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"REFASHIONING AFTER THE SPLIT: MOROCCO AND THE REMAKING OF FRENCH CHRISTIANITY AFTER THE 1905 LAW OF SEPARATION"

by

WHITNEY ABERNATHY

Under the Direction of Denise Davidson

ABSTRACT

On December 9, 1905, newspapers announced the French Third Republic had passed the Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State. This law dissolved the complex relationship that had existed between the French state and the Catholic Church and ended the public role of religion. However, while religious conviction seemed to be on the wane within the French metropole, public discourse in the early twentieth century regarding the impending French seizure of Morocco consistently referred to the French populace as "Christians" while the Moroccans were collectively labeled as "Muslim savages." This thesis argues that the French media, government, and other public figures generated the concept of a "Christian France" in order to underline the moral and civilizational superiority of a supposedly unified French civilization in relation to the inhabitants of Morocco.

INDEX WORDS: Morocco, France, Colonialism, French Third Republic, Catholicism, Law of Separation, Secularism, Sexuality, Discourse, *Laïcité*, Religion

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WHITNEY ABERNATHY

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Georgia State University

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by

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May 2013

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family, who has supported me unceasingly in my passions for writing and history.

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I could not have completed this thesis without the expert guidance of Denise Davidson. Dr. Davidson's insight, constant encouragement, and helpful critiques have been invaluable to the project. I would also like to thank Jared Poley and Joe Perry, who also significantly contributed to the ideas presented in this thesis.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"Assimilation is impossible in Islamic countries...for there is a fundamental dissimilarity between the Muslim and the Christian."[1] Réginald Kann, 1921

On December 9, 1905, French newspapers announced that the Third Republic had passed the Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State. This law, publicly hailed by contemporaries as "most beneficial to the productive, modern country," dissolved the complex relationship that had existed between the French state and the Catholic Church, ending the public role of religion and terminating all interaction between the government and religious institutions.[2] After decades of debate and conflict, France had become a secular republic, meaning that the French government no longer acknowledged any religion and that the claims of all religious communities were to be confined to private spheres of influence.[3] The separation was intended to secure the allegiance of individuals to the republic and, in so doing, break the political and ideological power that had been held by the Catholic Church for centuries.

In claiming, "the state does not recognize...any religion," the law reinforced the notion that the French public sphere was to be free from religious persuasion.[4] While religion—particularly Catholicism—undoubtedly remained important to many people within France during this period, language in newspapers and other forms of print media suggests that there was a strong sense of rupture and a fear of impending societal change amongst contemporaries in regards to the separation.

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[1] Réginald Kann, *Le Protectorat Marocaine* (Nancy: Berger-Levrault, 1921), 51.
[2] Henri Des Houx, "Le Bilan de la séparation," *Le Matin,* December 9, 1905.
[3] Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 56.
[4] Aristide Briand, *La Séparation: Discussion de la loi 1904-1905* (Paris: E. Fasquelle, 1908), 8.

However, many individuals in France reacted positively to the new law. Catholic influence in the public sphere, according to the prominent Parisian newspaper *Le Matin*, had been "sowing discord" within France, and the relegation of religion to people's interior lives was sure to be a powerful "instrument of peace" throughout the country.[5] Many French people believed that France would not enjoy the fruits of democracy until religious influence was rooted out of civic life.[6] Despite this attitude, religious language continued to permeate public discussion in the years following the Law of Separation, particularly in relation to France's colonies. In fact, early twentieth-century print media, literature, and government documents frequently alluded to a dichotomy based largely on religious affiliation that the French constructed between themselves and North African inhabitants, particularly the Moroccans. In other words, although many French writers during this time extolled France's new, established secularism, they simultaneously drew upon the centuries-old religious rivalry that set the "French Christians" against the "barbaric Muslims;" this time specifically in regards to the Kingdom of Morocco.[7] Although this dichotomous relationship between Christianity and Islam had been well established within French discourse, its continued use after the Law of Separation requires additional study. Even though French Catholics were also distinguished from French Jews and Protestants during this period, this study focuses on the comparison between the French Christians and Moroccan Muslims after the Law of Separation, for the colonial context permits a more multifaceted understanding of French religious identity.

At its core, my thesis examines the paradoxical ways in which the French people identified themselves in relation to Christianity both within France and regarding the people of Morocco during the years 1900 to 1914. Depending on the context, religion was used in early twentieth-century public discourse to exclude or include, to embrace or to define an "other." After surveying the

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[5] Des Houx, "Le Bilan de la séparation," *Le Matin,* December 9, 1905.
[6] Alexander Sedgwick, *The French Third Republic 1870-1914* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 72.
[7] M. Rebout, "Fez et révolte," *Le Matin* April 19, 1912.

outward division between the French secular republicans and Catholics during this period in France's history, my research contends that the institutions of secular republicanism and the Church were not as mutually exclusive as current scholarship suggests, for both secularists and Catholics invoked similar language and moral ideals to accomplish dissimilar ends.

Building upon this morally-based unity that existed between Catholics and secularists within late nineteenth and early twentieth-century French discourse, the work asserts that public figures writing about the Moroccan situation fashioned a unified French Christian colonial identity that resonated with the French populace. Interestingly, this constructed "Christian" identity was strongly intertwined with French views of "moral" sexuality in relation to the Moroccan people. By viewing sexuality through an explicitly religious lens in the French-Moroccan context, the work attempts to understand the ways in which perceptions about Arab sexuality in relation to religion were used to justify and legitimate French interference in Morocco. Finally, and most importantly, this thesis proposes that the French populace's rhetorical interactions with the Moroccans both shaped and revealed the changing nature of French Christianity after the Separation of Church and State in 1905.

Through my research, I intend to make a few broader claims. Firstly, French writers, journalists, and government officials created the notion of a unified "Christian France" in order to diminish the credibility of the Moroccans and ideologically justify French interactions in Morocco. My research simultaneously reveals the discursive ties that still existed between the French people and Catholicism after 1905. Secondly, the work will uncover the mutual influences between metropole and colony and unpack the ways that power was exercised through the overlapping discourses of morality, sexuality, and religion. Thirdly, I will argue that the Law of Separation was not as definitive as current scholarship suggests while also showing the ways in which the law—in con-

junction with France's endeavors in Morocco—impacted and changed what it meant to be a French Christian in the early twentieth century.

Now, the question presents itself: How did the French populace's interactions with the Moroccan peoples in the early twentieth century (mostly through newspapers and other forms of print media) reflect and even shape French religious identity within the metropole? And further: What do these interactions in the formative years of the Moroccan protectorate tell us about the broader tensions between religion and secularization within French society in the twentieth century? The best way to go about answering these questions is to first ask: Why Morocco? What about Morocco had such significance in the French collective imagination during the first years of the twentieth century?

Morocco was consistently headline news in early twentieth-century French media because of its political, economic, and cultural importance to France and Europe during the period. Although every interested power in Europe—whether it was Britain, France, Germany, or Spain—saw Morocco as a key to controlling commerce and politics in the Mediterranean, France was not only looking for economic and political gain, but was also seeking a patriotic bridge after the divisive years of the Dreyfus Affair.[8] Outward expansion had the potential to smooth over the internal complexities and surface-level divisions caused by religion in France. Also, it is crucial to remember that the situation surrounding the impending Moroccan protectorate was at the forefront of public discussion among the French populace during a time in which religion was being reevaluated and its role reconsidered within France.

Because the French looked to Morocco as a potential unifying force during a time when questions over the place of religion in society (specifically Catholicism) were causing division, looking at issues of religion and France's colonial endeavors in Morocco together enables us to see the

[8] Robert Gildea, *Children of the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 430.

ways in which they influenced each other. Sociologist Emile Durkheim, commenting on the religious climate of early twentieth-century France stated in 1914, "the old ideals and divinities...no longer respond sufficiently to the new aspirations of our day...Thus we find ourselves in an intermediary period."[9] I contend that, in the midst of this "intermediary period" in French religious life (a notion that is backed up in contemporary print media), Morocco provided an ideological space in which the French populace could appear unified and in which they could create a new, secularized "Christian" identity even as they drew upon the familiar bifurcation between Christianity and Islam that had existed for centuries in France's mythology.

Although this notion of a "Christian France" in Morocco after the Law of Separation was riddled with complexities, undoubtedly contested, and not indicative of a true religious unity within the metropole, the discursive ties that still existed between the secular French nation and Christianity (ties that were based in discourses of morality and civilization) legitimized the explicit references to a "Christian France" after 1905. Pushing this notion further, my thesis contends that the French print media, government figures, and other writers used the discourse surrounding Morocco to associate the French with a new brand of Christianity—a Christianity that highlighted the civilized aspects of France that it did not share with the Moroccans. The label "Christian" was employed in rhetoric regarding Morocco to highlight France's moral and civilizational superiority. Ultimately, I assert that France's interactions with Morocco reveal the beginnings of a trend by which Christianity in France (in public discourse—not necessarily in practice) became more concerned with asserting its moral superiority and over religious and racial inferiors than it was occupied with issues of salvation or religious practice. As stated earlier, there were undoubtedly many French secularists who privately practiced Christianity: it was not necessarily contradictory for French people (even those unaffiliated with any particular religious association) to associate France with Christainity after

[9] Emile Durkheim, *On Morality and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), xlvii.

1905. However, given the tentative political and religious climate(s) of the early twentieth century, the fact that the secular media, members of the French government, and members of non-affiliated colonial lobby groups unequivocally associated France with Christianity for years after 1905 in relation to Morocco suggests a deeper trend within French religious rhetoric that merits investigation.

Additionally, the influx of North African Arab immigrants into France over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have brought questions of religion, secularization, and pluralism in France to the forefront of public discussion. The secularized form of French Christianity presented in this thesis continues to be shaped and defined by French people's interactions with supposed religious and racial inferiors within the Fifth Republic. Therefore, it is crucial to study moments of rupture in French religious life (such as the Law of Separation) in conjunction with French colonial endeavors in North Africa so as to better understand the nature of French conceptions of religion within a framework of secular republicanism.

Before proceeding any further, a few clarifications are necessary. This thesis does not intend to carelessly conflate the terms "Catholic" and "Christian." Clearly, the two words do not always represent the same people or group and, as a result, must not be thrown around haphazardly. However, contemporaries in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century France did use these words interchangeably. While these terms were undoubtedly contested and loaded with various meanings, a discursive analysis of these terms suggests that contemporaries used the two words synonymously in the early twentieth century. It is obvious that the French media assumed the overwhelming majority of French people who were likely to associate themselves with Christianity were Catholic. This thesis will define these terms based on such assumptions while at the same time maintaining full awareness of the complexities inherent in such a methodological approach.

1.1 Historiography

This thesis combines and complicates two well-developed bodies of historiography: the historiography of religion and French secularism, or *laïcité,* within France and the historiography of French colonialism. While both of these historiographical areas shed light on the nature of religion and empire in twentieth-century France, it is in their overlap where the most interesting and revealing complexities reside regarding French identity. Religious evolution in twentieth-century France did not occur within an ideological bubble. Therefore, it is crucial to understand any religious change or trend amongst the French populace in light of its interactions with the people in France's colonies.

Chronologically, my primary source analysis begins in the late nineteenth century. However, I will be drawing initially from historiography that focuses on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in order to uncover the discursive relationship between late nineteenth-century Catholics and secularists. Works such as David Bell's *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism 1680-1800,* Marcel Gauchet's *The Disenchantment of the World,* and Robert Gildea's *Children of the Revolution* all discuss the waning of Christianity in France and the advent of secular nationalism over the course of the eighteenth century. Bell's work in particular demonstrates that nationalism in France borrowed heavily from religious discourse and religious practice, a notion that has proven itself crucial in the development of my research questions. In my work, I expand on Bell's assertions. Not only did secular nationalism draw heavily from religious language, but also notions surrounding *laïcité* itself were discursively bound to Christianity.

Works that focus on religion, morality, gender, and *laïcité* in nineteenth-century France have also shaped the ways in which I have approached my research. Caroline Ford's *Divided Houses,* Frederick Brown's *For the Soul of France,* Gilbert D. Chaitin's *Culture Wars and Literature in the French Third Republic,* and Patricia Tilburg's *Colette's Republic: Work, Gender, and Popular Culture in France 1870-1914* each discuss the roles of religion and secularism in nine-

teenth-century France. However, these works (with the exception of Tilburg) overwhelmingly support the idea of a divided France (either secular versus Catholic or male versus female) in regards to religion. As implied earlier, my thesis implements the concepts and methods derived from Bell's book and asserts instead that the people of France were linked within a discursive framework of morality and civilization that was based in Catholic rhetoric and tradition. While this may be an interesting notion in an exclusively French framework, the discursive unity mentioned above can only be fully explored and understood in the colonial context. The French people seemed to be uncharacteristically unified in regards to Catholicism when they wrote, read, and spoke about the supposed exotic, amoral peoples of the Islamic world.

Works on French colonialism in general, such as Robert Aldrich's *Greater France: A History of Overseas Expansion*, and Alice Conklin's *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930,* have increased my knowledge of general trends within French colonial historiography. Additionally, works that deal with colonial sexuality and the role of sex within empire, such as Mrinilini Sinha's *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire,* Ann Laura Stoler's *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule,* and Judith Surkis' *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France 1870-1920* have demonstrated the fundamental position of European views towards "native" sexuality in the making of Empire. Stoler's work, in particular, which asserts that European identity was constructed in the colonies, has shaped my approach towards studying Moroccan sexuality.

Additionally, I have utilized scholarship that deals almost exclusively with colonialism in either North Africa or Morocco. Works such as Sahar Bazzaz's *Forgotten Saints: History, Power, and Politics in the Making of Modern Morocco,* Dana S. Hale's *Races on Display: French Representations of Colonized Peoples, 1886-1940,* and Douglas Porch's *The Conquest of Morocco* discuss French political action in Morocco, outline general French perceptions of the Moroccans, and

discuss the cultural interactions that took place in the formative and early years of the protectorate. Works on the Jihadist culture that existed in Morocco have also influenced my research, most notably Amira K. Bennison's *Jihad and Its Interpretations in Pre-Colonial Morocco.* In discussing Moroccan religious culture, societal mores, and gender roles, these works have enabled me to better understand the meaning behind French language surrounding Morocco as it relates to French religious identity. For example, Bennison's emphasis on the centrality of religion to the people living in pre-colonial Morocco may help explain why a religiously based binary cropped up in French public discourse regarding the North African country.

Finally, monographs that address the connected and integrated history between secularism and Catholicism have also contributed to the ideas disseminated in this thesis. Monographs that highlight the sometimes-fluid boundaries between secular and Catholic ideals in France both before and after the Law of Separation are still somewhat rare. However, French historians have shown that, in certain moments, Catholics joined forces with agnostic reactionaries for political reasons, secular revolution might promote the spread of Christianity around the globe, and republicans and missionaries might choose to work together for the glory of empire. Secularism and Catholicism were never mutually exclusive entities within French society.

In his work, *Nationalism, Positivism, and Catholicism: The Politics of Charles Maurras and French Catholics 1890=1914,* Michael Sutton discusses the relationship between the Positivists and the Catholics in the conservative group *Action Française* in the early twentieth century. Sutton's evaluation of *Action Française* enables us to witness a gathering of secularists and Catholics with expressly different beliefs combining to fulfill common (albeit harmful and damaging) political and cultural goals. In fact, the group's agnostic leader Charles Maurras stated in 1904, "All our favorite

ideas, namely order, tradition, discipline, hierarchy, authority, continuity, unity, work, family, corporation, decentralization, autonomy were safeguarded and perfected by Catholicism."[10]

Additionally, Sarah Curtis' work *Civilizing Habits: Women Missionaries and the Revival of French Empire* illustrates the ways in which Catholic missionaries shaped and influenced early republican French colonial projects. Curtis demonstrates that the overthrow of Catholicism during the French Revolution, far from extinguishing religion in France, led to the production of a "new kind of nun, both active and uncloistered."[11] According to Curtis, these post-revolutionary French nuns, "through their missionary work...were integral to the process of transforming France into both a modern state and a global empire."[12] In this account, revolution begets a more globally minded Catholic mission, which in turn results in the modernization of France and the expansion of empire.

Entering into the religious fray of the early twentieth century, JP Daughton's work, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism 1880-1914,* discusses the crucial role that France's missionaries played in colonial projects in Indochina, Madagascar, and Polynesia. Particularly, Daughton contextualizes colonial mission work during this period and examines it in relation to the debates between secularists and Catholics in the metropole. Daughton contends that, "while the point of departure is discord" between the secularists and the Catholics, his work "ultimately explores one venue—the empire—where, in an age of division and polemic, Frenchman chose reconciliation and cooperation, if not mutual admiration." Despite vocal criticism from anticlerical republicans, "the colonial administration ultimately defended the presence of Catholic missionaries abroad." As a result, Daughton concludes, "there was a consid-

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[10] Quoted in Michael Sutton, *Nationalism, Positivism, and Catholicism: The Politics of Charles Maurras and French Catholics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 79.
[11] Sarah Curtis, *Civilizing Habits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 7.
[12] Ibid, 9.

erable portion of the French population committed to both Catholicism and the republic's colonial cause."[13]

Clearly, current historiography contends that the French had been crossing the porous boundaries between enlightenment, revolution, and religion since 1789, influenced simultaneously by seemingly divergent ideologies over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, what did it mean for secularists to associate with Christianity in the colonial context after the Law of Separation? How do we understand these people—either expressly against religion or simply unaffiliated—who identified explicitly with Christianity during a period of French history in which Catholicism was often considered reactionary in public discourse? If Catholicism was meant to be a private affair after 1905, why emphasize France's "Christian" identity in public spaces? My work will attempt to answer these questions by uncovering the modifications made to "French Christianity" that occurred in France as a result of the French populace's rhetorical interactions with Morocco. These changes, which resulted in an altered conception of French Christianity, one that was based on the superiority of French morality and superior culture, continue to characterize French attitudes towards religious "inferiors" and influence public policy in France in the twenty-first century.

