hijab style or lack of hijab be a representation of how 'Muslim' they are." The "we" here clearly marks her audience as fellow Muslims, especially those guilty of judging character based on hijab. In her view, "faith is not only external, but internal," with internal qualities being more important than external appearances:

> Yes hijab is important but so is spreading kindness and peace. Like why is someone's character invalidated because of they wear hijab or don't wear hijab. Personally, I would rather attempt to be a good person and spread positivity than have a super tight hijab and be a horrible person.

On a scale of virtues, wearing hijab weighs less than kindness. Faith is an individual matter: "it's your life and your relationship with God." Thus, she admonishes Muslims to realize that the personal relationship with God matters more than social appearances.

The inscrutable internality of faith recurs in a profile published a few days later, in which the subject argues for viewing depression as an illness rather than a moral weakness (Profile #2). She addresses coreligionists: "Here in the Muslim community, we forget that depression isn't a

spiritual thing; rather, it's a physical thing." Though she concedes, "Yes, Allah eases all our difficulties, yes, praying brings us to peace of mind, and yes, our constant faith in Allah should be our only expectation in this life," she maintains that "depression is depression and it stays present." She exhorts Muslims:

> Let someone take a moment to be sad, to be perplexed, to be lazy, to be unwilling to communicate. Stop accusing them of being crazy, irrational, and God-less. If somebody is sad, don't tell them, "maybe you need to pray more, or fast." …[W]e all must regard the other with the same consideration we would want. Depression is a struggle, a big one. So just be understanding. Understand the person before you instead of disregarding them. And understanding begins with kindness, a major mark of a Muslim.

In this passage, the core of her statement, she instructs her audience to empathize, not only for the sake of people struggling with depression but because such compassion is the "mark of a Muslim." Thus, she appeals to the audience's principles and religious identity. Finally, she embraces her audience in collective emotion: "So let us experience sadness, with Allah in our hearts." Sorrow, she claims, does not preclude remembrance of God. Like the previous profile subject, she critiques an attitude in the Muslim community without critiquing Islam. The religion, she argues, promotes kindness, but adherents misuse it to justify judging coreligionists who struggle with mental health. Notably, this post garnered the highest number of shares of any on HNY—over three thousand—indicating that the argument struck a chord with many readers.

Indeed, both these posts enjoyed high circulation—and ignited controversy in the comments because of their relatively liberal approach to morality. The post about hijab sparked heated debate. Some commenters criticized the subject for exposing her hair or contended that Muslims *should* advise each other on moral matters; others defended her. HNY's editors even

made a rare intervention, admonishing, "Brothers and sisters, please think about the comments you make before you submit them." Similarly, commenters on the post about depression engaged in debate over whether mental illness is a sign that *Shaytan* (Satan) has overtaken a person's spirit, necessitating a spiritual remedy, or is a medical condition requiring physical treatment. The quantity of debate in the comments suggests HNY's success in attracting diverse Muslim interlocutors to deliberate on the interpretation of Islamic teachings.

Questioning Cultural Expectations

The posts on hijab and depression critique the pressure of *religious* expectations; similarly, other posts speak out about *cultural* expectations. A number of profile subjects on HNY explain how they have confronted (and often overcome) the confining traditions of their immigrant community or their family. For instance, one aspiring Arab-American entertainer narrated receiving harsh denunciations from coreligionists who, adhering to "traditional cultural norms," felt her public presence was inappropriate (26 May 2016). But she persevered. Two of the site's most popular posts similarly recount how the subjects made unorthodox decisions and faced backlash but persisted in their chosen paths nonetheless.

Like the aspiring entertainer, some young women feel resistance to their desired careers—the topic of Profile #4 (see Table 5-1). The subject—pictured smiling in a workplace—relates her experiences facing prejudice because of her career choice. She begins with an anecdote in which she and her mother meet a fellow "desi" (South Asian) woman at a wedding; when her mother discloses that her daughter is pursuing a media career, the woman upbraids her for not pushing medicine, even though the subject was uninterested in that field. The subject queries, "All the desi parents in the world that forced/guided their children to do premed - where are all you

medical students at?" She claims that many such offspring try to find ways out of doctoring and its grueling demands. Returning to the opening anecdote, she explains that her mother must repeat the same apologia "at every dawath [feast], at every wedding, and even those catch up phone calls." Such narrow-mindedness is injurious not only to individuals but to the U.S. Muslim community:

> And everyone is always wondering why certain industries treat Muslims so bad. Well, where is your representation? Where are the kids you pushed to seek their dreams, go the way they are talented, push themselves and branch out into things that aren't the conventional three career paths. . . . If you don't have your community in high ranking positions across all fields - how do [you] expect change.

Muslims need to enter diverse professions for community uplift, increasing representation to counter discrimination, she contends. Moreover, individuals should pursue fulfilling careers rather than chase status: "If it makes you happy and you know Allah is cool with it, do it. And don't seek validation. Let your success scream for you." This call to action merges individualism (if it makes you happy) with Islamic faith (Allah), implying that the only expectation that matters is God's. Addressing South Asian Muslim immigrants, this profile suggests that reforming the culture of status will bring collective benefits.

Whereas the media specialist finds in her mother a refuge from cultural pressures, other subjects lament that their parents perpetuate such pressures. One such daughter smiles in a school hallway lined with colorful bulletin boards (Profile #6). She explains that, despite sharing an origin in Pakistan with her parents, she diverges in her approach to Islam. Her parents combine Islam with "culture, community, and respectability." In their fixation on respectability, she perceives sexism, expressed in their concerns that her political volubility—her "big mouth"—

will deter potential husbands. She, on the other hand, distinguishes Islam from Pakistani culture; this discretion is enabled by her border-straddling position as a generation-1.5 immigrant:

> [G]rowing up as a Pakistani-American hybrid forced me to develop a more nuanced and personal relationship with my Islam than I sometimes think [my parents] have. I never felt fully part of the Pakistani community, and instead of absorbing religion through osmosis . . . I have relentlessly questioned my faith. I adopted an Islam that embraces social justice and equality, with what I think is a purer relationship to the scriptures. Unlike my mom, I even put on the hijab.

Her "hybrid" identity in the United States motivated her to discover Islam for herself, rather than absorbing others' views; immigrating, it seems, can deepen one's relationship with religion.[23] "I don't begrudge my parents of their culturally imbued religion, but I constantly struggle to shake off that upbringing," she reflects. That "upbringing" induces anxiety about "what the world thinks"; she explains, "I involuntarily worry about disappointing my family and community before I think about what's right for myself." She prefers to invert those priorities, placing her personal spiritual trajectory before her reputation. Although she shares both a homeland and religion with her parents, she portrays herself moving ahead in her faith journey, while they seem static, stuck in tradition.

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[23] This concept recurs in other profiles; for example, one subject states that moving outside a majority-Muslim country "made my faith stronger because I was alone and Muslim. . . . I realized that my lifestyle was not something that was simply imposed on me. I had the choice and option to do anything I wanted, but I still wanted to live through my faith. It made me realize that I was driven by spirituality and not by culture. This realization really made me value my faith in a new way. I realized that it did come from me" (16 Aug. 2016). Such statements seem to align with Kate Vieira's finding that religion can assume a significant role in immigrants' lives because it provides a sense of community and purpose.

Both these profiles contend that Islam is diluted when mixed with cultural norms—an apparently widespread concern, given that the vast majority of commenters voiced agreement. The first profile argues that Muslims in the United States could have better representation, and perhaps more power, if they encouraged their offspring to pursue diverse careers. The second suggests that "culturally imbued religion" is an inferior version of Islam, since it replaces personal spiritual investigation with unthinking obedience to norms. Moving away from cultural tradition can mean moving toward social justice, she implies; indeed, this profile subject, critiquing her parents' anxiety over her (un)marriageability as an outspoken woman, introduces a concern that the cultural mores of some Muslims promote patriarchy.

Calling Patriarchy to Account

Though many young Muslims resent older generations for their traditionalism, this anger should be directed at "the systems that indoctrinated our parents this way," argues one young woman (20 Sept. 2016). The "patriarchal system . . . teaches our fathers that they must violently control and dominate every aspect of our lives in order to be 'men'" and "brainwash[es] our mothers and aunties into thinking an unmarried girl past age 22 is expired and shameful." Because the younger generation is more conscious of patriarchy's injustice, it can dismantle this system, she contends. Several other profile subjects make the same argument, advocating for change in gender relations.

Transforming the raising of daughters from sheltering them to encouraging exploration is the change recommended by Profile #8. Fittingly photographed on a subway platform, she argues that travel is critical for personal growth. She opens with a series of imperatives for her reader to transcend social pressures—for instance, "Don't ever let anyone convince you that being a

woman means staying sheltered in the home." She contends that the "customs and traditions we are born in to become oppressive when they limit our potential." As "a young Muslim Bangladeshi girl," her potential mobility was doubly limited by her parents and by post-9/11 Islamophobia. Traditional parents control girls' movements more than boys', worried about daughters' reputations and marriageability. Daughters then rebel "by removing our veil, by going behind our parents [*sic*] backs, by having relationships, or exploring things that no longer made us feel as if we weren't living life." Her own rebellion culminated in traveling abroad. She reflects, "my sheltered childhood made me want to break free, to explore." Persuading her parents to support her was a challenge, as "everything becomes a process when you are the one who needs to change a societal custom." But, "after months of pleading," she succeeded. When she returned from her travels, her parents witnessed how her outlook, goals, and spirituality had improved—and their familial relations improved likewise. "May we all live life with a touch of wanderlust," she concludes. Mobility, for her, is the stimulus for maturation; a girl who remains cloistered at home misses opportunities not only to discover her identity but to develop into a better Muslim. Changing patriarchal modes of parenting, then, benefits girls and the religion alike.

The site's most popular post (Profile #1) makes an even more incisive attack on patriarchy, lambasting Muslims who overemphasize female modesty. In her portrait, the subject grins widely in a sunny plaza, attired in veil, sunglasses, fitted pants, overcoat, and handbag. Her carefree posture in an outdoor space exudes an *ethos* of confident individuality, which also pervades her statement. It provides an extended response to an opening question: "If you could be anything in this world what would you be?" She quips that she would be a lollipop in a wrapper, a pearl inside a shell, or a ring inside a box, "because apparently that's what Muslim women are." The lollipop reference derives from an online Islamic meme that contrasts wrapped

and unwrapped, insect-covered lollipops, suggesting the distinction between women with and without veils. With her list of metaphors for veiling, she mocks the way promoters of veiling objectify women. In her view, no such division should be made between veiled and unveiled women, especially by Muslim men. She names and dismisses folk beliefs about the hijab: it preserves a woman's value, protects her against sexual harassment, and reveals her integrity.

In contrast to these popular "talks" that reduce Muslim women to the hijab, she interprets Islam to focus on "inner beauty." This internal spirituality is not expressed by the hijab, she argues. Wearing it should be a private choice, a matter of personal faith, so the community should not pressure girls into veiling:

> Like, who cares if Fatima wore it when she was 9, let Maryam do her own thing and find her path to whatever her destiny is. We also need to stop calling girls out for how they wear hijab. Especially men. I'm wearing pants. Okay. I'm sorry, does that offend all the Mohammads and Ahmeds out there? Does that make me less smart? Less modest? Less religious? Less in touch with my God? I'm not calling out every Muslim guy for their tight chinos and lack of facial hair, that's just odd.

Comparing unveiled girls to veiled girls ("Maryam" to "Fatima") undermines the individual's self-determination, she argues. Turning to her own outfit, with a series of curt rhetorical questions, she implies that if fitted clothes offend Muslim men, they are applying a double standard. Concluding her polemic, she returns to the opening question: "So yeah if I can be anything in the world, I would be a kick-ass overachieving woman. Being a lollipop ain't gonna cut it." She thus rejects the objectifying analogies of "lollipops, pearls and rings" in favor of female fearlessness, independence, and vocality. Throughout the post, her tone is defiant, marked

by slang and mild profanity. The female paradigm she endorses disdains exteriority; her qualities emanate from internal resolve.

Both profiles argue that Muslims must change their perceptions of girls and women. In place of prioritizing innocence and modesty, they should value female agency, confidence, and achievement. Such a transformation does not entail leaving behind Islamic principles, but rather purifying them. As the first profile subject argues, exploring the world invigorated her spiritual life; the second similarly claims that de-emphasizing appearance enables more energy to be put into spiritual development. These arguments are not uncontroversial. In particular, the second profile's brash critique of Muslim men for superficiality and hypocrisy elicited some resentment, with some men rejoining, "I guess people nowadays love to whine a lot," "I see bitterness, and behind it, arrogance," and "women should know her Limits," for instance. Many comments were more supportive, though. Her statement ignited a discussion spanning hundreds of comments, as Muslims debated the valuation of the hijab. What can be gained by eavesdropping on such debates within the Islamic diaspora?

Eavesdropping as Intervention

All these profile subjects arguing for change *within* the Islamic immigrant community, whether regarding worthwhile jobs or women's role, appeal to Islamic principles, advocating kindness and the private relationship with Allah over status and custom. They valorize personal integrity—the individual spirit—as they suggest in their exhortations to tolerance and freedom. They wish to advance their communities, positioning themselves in the vanguard of social progress by narrating personal transformations. Yet, their activism does not entail a break from the collective. They address a primary audience of fellow Muslims, as only this group can change

their own religious and cultural practices. The role of the secondary audience of non-Muslims—the eavesdroppers like me—is less clear. Applying Ratcliffe's theory, eavesdropping on HNY's internal conversations may *potentially* enable outsiders to gain intercultural understanding; this outcome, however, depends on the eavesdropper's disposition toward the overheard community (especially whether they believe Islam to be oppressive). Discovering common ground could mean taking comfort in apparently shared commonplaces, which could hinder as well as help HNY's goal of dissolving mainstream hostility toward hijabis. Alternatively, realizing common ground could mean taking the array of opinions on the site as evidence that, like any faith, Islam is not monolithic but richly contested by adherents.