1.2 Organization

Chapter one, titled "Two Frances? Secularism and Christianity in *Belle Époque* France in Relation to the Moroccan Protectorate," will historicize the relationship between the Catholic Church and the French state, consider the discursive relationship between the Catholic faith and

[13] J.P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 20.

laïcité, and examine the constructed religious binary between the "French Christians" and the "Muslim savages" that existed in the early twentieth century.

According to David Bell, religious and nationalistic discourses were intertwined in France in the years following the Revolution in 1789. Using Bell's theoretical and methodological models, chapter one analyzes contemporary language and suggests that French secularism, or *laïcité,* operated within a discursive framework rooted in morality and Catholic language. Judging by contemporary governmental debates and bulletins, leaders and prominent men in the Third Republic were required to harness this "moral discourse" in order to legitimize and justify the Law of Separation. Most importantly, this chapter argues against the strict notion of "Two Frances." The notion of "Two Frances" refers to the division (underlined by many French scholars) in the late nineteenth century between the supporters of a secular, republican France and advocates of an aristocratic, Catholic France. And granted, after France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the debate between forward-thinking, rational republicans and nostalgic, faithful Catholics became prominent in public discourse.

However, as suggested earlier, the two groups were not as mutually exclusive as current scholarship suggests. I assert that a "discourse of morality" continued to connect the people of France to their Christian heritage after the Law of Separation was passed in 1905. That is, even though the French secular media and government publically eschewed the influences of the Catholic Church within French society in the years surrounding 1905, secularists and Catholics continued to share similar conceptions of morality as they related to a prolific French state. Interestingly, many French newspapers that covered France's endeavors in Morocco in the first decade of the twentieth century consistently referred to the French people as "Christians" while the Moroccans

were collectively labeled as "Muslim barbarians."[14] While the chapter contends that the notion of a united "Christian France" was a construction utilized to belittle the humanity of the rebellious Muslim population and legitimate France's colonial ventures in Morocco, the label "Christian" would have resonated with the French who still adhered to a moral discourse that the secularists shared with the Catholics. As the French populace pondered over religion's new role in the years after 1905, its rhetorical interactions with the people of Morocco insinuates that notions concerning what it meant to be a "French Christian" were wrought in the colonies as well as in the metropole.

Chapter two, titled "Sexuality, Religion, and the Implementation of Power in Morocco," examines the discourses specifically concerning religion, sexuality, and morality that were utilized in order to justify France's meddling in Morocco. French journalists and government officials created a French "Christian" identity regarding sexuality within the Moroccan context in order to justify France's *mission civilisatrice* in the Islamic country. Despite the fact that France's civilizing mission in Morocco was not explicitly religious, its advocates in the French government and populace associated it with a cultural and moral superiority rooted in Christian discourse.

This French cultural superiority bound up in the label "Christian" is most visible in contemporary comparisons in print media, literature, and government brochures between the "moral" sexuality of the French and the supposed degenerate sexuality of the Moroccans. By first establishing a connection between the Third Republic's notions of proper, civilized sexuality and Christianity, the chapter explores the relationship between the two seemingly opposite entities, viewing how notions of a civilized "Christian" French sexuality played out in the Moroccan context. Judith Surkis asserts in her work *Sexing the Citizen* that "understood as a source and sign of social order and morality, the conjugal organization of sexual difference could also operate as an index of cul-

[14] Paul Richard, "Les Incidents de Fez," *L'Aurore,* April 19, 1912.

tural superiority."[15] According to Surkis, heterosexual, monogamous relationships were indicative of civilization to many people living in early twentieth-century France. Building on this notion, chapter two demonstrates that the French media portrayed Moroccan sexuality as degenerate and barbaric in order to underline France's innate superiority over the Moroccan Muslims and to validate and necessitate the French *mission civilisatrice* in Morocco.

The dominant discourses concerned with sexuality in France were tied to Catholicism and contained in them an innate sense of cultural superiority. When viewed in the context of Morocco, the invocation of a French and Christian moral authority suggests that religion continued to influence French colonial identity after the establishment of the Law of Separation, albeit in an increasingly secularized form.

Chapter three, "The Secularization of French Christianity," demonstrates that France's Moroccan endeavors shaped and reflected a fluctuating and changing French religious identity within the metropole itself. As division and a sense of rupture—caused by the Dreyfus Affair and the Law of Separation—pervaded metropolitan France in the early twentieth century, Morocco provided an ideological space for writers, colonial lobbyists, and government officials to create a more worldly "Christian" identity that simultaneously tied France to its illustrious Christian past and its rational, secular present. That is, France's "Christian" identity in relation to the Moroccan populace was invoked to underline more "secular" aspects of French culture such as reason, materialism, free thought, and an emphasis on the individual. As a result, the French were disassociated with more fundamental aspects of religion (that were practiced by Islamic peoples) such as religious warfare and submission to religious laws without free thought. Religious fundamentalism was for inferior peoples. Contemporary sources highlight the superior rationality and morality of the

[15] Judith Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 2.

French Christians in direct relation to the Moroccans, suggesting that the "French Christians" mentioned in relation to Morocco were rational, moral, and civilized. However, their explicit existence in non-religious public discourse suggests that the Law of Separation did not extricate the French populace's connection to Catholic tradition.

Although I am not claiming that France's relationship to Catholicism changed exclusively because of its interactions with the people of Morocco, historians cannot understand religion in pre-War France without taking France's colonial endeavors into consideration. Additionally, although religion in France had been unceasingly contested since 1789 and had never been self-contained, the Law of Separation fundamentally changed the French populace's relationship to religion. The law's consequences require historical inquiry so as to better understand national and religious identity in twentieth-century France. As issues of secularization, religion, and pluralism continue to cause tension and even violence within France today, historicizing and understanding the roots and causes of the tension between religion and *laïcité* might help shed light on the nature of French politics and culture as it relates to religion in the twenty-first century.

2. TWO FRANCES? SECULARISM AND CHRISTIANITY IN PRE-WAR FRANCE IN RELATION TO THE MOROCCAN PROTECTORATE

In his work *For the Soul of France,* Patrick Brown asserts that after France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, "'science' and 'supernatural intervention' were indeed the competing prescriptions for France's recovery. These alternatives informed France's social, political, and cultural life in the last third of the century, framing a bitter debate over the country's heart and soul."[16] From a certain perspective, Brown's assessment of a divided France proves itself persuasive. France's loss at the hands of the Prussian army propelled a fierce debate amongst anti-clerical republicans and faithful Catholics in public discourse. However, while a division existed in the late nineteenth century between the supporters of a secular, republican France and advocates of a hierarchical, Catholic France, this chapter will contend that the two factions were not as disparate as current scholarship suggests. Even after the victorious secular republicans passed the law separating the Church and state in 1905—a law which officially confined the claims of all religious communities to private spheres of influence—discursive ties and shared ideals connected the two groups, enabling them to be grouped together in French newspapers under a seemingly unified banner of "Christianity" in regards to France's imperial endeavors in Morocco. That is, although popular French newspapers and magazines reflected and shaped the overt religious divisions of the period—oftentimes ostracizing devout Catholics within the metropole—they drew upon the antiquated (and fabricated) binary between Christians and Muslims when covering events in Morocco, consistently referring to the French people corporately as "Christians" while the Moroccans were often collectively labeled "Muslim barbarians."[17] Although this bifurcated relationship between

[16] Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 4.
[17] Paul Richard, "Les Incidents de Fez," *L'Aurore,* April 19, 1912.

Christianity and Islam had been well established within French mythology since the time of the Crusades, its continued employment after the Law of Separation deserves further examination.

This chapter will examine the similarities between secular and Catholic ideas towards morality in conjunction with the rhetoric surrounding France's actions in Morocco to better understand the complex nature of French religious identity in the early twentieth century. While religious discord caused by the Law of Separation threatened to rip the social fabric of France apart, many French people viewed the European-wide struggle for Morocco as a potentially unifying force. Colonial expansion was sure to smooth over the internal complications and superficial rifts that politics and religion caused in France during the *Belle Époque*. I contend that the French press promulgated the concept of a "Christian France" in relation to Morocco in order to indicate the superior moral values of a unified French civilization. Despite the fact that the French nation was largely characterized in contemporary discourse by its impassioned secularism and apparent religious division, its peoples' shared views of morality—views that were based on collective notions of superior French mores and civilization—enabled the French media to plausibly generate this notion of a united "Christian France" in the Moroccan context. Most importantly, the press emphasized these shared, exceptional French morals in order to undermine the ethics of the Moroccan Muslims and thereby drum up support for and legitimize the French domination of a rebellious Moroccan population. Also, as stated earlier, while the imagined bifurcation between Christianity and Islam was not a novelty to contemporaries, its continued use after the Law of Separation suggests that the notion of a "Christian France" had begun to take on a more nonreligious meaning in early twentieth-century public discourse. That is, the label "Christian" was employed in rhetoric regarding French action in Morocco to highlight France's civilizational and moral superiority over a religious inferior rather than to imply any type of collective, national religious devotion.

2.1 Two Frances, One Superior Moral Civilization

In order to explore the shared ideas about morality that existed among secularists and Catholics, it is necessary to historicize the complicated relationship that existed between the Catholic Church and the French State. On the eve of the French Revolution of 1789, the Catholic Church and its clergy held inordinate amounts of discursive and material power. Not only did the Church alone possess the knowledge and administer the rituals that led to salvation, but it also took precedent over the nobility and the third estate in political assemblies and had significant judicial and fiscal privileges under the *Ancien Regime*.[18] However, this power was quickly fading. The religious, political, and philosophical shifts that stemmed from Enlightenment ideas in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century caused many French men and women to perceive God as absent from the realm of human events. David Bell upholds this notion in his work, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism 1680-1800*, claiming that by the end of the eighteenth century, there was a broad shift in the way the French perceived the world around them. By means of this ideological shift, the French progressed from a perspective in which humanity was seen as subordinate to external (particularly divine) determinations to one in which it was seen as sovereign and self-sustaining. This shift would make it feasible for the French to hold up the nation, rather than God, as the source of all legitimate authority.[19] As dialogue concerned with scientific knowledge and faith in reason increased and gained adherents, power in France shifted significantly. The Church's monopoly over all things spiritual and intellectual was diminished in a culture increasingly reliant on science and reason. In addition, the growing belief in scientific truth rendered the Church incapable of laying claim to any undisputed absolutes. As a result, the rational,

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[18] William Doyle, *The French Revolution: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 19.
[19] David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism 1680-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 26.

republican values of the French nation allowed it to harness discursive and ideological control over France's populace at the expense of the Church.

While it might be tempting to understand these new ways of perceiving and ordering the world as a process of "de-Christianization," the men and women living in eighteenth-century France did not necessarily lose their faith or come to disbelieve in God. Religion simply began to assert less power in the public and political realms. Bell claims that the Christian began to "confine himself in his everyday life to altogether secular attitudes...looking exclusively to the rule of prudence and good sense to regulate the details of his life." This shift in attitude does not so much reflect a process of secularization as it does an "interiorization" of belief. That is, belief was overwhelmingly relegated to the private consciences of individual believers. This privatization of religion, the growing conviction that true religion had no particular connection with the body politic, and the subsequent, subtle favoring of secular power over divine power enabled Jean-Jacques Rousseau's notion—that a properly constituted national community required a civil religion that would inspire people to love their duties—to eventually become a reality in France.[20] In this way, the French nation arose both out of and against a religious system of belief. In other words, despite the fact that the French nation was gaining ideological authority in France at the expense of the Church, this new "faith in the nation" cannot be accurately understood without reference to religion.[21] This is partly because the early French nationalists borrowed extensively from Christianity's symbolic stockpile. The notion that "faith in the nation" and Catholicism were symbolically and discursively interrelated in France in the years following the Revolution of 1789 serves as a crucial foundation for this argument. The rhetorical overlap and tension that existed between Catholicism

[20] Ibid, 37-39.
[21] Ibid, 24.

and secularism would endure in public discourse into the twentieth century with fascinating ramifications.

The Concordat of 1801, an agreement between Napoleon Bonaparte and papal and clerical representatives in both Rome and Paris, overturned the revolutionaries' efforts at de-Christianization by defining the status of the Roman Catholic Church in France. The Concordat named Catholicism as the religion of the French majority, put the state in control over all religious matters, and established a ministry of religion in charge of naming Catholic bishops and overseeing the practice of other religions. Although Catholicism was no longer the official state religion in France as it had been before the revolution, ties between the Church and the French government were reestablished. French Catholicism did not go back to its seemingly invulnerable pre-revolutionary status, but the government acknowledged it as the "religion of the great majority of the French people."[22] The Concordant would remain law until the Law of Separation passed in 1905.

The years 1870-1871 were ones of tremendous upheaval for France. The Franco-Prussian War resulted in the overthrow of Napoleon III, the creation of the French Third Republic, and the military defeat of France. After this humiliating loss, republican advocates of scientific progress and Catholic promulgators of a nationwide return to Christianity emerged as two competing forces attempting to bring about the material, ideological, and spiritual recovery of France. When discussing this outward, bitter struggle between scientific rationalism and religion that ensued among the anticlerical officials of the Third Republic and the adherents of Catholicism, Frederick Brown refers to France as "a nation divided."[23] Similarly, Caroline Ford states in her work *Divided Houses: Religion and Gender in Modern France* that "the advent of the Third Republic in 1871 brought...a

[22] Lucien Crouzil, *Le Concordat de 1801* (Paris: Librairie Bloud et Cie, 1904), 4.
[23] Brown, *For the Soul of France*, 4.

pitched battle between the Catholic Church and the republic."[24] Robert Gildea also supports this notion of a split France in his book, *Children of the Revolution: The French 1799-1914,* by asserting that "the division between anticlerical republicans and Catholics remained clear" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[25] At first glance, this period seems to be one in which the Church increasingly lost ideological ground to the republicans, who finally triumphed in 1905 with the passing of the Law of Separation.

Contemporary sources also demonstrate this overt divide within pre-War society. Countless newspapers, magazines, and monographs written in the years leading up to and following the Law of Separation highlight the contention that existed between secularists and Catholics. The anticlerical work *L'Évolution de la morale,* by Charles Letourneau, speaks of the "terrifying tyranny that the religion of Jesus placed on the souls and bodies of the French populace."[26] Another article written by secularist Émile Combes, *Une Deuxième campagne laïque,* stated that "the Church limits the liberties and actions" of the French people.[27] In a debate over the Law of Separation, one Third Republic anticlerical government official described the Catholic Church as "a permanent menace for the future, the seed of new and innumerable conflicts."[28] An article in the politically moderate *Le Matin* from December 9, 1905 stated of the Church, "it does not need to offend the government or civilians, nor interfere in the political discussions of the nation." Instead, "its domain is the conscience, the interior. Its work is lawfully exercised only on the soul."[29] Similarly, an editorial referring to the Law of Separation in *Le Matin* from January 1906 stated, "This agree-

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[24] Caroline Ford, *Divided Houses: Religion and Gender in Modern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 138.
[25] Robert Gildea, *Children of the Revolution: The French 1799-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 363.
[26] Charles-Jean-Marie Letourneau, *L'Évolution de la morale: Leçons professées pendant l'hiver de 1885-1886* (Paris: A. Delahaye et E. Lecrosnier, 1887), 425.
[27] Émile Combes, *Une Deuxième campagne laïque* (Paris: G. Bellais, 1905), 2.
[28] Aristide Briand, *La Séparation: Discussion de la loi 1904-1905* (Paris: E. Fasquelle, 1908), 42.
[29] Henri Des Houx, "Le Bilan de la séparation," *Le Matin,* December 9, 1905.

ment...makes religion an essentially personal matter. Since this reform is made in a spirit of justice and it guarantees freedom of conscience in the most absolute way, we have only to congratulate ourselves. We can finally see that religious truths are only supported by those who profess them."[30] Evidently, the debates over the role of religion in French society circulated throughout the public sphere for years. Additionally, on November 11, 1906, an article in *Le Matin* declared, "The Christians are not obliged to quit worshipping...but we have the government's assurance that it won't recognize any religious associations."[31] This language demonstrates that an antagonistic attitude towards Catholics cropped up in French public discourse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although France's fervent Catholics did not remain silent—newspapers have references to Catholics who claimed that science and secularism were a "danger to the faith of the children of France"—Catholic counterarguments undoubtedly served to create a deep yet superficial rift in French society.[32] However, as stated earlier, while debates between secularists and Catholics over the role of religion in France characterized a large part of French cultural and political life in the *Belle Époque,* a discursive analysis of contemporary public rhetoric reveals these two seemingly oppositional entities were not as ideologically disparate as it may seem.

In the late nineteenth century, as the battle for the soul of France raged, an aggressive form of secularization, or *laïcité,* emerged under the French Third Republic. *Laïcité,* by definition, refers to the separation of Church and state through the state's protection of individuals from the claims of religion.[33] Despite the fact that the majority of government officials in the Third Republic believed progress depended on scientific truth rather than religion, they still feared the potential influence of the Catholic Church in the public sphere.[34] In *Colette's Republic: Work, Gender, and*

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[30] H. Hardun, "Propos d'un Parisien*," Le Matin,* January 3, 1906.
[31] Henri de Houx, "Le Coq a chante trois fois" *Le Matin,* November 12, 1906.
[32]Stephane Lauzanne, "Une Protestation De l'Episcopat Francais" *Le Matin,* September 13, 1908.
[33] Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 15.
[34] Alexander Sedgwick, *The French Third Republic 1870-1914* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), 41.

Popular Culture in France 1870-1914, Patricia Tilburg asserted that the Republic's secularization efforts (particularly in public schools) and its promotion of a secularized interior life resulted from a belief that any mention of religion would help bolster the cultural and political influence of the Catholic Church in France.[35] However, after liberating the French populace from the "moral shackles of the Church," government officials recognized that a vigorous *morale laïque* [secular morality] was required to replace Christianity's moral imperative to revive the nation.[36]

Although Tilburg touches on the importance of *morale laïque* in the Third Republic's secularizing initiatives, I contend that the moralizing crusade of *laïcité* itself developed out of French Catholic discourse and ideals. That is, French secularism depended heavily on laying claim to discourses of morality that the Church had employed for centuries. Specifically, Third Republic officials constantly evoked ideas of a morally superior, exceptional French civilization. Even though officials of the Third Republic minimized France's role as "eldest daughter of the Church" in Europe, notions of France's morally unrivaled civilization were unquestionably linked to its Catholic tradition. For example, a study titled *De La Famille: Leçons de philosophie morale,* written by philosopher Amédée de Margerie and published by a Catholic group in 1894 states, "A moral civilization is the heritage we have received from the Church."[37] Similarly, the work *La Morale sans dieu, ses principes et ses conséquences*, written by Christian apologist Auguste-Théodore-Paul de Broglie, claimed that "the establishment of Christianity in France brought significant moral, social, and civilizational progress."[38] Even the above-mentioned anticlerical work, *L'Évolution de la morale,* conceded, "the Christian Church laid the framework for the progressive, new [secular] morality."[39]

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[35] Patricia Tilburg, *Colette's Republic: Work, Gender, and Popular Culture in France 1870-1914* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 56.
[36] Ibid, 59.
[37] Amédée de Margerie, *De La Famille: Leçons de philosophie morale* (Paris: Téqui, 1894), 31.
[38] Auguste-Théodore-Paul de Broglie, *La Morale sans dieu, ses principes et ses conséquences,* (Paris, Putois-Cretté, 1886), 15.
[39] Letourneau, *L'Évolution de la morale,* 461.

Although secularists attempted to disentangle these ideas of morality and civilization from French Catholicism, the latent connections between morals, civilization, and Christianity proved significant in early twentieth-century public rhetoric.

Although Christianity was not the only source of morality in France, French secularist notions surrounding ethics during the *Belle Époque* reveal a direct connection to religion. In fact, multiple sources suggest that republican morality was intended to offer an alternative to Christianity. Author Albert Dès' commentary on secular morals, *Éducation morale et civique,* underlines this complicated relationship. In the anticlerical work, Dès discussed the benefits of a secular version of morality: "These morals are more rational than Christian morals which are too particular, too numerous, and too circumstantial." Secular morals "would not be concerned with religious affiliation, but would be based on the universal conscience and immutable reason of humanity."[40] Despite his clear desire to move beyond a Christian form of morality, Dès' work demonstrates a perceived (albeit negative) link between established religious values and new secular mores. Charles Letourneau's *L'Évolution de la morale* again underlines the innate connection that existed between secular morals and Christianity in the minds of contemporaries. Letourneau admitted in his fervently anti-Christian work, "to be fair, Christianity is responsible for the dissemination of civilized ideas such as brotherhood and charity. It is here that it has its importance."[41] However, while these sources ultimately suggest an imagined difference in Catholic and secular morality, a deeper look at these professed differences reveals significant similarities between the two groups.

Admittedly, works published by Catholic groups suggest that for Catholics, morality was partly characterized by submission to God, the acceptance of his will, and keeping the body and

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[40] Albert Dès, *Éducation morale et civique* (Paris: Librairie des Ecoles, 1900), VII.
[41] Letourneau, *L'Évolution de la morale,* 426.

mind away from secular influence.[42] For example, Margerie's work *De La Famille: Leçons de philosophie morale*, glorifies the undisputed "moral power" the Medieval Church exerted over the people of France and asserts that French society was the most "civilized" when France was "Christian in faith, in public morals, in law, in institutions, in science, in art, and in language."[43] However, Catholic moral ideals also functioned to produce more practical, earthly results for contemporary Catholics. When properly exercised, moral behavior produced ethical mothers and fathers, enabled familial affection, allowed French civil life to function properly, and, most importantly, fostered a deep love for France among its citizens.[44]

Some Catholic writers also suggested that morality contributed to the preservation of French civilization. The Catholic novelist and philosopher George Fonsegrive argued in his work *Morale et société*, that "morals maintain an indispensable cohesion and enable the existence of civil society...the moral order is based on superior reasoning."[45] Fonsegrive's work suggests that, at least in the eyes of many contemporary Catholics, a moral populace produced a superior civilization. Similarly, the Catholic pamphlet *La Conscience naturelle et la conscience religieuse: Philosophie morale*, by Henri Kleffer, contended that, without a moral populace, "the social edifices of France will crumble into barbarism."[46] For Catholics, morality both exhibited and produced an incomparable, patriotic, and civilized French citizenry.

Conversely, the secularists did not believe Christianity should influence French institutions or laws. Despite the fundamental disparities between Catholics and secularists, however, both groups defined the purpose and expected results of morality much in the same way. Chief among these similar conceptions was the belief that a moral populace both demonstrated and enhanced

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[42] Tilburg, *Colette's Republic,* 53.
[43] Amédée de Margerie, *De La Famille: Leçons de philosophie morale,* 12.
[44] Ibid, 226.
[45] George Fonsegrive, *Morale et société* (Paris: Bloud, 1907), 20-87.
[46] Henri Kleffer, *La Conscience naturelle et la conscience religieuse: Philosophie morale* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1890), x.

France's superior civilization. Albert Dès' *Éducation morale et civique* states of the French (after making a list of "savage" peoples who lacked moral, patriotic sentiments), "Among civilized peoples, the love of the *patrie* is based on reason, traditions, and morals."[47] Also, Dès affirmed that the objective of teaching morality was to produce "patriotic" French citizens filled with "charity, personal dignity, justice, good habits, and moral thoughts."[48] Even more compelling is the monograph *Études de morale* by positivist philosopher and professor Frédéric Rauh, which directly connected Catholic morality and patriotism by stating that Catholic traditions and morals were the sources out of which the French population's patriotic sentiments came. The nonreligious work links the concepts of morality, justice, and love for the *patrie* within its pages.[49] Judging by these examples, both Catholics and secularists believed that morality (even an explicit Catholic morality) led to a deep love of France and contributed to the upkeep of an exceptional, just French civilization. While the role of religion was the fundamental point of contention between the fervent Catholics and the secularists, their comparable language reveals that they perceived the aim of morality to be quite similar. Discourses concerning the exceptionality of French civilization and morality thus resonated with both Catholics and secularists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2.2 French "Christianity" and Its Discursive Influence Over Colonial and Religious Ideology

Although the explicit, seemingly untroubled association between France and Christianity in the Moroccan context was merely discursive and not indicative of true religious devotion or unity in the metropole, the construction of a "Christian France" in French print media after the Law of Separation is plausible for two reasons. Firstly, the press clearly understood that the notion of a "Christian France" still resonated with the broader French populace despite the anticlericalism and

[47] Dès, *Éducation morale,* 351.
[48] Ibid, 5.
[49] Frédéric Rauh, *Études de morale* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1911), 183.

increasing secularization initiatives undertaken by Third Republic government officials. Because the discourse that characterized French secularist initiatives partly relied on the ideas and concepts originally circulated by the Catholic Church, language that tied the French people to a civilized, oftentimes explicitly Christian form of morality still carried significance in France in 1912. Secondly, despite the religious disaccord between the secularists and Catholics, both groups found a more formidable enemy in the Moroccans. As a result, they were willing to buy into language that emphasized their superior, commonly held French civilizational morals in order to justify the domination of rebellious and morally inferior practitioners of other religions. Before unpacking these claims, it is important to briefly outline the nature of French colonialism in general and then French colonialism in Morocco in particular.

In its simplest form, French colonialism can be characterized by contradiction. French national identity under the Third Republic was bound up—at least officially—with universal human rights. However, as Alice Conklin asserts in her work, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930*, "French rule rested on a set of coercive practices that violated their own democratic values."[50] Nevertheless, "the French republicans did not identify any contradiction between their democratic institutions and the acquisition and administration of their empire. This was because they...were continually undertaking—or claiming to undertake...civilizing measures on behalf of their subjects."[51] After all, what people or group would not want to benefit from the civilized rule of France?

In contrast to French assumptions, the Moroccans did not want to reap the benefits of French civilization. Despite the increasing French economic and territorial gains in Morocco, the Moroccan people resisted French rule. Although Morocco did not become an official Protectorate

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[50] Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 9.
[51] Ibid, 10.

until 1912, the French press consistently drummed up support for a French seizure of the North African country as early as 1905. For years, France's newspapers were filled with examples of Moroccans speaking against French meddling in Morocco, language that overwhelmingly identified the French as "Christian." In December 1906, *Le Matin* quoted a Moroccan Muslim living in the city of Fez: "We will not let those French Christian dogs rule in our city!"[52]A few years later, an article in *Le Matin* from 1908 quoted another Moroccan: "We have the strength of God with us. We have several times defeated the Christians. We are sure of success. We will throw the Christians into the sea."[53] In 1907, Moroccan civilians and Islamic leaders deposed their impotent Sultan, Abdelaziz, and replaced him with his brother, Moulay Hafid. An interview with Abdelaziz appreared in *Le Matin* in 1908. When asked why his own people deposed him, Abdelaziz apparently shook his head, smiled, and replied, "they accused me of selling Morocco to you Christians."[54] Even in 1909, after Moulay Hafid had taken power, a Moroccan interviewed by the widely read daily, *Le Figaro,* declared that he "wanted to strike the sultan to prevent his dealings with the Christians."[55] Although the economic and political situations in early twentieth-century Morocco were in flux, the Moroccans' apparent hatred of the French Christians remained constant within French public discourse. In fact, an article in the weekly French literary magazine, *La Revue de Paris,* published in 1907, stated, "Although negatively disposed towards all Christians, the Moroccans consider the French Christians their particular enemies."[56]

While the fighting between secularists and Catholics endured in France, the Moroccans were associating the French with Christianity, many times using the term "Christians" as a synonym for "French." Through print media, journalists and other writers were able to exercise power over

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[52]Stephane Lauzanne, "Agression contre un officer Française," *Le Matin*, December 21, 1906.
[53] Stephane Lauzanne, "Les Sultans Marocains," *Le Matin,* January 24, 1908.
[54]Christian Houel, "Interview d'Abd El Aziz," *Le Matin,* May 25, 1908.
[55] Benoît Jouvin, "A L'Etranger: Au Maroc," *Le Figaro,* February 3, 1909.
[56]*La Revue de Paris* (Bureaux de la Revue de Paris, 1907), 344.

contemporary discourse in deciding which stories to cover and which quotes to include. Because this language littered the pages of French newspapers for years, it is quite clear that the notion of a civilized "Christian France" still resonated with the French public. The press both reinforced and shaped this unified religious identity in relation to Morocco, and the French populace literally bought into it at the *kiosque de presse*.

Back in Morocco, much to the dismay of the Moroccans, Moulay Hafid proved just as powerless as his predecessor when it came to the French. Morocco's poor economy and indebtedness to France forced the sultan to sign a treaty in the city of Fez on March 30, 1912 that officially established the French Protectorate over Morocco. According to the Moroccan people, Moulay Hafid, in a similar manner to that of his brother, had sold Morocco to Christians.[57] Less than three weeks later, the capital city of Morocco, Fez, was in revolt. The rebels not only killed French military personnel and civilians within the city, but they also attempted to take the French consulate.[58] This blatant rejection of the French in Morocco inevitably affected France's colonial mentality. Because of the underlying rhetorical struggles between French republicanism and colonialism, the French needed to justify their presence among the people of Morocco who rejected their influence.

This ideological need to justify the French occupation of Morocco led to the promulgation of a "Christian France" in the same newspapers that were simultaneously playing up the religious divisions in the metropole. The French, unified against an outside enemy, created a stark contrast between themselves and the Muslims in order to demonstrate that the French presence in Morocco was not simply desired, but absolutely critical. By employing the moniker "Christian" in contemporary print media, the French press gave the secularists and the Catholics a unified identity

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[57] Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: A History of Overseas Expansion* (New York: Palgrave, 1996), 35.
[58] Edmund Burke III, *Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 186.

with which to confront the insurrection and the Moroccan Muslims' "unrestrained" and blatant rejection of French civilization.[59] Ironically, while debates over the role of religion sowed discord within France, Christianity seemed to work as a unifying force against the inferior Muslims in Morocco. While this explicit identification with Christianity is fairly conspicuous after the Law of Separation, the continued, subtle use of religious language by the secularists who based their moral initiatives on the antiquated discourses of the Church clearly resonated with the French populace. French supremacy—made legitimate by their higher moral, "Christian" civilization—justified their actions against the Muslim insurgents.

This need to render the Muslims religiously inferior in order to legitimate France's involvement in Morocco resulted in the dichotomy between French Christians and Moroccan Muslims being played up in the media in regards to the massacre. In April 1912, the left-leaning, republican newspaper *L'Aurore* published an article that derided the "savage adherents to Islam" who had perpetrated the massacre. This article stated, "We Christians... placed the savages under our protection. Could they learn that we are now their masters? They must submit to our powerful occupation before another revolt takes hold of them...they must realize the material and moral advantages of our presence."[60] Obviously there was a belief among contemporaries that Muslims would benefit from the moral lessons the French were offering to give them. Similar language is found in an issue of the Catholic newspaper *L'Univers* from April 24, 1912, a few days after the French military forces had crushed the rebellion, stating that France "would continue amongst all obstacles, its large, civilizing, moral, and therefore, Christian work" in Morocco."[61] Also, in early May 1912, a journalist for *Le Figaro* published an article discussing the ill-fated "Christians" who

[59] M. Rebout, "Fez et révolte," *Le Matin,* April 19, 1912.
[60] Richard, "Les Incidents de Fez," 1.
[61] Francois Veuillot, "La France au Maroc," *L'Univers,* April 25, 1912.

were exterminated at Fez by the morally corrupted Muslims.[62] Interestingly, secular republican and Catholic newspapers both contained clear references to France's civilized, Christian identity in relation to Morocco.

Additionally, while public discourse regarding the Moroccan situation created the appearance of an exceptional, unified French Christian identity in regards to Morocco, the popularity of the phrase "Christian France" within contemporary print media also sheds light on the evolving nature of religious identity within the metropole after the Law of Separation. By continually accepting the notion that the religiously inferior Muslims were eager to kill French Christians, the French public, partially manipulated by journalists, arguably began to develop an altered "Christian" identity in relation to the Moroccan populace. That is, although many French newspapers during this time extolled France's new, established secularism, they simultaneously drew upon the centuries-old conflict that set the "French Christians" against the "barbaric Muslims." The continued use of this fictitious binary after the Law of Separation suggests that the concept of a "Christian France" was beginning to be imbued with a more secular meaning in early twentieth-century public discourse. The title "French Christian" was primarily utilized in the rhetoric regarding Morocco to highlight France's innate civilizational and moral supremacy and supposed unity, not a renewed national religious commitment.

Clearly, the fabricated ideological rivalry between Christians and Muslims continued to enjoy legitimacy among the French public. So, while the media responded to this established ideological reality, it also manipulated public opinion by consistently underlining the preeminence of French "Christianity" in relation to the peoples of the Islamic world. In this way, print media and public opinion fused and, as a result, modified French conceptions of what it meant to profess Christianity in the grander narratives of early twentieth-century French discourse.

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[62] Gaston Calmette, "La Situation a Fez," *Le Figaro,* May 6, 1912.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to one example that may shed light on the ways this explicit identification with Christianity affected French national identity and defined French experience in the early years of the Moroccan protectorate. In 1916 an edition of *France-Maroc: Revue mensuelle* published an article titled "Memories of the Massacre of Fez: April 1912." Circulated in Paris between 1916 and 1925 by the French Committee for Moroccan Affairs, the magazine was created to highlight France's political, economic, and cultural achievements in Morocco in the early years of the protectorate. The article was written by a French interpreter for the Sherifian government of Morocco recounting his experiences as an official during the Massacre of Fez in 1912. As stated earlier, a month after the Treaty of Fez was signed, the Moroccan people living in Fez (who were overwhelmingly Muslim) revolted for four days against the new French inhabitants. The rebels killed French military personnel and civilians within the city and also attempted to take the French consulate.

The stark contrasts that the author, L. Mercier, depicts in his account between the civilized, French Christians and the barbaric, Moroccan Muslims prove significant to this study. While this article provides only a limited perspective, the fact that this French government employee recounted his experiences during the massacre in Fez through a lens of religion is not inconsequential. The article, directed towards the "Christian survivors of the massacre," tells the tale of the French civilians and government workers—still staying in the local hotel as they had just arrived from France—who were attacked by the growing Muslim mob in Fez.[63] It is a tale that highlights the French Christians' sacrificial bravery and the Muslims' savagery, and it reaches its climactic moment when an Islamic holy man "covered in rags" saws off the head of a courageous French man attempting to save his companions. After he is finished with the account of his traumatic experience, Mercier stated (from the safety of 1916), "That was Fez in 1912! What a long way we have

[63] L. Mercier, "Souvenirs des massacres de Fez," *France-Maroc: Revue Mensuelle,* April 17, 1916, 11.

come since then! Today, a fair meets on the same streets, attended by the massacarists of yesterday and the benevolent winners. The contrast between yesterday and today entitles us to plead in favor of French action in Morocco—the facts speak for themselves."[64]

Judging by its language, this article sought to make the case that the Muslims' former barbarity and lack of morality merited French intervention in Morocco; the supposed improvements in the Moroccans' actions and behavior were irrefutably good. And, considering the fact that it was one of many contemporary works that discussed the immorality of the Moroccans, its themes resonated with the French public. Mericer's narrative demonstrates the endurance of a French "Christian" identity even after the Law of Separation in 1905. Not only did the explicit association with Christianity that emerged in regards to the massacre define the French against the inferior Muslims, but it also characterized, at least in this example, the colonial experience of the French in Morocco (Christians versus Muslims) and justified the French civilizing presence there.