Commonplaces, as this dissertation has argued, are powerful methods of building community—but these nearly invisible shared values are often exclusionary, relying on us/them binaries. A core commonplace of U.S. immigration discourse is the assumption that immigrants' cultures are inferior to "native" (White) culture. HNY has the potential of playing into this *topos* if an eavesdropper is predisposed to view Islam or immigrant parents as oppressive. For instance, critiques of overbearing or sheltering parents (Profiles #6 and #8) could easily prop up the myth of melancholic immigrant parents, who, in longing for their homeland (and in feeling alienated in their new country), pressure their children to maintain their home culture (Sara Ahmed). Predictably, the children rebel, which is viewed from a mainstream perspective as a positive move toward integration. This stereotype is, in fact, analyzed in one HNY profile, which recounts how the subject realized that her frustration with her parents—their traditionalism, their poor English, their strictness—actually arose from "internalized racism/xenophobia and from [Western] narratives that vilify desi parents" (27 May 2015). Could eavesdroppers construe some

of the site's top profiles as supporting those vilifying narratives and proving the superiority of "liberated" U.S. culture? Certainly.

However, despite critiquing older generations, profile subjects still express respect, contravening the culture commonplace's inherent xenophobia. One praises her mother as "an angel" (Profile #4), another offers her parents "forgiveness and understanding . . . no matter how much our views diverge" (Profile #6), and another relates how her parents ultimately compromised with her (Profile #8). There is material here to both perpetuate and deconstruct the trope of the stifling immigrant parent. Similarly, Profile #1's pointed reproach of one group—Muslim men—could validate the all-too-common Western belief that Islam is a sexist creed. It could even perpetuate the colonialist trope of brown women needing salvation (by white men) from oppressive brown men (Spivak). Yet, the profile subject projects an *ethos* closer to crusading activist than hapless victim; as her photograph demonstrates, she *chooses* to wear the hijab, embracing Islam while pursuing her own interpretation. So, there is a risk of reinforcing the stereotype of the oppressive Muslim man—but, read in full, the profile subverts it by demonstrating that Muslim women have the agency to refuse oppression.

Though commonplaces are often channeled into insidious ends—for instance, the culture *topos* justifies militarily "rescuing" Muslim women from oppressive milieus (Kulbaga)—they can foster happier outcomes, I argue. Take the commonplace of travel as enabling personal development: "the ability to travel freely, to move about to meet and see others or to gain a new view of the world, is valued highly in Western modernity and is an integral part of the claim to subjectivity and personhood in many feminist discourses," according to Caren Kaplan (220). Profile #8's promotion of travel for girls' self-transformation aligns with this *topos*, as the subject articulates an enthymeme: travel brings subject formation; therefore, girls should travel. Its

premise, travel's capacity to spark individual development, needs no defense in the U.S. context, with contemporary ideals of cosmopolitan adventure rooted in customs like the European Grand Tour. Now, plenty of critiques could be lodged against the travel commonplace, as Kaplan demonstrates by linking it with Orientalism. Yet, I would argue that coming together around the value of young people traveling for self-improvement constitutes a relatively innocuous patch of common ground. HNY's eavesdropper could thereby experience comforting identification on the basis of shared assumptions.

Perhaps, though, the most desirable outcome of the outsider perception espoused by Ratcliffe would be not simply recognizing sameness between eavesdropper and profile subject but observing the variation among U.S. Muslims. Indeed, if an eavesdropper goes in with the desire to learn—following Ratcliffe's recommendation—they would discover that monolithic notions of Islam or Eastern cultures belie the actual diversity of viewpoints. The six profiles analyzed above demonstrate that there is no consensus even among the relatively small U.S. Muslim community on issues ranging from the nature of mental illness to the value of preserving cultural roots. At least for me as an eavesdropper, the dissimilar opinions among coreligionists remind me of the diverse perspectives found in my own faith community—and likely in any religious group. Thus, the at-times contentious debates implied in the profiles and roiling in the comments can become a sort of common ground between eavesdroppers and U.S. Muslims.

Eavesdropping is built into the mission and configuration of HNY. Abdelhamid's comments on the campaign (reviewed earlier) indicate that she wants a mainstream audience to witness it: for example, HNY intends "to show the rest of the world the vibrancy and diversity of Hijabi women" and to help "people . . . [get] to know us" (Rodulfo). The "rest of the world" and as-yet unacquainted "people" suggest that Abdelhamid wants non-Muslims, especially

majoritarian Americans, to access the profiles. Even though this secondary audience is largely ignored by many of the profiles, its presence is always possible due to the public nature of the campaign—and even hoped for. Thus, HNY demonstrates a notable strategy for improving relations between maligned immigrants and "natives" (if not nativists): it puts an immigrant "enclave" in plain sight and in (mostly) plain English. This exposure counters nativist fears that immigrants are plotting takeovers in secret enclaves, communicating in inscrutable mother tongues. As an eavesdropper would witness, Muslims are comfortable discussing internal affairs publicly, and these internal affairs resemble those of any faith community.

Direct Challenges to Immigration's Dominant Commonplaces

The campaign also addresses "external affairs," the interactions between Muslims and other Americans, more directly; these posts shift the secondary audience's role from eavesdropper to interlocutor. That is, providing the wider public an opportunity to eavesdrop on debates among Muslims takes a subtle, "back door" approach to breaking down stereotypes about this immigrant group by displaying both their normalcy and variety; on the other hand, addressing the public treatment of Muslims takes a "front door" tactic, making the mainstream reader part of the conversation by positioning her as a potential ally—or Islamophobe. This more direct appeal to the secondary audience unfolds as profile subjects confront the dominant immigration *topoi*—the economy-security-culture triad. Some subjects subvert commonplaces implicitly by sharing narratives that defy their mold; some do so explicitly via critique. The following subsections are divided into the three immigration commonplaces and arranged along a spectrum from implicit to explicit challenges to the secondary audience.

Presenting Immigrants as Professionals

As exemplified by several of the profiles I eavesdropped on in the previous section, the subjects present themselves as professionals on the rise, pursuing self-designed and sometimes nontraditional career paths. To add another example, in a profile posted on December 15, 2015, the subject describes initially feeling disheartened after immigrating to New York as her world contracted to her maternal responsibilities. So, she started her own business, a hijab boutique, which she finds exciting and inspiring; she states that juggling motherhood and entrepreneurship is "tough but worth it." This profile encapsulates the overall *ethos* projected by the profile subjects: agents of their own professional lives. Besides flouting the stereotype of the oppressed "Third World" housewife (Mohanty), these profiles also challenge the common equation between immigrants and economic units, one of the dominant *topoi* of immigration discourse. One of HNY's top posts, Profile #9 (see Table 5-1), exemplifies this challenge.

The subject stares straight into the camera, smiling, with shoulders back and hands in pockets, exuding quiet confidence. In her statement, she explains that as an engineer, she works in a "male-dominated field." Despite this potentially inhospitable climate for a hijab-wearing woman, she loves what she does because her upbringing inculcated self-respect:

> I was raised to believe that there were no limits to what I could do as a woman and [that's] what pushed me through my career. As a hijabi working on a construction site I stand out. But this doesn't stop me. [Every day], I want nothing more than to put on my hard hat and my steel toe boots and walk the construction site.

In this passage, she deposes the myth of the repressive immigrant parent: her parents *empowered* her. The resulting deep-rooted confidence enables her to love her unusual work environment.

She concludes by advocating for "more women to participate, excel and lead in the STEM field," exhorting them: "face the world and let them see what you can do."

Facing the world in her case means overcoming multiple stereotypes: the engineer as male, the hijabi woman as quiet, the immigrant as cheap labor. The comments on this post are uniformly supportive; some fellow STEM women commend the author on her inspiring words. Her hyper-visible presence in construction might create some mainstream discomfort, as she takes a leadership position over men and likely over "natives." But she has every right to do so, she suggests; her credibility as a self-assured professional undermines the economy *topos*.

Exposing U.S. Authorities' Threat to Muslim Security

Like the engineer's post, many of the most popular profiles pair critique of social injustice with optimism for change. One of them, however, stands out for the harrowing story of unjust detention it recounts and its tacit refusal to put a positive spin on the experience (Profile #7). This experience relates to the security *topos*—the commonplace that justifies the government's control over immigrants in the name of national sovereignty and citizens' safety. The profile subject questions this commonplace by testifying to the insecurity inflicted upon immigrants by the state security regime.

The profile subject, draped in a modest veil and gown, flashes a smile for the camera—an expression that belies the suffering she recounts. As she explains, her family immigrated from Guinea when she was a baby. "I was 16 years old when they knocked on our door, took everything from us and locked me up. They wore titles on the backs of their jackets: 'FBI', 'NYPD' and 'ICE'." These officials wearing the insignia of power jailed her for "six and a half weeks," during which time she was subjected to strip searches, "harsh interrogation," and

"discriminatory comments." At this point in the narrative, she has not yet disclosed the authorities' justification for the raid; this narrative arrangement reflects the "nightmare" of getting detained without any rationale.

"They accused me of being a suicide bomber," she reveals; "Of course, they had no real evidence against me. It was all because I chose to be a practicing Muslim at a time when fear eroded civil liberty." Her arrest stemmed from a conflation of Muslim identity with terrorism, she asserts—a conflation that subordinates civil liberty to supposed security. Her ordeal continued even after authorities released her, as she had to submit to "constant surveillance," including wearing an ankle monitor for three years, and obey a "harsh curfew." In addition, "[t]hey threatened to deport me to a country I knew nothing about." The repetition of "they" throughout the post to denote the authorities conveys her sense of powerlessness against a regime that rejects this young immigrant's claim to be "an American." Demonstrating the extreme insecurity wreaked by the security regime, she expresses "anguish" and "constant fear." The social ills that facilitated her incarceration seem only to be worsening, she indicates, as the government further tightens its regulation of immigrants: "What Donald Trump is suggesting [in 2016] to do to other families was already done to mine." Sharing her story for "the world to see" might serve as a wakeup call about the dire state of affairs, she suggests.

Indeed, this profile reveals immigration control's entanglement with anti-terror policing. It provokes questions about the conflation of immigrants with terrorists: What threat does a teenage Guinean American pose to national security? And what right does the government have to undermine *her* security? Several white commenters, apparently mulling such questions, expressed regret with notes like, "On behalf of most Americans, I apologize for the ignorance and cruelty displayed to you." Yet, the feelings of "most Americans" about Islam and security are

probably not so straightforwardly conciliatory. By early 2017, with the Trump Administration's first attempt at a "Muslim ban," the profile subject's prophecy of rising discrimination had already been realized. At that time, HNY featured a profile protesting the Executive Order (31 Jan. 2017). In concert with posts that blast the U.S. government for perpetuating the security *topos*, others critique Islamophobia's more diffuse roots in mainstream culture.

Shifting Anti-Muslim Culture

Indeed, the security *topos* collaborates with the culture *topos* (holding immigrants' traditions to be inferior) to solidify the ideology of Islamophobia. Critiques of Islamophobia from a cultural perspective permeate HNY; these posts tend both to encourage fellow Muslims to persevere and to expose mainstream misperceptions. These posts come closest to directly addressing the page's secondary audience, non-Muslim Americans, as they recount harassment by members of this demographic. Many subjects recount getting accused of being terrorists or un-American, with much of this vitriol centering on their hijabs.[24] Indeed, many posts address this prevalent fixation by defending Muslim women's choice to veil; this is the case for two of the

[24] These posts are quite eloquent and moving, so I share some excerpts without my commentary: "I'm tired of seeing Muslims being harassed for something a radical did" (18 Nov. 2015). "Wearing this hijab that I love so much, I now feel like a walking target. I'm definitely not the only Muslimah to feel this way, so all I can really say is to reflect back upon how our beloved Prophet . . . dealt with Islamophobia" (6 Dec. 2015). "Muslim women are being forced to apologize, condemn and reject ideologies that are so clearly not part of the Islamic faith" (19 Dec. 2015). "The reality is that I am so tired of answering questions about anti-Islamic bigotry and why I wear what I wear on my head" (4 Jan. 2016). "People often forget the long history of Islamophobia in this country and much of it started with enslaved Africans, who were violently pressured to convert" (12 Mar. 2016). "[B]ecause of my hijab I was a victim of hate, anger and ignorance. It was horrifying. I started to question everything. My identity as a hijabi, a Muslim, an American, an Afghan" (17 May 2016). "I understood that I would be unwelcome as long as I wore symbols of my heritage and chose to, in however modern a way, embrace my ancestors. I was told that to manifest my faith in this way, to dress like my mother as many young girls want to do, was to spit in the faces of 'real Americans'" (13 July 2018).

most popular profiles, #10 and #4. Both recount debasing harassment—yet, the subjects position themselves as transcendent, scrutinizing prejudice from a morally elevated position.

In Profile #10, the subject's photo portrays shadows falling across her somber face. Her unsmiling pose and her statement's tone convey defiance as she recalls being accosted in public:

> Around 2 years ago, I was sitting on a random curb across from the Baltimore Harbor and some lady had [come] up to me and told me to kill myself and take my hijab off. That was my first experience ever with hate towards me as a hijabi, except I couldn't take her seriously because she was dressed like a clown so I ended up laughing the second it took place. I find it absolutely hilarious when anyone tells me I should take my hijab off like bro, honestly, my hijab is my crown. Why would a queen ever take off her crown to please someone else?

In contrast to the physical positioning of the story, in which she sits near the ground while her harasser stands over her, her analogy reverses their levels. She is a crowned queen, while her assailant is clownish. Using a colloquial expression, "like bro," to convey her incredulity and lack of regard toward the harasser, she ridicules the idea of obeying the demand to remove her veil. She thus transcends the attack by emphasizing her aloofness through metaphor and dialect—a move applauded by the commenters, including both Muslims and Euro-Americans.

Profile #3's subject provides a much more extensive narrative; her statement reflects the transcendence invoked by the previous subject, yet she takes a more invitational approach to her antagonists. In her photo, she laughs, holding out her long, bright dress; laughter, as evidenced by the previous profile, expresses resilience in the face of discrimination. She begins her memoir by declaring she is daily oppressed "by those who have chosen to speak on my behalf, without ever asking me to speak for myself," elaborating:

> My oppression stems, not from my religion. Not from my attire. Not from my male relatives. The source of my oppression are those, who without ever meeting me, tell the world that I am oppressed. The source of my oppression are those who try to bury my soft voice under their loud, angry words of misguidance and ignorance. It is you, who has attempted to write my narrative, that oppresses me every single day.

Pundits with no sincere investment in feminism highlight Muslim women's sufferings as a cynical ploy to undermine Islam (Leila Ahmed, *A Quiet Revolution* 221). In this passage, the subject exposes the hypocrisy of such Westerners who claim concern for Muslim women's oppression while oppressing them by drowning out their voices with "loud, angry words." She declares, "today, I write my own narrative," rejecting narratives of her oppression by Islam, Muslim men, and hijab. Although her critique seems to be directed at Islamophobic Americans, she renders her accusations oblique by not naming "those" who perpetuate the narrative.

Indeed, she demurs from alienating any group, expressing empathy for aggressors and inviting them to learn about her life: "Let me tell you about hijab." In the following paragraphs, she explains her take on hijab—the "flowy garment of empowerment that I choose to wear"—and her experiences with prejudice. Though she wears hijab to focus attention on her inner beauty, she qualifies, "I would never criticize those who choose to live another way, this is just how I've chosen to live." She appeals to principles of fairness and freedom, querying, "if you can choose to show what you like, why can I not choose to cover what I like?" She then describes walking in her neighborhood, where she feels like "a circus attraction," facing stares and slurs of "Anti-American" and "terrorist." But her purpose in rendering this account is not to solicit "pity," but to show how she overcomes prejudice. She explains,

> It has taught me patience. It taught me how to love people unconditionally, with the understanding that this hatred they feel for me isn't entirely their fault. We live in a society that conditions us to fear what's different. Understanding that, I know that the way to fight hate is not with hate, but with the purest and most genuine form of love that I have to offer. I can't change the world's perception of me. But through every day-to-day interaction, I can change the way people perceive me by being myself: the goofy, smiley, cat-loving, kind of awkward, but really awesome human that I am.

She offers an absolution of Islamophobes—a strategy resembling invitational rhetoric, since she reveals her efforts to understand her non-Muslim audience (Foss and Griffin). Ideally, they will reciprocate. Each interaction affords an opportunity to shift her interlocutor's perception. In these interactions, her narrative will unfold, "each page left in a different conversation with a different person." She concludes that her story "is being written by the only person who deserves to write it: Me." In this empowering ending, revolving around the trope of authorship, evoking the agency and individuality of storytelling, she triumphs over silencing.

The two popular profiles advocating for liberty to wear hijab demonstrate different approaches. The first is defiant and sardonic, belittling Islamophobes as clownish. The second is more inviting, even to potential Islamophobes, with the subject revealing more of her identity in a gesture soliciting identification. By listening to either of these profile subjects, non-Muslims could perhaps extend their identification with these two women to encompass other Muslims. It is worth acknowledging, however, that even the more invitational profile elicited strident controversy in the comments; perhaps its high circulation, with over 760 shares, meant it reached a wider and less tolerant mainstream audience. While some Euro-American commenters were supportive ("Your 1st Amendment rights as a free American!"), others simply perpetuated the

very stereotypes about oppressed Muslim women that the post critiqued ("it's always maddening watching thoughtful, intelligent women uphold their own subjugation in defense of any organised religion"), and one even equated Islam with terrorism. These comments exemplify the difficulty of fighting Islamophobia and other dominant, xenophobic commonplaces; even when a rhetor eloquently reveals the flaws in the ideology's logic, its devotees easily revert to that same logic in their responses.

Pairing Challenges with Commendations

Social critique, which unsettles the easy assumptions of the economy-security-culture triad, evidently offends some non-Muslim HNY readers. Lest the secondary audience grow alienated and ignore (or attack) the campaign, these critiques must be sweetened with more affirmative messages—and overall, the page offers this balance. While the top profiles are primarily critical, either of problems within Islam or of Islamophobia, a multitude of others express happiness with immigrant life in the United States. A number of subjects convey gratitude that they or their parents immigrated, which opened new opportunities for them. For example, one woman declares, "I really like this country. My country, Bangladesh, is 90% Muslim but I don't think they're actually Muslim. In this country, there are mainly Christian people and people from other faiths, but they follow the values Islam preaches" (28 Feb. 2015). The subject's comparison praises the morality of non-Muslim Americans, who enact values she considers Islamic. Another subject states that, although she has faced some harassment due to her hijab, she feels free to wear it since most New Yorkers are "genuinely kind and open-minded": "I love that living in New York City doesn't stop me from being happy with the way I dress." It is

possible that compliments to non-Muslim Americans like these examples make the critical posts more palatable by establishing common ground in a shared regard for the United States.

It is worth noting, however, that even this peacemaking gesture faces critique. Two profile subjects in particular lambast "model minority" rhetoric for prioritizing U.S. Muslims' assimilation over deeper engagement with social justice. One observes that, "Many 'leaders' in our community want to brush these stories [of systematic racism] under the rug and fight Islamophobia by creating an image of the Muslim community as a middle class model minority - who are just like everyone else" (8 Apr. 2016). As this activist suggests, the move toward claiming commonality upholds the insidious culture *topos*, implying that blending into the mainstream should be the aspiration of all immigrants. In another noteworthy profile, the subject argues, "Muslim Americans can be civically and socially integrated internally and in greater society; I feel our potential in my bones. But we have to subvert the dominant paradigm that feeds us money and status quo," a paradigm that busies immigrants with accumulating wealth and thus clouds their awareness. Integration is possible and even desirable, she implies, but it does not necessitate assimilating to mainstream norms. The critiques performed by profile subjects like these two activists ensure that few commonplaces escape unquestioned, pushing the secondary audience to question the "all-American" bootstraps myth of acculturation.

"Inspiring the World, One Hijabi at a Time"

In this section, I consider the resources that religious rhetoric can provide to pro-immigrant arguments, thus returning to the dissertation's critical question. Hijabis of New York, by prioritizing values of (female) agency and diversity, provides an alternative to the discourse that renders Muslim immigrants backwards and monolithic Others. It challenges the dominant

commonplaces of immigration, calling attention to the faults in the economy-security-culture *topoi*. These challenges, intended for a non-Muslim audience, are launched via a twofold method: facilitating eavesdropping and addressing injustice directly. Though a relatively small intervention into the massive discourse of nativism and Islamophobia, HNY offers some promising tools for redressing the damaging ideologies that circulate around immigrants, Muslim women in particular.

Agency and Diversity as Challenges to the Dominant Commonplaces

The economy commonplace reduces immigrants to labor; the security commonplace, to danger; the culture commonplace, to uncivilized inferiors. These *topoi* control most U.S. discourse on immigration, including rhetoric on Muslim immigrants. HNY challenges each one. Rather than passive economic units, Muslims are shown to be entrepreneurs and professionals, choosing their own career paths in disciplines as diverse as engineering and media. Rather than dangerous quasi-terrorists, Muslims are shown to be endangered by the U.S. government's discriminatory security policies and enforcement. But it is the third commonplace, the culture *topos*, that receives the most attention from the campaign. Rather than uniform vassals of backwards traditions, Muslims are shown to be diverse individuals who exercise agency in selecting elements of culture to celebrate.

Expressing agency is of special importance in refuting the culture *topos*'s assumptions about Muslim women. A pervasive assumption is that Muslim women are oppressed, mere thralls of their male kin—or, when they do assert the agency to practice their faith freely, that they are anti-Western. This paradox was illustrated in this chapter's introduction through the examples of the vitriol heaped on Ghazala Khan (quiet and therefore oppressed) and Ilhan Omar

(assertive and therefore anti-American). HNY responds by demonstrating the nuances of agency. The women profiled acknowledge constraints imposed by ancestral cultures, such as ideals of marriageability and prestige. But rather than lamenting their oppression by these norms, they narrate overcoming them, often in concert with their parents; so, immigrant cultures may have flaws, but they are ever evolving as young people revise problematic traditions. And there are plenty of flaws in "native" U.S. culture, as the profiles point out, such as consumerism and racism. Taken together, HNY's profiles exemplify how U.S. Muslim women exert agency in selecting the good parts of ancestral and U.S. cultures while pushing against the bad ones—a far cry from the oppressed or anti-American caricatures produced by the culture *topos*.

Likewise, showcasing the diversity within Islam may disintegrate the fear inculcated by the culture commonplace—that any immigrant group is a single-minded mob. The nearly two hundred women profiled on HNY represent not only a range of backgrounds, from sub-Saharan Africa to Malaysia, but also a spectrum of sometimes conflicting perspectives. For instance, even though they all wear hijab, their take on it differs. Some see the choice as bringing peace and dignity to their lives, while others describe it as a source of friction even with coreligionists. As the campaign's editors wrote in a post, "The styles & colors of a headscarf are as diverse as the sisters who wear them" (1 Feb. 2017). Dissimilarities abound: some profiles express uncritical gratitude toward the United States, while others critique model-minority rhetoric; some praise their parents, while others resent parental pressures—and so on. HNY's diverse profile subjects testify that there is no single Muslim culture and no representative individual. This cosmopolitan display confounds the dominant "clash of civilizations" approach, the tendency to generalize about Islamic culture.

The Power of Representation

HNY provides an audience of non-Muslims with two ways to encounter its challenges to dominant immigration discourse. First, since many of its posts address a primary audience of Muslims, a visitor to the campaign has plentiful opportunities to eavesdrop, thereby learning about debates in the U.S. Muslim community over issues like mental illness and modesty. Second, other posts confront the treatment of Muslims by non-Muslims, bringing the secondary audience more directly into the conversation as potentially complicit with or allied against the problem. Either method could result in persuading the secondary audience to revise their views; as one profile subject speculated, reminiscing about her experience enlightening a formerly anti-Muslim friend, "I don't feel afraid from Islamophobes because I don't blame them. I believe they will change when WE decide to show them what is Islam" (18 Jan. 2016).

Representations of Islam have real effects in the realm of public opinion and policy. News media's portrayals of Muslims as violent sway public opinion toward policies harmful to both Muslims abroad and in the United States; conversely, "counterstereotypic" representations have the opposite effect (Saleem et al. 861). Researchers have also found that "knowing something about Islam is even more powerful a predictor of tolerance toward Muslims than knowing a Muslim personally," perhaps since happy encounters with a few individuals "can be dismissed as an exception or 'one of the good ones'" (Mogahed and Mahmood 23). It seems, then, that the knowledge—or the fear—fostered by media representations is a deciding factor in the treatment of Muslims.

There is empirical evidence, then, of the potential power of a social media campaign like HNY. Admittedly, HNY's reach is limited, and it seems to have ceased generating content. But the grassroots, low-budget approach that constrains its diffusion and longevity is also its special

potency, for it provides *self*-representations of immigrants—distinct from my other two case studies, in which organizations spearheaded by Euro-Americans serve immigrant clients. Led by Muslims and geared toward Muslims, HNY paints a far more complex picture of the U.S. Muslim community than even well-meaning white-liberal efforts can (cf. Hartelius). Indeed, when Muslims have a hand in their own media representations, the result is more nuanced and multidimensional than simplistic efforts to overwrite "bad guy" depictions with "good guy" ones (Zaheer). Offering profiles that evince this nuance, HNY furnishes a curriculum for non-Muslim Americans to gain knowledge about Islam.

Rewriting Islamophobia in the Writing Classroom

By the time students receive their diplomas after spending four or more years in college, I would like to imagine that they have come to question many of the prejudices they entered with. This was, in fact, my own experience. For instance, a number of my college friends and acquaintances were Muslim. Through the conversations we had, I was forced to think hard about my reactions to aspects of Islam I found discomforting, like veiling and polygamy. Yet, research shows that, for most, college education has no effect on Islamophobia (Mogahed and Mahmood). That means many students graduate with the same opinions on Muslims they started with. Since Muslims are such a small minority, perhaps most non-Muslim students lack opportunities to interact with them. But, to reiterate, research also shows that *knowing something about Islam* is actually more effective at eroding Islamophobia than is *knowing a Muslim* (Mogahed and Mahmood). That fact gives hope for even institutions with few Muslims enrolled to make strides toward breaking down this dangerous brand of xenophobia.