The historical relationship between the Catholic Church and the moralizing, secular ideals behind *laïcité* is indeed complex. However, I have asserted in this chapter that these two entities were connected through their ideas, particularly as they related to the Moroccan protectorate. Interestingly, rhetoric regarding religious association was utilized to simultaneously divide groups within France and unify the French against outside foes. Obviously, this notion of a "Christian France" in Morocco after the Law of Separation was riddled with complications, unquestionably contested, and not indicative of a true religious unity within the metropole. However, the linguistic ties that still existed between the secular French nation and Christianity—ties that were based on notions of a superior French morality and civilization—legitimized the explicit references to a "Christian France" after 1905 and aided in creating an alternative colonial religious identity in regards to the Moroccan Protectorate. The discursive banner of French Christianity in Morocco was

[64] Ibid, 17.

both plausible and incredibly useful in forging a new French identity during a time of religious reconstruction that had been brought on by the Law of Separation.

3. SEXUALITY, RELIGION, AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POWER IN MOROCCO

"The status of females in Morocco exemplifies the relatively lax moral standards of the Muslims. The men are too powerful; the laws do nothing to stop their passions and the women become prisoners and slaves in their hands."[65] While this quotation may seem out of place in the economic journal in which it was published, it echoes predominant discourses in pre-War France regarding sexual morality and gender roles in Morocco. According to contemporaries, the Moroccans' "moral" limitations explained their backwardness. This chapter focuses on the rhetoric that surrounded religion, morality, and sexuality in the French-Moroccan context and contends that this language was employed to justify France's "civilizing" presence in Morocco.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, French journalists, government officials, writers, and public figures manipulated language and produced a secularized French "Christian" identity in regards to Morocco. Despite France's new secular status, the concept of a "Christian France" gave historical legitimacy and weight to France's authority in the Islamic kingdom. While the last chapter discussed how religious discourse was used to validate action against a rebellious Moroccan population, this chapter focuses more on how religious rhetoric was used in conjunction with discourse about sexuality to validate France's authority and civilizing mission in Morocco.

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[65] M. Dussol, "Organe de défense des intérêts économiques Français au Maroc," *La Revue Marocaine,* November 5, 1913, 611.

Even though France's civilizing mission in Morocco was not explicitly religious, I aim to prove that its advocates in the French government and popular media associated the mission to civilize with a cultural and moral superiority rooted in Christian discourse.[66] This cultural superiority based in religious rhetoric visibly manifests itself in the comparisons between the "moral" sexual and familial practices of the French "Christians" and the degenerate sexual practices of the Moroccans. These comparisons arose frequently in literature, print media, and government documents in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Significantly, while debates over marriage, divorce, and notions of proper sexuality divided secularists and Catholics within the hexagon, the French populace appeared discursively unified in literature and the press when regarding the amoral sexual practices of the Moroccans. Additionally, the emphasis on French "Christian" sexual practices in relation to Moroccan ones reinforced certain French moral ideals and structures at a rhetorical level in the metropole.

While there has been significant work published on the subject(s) of sexuality and European imperialism, my analysis adds to this body of scholarship by viewing sexuality through an explicitly religious lens in the French-Moroccan context. In so doing, it examines how a new brand of French "Christianity" was utilized to justify France's moral authority over the Moroccans. By uncovering the underlying moral rhetoric shared by Catholics and secularists in France after the 1905 Law of Separation, this chapter elucidates why the notion of a "Christian France," though officially discredited by the French government, continued to be utilized in public discourse. It simultaneously views metropolitan moral structures and their ties to religion to understand how power was implemented in the colonies in the name of religion and the meaning behind such implementation. In other words, what did it mean for "French Christians" to assert their moral and sexual superiority over the Moroccans after 1905? The dominant discourses concerned with sexuality in

[66] Douglas Porch, *The Conquest of Morocco* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), 5.

France came out of Catholic tradition and contained in them an innate sense of cultural superiority. When viewed in the context of Morocco, the invocation of this religiously based, moral authority suggests that religion continued to influence French colonial identity after the establishment of the Law of Separation, albeit in an increasingly secularized form.

3.1 Historiography: Issues of Colonialism and Sexuality

It is a well-established notion within the historiography of European imperialism that "assessments of civility...were measured less by what people did in public than by how they conducted their private lives."[67] In other words, matters of sexuality, family, and intimacy were fundamental aspects of colonial policy and profoundly shaped metropolitan perceptions of the colonized. In her work *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule,* Ann Laura Stoler asserts that "colonial observers and participants in the imperial enterprise appear to have had unlimited interest in the sexual interface of the colonial encounter." In fact, Stoler pronounces, "no subject is discussed more than sex in colonial literature...lurid descriptions of sexual perversion marked the Otherness of the colonized for metropolitan consumption."[68] Julia Clancy-Smith discusses similar themes in her article, "Islam, Gender, and Identities in the Making of French Algeria, 1830-1962." Clancy-Smith states, "Colonial male writers...believed Arab men to be 'over-sexed.' The social consequences of exaggerated male sexuality, symbolized by polygamy and the harem, were [in the eyes of the colonial masters] momentous for North African Muslim civilization."[69]

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[67] Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 6.
[68] Ibid, 43.
[69] Julia Clancy-Smith, "Islam, Gender and Identities in the Making of French Algeria 1830-1962" in *Domesticating the Empire: Race, Gender, and Family Life in French and Dutch Colonialism*, ed. Julia Clancy-Smith and Frances Gouda (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 162.

Differences in gender roles also played a part in shaping negative European perceptions of indigenous, colonized peoples. Julia Clancy-Smith argues that, "As military domination gave way to civilian rule and moral subjugation after 1870, the status of Muslim women became increasingly significant for judging the culturally different, subordinate other."[70] Similarly, Mrinalini Sinha's work *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire,* contends that the 1927 literary exposé on Indian culture, *Mother India,* "provided graphic details of a variety of social ills in India, especially as they affected the position of women."[71] Clearly, perceived differences in sexual practices and gender roles legitimized and justified the European domination of morally degenerate colonized populations.

Interestingly, while scholarship regarding European imperial power, sexuality, and gender in the colonies almost always references the beliefs and degraded morals of the colonized, the religious and moral convictions of the various metropolitan populations (as they relate to the colonies) have seldom been explored in great detail. For example, in *Specters of Mother India,* Sinha argues that many British individuals perceived "the political, economic, and social problems of India had a single cause, and that cause...was the very essence of the beliefs and practices of Hinduism."[72] However, she does not address the question of how the British peoples' complex moral and religious convictions shaped their ideas about Hinduism? Nor does she discuss how interactions with the colonized might have changed or reinforced metropolitan perceptions of such religious and moral frameworks.

By looking at sexuality through an explicitly religious lens, we can view how this discourse was manipulated to exercise power over the colonized and also understand the effects interactions with the colonized had on metropolitan people's perceptions of religion. Because the construction

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[70] Ibid, 154.
[71] Mrinalini Sinha, *Specters of Mother India: The Global Restructuring of an Empire* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 1.
[72] Ibid, 5.

and maintenance of "moral" and "immoral" sexual practices had historically been a mode through which both colonial and religious authorities managed power, sexuality proves an acute lens through which to examine the overlap of imperialism and religion in pre-War France. In studying the broader moral frameworks and religious beliefs and practices of the metropole, we can better understand *why* power was executed in the colonies in the name of religion and the *meaning* behind this process. Specifically, what did it mean for the people of secularized France to invoke their corporate Christian identity in relation to the Moroccans' sexual practices? Thus, while the French justified their "civilizing" authority in Morocco through discourses of sexuality and religion, this type of rhetoric regarding France's colonial endeavors in Morocco also unveils religious and moral instability and insecurity within the metropole after 1905. These connections between French religion, sexuality, and colonialism play out in intriguing ways in France's interactions with Morocco in the formative years of the protectorate.

3.2 French Sexual Morality and Religion

First it is crucial to look at French conceptions of morality, sexuality, and religion in the years leading up to World War I. While an overt division existed in the period between the supporters of a secular France and advocates of a Catholic France, discursive ties and shared ideals—particularly those regarding sexual morality—connected these two groups, enabling them to be categorized under a seemingly unified banner of "Christianity" in regards to Morocco.

Although notions regarding "proper" sexual conduct were not necessarily tied to religion in early twentieth-century France, anticlericalist discussions about sexuality suggest an innate connection to Catholic morals. That is, though secularists attempted to disentangle their own ideas about the benefits of sexual morality from French Catholicism, the two groups shared similar ideas about the role of morals in French society. The link between secular and Catholic mores manifests itself

in the analogous language employed in the secular and religious writings of the period, for both groups produced works that stressed the societal benefits of sexual restraint.

Before demonstrating these connections, it is necessary to define what is meant by "proper" sexual conduct. Though *Belle Époque* France is often remembered for its music halls and its sexually liberated Bohemian artists, a framework of "middle-class respectability" characterized by "values of domestic order...moral sanctity...and bourgeois sexual morality" continued to exercise influence.[73] According to Patricia Tilburg in her work *Colette's Republic: Women, Gender, and Popular Culture in France 1870-1914,* when studying the *Belle Époque,* "the student of history is left with the impression of a strangely bifurcated France—a country at once plodding through positivist reforms and reveling in avant-garde experimentation and irrationalism."[74] So, even though concepts of sexual morality were questioned and challenged by contemporaries on both sides, a moral structure that extolled sexual purity and monogamous conjugality continued to shape public opinion within France at the level of rhetoric. Judith Surkis upholds the view of a prevalent moral framework in France in her work, *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France 1870-1920.* Surkis states that, for certain contemporaries, "conjugal sex...produced a new moral being, a 'new person', which transcended the discrete and separated individual. This union constituted and confirmed the social value of the married couple, while relegating all other sexual relations to the realm of 'profanity.'"[75] Contemporaries witnessed and participated in the linguistic construction of conjugality as a moral ideal.

Edward Berenson also supports this idea of an influential ethical framework in his book, *The Trial of Madame Caillaux.* Although the work's primary focus is on understanding the infa-

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[73] Patricia Tilburg, *Colette's Republic: Work, Gender, and Popular Culture in France 1870-1914* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 14.
[74] Ibid, 3.
[75] Judith Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France 1870-1920* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 181.

mous 1914 murder trial of Henriette Caillaux through a lens of gender and politics, Berenson also sheds light on the moral climate(s) of the period. According to Berenson, the blatant sexual immorality of Henriette and her husband Joseph Caillaux was a chief cause behind their fall from the good graces of French public opinion. When discussing an intimate letter that had been published in the newspapers incriminating the Caillaux, the work claims "It stood as evidence of Caillaux's adulterous liaison and thus of his questionable morality."[76] Later in the work, Berenson describes Joseph Caillaux—infamous for flaunting his extra-marital relations to the public—as his colleagues saw him: "an exemplar of libertine morality that threatened family life and national unity."[77] It is possible to detect in these comments a contemporary sense that sexual morality contributed to a wholesome French society. While this morality may have been almost exclusively at the level of rhetoric, it carried significance in the public sphere in early twentieth-century France.

This idea of "proper" sexual morality presents itself in both secular and Catholic writings of the period. The secular, scientific work *L' Éducation sexuelle*, by Dr E. Stérian, acknowledged that humans are physical beings that required sex. However, Dr. Stérian claimed that young men forced to satisfy their "reproductive" desires in unfavorable circumstances inevitably "acted against morality and practiced masturbation and homosexuality."[78] Even though this work does not condemn young men for having—or even fulfilling—sexual urges (proving it more open-minded than the traditional Catholic morality explored below), it does imply that an acknowledged, overarching moral code concerning sex existed within the broader discourses of early twentieth-century France. This "morality," which included monogamy and heterosexual marriage, excluded homosexuality, which, according to the work, was "very dangerous for societies in the civilized world." The work

[76] Edward Berenson, *The Trial of Madame Caillaux* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 22.
[77] Ibid, 43.
[78] Dr. E. Stérian, *L'Education sexuelle* (Paris: J.B. Baillière et fils, 1910), 26.

then outlined various scientific methods through which homosexual practices might be eradicated from France.

In addition, Dr. Stérian associates both physical and moral degradation with venereal disease. He states, "it is important to fight venereal disease and, in so doing, contribute to the work of moral regeneration" in France.[79] By linking the decline of venereal disease—a malady associated with prostitution and sexual promiscuity—with the idea of moral regeneration, Stérian suggested that a healthy, vibrant society was one in which sexuality was kept within the confines of "morality," that is, heterosexual marriage.

The socio-scientific work *Amour, préservation et sécurité,* by Dr. Maxwell Alexander, reiterates these views. While making room for the possibility of sexual liaisons outside of marriage, Alexander nonetheless states, "The man who wants to satisfy his sexual desires outside of marriage...exposes himself to venereal disease...the danger is great."[80] For Alexander, sexual disease posed a great threat to French society due to the fact that it contributed to a decline in birthrates. Statistically, the French were falling behind their enemies in Germany in regards to population. Alexander contends that this was due to the fact that Germans were more likely to enter into moral sexual unions. The work poses the question, "What is the dominant thought and desire of the Germans? It is to marry!" It continues, "Marriage gives aid in the struggles of life...contracted in such conditions, marriage satisfies the requirements of society and the needs of nature...it engenders the reciprocal attraction between the sexes and ensures fertility."[81] According to Dr. Alexander, illicit sexual activity had led to a demographic and moral decline within French society. The Germans lived more strictly within the confines of morality and these practices benefited their population and culture.

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[79] Ibid, 73.
[80] Max Alexander, *Amour, préservation et sécurité* (Paris: F. Pierre, 1909), 62.
[81] Ibid, 95.

French Catholics similarly believed sexual restraint—in the form of a heterosexual, monogamous union—was the key to a productive and efficient French society. The *Annales Catholique,* a weekly religious magazine that wrote about political issues relevant to the French Church, stated that sexual morality "is the...way to purity and fecundity in France." The article nonetheless claims, "it is not possible for man to repress his passions or instincts except by submitting to God, the moral authority."[82] Although this work invokes the help of God instead of the help of science in combating sexually immoral (and therefore, degenerative) behavior, the sense that sex should be kept inside a moral framework for the "fecundity" of France is apparent.

The Catholic work *L'Impureté* also comments on illicit sexual practices in France. The author, Benjamin Arbousset, contends, "Our young men are in danger... If we do not educate them about carnal passions and the individual and societal consequences of such passions, they will drink the poisoned cup of vice and develop an insatiable thirst for pleasure."[83] He continues, "the danger we report is a terrible reality...these misfortunes that afflict families and weaken society have their roots deep in immorality."[84] Even though secularists and Catholics differed in their particular conceptions of sexual morality, there appears to have been a contemporary understanding that social and sexual practices such as heterosexual marriage and monogamy were indicative of a prolific, superior civilization. Literary works regarding sexuality produced by both Christians and secularists acknowledged a similar, inherent moral law that was linked to rhetoric hailing a productive French state.

Judith Surkis supports this notion of an idealized form of civilized sexuality. In *Sexing the Citizen,* Surkis argues that many republican thinkers "imagined married heterosexuality as a motor and manifestation of civilizational and moral progress...conjugal complementarity be-

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[82] Joseph Chantrel, "Revue politique de la France et de l'Église," *Annales catholiques. Revue religieuse hebdomadaire de la France et de l'Église,* November 7, 1903, 441.
[83] Benjamin Arbousset, *L'Impureté* (Lyon: E. Bicksel, 1909), 6.
[84] Ibid, 21.

came…generative of sociality itself…it bound together gender ideals…with a specifically social and moral account of sexuality."[85] So, how did this republican view of sexuality come to be blatantly associated with Christianity in the Moroccan context? While the role of religion was the fundamental point of contention between the Catholics and secularists, their comparable language reveals that they perceived the aim of sexual morality to be quite similar. The superior civilization that was indicated by the French people's supposed sexual virtue resonated with both Catholics and Secularists after 1905. Thus, a French "Christian" identity—used in conjunction with rhetoric about Islamic sexuality—was employed to unify the metropolitan populace discursively and to justify the French conquest of and "civilizing" presence in Morocco.

3.3 Divorce, Or, French "Polygamy"

Even though this unified "Christian" front was employed to justify French authority in Morocco, I believe that studying rhetoric that focused on matters of Moroccan sexuality, religion, and familial life serves to expose deeper issues and concerns within French society. During the pre-War period, concerns over marriage, divorce, and the family loomed large in France, a result of fears following the country's defeat by Prussia in 1870 and from a perceived deterioration in French power that contemporaries related to moral and demographic degeneration. If France was weak, writers frequently claimed, its weakness was rooted in a "growing demographic deficit" caused in part by the legalization of divorce.[86] Emile Durkheim outlined other potentially negative effects of divorce in his work *L' Éducation morale.* Durkheim stated, "If the rules of conjugal morality lose their authority, if the duties which spouses owe one another are less respected, and if the passions and appetites that this aspect of morality contain and regulate, were to unleash and dereg-

[85] Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen,* 1-3.
[86] Berenson, *The Trial of Madame Caillaux,* 11.

ulate themselves...they would bring about a disenchantment, which would be visibly translated by suicide statistics."[87] Although many hailed the legalization of divorce as a step towards modernity—an article in *Le Matin* amusingly claimed in 1913, "it is better to have divorce than to accept murder into our moral code"—contemporary sources suggest that the issue of divorce caused division, disenchantment, and increased anxiety regarding demographic decay.[88]

Interestingly, widely read contemporary sources associated divorce in France with polygamy, a practice overwhelmingly associated with Islam that was condemned by the French. An article in *Le Matin* stated, "When we measure the strength of a civilization, we find that the strong societies tend to practice monogamy. Whenever they decline, they return to polygamy, that form of disturbed morality. Divorce is a kind of successive polygamy."[89] A similar article appeared the same year in *Le Temps,* "the strong races tend to practice monogamy...monogamy implies civilization and it is to this that we should return. Divorce is a type of successive polygamy." According to this article, when a man and a woman divorced one another with the intention to remarry, there existed practices of "polygamy and polyandry simultaneously." It went on to claim, "these are the morals of savages."[90] Judging by this text, contemporaries believed France was in danger of adopting savage, uncivilized behavior. Sharp division and fears of potentially degenerative conduct had gripped the metropole during the formative years of the Moroccan protectorate. This reality inevitably contributed to the French focus on the relatively depraved sexuality of the Moroccans. By adopting a unified "Christian" front concerning Islamic sexuality, the French media and other writers connected the French populace with civilization, morality, and prolificacy, positive notions that clearly resonated with the French populace.