Indeed, if learning about Islam is the best way to break down prejudice, then why not incorporate some writings on the religion into our composition classes? There is plenty of relevant material by U.S. Muslims. For instance, when I taught first-year writing a few years ago, I assigned an essay by Romaissaa Benzizoune, "At the Beach in My Burkini," in the (re)definition essay unit. Besides furnishing a definition of "burkini" and therefore being relevant to the unit, this piece seemed well suited to my students since Benzizoune was their age, a fellow freshman, at the time. Similarly, any of the profiles on HNY—most of which feature college students—could be good jumping-off points for discussions of eavesdropping as a rhetorical and intercultural strategy (Ratcliffe) and of representation. Moreover, the profiles could even be models for students' own writing.

Life-writing is a genre on the rise outside academia (Mannon), and it is also a good fit for first-year writing, as indicated by the popularity of literacy narrative assignments. A single HNY profile, such as Profile #3, the statement on oppressive narratives, could provide inspiration for brief essays in which students emulate the writer in thinking about the limiting stereotypes they face and their responses. While, in all likelihood, most students do not confront prejudices as malicious as Islamophobia, they all have characteristics that are obscured by outward appearances, just as the "goofy, smiley, cat-loving, kind of awkward, but really awesome" facets of the writer of Profile #3 disappear when onlookers fixate on her hijab. Through such an assignment, students would see young Muslim women promoted as model writers—and perhaps also as familiar in that, upon entering adulthood, they face relatable questions about identity—thus forming a more accurate image of Islam in the United States.

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Chapter 6 Conclusion: Infusing Immigration Rhetoric with "Good Words"

My co-researcher Mehr Mumtaz (introduced in chapter four) and I have completed our first visit to the Comedor, Kino Border Initiative's soup kitchen in Nogales, Mexico, beside the U.S. border. It is early December 2017. Father Paul, a Jesuit priest who looks like a desert Santa Claus with his cowboy hat, sparkling blue eyes, and white hair and beard, is accompanying us back to Nogales, Arizona, via the pedestrian crossing. We walk alongside a long line of cars waiting to enter the United States; vendors mill around them selling drinks and trinkets. At a certain point, the pedestrian path diverges from the cars, and we find ourselves in a fairly tranquil, walled area. Paul recounts how carefully the U.S. government designed the landscape of this border crossing a few years ago, making sure to feature native species of desert plants along the sidewalk. He obviously sees irony in the attention lavished on native plants, in contrast to the government's easy disposal of migrant bodies. As we approach the checkpoint, he explains that the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers will ask us why we were in Mexico and for how long.

Soon we reach a large modern building with tall windows. It is empty of pedestrian crossers besides us. Two officers in dark blue uniforms wait at a counter. I show my passport and explain that I visited a soup kitchen in the morning. The agent, a young white man with a buzz cut, is jocular toward me. He asks me about my employment, and I tell him I am a graduate student. He then tells me about a former army buddy who went to grad school and now earns less than this officer does with only a degree near high school level. He tells me his agency is trying to recruit more female agents and suggests that I consider applying.

Meanwhile, while I am getting recruited for CBP and then passed through the checkpoint, Mehr faces a lengthy background check due to her travels in the Middle East—or so her officer claims. (For comparison, I lived in Israel for two years and visited Turkey during that time.) Perhaps there is another reason for the holdup: she was born in Pakistan, an Islamic country, and thus is marked by the government as a potential terror threat. Paul, who, like me, passed through easily, is annoyed. He says that since Mehr has a U.S. passport, there is no reason for them to be hassling her; he opines that after 9/11, citizens' constitutional rights have been suspended along the border. It feels like we wait ten minutes for Mehr to be allowed through, but maybe it feels so long because we are both speculating about the role white privilege played in our easy passage through the checkpoint in contrast with our darker-skinned companion's careful inspection.

Over the coming days in Arizona, Mehr and I have more opportunities to observe the U.S. border security infrastructure. For instance, on our drive to Tucson to observe deportation proceedings for dozens of apprehended migrants, we need to stop at a Border Patrol highway checkpoint some twenty-five miles north of the border. I am driving. Is it my whiteness that gets us waved through? Perhaps I am overestimating the power of my whiteness, but Arizona is notorious for enshrining racism in its immigration policies, such as SB 1070 (discussed in chapter one). Our checkpoint experiences are, I know, just the tip of the iceberg: hidden to us is the expansive system of detention engulfing tens of thousands of immigrants in prison-like centers across the country (Kassie). The border we see is marked with a tall bollard wall that splits Nogales; the highway checkpoint is shaded by a steel-framed white canopy; the detention centers that we do not see are likewise solid constructions. But these expansive, expensive edifices

were not merely built of steel or concrete—their foundations were laid by words, nativist rhetoric that persuaded the U.S. polity that *we* must keep *them* out.

Each of the case study organizations I analyzed in the previous three chapters—the Tahirih Justice Center, Kino Border Initiative, and Hijabis of New York—challenges the rhetoric of borders. In place of hard divisions between nations and other imagined communities, they advocate for transcendence of these boundaries, promoting forms of religious cosmopolitanism. In this final chapter, I lay out the implications of my analysis of their advocacy work, returning to my critical question: *What resources can religious rhetoric provide to pro-immigrant arguments in the contemporary (post-9/11) United States?*

LESSONS FROM FAITH-BASED IMMIGRATION ADVOCACY

This dissertation has demonstrated that, in contrast to the *us-versus-them* assumptions underlying much immigration rhetoric, religion can contribute to persuasion on the opposite front: arguments that *we* should welcome *them*—or, more radically, that there is no *them*, just a global *us*. More specifically, appealing to unifying spiritual principles and sacred stories of mobility can enhance the persuasiveness of pro-immigration advocacy by tapping into the ultimate form of conviction: faith. These conclusions are drawn from my case studies of three organizations that, in different ways, draw upon religious faith in their advocacy work. The diverse approaches taken by organizations inspired by the Bahá'í Faith, Catholicism, and Islam show that a variety of religious discourses can serve cosmopolitan ends.

In its dedication to human rights and women's empowerment, the Tahirih Justice Center (TJC) (chapter three) takes its impetus from Bahá'í principles. Yet, to ensure its arguments for asylum and amnesty reach a broad audience, TJC presents a secular public face, appealing to

patriotic pride to push Americans to uphold their nation's legacy of hospitality. In this policy advocacy, TJC adheres to the Bahá'í principle of nonpartisanship, which facilitates its ability to enlist support across the aisles even while addressing controversial issues. TJC thus models a moderate approach that melds a minority religion's principles with mainstream civic ones to produce emphatic calls for immigrant rights.

On the other hand, the Kino Border Initiative (KBI) (chapter four) spotlights its religious tenets, plugging into a network of Catholic social justice advocacy and appealing to the United States' millions of Christians through its veneration of Jesus as a model of hospitality. In its creative advocacy efforts, especially its annual Bi-National Posada and its immersion programs, it develops a rhetoric of journeying that spiritualizes the physical crossing of borders. KBI exemplifies an advocacy approach that, by merging millennia-old scriptural stories with current policies, urges adherents of a majority religious group to reconceptualize undocumented immigrants not as threats but as spiritual wayfarers.

Hijabis of New York (HNY) (chapter five) represents yet another approach to the intersection of religion and immigration as it claims public space for a much-maligned immigrant group, Muslim women. Islam—especially debates *within* the religion's Western diaspora on issues like modesty and mental illness—takes center stage in this social media campaign. Because of its public nature, HNY encourages non-Muslims to eavesdrop on these discussions and discover the internal diversity of the religion, thus realizing the falsity of nativist discourse that scapegoats Muslims as universally fanatical. To make this message clear, the campaign also features vociferous critiques of Islamophobia. HNY models how showcasing a spectrum of voices from a single minority religion can subvert stereotypes about a supposedly monolithic immigrant group.

Each organization, responding to assaults on the rights of female, undocumented, and Muslim immigrants, respectively, draws upon religious tenets that mandate universal justice and compassion. Through their compelling arguments for border-crossing dispositions and policies, they display how these tenets can reframe immigration, replacing the xenophobia that dominates discourse today with recognition of migrants' humanity and spirituality. Thus, they demonstrate how religious elements can be adopted to vivify cosmopolitan discourse. Cosmopolitanism, religion, immigration, and rhetoric: positioned at their intersection, my project has implications within the academy and beyond it, as I explain in the subsequent sections.

Lessons for Rhetoric Researchers

Within the field of rhetoric, my dissertation has implications for two areas of study: border rhetoric and religious rhetoric. By "border rhetoric," I refer to scholarship on the U.S.–Mexico border as well as on immigration and xenophobia more broadly. By religious rhetoric, I refer to the study of discourses based on belief in the divine. In the U.S. academy, both subfields are attracting increasing attention: border rhetoric as scholars respond to the current surge of nativism, and religious rhetoric as the postsecular turn gains momentum. As these two subfields are maturing, it is timely to reflect on their purposes and future directions.

Border Rhetoric

The primary thrust in border rhetoric has been toward critiquing discourse that normalizes borders between "native" and "foreigner." As nativist rhetoric emanates ever more loudly from the mouths of political leaders and their constituents, this subfield's critiques cut through the noise to reveal the forgotten histories and flawed logics undergirding such

arguments. In a host of studies on topics from border militarization to eugenic policies, rhetoric scholars have pointed out that the scapegoating of immigrants is a long-standing tradition in this country and that it has deleterious effects on democratic deliberation, let alone on human rights. It is from this body of critique that I pulled the *topoi* I have discussed in this project—the commonplaces that reduce immigration to (a threat to) "our" culture, economy, and security.

But is critiquing nativist rhetoric enough? In my view, to be socially useful, critiquing problems must be complemented with proposing solutions. While a debate could be waged about how "useful" academic research must be, border rhetoric has an unapologetic social agenda: to destabilize borders, which necessitates going beyond presenting critiques to like-minded scholars (De La Garza et al.). Recently, some scholars have turned from critiquing nativism to examining immigration advocacy (e.g., Chávez; Cisneros). Yet, even this new vein of research has a tendency toward critique, reprimanding advocacy efforts if they draw upon non-leftist discourse, whether that be DREAMers' neoliberal arguments or the Catholic Church's conservative stances. But viewing every advocacy effort as always already co-opted by a dominant discourse breeds a "politics of despair" (Canagarajah 6): *Why even try to produce pro-immigrant rhetoric when the result is bound to uphold certain neoliberal, conservative, or nativist tenets?*

To mitigate against this creeping cynicism, I suggest that border rhetoricians give equal attention to immigration advocates and opponents and, when examining advocacy efforts, resist the urge to jump to critique, instead looking first for positive outcomes and transferable strategies. In this recommendation, I echo Peter Elbow, who suggested decades ago that we supplement the doubting game with the believing game. Taking this optimistic approach does not entail jettisoning critique entirely—as I have affirmed, critique constitutes a valuable contribution to the rhetorical battle against nativism. Rather, I recommend balancing it more

evenly with commendation. Edward Said, literary critic *par excellence*, once wrote, "Rather than the manufactured clash of civilizations, we need to concentrate on the slow working together of cultures that overlap, borrow from each other, and live together" (xxix). To me, Said's guidance points toward an optimistic approach to studying efforts at coexistence, even if they are slow (and flawed)—the "politics of hope" recommended by Suresh Canagarajah.

In this dissertation, I have tried to model the "politics of hope" that I see as the most productive direction for border rhetoric. By focusing on what my case study organizations do well in their arguments—strategies ranging from seizing social media for activism and debate to leading students through the Sonoran Desert's brambles—I have celebrated their contributions to transnational and intercultural understanding. I never claim that they are perfect, but I do contend that they make valuable arguments that accommodate broad audiences—even beyond the political left—and that reframe immigration, rejecting the commonplaces of nativism in favor of various versions of cosmopolitanism informed by religious principles.

Religious Rhetoric

As with border rhetoric, the study of contemporary religious rhetoric—which is growing apace—tends to focus on critiquing dominant discourses. In the U.S. context, that means Protestant Christianity, the majority religion, receives the most attention. To give an example from my own experience, I once participated in a workshop about religious rhetoric and public leadership; coming from a non-Christian background, the discussion lost me, because it revolved around critiques of the Christian Right. While I appreciated the exposure to this significant strand of religious rhetoric, I wondered why—excepting a brief discussion of Islamic fundamentalism—non-Western faiths apparently had no role to play in public leadership.

As with my stance on border rhetoric, I do not wish to banish critiques of dominant religious discourses—but I do encourage those with an interest in contemporary religious rhetoric to also look toward the margins: what are minority and non-Western religions saying? I believe they are making arguments worth analyzing and amplifying, as I have sought to prove in chapters three and five, in which I examined Bahá'í and Islamic organizations, as well as in chapter two, where I briefly touched on Hinduism, Judaism, and Buddhism. As minorities, especially as minorities counting many recent immigrants among their U.S. adherents, they have a unique perspective that comes from living outside the mainstream. They have not only an abstract but a lived interest in promoting intercultural cooperation.