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[87] Emile Durkheim, *L'Éducation morale* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), 99.
[88] Stéphane Lauzanne "Le Jury de Seine-et-Oise Acquitte," *Le Matin,* January 23, 1913.
[89] Paul Borget, "Le Divorce," *Le Matin,* January 28, 1908.
[90] Adrien Hebrard, "La Question du divorce," *Le Temps,* January 30, 1908.

Moreover, as Alice Conklin states in *A Mission to Civilize*, "French imperial policy consistently identified civilization with one principle...mastery...mastery of nature, including the human body, and mastery of what can be called 'social behavior'...mastery was integral to France's self-definition under the Third Republic." Because inhabitants of the non-European world lacked the "crucial ability to master," they were "obviously barbarians, in need of civilizing."[91] While debates surrounding the legalization of divorce caused apprehension and proved so contentious within the metropole, the assertion of a French "Christian" civilization in the Moroccan context joined secularists and Catholics and reaffirmed their relative superiority. If the French lacked the crucial ability to abide by—or even agree upon—correct forms of social behavior, condemning the "blatant" lack of mastery found within Moroccan society soothed fears caused by the debates over divorce and demographic decline within France. Attempting to understand and contextualize French proclamations of a "Christian" civilization after 1905 enables us to better understand the complexities behind the French condemnation of Islamic sexuality. A "Christian" identity in relation to Morocco would have superficially minimalized the complications inherent in French cultural life at the time and reinforced the idea of an admirable French civilization.

3.4 The French in Morocco (and Elsewhere)

Because France was fighting to establish a protectorate in Morocco in the early twentieth century, the rhetorical interactions between the French population and the Moroccans had the most profound impact on French politics and culture. However, literary works that demonstrated France's civilized, "Christian" superiority over Islam and the inhabitants of other Islamic colonies were also widespread. The work *Psychologie sociale contemporaine* by esoteric philosopher Jo-

[91] Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 5-6.

seph Maxwell claims "religious reasons can determine certain prohibitions." Because of this reality, Islam permitted multiple wives within Islamic societies, while "Western nations and those who have undergone the influence of civilization and Christianity can not tolerate the plurality of wives, for polygamy is contrary to morality in most Christian societies." Although Maxwell's work puts forth a more pluralistic concept of morality than Catholic publications, there remains a blatant connection between Christian monogamy and civilization on the one hand, and polygamy on the other.[92]

The religiously toned monograph, *Dieu et science* by Catholic Jacques Brac de La Perrière stated of Islamic civilizations, "In rejecting the religion of Christ, these Mohammedans have diminished civilization...women are found in degradation and servitude."[93] According to this work, Islamic peoples degraded their women and lacked civilized qualities *because* they had rejected Christianity. This assertion implies that, in the minds of certain contemporaries, Christian morals exerted a civilizing power within society. Similarly, the monograph *L'Islam: Impressions et etudes,* by the Catholic writer Henry Castries, declares, "Islamic polygamy greatly offends our civilized, Christian morals...the two faiths are morally opposed to one another."[94] By condemning the practice of polygamy, these ideologically differing writers set French "Christian" morals above those of Islam.

The work *Mœurs Arabes* by secularist Witold Lemanski, compared "Christian dogmas"--out of which French morality evolved—to Islam. The author stated, "monogamy...and polygamy...prove to be opposites." He also argued that, while "monogamous marriage and its rules are the foundations of civilization," polygamy was "a sign of primitive civilization." Lemanski then condemned the status of women in Islamic countries: "It is the Islamic religious tradition which fashions the immutable souls and lives of Muslim women...Islam would be undermined with the

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[92] Joseph Maxwell, *Psychologie sociale contemporaine* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1911), 189.
[93] Jacques Brac de La Perrière, *Dieu et science* (Lyon: E. Vitte, 1909), 254.
[94] Henry Castries, *L'Islam: Impressions et études* (Paris: A. Colin, 1907), 108.

emancipation of women."[95] Although the religiously unaffiliated Lemanski was writing for a general audience, his invocation of France's "Christian" heritage points to the idea that "Christian" sexual morality yielded a higher civilization than Islamic ideas and practices. Comparable rhetoric exists in the 1910 lecture published by a large colonial lobby group titled *L'Islam et la colonisation de l'Afrique.* The lecture, given "under the patronage of the French Colonial Union," avowed, "In the interest of civilization or Christianity, we should crush or at the least limit Islam in North Africa"[96] This was due in significant part to the fact that "Islam sanctifies polygamy."[97] Judging from these passages, both Catholic and secular observers found common ground in condemning sexuality and gender roles endorsed by Islam. By linking France's "Christian" heritage to its civilized traditions and its superior ethics, Catholics and anticlericalist writers alike created a stronger reason for exercising power over perceived religious inferiors.

Newspapers in the early twentieth century echoed these discourses. An article in the newspaper *Le Temps* states of the Algerian Muslims, "they will never submit to our practices...for even if they cease to be Muslims, they will never become Christians." It continues, "If we allow Muslims to unite with us, won't their familial life slowly invade our mores? For the two essential principles of their intimate domestic life, polygamy and the confinement of women...are signs of savagery."[98] Not only did this article bind the morals of secular France to Christianity, it also revealed a fear that "savage" Islamic practices would slowly vitiate the French population's superior mores.

In the case of Morocco, French monographs and newspapers were littered with references to the depraved practices of the Muslim inhabitants. These assertions often appeared with language invoking France's Christian identity. In the monograph *Sorcellerie au Maroc*, the author, scientist,

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[95] Witold Lemanski, *Moeurs Arabes* (Paris: A. Michel, 1908), 24.
[96] Dr. C.H. Becker, *L'Islam et la colonisation de l'Afrique: Conférence faite sous le patronage de l'Union Coloniale Française* (Paris: Union Coloniale Française, 1910), 5.
[97] Ibid, 11.
[98] Adrian Hebrard, "Le Problème indigène en Algérie," *Le Temps,* April 15, 1903.

and secularist Emile Mauchamp, presents his work, not in the interest of religion, but in "the interest of science and civilization... for beneficial instruction and scientific progress" in Morocco.[99] According to Mauchamp, "the people of Morocco have a fear and contempt of Christians." He stated, "in this closed world of Morocco, which exists on the fringes of radiant Europe, the people suffer, sealed in their misery and wariness, refusing the help of their Christian neighbors, like obstinate prisoners in their cells rejecting freedom, health, light, and comfort."[100] When commenting on the Islamic male practice of keeping multiple women in a harem, Mauchamp remarked, "love between women among the Moroccans exceeds moral and natural relations...the women, confined within the harem are, almost without exception, lesbians. Passions are born within the harems, provoking jealousy between the women and...homosexuality." He also talked about the "debauchery" and "lasciviousness" that inevitably cropped up among these confined women, concluding, "the role of women in Morocco is restricted to pure animality."[101] Clearly, Moroccans had much to gain from French "Christian" civilization.

Likewise, the *Congrès de l'Afrique du Nord,* held in Paris on October 6-10, 1908, proposed many reforms that might be made in Morocco on behalf of civilization. The printed monograph consistently referred to France as "the Christian world" in regards to Morocco and stated, "it is certain that if reforms such as the abolition of polygamy are necessary for the social evolution of Muslim peoples, they may be hampered by the very fact that they are against Islamic law, which is immutable because, for them, it is divine in essence."[102] Though the civilized Christian world offered civilization to the Moroccans, their sexual practices—embedded within their society and confirmed by their religious beliefs— proved an almost insurmountable obstacle.

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[99] Emile Mauchamp, *Sorcellerie au Maroc* (Paris: Dorbone-Ainé, 1919), 3.
[100] Ibid, 75.
[101] Ibid, 81,169.
[102] *Congrès de l'Afrique du Nord, tenu à Paris, du 6 au 10 octobre 1908. Compte-rendu des travaux. Questions indigenes et Maroc* (Paris: Charles Depincé, 1909), 171.

Adding to these discourses are pamphlets focused on improving Moroccan ethics. The tract *Dans le grand atlas Marocain* written by humanist doctor Paul Chatinières, characterizes Moroccan society by stating, "the Islamic religion determines the unique character of Moroccan culture just as Christianity created our civilization." However, where Christian morals had contributed to a productive and vibrant French civilization, the acceptance of polygamy and degradation of women in Islamic Moroccan society, according to Chatinières, had led Moroccan society to depravity.[103] A bulletin titled *Société Française de Prophylaxie Sanitaire et Morale,* published by the secular Société Française de Prophylaxie Sanitaire et Morale, also sets "Christian" sexual practices above those of Islam. After encouraging men and women "inhabiting Christian countries," to practice "monogamy" and "early marriage between a man and a women" in order to avoid "moral degradation" and "carnal lust," the work considered the oversexed nature of Muslim men that was causing depravity in Morocco.[104] It concluded that "the suppression of debauchery and polygamy in Morocco is desirable" due to the fact that these practices were causing venereal disease and contributing to the moral decay found among the Muslims.[105]

By referring to the entire Moroccan population as "Muslims," the French were simplifying and homogenizing Moroccan society. In accepting and welcoming the label "Christian," the French were doing the same to themselves, but not without a purpose. Despite France's new secularized status, "Christian" sexual morality enabled the French to define themselves against the Moroccan Muslims. By extolling their "Christian" civilization over that of the Moroccans', French writers and public figures not only asserted that the Moroccan population was utterly debauched (and, therefore, in need of French civilizing help), but they also rendered the Moroccans as fundamentally inferior, thereby justifying France's interference in Morocco. Additionally, this "Christian" label

[103] Paul Chatinières, *Dans le grand atlas Marocain, extraits du carnet de route d'un médecin d'assistance médicale indigène, 1912-1916* (Paris: Plon Nourrit, 1919), 277.
[104] Société Française de Prophylaxie Sanitaire et Morale (Paris, J. Rueff, 1912), 54.
[105] Ibid, 10.

reinforced a connection between sexual morality and French society and generated ideas of a fertile French civilization teeming with productivity in a time of religious and moral rupture in the metropole.

Despite secularization and the privatization of religion within France in 1905, a French "Christian" identity endured in public discourse regarding the sexual practices of colonized peoples. Not only did the application of the label "Christian" justify French moral authority in Morocco, the employment of this religious rhetoric also sheds light on the fluid views towards religion and the overlapping contemporary conceptions of morality during the *Belle Époque*. During a time of moral rupture and a reevaluation within the metropole, French public figures, writers, and journalists focused on the sexual immorality of France's Islamic colonies and protectorates. This served to degrade the practices of the Moroccans as well as reinforce moral structures (at the level of discourse) within France. By continually accepting the notion that the Moroccan Muslims were religiously and morally inferior, the French public arguably began to develop an altered "Christian" identity in relation to the sexual practices of the Moroccan populace. Because Morocco was a colonial prize characterized by its divisive role in European politics in the first decade of the twentieth century, it proves a valuable colonial example through which to view these religious changes and France's internal and international insecurities.

4. THE SECULARIZATION OF FRENCH CHRISTIANITY

"The separation of Church and state is difficult to consider without a certain melancholy mixed with anxiety..." wrote a journalist for *Le Figaro* on December 26, 1905, just days after the

Chamber of Deputies passed the Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State.[106] A few years later, French sociologist Emile Durkheim reflected on this state of religious uncertainty in early twentieth-century French society in an essay titled "La Conception sociale de la religion."

> The old ideals and the divinities which incarnate them are dying because they no longer respond sufficiently to the new aspirations of our day; and the new ideals which are necessary to orient our life are not yet born. Thus we find ourselves in an intermediary period, a period of moral cold which explains the diverse manifestations of which we are, at every instant, the uneasy and sorrowful witnesses.[107]

These sources (and many others that will be examined in this chapter) demonstrate that a sense of rupture had taken hold of the French metropole in the years after 1905. Despite republican assertions that secularization would transform humankind, once "an accursed race slouching...through a valley of tears," into "an endless cortege proceeding towards the light," a perceived sense of religious and moral decline nevertheless permeated French public rhetoric.[108] As a response, the French government, media, and other public figures began to inculcate outmoded collective identities (like "French Christians") with new meaning in a time of apparent division and strife. In so doing, they affirmed the continued existence of a shared, sacred French identity, linking France to its high, Christian past and its secular, innovative present. This chapter explores the modifications made to "French Christianity" in public discourse after the Separation of Church and State in 1905 in conjunction with France's colonial endeavors.

I use the word "modifications" quite purposefully, as this chapter does not suggest the Law of Separation generated a complete break with France's former role as "eldest daughter of the Church," but instead proposes that a French "Christian" identity endured in twentieth-century public discourse, albeit with more secular connotations. While religious discord and division caused by

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[106]Gaston Calmette, "Le Dernier noel," *Le Figaro,* December 26, 1905.
[107]Emile Durkheim, "La Conception sociale de la religion," séance du 18 janvier 1914 de l' "Union des libres penseurs et de libres croyants pour la culture morale," in *Le sentiment religieux a l'heure actuelle,* Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1919, 104.
[108]Frederick Brown, *For the Soul of France* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 39.

the Dreyfus Affair and the Law of Separation threatened to rip France apart, many perceived the European contest for Morocco as a source of potential unification. In the midst of this turbulent epoch in French religious life, Morocco provided a space in which the French populace could appear unified and construct an innovative "Christian" identity while drawing upon the older, established religious division between Christianity and Islam that had existed for centuries in French tradition. French interactions with the Moroccan people reveal the beginnings of a cultural trend towards this new sense of religious identity. In popular French newspapers and other kinds of publications, "Christianity" emerged more as a trope to assert French moral superiority over religious and racial inferiors than a religion dedicated to the salvation of souls.

While the previous two chapters demonstrate that the French publically identified with Christianity after 1905 to superficially unify and justify their superiority over the Moroccan population, this chapter focuses explicitly on the increased "secularization" of this "Christian" label. One of the most celebrated aspects of the Law of Separation in contemporary rhetoric was the fact that religion was now meant to be an internal, private affair. An article in the popular daily *Le Matin* published on December 9, 1905 stated that the law would render the French people, "free from the external interferences" of religion. According to the article, internalized, covert religious observance, "would exercise its influence for the health, fecundity, and good of the country."[109] However, as demonstrated in the previous chapters, when viewed in the Moroccan context, France's association with Christianity remained overt and unconcealed in popular newspapers, academic literature, and government documents when discussing Islam. What does this imply about the constructs of "Christianity" and "Islam" as they relate to imperialism in public discourse after the Law of Separation? While this chapter does not suggest that it was necessarily *contradictory* for moderate secularists or even overt anticlericalists to identify with the notion of a "Christian" France, the

[109] Henri de Houx, "Le Bilan de la séparation," *Le Matin*, December 9, 1905.

explicit association with Christianity after 1905 regarding the new Moroccan protectorate sheds light on the changing nature of religious rhetoric in early twentieth-century France.

Although many Catholic groups accepted scientific and enlightenment ideals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, contemporary discourse overwhelmingly associated the Catholic Church and Christianity with the despotism and backward politics of the *ancien regime*.[110] A 1905 article in the widely read daily *Le Matin* stated, "the separation will not affect personal freedom of conscience, but it will guarantee individual empowerment while ensuring the supremacy of a secular power over outdated concepts of theocracy." It continues to claim that the correlation between the French state and the Catholic Church "was the work of a despotic regime" and that "the new regime will be the work of a free people."[111] By looking at religious discourse in regards to Morocco, I will track how the secular media and other non-affiliated writers and public figures utilized the label "Christian" to underline aspects of French culture that generally had more "secular" connotations. Enlightenment values including rationality, free thought, materialism, and a willingness to modernize and evolve, though not typically associated with Catholicism in the years after the Dreyfus Affair, were linked with French "Christianity" in the Moroccan context to underline Moroccan fundamentalism, irrationality, and barbarity while uniting the French populace.

In other words, French non-affiliated public figures and the media used "Christianity" as a rhetorical label, connecting France to its superior Christian past while simultaneously linking it with modern, enlightened ideals (such as rationality and progress) not typically associated with Catholicism in contemporary rhetoric.[112] Morocco, one of France's first and most important colonial acquisitions after the Law of Separation, provided a conceptual space in which the French populace

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[110] Brown, *For the Soul of France*, 56.
[111] Stephane Lauzanne, "Les Catholiques et la séparation," *Le Matin*, March 3, 1905.
[112] By non-affiliated, I refer to the French men and women who would not necessarily have been opposed to Catholicism in their private lives, but were not publishing works that vied for the preeminence of Catholicism in French society.

(led by journalists, governmental figures, and writers) asserted its moral and cultural prolificacy and superiority over a religious inferior during a time of uncertainty and "moral coldness" within the Metropole.[113] Because this new brand of "French Christianity" endured for decades in the French media and academic literature regarding Morocco, the moniker clearly resonated with both Catholics and anticlericalists in the metropole. While the label did not smooth over all superficial religious divisions, the connections, complexities, and inconsistencies surrounding religion would have significant and detrimental ramifications within twentieth-century France.

4.1 The Role of Language in France Under the Third Republic

Before getting into the main body of the argument, it is imperative to briefly outline the relationship between the French populace and language, particularly after France's revolution in 1789. Modern French historiography is littered with scholarship that focuses on how the emergence of new linguistic concepts radically altered the French public's perceptions of the world(s) in which they inhabited. Although the meaning of "the French public" changed and expanded between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, the notion that ideologies *might be constructed*, the "compelling intensity" inherent in rhetorical transformation in France, and the crucial role of language in shaping identity remained important within French society.[114] Echoing this idea in his work *Culture Wars and Literature in the French Third Republic,* Gilbert Chaitin claims that in France, "great moral power" was traditionally attributed to language and literature.[115] Moments of great historical change and societal rupture—such as the French Revolution and the Franco-

[113] Emile Durkheim, *On Morality and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), xlvii.
[114] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 15.
[115] Gilbert D. Chaitlin, *Culture Wars and Literature in the French Third Republic* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 16.

Prussian War—emerge within French historiography as obvious instances where language provided a venue through which governments, individuals, and classes exercised and legitimized power.

While the utilization of language to accomplish political and cultural goals is obviously not an exclusively French practice, linguistic politics played a fundamental role in the construction of a modern, secular French identity under the Third Republic. In his work, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914,* Eugen Weber claims that the linguistic diversity that had characterized France for centuries prior to 1870 "became significant when it was perceived as a threat to...ideological unity," for "all citizens had to understand what the interests of the Republic were and what the Republic was up to." Most importantly, the Republic "needed an effective vehicle for propaganda." However, the Republic could hardly capture the hearts and minds of France's populace if this populace did not know the French language. According to Weber, a French state that had been previously "unconcerned about linguistic diversity...was replaced by an ideology that embraced unity as a positive good and recognized language as a significant factor in achieving it."[116] Therefore educational reforms, notably the Ferry Laws of the early 1880s that provided free, secular, and compulsory education for all French children, were implemented not only to increase literacy rates but also to promote unity via the French language throughout the country's diverse regions.

As the turbulent nineteenth century progressed, secular educators used language as a means to inculcate French children with a deep love for France at the expense of Catholicism. As a result, by the early twentieth century (the period in which the first children affected by the Ferry Laws reached adulthood), the French language had become more than a possession of an educated elite: "it became a patrimony in which all could share, with significant results for national cohe-

[116] Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 72.

sion."[117] In other words, language itself was the venue through which the Third Republic (allegedly) forged a universal, secular French identity. And, while the Republic's education and secularization initiatives appear to have succeeded in "winning" the French people's souls away from the alters of the seemingly defeated Church, religious language and a French "Christian" identity endured in public rhetoric into the twentieth century. So, it is this specific role of language within contemporary French society and politics that prevents us from simply viewing the endurance of a discursive "French Christianity" as a linguistic oversight on the part of the secular republicans. Language played too crucial a role in the wars between the Third Republic and the Catholic Church to have been used indiscriminately or randomly in any circumstance. Therefore, we must set such language within its historical contexts and judiciously consider its meaning(s).

As stated above, when the Third Republic came to power in 1871, government officials, their supporters, and their critics alike mobilized language and literary phenomena for the purposes of political and social warfare. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the drive for increased secularization (and the subsequent Catholic backlash), the fight for Alfred Dreyfus' imprisonment or freedom, the passing of the Law of Separation, and the continued struggle to legitimize and justify moral power within Morocco all exemplify battles fought at the level of rhetoric within French newspapers, literature, and legislation. Certain contemporaries (of the monarchial, Catholic faction) argued that, "'Frenchness' was...something inherited, something in the blood, even if political action was still necessary to purge France of impure alien influences." In their eyes, "France remained a Christian, Catholic nation, part of a great and unbroken chain that extended from the people...to God and the kingdom of heaven."[118] Conversely, others (of the secular republican faction) asserted "the era when religion still permeated French life has definitively

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[117] Ibid, 336.
[118] David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 203.

ended, and 'extinguished Christianity' has passed its torch to the republican *patrie*."[119] However, a faction of French republicans, in the tradition of their revolutionary forbearers, attempted to sweep France clean of the deleterious effects of reactionary religion (think of the Dreyfus Affair) while creating a new identity, "lovingly put together out of hallowed, ancient material" and rooted in France's established Christian tradition.[120] In their attempts (conscious or unconscious) to "remake" French religious identity, this third faction of French republicans drew upon the French practice of imbuing words and concepts with new or alternative meanings in times of cultural upheaval (such as the period after 1905). In so doing, they changed what it meant to profess Christianity after the Law of Separation, particularly in relation to France's colonial holdings.

4.2 Dreyfus, Durkheim, and a Period of French "Moral Coldness"

In 1883, the well-known secularist Jules Ferry, French minister of education and author of the "Ferry Laws" which provided mandatory secular education for all French children, wrote a letter to Pope Leo XIII. In the letter, Ferry assured the new pope that, despite republican commitments to secularization, the French government had no intention of undoing the Concordat and separating the Church and the state.[121]

For Ferry, the Concordat, which had governed the Church of the French majority since 1802, "was a fixed point."[122] Catholicism in France was culturally ingrained to the point of inevitability. In 1888 he declared in a meeting that "separation would be absolutely contrary not only to the beliefs of a great number of French people but to something much stronger than beliefs, to the

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[119] Ibid, 204.
[120] Ibid, 201.
[121] Robert Gildea, *Children of the Revolution: The French 1799-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 344.
[122] Ibid, 344.

habits and traditions of the French people, to popular instinct itself."[123] Ferry believed the relationship between the French state and the Catholic Church, however problematic for secular republicans in the late nineteenth century, embodied a fundamental aspect of French society. Nevertheless, the Law of Separation passed only seventeen years later, breaking the Concordat and rendering France a secular state officially recognizing no religion. How do we account for this seeming alteration in policy? Did the secular republicans move from a place of seeming respect towards the French Catholic population towards a track bent on ostracizing Catholics in public discourse a decade later? If so, why?

In part, Ferry was not entirely correct about the grassroots support for a "Catholic" France in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Across France, religious practice declined among such increasingly varied and heterogeneous groups as rural peasants, industrial workers, students, writers, and socialists. In addition, religious processions were steadily banned in various towns across the country and the number of civic burials rose exponentially in regions from Paris to the Limousin.[124] The comments of a peasant from Beissat (Creuse) in the early twentieth century further highlight this point. He stated of the Church and its priests, "honor be to those who cleave to reason instead of the enigmatic revelation...Let us shake off the monastic and clerical yoke and thus become free men again."[125] Judging by the language and actions of contemporaries, many people within France seemed to be placing a higher value on reason, science, and knowledge than on religious belief and practice.

However, a far more culturally impactful episode—the Dreyfus Affair—arguably accounts for this shift in views towards the Catholic Church and France's Catholic population. The Dreyfus Affair was a political and cultural scandal that is conventionally known for ideologically splitting the

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[123] Jules Ferry, speech of 21 December 1888, in *Discours et opinions,* VII (Paris, 1898), 129.
[124] Gildea, *Children of the Revolution,* 347.
[125] Ibid, 348.

population of France from its commencement in 1894 into the early years of the twentieth century. Robert Gildea refers to the Dreyfus Affair as "a religious war" between the French populace.[126] Historians have recognized the affair as a time of extreme tumultuousness in French religious and cultural life in the last years of the nineteenth century.

In November 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish artillery officer in the French army, was accused of communicating French military secrets to the German Embassy in Paris. After a hasty trial and conviction, Dreyfus was sent to the penal colony at Devil's Island in French Guinea, placed in solitary confinement, and forced to endure unspeakable treatment and horrendous living conditions for almost five years.

By 1898, evidence had emerged that suggested a French Army major, Ferdinand Esterhazy, was the real culprit. However, a military court collectively acquitted Esterhazy and the army subsequently accused Dreyfus of additional charges based on false documents fabricated by members of the French army. News of the military's actions began to spread, chiefly owing to vehement works published in newspapers and other contemporary literature by progressive republican activists, such as Emile Zola, author of the famous exposé "J'accuse," who publically pressured the government to reopen the case. As stated earlier, the extreme political and judicial scandal that proceeded divided French society between those who supported Dreyfus—known as the Dreyfusards—and those who condemned him—identified in public rhetoric as the anti-Dreyfusards.

Although all accusations against Alfred Dreyfus were eventually proved baseless (exonerating him of all his alleged crimes), the affair led to a sense of severe moral anxiety that manifested itself in skepticism regarding Catholics and public religion within France (the negative views towards public religion will be discussed later in the chapter). Although I am not suggesting that there is a direct, simple path from the Dreyfus Affair to the Law of Separation, an examination of con-

[126] Ibid, 355.

temporary discourse indicates that, for many French people, the Dreyfus Affair highlighted all that was wrong with the traditionally monarchical institution of the Church. This undoubtedly affected average French viewpoints of the Catholic Church specifically and Christianity more generally. The affair both reflected and deepened the apparent rift between the Catholic, monarchical right and the Republican, secular left.

Importantly, recent historiography considers the Dreyfus Affair and the 1905 Law of Separation to be two parts of the same phenomenon. Gilbert Chaitin combines the two events in his analysis within *Culture Wars and Literature in the French Third Republic,* claiming that it was the Dreyfus Affair and the Law of Separation, which "divided the country into two warring camps" causing "internal strife which lasted until the beginning of World War I."[127] Although I have demonstrated in previous chapters that the two groups were not as irreconcilably distinct as present historiography suggests, the outward divisions between the two were formidable and caused a deep sense of uncertainty within metropolitan culture.

The political and cultural upheaval caused by the Dreyfus Affair coupled with the "fanaticisation" of French Catholics in public discourse led to a deep mistrust of Catholics and public religion among Dreyfusards. First, I will examine the sense of societal rift within France as seen in an article of *Le Temps* from December 1899. The article stated, "There is no doubt that the Dreyfus Affair has been an instrument of discord for far too long between the French." It contended that the affair was "causing great harm" and referred to it as "a great moral crisis"[128] within society. Along similar lines, the monograph *Les Doctrines de haine,* by the well-known rational historian Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu and published in 1902 claimed that "the Dreyfus Affair is responsible for

[127] Chaitin, *Culture War and Literature in the French Third Republic,* 6.
[128] M. Falateuf, "Haute cour de justice," *Le Temps,* December 29,1899.

the moral crisis which traverses France."[129] Clearly, a sense of moral catastrophe was emerging within the minds of contemporaries. Comparably, the work, *Les Preuves: Affaire Dreyfus*, by French socialist leader Jean Jaurès, claimed the affair had been responsible for the present "degradation" in France and, therefore, responsible for France's "supreme crisis."[130] Commenting on the heinous acts of the officers in the army, the exposé, *L'Affaire Dreyfus: Tout le crime,* referred to the officers as "the authors of this crime." The author, Joseph Reinach, writer, politician, and admirer of the famous secularist Léon Gambetta, calls Esterhazy "the loony Robespierre" and claims that he and his kind "have caused genuine inquietude and anxious uncertainty" in France.[131] Many of these works published by Dreyfusards refer to the "despotic" generals and army members as both "Catholics" and "Christians."[132] Perhaps ironically, traditional Christianity began to emerge in general discourse as a reactionary force responsible the cause of a specific type of moral uncertainty within France.

These sentiments led to the rise of a new imagined threat to France: the "Catholic fanatic." According to anticlerical contemporary Henri la Soudiar, "The Dreyfus Affair is not a miscarriage of justice, but a conscious and premeditated crime: the crime of clericalism and anti-Semitism." Also discussed is the "current crisis" that found "the French nation unconsciously drowned in a deep moral lapse that explains and characterizes it."[133] The work *L'Affaire Dreyfus et ses ressorts secrets: Précis historique,* by famous novelist and politician Paschal Grousset, claimed that "There is a presumption of injustice in the covert summary execution of the Jewish officer by the ministry of war and the Catholic fury...This crime has deeply troubled the national conscience. It has unleashed a ruinous tempest on France." It also asserted, "religion is a prodigious instrument of rule,

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[129] Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, *Les Doctrines de haine* (Paris: C. Levy, 1902), 2.
[130] Jean Jaurès, *Les Preuves: Affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: La petite République, 1898), 247.
[131] Joseph Reinach, *L'Affaire Dreyfus: Tout le crime* (Paris: P.V. Stock, 1900), 532.
[132] Joseph Reinach, *Vers la justice par la vérité: L'Affaire Dreyfus* (Paris: P.V. Stock, 1898), 108.
[133] Henri la Soudiar, *Bibliographie Française, recueil de catalogues des éditeurs Français: Accompagné d'une table alphabétique par noms d'auteurs et d'une table systématique* (Paris: H. le Soudier, 1900), 40.

which crushes the seeds of all revolution, repeals all rights, enslaves the conscience, and humiliates the conscience. In regards to the "Catholic, royalist" nature of the army, the work contended, "When we forge armies in such a way it is for a purpose. It is to crush the French Revolution, to replace it and the ruins of the modern world...establishing the rule of a State where the Christian priest be all, where the individual will be nothing." It consistently invokes the evils of the "Catholic, royalist army" and claimed the idea that "every Jew is a traitor. Every Jew must be crushed like a venomous beast" was "pure royalist, Catholic doctrine."[134] Furthermore, the work *Vers la lumière...impressions vécues: Affaire Dreyfus*, by the French feminist and socialist Séverine (Caroline Rémy de Guebhard), maintained that the Dreyfus Affair was triggered by "Catholics." It continues to argue that Catholic "anti-Semitism" was "the doctrine of hate, destroyer of progress, 'a danger for the Republic."[135] The Dreyfus Affair inspired left-wing journalists and writers to associate Christianity with "doctrines of hate," France's despotic past, and reactionary politics which inhibited progress. The division between "reactionary" Catholics and "progressive" secularists caused a deep sense of rupture, moral confusion, and uncertainty within France.

The association of Catholics with the *ancien regime* and counter-enlightenment principles during the Dreyfus Affair continued to influence debates over the Law of Separation a few years later. An article in *Le Matin* from October 1904 stated, "The present political regime is inspired by the emancipatory principles of the revolution and free from dogmatic input and is pressing towards intellectualism and rationality. Clericalism has always stood against the Republic as an implacable enemy...the law (of separation) is called upon to rescue us from any fanaticism and ignorance in the country." The article supported the act of "undermining religion" due to the fact that "religious

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[134] Paschal Grousset, *L'Affaire Dreyfus et ses ressorts secrets: Précis historique* (Paris: A. Goudet, 1899), 18.
[135] Séverine, *Vers la lumière...impressions vécues: Affaire Dreyfus* (P.V. Stock, Paris, 1900), 352.

power has denied the rights" of the French people since the establishment of the Concordant.[136] When the law passed in 1905, many contemporaries perceived it as a rational, progressive move. An article in *Le Matin* claimed exuberantly, "the Concordat is no more." It continued to state that, "this venerable monument (the Concordat) which had arbitrated the official religion of France" was to be replaced with "a law truly worthy of a secular republic...henceforth, no vestiges of the old state religion remains, it recognizes no religion...all are equal before the law." It asserts that the law will be effective "against religious fanatics," leaving the French people to "carefully roll abolished deities in the purple shroud of sleeping, dead gods."[137] The cultural and political sway of these "fanatical" Catholics and their public displays of religion seemed to be on the wane within French society.

The Dreyfus Affair led to a demonization of Catholics within public discourse, minimized the political power of the right, and circuitously led to the passing of the Law of Separation in 1905. For many, France was progressing and modernizing beyond the influence of reactionary, monarchical Catholics. However, a sense of moral degeneracy and confusion continued to significantly pervade the metropolitan population, both Catholic and unaffiliated alike.

Catholic works pointed to this idea of a moral and religious breakdown in France after the Law of Separation. Importantly, we must understand that the law was by no means attempting to *rid* France of religion. Rather, it was implemented to relegate religious conviction to individuals' private lives in favor of public peace. However, the interpretation that the separation caused France to lose a fundamental aspect of its identity remained common in early twentieth-century rhetoric. The Catholic work *Contre la séparation*, by Albert de Mun, stated, "The rupture of the French government with the Church, the separation between the Church and state, constitutes the crucial

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[136] Stephane Lauzanne, "Vers la séparation," *Le Matin,* October 23, 1904.
[137] Jean D'Orsay, "La Fin du concordat," *Le Matin,* July 4, 1905.

happening of our times...France is in an uncertain, precarious, and sad position." It continues, "some call it (the law) the intellectual and social emancipation of the nation, others will see that is will cause moral decay and national abasement. But without even addressing this debate, acknowledge the fact that the separation of Church and state is France's official apostasy."[138] Even though the law wasn't eliminating religion, contemporary reactions suggest that, for some Catholics, the separation was of great and detrimental significance to their religious lives. These notions reverberated in the monograph *Après la séparation: Suivi du texte de la loi concernant la séparation des Églises et de l'État*, by the moderate right writer and politician Gabriel-Paul-Othenin d' Haussonville. D' Haussonville stated, "the ambiguities and inconsistencies of the law explain and justify the abundant uncertainties which currently shape Catholic points of view."[139] An article published in *Le Matin* emphasizes the uncertainty as well. It stated, "this nation that was previously called the eldest daughter of the Church in regards to religion is now an object of sadness, grave concern, and anxiety."[140] While the Law of Separation was implemented first and foremost to privatize religion, it is clear that contemporary Catholics perceived it as something more resembling apostasy than religious interiorization. France's role as "eldest daughter of the Church," despite over a century of revolution and increasing secularization, had continued to hold ideological sway for France's Catholics.

While it was understandable for Catholics to have felt a sense of unease, more widely read, religiously unaffiliated sources also mimicked these ideas as well. An article in the daily *Le Temps* worried over the nature of the Law of Separation. It stated, "by definition, the rupture will result in greater liberty for both spouses (the state and the Church). However, the rupture of the concordant union will not have this effect. The state will be cleared of its obligations to the Catholic Church.