While I have focused on my own religion as a foundation for my research, I have also found it fruitful to look to other traditions. Based on my experience studying Catholicism and Islam for this dissertation, investigating unfamiliar religions is not only intellectually interesting but also fosters appreciation. I would therefore advise scholars of religious rhetoric, especially those from Christian backgrounds, to conduct projects beyond their own faith community. What can Sikhism teach us about interfaith rhetoric, for example? How about indigenous faith systems—what alternatives might they provide to dominion theology (discussed in chapter two)? Widening our vision of religious rhetoric will, I hope, contribute to a university-wide movement toward interfaith and intercultural literacy. Rhetoric's partner, composition studies, offers a pre-existing platform for fostering such literacy.

Lessons for Writing Instructors

At institutions with a required composition course, the curriculum has a unique opportunity to enrich not only the writing skills, but also the perspectives, of the hundreds or

thousands of students who enroll in any given semester. Though long seen as an underdog discipline, composition studies actually wields great power in terms of direct contact with students. For writing program administrators and instructors working to develop the best curriculum for their students, I recommend giving immigration some thought. Global migrations affect the kinds of writing students can expect to encounter and produce in their post-college lives; as translingual theory holds, no one owns English, and there are no fixed borders around any language, so they are all constantly merging and changing. Prioritizing the intercultural communication required by our migratory world helps compositionists think critically about our traditional role as protectors of standardized English. In addition to pushing us to think about literacy and language through a more global lens, attending to immigration can entail bringing it up in the classroom. As a prominent strand of civic discourse, it fits into any composition curriculum taking a rhetorical approach.

In the takeaways for composition studies that I laid out in the conclusions of chapters three, four, and five, I suggested some ways to do so. In chapter three, drawing from TJC's strategies, I suggested that we can bring political matters into the classroom in a nonpartisan way by focusing on policy discourse rather than on politicians and parties, thus facilitating productive discussions of typically polarizing immigration-related topics, such as the border wall. In chapter four, taking inspiration from KBI's emphasis on direct encounter with migrants as a form of persuasion, I suggested simple methods for fostering a hospitable disposition among students, such as encouraging careful audience analysis. In chapter five, based on evidence that knowledge about Islam is the surest way to combat Islamophobia, I speculated that assigning our students some texts by Muslims about their faith—like those produced by HNY—could be a way to break down prejudice among the students who pass through our classrooms. Now, I wish to share what

happened when I took my own advice, building a first-year honors composition class around the theme of immigration (the syllabus is provided in the Appendix).

The first-year *honors* composition course differs from the standard version in that it has a theme and requires more reading. The course catalogue did not mention my section's theme, so the twenty-four students who enrolled did not know that we would be focusing on immigration. Some of them expressed excitement when they learned the theme; others revealed their boredom with it on the midterm evaluation I provided (as one wrote, "I am not super interested in the topic of immigration and all of the readings and a majority of the writing are centered around this topic"). Regarding demographics, one-fourth of the students were first- or second-generation immigrants. Most of the other three-fourths were Euro-American Pennsylvanians, at least one of whom could trace her ancestry back to the Mayflower. Overall, the setup of the course made it a good case study in how a group of students with no particular interest in immigration would respond to a semester spent analyzing and composing immigration rhetoric. Plenty of quandaries resulted, but so did many new insights.

Quandaries: The Power of Stereotypes and Commonplaces

While my not-so-hidden agenda was to encourage students to question many of the assumptions of mainstream immigration rhetoric, these assumptions sometimes proved recalcitrant. One example arose during a discussion of an excerpt from Kate Vieira's *American by Paper* in which she writes about how undocumented status affects the literacy lives of youth. In one passage, she relates,

> There are few institutionalized rewards for completing college while undocumented, because job opportunities are restricted to those that do not demand papers—often low-

> paid service work, such as cleaning houses. For this reason, a Brazilian mother I interviewed encouraged her teenage son to leave school. Since he wasn't doing well and didn't have documents anyway, there was no point in graduating. (120–21)

During our discussion, a Euro-American student shared his interpretation of this passage: "Education is not valued in that culture." His statement troubled me for several reasons. One, it missed Vieira's point that *documentation* affects education. Two, it seemed to perpetuate the racist stereotype that U.S. Latinos underperform academically because "their culture" does not valorize education. In my reply, I tried to gently correct him, reminding the class that documentation, rather than culture, was the issue at hand. This incident made me wonder about how the dominant framing of immigrants in our public discourse colored students' interpretations of our course content—and how much one semester of coursework could alter eighteen years of exposure to xenophobic stereotypes.

Another moment that gave me pause came when students completed a community-engaged project with a local literacy organization that primarily serves immigrants. In this project, students wrote posts that the organization could use for its blog. To design the project, I had worked with the organization's leaders to develop some broad topics for students to write about: ESOL education, immigrants' contributions to U.S. literacies, challenges experienced by immigrants, language diversity in Pennsylvania, and World Englishes. In posts where students directly commented on immigrants, I noticed two patterns. One was that they emphasized the importance of acculturation to immigrants' wellbeing in the United States. Another was that they argued for immigrants' value based primarily on the economic contributions of skilled workers. These patterns fit quite neatly into the commonplaces of immigration rhetoric: cultural assimilation is ideal; immigrants are reducible to economic terms. Now, by tapping into these

commonplaces, students were successfully supporting our collaborating organization's mission: the provision of literacy services to ensure newcomers' integration. Thus, they were adhering to the assignment's criteria. Moreover, by leveraging commonplaces and thus conforming to a familiar pattern of discourse about immigrants, their arguments would likely find amenable audiences. But, as this dissertation has argued, while commonplaces are deeply persuasive and sometimes useful, they often rest on social inequities. For example, celebrating immigrants' contributions to STEM fields in the United States is great—but why do we need to justify their existence based on their skills, rather than on their inherent value as human beings? The project confirmed for me the resilience of the culture-economy-security commonplaces, as (ironically) I contributed to their circulation—making TJC's, KBI's, and HNY's efforts to defy these *topoi* all the more impressive.

New Insights: Complexity, Moderation, and Identity

Even while wading through quandaries about stereotypes and commonplaces, I witnessed most of my students deeply engaging with the complexity of immigration rhetoric. When I designed the course, I kept the teaching strategies I extracted from TJC and KBI in mind: that we can teach about political rhetoric without being partisan, and that we should respectfully engage with a spectrum of viewpoints on immigration. So, I included readings from liberal and conservative thinkers alike (and most of the assigned texts were not explicitly political, instead narrating personal experiences with immigration). My attempt at balance produced a number of new insights for me and the students.

First, there is the question of partisanship, which I discuss in chapter three in relation to TJC. As a Bahá'í, trying to adhere to the same principle of nonpartisanship that informs TJC, I

avoid commenting on whatever the current administration is doing, except when directly pertinent to the readings. But one reading I had assigned in my effort to include conservative voices struck me as unavoidably connected to the nativist upsurge that enabled Trump's presidency: Samuel Huntington's "The Hispanic Challenge," an article published in 2004. At its heart, this essay contends that Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture is superior and inimical to the "Hispanic" culture of immigrants from Latin America. When I first read it in 2013, the piece struck me as deeply objectionable. But re-reading it in 2019, it seemed even worse: a downright dangerous rationale for the white nationalism that has gone mainstream over the past few years. So, I felt an obligation to voice my personal opposition to the argument, which I usually avoid doing (again, in an effort to make sure students across the political spectrum feel comfortable sharing their ideas). At the end of our discussion of Huntington, I took a minute on the soapbox to critique his essay for cloaking a racist argument under a veneer of facts and intellectualism, and for serving as fodder for today's white nationalism. That was the closest I came to disclosing my left-leaning views—though these views of course informed the whole conception of the course and were likely obvious to students. While I continue to believe that, as instructors, we can engage political topics without dragging in partisanship (for instance, I did not explicitly link Huntington with the Republican Party or Trump), I acknowledge that the line is a blurry one.

Indeed, one of the best discussions my students had centered on the idea of "balance" between viewpoints. We were discussing the first chapter of Jason De León's *Land of Open Graves*, in which, in graphic terms, he explains the fatalities caused by Prevention through Deterrence (a border security policy that funnels undocumented immigrants into the brutal landscape of the Sonoran Desert). De León is clearly sympathetic to the migrants and critical of the federal government and its border agencies, which prompted me to ask the students about

their thoughts on his credibility. Intriguingly, one student, a second-generation immigrant, responded that "moderation" in representing migrant deaths was inappropriate. Avoidable deaths resulting from governmental policy are inherently atrocious, he explained, so expressing objectivity about them would be deceptive, even unethical. A few other students agreed with this viewpoint; in their eyes, De León's credibility was only augmented by his personal investment in the topic (which he carefully inventories so his reader understands his positionality). The *pathos* of De León's text—his outrage at migrant deaths—though "subjective," is more ethical than an "objective" approach. My students' insights got me thinking about the approach to border immersions taken by KBI. While it does expose participants to a range of stakeholders with conflicting views on border policy, at the heart of its teaching is deep empathy with migrants. In the end, perhaps centering emotion is a more honest approach to teaching about immigration rhetoric than is purported objectivity: expose students to varying perspectives but embrace compassion with immigrants as the underlying pedagogical motive.

Finally, I arrive at HNY's role in my class. I used the prompt I recommend in chapter five as a brief writing exercise, asking students to read a selection of profiles from the campaign and to emulate one in which the subject explains what onlookers fail to see in her when they focus on her hijab. The prompt asked, "What can't people tell about you when they fixate on your appearance or obvious characteristics?" Through students' responses, I learned the falsity of some of my own stereotypes. For example, students I assumed were disengaged due to their blank expressions and silence talked about how their shyness veils their passion. Several white students discussed how their whiteness privileged them. As a teacher, this prompt helped me understand my students better; it also helped my students engage in critical self-reflection. Later

in the semester, one of my Euro-American students identified the HNY profiles as her favorite reading assignment, writing,

> As a female myself, I found these stories to be very inspiring and they motivated me to be a true version of myself. These women all come from the Muslim faith which, in the United States, is an ethnic minority. Despite this, these women describe the challenges and how they have overcome them. This specific reading inspired me and sparked a number of thoughts and questions in my mind.

It seems that linking migration and the flux it entails with students' own inchoate identities can increase their engagement with immigration even when, for many, this issue does not top their interests. In short: including attention to immigration rhetoric in a writing class can lead to opportunities for students and teacher alike to learn about stereotypes, identity, and inclusion.

Lessons for Immigration Advocates and Other Cosmopolites

First, a confession: in working on this project and learning about the xenophobic policies and prejudices that immigration advocates are fighting against, I often felt disheartened about the potential for cosmopolitan arguments to triumph over nativist ones. Separating young children from their asylum-seeking parents and denying that gender-based violence could be grounds for asylum? Deporting undocumented immigrants like Javier, a man I met at KBI's soup kitchen, who, after losing his battle for amnesty, had been taken away from his wife and children—after spending six months in prison? Incarcerating a Guinean woman on suspicion that she was a terrorist—when in reality she was just a Muslim teenager trying to get her high school education? And these are just some of the U.S. government's anti-immigrant actions. Plenty of civilians contribute, too, in ways ranging from verbal to violent assaults—just in my

year of writing this dissertation, so many hate crimes against immigrants and religious minorities were perpetrated, including the heinous massacres of Jews in Pittsburgh and Latinos in El Paso. When it comes to the treatment of immigrants, the country, from the grassroots to the highest echelons, seems engulfed by nativism. How can immigration advocates hope to reverse this situation when so many forces are leagued against them?

But they do hope, and they do try—and they thus give hope to the cosmopolitan project, which I envision as spreading the belief that we all have ethical obligations to each other, regardless of how we look or where we come from. I would like the three case studies I presented to be of some use to those who do the laudable work of advocating for immigration justice. Whether religion or a secular commitment to human rights motivates an organization, the three examples show advocates how they can make arguments that reframe immigration, transcending nativism's commonplaces, without losing their audience. Scholars have worried that cosmopolitanism is too radical to impel the sort of mass mobilization needed to push for immigration reform (Ono and Sloop)—and even worse, that it could alienate the majority of Americans, who remain highly invested in national sovereignty and feel threatened by appeals for a borderless world (Cisneros). Championing unmitigated cosmopolitan theory, with its Kantian vision of a world-state, could indeed trigger a backlash. But the organizations I studied fuse cosmopolitan ideals with commonplaces more familiar to their audiences—for example, for Christians, episodes from the life of Jesus (KBI), and for Americans of any creed, the country's storied heritage as a refuge for huddled masses yearning to breathe free (TJC). While their approaches are tailored to their specific objectives, their rhetorical strategies could provide inspiration to like-minded groups.

Their pragmatic fusions point to what I believe is one of the surest ways that supporters of cosmopolitanism can diffuse this "fringe" philosophy into the mainstream: building on existing spiritual commitments. Any cosmopolite can do so with their coreligionists and others, I believe. HNY, for example, was run by *one* college student, Rana Abdelhamid, with the support of a few friends. Even the largest organization I studied, TJC, was started by *one* young lawyer, Layli Miller-Muro. That across scales, all these organizations make compelling arguments for hospitality, compassion, and justice, shows that there are no entry restrictions, no minimum qualifications, for joining the effort to reframe immigration—though it does help to be plugged into a network of fellow believers. In the next, and final, section, I present one more faith community motivated to promote cosmopolitan dispositions toward immigrants.

From Angel Island to a Zoroastrian Center

The immigration control system Mehr and I witnessed in Arizona has a precedent on the bucolic shores of Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay, which I visit in May 2018 with another co-researcher, Sahar Noroozi (introduced in chapter two). As we learn on our visit, the Immigration Station there served as a sort of Ellis Island of the West Coast from 1910 to 1940. For Chinese immigrants, subject to exclusionary laws, the Station was a prison where they could spend up to two years. These detainees literally left their mark, carving some two hundred poems into the Station's walls over the decades. These poems evince frustration and homesickness—for example, Yee of Taishan wrote, "Grief and bitterness entwined are heaven sent. The sad person sits alone, leaning by a window." Another poet proclaimed his intention to flee the "cage": "From now on, I am departing far from this building." The Station's managers repeatedly filled the carvings with putty and painted over them—the walls were painted some eight times—but now

the exposed poems, neat columns of Chinese logograms under flaking paint, memorialize the human misery inflicted a century ago by nativist immigration policies.

Beyond Angel Island, the metropolises of California we pass through, tapestries woven from diverse groups, testify to the perseverance of immigrants in the face of repression. In the Los Angeles area, we observe the imprint of the Iranian immigrant community by ambling around "Persian Square," a strip of Iranian restaurants and shops (here, Sahar introduces me to *faloodeh*, ice cream made with noodles, which is surprisingly delicious). We also visit two Zoroastrian centers in the area. Zoroastrianism, a religion founded in the sixth century BCE, is of special interest to me as the faith of my Persian ancestors. At one of the centers, in a photo of its founders, I spot a distant relative, Farangis Keykhosrow Shahrokh. The unexpected encounter with my grandfather's half-sister makes me ponder immigration's power to break and make ties, to separate and reunite. At the other center, Sahar and I are warmly greeted by a group of women. They give us copies of the *Gathas: The Holy Songs of Zarathustra.* I am struck by how many have made time for our interview,[25] though I bear no formal relation to their community, and by their whole-hearted welcome of two outsiders. To me, that is what hospitality looks like.

These women recount their immigration journeys from Iran to California decades ago and tell us about their religion, the philosophy of which is summed up in the words adorning the center's outer walls: "Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds." "We could use it these days, right?" one woman, Nooshin, comments. Rather like the Iranian Bahá'ís I talked to, whose responses I shared in chapter two, Nooshin sees her faith's core tenets, especially its emphasis on helping society progress, guiding the integration of immigrant believers. While Zoroastrianism is

[25] This interview was conducted as part of STUDY00009524 (see chapter two). "Nooshin" is a pseudonym.

fairly unknown in the United States, the women say it is gaining recognition now—for example, they are being invited to speak about their religion at schools. "I think what makes U.S. special is the openness to different cultures, to different religions, to different people, and being accepting of those people," Nooshin says, ". . . so everyone goes and mingles and tries different things and they talk about the different places that they come from."

In the perspective of Nooshin's Zoroastrian faith, good thoughts lead to good words, and good words lead to good deeds. Rhetorical studies rearranges that narrative, seeing words as influencing thoughts and deeds alike. Following this logic, my dissertation has implied that the way we talk about immigration has consequences for the way people think about their ethical obligations to out-groups and for the way they treat immigrants in daily interactions and in policymaking alike.

Nooshin's vision of mingling is one I would like to leave the reader with. She defines the United States by its openness to and acceptance of diversity, finding that Americans are willing—even happy—to encounter new cultures and share their own heritage. If this cosmopolitan fusion were currently ascendant throughout the country, there would be no basis for prejudice against immigrants, and my project would happily lack an exigence. Alas, while Nooshin's vision may be a reality in pockets of the country, the dominant movement seems to be towards closing out "Others" and valorizing only Euro-American heritage. But I would suggest her vision is not unattainable. Pro-immigrant rhetoric can gain the upper hand if it becomes more persuasive than nativism—and the good words offered by religion can help us get there.

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Appendix: First-Year Writing Syllabus

ENGL 30–03: HONORS RHETORIC & COMPOSITION ~ FALL 2019 | INSTRUCTOR: LAYLI MIRON

(RE)WRITING U.S. IMMIGRATION: MOBILE LIVES, MOVING TEXTS

Course Description

Participants in this honors writing class will compose texts while observing "the available means of persuasion" for a rhetorically rich subject: immigration. Besides being a pivot of political rhetoric today, immigration is the firsthand experience of 14% of U.S. residents. Focusing on this contemporary moment, we will analyze present-day constructions of immigration, examining how a range of rhetors, from immigrants to nativists, have formulated arguments on issues from linguistic assimilation to refugee detention. Students are encouraged to weave their responses to the ongoing debate into their own compositions, which center on five major projects in different genres and mediums. They are also invited to reflect on their personal links with immigration. By the end of the class, students will have sharpened their composing skills by inventing a variety of arguments for different audiences. They will also have established the groundwork for contributing their ideas to civic deliberations on immigration.

Required Materials

1. Andrea Lunsford, John Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters, *Everything's an Argument*, **8th edition**
2. Program in Writing & Rhetoric, *Penn Statements: Volume 38*, **2019 edition**

Learning Objectives

By the end of our fifteen weeks together, you should be able to:

- ✓ Recognize and articulate your goals as a writer.
- ✓ Research and respond to the ongoing conversation surrounding a topic.
- ✓ Apply critical thinking to your own compositions and those by other rhetors, interrogating the assumptions and evidence underlying claims.
- ✓ Anticipate the needs and expectations of your audience.
- ✓ Compose in a process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing.
- ✓ Employ the affordances of various mediums, whether a traditional paper or a digital medium.
- ✓ Contribute to immigration discourse, drawing on your knowledge of the issue's complexity.

To work toward these objectives, you need to engage with the course materials by completing the reading assignments before each class meeting, attending class and actively participating, and practicing writing via the course assignments.

Grading Overview

The distribution of graded work aims to maximize your opportunities to succeed:

Participation & Attendance	15%	Project #3: Factual Argument	15%
Playful Essays (PEs)	10%	Project #4: Proposal	20%
Project #1: Rhetorical-Cultural Analysis	10%	Project #5: Literacy Narrative	15%
Project #2: (Re)Definition	15%		

Details about each of these seven components are provided later in the syllabus.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced in class.

EA = Everything's an Argument; PS = Penn Statements; Canvas = Course website

UNIT 1 ANALYZING RHETORIC / INVESTIGATING IMMIGRATION DISCOURSE

Date	Topic	Reading due before class		Writing due
		Textbook / PS	Canvas	
T 8/27	Course introduction: What is "rhetoric and composition"? What does immigration look like today?	*EA* Ch. 1 (3–31): *Understanding Arguments and Reading Them Critically*	Morrison, "Home"	
R 8/29	Intro to Project #1	*EA* Ch. 6 (97–124): *Rhetorical Analysis*	Arendt, "We Refugees"; Abdelrazaq, "Mariposa Road"	**PE #1** due by 9:00 AM
T 9/3	Emotional, ethical, and logical appeals / Immigration advocacy	*EA* Ch. 2, 3, **&** 4 (32–78): *Arguments Based on Emotion; on Character; on Facts and Reason*	Korgen & Pyle, *Migrant*	**Proposal for Project #1** due by 9:00 AM
R 9/5	Evaluating student examples / Immigration journalism	*PS* Samples (11–26): *Rhetorical Analysis*	McDonnell, "Covering Immigration"; De Lama, "A Son of Immigrants"	**PE #2** due by 9:00 AM
T 9/10	Peer review of draft	Focus on writing! ☺		**Draft of Project #1** due by 9:00 AM
R 9/12	Style workshop: ***Bring current draft!***	*EA* Ch. 13 (321–27): *Style* (Word Choice)	Peer review comments	**Final Draft of Project #1** due by 11:59 PM

UNIT 2 ARGUING ABOUT DEFINITIONS / (RE)DEFINING "AMERICAN"

Date	Topic	Reading due before class		Writing due
		Textbook / PS	Canvas	
T 9/17	Intro to Project #2 / Redefining U.S. identity	*EA* Ch. 7 (135–163): *Structuring Arguments* **&** Ch. 9 (197–223): *Arguments of Definition*	Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism"	

R 9/19	Library resources for research ***Meet in Pattee W211A*** *(Arts & Humanities Library)*	*EA* Ch. 17 (405–418): *Academic Arguments* **&** Ch. 18 (438–45): *Finding Evidence* (Searching Effectively) **&** Ch. 19 (454–62): *Evaluating Sources*	(None)	**PE #3** due by 9:00 AM
T 9/24	Ethics of using sources; Ethics of culture and language: appropriation and euphemisms	*EA* Ch. 20 (464–83): *Using Sources* **&** Ch. 21 (484–91): *Plagiarism and Academic Integrity* **&** Ch. 22 (494–515): *Documenting Sources*	Kapadia, "Cultural Appropriation"; Japanese-American Citizens League, "The Power of Words"	**Proposal for Project #3** due by 9:00 AM
R 9/26	Evaluating student examples / Defining "home," "alien," and "marriage"	*PS* Samples (91–97): *(Re)Definition Argument*	Mengestu, "Home at Last"; Nakhjavani, "A Wandering Alien"; Jacob, "Arranged Marriage"	**PE #4** due by 9:00 AM
T 10/1	Peer review of draft	Focus on writing! ☺		**Draft of Project #2** due by 9:00 AM
R 10/3	Style workshop: ***Bring current draft!***	*EA* Ch. 13 (327–29, 343–45): *Sentence Structure and Argument*; *Schemes*	Peer review comments	**Final Draft of Project #2** due by 11:59 PM

UNIT 3 ARGUING THE FACTS / LINKING LITERACY AND IMMIGRATION

Date	Topic	Reading due before class		Writing due
		Textbook / PS	Canvas	
T 10/8	Intro to Project #3 / Literacy education	*EA* Ch. 8 (164–96): *Arguments of Fact*	AIC, "Immigrants in PA"; MSLC, "Literacy in Action"; Lorimer Leonard, "Fluidity"	
R 10/10	Visit from Mid-State Literacy Council / Multimodal immigration rhetoric	*EA* Ch. 16 (381–402): *Multimodal Arguments*	Hijabis of New York, Selected Profiles; Haydar, "Hijabi (Wrap My Hijab)"	**PE #5** due by 9:00 AM
T 10/15	Visualizing arguments, envisioning literacies	*EA* Ch. 14 (346–62): *Visual Rhetoric*	Thomson, "The Education Transformation"; Gavrilos, "Bilingualism"	**Proposal for Project #3** due by 9:00 AM

R 10/17	Evaluating student examples / Immigrant literacy and documents	*EA* Ch. 8 (187–192): Review student sample PS Sample (54–56): *Investigative Report*	Vieira, "Literacy Lives of the Young"; USCIS, "Civics Questions"	**PE #6** due by 9:00 AM
T 10/22	Peer review	Focus on writing! ☺		**Draft of Project #3** due by 9:00 AM
R 10/24	Style workshop: ***Bring current draft!***	*EA* Ch. 13 (329–33): *Punctuation and Argument*	Peer review comments	**Final Draft of Project #3** due by 11:59 PM

UNIT 4 PROPOSING SOLUTIONS / MOBILIZING FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

Date	Topic	Reading due before class		Writing due
		Textbook / PS	**Canvas**	
T 10/29	Intro to Project #4 / Arguments for immigration reform	*EA* Ch. 11 (255–72, 280–85): *Causal Arguments* **&** *EA* Ch. 12 (286–317): *Proposals*	Zolberg, "Why Not the Whole World?"	
R 10/31	Planning fieldwork / Studying the borderlands	*EA* Ch. 18 (446–451): *Finding Evidence*	Sessions, "Zero-Tolerance Memo"; De León, from *Land of Open Graves*	**PE #7** due by 9:00 AM
T 11/5	Identifying fallacies / Comparing immigration proposals	Ch. 5 (79–95): *Fallacies of Argument*	Huntington, "Hispanic Challenge"; Tonatiuh, *Undocumented*	**Proposal for Project #4** due by 9:00 AM
R 11/7	Evaluating student examples	*PS* Samples (30–42): *Proposal Argument*	Rodriguez, "Profession"	**PE #8** due by 9:00 AM
T 11/12	Peer review of draft	Focus on writing! ☺		**Draft of Project #4** due by 9:00 AM
R 11/14	Worktime for PE #9 ***No class meeting***		Peer review comments	**PE #9** due by 11:59 PM
T 11/19	Style workshop: ***Bring current draft!***	*EA* Ch. 13 (333–42): *Special Effects: Figurative Language (Tropes)*		**Final Draft of Project #4** due by 11:59 PM

UNIT 5 NARRATING LINGUISTIC DEVELOPMENT / APPRECIATING OUR DIVERSITY

Date	Topic	Reading due before class		Writing due
		Textbook / PS	Canvas	
R 11/21	Intro to Project #5 / Language and identity	*PS*, Narratives (61–63)	Anzaldúa, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue"	
T 12/3	Enticing the senses: Imagery and visuality in immigration narratives		Bui, from *The Best We Could Do*; Dumas, "The 'F Word'"; Lahiri, "Trading Stories"	**Proposal for Project #5** due by 9:00 AM
R 12/5	Evaluating student examples / Literacy and identity in asylum cases	*PS*, Narratives (64–73)	Kassindja, "Hearing"	**PE #10** due by 9:00 AM
T 12/10	Peer review of draft	Focus on writing! ☺		**Draft of Project #5** due by 9:00 AM
R 12/12	Course wrap-up & evaluation / Prospects for immigration rhetoric		Peer review comments Additional reading TBA	**Final Draft of Project #5** due by 11:59 PM

PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE CRITERIA

Participation counts for 15% of your final grade in this course. It is comprised of two components:

- ***In-class engagement:*** being present, prepared, and attentive during class, completing in-class writing and group work, and contributing to discussions.
- ***Process work:*** on-time and complete submission of proposals, drafts, and peer feedback.