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[138] Albert de Mun, *Contre la séparation* (Paris: Vie C. Poussielgue, 1905), 95.
[139] Gabriel-Paul-Othenin d' Haussonville, *Après la séparation: Suivi du texte de la loi concernant la séparation des Églises et de l'État* (Paris: Perrin, 1906), 20.
[140] Stephane Lauzanne, "La Séparation," *Le Matin,* December 12, 1905.

But the latter will not recover its rights from the hands of the state—most notably it will not gain its independence. Why? Because the state will not be willing or able to ignore a force as considerable as the Catholic Church...This will lead to a new arbitrariness that will not be limited by the pleasure of the majority." It continues, "we are passing from a stable regime to a regime based on the whims of the highest bidder."[141] Apparently, a fear that France was lapsing into incertitude and falling under the rule of an arbitrary government existed among the populace. The separation of the former "spouses" carried momentous consequences even for the religiously unaffiliated. And, as with all divorce, while the eventual results might be positive, gaping wounds remain for years.

France's populace lost an integral part of its complex identity after 1905. By minimizing (though not extinguishing) France's traditional and eminent role as "eldest daughter of the Church," the French government diminished a fundamental characteristic of French culture that had contributed to the country's international prestige for centuries.[142] An article from *Le Matin* in 1906 highlights this notion. The article states, "1906 finishes in sorrow and 1907 begins with anxiety. There has been, in reality, the total collapse of one society and we lack the ability to create a new one...never have I seen such a series of dark events... The good French men who had been attached to the traditions which made France glorious never found themselves...so low."[143] This passage reiterates the notion that, not only had France's relationship with the Catholic Church made it "glorious" in a secure, more illustrious past, but it also demonstrates that the law caused a noteworthy crack in French society. The work *La Crise de la République,* published a few years later in 1914, repeated similar sentiments. It claimed, "the Individual Frenchman has not lost the physical and intellectual qualities of his race, but the nation is no longer governed by morality. It seems to overlook the purpose of moral greatness and power which further elevates people by ex-

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[141] Charles Vernes, "Concordat et séparation," *Le Temps,* August 31, 1903.
[142] Gildea, *Children of the Revolution,* 439.
[143] Eduard Drumont, "La séparation," *Le Matin,* December 31, 1906.

citing their energies. This is evil."[144] While the "Frenchman" continued to thrive physically and intellectually, France had lost its formerly perceived sense of moral greatness. The author of the text, J.L. de Lanessan, a self-identified "liberal" who was not necessarily opposed to the separation, still maintained the crucial role the "high Catholic cultural ideal" had played in France when the relationship between the Church and state had existed. Also important is the fact that he questioned the State's ability to replace the Church's role in society. However, Lanessan affirmed that, "despite these political differences that divide them (the Catholics and secularists), they must unite and make every effort to...raise the moral greatness of this country."[145] Judging by these sources, feelings of division and moral lapse permeated France in the years leading up to World War I. This epoch in French history was defined by societal and religious schism, echoing the Durkheimeian notion that "the old gods are growing old or already dead, and others are not yet born." This reality caused a "state of incertitude and agitation" in France.[146]

This sense of a fractured French identity in relation to religion, belief, and morality left France in a state of ideological limbo. Perceived breaks with a (reactionary) Catholic past coupled with the sense that enlightened progress (no matter how liberating) was unable to fill the cultural void left by the separation landed French society in a precarious position.[147] Judging by early twentieth-century language, the Law of Separation and the subsequent privatization of religion were momentous events: the equivalent of apostasy for many Catholics and a jolting experience on a sociocultural level for the religiously unaffiliated. So, while the increased fanaticisation of Catholics in public discourse surrounding the Dreyfus Affair and the Law of 1905 made it increasingly unpopular to be associated with Christianity in public rhetoric, discourse surrounding the fight for Morocco explicitly identified France with "Christianity" and "the Christian world" as if France's "Christi-

[144] J.L. de Lanessan, *La Crise de la République* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1914), 14.
[145] Ibid, 56, 120.
[146] Durkheim, *On Morality and Society*, xlvii.
[147] Ibid, xlvii.

anity" was something inherent and understood. How is this feasible? Because French society found itself in a state of confusion in regards to religion and morality, French journalists, government officials, and other public figures began to imbue "French Christianity" with new meaning—tying France to its more illustrious past and assuring its connections to a progressive, enlightened, secular future. Morocco provided a space in which to create a new secular Christian identity that incorporated both of these associations.

4.3 Fanaticism, Rationality, and the New "French Christianity"

The Third Republic's brand of secular morality was initially intended to replace Catholicism in the hearts and minds of the French populace.[148] However, the Law of Separation was not meant to rid France of all religious (Catholic) observance. As stated earlier, French government officials intended to relegate religious practice to the private sphere. Despite the fact that the Dreyfus Affair and the Law of Separation caused a sense of loss and instability within France in relation to French identity, contemporary rhetoric surrounding the debates over the law suggests that, for many religiously unaffiliated French people, the promise of religious privatization was one of the most celebrated and anticipated aspects of the Law of 1905.

In *For the Soul of France,* Frederick Brown cites a late nineteenth-century petition from "The New Education Society" regarding the division between the public and private sectors. Brown quotes, "Liturgical objects and religious images should be removed from public view. Neither prayers, nor dogma, nor anything that pertains to the individual conscience should be taught or practiced in common." The only method that was to hold sway was "the experimental or scien-

[148] Patricia Tilburg, *Colette's Republic: Work, Gender, and Popular Culture in France 1870-1914* (New York: Berghahn, 2009), 59.

tific, which is based on facts, whatever their nature—physical, moral, intellectual.[149] Unmistakably, religion, a symbol of France's reactionary past, was to be a private affair whereas science, a marker of modernity and progress, was much more acceptable to discuss in public forums. Similarly, the work *Précis de morale,* by secularist Emile Rayot, asserted, "the state, in the interest of public order, to defend against violations of justice, to protect the rights of individuals," enacted the Law of Separation to "ensure the freedom of each and maintains the rights of private initiative which is one of the most valuable sources of public wealth, it also seems to truly meet the collective interest."[150] According to the author, the individual's "private initiative" to practice religion ensured the freedom of the French people. Such accounts consistently identified religious interiorization with freedom and liberty for the majority, insinuating that the public exercise of religion proved stifling in the minds of many contemporaries.

Fortunately for such persons, the Law of Separation encouraged the privatization of religion from a legal perspective. The minutes from the debates over the law that took place from 1904 to 1905, titled *La Séparation: Discussion de la loi,* declared, "If the sentiment is found in France for people wanting to create a new religion, they can form an association of individuals to practice their religion in private meetings, but when they open a place of worship in public, they will need to form any association declared according prescriptions sixteen and seventeen under title four."[151] Prescriptions sixteen and seventeen outlined what was allowed and not allowed to be place on the exteriour of religious buildings in France. I cite these details to demonstrate that, though religion was not being outlawed or forbidden within French society, public representations of religious observance were most certainly discouraged after 1905. Similarly, the pro-separation monograph *Apres la séparation,* by René Lavollée, outlined the parameters placed on the public

[149]"Liturgical Objects": *La Commune de 1871: Le Journal officiel avec ses decrets, affiches, et proclamations* quoted in Brown, *For the Soul of France,* 28.
[150] Emile Rayot, *Precis de morale* (Paris: P. Delaplane, 1906), 253.
[151] Aristide Briand, *La Séparation: Discussion de la loi 1904-1905* (Paris: E. Fasquelle, 1908), 283.

display of religious symbols. The work explains that there was to be "no religious symbols on public monuments or in any public place whatsoever, except for buildings used for worship, burial grounds in cemeteries, monuments and museums or exhibitions." It elaborates on the strict regulations placed on religious images in the civic sphere, "associations formed for... the public exercise of worship shall be in accordance with the following articles..."[152] We can gather from reading these texts that symbols of religion or religious observance were, if not eradicated from, then at least discouraged in French public life after the Law of Separation. Religion was meant to be the exclusive business of the faithful, not the preoccupation of the French state or its general populace.

A lecture given by Léon Duguit at a school for social studies in 1907 titled *Le Régime du culte Catholique antérieur à la loi de séparation et les causes juridiques de la séparation: Conférence faite à l'École des Hautes Études Sociales,* gives an alternative perspective on the privatization of religion. Although the Catholic author is "Glad that 'discord and strife'" will end with the enactment of the law, he admitted, "I cannot force myself to believe that the result will be a regime of stable equilibrium in which religion, now a thing of the private conscience, has become quite alien to the political life of the country...and all believers will worship freely and practice their faith under the protection of an impartial and neutral state."[153] Although Duguit was against the idea of separation, his lecture enables us to better understand contemporary notions surrounding the law. While his speech allows us to see the (negative) results Catholics expected from religious privatization, it also reveals the emphasis placed on the interiorization of religion in discussions surrounding the law. Duguit's speech also shows that contemporaries hoped that relegating Christianity to an exclusively private sphere of influence would bring an end to the discord and strife that had characterized French life for decades.

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[152] René Lavollée, *Après la séparation* (Paris: au siège du Comité, 1906), 83, 87.
[153] Léon Duguit, *Le Régime du culte Catholique antérieur à la loi de séparation et les causes juridiques de la séparation: Conférence faite à l'École des Hautes Études Sociales* (Paris: L. Larose et L. Tenin, 1907), 2.

Newspapers widely read by the general populace also proclaimed that, because public religion had led only to division and moral crisis in France, the Law of Separation would result in an unprecedented "freedom of conscience" on an individual level. An article in *Le Matin* in 1906 claimed, "democratic and liberal sentiments are so entrenched, and the country has shown recently in the general elections that...the triumph of secularism and freedom of conscience will be the outcome of this struggle with the Church"[154] Similarly, an additional article from 1906 asserted that the law "proclaims the freedom of conscience, the secularization of the state and of life." It continues to state that the relationship between the French state and the Catholic Church had "condemned all free spirits in the depths of their consciences" and that intellectual freedom would result with the expulsion of public religion.[155] Contemporary newspapers are littered with similar sentiments. Clearly, the separation between the Church and the state and the privatization of religious symbols and practice would result in a greater freedom of conscience for the French majority. After receiving extremely bad press in regards to the Dreyfus Affair, Catholicism—and its supposed reactionary, monarchial, anti-enlightenment political leanings—seemed best exercised within the private consciences' of expressed believers. Despite the moral confusion and sense of rupture caused by the Law of Separation, it seems the majority of the French (Catholics included), believed that a public disassociation with religion would lead to public peace.

However, French discourse surrounding Morocco complicates this picture in that language used by the secular media and government publically identified the French as "Christians" in relation to the Muslims of the North African country. The secularists' references to "Christianity" indicate the beginnings of a cultural progression within French public discourse. By placing typically

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[154] Stephane Lauzanne, "Les Elections Française," *Le Matin,* May 6,1906.
[155] Ibid.

"secular," "scientific," and "enlightened" ideals under the moniker "Christian" in the Moroccan context, French public figures and writers began to (consciously or subconsciously) imbue the concept of "French Christianity" with new meaning. In this context, Christianity was used as an appellation to indicate a deep cultural superiority over a religious inferior and not as an indication of a national return to a higher deity after the Law of Separation. As metropolitan France staggered under the weight of religious change and perceived moral dissolution, Morocco provided a space in which to refashion a unified, enlightened Christian front, establishing solidarity in a desperate moment within French religious life.

As stated in chapter one, the primacy of religion within Moroccan culture resulted in the Moroccan people initially characterizing the French as "Christians." In fact, a government-sponsored publication, *Affaires du Maroc 1910-1912,* published by the *Ministère des Affaires Étrangères,* criticized the Moroccans for placing importance on religious identity at the expense of European nationalism. The work complains that the Moroccans, "excited by fanaticism," had not made any distinction of nationality...Moreover, they hardly know the name of the main European nations and confuse us all under the name Christian.[156] Not only does this quote underline the Moroccans' lack of knowledge about the "nation" that was so crucial to French conceptions of modernity, it also might suggest that it was the Moroccans, not the French, who often associated France (wrongly) with Christianity. However, not only does this particular article accept the label, but also, during the later years of the *Belle Époque*, it is apparent that French media and public figures adopted this discourse and attempted to utilize it for their own purposes. Contemporary media and government reports suggest that "French Christianity" was employed by the religiously unaffiliated to connect France to its high, illustrious Catholic past while simultaneously connecting the

[156] France. Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Affaires du Maroc, 1910-1912* (Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1912), 456.

French populace to enlightened rationality and scientific reasoning in regard to the Moroccan populace.

This "secular Christianity" emerged within discourse regarding the "irrational fanaticism" of the Moroccans in direct comparison to the "rationality" of the French Christians. An earlier publication of the bulletin *Affaires du Maroc: 1901-1905* states, "It is only the hate of the Christian which guides our adversaries." According to the document, even military setbacks or failures, "certainty do not diminish the fanaticism" of the Moroccans.[157] The work also addresses the state of French reform work in Morocco. The attempts of "Christian France" to bring Moroccan society into modernity excited "the fanaticism of the Moroccan population…against French…Christians."[158] In this passage, French Christians are portrayed as rational carriers of enlightenment and scientific improvement while the Muslims are irrationally religious and fanatical.

In the government bulletin, *L'Organisation financière de l'Empire Marocain* we find comparable language. Referring to the general culture of Moroccan insurrection against the French, the work asserts, "in Morocco, in serious circumstances—particularly when the country is flooded by Christians—if the Sultan proclaimed a Holy War (Jihad) he is sure to receive the dedicated support of his subjects." The work goes on to state, "religious initiation causes a Muslim child to suddenly become fanatical, full of foolish pride and believing that he possesses the absolute truth, happily demonstrating his inferiority. This is the foolish pride of radical Muslim vice."[159] Although this work does not go into explicit detail regarding the character and actions of the French Christians, the implicit contrast between the Christians and Muslims suggests that the Moroccans' belief in absolute religious truth rendered them inferior. The Christians "flooding" the country are clearly assumed to be of a more rational, scientific variety.

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[157] France. Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Affaires du Maroc, 1901-1905* (Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1905), 109.
[158] Ibid, 263.
[159] Taleb Abdesselem, *L'Organisation financière de l'Empire Marocaine: Affaires du Maroc* (Paris: E. Larose, 1911), 21.

Additionally, the vignette, *La Renaissance du Maroc: Dix ans de protectorat, 1912-1922,* a work published by the Résidence Générale de la République Française au Maroc in 1922, upholds this idea of Muslim fanaticism. The work, intending to sum up France's imperial experience in Morocco in the first decade of the protectorate, consistently referring to the Moroccans as ""violent" "savage" and "fanatical in their subconscious lives." The work states, "We must guard against Islamicized and Arabized natives, who today oppose our valiant troops with resistance. They hate Christians" but, the work hopes, "perhaps one day they will become the strongest supporters of our domination."[160] French writers associated France with a Christian identity in direct relation to Moroccan "religious fanatics." Interestingly, these portrayals of Muslims as subordinate, unreasoning, and driven by mindless religious observance are not wholly unlike French portrayals of fervent Catholics within the metropole.

Moroccan opposition to French "Christian" interference led to several rebellions over the first two decades of the twentieth century. Popular French newspapers covered these rebellions, playing up the dichotomy between Islam and Christianity for a general metropolitan audience. When Moulay Hafid's acension to the throne was announced in 1908, riots broke out in Fez, the capital city of Morocco. An article in *Le Temps* states that "the Moroccans accused him (the former sultan, Abdul Aziz) of acting under the inspiration of Christians and ceding to the French that which was not theirs." After linking France with Christianity, the article asserts that "France, Morocco's neighbor, needs to impose order on anarchic feudalism in Morocco...which is always synonymous with disorder." It continues to discuss the riot, referring to the Moroccans as "xenophobic," "anarchic," and "largely ignorant." The rioters who were "accusing Abdul Aziz of selling Mo-

[160] *La Renaissance du Maroc: Dix ans de protectorat, 1912-1922* (Rabat: Résidence générale de la République française au Maroc, 1922), 40.

rocco to Christians," were "troublemakers who fomented the recent riot."[161] Even though Catholics within the metropole were condemned in wider metropolitan discourse for their reactionary religious and political views in the early twentieth century, French Christians in the Moroccan context were implored to impose republican order on a feudalistic, ignorant society supposedly dominated by religious sentiment.

A few years later, as the new Moroccan sultan, Moulay Hafid, signed Morocco over to France in 1912, a journalist asserted that, "the resentment against French Christians increased." The article, appearing in the center of the front page of *Le Temps*, refers to the Moroccans as fanatic "mutineers" blinded by their religious hatred. However, "those who know Morocco declare that the country is able to rise (to the level of civilization). These individuals, whose authority is great in this matter, must be included so that France can institute in Morocco a regime of clarity and enlightenment.The people must feel the benefits of our action. If these benefits are not imposed on the spirit of the population, France's actions risk remaining sterile."[162] In this context, the French Christians, harbingers of clarity and enlightenment, are beseeched to raise the Moroccans above their religious fanaticism and impose rationality and order within the new protectorate or risk becoming ineffective. By linking France to its high, superior Christian past and its modern capabilities to civilize (and even secularize) the Moroccan mindset, this article demonstrates a new, rhetorical meaning behind "French Christianity" in regards to Morocco's colonial population.