A note on absences: Your success and the success of this course depend on your active participation; therefore, your regular attendance is required. Excused absences are certainly appropriate, but you must tell Mrs. Miron about them ahead of time. Be aware that University policy (*Policies and Rules*, 42-27) states that a student whose absences are excessive "may run the risk of receiving a lower grade or a failing grade," regardless of her or his performance in the class. You run that risk if you exceed ***two*** absences in this course. If you miss a class, regardless of the reason, it is your responsibility to get the assignments, class notes, and course changes from a classmate. In addition, if you miss class on a day that written work is due, it is still your responsibility to submit that work by the deadline.

Above: "Rhetorica," ascribed to the painter Mantegna. What do you think her upraised sword symbolizes? How about the trumpeting cherubs? Lady Rhetoric was one of various allegorical figures used in the Middle Ages to represent the seven disciplines of the liberal arts (grammar, logic, rhetoric, music, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy).

PLAYFUL ESSAYS: ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

"Essay" can refer to both a "short piece of writing" and "an attempt or effort." The playful essay assignments cover both meanings. They are short pieces (around 500 words) in which you'll attempt to employ the concepts we're studying. Their essayistic nature makes space for experimentation and play, within the bounds of the prompt. The Playful Essays are intentionally abbreviated as "PE," evoking physical education class. Consistent exercise of your writing muscles will lead to strength and agility in composing, just as PE class mandates frequent workouts to fortify your body.

The ten PEs count for 10% of your final grade. They are graded on a pass/fail basis to encourage you to get creative and experiment—you'll only fail if you don't respond to the prompt or don't turn in your work on time.

PE #1: Mobile Lives: Today, some scholars in the humanities and social sciences promote the *mobility paradigm*, which argues that, whereas we often consider fixity to be normal and movement abnormal, our lives are actually all shaped by movement—and we ourselves are often, if not constantly, in motion. This PE asks you to reflect on the mobilities that eventuated in you being here at Penn State. You can take a broad view, looking at the movements of your ancestors that influenced your own location. You can take a deep view, examining the educational, economic, transportation, bureaucratic, and other infrastructures that over the past few years influenced your path to State College. Or you can combine the broad and deep views. Your PE can take various forms, but make sure to include some consideration of the borders crossed in your journey to college, whether those are the official boundaries between nations and states or metaphorical social borders.

PE #2: Practicing Appeals: In her talk "Home," delivered at Oberlin College in 2009, Toni Morrison critiqued rising discrimination against people perceived as foreign Others. Imagine: you've been asked to follow in Morrison's footsteps and draft a brief speech on the social role of immigrants and/or minority groups. Your stance on the topic is up to you, but you should be argumentative, seeking to persuade your audience to accept some claim. The audience is your former high school classmates. In this speech, you need to employ appeals to pathos, ethos, and logos. Think about the strategies displayed in *EA* Chapter 2, 3, and 4—emotive stories, sharing your own background as authority to speak, citing facts, etc. Your PE should take the form of a speech script employing emotional, ethical, and logical appeals, with each appeal marked, perhaps by changing the font color and including a key indicating which color matches to which appeal.

PE #3: Toulmin Analysis: In the last unit, you conducted rhetorical analysis. Now you've learned about Toulmin argument (*EA* Ch. 7). In this PE, you'll expand your analytical toolkit by using the Toulmin model to identify components of an argument. You have two options for finding a text to analyze. The first option is to find an argumentative text relevant to your potential topic for Project #2—try looking for opinion articles (editorials or letters to the editor—*not* news articles). The second option is to use one of the texts recommended for rhetorical analysis (see list provided by Mrs. Miron in Unit 1), though not the same one you used for Project #1. Provide a brief summary of the text, and then identify its components: its claim, qualifiers, reasons or evidence, warrants, and backing. Finally, comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the argument. For example, did it provide sufficient evidence? Was the warrant shared with the audience?

PE #4: Annotated Bibliography: An annotated bibliography is a list of resources compiled as part of a research project paired with detailed notes about those sources (see *PS* 57–60). Each source is

documented, in this case using MLA citation style (*EA* Ch. 22), and then annotated. The annotation should include (1) a summary of the source, (2) an assessment of the source's reliability (see *EA* Ch. 19), and (3) a reflection on its usefulness specific to Project #2. You should write ***at least one to two sentences*** for each of these three categories. Include information that will help you understand and recall the source's major arguments and contributions without having to go back and reread everything. You should cite and annotate at least ***five*** sources. One should be a ***scholarly source***: written by an academic (likely someone with a doctoral degree), peer-reviewed (reviewed by experts), and published in a journal or book series by a university press.

PE #5: Manifesto for Belonging: In the profiles on *Hijabis of New York*, the subjects critique the oppressive narratives they face; Profile #11 makes a particularly eloquent case against stereotypes and for constructive responses. For this PE, you will emulate this writer in reflecting on the limiting stereotypes you face and your response. While you might not confront prejudices as malicious as Islamophobia, you do have characteristics that are obscured by outward appearances, just as the "goofy, smiley, cat-loving, kind of awkward, but really awesome" facets of Profile #11's writer disappear when onlookers fixate on her hijab. What can't people tell about you when they fixate on your appearance or obvious characteristics? What strategies (if any) have you used to confront limiting stereotypes you or others face? What's your manifesto for belonging and inclusivity?

PE #6: Infographic: As you learned in *EA* Chapter 14, arguments can be bolstered by including visuals, particularly infographics. Focusing on your subject for Project #3, consider the facts relevant to your argument. If you don't already have facts, most likely in the form of statistics, start by researching them (FedStats, Google Public Data Explorer, and Pew Research Center are possible sources). Once you've gathered pertinent facts/statistics, your task is to illustrate them in an infographic. While this infographic need not be elaborate, it should demonstrate attention to design (images, colors, fonts, etc.). The infographic should include references for the sources of your facts. To build your graphic, you can employ the SmartArt feature in Microsoft programs, or online software such as Piktochart and StatPlanet.

PE #7: Causal Analysis: Write a brief causal argument (*EA* Ch. 11) about a phenomenon you consider problematic—ideally, one you'd consider using in the proposal argument (Project #4). For instance, *What accounts for the cliquishness I experienced in high school? What are the likely consequences of my student organization's lack of diversity in its membership? Why have so many of my coworkers left my workplace recently?* Explore the potential—and probably multiple—causes and consequences of the phenomenon you call into question.

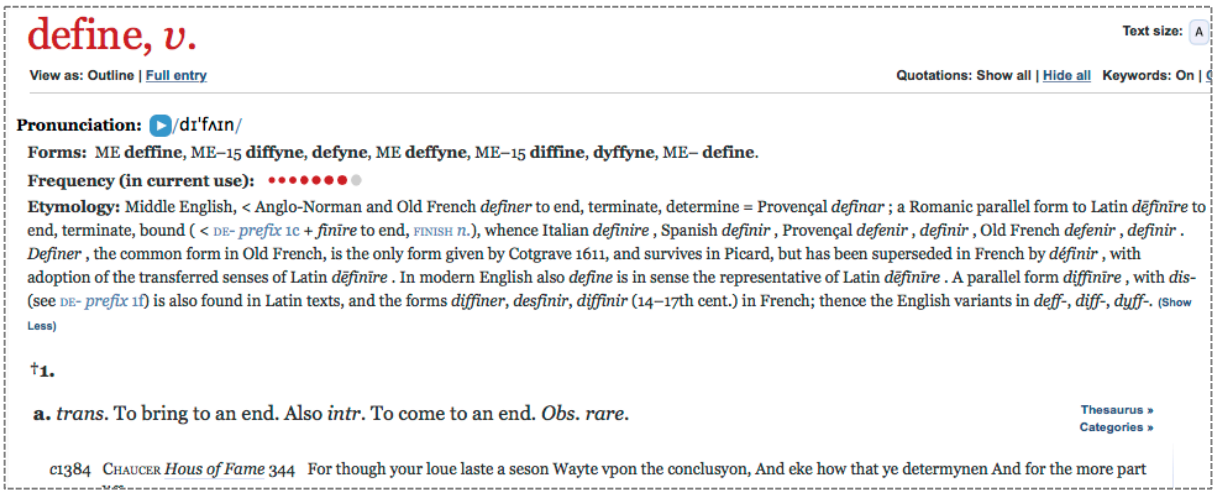
PE #8: Audience Analysis: Understanding your audience is important for effective persuasion, of course—but it can also be an ethical action related to the concept of "hospitality." As philosopher Jacques Derrida has argued, ethics and hospitality are both about how you treat the Other. In an argumentative situation like a proposal, your audience is the Other: they differ from you, likely in multiple ways, but at least in their approach to a given problem (otherwise, there'd be no reason to try to persuade them). Your task here is to conduct audience analysis with a hospitable attitude, getting to know your potential readers as human beings. Pinpoint a few members of your proposal's audience and see what you can learn about them, whether through online research or actually meeting in person. What are their names and professions? What do they care about? What are their interests? The result of your analysis should be a profile of one or more individuals in your rhetorical audience.

PE #9: Reflection: As we approach the conclusion of our course, it's a good time to reflect on our progress thus far, both in terms of (1) growing as writers and (2) as contributors to immigration discourse. For the first part of this PE, reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as a composer, drawing upon feedback you've received on your drafts from your peers and on your final versions from Mrs. Miron. What areas would you like to focus on for improvement? For the second part, return to one of the readings we've done thus far that you found particularly inspiring, troubling, or problematic. Respond to it: what about it do you admire, question, or disagree with? Why?

PE #10: Show, Don't Tell: To compose an appealing narrative, as you are doing for Project #5, it's necessary to immerse the reader in a scene. This final PE asks you to give this approach a try by narrating an interaction you observed or participated in over Thanksgiving break. Your brief narrative should include three elements: setting the scene through descriptions that appeal to multiple senses (consider not only what things looks like but also what they sound, smell, taste, and feel like), developing the characters (point out key features that indicate their personalities), and providing dialogue (there should be some quotations, though you don't need to reproduce an entire conversation). It's fine if there's no plot or drama; rather than requiring you to compose a fully formed story, this PE is a chance to practice using imagery—*showing* your reader something rather than *telling* them about it.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

The project instructions that follow encourage you to think about writing as a process that includes planning (proposing), drafting, and giving and receiving feedback (followed, of course, by revising and editing). You will earn participation credit for your proposals, drafts, and peer reviews, assuming they adhere to the guidelines and deadlines set out on Canvas and in class. The final drafts will be graded according to the criteria listed at the end of each assignment page, which correspond to rubrics that you can view in Canvas. Possible grades for final drafts are A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, and F.



define, *v.*

Text size: A

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Quotations: Show all | Hide all Keywords: On |

Pronunciation: /dɪ'fʌɪn/

Forms: ME **deffine**, ME–15 **diffyne**, **defyne**, ME **deffyne**, ME–15 **diffine**, **dyffyne**, ME– **define**.

Frequency (in current use):

Etymology: Middle English, < Anglo-Norman and Old French *definer* to end, terminate, determine = Provençal *definar* ; a Romanic parallel form to Latin *dēfīnīre* to end, terminate, bound (< DE- *prefix* 1c + *fīnīre* to end, FINISH *n.*), whence Italian *definire* , Spanish *definir* , Provençal *defenir* , *definir* , Old French *defenir* , *definir* . *Definer* , the common form in Old French, is the only form given by Cotgrave 1611, and survives in Picard, but has been superseded in French by *définir* , with adoption of the transferred senses of Latin *dēfīnīre* . In modern English also *define* is in sense the representative of Latin *dēfīnīre* . A parallel form *diffīnīre* , with *dis-* (see DE- *prefix* 1f) is also found in Latin texts, and the forms *diffiner*, *desfinir*, *diffinir* (14–17th cent.) in French; thence the English variants in *deff-*, *diff-*, *dyff-*. (Show Less)

†**1.**

a. *trans.* To bring to an end. Also *intr.* To come to an end. *Obs. rare.*

Thesaurus »
Categories »

*c*1384 CHAUCER *Hous of Fame* 344 For though your loue laste a seson Wayte vpon the conclusyon, And eke how that ye determynen And for the more part

Part of the definition of "define" from the Oxford English Dictionary (oed.com.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu). You'll be writing a (re)definition argument for Project #2.

PROJECT #1: RHETORICAL-CULTURAL ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW: A rhetorical analysis (i) identifies the strategies used by an author, (ii) analyzes how they work, and (iii) argues for the effect these strategies have on the text's accomplishment of its purpose. A cultural analysis adds an element: (iv) stepping back from the text and contextualizing it in relevant social ideologies.

Genre: Rhetorical analysis	***Medium:*** Document	***Length***: ~1,000 words	***Project weight***: 10%
Deadlines:	Proposal: 9/3	Draft: 9/10	Final draft: 9/12

STEP 1: *Choose your piece of rhetoric.* Choose a text from the list of options provided by Mrs. Miron (or, if you prefer, find your own text). Consider the guidance given under "Finding a Topic" on *EA* 125 (Ch. 6), and once you've settled on a text, begin to ponder the questions under "Researching Your Topic" and "Formulating a Claim."

STEP 2: *Write a proposal.* For the proposal assignment (Canvas), you will identify your chosen text, explain the rhetorical situation (including the larger sociocultural context), describe several rhetorical components that seem especially compelling and worthy of detailed study, and provide your working hypothesis or tentative thesis about the text's rhetorical elements.