Furthermore, newspaper coverage of the 1912 massacre in Fez suggests that the moniker "Christian" was being used to voice more secular, rational ideals. The article, published in *Le Matin* in 1912, contended that, while French "Christians" had come to Fez to bring "peace and tranquility" to Morocco, the jihadist leaders' "effective propaganda" against the Christians turned even

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[161]Adrien Hebrard, "La Situation au Maroc*," Le Temps*, January 13, 1908.
[162] Adrien Hebrard, "L'Enquête sur les troubles a Fez," *Le Temps*, May 6, 1912.

the most trustworthy Moroccans against France. The article continues, "some of the (Moroccan) tribes came to tell us that...they were obligated to march against us in order to evade being massacred."[163] This passage, though not without a certain amount of sympathy, nevertheless depicts the Muslims as malleable and lacking free thought and individuality. The Moroccans, forced to conform to the will of God and their earthly superiors at the point of a sword, stand in stark contrast to the French Christians, who seem dumbfounded by the Moroccan's lack of personal agency in the matter.

The French media also associated this secular "Christian" civilization with humanitarian sentiment. An article published in *Le Temps* in 1912 discussed the nature of religion and society in Morocco among other topics. The editorial described Moroccan Muslims as "fanatical" and claimed that they "observe their religion with more severity than other peoples." It continued to discuss the sad plight of the "poor, small Moroccan refugees" who survived the rebellion in Fez. The editorial concludes that, although the French people might have been tempted to sympathize with the "large, somber eyes" of the Moroccans affected by France's reprisals, "in reality, the Christian is always abhorred by these fanatics."[164] In this article, French Christianity is represented as an identity based on rationality as well as a controlled, superior sentimentality. Although the French Christians might have been lured into feeling sympathy for the destitute, they are clearly not subject to the severe, violent fanaticism characteristic of the Moroccan Muslims. Again, this language employed to demean the Moroccans was not unlike the contemporary portrayals of devout French Catholics cited above. These discursive similarities indicate that Christianity in the Moroccan context was employed to highlight France's rational, ethical civilization rather than religious devotion.

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[163] Jules Madeline, "Les Attaques des tribus contre Fez," *Le Matin*, May 31, 1912.
[164] Adrien Hébrard "La Vie a Paris," *Le Temps,* April 26,1912.

Often, unaffiliated government officials and writers associated "French Christians" explicitly with enlightenment ideals. Despite asserting that "France" was "slowly coming out of the 'age of religion,'" the monograph, *Un Programme de politique coloniale: Les Questions indigenes* by anticlericalist Louis Vignon, makes dozens of references to "French Christians" when discussing the peoples of the Muslim world. While Vignon claimed, "little by little, the scientific movement is delivering it...France offers the premier example of a people who, in sum and en masse, practice free thought," he continued to associate the people of France with Christianity. He stated, "France has large colonial holdings over the Islamic world, where an opposition to Christianity exists among the Muslims." Vignon upholds this association throughout the work, making staments such as, "In France's colonial endeavors, it is found that Christianity and Islam clash."[165] Additionally, the work asserts that non-European, inferior peoples "cannot comprehend the religion of Christ" and, these "Muslims...have a disregard for antecedents and a lack of moral unity." Paradoxically, Vignon condemns "inferior" peoples (particularly Muslims) for lacking the ability to comprehend the Christian religion while at the same time extolling the French people's increased secularism, *libre pensée*, and their ability to place value on scientific rather than religious truth.[166]

The idea of France as a "Christian state" also continued to exercise influence within French colonial rhetoric. The non-religious study, *Précis de sociologie nord-africaine* by A.G.P. Martin, discusses the mindset of the Moroccan peoples from a French perspective, stating that, "from a Muslim point of view, the sovereign cannot accept the political tutelage of a Christian state without losing prestige." While Martin identifies France as a Christian state, he is clearly not referring to the collective French populace's childlike faith and collective religious devotion, for he continues to associate French Christianity with more "secular" values throughout the work. "We have already

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[165] Louis Vignon, *Un Programme de politique coloniale: Les Questions indigenes* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et Cie, 1919), 409, 415, 565.
[166] Ibid, 159, 565.

seen that the character of Islam does violence to reason. Their reasoning abilities are relatively low, since there is only one mystery, the existence of God." Additionally, he elucidates on "the cohesive forces of Islam" that "establish mental uniformity among its followers." This cohesiveness results in "the common interests of the religious and social group" becoming "aggressive and disturbing" to the French. He concludes with a call for reform: "all the groups of the Muslim community" must "regain their liberty, and, each accountable for himself, try to be resigned in submission to avoid greater damage."[167] While stating that these Muslims must put aside their collective religious devotion in favor of the individual, free thought associated with progress and modernity, he clearly still maintains that they must remain submissive to the rule of the (Christian) French state.

Comparably, the monograph *Chrétiens et musulmans: Voyages et études,* by progressive author Ludovic de Contenson, claimed that Muslims "hated Christians," that is, "modern civilization." The work, having linked Christianity with innovation and development, continues, "the Muslims hate Christians not only because they are infidels" according to Koranic law, but because they are "capitalists" "conquerors" "engineers" and "the masters of tomorrow."[168] These descriptions of the "French Christians" link them with processes of modernity and an innate superiority that differed greatly from descriptions of Catholics within the metropole.

The Moroccan penchant for rebellious, religious warfare served to highlight the rationality of enlightened French Christianity. The work, *La Conquête du Maroc; La Question indigene,* by French government official and lecturer René Millet, similarly claimed that the Moroccans so long "removed from civilization," should "graciously accept the foreign yoke within the rebellious, turbulent, fanatical ancient city of Fez, which...has been long inaccessible to Christians." Now that France had gained access to the Islamic stronghold however, the French people had "received the

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[167] Alfred-Georges-Paul Martin, *Précis de sociologie nord-africaine* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1913), 46, 115).
[168] Ludovic de Contenson, *Chrétiens et musulmans: Voyages et études* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1901), 179.

mission to spread among them our civilization," and "fight the lasciviousness and misery found" within Moroccan culture.[169] Regarding the rebellious nature of the Moroccans, the monograph stated that, "undoubtedly, the religious reaction which followed the appearance of Christians...would bring attention to Fez, the holy city of Islam." Nevertheless, "French institutions will penetrate Moroccan disorder" until "the (backwards) instincts of the natives are presented with liberty." For, the author asserted, France's "queen is named Reason" and the French nation is "not without grandeur...if we consider the intellectual progress France has made as well as its progress in its external (colonial) endeavors."[170] The Christian penetration of the Islamic holy places would lead to increased civilization and productivity within Morocco. The great people of France, identifying with their traditional Christian identity while simultaneously submitting to the progressive rule of "Reason," would bring liberty to the Muslims of Morocco.

Similarly, the minutes from a 1910 meeting of the colonial lobbyist group, L'Union Coloniale Française, titled, *L'Islam et la colonisation de l'Afrique: Conférence faite sous le patronage de l'Union Coloniale Française*, claimed that "experience has proved a thousand times that adherents to Islam are lost to the Christian religion." While "Islam responds to a spirit of discipline," it does not "guarantee the free thought of modern civilization or the morality of enlightened Christianity." The minutes also record the statement, "the interest of the metropole should prevail always and everywhere." And, while "the metropole does not have the least interest in the religion...of the indigenous peoples, the modern state favors the formation of strong Christian groups (among the colonized populations), not for any religious or sentimental reasons, but for reasons of state. This is possible without great difficulty, because...it is evident that Christianity is superior by the very fact

[169] René Millet, *La Conquête du Maroc; La Question indigene* (Paris: Perrin, 1913), 2-252.
[170] Ibid, 69.

that it is practiced by the superior race."[171] Although this quotation does not explicitly address Morocco, the idea of a "religionless Christianity" emerges in relation to Islamic North Africa. Lobbyists utilized this secularized, enlightened brand of "Christianity" to demonstrate France's moral and civilizational superiority and mused over whether it might be used to better control Muslim populations in North Africa.

Even government meetings were filled with conversations about the status of "French Christians" in Morocco. Minutes from the *Congrès de l'Afrique du Nord,* held in Paris on October 6, 1908, stated that the Moroccan populace was "vehemently against the Christians." The congress continued to ponder this notion, stating, "However, if it were really a hatred of all Christians, without distinction of origin, dictated by unique religious motives, all would be rejected with the same disapproval." In the Moroccan population, however, "only the French" Christians were held in defiance. "Their skillful legends represent the French people as tyrants and oppressors." Their "preventions are based on more than religious enthusiam...when they fight against the possible intervention of our troops. Certainly, religious enthusiasm exists amongst the Moroccans, but it would be a mistake to believe that is the cornerstone of their general hostility...particularly against the French." While these passages give the Moroccan people slightly more agency and depict them as more than religious fanatics (perhaps they had political and cultural reasons for rejecting French rule!), this work demonstrates that French government officials continued to associate France overtly with a Christian identity even after the Law of Separation. Although "it would be humiliating for the Moroccans to be governed by Christians," a French-ruled Morocco would, "allow the natives to participate in the work of progress and justice, which will be fulfilled around them." The work then claims, "we can conceive the creation of a modern Muslim University where, light of

[171] M. Dr C.-H. Becker, *L'Islam et la colonisation de l'Afrique: Conférence faite sous le patronage de l'Union Coloniale Française* (Paris: Union Coloniale Française, 1910), 16,17.

Western science will train a new generation...more apt...to appreciate the civilizing mission of France."[172] Judging by this language, although the French identified themselves as Christians in relation to the Moroccans, there existed no religious-based ambitions to spread the Christian gospel but an ambition to civilize and spread progressive, enlightenment values amongst the backwards, unenlightened population.

Indubitably, a French Christian identity was diffused with new nuance and meaning. By comparing the Islamic, Moroccan fanatics to the rational, enlightened French Christians after the Law of Separation, French journalists, government officials, and other public figures and groups demonstrated that what it meant to be French and Christian was changing in public rhetoric. By invoking ideas of France's illustrious Christian past in a time of religious and political instability, French public figures created a sense of solidarity amongst their divided metropolitan constituents. However, by highlighting "Christian" France's scientific and civilizational achievements, these individuals' language suggests that "French Christianity" was referring to a superior, enlightened France (not a devout, Catholic France) in the Moroccan context.

Emile Durkheim stated in 1912, "There can be no society which does not feel the need of upholding and reaffirming at regular intervals the collective sentiments and the collective ideas which make its unity and its personality."[173] After the turmoil caused by the Dreyfus Affair and the sense of sociocultural rupture caused by the secularization of France and the privatization of religion in 1905, France's "Christian" identity in relation to the supposed inferior, irrational inhabitants of Morocco provided an space in which the French could draw on both past and present glory. In so doing, the French media, government, and other public figures upheld certain "collective

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[172] *Congrès de l'Afrique du Nord, tenu à Paris, du 6 au 10 octobre 1908. Compte-rendu des travaux. Questions indigènes (enseignement, justice, institutions religieuses, conditions de vie matérielle). Maroc (questions politiques et économiques)* (Paris: M. Ch. Depincé, 1909), 172, 823.
[173] Durkheim, *On Morality and Society,* xlix.

sentiments" which appealed to both Catholic and unaffiliated French men and women in the years leading up to World War I.

EPILOGUE

French historian Sarah Maza once stated, "Who we are as social beings is shaped by the constant messages we receive about whom to desire and whom to despise."[174] Nowhere is this statement more applicable than when discussing France's colonial relations with Morocco, where interactions between the colonizing power and the colonized peoples both shaped and reflected a fluctuating metropolitan French religious identity in the turbulent first decades of the twentieth century. Through an examination of how the French press, government, and other public figures molded what it meant to be "desirable" or "detrimental" to French society, this thesis demonstrates that desirability was a fluid concept depending heavily on race, ethnicity, and religious identity.

One hundred years after the Law of Separation, "desirability" within France remains equally capricious. On March 15, 2004, the French government passed a statute prohibiting the wearing of "conspicuous signs" of religious affiliation in public schools. Article 1 states,

> In public elementary, middle and high schools, the wearing of signs or clothing which conspicuously manifest students' religious affiliations is prohibited. Disciplinary procedures to implement this rule will be preceded by a discussion with the student.

An explanation of "conspicuous" accompanies this article:

> The clothing and religious signs prohibited are conspicuous signs such as a large cross, a veil, or a skullcap. Not regarded as signs indicating religious affiliation are discreet signs, which can be, for example, medallions, small crosses, stars of David, hands of Fatima, or small Korans.[175]

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[174] Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 204.
[175] Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1.

Despite the fact that this law applied to *all* explicit signs of religion, it was aimed primarily at Muslim girls wearing headscarves. According to Joan Wallach Scott in her work, *The Politics of the Veil,* "the headscarf or, as it was soon to be referred to almost exclusively, the veil (*voile*), was considered inimical to French custom and law because it violated the separation of Church and state, insisted on differences among citizens in a nation one and indivisible, and accepted the subordination of women in a republic premised on equality. For many supporters of the law, the veil was the ultimate symbol of Islam's resistance to modernity."[176]

The idealization of nationalism has taken on many forms within various national histories. In France, it has taken the form of an insistence on the ideals of the republic, supposed to be the principles of the Enlightenment in their preeminent, most enduring form. According to Scott, "This image of France is mythical; its power and appeal rests, to a large degree, on its negative portrayal of Islam. The objectification of Muslims as a fixed 'culture' has its counterpart in the mythologizing of France as an enduring 'republic.' Both are imagined to lie outside of history—antagonists locked in eternal combat."[177] However, a closer examination of the French people's (discursive and literal) interactions with the Muslims of Morocco in the first few decades of the twentieth century demonstrates that not only do French republicanism and the "immutable culture" of the Islamic world share a weighty and interconnected history, but also that history has had a fundamental impact on the ways in which the French have defined themselves internally and internationally in the twentieth century.

Far from being an incontrovertibly secular republic since 1905, France continued be identified with Catholicism, albeit in a more temporally infused form. Supporting this notion, Joan Scott asserts in *Politics of the Veil* that even in the twenty-first century, critics of *laïcité* claim that it is not

[176] Ibid, 2.
[177] Ibid, 7.

a universal concept at all, but is rather "intimately bound up with the dominant Catholic religious culture of the nation."[178] It is this current perception that has led me to argue that, after 1905, the concept of a "Christian" France not only resonated with people in their private consciences, but continued to fundamentally define what it meant to be truly French in public rhetoric.

I have aspired to contextualize and consider twentieth-century French religious identity in light of France's imperial endeavors. According to Kevin J. Callahan and Sarah A. Curtis in their work *Views from the Margins: Creating Identities in Modern France*, "the core/periphery framework allows us to investigate the salient features of modern French identity in multiple ways."[179] Religious evolution in twentieth-century France did not occur within an ideological bubble. Therefore, it is essential to understand French religious trajectories in light of the French populace's interactions with colonial peoples, for not only did the periphery "permit more fluid and dynamic notions of identity," but peripheral developments also had the power to "drastically upset or change identity patterns emanating from Paris or the center."[180] In response to this historiographical call, I have combined and complicated two established bodies of historical literature: the historiography of religion and *laïcité* in France and the historiography of French colonialism. While both of these areas shed light on the nature of empire and religion in pre-War France, it is in their overlap where the most interesting and revealing intricacies exist concerning French identity. As debates over the role of religion in a secularized French society continue to influence public affairs into the twenty-first century, I believe examining the contradictions inherent in the master narratives of French religion over the last century prove more crucial than ever. For, according to Scott, "the attribution of inferior otherness...was attached to the veil, and beyond it to everything Muslim, Arab, and North African. The headscarf law, then, was not so much a solution to a problem as a

[178] Ibid, 101.
[179] Kevin J. Callahan and Sarah A. Curtis, eds., *Views from the Margins: Creating Identities in Modern France,* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 4.
[180] Ibid.

symptom of France's inability or unwillingness to face...the continuing power imbalance based on ethnic/religious difference—that has characterized its dealings with North Africans for so long."[181] Religion continues to influence both French government policy and views towards supposed religious and racial inferiors and, as a result, must be allotted a central position in the historical analysis and understanding of twentieth-century French cultural and political life.

In an attempt to contribute to this conversation, my thesis shows that, while religious devotion seemed to be on the wane within France in the early twentieth century, especially after the Dreyfus Affair and the passage of the 1905 Law of Separation, official rhetoric nevertheless continued to contrast a "Christian" France with an Islamic, even "savage" Morocco. Through a close examination of contemporary discourse, I have demonstrated that secular republicans and their Catholic counterparts shared similar ideals regarding morality, sexuality, and civilization in relation to France's Islamic colonies. Anxious about moral, sexual, and civilizational degeneracy within France and keen to characterize Moroccans as inferior to French civilization, French public figures of all ideological camps rallied around the banner of Christianity to evoke French ethical, cultural, and political superiority. Thus entangled, religion, morality, sexual prudence, and an innately superior and productive French civilization justified and legitimized the French imperial project. Despite the undeniable reality that the French—both secular and Catholic alike—were experiencing a period of religious and political upheaval in the metropole, Morocco provided a space in which these two groups were able to put aside their different ideals and principles and unite for the prolificacy of French civilization.

Not only was this discursively united metropolitan identity invoked in relation the people of Morocco, but France's post-1905 "Christian" identity also reflected and influenced the religious changes taking place back home. I have shown that secularists' references to "Christianity" in the

[181] Scott, *Politics of the Veil,* 181.

Moroccan context indicate the beginnings of a cultural trend within French public discourse. By placing typically secular, scientific, and enlightened ideals under the moniker "Christian" in the Moroccan context, French public figures and writers began to (consciously or subconsciously) instill the concept of "French Christianity" with new connotations. In this context, Christianity was used as a trope to indicate cultural superiority over religious inferiors and not as an indication of a national return to religious observance after the Law of Separation. As metropolitan France stumbled under the weight of religious change and perceived moral dissolution, Morocco provided a space in which to "refashion" a unified, enlightened Christian front, establishing solidarity in a desperate moment within French religious and cultural life. By analyzing the rhetorical interactions among French writers from a range of political and religious backgrounds, we are able to trace the contours and highlight the crucial interconnections between cultural practice and French imperial programs in the early twentieth century.

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