STEP 3: *Draft your paper*. Consider beginning with an outline to guide your structure. Compose your draft, writing between 750 and 1,000 words. If you use any sources beyond the text you're analyzing, make sure to track them and cite them using the guidelines in *EA* Chapter 22.

STEP 4: *Format your paper.* For this assignment, your paper should follow MLA style: text formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Place your name, the date, and the instructor's name ("Mrs. Miron") in the upper left-hand corner of the first page, with your creative, engaging title centered below. Number all of the pages except page 1. See *EA* 514 (Ch. 22) for an example.

STEP 5: *Revise, edit, and proofread your paper.* After receiving comments in the peer review session, implement the feedback. Revisions should involve significant changes to your paper—for example, to its structure, content within paragraphs, and thesis. In the next phase, editing, read your sentences carefully, making sure they are effectively conveying your meaning. Finally, proofread your paper—make sure you didn't overlook any typos.

Mrs. Miron will evaluate the final draft based on its

- accurate identification of all elements of the text's rhetorical situation, including the cultural context
- organization, including introduction with thesis and body paragraphs with topic sentences and transitions
- analysis of several rhetorical components: what they are, how they work, why they matter
- support of all analytical/argumentative claims with sufficient evidence
- clear style adhering to the standards of edited English and MLA format

PROJECT #2: (RE)DEFINITION

OVERVIEW: A (re)definition argument (i) responds to an opportunity to change an audience's definition of a given person, place, or thing by (ii) staking a claim that deepens or alters the typical understanding of the word or phrase, corrects its improper usage, or updates it for today and by (iii) supporting this claim with evidence and reasoning.

Genre: Definition argument ***Medium:*** Document ***Length***: ~1,000 words ***Project weight***: 15%

Deadlines: Proposal: 9/24 Draft: 10/1 Final draft: 10/3

STEP 1: *Choose your subject.* Review the prompts under "Finding a Topic" on *EA* p. 211 (Ch. 9). Find a term that matters to you and to a particular community. You could choose a term related to our class's theme, but that's not a requirement.

STEP 2: *Compose a proposal.* For the proposal assignment (Canvas), you will provide a draft of your thesis, the exigence for your argument, your target audience, and the kinds of sources that will be most useful to you.

STEP 3: *Do your research.* This project provides the opportunity to get familiar with the resources for research at Penn State. Employing the strategies learned from our library session, conduct research on your subject using the library databases and other resources. If you encounter any difficulties with your research, contact our course librarians (guides.libraries.psu.edu/UPEngl015). Complete the annotated bibliography assignment, PE #4.

STEP 4: *Draft your paper.* You might consider outlining your argument before you write it, perhaps employing the parts outlined on *EA* 214. In composing your draft, write between 750 and 1,000 words (plus your list of works cited).

STEP 5: *Format your paper.* For this assignment, your paper should follow MLA style: text formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Place your name, the date, and the instructor's name ("Mrs. Miron") in the upper left-hand corner of the first page, with your creative, engaging title centered below. Number all of the pages except page 1. See *EA* 514 (Ch. 22) for an example.

STEP 6: *Revise, edit, and proofread your paper.* Apply the feedback you received in the peer review session in revising your paper, and carefully edit and proofread before submitting it. Pay special attention to your in-text citations and Works Cited list. Do they correspond exactly? Do both follow the MLA style guidelines? Is every piece of information cited?

Mrs. Miron will evaluate the final draft based on its

- (re)definition of a single term based on a central claim (thesis) that deepens or alters the typical understanding of the word or phrase, corrects its improper usage, or updates it for today
- adaptation to the target audience using appeals to persuade them of the definition's significance to their lives
- support of this definition through a well-structured and developed argument
- effective use of reliable sources to persuade the audience; proper use of MLA-style citations
- style tailored to purpose and audience (colloquialisms might work, but typos do not)

PROJECT #3: FACTUAL ARGUMENT

This project is commissioned by the Mid-State Literacy Council through Penn State's Public Writing Initiative.

OVERVIEW: An argument of fact (i) teaches the reader about a subject by (ii) synthesizing evidence gathered from reliable sources. It should also (iii) generate interest in the subject, persuading the reader to care about it. In this case, your factual argument will take the form of a post for the *Literacy in Action* blog on the Mid-State Literacy Council's website (mid-stateliteracycouncil.org/the-latest/).

Genre: Factual argument ***Medium:*** Document w/ graphic(s) ***Length***: ~500 words ***Project weight***: 15%

Deadlines: Proposal: 10/15 Draft: 10/22 Final Draft: 10/24

STEP 1: *Choose your category and topic.* Several general categories will be offered. Choose the one you find most interesting. Within the category, come up with a relevant topic. Consult with your category-mates to make sure you haven't picked the same topic. Do some preliminary research to see what other people have written about your subject already. You may also find the guidance in *EA* Chapter 8 useful.

STEP 2: *Compose a proposal.* The proposal assignment (Canvas) asks you to provide a draft of your thesis, the exigence for your argument, a rough outline, and several potential sources.

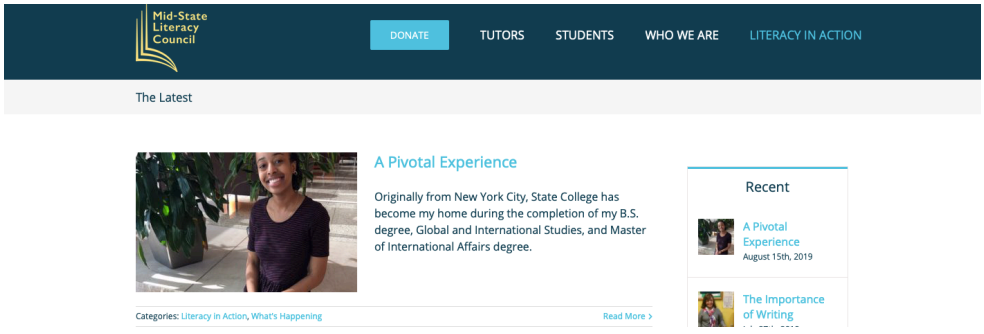
STEP 3: *Research your subject.* Employing the research strategies learned in the previous unit, conduct research on your subject using the library databases and other resources. If you encounter any difficulties with your research, contact our course librarians (guides.libraries.psu.edu/UPEngl015).

STEP 4: *Draft your post.* In composing your draft (a standard word-processed document), aim for writing between 400 and 600 words, and draw from the sources you've gathered. Take advantage of the multimodality of the blog medium your document will eventually take by including hyperlinks to your sources rather than formal citations. Also make sure to include at least one graphic of your own creation; PE #6 will generate one visual you can use.

STEP 5: *Revise, edit, and proofread your paper.* Apply the feedback you received in the peer review session in revising your document, and carefully edit and proofread before submitting it.

Mrs. Miron will evaluate the final draft based on its

- support of a thesis through a well-structured factual argument
- adaptation to the audience and the format of the *Literacy in Action* blog
- employment of sufficient research from reliable sources to support claims
- sensitivity to the multimodality of the blog medium (e.g., graphic(s), hyperlinks)
- style tailored to purpose and audience



A screenshot of the Literacy in Action *blog.*

PROJECT #4: PROPOSAL

OVERVIEW: A proposal argument (i) establishes an exigence for action, (ii) lays out a plan of action, and (iii) argues for this plan's feasibility and acceptability over competing options.

Genre: Proposal argument ***Medium***: Document ***Length***: 1,000+ words ***Project weight***: 20%

Deadlines: Proposal: 11/5 Draft: 11/12 Final Draft: 11/19

STEP 1: *Choose your issue.* Locate a local issue of limited scope that you wish to resolve; the issue should pertain to diversity, inclusion, and equity. For example, you could consider cliquishness at your high school, challenges facing international students at Penn State, homogeneity among the membership of a student organization you belong to, or the social environment of your workplace. Avoid general problems like gun violence, racism, and poverty, because they are impossible to comprehensively address in a short proposal. You may find the guidance in *EA* Chapter 12 useful.

STEP 2: *Investigate the issue.* Your research should include both fieldwork and online/library reading. What do the people with a stake in the issue think about it? What have other people said about the issue you're investigating? PE #7 will get you thinking about these questions. Try to locate at least five pertinent sources.

STEP 3: *Organize your research into a proposal with bibliography.* The proposal assignment (Canvas) asks you to provide your tentative thesis, an explanation of the significance of your issue, the stakeholders and audience, and five potential sources with brief notes about their value to your project. Some of these sources should be people you plan to interview or other fieldwork you plan to conduct.

STEP 4: *Draft your proposal*. As you draft, make sure to keep track of the sources you're using—stick with MLA as the citation style. The draft should be at least 1,000 words long.

STEP 5: *Format your proposal.* Be creative with document design—think about how to appeal to your audience through visual elements, such as headings, spacing, fonts, alignment, charts, photos, etc. This time, there's no need to stick with Times New Roman, double-spaced!

STEP 6: *Revise your proposal.* Apply the feedback you received in the peer review session in revising your proposal and carefully edit it.

Mrs. Miron will evaluate the final draft based on its

- description of problem, including analysis of its causes and effects
- presentation of your recommended proposal, including a feasible plan for implementation
- demonstration of how your proposal addresses the need, including evidence that the proposal will achieve the desired outcome *and* consideration of alternative ways to achieve a similar outcome
- incorporation of evidence gathered via fieldwork and other research methods, cited in MLA style
- document design and writing style tailored to purpose and audience

PROJECT #5: LITERACY NARRATIVE

OVERVIEW: A literacy narrative (i) recounts key moments in your development as a user of language by (ii) appealing to an audience through the use of vivid sensory details, characters, scenery, dialogue, and personal reflection. For this class, your literacy narrative should include (iii) consideration of how exposure to *linguistic diversity* has influenced your development (consider the forms of language and literacy you've been exposed to beyond the standardized English taught in school—e.g., learning a second language, living abroad, using the slang of youth culture, etc.).

Genre: Literacy narrative ***Medium***: Your choice ***Length***: Variable ***Project weight***: 15%

Deadlines: Proposal: 12/3 Draft: 12/10 Final Draft: 12/12

STEP 1: *Brainstorm key moments with language.* The more specific the memories you can pull together, the more interesting your narrative will be. Come up with at least three moments that represent turning points in your relationship with language, at least one of which should relate to linguistic diversity.

STEP 2: *Consider the best medium for your narrative.* We've done some multimodal composing already, and there are many mediums we haven't used in this class that might appeal to you: a webpage, short video, comic strip, podcast, storybook, online presentation (e.g., Prezi), custom map (e.g., ZeeMaps), song… Consider choosing a medium that will showcase your strengths as a composer and thus appeal to your audience, as well as challenging your rhetorical abilities.

STEP 3: *Compose a proposal.* The proposal assignment gives you an opportunity to explain your choice of medium, to define your target audience, and to provide a rough outline.

STEP 3: *Draft your narrative.* Remember to flesh out your narrative with vivid sensory details, characters, scenery, and dialogue.

STEP 4: *Revise, edit, and proofread your narrative.* Apply the feedback you received in the peer review session in revising your project, and carefully edit and proofread the project before submitting it.

Mrs. Miron will evaluate the final draft based on its

- narration of specific moments that demonstrate your development as a user of language
- reflection on your growth, especially as it pertains to linguistic diversity
- appealing integration of supporting details, characters, dialogue, and scenery
- effective use of the affordances of the chosen medium (e.g., sound, graphics, design, movement) to reach the target audience
- style tailored to purpose and audience (colloquialisms might work, but typos do not)

Vita of Layli Maria Miron

EDUCATION

Pennsylvania State University — PhD, English (Rhetoric & Composition), May 2020
MA, English (Rhetoric & Composition), May 2017

Major Awards: Center for Democratic Deliberation Dissertation Fellowship, Sparks Fellowship, McCourtney Family Distinguished Graduate Fellowship

Mount Holyoke College — BA, English, summa cum laude, ΦBK, May 2013

Honors Thesis: "Stepping into Academia: First-Year Students' Experiences of Writing at Mount Holyoke College," supervised by Dr. Mark Shea

PUBLICATIONS

Graduate Writing Workshops: To Generalize or to Specialize?
WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship — Spring 2020

No Reclaimed Homeland: Thi Bui's Postcolonial Historiography in *The Best We Could Do*
Inks: The Journal of the Comics Studies Society, vol. 4, no. 1 — Spring 2020

A Persian Preacher's Westward Migration: Táhirih's Transnational Rhetoric, 1817–2015
Journal of Communication and Religion, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 5–27 — Winter 2019

Making Visible the Nativism-Ableism Matrix: The Rhetoric of Immigrants' Comics
Rhetoric Review, vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 445–463 — Fall 2019

Martha Root's Interwar Lectures: Cosmic Education and the Rhetoric of Unity
Peitho, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 132–157 — Fall/Winter 2018

Laura Barney's Discipleship to 'Abdu'l-Bahá: Tracing a Theological Flow from the Middle East to the United States, 1900–1916
Journal of Bahá'í Studies, vol. 28, no. 1–2, pp. 7–31 — Spring/Summer 2018

Review of *Constitutive Visions: Indigeneity and Commonplaces of National Identity in Republican Ecuador* by Christa J. Olson
Quarterly Journal of Speech, vol. 103, no. 1–2, pp. 186–190 — January 2017

Vita current as of March 2020. For updates, please visit https://layli.net.